

Participant booklet: intention formation

Why walk to work?

Walking to work:

- Can be less stressful than driving a car or using public transport
- May not take as long as you think and may even be quicker than other forms of transport
- Can help you get to work on time - you don't have to worry about traffic jams or parking issues
- Makes it easier for you to plan your journey time
- Can save you money – you don't have to pay for fuel or fares

Personal benefits

Taking regular exercise as part of your daily routine can have important health benefits to you. If you become more active on a regular basis you may:

- Reduce your risk of developing heart disease, stroke, some cancers, type 2 diabetes, dementia and osteoporosis
- Help to prevent high blood pressure
- Help to control your weight
- Help to maintain good mental health and cope with stress

Physical activity guidelines

The Department of Health recommends that people should be active on a daily basis. A good way to do this is to build activity into your daily routine - such as walking to work! For general health adults should aim to do 30 minutes of **moderate** intensity physical activity on five days a week. This amounts to 2 hours 30 minutes of physical activity a week. The good news is that activity does not have to be in one go and can be built up in bouts of 10 minutes or more throughout the day.

What is 'moderate intensity' activity?

People have different fitness levels and it is usually wise to start slowly and build up your walking. Moderate activity means that you:

- Feel warm
- Get slightly out of breath but can still carry on a conversation

You don't have to push yourself really hard so that you arrive at work all hot and sweaty. But if you want to increase your exercise, you could speed up on the way home - it's cheaper than the gym!

Caring for your environment

Walking to work can play an important role in improving the quality of our environment. Motor vehicles contribute to traffic congestion and road danger, and increase noise levels in the city. Motor vehicles also contribute to air pollution by emitting harmful exhaust fumes. Car engines can take some time to warm up and the emissions are greatest when the engine is cold. A great way to contribute to reducing air pollution is to walk instead of using the car for short journeys.

Saving money

Although using the car can be convenient, high fuel and parking costs can make it expensive especially for short trips. The annual average cost of commuting to work by car is £2,500. Leaving the car at home could save you money.

Combining walking with public transport

Some people will not be able to walk all the way to work. For longer trips, it may be possible to make part of the journey by public transport. Research has shown that combining walking with trains or buses can help people to meet the recommended physical activity levels.

What will motivate you?

There are lots of reasons to consider walking to work. Different people have different motivations:

- Improving health
- Saving money
- Feeling good
- Guaranteed journey time
- A less stressful journey
- Concern for the environment
- Keeping fit
- Losing weight or controlling weight gain

Participant booklet: identifying barriers and solutions

Getting ready to make your journey to work active

If you are considering walking to work, write down what you consider to be the main benefits and barriers for you in walking to work

Benefits	Barriers
<i>E.g. Avoiding the traffic jam</i>	<i>E.g. Need to take children to school</i>

Weigh it up

If you've listed more benefits than barriers, you're on the road to becoming a healthier commuter. If you've listed more barriers than benefits - read on for some tips on how to minimise them.

Some barriers and solutions

Here we set out some possible solutions to barriers that people often mention when they are asked about walking to work.

Barriers	Solutions
I need to take the children to school	Could you share this with someone so that you could walk to work every other day? If they are older, and their route to school is safe, could you trust them to walk to school with friends?
I've got a lot to carry	Lots of us carry things backwards and forwards to work and hardly look at them. Empty your bag or briefcase and only carry the stuff you need for the day. If you do need to carry a lot, have you considered using a rucksack? Rucksacks are better for your posture and are also good for carrying the odd bit of shopping on the way home.
I need to wear smart shoes at work	That's an easy one. Leave your smart shoes somewhere safe at work e.g. in your desk drawer or locker and wear walking shoes for the journey— they all do it in New York!
I'm not very fit	You don't really need to be very fit to start walking, and you can build up your fitness in stages. For example, try walking to work and back on 1 day the first week, 2 days the second week, 3 days the third week and so on
I need my car for work	Do you actually need your car every day for work? Are there some days you could leave car at home if you do not have any meetings out of the office planned?

List your own barriers and proposed solutions here

Barriers	Solutions

Getting started with goal setting

You may be ready to start walking to work every day or you may decide to start gradually and work your way up. About 15 minutes walking in the morning and again in the evening is a suitable goal if you're not very active at the moment.

Example 1

Jackie lives about 2 miles away from work and currently drives but wants to stop using her car for the journey to and from work. There is a possible bus but in the long term she would like to walk as much as possible.

Short term: Pick two days to catch the bus to work and walk back, and drive the rest of the week.

Intermediate (*in one month*): Walk to and from work one day a week; catch the bus to work and walk home two days per week, and; drive the rest of the week.

Long term (*in three months' time*): Walk to and from work at least three times a week.

Example 2

Chris lives 6 miles away from work and currently drives. He would like to walk some of the way as a means of getting fitter but there is no convenient public transport.

Short term Pick one day to park 1 mile from the workplace and walk to and from the car to the workplace.

Intermediate (*in one month*): Pick three days a 1 mile from the workplace and walk to and from workplace.

Long term (*in three months' time*): Park the car further away (1.5 miles from the workplace) and walk to and from the car to the workplace at least three days a week.

Setting your own goals

- Write your goals in the table below. Maybe the number of times you want to walk to work or the number of steps if you are using a pedometer.
- Make sure the goals are **realistic for you** (you can review them in a few weeks).
- Be **flexible** as some weeks will just not work out the way you plan. If you can't walk for a few days due to illness or a holiday, just start again when you can.
- **Don't feel guilty** if things don't go well at first. Just re-plan for the next week. The most important aim is to walk to work on a regular basis over the longer term. If you miss a day here and there, it won't make a big difference. If you need to reset your goals, think through more realistic goals and chart them on a new sheet.
- Decide on what your long-term goal is – what you want to be doing in three months and how you might be able to achieve this in stages.

Short term

Intermediate (in one month)

Long term (in three months)

Participant booklet: self-monitoring

Monitoring your progress

A good way to monitor how many steps you do in a day and encourage you to increase the distance walked is by using a pedometer. To estimate your daily step count, clip a pedometer to

your belt or waistband in the morning and wear it until you go to bed at night.

It has been estimated that the average person walks between 3,000 and 4,000 steps per day. Walking 10,000 steps a day can really improve your health but it may take a while to work up to it!

Build up your steps gradually, by adding a few more steps every so often, until you're regularly walking 10,000 steps a day. Set yourself a reasonable target - perhaps an extra 1,000 per day (10 minutes walking) during the first week. There is space at the back of this booklet to record the number of steps each night to help you keep track.

Tracking your progress

Research has shown that tracking your progress can help you to achieve your goals. One way to do this is by keeping a diary. In the pages that follow we have given you a 'page a week' diary to record information about your journey to and from work and any comments about your journey, for example:

- How you travelled to and from work.
- Brief notes about your journey to work e.g. Why did you use this method? Did you combine the journey home with other activities e.g. shopping?
- If you decide to use a pedometer, you can also record the number of steps walked per day.

On the following pages, there is a travel diary where you can record your journeys. This is for your own personal use and we will not collect it from you, although we will interview some people about their experiences of trying to increase walking during their journey to and from work.

Participant booklet: Self-monitoring diary page				
Week 1	Journey	Method of travel <i>(Please circle all methods used)</i>		Any comments? <i>(If you are using a pedometer, you might like to fill in the number of steps)</i>
Mon	To work	Walk Car Other	Cycle Train Bus	Steps/day
	Back home	Walk Car Other	Cycle Train Bus	
Tues	To work	Walk Car Other	Cycle Train Bus	
	Back home	Walk Car Other	Cycle Train Bus	
Wed	To work	Walk Car Other	Cycle Train Bus	
	Back home	Walk Car Other	Cycle Train Bus	
Thurs	To work	Walk Car Other	Cycle Train Bus	
	Back home	Walk Car Other	Cycle Train Bus	
<i>Continued through to Sunday</i>				

Participant booklet: general encouragement and social support

Support and encouragement

The chances of people walking to work may be helped by getting support from family, friends or colleagues at work. Can anyone help with the school run? Is it possible to walk part of the route with a colleague? What about some competition between walkers?

Comfort and safety considerations

A waterproof jacket or umbrella can help to keep you warm and dry, and a rucksack is a great way to carry things when you are walking. You might find it better to wear training shoes or walking shoes to keep your feet dry and comfortable and keep a spare pair at work.

Safety during your journey to work is an important issue. If you feel nervous in quieter areas, you may be able to find a route with more people about, or ask a friend or colleague to walk with you. Wearing reflective clothing can help road users to see you.

Useful websites

The following websites give useful information and encouragement to people who want to be more active and walk to work:

- maps.google.co.uk - can be used as a walking route planner
- www.livingstreets.org.uk - lots of resources to encourage walking
- www.walk4life.info - find a walk and track your progress
- www.nhs.uk/Livewell/loseweight/Pages/10000stepschallenge.aspx - information and encouragement to increase your daily step count
- <http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/> - support to get active, stay active
- <http://traveline.info/> - sustainable travel advice
- www.sustrans.org.uk - lots of information about healthy active travel
- www.dft.gov.uk/think - the government's road safety campaign website