

Cycling & Health — Physical Activity

Cycling is an easy way to build exercise into daily life, save money, get fit and help the environment. And it's easier on joints than high-impact activity like running.

The Chief Medical Officer's Physical Activity Guidelines [below] recommend at least 150 minutes a week of activities like cycling.

Lifespan – Regular cycling is a great way to increase longevity, being associated with increased 'life-years' even when adjusted for injury risks - 20 life-years are gained through cycling for every year lost through injury. Middle-aged people who cycle regularly typically enjoy the fitness level of someone 10 years younger, and gain two years in life expectancy.

Obesity, weight control and diabetes – Cycling, combined with a healthy diet, is a good way to control weight and lower the risk of diabetes. It raises the metabolic rate, builds muscle and burns body fat, and is a comfortable form of exercise which you can vary and build up slowly. A daily half-hour bike ride will burn nearly five kilograms of fat over a year. Lack of physical activity is thought to be a major reason why type II maturity onset diabetes is dramatically increasing, a major public health concern. Without action, 60% of men, 50% of women and 25% of children will be obese by 2050 in the UK, costing the NHS £10 bn a year

Cardiovascular disease - regular cycling stimulates your heart, lungs and circulation, reducing the risk of stroke, high blood pressure and heart attack.

Cancer - Exercise reduces your risk of colon and breast cancer, and research has found cycling reduces the risk of bowel cancer.

Bone injuries and arthritis - Cycling improves coordination, strength and balance and may help prevent falls and fractures. Being a low-impact, with little stress on joints, it's also an ideal form of exercise for osteoarthritis. Around 70% of body weight goes through the saddle and handlebars instead of your ankles; and the bigger you are, the more important that is!

Mental illness - Mental health conditions like depression, stress and anxiety can be reduced by regular cycling. This is due to the effects of the exercise, producing endorphins, and because riding a bike can bring great enjoyment.

See spokes.org.uk/bulletin for a fuller version of this article



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Wikipedia

[en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Oliver_\(surgeon\)](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Oliver_(surgeon))

Physical activity benefits for adults and older adults

- BENEFITS HEALTH
- IMPROVES SLEEP
- MAINTAINS HEALTHY WEIGHT
- MANAGES STRESS
- IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE

REDUCES YOUR CHANCE OF	Type II Diabetes	-40%
	Cardiovascular Disease	-35%
	Falls, Depression and Dementia	-30%
	Joint and Back Pain	-25%
	Cancers (Colon and Breast)	-20%

What should you do?



UK Chief Medical Officers' Guidelines 2011 **Start Active, Stay Active:** <http://bit.ly/startactive>

For a larger version of this infographic, go to bit.ly/startactive