Active Travel

Are you looking for a way to increase your physical activity? Active travel is a way to add physical activity into your daily activities and routines.

# What is Active Travel?

Active travel involves moving from place to place by human-power. It includes walking, cycling, running, using a scooter, or skateboarding. Other forms of travel are passive travel (e.g. driving or being driven in a car) or public transport (e.g. bus). Public transport can be made more active by getting off one or two stops earlier and walking the rest of the way.

Active travel is an easy and common way for young people to get the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity. Those who develop regular patterns of activity early in life, such as active travel, are more likely to remain active throughout life. Being active has long-term health benefits.

# Why Use Active Travel?

Active travel can:

* wake you up, help you feel more alert and improve your concentration
* help you meet your daily physical activity needs. If you walk for 50 minutes each school day (to and from the bus to school and home) you will walk approximately 3.2 kms each day which is 16 km each week!
* help improve your mood, reduce stress and improve self-esteem
* improve academic performance
* give you independence and extra time to be with friends
* save money on bus fares and petrol
* help traffic congestion. If you are traveling at peak times, you may save time!

# Environmental Benefits[[1]](#endnote-1)

Not only is active travel good for your health, it is great for the environment as you are not adding any emissions into the atmosphere.

Based on the average household’s environmental impact, motorised transportation accounts for:

* almost 50% of toxic air pollution
* over 1/3 of greenhouse gas emissions
* almost 20% of toxic water pollution.

Walking and cycling are "clean" modes of transportation. They result in no greenhouse gas (GHG) or criteria air contaminant (CAC) emissions.

Did you know the environmental footprint of a cyclist is 1/10th of a driver? A bicycle requires 100 times less energy to manufacture than an automobile and produces little waste during its life cycle.

# Active Travel Facts[[2]](#endnote-2)

* Around one third (or less) of Australian children and young people use active travel every day to travel to and/or from school.
* Approximately 50% of Australian children and young people do not use active travel to or from school on a weekly basis.
* There has been a 42% decline in children’s active travel participation rates to/from school over the past 40 years.

# Tips for Active Travel

* You don’t have to use active travel every day. Gradually build up the number of days you ride or walk to your destination.
* Part way is ok. Walk to the next bus stop or get dropped a short walk away.
* Plan your route and work out how long it is going to take you. It takes around 12 minutes to walk 1km.
* Get prepared. Do you need to take some spare clothes? Is there a place to store your bike/scooter?
* Be safe. Wear a helmet, follow road rules and avoid distractions such as looking at your phone.
* Dress for the weather. Think it’s too cold in winter for active travel? The Netherlands has one of the world’s highest rates of active transport among children and young people. Their daytime winter temperature is between 2°C - 6°C. Tasmania doesn’t seem so cold to be out and about, does it?

1. Alberta Centre for Active Living, *Benefits of Active Transportation,* viewed 2 October 2019 <https://www.centre4activeliving.ca/media/filer\_public/cc/0e/cc0e1f16-27b6-4ec3-84ef-3c676f2552a2/2017-active-transportation-factsheet.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Active Healthy Kids Australia (2015), *The Road Less Travelled: The 2015 Active Healthy Kids Australia Progress Report Card on Active Transport for Children and Young People,* Adelaide, South Australia: Active Healthy Kids Australia [↑](#endnote-ref-2)