

The background is a solid blue color. On the right side, there is a large, stylized white hand with the index finger pointing towards the left. The hand is positioned as if it is pointing to the main title of the document. The overall design is clean and modern, with a focus on the text.

CSSC

Active Wellbeing

Benefits of active travel

including cycling, walking, running

The many health benefits of leading an active lifestyle are well documented, for both your physical and mental wellbeing. However, knowing this is only half the journey. Finding the time, space, effort and money to incorporate activities into our busy lives can be the hurdle that many of us never overcome.

We've put together a handy guide with some practical tips on integrating physical activity into our daily commutes and journeys. Hopefully you'll agree that it doesn't require loads of fancy gear and huge time commitments. Just a little bit of planning and a small nudge to budge in the right direction.

Walking

By far the UK's most popular form of exercise, which is not surprising as it requires the least preparation and the least equipment and clothing. You can easily fit a brief walk into your daily routine, in fact most of us do so, without appreciating the good that it's doing us. So, how can we add a few extra steps or make a little more time to walk more often or perhaps even faster and for longer to really feel the benefits of stretching our legs.

Walking and working

1. If possible, take the stairs wherever and whenever you can. It sounds simple, but it's so easily avoided with ubiquitous workplace lifts and shopping centre escalators, you may have to go out of your way to find the stairs. Not only can taking the stairs often be quicker than waiting for a lift, but climbing stairs, even just a few flights, can get the blood pumping and the muscles working.
2. Get off the bus, tube, train one stop early and walk the rest of the way.
3. Park a little further from work and walk 10 minutes.
4. Volunteer to make the tea. It might only be a few steps to the kitchen area but doing that 5 times a day for 25 days can really add up. Plus, you'll be the most popular person around in February.
5. See what meetings you can take on your feet. We all attend some which require us to just listen. So, why not dial in from your mobile phone and take a walk while listening in. You may find you're more attentive to what you're hearing than if you were sat at your desk distracted by other emails and tasks.

Walking at the weekend

1. Explore your local area with a gentle stroll and investigate every avenue and side road in your hometown. You find some terrific hidden gems and might just get to know your neighbours.
2. Utilise the nation's cultural and heritage gems like English Heritage, Cadw, National Trust Scotland and Kew Gardens. CSSC members enjoy free or discounted entry to these partners and invite you to join CSSC to enjoy free family entry and great value tickets to these and many other partners.
3. If possible, take time out to walk the kids to school. Not only will it save you petrol and possibly scraping ice off the car, but offers a great chance to spend reflective time with the family talking about their day.
4. Research local groups through social media, starting with CSSC's walking groups. If you're ready to take your rambling to the next level, why not find like-minded people to walk with. Walking with others not only encourages you at a pace that's right for you but can be incredibly therapeutic as you chat and stroll.



Running

It's like walking, only faster. Well, actually it doesn't have to be. If you're new to running the best advice is to start slow and take it easy. Don't push yourself too far and too fast, too early. Instead build up to longer distances and faster times as your strength, stamina and experience increases.

Run your commute

1. Replacing your motorised commute with a run to work is an incredibly rewarding and invigorating way to start your day. But it can require some planning. Of course, it always helps if your workplace has showers or changing rooms. But if not, you can always save your run for the way home. A fantastic way to declutter your mind and transition from work to family life.
2. Start a run club. If you're looking for some company and mutual encouragement on your runs, post notices on boards or intranet sites. Let people know where you're going and when and seek feedback on local routes. If your workplace doesn't have a forum to share, you can always speak to your HR department to send round communications to find other like-minded people.
3. Find gyms, including CSSC gyms and local spaces to run at lunch. Most gyms now cater for workers at lunchtime and pre and post workouts, conveniently located in town centres near business districts. They can get busy, so going early or switching your lunch break to before 12 or after 2pm can ensure more equipment is available with fewer people.
4. If you can't run the whole way, why not park close by or change bus/train routes to stop a little further way from the workplace and run the rest of the way. By parking out of town and leaving public transport a little sooner, it could save you money as well as proving enough time to increase your activity. As your experience and confidence grows, so to can the distance you run before or after work.
5. Join CSSC and encourage others to do likewise. For over 100 years CSSC has been uniting members of the civil service and public sector with sports, games and recreation. They have dozens of sports and opportunities to get involved with running. From clubs and social groups to discounted equipment, gym memberships and workplace funding to help pay for race entry fees and organising group, fun activities like Active Wellbeing. Find out more at cssc.co.uk.

Running away with it

1. Running may not be everybody's idea of relaxing time off, but it doesn't have to be a chore. You don't need loads of fitness tech and step trackers straightaway. (although if you have one, remember to sync it to the app to take part in the Around-the-World challenge and log your activity.)
2. You don't need an expensive pair of running shoes. A simple pair of supporting trainers can be purchased for less than £40 (even cheaper through CSSC savings).
3. Research some flat routes that don't change in gradient or ground. You'll find your first runs much easier if you stick to footpaths and toe paths and you may start to increase your distances and difficulties over time.
4. Get the family involved. Even with younger kids running can be fun, they can help pace you and keep you grounded. For little legs they can take their bikes to keep up and for even littler legs there are communities out there that run with buggies and pushchairs, which can help with resistant training.
5. If you're looking to meet like-minded members, or find more motivation, why not join CSSC Running Facebook community?



Cycling

Of all the low impact forms of exercise, cycling can feel like the most rewarding. For a minimal input you can cover loads of ground across multiple terrains. Cycling allows you to explore far and wide without too much stress on joints and muscles.

Cycle the commute

1. Swapping your commute with a bike ride is an easy option for some. Many workplaces encourage cycling offering tax efficient 'Bike-2-work' schemes, bike racks and changing facilities. Check with your employer if they offer any schemes.
2. Map out your routes before you travel, including where possible using any designated bike routes and plan for alternatives to anticipate access closures.
3. Consider what type of bike would suit your needs more. If cycling is only part of your journey combined with train, tram or tube journeys, you wish to consider a folding bike. However, these can be expensive brand new, so check second-hand sites or cycle-2-work schemes for monthly payments.
4. Invest in a good lock, helmet and reflective weatherproof clothing, along with the best and brightest lights you can afford. Now is a great time to pick up a good value bike, either new or second-hand as many people don't think about cycling until the spring.
5. Cycling together is a great way to stay safe, be seen and have fun. Organise a workplace cycle meet, or simple chat with fellow cyclists at the bike rack. If you're not confident on a bike, you could seek funding from CSSC to organise a cycling proficiency class for you and your colleagues.
6. Join CSSC active communities, including: OUR reading, dancing, cooking, gardening, running, walking, cycling, swimming and retired members groups.

Weekend Wanderings

1. Decide what kind of cycling you'd like to take up as they each come with their own benefits and limitations. Road riding can be fast and provide a full body workout. Off-road or mountain biking can be more scenic and challenging. And velodrome cycling or BMXing can be indoors but require more specialised bikes.
2. If you intend to use your bike for commuting and fun, you may wish to consider a hybrid bike, suitable for all surfaces and speeds. The frames and wheels are stronger and the tyres much more forgiving and durable. Plus, they're often set up for mudguards and lights – all essential for comfortable riding.
3. If you're looking to purchase a new bike, Halfords is a great place to start. They have loads of knowledgeable, friendly staff to guide you and can deliver the bike, fully make up with all the accessories and ready to go. Plus, you get 8% cashback at Halfords through CSSC, saving £40 off the cost of a typical new bike. So, if you join CSSC, you could easily save your annual membership fee with just one purchase.
4. Cycling is a great way to spend quality time with the family. Not only is it low impact on joints, but it's environmentally friendly and quiet, meaning you can chat and ride in comfort. You can explore far and wide, take picnics and discover hidden gems and places of interest like English Heritage sites and blue plaques. CSSC members enjoy free, family entry to all English Heritage and Cadw sites, both perfect for family bike rides. Plus, members get unlimited entry to Kew Gardens and discounted entry at WWT and National Trust for Scotland, all fantastic places to explore on two wheels, four wheels or even one wheel.





However

whenever and wherever you choose to walk, run or cycle, there are some important safety tips to consider.

1. Think about your skill level. Push yourself and increase your activity, but always run, walk or cycle within your limits. If you're looking to stretch yourself, you could always go with someone on the first occasions or join a gym. Perhaps save the more arduous routes and tests for when you have time during the day, so the light is better and you have more time to explore and investigate.
2. Research the best equipment. The great thing about running, cycling and especially walking is they don't require too much equipment or specialist clothing. A decent pair of trainers or walking shoes can really help and second hand bikes are really great value. But do your research. Get in touch with knowledgeable and passionate forums, like CSSC's groups and communities for all the inside knowledge you'll need.
3. Go with a partner if possible or share your plans. For many, walking, cycling or running on ones own can be part of the appeal. Freeing your mind can be incredibly cathartic and a great way to relax and meditate. But it's always important to be safe when being active. Some of the best routes, by their nature, can take you to remote places. So, if you can share your plans with family, friends, neighbours, colleagues or even groups, that can help keep you safe. Track your route on social media, but only share it with those you know. And keep your phone with you and fully charged when you're out and about.
4. Take into account changing weather conditions. This is Britain after all and the one thing you can expect is the unexpected will happen. Perhaps invest in a lightweight, reflective jacket, suitable for all activities and weather conditions.
5. Stay safe and be aware of your surroundings. Exercising first thing in the morning or last thing at night can be incredibly rewarding and often the only chance many of us get to be active. Try to stay in well-lit areas known to you, so you are fully aware of the dangers of heavy traffic, foggy conditions and remote areas. Save the more adventurous routes for the weekend, with better light and better conditions.

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Active

Wellbeing

**Your
Nudge
to Budge.**