

# The Top Ten Excuses for not Commuting by Bike

## **10. I need my car for work.**

Many transportation tasks could be handled equally well if not better on a bike. Meet with your employer and see if your company might not benefit from a more environmentally friendly image if you conducted your business by bike. Consider that many traditional tasks adapt well to cycling, whether it's police work, meter reading, postal delivery, etc.

## **9. I'd have to get up much earlier if I rode my bicycle.**

You'd be surprised! Because of traffic in urban areas, cycling generally takes less time than driving for distances of three miles or less, and about the same time for trips of three to five miles. But even if your commute is longer, 30 minutes of extra sleep won't be nearly as invigorating as an early morning ride. You'll arrive at work alert and refreshed. Likewise, your evening ride home should leave you more relaxed since you won't face the aggravation of sitting in rush hour traffic. And you won't have to rush off to an evening work-out to unwind. You'll already have accomplished that! Also, don't forget your savings of time, money (and the environment benefit) when you eliminate visits to the gas pump.

## **8. I'm out of shape.**

If you leave yourself plenty of time and go at an easy pace, you'll find cycling no more difficult than walking. As you ride more, you'll ease your way into better shape, building fitness that is an integral part of your schedule. If you have health problems, consult your family doctor for suggestions on getting started.

## **7. I can't afford a special commuting bicycle.**

You don't need one. Your old beater bike gathering dust in the garage will suffice if properly adjusted and maintained, and it's less attractive to thieves. If you have a recreational bicycle you can outfit it with a lightweight rack and bag or use a fanny pack to carry necessary commute items. With the fixed cost of operating an automobile at around 30 cents/mile, the money you would save commuting by bicycle on an average 10 mile round trip would buy you a \$400 bicycle in six months time. (Not to mention the health benefits or the savings to the environment.)

## **6. I have to dress nice for work.**

Some bicycle commuters simply ride in their business attire – they seem to command more respect from motorists. Most ride in casual or cycling clothes and change when they arrive. You can carry your change of clothes in a pack or in panniers on the bike or even transport them back and forth on days when you don't ride.

### **5. There's no secure place for my bike.**

There is probably a storage room or closet where your bike can be secured behind a locked door. Maybe you can even take it to your office – what a status symbol! Or check and see if parking is available in nearby buildings or garages. Otherwise, fasten it to an immovable object with a U-bolt lock, preferably where you can see it.

### **4. I can't shower at work.**

Depending on the weather, you may not need a shower if you ride at a leisurely pace. If you do, take a washcloth, soap, towel and deodorant and clean up at the restroom sink. Or look for a public facility or health club within walking distance of your workplace where you can shower. Then encourage your employer to install showers where you work.

### **3. What if it's rainy or cold?**

Start as a fair weather bicycle commuter – when the forecast is bad, don't bike. Some people may conquer the elements and commute every day, but it doesn't mean you have to. If you only ride when the weather report is favorable, it will still make a dramatic improvement. The more you enjoy bicycle commuting, the more you'll look forward to your daily ride. You may eventually decide to invest in rainwear and cold weather gear so you can commute year-round!

### **2. I'd have to ride in the dark.**

Wear light colored reflective clothing, use a good lighting system and choose a route that avoids major thoroughfares. There are a variety of bike mounted lights that can help you see and be seen.

### **1. It's not safe to ride in traffic.**

The fear of riding in traffic is often much greater than the actual danger. Minimize risk by riding properly – visibly and predictably. In stop-and-go traffic, a fit cyclist can generally keep up with the traffic flow, so it's acceptable to maintain your place in the roadway. Hugging the curb invites danger as cars try to squeeze past you. To help prevent injury always wear a helmet. You can also reduce the risk of riding in traffic by using less-congested secondary roads. You may travel a few extra miles, but you'll be able to enjoy the ride, a worthwhile trade-off.