

Health Tips

Your Good Health Information From eDocAmerica

with

Dr. D



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Health Tip : The price of gasoline, turning lemons into lemonade



Looking for a way to save money, improve your health and the health of the environment? Consider walking or riding a bicycle instead of driving when commuting to work, visiting friends or making short trips to the store. Gasoline mileage is significantly reduced by the start and stop driving that occurs with in-town driving. This coupled with the price of gasoline hovering around \$3.00 makes commuting or using the car for short trips a costly means of transportation. When you consider the additional expenses of parking fees and automobile maintenance, the price of a good pair of walking shoes or a bicycle becomes more reasonable, not to mention the potential health benefits from walking or riding a bike.

As most everyone knows by now, regular exercise has been shown to provide a host of health benefits including reduction in the risk of heart attack and stroke, decreased likelihood of developing certain types of cancer, and

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improved bone health. Walking to work or bicycle commuting is a great way to squeeze regular exercise into a hectic schedule. The belief that physical activity is limited to exercise or sports may keep people from being active. Another myth is that physical activity must be vigorous to achieve health benefits. Physical activity is any bodily movement that results in an expenditure of energy. Walking a mile burns approximately 100 calories and bicycle commuting, depending on the terrain and level of exertion, can burn up to 500



calories per hour. In many cases, it is possible to get the recommended amount of daily exercise during your work commute, leaving the rest of the day for family or personal interests. Instead of sitting frustrated in traffic, walking or biking to work may get you to work on time more often and in a better mood as well. Commuting time can be used to help you keep in shape and to do your job better.

Autos are the single largest source of U.S. air pollution. Shorter trips which are often the most appropriate for walking or biking may produce even more pollution than longer trips. An average four-mile round-trip bike commute prevents nearly 15 pounds of auto air pollution from contaminating your air. More self-propelled transportation means less benzene, cyanide, lead, carbon monoxide, CFC's, sulfates and ozone in the air we breathe. Since the bicycle season matches the ground-level ozone season, by biking instead of driving, you contribute to pollution prevention when it is most needed. For those considering bicycle commuting, the Sacramento Transportation Management Association <http://www.sacramento-tma.org/Bicycling.htm> has provided a number of tips for getting started. They address a number of potential concerns including route planning, dealing with sweat and wrinkled clothing, and personal safety.

Commuting to work via bicycle does require planning and perhaps even some sacrifice. Walking or bicycling to the store or to a friend's house, on the other hand, may be quicker and much more enjoyable than driving. Before automatically hopping into the car, consider if you could make the trip just as easily on foot or by bike. You will be doing yourself, your pocketbook and the environment a huge favor.

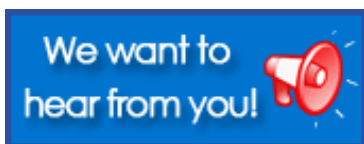


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