
Cycling – a prescription for health

How riding your bike can lead to a longer, healthier life



Physical inactivity is one of the greatest public health threats of our time. A simple way to make sure you're getting enough physical activity is to bike or walk to work, school or in your free time. And guess what? Apart from all the positive health effects you'll gain, we can promise that your wallet won't complain and the environment will thank you too. We've gathered some key facts that will convince you to get in the saddle – if you weren't already.

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**”If there were a pill that
had the same effects as
cycling, every doctor
would prescribe it”**



PETER SCHANTZ
Professor in human biology

Have you gotten your 150 this week?

That is to say, have you gotten at least 150 minutes of physical activity this week? If the answer is yes, that's great! If the answer is no, then you are among the 25 percent of the population worldwide that don't meet the recommendations for minimum physical activity for good health set by the WHO. The recommendation for children and adolescents (aged 5-17 years) is to engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day.

It's better to do something than nothing!

Replacing time spent sitting still with physical activity of any intensity provides health benefits! Kids should also limit the amount of time spent being sedentary, particularly the amount of recreational screen time.



As countries develop economically, levels of inactivity tend to increase. Therefore, our cities and societies need to encourage walking, cycling and other kinds of active transportation.



150 minutes of physical activity throughout the week might sound like a lot. But consider:

30 minutes of physical activity, such as walking or cycling, five days a week sounds quite reasonable, right? And it makes a huge difference for your health.

Walking or cycling to school, to work or in your free time is a great way to get those 30 minutes in and do something good for your health.

Children and adolescents need at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day. More time on a bike means better health and more fun!

Health benefits associated with regular physical activity

- Lower risk of early death
- Lower risk of coronary heart disease
- Lower risk of stroke
- Lower risk of high blood pressure
- Lower risk of type 2 diabetes
- Lower risk of colon cancer and breast cancer
- Reduced depression
- Better cognitive function (for older adults)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2008)
Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

Physical activity boosts children's health – and grades!

Physical activity leads to better school performance. In the Swedish Bunkeflo project, a group of pupils were assigned an extra 40 minutes daily physical activity. When leaving primary school, this group had better grades and health than the children who did not get the extra physical activity.

... And decreases employee sickness absence

Employees who bike to work regularly have on average 1.3 fewer sick leave days a year.

**Have you
taken your
30 minutes
today?**

mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun
						

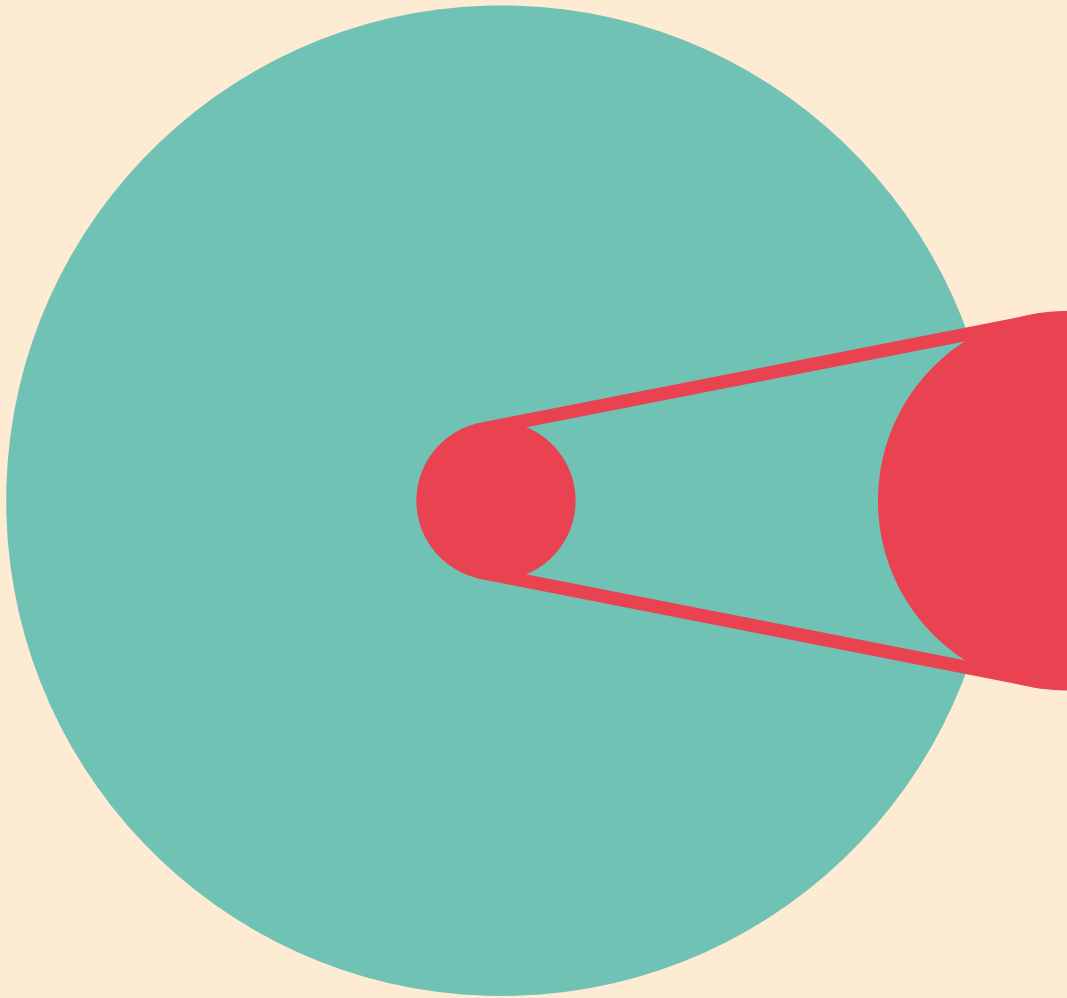
Sources

European Cyclists' Federation (2018): *The benefits of cycling Unlocking their potential for Europe.*

Jesper Fritz (2017): *Physical Activity During Growth. Effects on Bone, Muscle, Fracture Risk and Academic Performance.* Lund University.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2008): *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.*

WHO (2020): *Physical activity*
[www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/
detail/physical-activity](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity)



**To help improve your physical and mental health:
Ride a bike or walk 30 minutes at least five times a week.
Repeat. Increase dose as desired.**

Side effects may include:

- Getting to where you're going
- Saved time
- More money in your wallet
- A better environment

Cykelfrämjandet is the Swedish Cyclists' Association.

We work for a sustainable future where it is safe and easy for everyone to ride a bike. We work to improve conditions for all cyclists in Sweden, and to convince more people to choose the bicycle more often.