



# HEHA FOR HEALTH



## 'Active Travel' For Health

Over the past few decades, changes to the way we live has led to increasingly inactive lifestyles.

For adults, 30 minutes of physical activity at least five days per week is the minimum recommended for good health. For children, 60 minutes is desirable.

One of the easiest ways we can achieve this is to incorporate some 'Active Travel' into our daily routine. This can mean walking or cycling to work or school, or catching the bus or train part of the way and walking the rest. The result? You and your family can get enough regular activity without having to find additional time for exercise.



### What is active transport / active travel?

Active travel is physical activity undertaken as a means of transport. This includes walking, cycling, and also incidental activity associated with the use of public transport such as walking from the bus stop to your place of work.

### What's a Travel Plan?

Schools and businesses can use a Travel Plan to support people who want to walk, cycle or use public transport more. Typical actions include:-

- providing changing facilities, showers and secure cycle parking
  - making public transport information readily available
  - promotion of walking school buses
- Capital and Coast District Health Board has its own travel plan, known as 'Wellmoves'. Other organisations in Wellington with travel plans include schools and government organisations, Massey and Victoria Universities, and the Greater Wellington Regional Council.



### Active Travel at Work

Ben Tucker and Rob Appleton (pictured above) are regular cycle commuters who work in mental health services at the C&C DHB Kilbirnie Clinic. Both find cycling an efficient way of getting around the city and they often cycle when making home visits to clients.

Rob cycles from home to make an 18km per day round trip from Wadestown. With cycling as his everyday mode of transport, he avoids the need for a second car in the household.

Ben's journey from Hataitai is much shorter, and he goes via the gym in the mornings. "It's quicker than going by car, you don't spend any time parking," he says. "On the occasional day that he drives to work, Ben somehow finds himself wishing he'd biked instead. "But I never have that feeling about cycling, whatever the weather".

Rob says cycling keeps him healthy, and he very seldom needs to take sick leave. "It makes you feel better, because it increases your serotonin and dopamine levels. You don't see any sad cyclists!"

Check out [www.ccdhb.org.nz](http://www.ccdhb.org.nz) for previous monthly articles



Wellington City celebrated Walk 2 Work Day on Wednesday 19 March. This was coordinated by Living Streets Aotearoa (LSA), an organisation that promotes walking and seeks to develop walking-friendly communities. A public breakfast event in Frank Kitts Park attracted over 250 people on their way to work. The celebration also highlighted the positive benefits of walking as part of Wellington City Council's 'Stepping Out Month' programme.

Living Streets' vision includes 'More people choosing to walk more often and enjoying public places'.

To find out more about Living Streets, and for details of walking groups and walking activities around the Wellington area, visit their website [www.livingstreets.org.nz](http://www.livingstreets.org.nz) or phone 04 385 8280.

### Getting Started

- Invest in the equipment you need to be active, for example a cycle, or good walking shoes.
- If you drive to work or town, deliberately choose a park that allows you to walk to your destination. A 1km walk takes around 12 minutes and adds up to your total of 30 minutes of physical activity per day.
- If you use the bus or train, get off a couple of stops early, and walk the rest of the way. Getting off at the end of a fare zone saves money.
- Choose one or two days per week to be car-free. Walk, cycle or go by bus instead.
- Walk the kids to school, then carry on to work by bus.
- Set yourself a mini-goal, such as walking home 2 days a week.
- Approach a friend who lives near you and agree to be walking buddies.