

A Transportation Revolution

Riding a bicycle isn't only a good workout—it's also a great option for short-distance trips, for navigating areas where nimble transportation is required, and for users who can't afford more expensive options. Bicycles offer commuters an important complement to other forms of public transportation as well, such as buses and subways.

When properly supported with bikeways, traffic signals that favor bikes, and other infrastructure and policies that promote safe, efficient cycling, bicycles can carry a substantial share of the urban transport burden. In the Netherlands, for example, bicycles account for nearly 30 percent of all urban trips—compared with less than 1 percent in the U.S.—proving that bikes are not just for less developed countries.

Over the last quarter century, infrastructure investments have helped to reduce cycling deaths in the Netherlands and Germany. Initiatives include “traffic calming” in residential neighborhoods, people-centered urban design, restrictions on motor vehicle use, and traffic regulations and enforcement that are pro-pedestrian and pro-cycling.



DID YOU KNOW...?

- * Over the past decade, bicycle production has shifted steadily to China, which by 2003 accounted for 58 percent of the total global production of 101 million bikes. Japan, Taiwan, and the United States, meanwhile, saw double-digit declines in output over this period.
- * Asia is now home to four of the top five bicycle producers—China, India, Taiwan, and Japan. Viet Nam posted the world's fastest rate of growth in 2002—more than 250 percent—making more than 2 million bicycles. The European Union, third in the world, is the only non-Asian producer of any size.
- * In the U.S., biking remains marginalized due largely to a dominant car culture: 95 percent of parking is free, and gas prices, vehicle taxes, and other driving-related costs are among the lowest in the industrial world. The U.S. rate of car ownership is the world's highest, about 50 percent above that of Western Europe.
- * Due to inadequate cycling infrastructure, U.S. cyclists are 12 times more likely than people in cars to die en route. On a per-kilometer and per-trip basis, U.S. cyclists are twice as likely to die on the road as German cyclists, and more than three times as likely as Dutch cyclists.

SUCCESS STORIES

- ❖ In Africa, health care providers use bicycles to deliver immunization programs, prenatal care, and ongoing therapies like TB treatment. Projects in Senegal found that nurses on bikes were 58 percent quicker in their rounds than those who walked, and they saved \$ 0.40 per trip over taking a taxi.
- ❖ Global sales of electric bikes, mainly in China, reached 10.5 million units in 2005, a 79-fold increase over a decade.

❖ New Jersey-based Pedals for Progress has processed and donated more than 85,000 used bikes and \$8 million in new spare parts to partner charities in 20 developing countries, for use by the working poor.

❖ In Lyon, France, a new subscription-based program was introduced in 2005 with 1,500 bicycles and about 100 computerized bike racks. The program attracted 15,000 subscribers in its first 3 months, and each bike is used 6.5 times per day, on average, for nearly 10,000 daily trips.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF AND OTHERS:



Try to take a least one long bike ride every two weeks, whether to your workplace, to the store, or to a friend's house. Gradually increase the frequency of these trips, and see whether you can make a daily habit of biking to your most common destinations.

SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO:

- ✓ Ride your bike to work and for short trips to the store.
- ✓ Encourage your local politicians to support bike lanes and other infrastructure that makes cycling safer, while providing disincentives for auto use.
- ✓ If you have an unused bicycle sitting at home, consider donating it to a charity or individual that will use it.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- 🚲 **International Bicycle Fund (www.ibike.org)** is a nonprofit advocacy group that promotes non-motorized urban planning, bike safety education, responsible travel, and bicycle tourism.
- 🚲 **Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (www.itdp.org)** works to promote environmentally sustainable and equitable transportation policies and projects worldwide.
- 🚲 **Pedals for Progress (www.p4p.org)** donates used bicycles and spare parts to partner charities in 20 countries, and helps promote bicycle repair businesses in the developing world.
- 🚲 **ProBicycle (www.p4p.org)** provides information and resources for utility and recreational vehicular cyclists, primarily in the U.S.