

What you can do



12 reasons to ride an electric bike



Electric bikes are fast becoming more mainstream and you may have even started to see them on the road yourself, but is an electric bike right for you?



For some riding an electric bike may seem like “cheating” but for many others it makes travelling by bike far more accessible and enables them to start incorporating more exercise into their daily routine.

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The law in England, Scotland and Wales means that you do not need a licence to ride an ‘electrically assisted pedal cycle’ (also referred to as an EAPC, ebike or Pedelec). Nor do you need to register, tax or insure it - if you are over the age of 14 you can simply ride an electric bike in the same way as you would a regular push-bike.

Unfortunately in Northern Ireland this is not the case and you will need a moped licence to drive any form of electric bike. You will also need to register the bicycle and provide proof of insurance to ride it. They are also not permitted on

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buyers and provide proof of insurance to ride it. They are also not permitted on off-road routes that are shared with pedal bicycles. Legislation to give electric bikes parity with pedal cycles has been delayed by the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

There are some regulations of course: your bike will only be pedal-assisted when you are travelling up to 15.5mph and have a maximum power output of 250 watts.

Here are twelve excellent reasons why an electric bike might be the perfect fit for you:

1. Great designs and more variety of frames available

In the past electric bikes were seen as clunky, heavy and not very attractive for people who already ride bikes but as technology improves and batteries become smaller new designs of electric bikes are now very slick and even stylish. There are lots of different types of electric bike available on the market including mountain bikes, road bikes, step through frames, cargo bikes and even folding bikes.

On average electric bikes cost more than a conventional bike, usually around £1,500, so you may have to start saving-up to buy one, or you could try the Cycle To Work scheme if your employer offers it.

2. Build confidence in your fitness and ability

If you have ever felt that you would like to cycle more but are yet to take the plunge into life on two-wheels because you're worried about your fitness levels, having a bit of battery assistance could help you get started.

An electric bike helps by giving you an extra boost as you cycle, so although you're being electrically assisted you will still be pedalling the whole time. Therefore when riding an electric bike you burn almost as many calories as on a regular bike - which is a whole lot more than you would in a car or on a motorbike.

3. Hills and wind need not be a problem

The thought of cycling uphill against the wind is probably one of the most off-putting reasons for not cycling. With an electric bike neither need to be a problem when you can tap into your electric motor as and when you need it.

4. Wear what you want while you ride

A massive benefit of not exerting as much energy while you cycle means that you won't overheat and sweat as much as you might do on a traditional bike. This means you can dress more appropriately for prevailing weather conditions. This is a real bonus if you're cycling to work and there are no shower facilities at the other end.

5. Safer than you think

Having a little more acceleration when starting from a stopped position means that junctions and car traffic can feel a lot safer than if you were using a traditional bike. You may also find that you will be more aware of your

surroundings as you won't spend as much time head-down or standing up on your pedals in an attempt to build up speed.

Another safety bonus is with your silent motor running you'll be more aware of the sounds around you than compared with being on a motorbike or scooter.

6. Spend less time in your car

If you are an everyday commuter you may find yourself regularly sitting in traffic daydreaming about being anywhere else other than in your car. That dream can be a reality.

Cycling to work is a great way to include more exercise into your daily routine. Arrive at work more alert and ready for the day. Check out our online map of the **National Cycle Network** to see if you can plan your new route to work.

7. Enjoy cycling longer distances without getting exhausted

Being outdoors on a beautiful day can be one of the most enjoyable and relaxing experiences. One of the big draws to long distance riding is that you are able to experience more views and sights than if you were walking.

With an electric bicycle you can enjoy the great outdoors without worrying about the after-effects on your legs. A short journey can turn into a mini-adventure that spans just that little bit further than you could usually attempt under your own steam.

For even longer journeys, **Electric Bicycle Network** has a handy map tool to find electric bike charging points in various areas around the UK.

8. Travel sustainably

Electric bikes not only have less-impact on your knees and thighs, they can also have less of an impact on the environment.

If sustainability is important to you an electric bike may be a perfect alternative to driving. As you charge the battery yourself, you have complete control on how eco-friendly your bicycle is. If you're electricity supplier is green then you are good to go!

9. Perfect for shopping (carry more cargo)

Cycling with a heavy load of groceries can be exhausting. With your panniers full you could be carrying quite a few extra kilograms of weight.

If you plan your weekly shop with an electric bike in mind you can cycle to the shops and use your battery power on the way back - it's more exercise than driving, so you can still earn yourself a few extra special shop-bought treats for the week.

10. Keeping pace with faster cyclists

Cycling can be a very social activity, and there are many who enjoy spending time with others whilst out on two wheels. If you are concerned that you

wouldn't be able to keep up but still want to enjoy time spent with friends or family on a bike ride then an electric bike can help you keep pace with others (and perhaps even go a little faster, if you're the competitive type!).

11. Cheaper to run than a car or motorbike or using public transport

Although an electric bike may be more expensive than a conventional push-bike, compared to running a car the costs are minimal. If you already own a car you will be very aware that it is not the cheapest form of transport and public transport can cost between 10p-30p per mile.

It only costs a few pence to fully charge the battery on an electric bike and depending on your bike and battery it could take you as far as 30-90 miles.

12. You can try before you buy

If you think an e-bike might be right for you there are many retailers that offer a "try before you buy" offer, so you have the opportunity to do exactly that before committing to buying the bike.

Many thanks to **Atmosphere Electric Bikes**, Bristol, for lending us a range of electric bikes to test and photograph for this article.

Read Clare's story to discover why she switched to commuting by electric bike

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