

A to B

Circular

Plot

Nearby

Walk in

Select a city...

from

eg SE1 7PB or London Eye

add via

+

to

direct

less busy

low pollution?

Go



- More about walking
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Walking for health

Walking to work

Walking to school

Facts and figures

Walk to School Week

Buying shoes for school

Walking with your children

Going green

How our children travel to school can be a hot topic for discussion. Commuters grumble about the increase in traffic during the hours of the "school run". Residents living near schools can find their neighbourhoods choked with traffic and noise at the beginning and end of the school day. And parents are deeply concerned about the safety of their children, as well as getting them to school and themselves to work on time.

Why walk to school? There are many benefits. Here are just some of them:

Benefits for your children

1. Fitness and health

Most of us are very aware that childhood obesity is rising fast – in 2008, 31% of children between the ages of 2 and 15 were overweight or obese. As you'll read in [Walking for Health](#), children need at least an hour of physical activity per day, and walking to school is a great way to get some of that exercise.

There are also concerns about the level of pollution that children are exposed to sitting inside cars in congested or slow moving traffic. When planning your walking journey to school, it may well be possible to find a route which is quiet or traffic-free, and walking through green spaces such as parks can make you feel calmer and happier.

2. Concentration at school

Evidence shows that children who are physically active on the way to school burn off some of their excess energy, and are more able to settle down and focus well in lessons.

3. Road safety skills

Good habits learned young are learned well. Teaching your child to walk safely to school will stand them in good stead for the rest of their life.

4. Socialising and independence

If your child joins a walking bus, or is old enough to walk to school with friends, they will have extra time in the day to build friendships, and feel comfortable around other people. And most teenagers, like all of us, need time to themselves – walking home can be a great time to think, relax, and mull over their day.



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Benefits for you

1. Fitness and health

If you walk with your child to school, you will also get fitter! If your child is old enough to walk fairly fast, you'll be adding to your daily total of physical activity. And because it's much easier to predict how long walking will take you, your journey to school is likely to be much less stressful than being at the mercy of traffic.

2. Cost

This one's easy... the amount you spend on petrol will go down!

3. Time

It may not be your first instinct, but walking to school might actually save you time. Here's how: Firstly, it could be that walking to school doesn't actually take you much longer than driving (when was the last time you timed each option?) If your school has a walking bus scheme, you might decide to walk along only some days of the week – leaving your child with other trusted parents on the other days, and saving yourself some precious minutes. If your child is older, and able to walk home by themselves or with friends, just think of all that time you won't need to spend waiting for them to dawdle out of the school gates!

Benefits for the environment and community

During term-time, one in five cars on the road at the peak travel time of 8.45 a.m. Are parents driving their children to school. By switching to walking, we can save huge amounts of CO₂, helping to prevent climate change, and reduce levels of air pollution which are a major cause of asthma.

For residents of local communities near schools, trying to get to work at this time can be a huge struggle, what with traffic congestion in small residential streets, and the general mayhem of parents parking up, dropping kids off and snatching quick conversations with friends at the school gate.

Making it easier and safer to walk to school

So there are huge benefits to walking to school, but of course it's not just a matter of making a simple switch from driving to walking. People have complicated lives, with children at different schools, jobs to get to, and other daily tasks to complete. Parents often have very real concerns about the safety of their children crossing roads, and 'stranger danger'.

Fortunately there is now much greater awareness of the need to make walking to school both easier and safer. A wide range of information is available, as well as many ideas and initiatives that have been tried and tested. Why not find out about some more about:

- Walking buses
- School travel plans
- Road safety training
- Safe routes to school
- Park and Stride
- Walk to School Week, and Walk to School Month
- Hi-visibility clothing

The knack is to find the combination that works best for you and your family.

You might also be interested in:

- [Walking to school facts and figures](#)
- [Buying shoes for school](#)

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School TravelWise

Walking Bus Guide

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