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**Cycling to work ‘cuts risk of heart disease and cancer by half’**

Fancy cutting the risk of developing heart disease and cancer by almost half? Then cycle to work.

Or at least that’s the advice new research is handing out today.

According to the new figures, adults who commute by bike are 45% less likely to get cancer.

Oh, and they’re 46% less susceptible to heart disease, too.

In fact, the risk of dying prematurely from any cause is 41% lower – so it’s probably time to dust off that old bike in the shed.

In the study, which was created by experts at the University of Glasgow, it was revealed that although walking to work is good for you, it surprisingly doesn’t offer the same benefits as taking a bike.

Mainly because people who prefer to stroll to work actually have to walk for two hours a week in total to see any health benefits at all, compared to a short bike ride.

Experts behind the research, which studied 264,337 people, are now calling for a ‘change’ in policy, such as building more cycle lanes, to prevent long-term illnesses.

Speaking about the study, which has been published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ), experts said the lower benefits seen for walking compared to cycling could be down to several factors.

Such as the fact cyclists covered longer distances in their commutes than the walkers, cycling is a higher intensity exercise and cyclists were generally more fit.

Dr Carlos Celis-Morales, from the University of Glasgow, said: ‘Walking to work was associated with lower risk of heart disease, but unlike cycling was not associated with a significantly lower risk of cancer or overall death.

‘This may be because walkers commuted shorter distances than cyclists, typically six miles per week, compared with 30 miles per week, and walking is generally a lower intensity of exercise than cycling.’

But if you don’t fancy cycling the whole way to work (because it would take forever), have no fear.

The study also found some health benefits if people cycled part of their journey and took public transport or drove the rest of the way. Result.

The people taking part in the research were aged 52 on average at the start of the study and were followed for five years.

Some 2,430 people died during the study period, with 496 deaths related to cardiovascular disease, which covers all diseases of the heart and circulation, and 1,126 deaths from cancer.

Overall, 3,748 people developed cancer over the five years, and 1,110 had an event related to cardiovascular disease, such as a heart attack or stroke.

Dr Jason Gill, from the institute of cardiovascular and medical sciences at Glasgow, said the Government needs to look at ways to make it easier for people to commute by bike, such as creating ‘cycle lanes, city bike hire, subsidised cycle purchase schemes and increasing provision for cycles on public transport’.

These would create ‘major opportunities for public health improvement,’ he added.