



CAPE
Canadian Association
of Physicians
for the Environment

Association Canadienne
des Médecins
pour l'Environnement
ACME

Patient Factsheet

Get Healthy & Fit: Use Public Transit

Not Enough Time to Exercise?

In our modern society, it can be difficult to be physically active on a regular basis. Many people have jobs that involve sitting for most of the day. Many are too busy to find time to get to a gym or engage in sports. By using public transit, you can build physical activity into your daily life. That is because most transit trips begin or end with walking or cycling.

Transit Use Increases Physical Activity

A Montreal study found that the average person takes about 2,500 steps for one round trip on public transit. A US study found that adults who use public transit walk an average of 19 minutes a day in the process of taking public transit, with nearly one third of them walking 30 minutes a day.



Transit Use Improves Health

By increasing your levels of physical activity, transit use can reduce your risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and some cancers. Studies have found that each hour of moderate or vigorous physical activity per week reduces the risk of premature death by 4% to 9%. Transit use can improve mental health as well because physical activity improves self-esteem, reduces stress, and enhances feelings of happiness and satisfaction.

Transit Use Controls Weight

Transit use can help you maintain your weight by making you more physically active. One study found that the risk of becoming obese was reduced by 4.8% for every additional kilometre people walked each day, while the risk of becoming obese increased by 6% for every hour people spent in a car each day.

Transit Use Saves Money

Driving a motor vehicle can be expensive when one considers the cost to drive, insure, fuel, and maintain a vehicle. Estimates suggest that it can cost about \$10,000 a year to own a car. Public transit is a low-cost way to travel.

Transit Is Safer Than Driving

Public transit is an extremely safe mode of travel. Transit users are 20 times less likely to be involved in a fatal vehicle-related collision than those who travel in cars. Public transit is a particularly good way to travel when heading to a party or bar for entertainment.



Transit Is Good for the Planet

Cars are one of the most important sources of air pollution and greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. On a per person basis, public transit produces fewer emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases than single person vehicles. By using public transit, we can reduce air pollution and slow climate change.

Transit Increases Access

Not everyone can drive. Not everyone has access to a car. In fact, estimates suggest that in a typical community, 20-40% of people do not drive due to age, ability, or income. An efficient transit system can provide you with greater access to jobs, schools, services, and recreational opportunities when a car is not available to you.

Transit Use Increases Sense of Community

When you use transit, you have more opportunities to interact with other people. This can give you a greater sense of community, making your community feel safer and more friendly.

Getting Started

Getting started is easy. Visit your community's transit website to find out about the transit routes available in your community. Consider the destinations you visit regularly such as school or work. Use a transit website or a mobile phone app to help select the best routes for your destinations.

