

Research Shows Cycling Is More Important For Reducing Carbon Emissions Than Electric Cars

With the ever-present threat of climate change, many people are constantly talking about the most important thing we can do to cut carbon emissions. New research shows that cycling could be 10 times more important than electric cars for reaching net-zero emissions cities.

In 2020, one in 50 new cars was fully electric, globally. Even if all new cars were electric, it would still take an estimated 15-20 years to replace the world's cars running on fossil fuels.

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The emissions savings from switching to zero-carbon alternatives isn't enough to make the difference we need in the time we have left to spare. Not to mention, electric cars aren't completely emissions-free. The materials for the batteries, manufacturing, and the electricity used to run them all produce emissions.

Active traveling on the other-hand (walking and biking) is cheaper and better for both you and the environment. Research has shown that those who walk or cycle have lower carbon footprints than those who don't even if they just walking and biking on top of motorized travel.

Researchers observed 4,000 people in London, Antwerp, Barcelona, Vienna, Orebro, Rome, and Zurich over a two-year period. Over the two years, participants logged a total of 10,00 travel diary entries documenting all the trips they make

each day.

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We also estimate that urban residents who switched from driving to cycling for just one trip per day reduced their carbon footprint by about half a tonne of CO₂ over the course of a year, and save the equivalent emissions of a one-way flight from London to New York. If just one in five urban residents permanently changed their travel behavior in this way over the next few years, we estimate it would cut emissions from all car travel in Europe by about 8%.

Cycling is ten times more important than electric cars for reaching net-zero cities

People who cycled on a daily basis had 84% lower carbon emissions from their daily travel than those who didn't. Additionally, if the average person switched from a car to a bike just one day a week, they cut their emissions by a carbon footprint of 3.2kg of CO₂. Research showed that emissions from cycling can be 30 times lower than a fossil fuel car, and 10 times lower than an electric car.