







**SPARC**

Push Play is a nationwide SPARC campaign to get more people more active more often. The campaign aims to increase awareness about the benefits of regular, moderate, physical activity – and how easy it is to get active.

Push Play is based on the fact that even small amounts of activity give health benefits. The National Health Committee recommends just 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week.

**Push Play says**

-  physical activity is fun
-  it is easy to be active
-  physical activity is good for everyone
-  it is never too late to start being active
-  any activity is better than none
-  it doesn't have to be hard to be good for you

SPARC (Sport & Recreation NZ) is the public funding agency that encourages New Zealanders to enjoy healthy active lifestyles.

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For more information about activities in your area phone

0800 **ACTIVE** 0800 **22 84 83**

[www.pushplay.org.nz](http://www.pushplay.org.nz)



Getting started  
on the active way  
to health

As a form of transportation, the bicycle is hard to beat. It's non-polluting, human powered and it takes up little space. Beyond simply getting from 'A' to 'B', cycling can be a wonderful leisure-time activity. Or ride a little harder and it'll offer an excellent workout.










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30 MINUTES  
A DAY  
PUSH  
PLAY

**Checklist**

-  **Tyres** in good condition and properly inflated
-  **Wheels** no broken spokes, clean rims
-  **Brakes** operational and braking effectively at whatever speed
-  **Chain & gears** properly adjusted, lubricated but clean, in good working order
-  **Handlebars\*** set correctly in relation to the seat
-  **Seat** horizontal and at the correct height
-  **Bearing sets** (in which the handlebars, axles and pedals turn) professionally lubed

It makes good sense to have your bicycle checked once a year by specialists for safety and road-readiness. Should you want to do minor repairs and maintenance yourself, check out courses available through schools, community colleges, and some bike shops.

**Reference**

The material in this brochure is drawn from the book Active Living: The Miracle Medicine for a Long and Healthy Life by Gordon W Stewart (1995).

## Get rolling

Whether you're into commuter, leisure or fitness riding, the following points can make it more effective.

### ▶ Bike Selection

Mountain bikes are particularly popular, but there are also road or racing bikes to choose from. If you're in the market for a new bicycle, pick one that suits both your wallet as well as your needs. The popular trend in bikes may not match your type of riding, so be sure to get a bike that is right for you.

### ▶ Setup

A good bicycle shop will help you get the right setup. The handlebars, seat and other parts can be adjusted to make your ride comfortable. Seat position is particularly important.

Make sure the seat is horizontal (to minimise stress on the lower back) and at a height that allows a slight bend in your knee when the leg is extended.

### ▶ Style

Sit so your weight is evenly distributed over the seat, handlebars and pedals. Pedal at a comfortable and steady speed, changing gears to adjust to hills, wind conditions and your level of fitness (and fatigue).

### ▶ Safety

Be aware. Be defensive. Be predictable. Be visible.

Night riding calls for lights, reflectors and bright clothing. Remember that road and traffic regulations apply to bicycles. And always wear a helmet (it's required by law)! Look for one with a seal of approval from the relevant Cycle Helmet Safety Standard. The helmet should have a hard shell and a foam liner, and feel snug and comfortable.

### ▶ Starting

If you're a real beginner, take it easy! Avoid big hills at first. Severe breathlessness or tired and sore legs means you're building up too quickly. Three or four rides a week - of 15 or 20 minutes each time - are enough to begin with.

## Moving On

Beyond fun rides with the family or short trips to the shops, a bicycle is great for commuting, fitness riding and touring.

With comfortable clothing and cycling shoes and gloves, you're ready for action.

### ▶ Commuting

In addition to providing health benefits, cycle commuting saves fuel and parking costs, and wear and tear on your car. If you have a considerable distance to travel, you could get a bike rack for the car and do a drive-ride combination. Look for quieter safer routes if traffic is a concern.

The bicycle offers big environmental benefits, especially when replacing short car trips.

### ▶ Fitness

If you want to ride for fitness, you'll need to ride further.

The best way to increase your distance is slowly, gradually, patiently. As in other sports, training plans can help you improve your technique.

But as you progress, don't lose sight of the simplicity and freedom of cycling. If you want to ride in the company of others, inquire at your local bike shop or sports trust about cycling clubs in your area.

The enthusiasm and energy of a group can add much to your riding experience.

### ▶ Touring

If you move on to touring, ease into it. Start with five kilometres for a while, then 10 and so on. It could be months before you're ready for the longer rides. Your legs need to grow 'cycling fit', and you have to get used to the bike seat for longer periods.

Take it a step at a time. Enjoy the outing and the day.

Several New Zealand companies arrange cycling tours of European countries - something to aim for!

