



The first prototype for a bicycle was developed by Baron Karl Von Drais in 1817. The “dandy-horse” featured two wooden wheels and a frame, with the rider propelling it by pushing off with their feet. With time, this revolutionary invention developed pedals, gears, chains and proper padding to ensure both safety and comfort during usage. I’m sure when Drais was manufacturing the Bicycle he had hoped it would take off, but I doubt he ever imagined it would become such an ordinary aspect of modern fitness. Millions of people use and rely on bicycles for maintaining optimal health and getting where they need to be when they need to get there. Bicycles are both an efficient means of transport and a way to ensure the body is in a good condition.

This Tuesday was World Bicycle Day - a day to celebrate our everyday instrument of sustainable transportation. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), safe infrastructure for walking and cycling is a pathway for greater health across the globe. For the poorest urban sector, who cannot afford private vehicles, walking and cycling provide a form of transportation while reducing the risks of heart disease, stroke, certain cancers and even death. These cost-efficient substitutions are helping to reduce emissions in areas where population growth is intense and air quality/road safety are poorer. The bicycle contributes to cleaner air and less congestion; making education, health care and other social services more accessible.



Article 24 - Health, Water, Food Environment, says that healthcare and the quality of health for children and young people should be as good as possible; leaving them both physically and mentally fulfilled. Governments have a duty to provide good quality healthcare, clean water, nutritious food, a clean environment and education on health and well-being so children can stay healthier. The aims of this article are to diminish infant mortality rates, ensure the global provision of medical assistance (with an emphasis on the development of primary healthcare), to combat disease and malnutrition and to advise families on the importance of sanitation, hygiene and preventing accidents.

Around a billion people use bicycles worldwide with over 50% of the population aware of how to ride a bike. Bicycles engage core muscle groups in the legs, core and back, contributing to increased strength and endurance. They help burn calories and positively impact the performance of the heart and the lungs. It's easier on the joints than high-impact exercise like running making it suitable for people with arthritis or joint pain. Cycling can lower cortisol levels and improve moods whilst also releasing endorphins that help to combat anxiety and depression. It's already been established that children in particular should be moving their bodies for around an hour per day, and cycling is a fun and functional way to do so.

As summer draws nearer, try to think of some ways in which you could stay fit during the break. This could be cycling as mentioned or some other way of movement like dance, running and walks, swimming, ice skating or even just stretching. Having a good state of health allows you to live a better quality life and can prevent numerous injuries and illnesses down the line. You can enjoy activities you might otherwise have been unable to do; having more energy and being better able to manage life's challenges. So, if you notice the sun is out or the air is particularly cool, use the opportunity to work those muscles and take steps towards a healthier life.

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