



## **I am a bicycle commuter.**

Every day, I ride my bike to work rather than taking the car. This means that I get to enjoy experiences that people who travel by car do not. I hear the dawn chorus rather than Chris Moyles; I can stop and enjoy the sunrise or a view without having to find a parking space and my view is 360 degrees, not just what I can see through the glass; I can talk to people I meet along the way rather than being isolated in my metal box; I see foxes, badgers and deer; I feel the seasons changing a day at a time.

I'm also fitter than I would be and I can eat whatever I like because I'm burning more than I chew. I save money on fuel, car tax, insurance etc.

I'm happy commuting by bike and if I'm honest, I don't really care how you commute. But people often feel the *need* to tell me why they don't ride their bike – it usually sounds like they're making excuses to themselves. They'll say:

**'The weather isn't very nice'** – What is so bad about the cold? What happens after you get wet? Being cold and wet halfway up Everest is a bad thing. Riding through your local streets with a grin on your face, they are not. Better, surely, to feel the cold and feel alive than the opposite? When you're halfway between your centrally heated home and a hot shower on a 20 minute bike ride, the weather is something to enjoy. You will get cold, you will get wet, and you will feel the sun's powerful heat and nature's almighty wind. Your actions will fly in the face of modern life and that is exactly what is so enjoyable. Withdrawal from the sterile world of modern life and enjoy a momentary reconnection with raw, with pure, with wild.

**'I live too far away'** – How about riding part of the way? Park up and walk or ride the rest of the way. That start point can get gradually further away if you want to build up to riding the whole way as your fitness improves.

**'I have to be smart for work. My clothes will get creased in a bike bag.'** - Drive to work once a week, drop off several days' worth of clean clothes at the office and take the dirty stuff home. If your bike commute is a short one,

simply wear your office clothes and appropriate biking shoes. Drivers may even be more careful if you're dressed like a lawyer.

**'It isn't safe – there are too many cars'** - The great thing about bike-commuting is, you don't have to take the busy streets! Liberate yourself from the bumper-to-bumper car-commuter blues. With a little planning, you can explore the matrix of nearby quiet streets or trails you never see just the usual busy route that you usually take.



And as for 'too many cars', I never quite get this. If everyone who thought 'there are too many cars' got out of their cars and onto their bikes, what do you think might happen?

**So, with the clocks having sprung forward, the weather improving by the day and the Leicester Shire Cycle Challenge rapidly approaching, maybe now is the time...**