



# Asset HealthTalk

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

Happy Mother's Day!

May 2015

## BIKE YOURSELF TO WORK AND WELLNESS

It's National Bike to Work month, and May 15 is Bike to Work day! The goal of these celebrations is to raise awareness and provide education for bike commuting. Many businesses host free breakfasts and other events for bike commuters. Check out The League of American Bicyclists' website to learn about events taking place near to you.

There are many benefits of biking to work – it saves you money on gas, car maintenance and parking fees; it's good for the environment; it helps you stay fit; it can save you time by avoiding traffic jams and reducing the need to go to the gym; and it can decrease stress by helping you unwind after work. Bike commuting isn't just for seasoned athletes; anyone can do it.

### BIKING SAFETY TIPS



- ➔ Follow the same traffic laws as drivers. Stop at four-way stops and red lights.
- ➔ Be predictable and use signals to let drivers know what you're doing.
- ➔ Bike on the correct side of the road with the flow of traffic.
- ➔ Keep an eye out for people opening doors from parked cars.
- ➔ If weather conditions are unsafe, don't ride.
- ➔ Don't assume drivers see you and be mindful that glare can blind motorists.
- ➔ Don't ride while using headphones.

### 10 STEPS FOR GETTING STARTED:

- 1 Start with a realistic distance. If your office is 15 miles away, you can drive the first 10 miles, perhaps to a carpooling parking lot, then bike the rest of the way.
- 2 Commit to biking to work one or two times a week. Just because you've decided to bike to work, doesn't mean you have to do it every day. And it's okay to be a fair-weather fan. If you only bike to work when the weather is nice, that's better than nothing.
- 3 Wear clothes you already have. There's no need to dress like you're going to participate in the Tour de France. However, if your commute is longer than 20 or 30 minutes, you may want to consider padded bike shorts or a padded seat.
- 4 Do a practice run before you actually commute to work. Ride at a relaxed pace to get an idea of how much time to allow yourself.
- 5 Find a route without a lot of traffic or that has designated bike lanes. Here are some great resources for selecting the best route:
  - ➔ Google's bike map directions
  - ➔ RidetheCity.com
  - ➔ TrailLink.com
- 6 Make sure your bike is a good fit for a comfortable and efficient ride. If your seat is too low, it can cause knee pain and make you work harder than necessary while pedaling.
- 7 Be prepared. Check the weather and get everything packed up the night before. Check your bike every weekend; examine the ABCs – air pressure (in the tires), brakes and chain.
- 8 Carry a cell phone in case of an emergency.
- 9 Bring a bike lock if you have to store your bike outside. A U-lock is a good option.
- 10 If you're inactive, check with your doctor before bike commuting.

### ANATOMY OF A BIKE COMMUTER

**Helmet** – A helmet is a must for preventing head injuries. A model with good ventilation can help reduce sweat.

**Glasses** – Glasses protect your eyes from bugs and debris from cars.

**Gloves** – Gloves reduce vibration in your hands while you ride and are critical if you fall.

**Panniers** – Backpacks can get uncomfortable during a long ride and can lead to a sweaty back. Instead, haul your stuff to work using panniers, which are bags that can be mounted on your bike.

**Lights** – Lights and reflective gear are crucial so that motorists can see you. You should have lights on the front and back of your bike.

**Fender** – A fender helps keep your clothes clean by protecting you from water and other elements splashing up from the road.



"Bike to Work: Tips for Your First Commute," Gale Bernhardt, active.com, Accessed April 5, 2015.

"7 Essential Bike Commuting Tips," Susi Wunsch, bicycling.com, June 14, 2013.  
bikeleague.org



Do you have an old mason jar lying around the house? Well, then you have yourself a garden. You can easily grow your own sprouts with some seeds, a mason jar and some cheesecloth. It's a great way to infuse your diet with nutrients and save money. Sprouts that may cost \$4 in the store, cost only pennies when you grow your own. There are a variety of sprouts you can choose from – lentil, pea, sunflower, alfalfa and more!

#### Here's how:

1. Get a clean mason jar and add about two tablespoons of seeds. Cover it with a piece of cheesecloth and a rubber band.
2. Soak the seeds overnight in a few inches of filtered water then drain the water.
3. A couple times a day, rinse and drain the seeds by pouring and thoroughly emptying the water through the cheesecloth.
4. In three to seven days, you have yourself a jar full of sprouts.

Sprouts are a great addition to salads, soup and sandwiches. You should use your sprouts as soon as they're ready; however, they can keep in your fridge up to a week. In last month's issue of *Asset Health Talk* you learned about nutrient-dense microgreens. You can also grow microgreens in mason jars; they require some soil, seed beds and a little more time.

"How to Grow Sprouts in a Jar," Colleen Vanderlinden, [organicgardening.about.com](http://organicgardening.about.com), Accessed April 5, 2015



## Are *Cooking Shows*, *Pinterest* Hazardous to Your Health?

According to a study in *Appetite*, women who watched cooking shows on TV and regularly made the recipes they saw, referred to as "doers," averaged a higher body mass index (BMI) than "viewers," those who watched the shows and did not make the recipes. Additionally, *Smithsonian* reports that those who use social media, such as Pinterest, to discover new recipes are also linked to a higher BMI. It turns out that when people regularly watch cooking TV shows or browse these sites, they may be under the impression that it's the norm to incorporate such rich meals into everyday dining.

So what's the takeaway? It isn't that you should stop cooking at home. You simply have to use your judgment to select healthy recipes or revamp existing ones.

### Here are some *simple tips* for lightening up recipes:

- Replace at least half of the fat, e.g., butter or oil, with healthier alternatives, such as unsweetened applesauce or prune puree.
- Reduce the amount of sugar in the recipe by one-third or one-half.
- Reduce or eliminate the salt and cheese.
- Use whole-wheat pastas and breads.
- Use lean cuts of meat and/or scale back on the meat and substitute it with more veggies.
- Cut back on high-fat and high-calorie toppings and condiments.
- Change the cooking method. Use healthier methods like broiling, grilling or steaming instead of frying foods.
- Use whole-wheat flour in baked goods.

As you experiment with your recipes, take note of the alterations you made – what you did and did not like. It may take time to get it right, but it's worth it – *for your health*.

"Cooking shows and Pinterest are making us fat," Arden Dier, [usatoday.com](http://usatoday.com), March 19, 2015.

"Recipe makeovers: 5 ways to create healthy recipes," Mayo Clinic Staff, [mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org), Feb. 20, 2014.

## Don't *Sweat* the Commute

Perhaps the most common barrier to bike commuting is that people don't want to show up to work sweaty. Don't let this stop you. With a little preparation, you can feel energized from your ride and fresh for the day.

First of all, don't bike in your work clothes. Rather, pack them in your panniers or choose to drive to the office on Monday and bring all your work clothes for the week. While commuting, wear comfortable, wicking layers. Take it easy on your ride to reduce sweating and allow enough time to cool down once you

arrive at the office. If possible, shift your work day so that you're commuting earlier when it's cooler. Another option is to take public transportation to work and bike home.

Freshen up once you get to work, and keep your supplies at the office so you're not hauling them back and forth. Kit essentials include a sports towel, moist wipes, deodorant and a comb. You can leave work shoes at the office and, if you wear makeup, it's a good idea to skip it in the morning and apply it once you arrive at work.

