

Encourage wellbeing through healthy, active lifestyles

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

According to the World Health Organisation, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not just the absence of disease or infirmity." There are factual links between regular exercise and good physical and mental health.

Regular physical activity helps prevent and manage common conditions and diseases such as: coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, some cancers, overweight and high blood pressure.

A walk in the country is known to lift the spirits but a walk along a town street which has variety, some greenery, interesting things to do and people to meet also has mental health benefits.



Walking can be fun as well as healthy. Walk to School Week is organised by Living Streets

WALKING EVERY DAY

Walking is good for our heart and lungs. It improves cardiovascular fitness. Most of the work is done by the muscles of the lower body, and it's a weight-bearing activity, so it can improve bone density. It's also low impact, so it won't strain our joints.

Walking 10,000 steps a day, which is equivalent to about five miles, can give us a healthy heart and reduce body fat. Most people manage 4,500 steps.

People walk more when they feel safe in their neighbourhood and when it is well maintained and lively, and when they have somewhere to walk to. Rural areas need to be walker friendly too.

Investing in everyday walking environments, including ordinary streets, can reduce the significant societal and economic cost related to poor health.



People like to walk. Robert Goodwill (right) the Transport Minister in Walk to Work Week 2014

AN INTERESTING WALK

Streets that are welcoming and interesting encourage more people to walk. In London, people usually go by tube from St Pancras station to Trafalgar Square. But it is more pleasant and often quicker to walk.

From St Pancras to the steps of St Martin in the Fields at Trafalgar Square takes about 25 minutes to walk compared with 27 minutes by underground, if a ticket is already bought and the wait for trains is 3 minutes. The total number of steps is 2,500, a quarter of the total daily number recommended.

The route is varied and interesting. It takes in well known sights, open spaces, active street frontages of shops and places where people come together, as well as paths and connections to other streets and alternative interesting routes.

The map shows a route starting at St Pancras International Station and ending at Trafalgar Square. The route passes through Judd Street, Marchmont Street, Russell Square, the British Museum, Monmouth Street, and Seven Dials.

The four inset photos are:

- NATIONAL ICON:** A photo of the Big Ben clock tower.
- LOCAL BARGAINS:** A photo of a person browsing through a market stall.
- GREEN SPACE:** A photo of two people sitting on the grass in a park.
- SENSE OF ARRIVAL:** A photo of a busy city square with many people.

The interesting walking and cycle route from St Pancras to Trafalgar Square