

ACU GREEN COMMUTING GUIDE

Introduction

Greening your travel to and from Uni is one of the smartest ways to cut your personal environmental impact. It also has the potential to boost your health and wellbeing and to cut your travel costs, too.

This guide will help you with ideas and information about how you can commute to Uni in ways that are more sustainable than commuting as the lone occupant of a car – which is the least sustainable travel mode. Inside this guide, therefore, you'll find information on walking, cycling and public transport.



Of course, for many ACU students and staff, it's often necessary to travel alone by car to campus. The purpose of this guide is encourage those students and staff to change their travel mode some of the time, because every little bit helps. And when many people take even just a small action, the combined impact can be enormous.

Walk to Campus

There are many benefits to walking and they're available the moment you choose to get up and go under your own locomotion.

Why walk?

Walking is an excellent weight-bearing exercise that can increase your cardiovascular and pulmonary fitness, reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke, strengthen bones and muscles, reduce fat and help manage hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol.

For many people, a walk can help them to relax and prepare for or unwind from a day studying or working – and that's just the tip of the mountain of possible mental health benefits of walking. Research indicates that 30 minutes of walking three times per week is as effective as traditional approaches such as medication and psychotherapy for the treatment of depression and some anxieties.

Getting going:

Despite its benefits, walking is often the last option many of us consider as a way to get to and from Uni because we're so used to the alternatives. So consider these tips to get you on your feet, and underway:

1. **Plan your route and the time it takes:** know your limits and know your way and you'll arrive at Uni on time. To begin, give yourself plenty of time to complete the walk. If you find yourself racing the clock and breaking into a harried-commuter shuffle you'll get back on that bus tomorrow. Use an online map service like Google Maps or Apple Maps to help plan your route.
2. **Walk only some of the way:** park a long distance from Uni or get off your bus, train or tram a few blocks from your usual last-stop and walk the rest of the way. Again, plan your route and your timings.
3. **Be present:** enjoy the walk! It's slow, so take advantage of that and notice things, or daydream, or listen to music or a podcast. And make sure to smugly watch the car-commuters rant and toot and burn fuel going nowhere while you burn calories.

Cycle to Campus

Riding to Uni is cheap, quick and great for your fitness and our campuses frequently add more and more facilities to make riding to Uni a practical option for many students and staff, year-round.

Why ride?

Cycling is an excellent form of aerobic exercise, so your daily bike commute will strengthen your heart and lungs, and by raising your metabolic rate and building muscle, it will help control levels of body fat provided you control your diet. Cycling to Uni is also cheaper day-to-day than public transport and driving (i.e. no fuel, parking or ticket costs), so it's good for your wallet, too.

And research indicates that that moderate to vigorous activity - the kind that you are likely to experience in a ride to work - is associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety as well as higher levels of psychological well-being.

Getting going:

1. **Practice:** if you haven't ridden a bike for a while, then we guarantee that although you will remember how, your body will be unprepared for the stresses of cycling. There's a simple solution, though, and that's to get out there and practice riding. A good tip is to take weekend rides of increasing distances, and then progress to occasional rides to work, with alternate days on public transport or walking, etc, to recover.
2. **Be safe:** cycling is a very safe activity but you must prioritise safety to make it so. Safe cycling requires a helmet and the right safety equipment and clothes, knowing your bike route, [knowing the rules for cyclists](#) and [being aware of the risks](#) so you can minimise or avoid them.
3. **Establish the habit before you purchase a new bike:** when it comes to commuting, there's no need for a carbon-fibre this or fusion-powered that. A bike in good mechanical condition is enough. Your one goal is to get to Uni, not win the Tour de Suburbs. So break out your old bike, get it serviced at your local bike shop, and take those practice rides on the weekend.
4. **Carry a spare tyre-tube and know how to change a tyre:** [If you can do this](#), you can ride with a lot more confidence than otherwise. To push a bike with a flat tyre for several kilometres will make even a bus ride sound like fun. This catastrophe is entirely avoidable with preparation.
5. **Plan your arrival on campus:** See your Campus's Amenity Map to learn where on campus you can lock up your bike, find a locker or take a shower at the end of your active-transport trip.

Ballarat	Brisbane	Canberra
Melbourne	North Sydney	Strathfield

And see our top tips for safe bike commuting on the next page -

Top Tips for Safe Bike Commuting

1. **Wear a helmet:** make sure it's correctly fitted and meets the Australian Standard. The helmet must be firm and comfortable and not tilt in any direction and it must have a sticker showing that it is safety-approved and meets the Australian standard (known as AS/NZS2063).
2. **Check your air, brakes, and chain before every ride:**
 - Air:** inflate the tyres to the pressure shown on the side of the tyre
 - Brakes:** inspect the brake pads for wear. Replace the pads if they've lost more than half their mass, and make sure the pads don't rub the tyre.
 - Chain:** make sure it's rust-free and clean.
3. **Prepare for repairs enroute:** learn where on your journey you can inflate your tyres and carry a pump and a tyre-patch kit.
4. **Use lights during the day.** Do this to increase the chance that a vehicle driver will see you. Remember that drivers are often distracted by passengers, music, GPS, other traffic, smart phones and other vehicles, so cyclists need to break through that distraction.
5. **Ride to be seen:** never assume that vehicle driver can see you, so ride in a prominent position on the road (if you hug the curb or parked cars you may be lost to drivers' vision), and you'll be vulnerable the opening doors of parked cars. And wear bright clothing.
6. **Practice your journey to Campus:** ride the route outside of peak hour first, and take close note of the busiest intersections (the site of most bike crashes), driveways and the state of the road.
7. **Plan your cycling route:** Online map service like Google Maps or Apple Maps can help you to plan a number of routes and calculate the approximate duration of your journey.
8. **Obey traffic signals:** if you're on a bike, you're traffic. Act like it: stop for stop-lights, give-way to pedestrians (even when there are no pedestrian lights or crossings) and indicate before you turn.
9. **Don't use a mobile phone:** don't hold it in your hand, don't send a text, don't take a photo and don't make a phone call. If you're using the GPS function, secure the phone to the bike.
10. **Keep no secrets!:** that is, make sure that you inform other road users, whether they are drivers, cyclists or pedestrians, of your intentions by using hand signals when turning or stopping.

Catch Public Transport to Campus

Public transport is a practical, sustainable option for most of us and while some ACU campuses have oodles of public transport links and other campuses have only a few, it's a good option for many of us at least some of the time.

Why catch public transport?

There are many benefits to public transport. These include the ability to read or study on the journey, or simply relax, which is near-impossible in any amount of road traffic when you drive. Taking public transport generally is cheaper than driving, especially when the full on-road costs of registration, insurance and servicing are added to the costs of fuel and parking (including fines!). There's even research to show that people who swap their car for public transport will lose up to several kilograms during the first year of the change.

Getting going

Plan the fundamentals of your PT journey: research shows that people prefer to drive if they perceive public transport as difficult. So plan your journey times, ticketing and routes. This will make you feel much more in control, and ensure you take the most direct journey.

Plan to enjoy the journey: plan what you will do on your PT journey, whether that's to take a book, write a journal, complete some work or study, or just roam around online. If you fail to prepare for your journey, you may find yourself with nothing to do but contemplate the fashion choices of your fellow commuters or count, say, the number of yellow cars that you pass. Neither counts as fun.

The benefits of those two tips are especially important for people who switch from their car to using public transport. This is because they are likely to perceive that public transport is a more complicated and a less entertaining way to commute than their car – so planning for a smooth, enjoyable journey is vital for these people to build a public transport habit.

More information:

See the Campus Public Transport pages for lots of detailed information on public transport options to get to your campus:

[Ballarat](#)
[Melbourne](#)

| [Brisbane](#)
[North Sydney](#)

| [Canberra](#)
[Strathfield](#)