



## Sustaining Dunbar

### Travel Advice Factsheet 7 -Walking

#### Why Walk?

About a third of all journeys we make are less than a mile, which most people can easily walk in 15-20 minutes. Walking is ideally suited to short local trips such as dropping the kids off at school, going to the shops, taking the dog out. It is a pleasurable way to get around; you can listen to your music, look at scenery and wildlife and chat with friends and people you meet along the way. Places feel more vibrant, safe and pleasant when there are lots of people out walking.



#### Walking with Children

Walking to school with your children gives everyone an opportunity to chat without other distractions. By teaching your children at an early age that walking is a good way to get around, you won't have to ferry them everywhere by car, you'll help them to gain independence and road safety skills that will stay with them for the rest of their lives and start them off with a good level of physical activity.

#### Environmental Benefits

By swapping your car for your feet and walking on shorter journeys, you will be doing your bit for the environment. Did you know that:-

- Walking instead of using a car for a 1 mile journey will save CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent to that of boiling 20 kettles.
- Local shops are usually within easy distance to walk. By using them we help to support local businesses and save food miles.

#### Health

Walking is the most widely available form of physical activity; it is cheap, can easily be incorporated into your daily routine and you can do it almost anywhere with just a comfy pair of shoes. Not only will you get physical activity, but walking will make you feel good too.

It has been shown that just 30 minutes of walking each day will dramatically decrease your risk of developing diabetes, obesity, heart disease, stroke and some cancers. It reduces cholesterol and high blood pressure, strengthens your heart and lungs, bones, muscles and joints.

Walking burns just as many calories as jogging over the same distance, but won't cause stresses and strains on your knees. As you get older, regular walking will help to maintain flexibility in your joints and co-ordination, which in later life can help you to avoid falls and fractures. For women, walking can help to preserve bone density, protecting against osteoporosis and the development of arthritis.



Furthermore, people who are physically active have enhanced moods, higher self esteem, greater confidence and better cognitive functioning compared to people who are less physically fit or sedentary. Walking is associated with a reduced risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, particularly among women. Brisk walking has been shown to be effective in the treatment of depressions and anxiety.

It is never too late to increase your level of physical activity. Becoming physically active after the age of 40 is associated with a 55% reduction in the risk of developing heart disease. Just making a small increase in activity levels can make a big difference to your overall physical well-being<sup>1</sup>.

## **Recreational Walking**

Dunbar and the surrounding areas offer a great variety of landscapes for walking, with the Lammermuir Hills to the south, beaches and cliffs on the coast and farmland in between. A local walk will often include river valleys, woodlands, bays, historic sites and stunning views. The John Muir Way covers the whole length of the East Lothian coast, and can easily be walked in short sections. There are many leaflets highlighting coastal walks, walks around towns and specialist interest walks, these are available from the tourist information office at the John Muir Birthplace in Dunbar, local libraries or to download, details below. Sustaining Dunbar also has a small selection available at 16 West Port, Dunbar, including street maps of Dunbar and East Linton, which are available free of charge.

## **Walking Groups**

If you would like to walk more for exercise or pleasure but need the motivation of a regular group, Walkin' East Lothian could be the answer. Walkin' East Lothian is a Community Wellbeing project which aims to encourage more people to walk using recognised, established pathways. There are walks to suit most abilities, and you can walk at a pace which suits you as there are leaders at the front and back of the group. The walks are social events which usually finish off with a cup of tea, and are free of charge. The current programme includes local town walks, longer walks and information packs for independent walkers. For more information about the project, which runs a Dunbar Group, please phone David Jeffrey, Recreation Officer, East Lothian Council on 01620 827608.



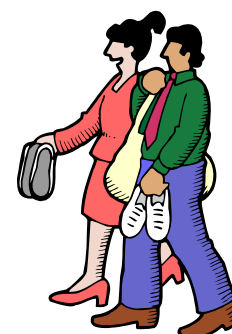
## **Walking for Health**

If you would like to walk to get fitter, a pedometer is recommended. This is a small, cheap device, costing around £5 to £20, which you clip onto your clothing. It counts the number of steps you take during the day and is a very useful tool in helping you to increase your physical activity. On average, people take around 2,000 to 5,000 steps each day in the course of their normal activities. It is generally recommended that you should aim to do an extra 3,000 steps above your normal everyday level to benefit your health, which is equivalent to 30 minutes exercise. If you haven't exercised for a while, start gradually with an extra 1000 steps and increase weekly.

## **Fitting Walking into Daily Life**

Walking can easily be incorporated into daily life without much effort:-

- Walk to the local shops or letter box, and leave the car at home for short journeys.
- Take the stairs instead of the lift at work.
- Use your lunch break to take a walk, walk with a workmate to encourage each other and have a chat.
- Walk the children to school.
- Walk to relax and unwind, take a stroll in the park or to the beach. Use the natural amenities in Dunbar!



<sup>1</sup> Health facts and figures from Sustrans, Active Travel

## Local Sources of Information

The John Muir Birthplace provides tourist information for Dunbar and the surrounding areas. They have a number of useful publications both free and for sale. There is a list of websites at the end of this factsheet, where you can download guides and leaflets. Sustaining Dunbar also has a range of maps and leaflets; you can contact us at 16, West Port, Dunbar.

## Neighbourhood Improvement Projects

If you would like to form a neighbourhood group to work towards improving your local area for residents and making it easier and more pleasant to walk and cycle, we have a fact sheet available outlining the options - Factsheet 11 - DIY Streets, or you can contact us on 866920

## Walking Leaflets

- **Safe Routes Around Dunbar Primary School** - Leaflet showing routes from all parts of town to get to both campuses of Dunbar Primary School. Includes code of conduct for shared use paths.
- **Dunbar and East Linton Maps** - Street plans of Dunbar and East Linton with information about paths and local public transport.
- **Walks around Dunbar** - Includes a street map of Dunbar and places of interest in the town as well as a map showing longer distance walking routes around the Dunbar area. Download from [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk).
- **Hill Tracks in the Lammermuirs** - Longer walks (10 miles+) in the Lammermuirs, including the Herring Road and the Southern Upland Way. Download from [www.walkinginthehighlands.co.uk](http://www.walkinginthehighlands.co.uk).
- **Barns Ness Geological Walk** - Leaflet describing the geology, including fossils, you can see on a walk round Barns Ness.
- **The John Muir Way** - One of Scotland's Great Trails, this 107 mile route runs from Dunbar to Helensburgh. [www.johnmuirway.org](http://www.johnmuirway.org)
- **Programme of Guided Hikes** - Dates and descriptions of ranger-led walks from East Lothian Council. Places must be booked, and the cost is £4. Tel: 01620 827421 or [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/rangerevents](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/rangerevents) for further details.
- **Heritage Explorer I and II Maps** - covering Standing Stones, Forts and Castles, and Industry, religion and War in East Lothian respectively. Download from [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk)
- **Lochend Woods Tree Quest** - Gentle woodland trail, ideal for all ages. Available from Sustaining Dunbar, or download at [www.dunbarwoods.org](http://www.dunbarwoods.org).
- **Architectural Assets & Hidden History** - 3.5 mile walk or cycle around Dunbar exploring Dunbar's architectural heritage. Available from Sustaining Dunbar or download at [www.sustainingdunbar.org](http://www.sustainingdunbar.org).



## Websites

[www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk) - lots of maps of local area to download, including special interest walks.  
[www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com) - information about the Scottish outdoor access code.  
[www.dunbar.org.uk](http://www.dunbar.org.uk) - local information about Dunbar  
[www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com) - information about public transport  
[www.pathsforall.org.uk](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk) - how you can get involved with helping to improve local paths.  
[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) - information about walking, and the DIY Streets scheme to help community groups improve their neighbourhoods  
[www.visiteastlothian.org/activities-walking.asp](http://www.visiteastlothian.org/activities-walking.asp) - information about walking groups, maps to download.  
[www.livingstreets.org.uk](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk) - (formerly the Pedestrians Association) - information about local and national walking campaigns, how you can get involved and their Reclaim Your Streets project to help local community groups improve their neighbourhoods.