

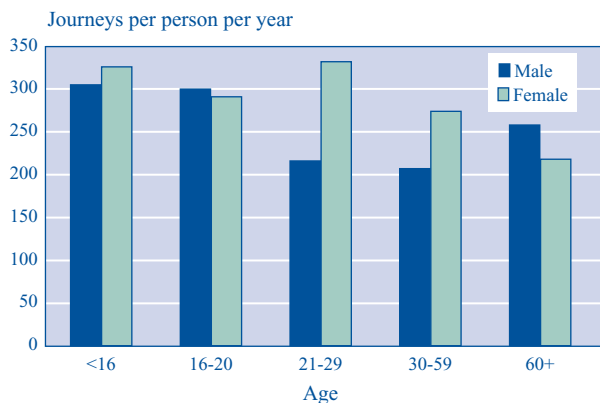
Recent trends in walking

- The proportion of trips made on foot has fallen from 30% in 1989/1991 to 26% in 1999/2001. However, the proportion of trips under a mile made on foot remained stable at around 80%.
- The total distance walked (including walks made as part of a trip with another main mode) fell by a fifth from 237 miles per person per year in 1989/91 to 189 miles in 1999/2001, which was less than 3% of the total distance travelled.
- In addition to 263 trips a year mainly on foot, the average person walked part of 78 trips for which the longest part was by another mode of transport. 42% of these were part of a trip made mainly by bus.

Who walks the most?

- Women walked more than men (Chart 1), making 278 trips per person overall, compared with 246 trips for men.

Chart 1: Walk trips by age and sex 1999/2001



- In every age-group under 60 years old, except for 16-20 year olds, women made more walk trips than men, although the position was reversed for those over 60. The greatest difference was for those aged 21-29, where women made a quarter more walk trips than men.
- Men and women walked similar distances in total, as the average walk length was slightly further for men.

Trip length

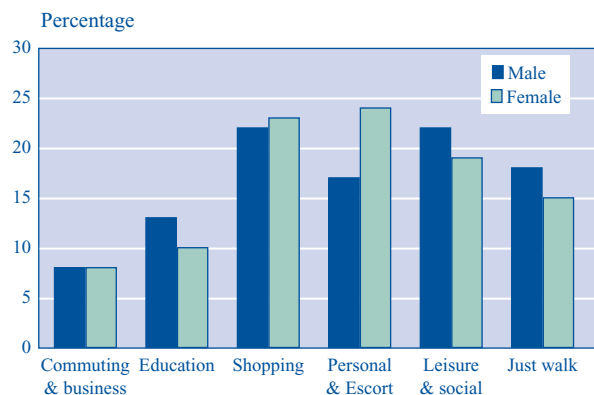
- Almost four out of five (77%) walk trips were under a mile, and only 5% were two miles or above in length.
- The average length of a walk trip in 1999/2001 was 0.6 miles, the same as it was in 1989/1991.

Note: Unless otherwise stated the figures quoted are an average of the years 1999-2001, and are derived from the National Travel Survey for Great Britain which is the main source of information on walking. Walking excludes walks under 50 yards, walking off the public highway, walking for payment (e.g. a postman), walking abroad and children's play.

Why do people walk?

- The three main reasons for a walk trip were to go shopping (23% of walk trips), for other personal business or escort purposes (21%), and for leisure or social purposes (20%) (Chart 2). In addition, 16% of walk trips were 'just walk', including walking the dog and jogging..

Chart 2: Walk trips by sex and purpose: 1999/2001



- The proportion of trips which were for personal business and escort (ie accompanying another person) was higher for women than men (24% compared with 17%), mainly because of the larger number of trips women made to escort children to school.

Walking to school

- 54% of trips made by primary school children (aged 5-10) to or from school were on foot, compared with 43% of school trips by secondary school children (aged 11-16). Primary school children are more likely to live within walking distance of their schools: four in five (79%) lived within 2 miles, compared with slightly over a half (54%) of secondary pupils.
- For school trips under a mile, 84% of trips were on foot for primary age children, and 92% for secondary age children.

Walking to work

- The Labour Force Survey asks questions on how people usually travel to work. In autumn 2001, 2.6 million people walked to work, 10.8% of the total number in employment.
- Although the percentage of workers walking to work has steadily declined since the 1991 Census when 13% walked to work, the total workforce has increased, so the actual number of people walking has remained fairly constant.
- There was a large difference between men and women with twice as many (15.0%) women walking to work than men (7.3%).

Car availability and walking

- Adults (aged 17 and over) living in households without a car walked much further on average than those living in households with a car: 265 miles compared with 163 miles.
- In car-owning households, main drivers walked 141 miles a year on average, compared with 207 miles for adult non-drivers. Men who were the main driver of a company car walked only 138 miles on average.
- In car owning households, children aged 16 and under walked 193 miles a year on average, compared with 266 miles for those in households without a car.

Walking for leisure

- The NTS only covers walking on the public highway but the 1996 General Household Survey (GHS) questions on leisure activity included all walking (results from the 2002 survey will be available in 2004). In 1996 walking was the most popular sporting or leisure activity. 45 per cent of adults reported walks of two miles or more in the previous four weeks, and 68 per cent in the previous 12 months. Both these rates had increased since 1993.
- More men walked for leisure than women (49% in the last 4 weeks compared with 41%).

Urban and rural variations

- Walking accounted for 351 trips a year for a resident of inner London, nearly two in five of all trips (37%). By contrast those living in rural areas made 204 walk trips on average, only 20% of all trips.

- Outside inner London, there was little difference between urban areas, with approximately 26% of all trips being made on foot.
- In London and Metropolitan built-up areas, 99% of households were within 13 minutes walk of a bus stop with a service at least once an hour. This percentage decreased as the size of a town decreased, to just 50% in rural areas.

Difficulties with walking

- The National Travel Survey asks whether respondents have a physical disability or long standing health problem that makes it difficult for them to go out on foot.
- 11% of males and 13% of females had some sort of difficulty walking, but the majority of these were still able to go out on their own. About 1 in 30 people (4%) either needed help when walking outside the home, or were not able to walk on their own at all.
- Not surprisingly, problems increased dramatically for the elderly, and for each age group over 70, women were more likely to have walking difficulties than men.
- For those aged 85 or more, 79% of women had difficulties compared with 57% of men. About 13% in this age group could not walk outside at all, but a fifth of these had the use of a wheelchair.

Technical note

In order to reduce the burden on the public the National Travel Survey (NTS) only asks for walks of between 50 yards and 1 mile to be recorded on the seventh day of the diary, and these are then grossed up by a factor of 7. In this factsheet the basic unit to calculate a trip or trip is a on-way course of travel with one main purpose. Walk trips are referred to as a trip where walk was the main mode (i.e. longest by distance). Trips can consist of more than one stage and distances travelled quoted above include walks made as part of any trip.

The text and charts are available from the DfT website at www.transtat.dft.gov.uk/personal. Other NTS publications include 12 further factsheets on a number of topics; the main results of the NTS in "National Travel Survey: Update 1999/2001" and in "Focus on Personal Travel: 2001 Edition" (1998/2000 data) and the Technical Report. These are also all available from the website. For further information, copies of the factsheets, Bulletin and any queries please contact national.travelsurvey@dft.gov.uk or telephone on 020 7944 3097.