

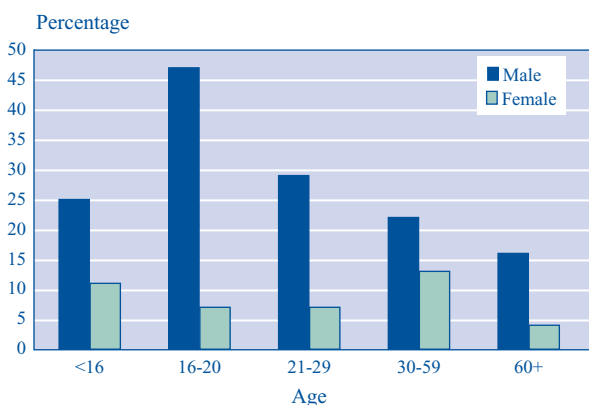
Recent trends in cycling

- Over the last decade the number of stages made by bicycle has fallen by a quarter, from 21 stages per person per year in 1989/91 to 16 in 1999/2001. About 1% of all stages are by bicycle.
- The total distance cycled fell by less, from 41 miles per person per year in 1989/91 to 39 miles in 1999/2001. Cycling now accounts for just 0.6% of the total distance travelled.
- In 1999/2001, 19% of males and 10% of females in the National Travel Survey sample reported that they used a bicycle at least once a week. This is an increase from the 1989/91 levels of 15% and 9%, for males and females respectively.

Who cycles the most?

- Men cycled more than women (Chart 1), making 23 stages per person per year overall compared with just 9 stages for women in 1999/2001.
- Males in the 16-20 age group made almost twice as many stages by cycle per year than other men.
- There were less variations across age groups for women, but those aged 30-59 cycled the most with 13 stages per woman per year.

Chart 1: Cycle stages by age and sex: 1999/2001



Stage length

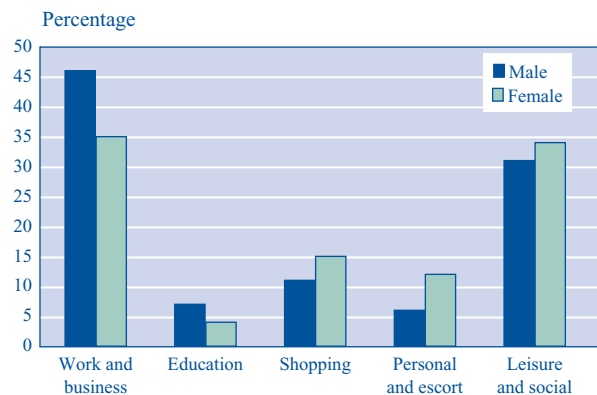
- Almost a quarter of cycling stages (23%) were under a mile in length, and 10% were five miles or over in length.
- The average length of a cycle stage in 1999/2001 was 2.4 miles. This is a 26% increase from 1989/91 when the average was 1.9 miles.

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 cycling. A trip consists of one or more stages. A new stage is defined when there is a change in the form of transport or when there is a change of vehicle requiring a separate ticket.

Why do people cycle?

- The three main reasons for a cycling stage were for work and business (42% of cycling stages), for leisure or social purposes (32%), and for shopping (12%) (Chart 2).

Chart 2: Cycle stages by sex and purpose: 1999/2001



- The purpose of making a cycle trip varied between the sexes. 15% of cycle stages made by women were to go shopping, compared with 11% for men. A greater percentage of cycle stages by males were for work and business (46% for men, 35% for women). Women were also twice as likely as men to make cycle stages for personal and escort purposes.

Cycling to school

- About 2% of secondary age pupils (11-16) cycled to school in 1999/2001, compared with 5% in 1989/91. The percentage of primary school children that cycle to school is negligible.
- The average length of a cycle trip to school in 1999/2001 was 1.5 miles. The average time taken for the trip was 16 minutes.

Cycling to work

- The Labour Force Survey (LFS) asks questions on how people usually travel to work. In autumn 2001, 741 thousand people cycled to work in GB, 3% of those in employment.
- The LFS also shows that cycle usage was lower in Wales and Scotland than in England.

- Census statistics show that, in Great Britain as a whole, the proportion of people cycling to work fell from 4.4% in 1971, to 3.7% in 1981 and 3.2% in 1991. Results from the 2001 Census will be available in 2003.
- This fall was much greater for women. In England and Wales for example, the proportion of women cycling fell from 3.6% in 1981 to 2.7% in 1991. For men, the equivalent decline was less, from 4.2% to 3.9%.

Car availability and cycling

- Adults (aged 17 and over) living in households without a car made more cycling stages on average (18 per year) than those living in households with a car (14 per year). They cycled further on average too: 46 miles per year compared with 40 miles.

Cycling for leisure

- The NTS only covers cycling on the public highway, but the 1996 General Household Survey (GHS) questions on leisure activity included all cycling (results from the 2002 survey will be available in 2004). In 1996, 11% of adults reported a bicycle ride in the previous four weeks, and 21% had cycled in the previous year. Both of these figures represent a large increase since 1987, when the equivalent rates were 8% and 15%.
- Men cycled for leisure more than women (15% in the last 4 weeks compared with 8% in 1996/98), and the 16-19 age group had more reported stages than for any other age group for both sexes.
- East Anglia had the highest rate of cycling for leisure (22%), with the lowest in Wales (7%).

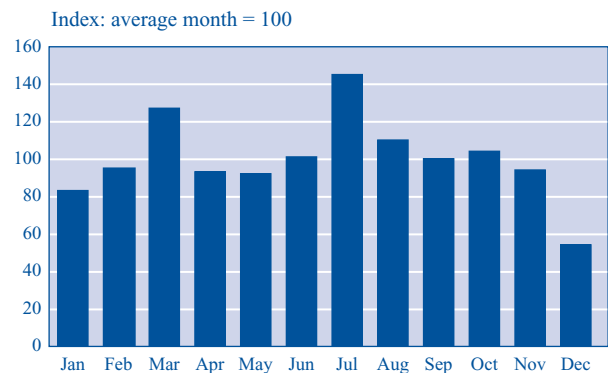
Cycle ownership by region

- Overall, about 42% of households in Great Britain owned a bicycle, compared with 36% in 1989/91.
- Households in the East of England, the South West and the South East were more likely to own a bicycle than in any other part of the country (at least 48% owned at least one bicycle in these regions).
- London households were the least likely to own a bicycle with only 32% of households owning at least one.

Cycle use by time of year

- Not surprisingly, the summer months were the most popular for people using their bicycles. For 1999/2001, 45% more stages were made during July than in an average month (Chart 3).

Chart 3: Cycling stages by month: 1992/2001



- Fewest cycling stages were recorded in the winter months of December and January.

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.