

# The Benefits of Cycling



*Cyclists on the City Island Esplanade.*

The bicycle is one of the most environmentally efficient modes of transportation. By using a renewable energy source, the human body, the bicycle, in contrast to the automobile, is non-polluting. The bicycle also uses much less space than the automobile, and is considerably more quiet than other modes of transportation. These benefits are especially attractive in New York City, as we struggle with noise and congestion issues, and are working to meet the federal mandates of the 1990 Clean Air Act.

The bicycle also has tremendous health benefits. Cycling is ranked among the top three exercises for improving cardiovascular fitness. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, the most effective activity regimens are moderate in intensity, individualized and incorporated into daily activity. Cycling to work, school or shopping as part of one's regular daily routine can be both a sustainable and time-efficient exercise regimen for maintaining acceptable levels of fitness.

Cycling can be informative and pleasurable. By traveling by bicycle, the rider becomes a part of the environment rather than isolated from it, getting to know different neighborhoods in the city and finding attractions that could be missed in an automobile.

The bicycle is also economically efficient. According to estimates by Transportation Alternatives, an advocacy organization devoted to environmentally-friendly transportation, bicycle riding costs the frequent cyclist only one-quarter as much as driving, assuming cyclists replace their bicycles every three years. Transportation Alternatives estimates that the annual savings would average \$1,100 per motorist.