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## 7 HEALTHY BENEFITS:

# BICYCLING

WHETHER YOU ENJOY RUSHING DOWN A STEEP MOUNTAIN trail, riding along country roads or commuting to work on two wheels, bicycling can help you reach the government's recommended 150 minutes a week of moderate exercise.

And since it's easy to learn—and hard to forget—this low-impact exercise is great for all ages. The best part is that the more miles you ride, the more you'll reap health benefits like the following.

### IMPROVES HEART HEALTH

"As a cardiovascular exercise it's excellent," says Bruce Drees, president of the Tidewater Bicycle Association. "I think it rates right up there with running and swimming." Because bicycling works the heart, blood vessels and lungs all at the same time, it also decreases your risk of stroke, high blood pressure and heart attack.

### GENTLE ON JOINTS

Unlike other forms of exercise, bicycling is low-impact so it will put less strain on your joints. That's why many runners make the switch to biking when their knees start to go. "Runners readily adapt to bicycling," says Drees, "because it is cardiovascular exercise, but it's less impact on the knees." Even older adults who have had knee or hip replacements often find bicycling easy on the joints.



### BURNS CALORIES

Bicycling is not only great for toning your legs, but it will also help you trim your waistline. With one hour of leisurely riding, a 160-pound person can burn almost 200 calories. You can burn even more by increasing your speed or tackling a few hills along the way. To maximize the weight loss benefits of bicycling, combine it with a healthy eating plan. 🍽️

### IMPROVES BALANCE & COORDINATION

Moving your feet and steering with your hands and body at the same time, will improve your coordination. And staying upright—on road or trail—can help you fine-tune your sense of balance.

### HELPS YOU LIVE LONGER

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, regular physical activity, like bicycling, can increase your chances of living longer, as well as reduce your risk of chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and some forms of cancer.

### STRENGTHENS MUSCLES

Bicycling will definitely tone your leg muscles—especially when climbing hills—but Drees says that the focus in biking is less on raw muscle power. "You really want to get into an aerobic zone where you're spinning [the pedals] faster," he says.

### BOOSTS MENTAL HEALTH

"Another advantage of bicycling is that it gets you outside, typically in the fresh air and sunshine," says Drees, and "that always is very helpful for your outlook and mental state." Research has shown that exercise combats depression, helps you sleep better and may even sharpen your thinking. Bicycling has all of that, plus a great view along the way.