

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Title	Attitudes towards Walking 2011		
Objective	Annual monitoring of Londoners' walking and attitudes towards it		
Date	March 2011	Agency:	SPA Future Thinking
Methodology	1,000 telephone interviews with a random selection of adult Londoners		

Abstract

Transport for London (TfL) aims to encourage more people to consider and undertake more journeys by foot in order to reduce pressure on the public transport network and to bring about public health benefits. The main factors Londoners say will encourage them to walk more are new or improved walking routes, knowing that walking was as quick as the bus for short journeys, and improve safety and security (eg better lighting or safer crossings). These have consistently been reported as the key elements over recent years, with no substantial change in walking patterns this year.

Key findings

Almost half of Londoners (46%) make a walking journey at least five times a week, and 85% do so at least once a week. In general Londoners' frequency of walking has changed little over the past few years, despite saying they are walking more, or that they are open to doing so.

Women, young people and those living in inner London continue to be the groups most likely to make frequent walking journeys. Women also tend to be most likely to be open to walking more, for example by alighting from a bus a couple of stops early.

The main reason Londoners say they make walking journeys is to gain the health and fitness benefits that it provides; however, the proportion saying that this motivates them to walk has been declining for the last two years and is now at 36%, down from 55% in 2009.

Of those making short regular journeys (to work, school or college, to get the groceries, or to take a child to school), at least half do so on foot (rising to 70% for taking a child to school locally). However, fewer than half of those who live near but don't currently walk say they would be prepared to consider making the journey by foot (decreasing to 32% for those making short trips for the groceries).

When asked, Londoners agree that a variety of changes could make them walk more – with the single largest one being new or improved pleasure walking routes (74% say this would encourage them to walk more). Three quarters (73%) also say that they would walk more if they knew that the journey would be quicker on foot than by an alternative mode.

Women, BAME Londoners and young people are generally more likely than other groups to agree that improvements to walking infrastructure would encourage them to walk more.

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