

# RESEARCH SUMMARY

<b>Title</b>	<b>Cycling tipping points</b>
<b>Objective</b>	Triggers, how new cyclists prepare themselves and how they overcome their barriers to start cycling
<b>Date</b>	April 2009
<b>Methodology</b>	Qualitative: 16 x 1 ½ hour depth interviews with people who have taken up cycling in the last 12 months. Sample covering a range of London locations, life stages, men/women, regular/occasional utility cyclists and a few leisure cyclists

## Key findings:

- Starting cycling is a very personal process, with a wide range of past and present emotional and behavioural experiences playing a role as catalysts. Therefore, there is no one solution that applies to all those considering (or on the tipping point of) cycling
- Cycling consideration intensifies through the accumulation of various primes, which can be anything from wanting to avoid public transport, to wanting to fit more exercise into your life, to wanting to bond with kids. These primes act as personal arguments that eventually build up a strong case to change behaviour, the nature and length of the process varying by individual
  - Individual primes are often perceptually counteracted by some powerful barriers during the consideration process. So, referencing specific drivers in isolation in comms could also lead to barriers surfacing
- Triggers for actually becoming a cyclist are often external environmental factors, such as moving house, changing job, shifting life stage, and especially peer pressure by close family/friends. TfL could tap into some of these key events (which can be quite common in Londoners' lives)
- Preparation tends to be more about 'gearing up' mentally than physical preparation steps, which are often minimal. People tend to find their own personal ways to break down the barriers to cycling, often by the act of cycling. So, encouraging people to simply give it a go could be more powerful than trying to break down all the barriers prior to cycling
- The word 'cyclist' still has fairly negative connotations ('geeky', 'reckless', 'lycra-clad' or 'serious' cyclists) for new cyclists
- Sustaining and normalising cycling can be as difficult as starting in the first place, as cyclists can easily lapse out of it. Some of TfL's initiatives should help cycling become normalised amongst new cyclists more quickly

**Job number:** 08227

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