

# *the National Cycle Network*

The National Cycle Network - a mix of urban and rural cycle routes, links many of the main centres of the population. It includes on-road lanes and traffic-free paths making use of routes across parks and other open spaces. The cycle routes are all well signposted.

The development of the National Cycle Network in Northern Ireland is ongoing. The map below shows the cycle network at the time of going to print.

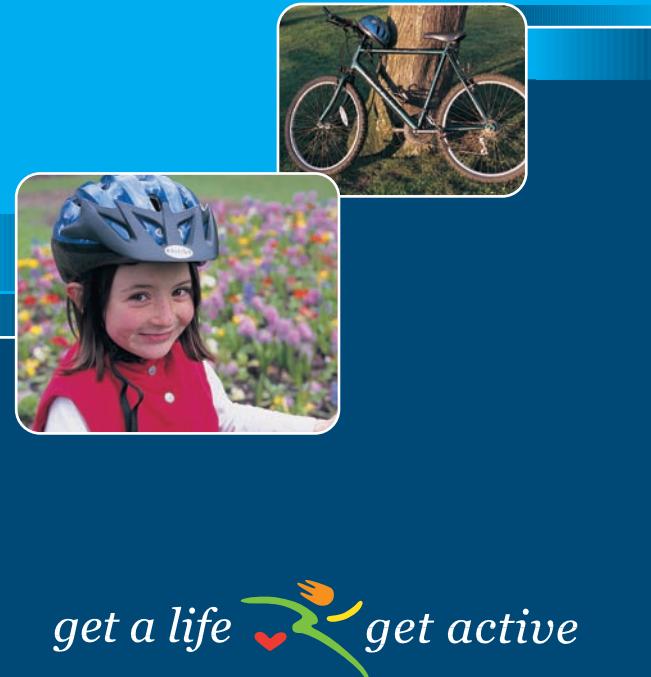
## *the National Cycle Network in Northern Ireland & border counties*



## *more information*

For more information about cycling opportunities in each of the Council areas contact the relevant local Council or the local Tourist Information Centre.

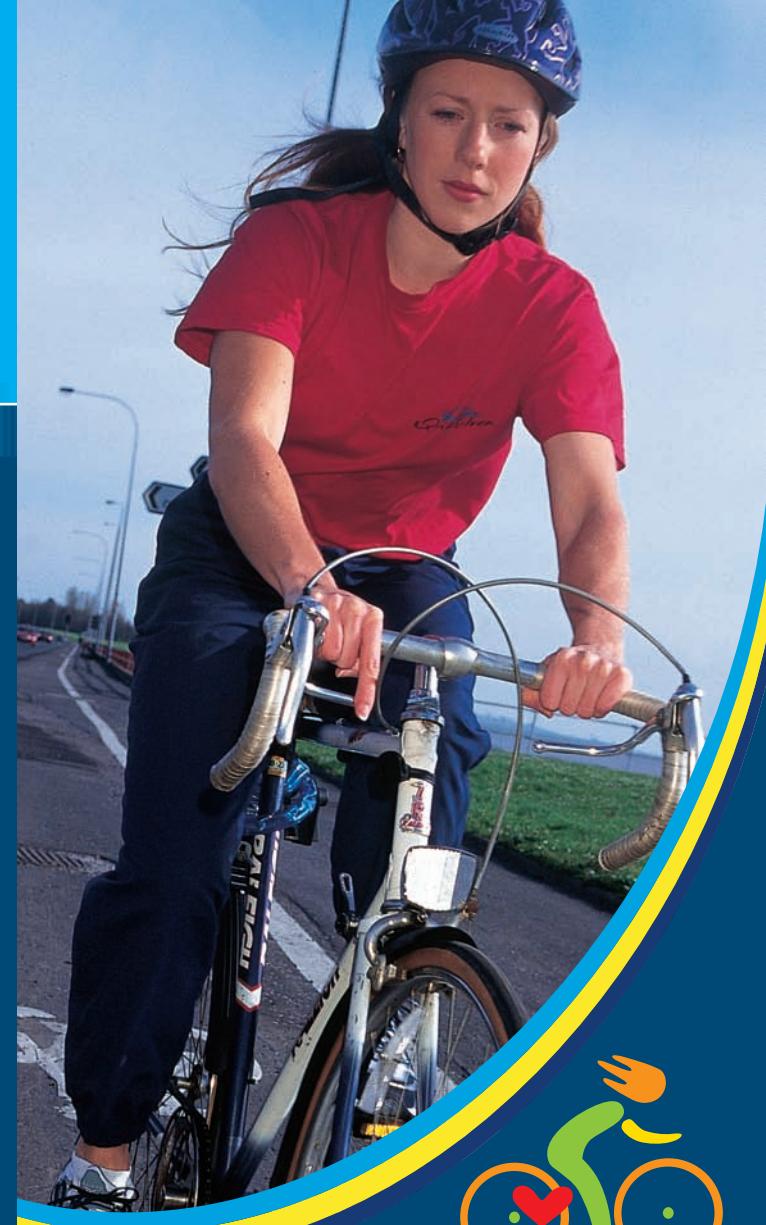
For more on cycling in Northern Ireland, telephone: 0845 1130 065 or visit:  
[www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk](http://www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk)  
[www.travelwiseni.com](http://www.travelwiseni.com)



Department of Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

Public Health Agency, Ormeau Avenue Unit, 18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast.  
BT2 8HS. Tel: 028 9031 1611. Textphone/Text Relay: 18001 028 9031 1611.  
[www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)



**Get a life, get active  
...go cycling!**

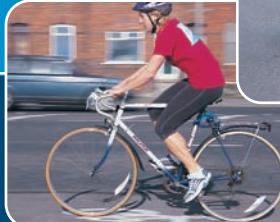
## who needs to be active?

We all do! Regular activity is vital for good health but it's a fact that most of us in Northern Ireland don't get enough. Cycling can be a fun way to build more exercise into your day. It offers a healthy, flexible, inexpensive and environmentally friendly way to travel for people of all ages.



## how much, how often?

Cycling for 15 minutes at a moderate speed burns the same number of calories as medium intensity aerobic exercise or badminton for the same time. Just a total of 30 minutes most days of the week could make a real difference to your health. You don't have to do the 30 minutes all at one time - for example you could do two 15 minute rides or three 10 minute rides.



## getting started

- Some people don't have a bike, but if you think you would like to try cycling why not borrow a bike to get started. In almost a third of all households in Northern Ireland at least one adult owns a bike.
- A new bike is quite expensive, but you should be able to buy a relatively cheap second-hand one. Ask for advice at your local bike shop.
- Adjust the seat height so that when you pedal you have a slight bend in the knee when your foot is at its lowest point.
- Adjust the handlebars so that you're comfortable with the reach when leaning slightly forward - too much of a stretch could hurt your back.



## benefits of cycling

Regular cycling can improve your health. It can:

- provide an excellent workout for the heart;
- almost halve the risk of heart attack, by helping to reduce risk factors like obesity, high blood cholesterol and high blood pressure;
- improve mental wellbeing, by helping us to reduce feelings of anxiety and depression, promoting self-esteem and reducing stress or insomnia;
- build strength, especially in your back and legs;
- promote the mobility of hip and knee joints.

## get a life - get active

**at least**  
**30 minutes a day**  
**10 minutes at a time**  
**5 days a week**

If you have any health problems or any worries about starting cycling, check with your GP first.

## think safety

- Always wear a cycle helmet. It is important to buy a new one as second-hand ones may have been damaged even though they look fine.
- Cycle helmets should fit squarely on your head (not pushed back) and fit snugly without pinching.
- Bright, reflective clothing makes you more visible, reducing accidents, especially at night.
- Front and rear lights should be used when cycling in the dark or in poor light conditions.
- Bikes should be serviced regularly to ensure that they are safe and roadworthy.
- Second-hand bikes should be checked by a bike shop to make sure they are roadworthy.