Ride your bike to stay healthy, avoid traffic and keep auto emissions out of the air

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by MaryClaire Cieply

When a destination is within a five-mile radius, it takes the same amount of time to travel by bicycle as by car. Reconsider your modes of transportation on campus this fall not just to avoid traffic and parking -- although those are great reasons -- but to stay healthy as well.
“Anyone can hop on a bike,” said Krista Bailey, assistant director of the Center for a Sustainable Future at IU South Bend. Bailey recommends biking because of its low-impact aerobic nature. She began biking as she grew older to both stay in shape and help the environment.

“There are more greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere from the short, everyday trips than the long ones,” Bailey said.

Researchers have noted that 60 percent of the pollution from auto emissions is released during the first few minutes of the operation of a vehicle. According to Worldwatch Institute, a four-mile round-trip by bicycle keeps about 15 pounds of pollutants out of the air we breathe.

Maggie Stimming, a work/life consultant in the Human Resources Administration at IUPUI, uses both environmental and financial statistics as her motivation to bike.

“A few years ago, when gas prices started to rise, I signed IUPUI up as an employer partner with Commuter Connect, which encourages use of mass transit, carpooling, walking and biking,” Stimming said.

“It provides a tool for matching up car poolers and also has a Commuter Cost Calculator that can help a car driver figure out what they might save by biking.”

Whether you’re interested in sustainability, staying in shape or just saving a few bucks, biking might be for you.

Register for upcoming biking events near you:
• Support the Hoosier Mountain Bike Association Oct. 12 to 14 for the Brown County Breakdown at Brown County State Park.
• The Hilly Hundred is scheduled Oct. 19 to 21 in Ellettsville, Ind.

For more information about bicycling at IU, visit the Office of Parking Operations.

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