Run commuting FAQs

Advances in technology are leading to creative approaches for international collaborative working which may reduce the amount of travel required. Some ideas about how to do this are below.

I don't have time to run to work

Running is a very efficient mode of transport, because you don't have traffic jams and convoluted routes to worry about. Whereas the bus has to loop around and stop frequently, and cars get stuck at red lights and bottlenecks, you can just breeze on past on the pavement. Of course you have to wait if you're crossing the road, until the traffic has stopped or cleared, but even still running can be quicker than other modes of transport.

Also, if you build exercise into your free time (evenings and weekends), you could save time overall by making your commute to work part of your exercise schedule. Instead of going for a run in the evening, or spending half an hour on the treadmill at the gym on the weekend, by run-commuting you'd have that time free in the evening and weekends.

I don't fancy being hot and sweaty when I get to work

There are ~40 different accessible showers across the campus (plus others which might be behind control barriers or with access limitations). If for some reason using these showers isn't practical or possible, there's a whole host of products these days to wash without water, like wet wipes and dry shampoo. The other alternative would be to run home, rather than to work.

I run anyway, I don't need to run to work

If you don't work from home, then the daily commute is inevitable, no matter how long or what time of day it happens at. By building your regular runs into your commute (something which you have to do anyway) then you can free up time in the evenings and weekends. Lots of run-commuters find that, overall, they save time in their week by running to/from work. Run-commuters also report feeling energized and refreshed after their run to work. This could mean that you're more productive throughout the day.

I don't want to be tired for the rest of the day

Although it might not seem logical, many run-commuters feel more energetic after their run to work. Running helps to clear the mind and sets you up with a strong, positive start to the day. Unless you're running a race, it's not generally a good idea to run so fast that you tire yourself out. Also, a nutritious snack to help you on your run might do the world of good – think about swapping sugary breakfast cereals for a light bowl of fruit, yoghurt and honey, then replenish your energy with some porridge or a flapjack when you get to work.

I can't carry all my spare clothes and wash kit while running

The range of running bags and rucksacks on the market is huge! There will be a bag to suit your needs out there. It's also worth thinking about reducing the amount that you need to carry, so perhaps bring your change of clothes in to work the day before your run day and keep your wash kit at work. Think carefully

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about what to wear on your run day, too: possibly avoid the bulky shoulder pads and heavy snow boots if you've got to carry them in your bag.

I live too far away to run to work

You don't have to run the whole of your commute. Consider getting off the train a stop or two earlier than usual and run the rest of the journey. This principle works for the car too, park up part-way into your journey and run the rest of the way to work. It's also worth thinking about running to meeting place and then travelling the remainder of the journey with a colleague or a friend who works in the same place. The university has a car sharing community which you can sign up to (you don't need to be a car owner to sign up to it), which matches people who'd like a lift with those travelling similar journeys. Every time you ditch your car you're helping the environment, and freeing up space in the car parks too.

I cycle/use public transport so I already do my bit for the environment and my health

The cost of travelling by public transport builds up to a surprising cost in the long run. By running, rather than taking the bus, once a week for a year, you could save over £200. You'd also be helping to alleviate the pressure on our public transport network. Running burns more calories than cycling, and can sometimes be quicker too. By running you can avoid both traffic jams and angry drivers.

It's too dangerous to run on the pavements, especially in the dark

In the winter months when you go to work in the dark, and leave work in the dark, finding the motivation to get out and run can be challenging. Safety is an important concern, and staying visible to other road users is crucial. There's a wide range of reflective and high visibility running accessories available these days, including head torches, reflective flashing arm bands, hi-viz tabards and ankle reflectors. Most running jackets are designed with reflective stitching or other details in them too.

There's safety in numbers, so running with a buddy can be safer (as well as more enjoyable) than running alone. By teaming up with other run-commuters from the university, you might find you feel more secure when it comes to lacing up your trainers and hitting the pavements.

Plan your route to avoid dark places and areas with uneven surfaces. It's completely fine if you don't fancy running along canal towpaths or through a disused industrial estate.

I'm not fit enough to run from my house to work

You'll be surprised at how far you can run. Taking the first few steps is often the hardest. To begin, try breaking the journey down into more manageable sections (e.g. take the bus part of the way and run the rest). It's ok to walk part of the journey – perhaps think about each lamppost as a target, so jog to one, then walk to the next. As you do the journey more often, your fitness will improve and you'll be able to run more and more of the journey without stopping.

I don't see the point of joining in with this community

Running to work isn't very common, but it's a fast growing trend. It takes a little bit of planning to get the logistics of run-commuting right, but lots of run-commuters say that they wish they'd done it earlier.

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Being more active has a positive impact on both physical and mental health, reducing the risk of heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's and osteoarthritis. The NHS recommends that adults (19-64 years old) should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week, or 75 minutes of high-intensity aerobic activity weekly. By doing 30 minutes of jogging the average woman burns 350 calories, and the average man burns over 400. Without making any other alterations to your diet or exercise routine, but by jogging to work for 30 minutes once a week, you could lose half a kg in weight over two months. Although in reality, a healthier lifestyle can often emerge from making one or two small changes, so committing to a weekly run-to-work might help you stay motivated to avoid that midmorning slice of cake, and that Thursday night takeaway, too. These can all add up to a significant weight loss. What's more, running regularly can help you sleep better, give you more energy, improve your skin, and improve your cognitive function.

By building your exercise into your journey to work, you'll free up evenings and weekends to do other things, rather than exercise.

Your health and spare time might not be the only things to benefit from run-commuting. Running is free, so by leaving the car at home, or not taking the bus/tram/train to work and running *once a week* instead, you could save ~£200 a year.