

How walking to work could reduce your risk of diabetes: People who ditch the car are 40 per cent less likely to develop the disease

- **Doctors are urging people to include physical activity in their routines**
- **Those who walk to work are far less likely to have Type 1 or 2 diabetes**
- **They also have 17 per cent lower risk of high blood pressure**

By Jenny Hope

Here's another reason to ditch the car keys and put on your trainers.

Walking to work each day could cut your chances of developing diabetes, claim researchers.

They found people who get to work under their own steam are around 40 per cent less likely to have the disease as those who drive.

Healthier choice: Workers in London walking home at the end of a weekday

Experts at Imperial College London and University College London examined how health is affected by the way people travel to work, using a survey of 20,000 Britons.

They found cycling, walking, and using public transport were all associated with a lower risk of being overweight than driving or taking a taxi.

Those who walked to work were far less likely to have Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes than drivers, and had a 17 per cent lower risk of high blood pressure.

Cyclists were around half as likely to have diabetes as those who drove.



Everyday exercise: Of the adults who use cars or taxis to get to work, 19 per cent are obese, compared to 13 per cent who cycle

High blood pressure, diabetes, and being overweight are all major risk factors for heart and circulatory disease, the UK's biggest killer.

The number of Britons diagnosed with diabetes hit three million this year for the first time – equivalent to almost one in 20 of the population.

The majority have Type 2 which is strongly linked to being overweight or obese, leading a sedentary lifestyle and an unhealthy diet.

In the study, published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, British scientists used survey data from 2009-11 to find the links between active travel to work and diabetes or hypertension.

Dangerous high: The number of Britons diagnosed with diabetes hit three million this year

They found wide variations in the modes of travel used in different parts of the UK. Public transport was used most in London, at 52 per cent, while only 5 per cent used it in Northern Ireland.

Of the working-age adults who used private transport such as cars, motorbikes and taxis to get to work, 19 per cent were obese, compared to 15 per cent of those who walked and 13 per cent of those who cycled.

The researchers said people could reduce their risks of serious health problems such as heart attacks by avoiding using a car.

Anthony Laverty, from the School of Public Health at Imperial College London, who led the research, said: 'This study highlights that building physical activity into the daily routine by walking, cycling or using public transport to get to work is good for personal health.

'It demonstrates associations between active travel to work and a reduced likelihood of being overweight, having diabetes and having hypertension.'

Robin Hewings, of Diabetes UK, said the charity 'recommends that the best way to reduce your risk of Type 2 diabetes is by combining physical activity with a healthy balanced diet that is low in salt, fat and sugar and rich in fruit and vegetables'.

He added: 'Walking to work is a great way to improve your overall health and we recommend people walk where possible in place of a car or public transport.'

A study by Leicester University earlier this year found those at high risk of developing diabetes can reduce the likelihood by cutting the time they spend sitting by 90 minutes