

THE GREAT BIKE BOOM CONTINUES

A state of the nation look at
the explosion of cycling.

halfords
for life's journeys



CYCLING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

Changes during the pandemic, such as the Government recommending cycling as a daily form of exercise, avoiding public transport, more investment, being housebound, and an increase in leisure cycling, have fostered an environment where cycling has thrived.

In fact Halfords reports that sales of adult bikes were up by almost three times, to 193% compared to the year before.

40% of Brits say they have cycled more frequently over the past 12 months and 42% use their bike at least twice a week. Of those who cycle, the average distance cycled on a bike ride is eight miles.

Cycling frequency during pandemic

- **30% said they cycle 6-10 miles**
- **21% said they cycle 11-20 miles**
- **5% said they cycle 21+ miles**

Why are people getting on their bikes more? Less traffic on our roads and the closure of gyms has played an important role:

- **22% said they feel safer on the roads compared to before the pandemic**
- **Nearly a third (32%) said their bike has replaced the gym or exercise classes as a form of physical activity**

As the nation adapts to life after the pandemic, the research suggests that the cycling boom is permanent and our lifestyle habits are likely to shift dramatically. 70% of those who said cycling has replaced other forms of physical exercise say this shift will be permanent.

To keep the cycling revolution going, cyclists say they will be motivated by:

- **Better cycling infrastructure (41%)**
- **Better places to park and lock bikes (34%)**
- **Tax benefits for cyclists (24%)**
- **Cheaper bikes (23%)**
- **Lower speed limits for cars (23%)**



Double Olympic champion Victoria Pendleton, says:

“With cycling being one of the only forms of available exercise and transport over the past year, it’s been exciting to see the boom unfold, and even more so that it looks like it’s here to stay.

“The research shows that the growth is being driven by two groups, those who have returned to cycling and people who have discovered it and are falling in love with it. I’m delighted that it means many more are waking up to the transformative power of bikes for transportation and recreation.”

WHAT DOES THE PANDEMIC MEAN FOR THE FUTURE OF CYCLING?

Last year rusty bikes were dusted off in garages and sheds, while sales of new bikes surged. In fact, last year **Halfords performed over 750,000 repairs on customer's old bikes.**

An increase in anxiety over public transport and a surge in exercise meant that there was a well-documented bike boom.

What does this mean for the future of cycling?

Understandably 40% of those polled said they have cycled more in the last 12 months compared to the last several years but, more importantly for fans of cycling, once the lockdown ends 33% plan on using their bike even more than at current levels, while 51% will sustain the same level of cycling.

When surveyed, **37% of UK adults said that they were planning on buying a bike for themselves or a family member within the next six months.**

57% of those polled said they use their bike once a week or more, while 56% cycle more than six miles on an average bike ride.

Of those adults that had bought a bike in the last 12 months, **43% had bought a mountain bike, 39% had bought a road bike, 28% had bought a hybrid bike and 28% bought a kids' bike, while 24% favoured an electric bike.**

The demand for cycling is further reflected across kids and junior bikes at Halfords, **with sales up 47% and 65% respectively,** as family bike rides look set to continue as a popular weekend activity.



WHEELS OF CHANGE

The way we live, work and keep active has transformed during the last year. We predict that the daily commute has changed forever as working from home, for many, is here to stay, which is why 45% of adults surveyed want Cycle to Work rules to be modernised. Currently, the rules state that half of journeys taken using the bike should be for work related purposes, but as the way we work changes, so must the way we exercise and travel.

At Halfords, we believe that anything that makes cycling more accessible is a positive move for everyone, so we support updating Cycle to Work rules to allow for leisure and exercise use. In spite of the nation working from home, Cycle to Work has seen huge growth during the last year, with demand for Halfords' own **Cycle2Work** programme up 89%.

*Over **100,000** employees have received new bikes as the number of those cycling on their commute increases.*

*Employers are listening to the demand, with **7,500** new schemes launched over the past year.*



A man and a woman are riding e-bikes on a paved path. The man is on the left, wearing a blue denim shirt, black pants, and a black helmet. The woman is on the right, wearing a white and grey striped long-sleeve shirt, blue jeans, and a black helmet. They are both smiling. The background is a lush green field with many cherry blossom trees in full bloom, creating a soft, pinkish-white canopy. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

AN E-BIKE REVOLUTION

Great for fun, fitness and commuting, electric bikes have continued to grow in popularity over the past few years – and with many benefits to the environment - we predict the demand will continue to rise.

Of the 36% of people who bought a new bike since the start of the pandemic, almost a quarter (24%) opted to go electric.

When asked why they bought an electric bike since the start of the pandemic – their multiple benefits came to light:

- *It's a useful mode of transport for longer journeys – 67%*
- *They are fun – 46%*
- *I want to arrive fresh for work – 46%*
- *I have an injury which means I can't ride a mechanical bike – 37%*
- *I'm not fit enough to ride a mechanical bike – 29%*
- *To help tackle hills and inclines – 27%*

Why e-bikes could be the answer

Some people are put off cycling for a variety of reasons, but plenty believe e-bikes could be the solution to getting back on two wheels.

SUPPORTING KEY WORKERS

The growth of cycling commutes has been driven by key workers who have been keeping the country going through the pandemic. The research shows that almost half of key workers (43%) have used their bike to cycle to work during the pandemic, with nearly a third (29%) stating their journey feels safer when using a bike rather than using public transport.

In fact, over one in ten (12%) said they would not feel safe getting to work without their bike if they couldn't use it for some reason.

Halfords has helped those emergency workers making commutes and has performed over **300,000 free bike checks** in the last 12 months and had **180,000 NHS, teachers and emergency forces staff** use Halfords' bike repair discounts.





WHY THE GREAT BIKE BOOM CONTINUES

The pandemic has seen more Brits take to the saddle than ever before, with a huge spike in cyclists. But what are the motivations behind this new wave of two-wheeled fans?

The most prominent reason for the increase in popularity is that with all the restrictions in place, many saw cycling as a way of keeping fit (58%).

The fitness fanatics were closely followed by those who saw cycling as an opportunity to spend more time outdoors with their family (48%) and just simply, to have fun (41%)!

The marked reduction in traffic on our roads is also a contributing factor, with 32% of those asked citing the quieter roads as their reason for embracing cycling.

Why did you buy a bike since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic?

- **To keep fit – 58%**
- **To spend time outside with my family – 48%**
- **They are fun – 41%**
- **To take advantage of traffic free roads – 32%**
- **To avoid public transport – 30%**
- **To commute to work – 29%**
- **For environmental reasons – 25%**

A photograph of a person and a child riding bicycles on a dirt path through a forest. The person is wearing a pink hoodie and a purple helmet, and the child is wearing a dark blue t-shirt and a green helmet. They are both riding away from the camera. The path is surrounded by tall green grass and purple flowers. In the background, there are tall trees and a blue sky.

For further information
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Figures from a combination of Halfords OnePoll survey of 2,000 adults polled between 18th-20th February 2021 and sales figures.