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# Health benefits of riding electric bikes

## Yes, riding an e-bike does have healthy side effects

There is a misnomer when it comes to e-bikes. They are often viewed as strictly electric bikes, something of a trimmed down moped or electric scooter. The truth is that most e-bikes are nothing of the sort. While they do provide an electric-assisted operation, they can be ridden and pedalled just like a normal bike. While they might be not preferred by hard core cyclists, e-bikes offer us regular folk a way to enhance our cycling experience and health.

For some of us, age and past injuries have bitten into our cycling time. While cycling has provided the opportunity to train our bodies to heal a bit, there are still undeniable truths when cycling. To wit: my knees are as old as I am and a rough youth of skateboarding and baseball has caught up to me. Distance and endurance while cycling has become a challenge. Swapping out my back tire for an e-bike tire to go further for a longer period of time is just the first benefit.

## Go further, longer

E-bikes utilize your natural cycling ability and toss on a motor and range to keep you cycling for a longer period of time, with a further range. If you are used to doing 10-20km rides but have found it more difficult to do so, then slapping an e-bike enhancement on your bike will supplement your rides with a motorized assist. Most e-bike motors allow for independent pedalling (you can turn it off and on, or set the level of assist). This lightens the strain on your body and helps you train for that 30km ride you want to achieve. Tempering your cycling workout to build endurance is one health benefit of an e-bike.

## E-bike for the brain

Aside from the clear aerobic benefits, e-bikes offer another healthy side effect, that of improving your mental state. While that could be said about any outdoor activity, e-bikes and cycling in general improve brain health, especially in seniors. There are even studies to support this. Why e-bikes over regular biking? We'll get to that in a second. Right now let's think about your brain. Your brain is stagnant. It's bored. It needs physical activity and running is a terrible choice because while healthy, it's pain. Ask any runner.

Cycling with an e-bike is not pain. It's pleasure. It's a relaxing ride through the country, through city streets recently converted to add bike lanes. It allows for both leisure and aerobics at the same time. This has positive effects on your mental health. It's not torture for the sake of health like some activities, it's health for the sake of health. Just being outside, going *somewhere* and absorbing nature along the way can change your state of mind for the better.

### **E-bikes are inclusive health**

E-bikes are not just for a segmented part of the population. E-bikes make cycling more inclusive by giving people who might not normally cycle a boost in power and distance with battery assist. This enables people who might not be able to cycle normally take up the activity and build strength and endurance, especially seniors. Or people like me with damaged knees. While I can hit a long ride on the flat streets of the locale in which I live, the e-bike motor enables me to tackle the odd hill or rise that my knees generally couldn't handle.

Anyone can use an e-bike which means anyone can enjoy the health benefits of cycling outside. To that end, more people are cycling with the assist of e-bikes than ever before.

### **More people are using e-bikes than ever before**

The e-bike market is growing around the world. Part of it is for the health benefits found in the slightly aging population, part of it is parents keeping up with their kids, part of it is young people commuting to work and school. Riding an e-bike is much healthier than sitting in your car or riding the bus because there is physical activity involved no matter which way you split it. Even if you keep the motor running the entire time, you still have to balance and steer and that takes muscle control and cognitive awareness.

To that end, e-bikes aren't a replacement for pure cycling. To some purists it might seem that way, but as a former road bike purist who now uses an e-bike to enhance my ride some days, I can say that the health benefits are the same as cycling. Some days it feels even more healthier because I'm able to use the e-bike to assist in pushing me further (and bringing me back). E-bikes have clear benefits for the senior population and for students and young workers who perhaps can't afford a car or live in a city centre and don't need one.

E-bikes are only growing in popularity and use. Recognizing that the health benefits are just as present as with regular cycling is a step toward creating a future in which we cyclists take back the roads, or build our own.

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