

Walking for Short Trips

Overview

As urban population density rises, walking serves as a key mode of non-motorised transport (NMT). A quarter of the urban population travels to work by foot (ORGI, 2011), but this is likely the segment that does not have access to mechanised transport. Recent data reflects a behavioural challenge of rising motorized vehicle ownership and dropping public transport ridership (Waghmare, 2024).

NMT can mitigate **10%** of urban transport emissions

The Low Carbon Lifestyles (LCL) programme by CSBC leverages behaviour change for sustainable lifestyle choices. Through a detailed literature review, diagnostic field work, and design ideation workshops, we identified behavioural pathways and interventions to improve walking as a mode of commute in Indian cities.

Behavioural solutions can be designed to link walking to health benefits and social activities. Empowering people to plan their walking routes, along with incentives and gamified experiences can be effective intervention opportunities.

Behavioural Barriers

Target behaviour

Walking as a primary mode of transport for short trips and last-mile connectivity

Target population

Urban commuters who use motorised private vehicles for daily transportation

- **Lack of safety for women:** safety and perceptions of safety strongly influence whether women choose to walk and they prefer busy, familiar routes or walking in groups
- **Walking seen as recreation and not for commuting:** upper-middle-class and older individuals associate walking with fitness and recreation while travel is done via personal vehicles, even for short distances
- **Perception of walking as low-status:** Middle- and upper-income groups associate walking for commuting as a necessity and a lack of access; lower-income individuals also do not view it as aspirational



Behavioural Pathways

BEHAVIOURAL PATHWAY

INTERVENTION IDEA



Link walking to benefits

Highlight the benefits of walking like improved physical and mental health, and reduced environmental impact

Highlight multitasking opportunities like meeting daily step-count goals, listening to podcasts, grocery shopping, or making phone calls



Gamify and digitise walking experiences

Use step counters or fitness apps to link to personal goals like burning calories and walking streaks



Encourage planning for walking

Publicize tools for planning like carrying fresh clothes to work or identifying walking routes can make commuters feel prepared

Promote the concept of 'walking back home' which can be an easier shift as it addresses concerns about being on time or being sweaty



Making walking social and fun

Organize community or group activities like walking clubs, buddy systems, or family walks

Campaign with aspirational figures like influencers or celebrities to improve the status perception of walking and establish it as 'cool' thing to do



Provide workplace incentives

Offering incentives to employees such as step-count challenges, coupons, or recognition for walking to work