



# ACTIVE TRANSPORATION





Written by:  
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Stella is very passionate about the subjects of health and wellness, with a holistic perspective. She is a champion of joyful movement, active transportation, intuitive eating, food as medicine, and Health at Every Size. She believes if healthy behavior change is to be sustainable it must be a pleasure, and not a prescription.

Stella holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Utah in Health Education and Promotion, with a Community Emphasis, and is a Certified Health Education Specialist.

## MUSINGS OF A LOCOMOTOR ENTHUSIAST

Seventy-six percent of Americans use a car to commute to work. The Environmental Protection Agency shows that the transportation sector is the biggest source of pollution in the US, and that cars are responsible for 58% of those emissions. April is Active Transportation Month- Active transportation is a means of getting around that is powered by human energy, primarily walking, biking, or rolling. Granted, we can't all walk everywhere we need to go but, if you were to decide to make an effort to walk everywhere within a set radius of where you lived for a week, or a month - say April to celebrate Active Transportation Month it could make a huge difference in our environment and physical health. I chose a mile initially. According to Naismith's rule, it takes most of us approximately twenty minutes to walk a mile, so I stuck a map to the fridge, with a red pencil circle compassed round my address. Using the map legend to determine how many inches made a mile, I drew my circle. It surprised me looking at the map, how many of my day-to-day destinations were inside the circle.

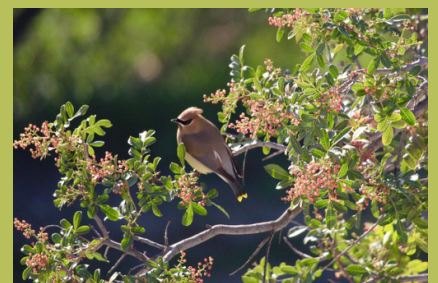




## Bird Watching



[Check out these facts about birds mostly commonly found in Utah's backyards and look for them on your next walk around town!](#)



The map became speckled with marinara, as everything in my kitchen invariably does, but at that point I had ceased referring to it. Now, I know that I am fortunate in this regard, and not everyone lives in such a walkable neighborhood as myself. For someone living in a neighborhood that lacks reliable sidewalks, footpaths, and biking lanes, or you cannot imagine going car-free the decision could be to park farther away from your destination whenever possible, carpool when you can, or walk to public transit. It takes a little extra thought and effort initially, but you may be surprised at how the time flies, and my guess is that by the end of the month that penciled circle will seem smaller. Active Transportation really is such a pleasure! You are present for the changes of the seasons in a way that's just not possible when you are viewing nature whizzing past. You get the opportunity to enjoy glimpses of nature only to be found (even in the most urban of areas) when walking quietly along . . . a large camouflaged bug, squirrel acrobatics, and birds everywhere! You might want to pack a wildlife identification guide, because once you start identifying flora and fauna, the variety on even the most urban city block is thrilling! Walking along, being present for the sights, sounds and smells of the seasons, with the rhythm of your footfalls lulling



## Active Transportation at SLCo



Learn how SLCo continues to make strides in improving active transportation design for residents and contribute to better air quality.

you into a meditative state . . . you may arrive at your destination, ironically, feeling quite refreshed after your walk. I always do . . . provided I allowed myself plenty of time. Otherwise, I arrive a little bedewed, which is fine too, because it's the physical activity that I believe is most responsible for the fact that being an active commuter helps me fall asleep and stay asleep at night. The research supports this, in fact aerobic activity has been found to be as effective as medication! It is not the only benefit though, it is the more environmentally friendly choice, with a single gallon of gasoline equating twenty-two pounds of CO2 emissions! It is also undoubtedly the more economically advantageous choice. Active transportation saves money on fares, gas, and vehicle maintenance which adds up to \$8,466 per year for the average American. Active transportation including walking, biking, and rolling does cost you time, but time I found is time well spent.

