ROAD TO ZERO

WALKING

Why is walking important for everyone?

Whether it's taking a stroll with the dog at the park, or walking to the train station to get to school or work, we all deserve to be safe.

Walking briskly for 30 minutes a day can improve your physical and mental health in the following ways[1]:

- Improved heart and lung fitness and increased endurance
- Reduced risk of heart disease and stroke
- Improved management of conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, joint and muscular pain or stiffness, and diabetes
- Stronger bones and muscles, and improved balance
- Reduced body fat
- Walking is also good for our minds as it improves our mood, encourages relaxation and releases muscle tension, and boosts creativity.

How can our communities be walking-friendly places?

No one should be killed or seriously injured while walking around our community or using the road network. Responsibility for the safety of the most vulnerable road users must be shared by everyone.

What would a walking-friendly world look like[2]?

- Fewer vehicles and traffic lanes
- Lower speed limits and less congestion
- Paths connecting local facilities
- Easy access to public transport
- Green spaces and landscaping
- Street lighting, shade in summer, places to linger or sit
- Shops with windows to the footpath.

What would a walking-friendly world feel like?

- Safer, with fewer crashes or near misses
- Easier to access, for people of all abilities
- Connected, with more human interaction and less social isolation
- Thriving local economies, with businesses doing better in walkable places
- Cleaner, with less air and noise pollution thanks to walkers' low carbon footprint.

What makes walking safer?

When we are walking, we don't have a vehicle surrounding our vulnerable bodies for protection. Serious injury or death is likely if hit by a car travelling at just 30 km/h.

Crossing the road can be made safer with the following road designs[3]:

- Raised platforms at intersections
- Pedestrian or traffic signals and school crossings
- Low speed limits
- Refuges in the median of the road to allow pedestrians to cross halfway.

These following vehicle technologies can help pedestrian safety too[4]:

- Auto Emergency Braking (AEB)
- Reversing cameras
- Blindspot detection
- Pedestrian airbags or pop-up bonnets.

Children under the age of 10 are still developing the cognitive abilities to cross the road unsupervised as it involves judging the speed of vehicles, gaps in traffic, distances, understanding driver behaviours and controlling impulses to dash out onto the road[5]. Tactics to help young children cross the road safely include:

- Holding hands with an adult
- Discussing and choosing safe places to cross with an adult
- Practising the habit of stopping (on the footpath), looking (in every direction for vehicles, listening (for vehicles) and thinking (where can vehicles come from and can a driver/cyclist see me?)

The law

Summarised below are some for the laws which apply to pedestrians in Victoria.

Pedestrians are not allowed to:

- cross the road when facing an amber or red traffic or pedestrian light
- cross the road within 20 metres of a pedestrian crossing – they must use the crossing
- cross a railway level crossing when it is not allowed
- walk along, or fail to give way when crossing a path which is for bicycles.

Pedestrians must:

- use the shortest or most direct way to cross a road
- cross to the nearest edge of the road after getting off a tram
- give way to vehicles at roundabouts
- obey a 'no pedestrian' sign.

There are fines associated with failing to obey rules as a pedestrian. For more information about road rules which apply to pedestrians, go to:

www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/safety-and-road-rules/road-rules/a-to-z-of-road-rules/pedestrians

[1] https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/walking-for-good-health

[2] https://www.towardszero.vic.gov.au/what-is-towards-zero/road-safety-action-plan
https://www.cdc.gov/features/walk-friendly-communities/index.html

[3] https://www.towardszero.vic.gov.au/what-is-towards-zero/road-safety-action-plan

[4] Strandroth, J., Rizzi, M., Sternlund, S., Lie, A. & Tingvall, C. (2011) The correlation between pedestrian injury severity in real-life crashes and Euro NCAP pedestrian test results. *Traffic Injury Prevention*, 12, 604-613.

[5] https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/safety-and-road-rules/pedestrian-safety/children-and-pedestrian-safety