

Stefano Marazzi – Rolls Royce

When you started cycling?

I'd previously tried cycling to Rolls-Royce back in about 2009, I had a very heavy, very old steel mountain bike with knobbly tyres and absolutely none of the correct gear at all.

It took me ages, and I was a bit put off!

I tried again 2012, after joining a local cycle group, who went out every Sunday, and bought myself a second hand 9 kilogram Cannondale road bike for £400 to try and keep up with them.

It was a revelation - so much easier to cycle than the mountain bike and from my first ride, I was hooked. Speeds of 20 mph seemed effortless, and I was able to cycle further and faster but with much less effort. Up hills became way easier, and down hills had the thrill of being on a rollercoaster!

Why you started cycling to work?

I started to cycle to work, initially to improve my fitness for the Sunday weekend rides I went out on with my local cycle group. I started off just riding in to Rolls-Royce every Friday. This then progressed to Thursdays as well, and I found I was really looking forward to the "bike commute". I soon found my weight started to drop off, and **I very quickly lost 20 kilos!**

Initially my 10 mile commute took an hour each way, but by using the Strava app, and a cycle computer, and concentrating on my average speed, I found I was able to reduce this to less than 40 minutes. I can now do it in about 35 minutes, and have learnt all the quickest and safest routes to Rolls-Royce Bristol.

The benefits to you?

So many benefits!

- 1) Fitness and weight loss – I can keep up on the Sunday rides easily, and **no longer have to pay money to join a gym** in order to stay fit. The fitness benefits are huge. I can still eat plenty of cake without worrying about counting the calories as **I burn 900 calories a day commuting** to and from work.
- 2) Time saved and reliability of getting to work – I'm sure people know how **bad traffic is in Bristol**, but no matter how bad it gets, the cyclepaths stay open, even road closures usually let bikes and pedestrians through. For example the Bromley Heath Viaduct Scheme, which is forecasting a 2 hour detour, and 8 kilometres of car tailbacks, is still perfectly open for bicycles. **I know I can cycle to work in 40 minutes maximum.** I therefore turn up at Rolls-Royce at exactly the same time each day, even leaving at busy times.
- 3) **Petrol savings and wear and tear on the car** – I used to have to fill my car up with petrol once every 9 working days, Now it's about once a month, so I **save about £100 in fuel a month cycling to work. Now I cycle 6300 miles a year, and drive only 3000**, so obviously my cars components are not wearing out much. I learnt how to fix my own bike, and mainstream bike parts are very cheap compared to car parts.
- 4) **De-stressing** – It's so good for this! Previously I used to feel in the car, that I hadn't really finished work until I'd got home. **Now as soon as I'm on the bike, after work, it feels like I have finished** as I'm "just out on another bike ride". You actually get to "see" your surroundings a lot better on a bike. I sometimes got different routes home just to see what is up a different lane, or cyclepath. You feel a lot more connected with nature, than in a car, and your suntan will be fantastic in spring and summer!
- 5) **The social aspect!** I have met loads of new "bike people" since cycling to work! Either fellow commuters, or people I've met from the weekend rides.

Mention if you got your bike on the cycle to work scheme

No, I didn't actually, as I bought mine second hand. But the cyclescheme is amazing. It lets you buy (for example) a £1000 bike, for about £600. But that £600 will be spread across 12 months! So it's

only £50 a month. Considering for my second hand bike I had to shell out £400 in one go, and obviously it might need a service, or some new parts, the cycle scheme is probably better! You also would get a warranty on a new Cyclescheme bike, whereas second hand, you don't.

Positive messages about cycling?

Just give it a go, try one day a week to start off, if you live too far away and normally drive all the way in, try and put your bike in the boot or on the roof and get within a few miles of work and cycle the last bit in. It will have huge benefits to your fitness and wellbeing. It will take about 6 weeks to develop your "cycling legs" so you have to stick with it!

Get involved with the Rolls-Royce BuG, There are almost 500 people in the Bristol BuG, so you probably sit near to someone who can help you start. We have loads of ideas to make cycling even better for anyone who wants to start cycling to work. In 2017, we have helped arrange two events, including a sustainable transport roadshow, a bike day, including ebike demos, and now we have the Bristol Grand Prix to look forward to, where we will be entering two highly competitive teams!

