

Fergus Stewart
Microsoft
Biker



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Fergus Stewart, part of Microsoft's Solutions Accelerators team, has been biking in to work since 1997. Fed up with driving, he decided to give biking a try, and 12 years later he has become a staunch advocate for bicycle commuting and a mentor to colleagues at Microsoft who want to try it out for themselves.

When asked about the benefits of biking to work, Fergus listed benefits for three parties: Himself, Microsoft, and his fellow employees on Microsoft's Redmond campus. Personal benefits include a faster commute home, feeling great and wide awake when he gets to work, stress relief that comes with regular exercise, weight control without ever visiting a gym, and cash savings. Fergus and his spouse gave up their second car when Fergus started biking the 11 miles round trip to work. Aside from the significant savings of maintaining one less automobile, Fergus says Microsoft and the City of Redmond "pay" him \$200 a year to bike to work with drawings and promotions aimed at alternative commuters. For his employer, the benefits include a more productive employee and a need for fewer parking spots. (The average cost in Redmond to build and maintain a structured parking space for 1 year is \$21,000 according to one study.) Benefits to his fellow employees include one less car on the road and one more freed up parking space.

His advice to those considering a bike commute is the following: Find a route that is safe, doable, and scenic—use maps.live.com or any other mapping site to preview your route in advance. If your commute seems overly ambitious, use your car for part of the route, and work up to the full commute. "Try it out, and be prepared to make mistakes," Fergus says, and when asked what types of mistakes one might make, he tells me about those few days a year when he's walking around Microsoft sockless because he forgot to pack socks in his panniers.

Fergus's advocacy for bike commuting, the example he sets, and his mentoring of new bike commuters led to his being nominated by no fewer than 7 of his colleagues at Microsoft. Fergus Stewart is clearly a 2009 Commute Champion.