



(Left) Recharging costs pennies
(Right) E-asier cycling



he said. "They allow people to cycle who otherwise might not be able to. I always reassure patients that they're not 'cheating' on an e-bike as they will get nearly all the same benefits as they would pedalling a conventional bike."

E-bikes don't have the same barriers to ownership as electric cars. They're much cheaper to buy and they don't require an extensive charging network; any standard electric socket is sufficient. Yet e-bikers need good infrastructure just as much as regular cyclists – perhaps more so because a newcomer to everyday cycling is more likely to be tempted by an e-bike than an unpowered one.

For experienced cyclists like Dr Leach, a lack of segregated cycle tracks and cycle lanes is annoying but not enough to stop him riding. "I would argue that cycling infrastructure in my area is poor," he said. "Despite there being no

cycling lanes, a taxi driver recently beeped his horn at me relentlessly because I was cycling on the road and he couldn't get past quickly enough due to oncoming traffic."

Nevertheless, Dr Leach has pedalled 5,000km on his e-bike over the last year. That means he's cycled far more than he has driven. "Using my e-bike has, without a doubt, saved me a significant amount of money," he said. ▶

“ I'M ABLE TO BYPASS TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN THE TOWN CENTRE, WHICH IS A HUGE BONUS, ESPECIALLY AT RUSH HOUR ”

Why e-bike sales are buzzing

In October 2022 the annual rate of inflation in the UK reached 11.1%, a 41-year high. The negative effects of the cost-of-living crisis are affecting many, meaning that cutting costs is at the forefront of many people's minds. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), 57% of British adults are already spending less on non-essentials, with 42% cutting back on non-essential journeys.

Consequently, a shift in transport behaviour is occurring. According to a recent BikelsBest report, 69% of Britons have changed or are considering changing their transport habits. What's more, 57% of people in the 20-30 age bracket see e-bikes as the most natural car replacement.

This goes hand in hand with the fact that, despite supply chain issues at that time, 2020 saw e-bike sales in the UK surge by an estimated 70%, according to a report by Mintel. The report suggests that, across the country, people are accepting e-bikes as a solution to financial constraints.

In Europe, meanwhile, e-bike sales reached an all-time high in 2021, exceeding 22 million units.