



Small steps make great things happen

## Description



Great things happen when we walk. That's the message from Northern Ireland's Department for Infrastructure.

They recently launched a campaign promoting walking – at the same time as our own focus on the subject in the latest [Roof 'n' Roots](#). Supported by a [TV advert](#), the department's scheme *Great Things Happen* encourages more people to walk as a travel option.

One of the positives to come from this crisis is more people choosing to walk

‘The Covid pandemic has been an incredibly difficult time for people,’ said Infrastructure Minister Nichola Mallon. ‘However, one of the positives to come from this crisis is more people choosing to walk as part of their journey or daily exercise. Like so many of us, I want us to build on this positive change and not just slip back to the way things were.’

Just as Revd Dr Brenda Mosedale pointed out in [the summer edition of Roof ‘n’ Roots](#), the department also explained how walking is good for our general wellbeing. They said there are benefits for:

- physical health;
- mental health;
- the environment.

People are encouraged to continue making the shift towards walking as a transport option – especially for shorter journeys. The Department for Infrastructure believe this is an important way to achieve higher levels of sustainable transport and reduce the number of car journeys. By cutting traffic congestion and reducing air pollution, quality of life is improved for everyone.

‘Greener, cleaner, healthier and happier people and places must be our aim as we learn to live with this new normal during and after Covid-19,’ said Minister Mallon. ‘Remember, if out walking, use footpaths where available and always walk on the right hand side facing the oncoming traffic.’

Outdoor exercise can be ‘absolutely vital’ for mental health

It was in the *Home Truths* feature of *Roof ‘n’ Roots* that retired minister and GP Revd Dr Brenda Mosedale said, ‘Walking gives time to think, reflect, sometimes just time and space, even if you need assistance of some kind.

‘It’s good to talk, but it’s also good to walk alongside someone quietly, just knowing they are there or, if you are on your own, knowing others have walked that way before you.’

Walking can improve your mood, even if you didn’t want to go. In that same feature we also quoted Stephen Buckley, Head of Information at Mind, who said for those who are able, outdoor exercise can be ‘absolutely vital’ for mental health.

Writing in [Public Service Executive](#), he recommends taking a walk as a way to relax and release endorphins, which can have a positive effect on mood. (*Photo is a still from the Great Things Happen TV advert.*)

## Category

1. News & reviews

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