

# EarthTalk™

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pooped (or sweaty) to pop.

Now a number of battery-powered two-wheelers are coming on the market that won't get you your exercise but will get you from point A to B and back with minimal environmental impact.

Consumers can start greening up their commutes on such vehicles for as little as \$1,500 plus about 25 cents a day in electricity costs—not bad at all when you consider that a new car costs thousands of dollars more up front and chugs mass quantities off expensive and polluting gasoline.

Many of us conjuring up images of electric bikes and scooters may envision the finicky mopeds of the 70s and 80s, but today's offerings are much improved and quite diverse.

Those who want to go fast but stay green should check out some of the electric scooters made by Miami-based EVTAMERICA. Each of the company's three models tops out at a maximum speed of 45 miles per hour—respectable even on the highway. "People want to go at least 40 mph," says the company's co-owner, Fernando Pruna. "Everything built before could only do 25 or 30."

Meanwhile, eGO of Somerville, Massachusetts makes electric bikes that can speed along at 25 miles per hour in "go fast" mode, but also have a "go far" mode, which trades off speed for distance (some 24 miles on a single charge).

While eGO's bikes may look diminutive, they are known for their strength.

"Our bikes are powerful enough to tow a car," says Kevin Kazlauskas, the company's operations manager. "These are not toys, and customers aren't treating them like toys."

Another option might be an electric scooter made by Houston-based Veloteq. These scooters only go 20 miles per hour at top speed, but they can cover up to 50 miles on a single charge, which is more than enough distance to get most commuters back and forth to work, as long as they can avoid fast-moving highways along the way.

A side benefit of the speed limitation on Veloteq's vehicles is that they are typically exempt from licensing, registration and insurance regulations in most jurisdictions—yet another way to save money over those car drivers still mired in their 20<sup>th</sup> century car commutes.

Opting for one of these new scooters or bikes over a car commute will take a big bite out of your carbon footprint, but the future promises even greener versions. The lead-acid batteries that most models use today will soon be replaced with greener and more efficient varieties, lithium ion and nickel zinc being two of the more promising formats.

These new fangled batteries will make the vehicles cost more, at least initially, but they will also trim bike weight significantly and provide a lot more distance per charge. And eGo is working on a model with a small solar array behind the seat to extend the bike's range once its electric charge starts to run low.



Today's electric bikes and scooters are big improvements over the finicky mopeds of the 1970s and 80s. Consumers can start greening up their commutes on such vehicles for as little as a \$1,500 investment and about 25 cents a day in electricity costs. (Pictured: the Veloteq Challenger RSV)

CONTACTS: EVTAMERICA, www.evtamerica.com; eGO, www.egovehicles.com; Veloteq, www.veloteq.com.

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