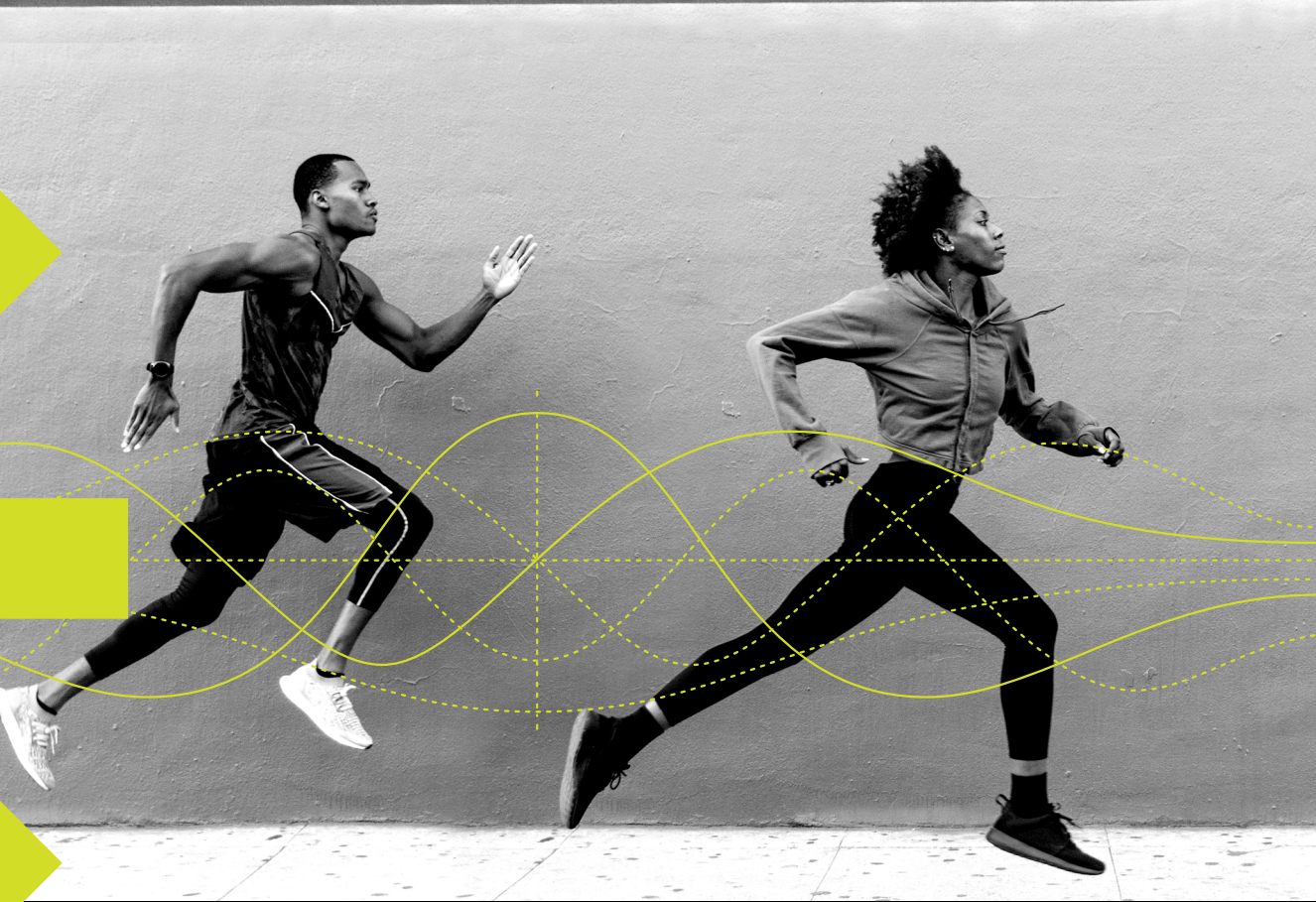




AMERICAN FITNESS INDEX®

2024 Data in Action:
Calling for Change in
America's 100 Largest Cities



July 23, 2024

Dear Partner in Promoting Fitness and Health:

The 2024 ACSM American Fitness Index® (Fitness Index) is a well-respected resource that, now in its 17th year, has proven to be a valuable tool in promoting the very things we all hold dear: health, wellness, fitness and overall quality of life. We are grateful to the American College of Sports Medicine® (ACSM) for our longtime partnership in positively impacting the nation's health.

Ours is a shared mission. As an organization that is committed to, connected to, and invested in our communities, the Elevance Health Foundation has pledged to strengthen our communities and address health inequities in our country. Similarly, ACSM works to extend and enrich lives through the power of movement. The Fitness Index is the intersection between our aspirational paths, providing the practical resources that bring our unified visions to life.

The Fitness Index ranks the 100 largest cities in the United States based on more than 30 fitness indicators. This provides each city with a detailed view of where they are succeeding and where improvements can help ensure they are creating the best environment for health and fitness. Similarly, the Fitness Index shares personal health indicators that individuals can use to assess where improvements can impact their own lives.

As is the case every year, the 2024 Fitness Index celebrates areas of improvement while also noting challenges and areas of opportunity. Arlington, V.A.; Washington D.C; and Seattle, W.A., landed the top three spots in the ranking this year, setting the standard for other communities and providing a roadmap for how to become – and stay – among the fittest cities. We also congratulate Lexington, K.Y., and Miami, F.L., for achieving the greatest improvements in the rankings, rising 31 and 26 places, respectively. Nationally, we saw notable improvements in public transportation and biking/walking to work and park expenditures, denoting individuals who are more inclined to stay active and have better access to the resources to do so.

This year's Fitness Index also identifies areas where communities can – and must – improve. Food insecurity, mental health services and community design enabling increased physical activity are critical factors for overall fitness, and the data reveal there is still work to do.

The Fitness Index provides the data and expertise that empower advocates and city officials alike. That means our partnership with ACSM extends to advocates across the nation who can leverage these insights and tailor their efforts to promote policies that address specific community needs.

We encourage you to review the full report to see where your community ranks and how it compares to Arlington and others. And then we invite you to act. Health and wellness are our most valuable possessions, and advocating for them is a high and noble calling. Please join us in answering that call.

Visit acsm.org/fitnessindex to learn more.

Sincerely,

Shantanu Agrawal, M.D.
Chief Health Officer, Elevance Health



Get Active, Cities! Be the Change with the American Fitness Index

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) wants to help everyone be healthier and more physically active. The ACSM American Fitness Index (Fitness Index) measures how well the 100 largest U.S. cities support healthy, active lifestyles. Cities with the highest Fitness Index scores are considered to have strong community fitness, a concept analogous to individuals having strong personal fitness. Cities that rank near the top of the Fitness Index have more strengths and resources that support healthy living and fewer challenges that hinder it. The opposite is true for cities near the bottom of the rankings: These cities have fewer strengths and resources to support healthy living.

But it's not just about rankings! The Fitness Index offers three ways city leaders and residents can make a difference:

- 1. Fuel Your Knowledge:** The Fitness Index provides data on a composite of health behaviors, chronic diseases, and community assets based on the most recent data available. Armed with this knowledge, residents can advocate for local initiatives and policy changes in their own communities.
- 2. Celebrate Success & Inspire Action:** The Fitness Index celebrates strides that the ranked cities have made towards promoting a culture of health and fitness. It's a source of inspiration for city leaders and residents alike, motivating them to pursue even greater achievements.
- 3. Join the Movement:** The Fitness Index provides cities with tools and resources to help city leaders and residents assess their communities' health and fitness landscape, and then work together to advocate for positive changes.

Why is this relevant to you? Because your voice matters. The Fitness Index aligns with ACSM's vision to extend and enrich lives through the power of movement. After all, healthy living starts where we live, learn, work, and play. By getting involved in grassroots advocacy, you can help create a city that encourages and supports a healthy, active life!

Be the Change

What We Found & What You Can Do

For the first time, the top three cities from last year retained their seats. Congratulations to Arlington, VA, Washington, D.C., and Seattle, WA, for sustaining your healthy, active communities! The full rankings, methodology, data sources and ranges, and references can be found at acsm.org/fitnessindex.

The Fitness Index encourages all residents to get involved at the local level. The following indicators and policies aim to create an environment that supports healthy behaviors, making it easier for individuals to make choices that positively impact their overall health.

Top 10 Cities Overall

- 1 Arlington, VA
- 2 Washington, D.C.
- 3 Seattle, WA
- 4 San Francisco, CA
- 5 Madison, WI
- 6 Minneapolis, MN
- 7 Denver, CO
- 8 Atlanta, GA
- 9 Irvine, CA
- 10 St. Paul, MN

Community Design for Physical Activity & Active Transportation:

Several Fitness Index indicators contribute to a community that is designed for physical activity and active transportation. A recent study published in the *Translational Journal of the American College of Sports Medicine (TJACSM)*¹ found that community policies and assets like parks close to home, as well as walkability and bikeability, were positively associated with the general health status of residents. A quick look at the data shows that all cities have room to improve their community assets.



What We Found

- 47.9 Walk Score
- 52.3 Bike Score
- 63.9 % of days with good air quality
- 71.4 % residents within a 10-minute walk to a park

100 city averages

Policies that encourage active transportation and increase opportunities for physical activity will promote overall fitness, reduce reliance on cars, and reduce air pollution.

What You Can Do

- Advocate for urban planning policies and funding that prioritizes public green spaces, parks, and recreational areas.
- Develop new parks and recreation centers that prioritize equitable access across different income and demographic groups.
- Improve existing facilities to ensure they are safe, well-maintained, and offer diverse opportunities for physical activity.
- Require green spaces in new developments or the renovation of existing public spaces.
- Advocate for policies like Complete Streets policies that prioritize and invest in active transportation infrastructure, such as bike lanes, pedestrian-friendly pathways, and public transportation.
- Create protected bike lanes and sidewalks that focus on connectivity and increase safety for non-motorized transportation.
- Support public transit systems by increasing accessibility, affordability, and service frequency.

¹ Seo B, Nan H, Monahan PO, et al. Association between built environment policy and good health status [Internet]. *Transl J Am Coll Sports Med*. 2024 [cited 2024 April 30];9(2). Available from: https://journals.lww.com/acsm-tj/fulltext/2024/04120/association_between_built_environment_policy_and.15.aspx



Healthy Food Access Initiatives:

Lack of access to healthy food puts millions at risk for chronic diseases and complicates managing existing conditions like diabetes. This burden disproportionately falls on low-income communities and communities of color, often lacking grocery stores and facing limited transportation options. Even in communities with adequate access, most residents are not eating the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables.



What We Found

- 10.4 % have food insecurity**
 - 14.3 % consuming 3+ vegetables/ day**
 - 29.4 % consuming 2+ fruits/ day**
- 100 city averages

Policies that address food insecurity and encourage healthier eating habits can potentially reduce diet-related chronic diseases and improve quality of life.

What You Can Do

- Advocate for policies that promote access to healthy foods, particularly in underserved communities.
- Implement zoning regulations and financial incentives that encourage grocery stores and farmers markets to locate in areas with limited access to fresh produce.
- Issue vouchers or coupons redeemable at farmers markets or grocery stores for purchasing fresh produce.
- Organize community gardens that enable residents to grow their own fruits and vegetables, reducing cost and improving food access.



Community Mental Health Services:

Mental health challenges affect every one of us, either personally or through someone we know. Despite the universal need for support, mental health care often receives less emphasis and resources compared to physical health. This disparity is even more pronounced for individuals who lack the financial means to access mental health services.



What We Found

- 44.7 % had poor mental health in the previous month**
 - 37.7 % had poor physical health in the previous month**
 - 50.1 % were in excellent or very good health**
- 100 city averages

We all have a part in ensuring fair access to opportunities to live healthy lifestyles, including both mental and physical health. Local leaders must act to address the community barriers to preventing and treating mental health illness.

What You Can Do

- Advocate for policies that enhance access to community-based mental health services.
- Increase funding for mental health clinics, integrating mental health services into primary care settings, and promoting awareness and destigmatization of mental health issues.
- Implement school-based mental health programs that provide comprehensive mental health services to students in their local schools.
- Provide training for community members, including teachers and employers, on recognizing and addressing mental health concerns.



Making Cities Healthier: A Call to Action

Building vibrant and healthy communities requires ongoing education and advocacy. These serve as the foundation for long-term, transformative change, propelling the implementation of impactful policies and initiatives that directly improve residents' health and well-being.

Achieving this vision is not a solitary effort. It demands collaboration and sustained action. Grassroots advocates must prioritize policies that resonate with the diverse needs of the community. Engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including local governments, businesses, non-profit organizations, and residents, fosters an inclusive approach. This ensures policy development and implementation truly reflect the community's voice and leads to equitable and impactful health outcomes.

The Fitness Index plays a crucial role in this process with data and information that empowers advocates and city officials alike. Advocates can leverage these insights to tailor their efforts and advocate for policies that address specific community needs.

City officials can utilize the Fitness Index as a baseline to measure progress and make data-driven decisions that improve residents' health. This information can also serve as a yardstick for future evaluations, enabling cities to track their progress and celebrate their achievements in creating healthier and more vibrant communities.

The Fitness Index highlights the tremendous efforts of cities nationwide in prioritizing the health and physical activity of their residents. By embracing collaborative advocacy and leveraging data-driven insights, we can collectively move towards a healthier future for America, one city at a time.

“Achieving this vision is not a solitary effort. It demands collaboration and sustained action.”

A Call to Action

2024 Rankings

Explore the city comparison tool to access all the rankings, scores, and data, as well as to learn what your city can do to help residents lead a healthy, active lifestyle: acsm.org/fitnessindex.

2023-2024 TREND	OVERALL RANK		PERSONAL HEALTH RANK	COMMUNITY + ENVIRONMENT RANK	2023-2024 TREND	OVERALL RANK		PERSONAL HEALTH RANK	COMMUNITY + ENVIRONMENT RANK
	Overall Rank	City				Overall Rank	City		
➔	1	Arlington, VA	4	1	➔	31	Durham, NC	10	82
➔	2	Washington, D.C.	2	3	➔	32	Sacramento, CA	46	26
➔	3	Seattle, WA	1	11	➔	33	Austin, TX	21	49
➔	4	San Francisco, CA	3	18	➔	34	Colorado Springs, CO	20	56
➔	5	Madison, WI	5	16	➔	35	Aurora, CO	18	63
➔	6	Minneapolis, MN	13	2	➔	36	Milwaukee, WI	62	7
➔	7	Denver, CO	6	19	➔	37	Anaheim, CA	11	91
➔	8	Atlanta, GA	9	15	➔	38	Buffalo, NY	68	8
➔	9	Irvine, CA	7	31	➔	39	Anchorage, AK	28	57
➔	10	St. Paul, MN	25	4	➔	40	Fremont, CA	29	50.5
➔	11	San Diego, CA	8	39	➔	41	Norfolk, VA	64	13
➔	12	Portland, OR	22	24	➔	42	Jersey City, NJ	31	50.5
➔	13	Miami, FL	16	35	➔	43	Long Beach, CA	39	43
➔	14	Boston, MA	38	6	➔	44	Virginia Beach, VA	40	46
➔	15	Honolulu, HI	24	28	➔	45	Tampa, FL	57	30
➔	16	St. Petersburg, FL	32	21	➔	46	Orlando, FL	50	40
➔	17	Pittsburgh, PA	44	5	➔	47	Newark, NJ	47	42
➔	18	Chicago, IL	43	9	➔	48	Cleveland, OH	78	10
➔	19	Oakland, CA	23	36	➔	49	Lexington, KY	30	75
➔	20	Spokane, WA	34	23	➔	50	Charlotte, NC	27	83
➔	21	San Jose, CA	12	52	➔	51	Omaha, NE	70	25
➔	22	Plano, TX	19	41	➔	52	New Orleans, LA	71	27
➔	23	Lincoln, NE	33	33	➔	53	Dallas, TX	42	54
➔	24	Raleigh, NC	17	44	➔	54	Los Angeles, CA	37	69
➔	25	Albuquerque, NM	35	29	➔	55	Philadelphia, PA	80	17
➔	26	New York, NY	26	38	➔	56	Tucson, AZ	56	37
➔	27	Boise, ID	36	34	➔	57	Reno, NV	41	62
➔	28	Richmond, VA	51	12	➔	58	Baltimore, MD	77	22
➔	29	Santa Ana, CA	14	66	➔	59	Stockton, CA	49	72
➔	30	Chula Vista, CA	15	67	➔	60	Riverside, CA	48	78

2024 Rankings

2023-2024 TREND	OVERALL RANK		PERSONAL HEALTH RANK	COMMUNITY + ENVIRONMENT RANK	2023-2024 TREND	OVERALL RANK		PERSONAL HEALTH RANK	COMMUNITY + ENVIRONMENT RANK
	Overall Rank	City				Overall Rank	City		
↘	61	Houston, TX	45	86	↘	81	Chesapeake, VA	82	74
↘	62	Cincinnati, OH	91	14	↘	82	Kansas City, MO	92	45
↘	63	Scottsdale, AZ	55	61	↘	83	Fort Wayne, IN	76	87
↗	64	St. Louis, MO	90	20	↘	84	Arlington, TX	66	97
↘	65	Glendale, AZ	61	60	↘	85	Henderson, NV	88	59
↗	66	Columbus, OH	73	47	↘	86	Gilbert, AZ	58	99
↗	67	Nashville, TN	52	89	↘	87	Toledo, OH	100	32
↘	68	Jacksonville, FL	72	58	↘	88	Corpus Christi, TX	95	53
↗	69	Laredo, TX	65	64	↗	89	San Antonio, TX	83	88
↘	70	Mesa, AZ	60	76	↘	90	Las Vegas, NV	85	77
↘	71	Chandler, AZ	63	70	↗	91	Louisville, KY	93	65
↘	72	Garland, TX	53	92	↗	92	Bakersfield, CA	81	95
↘	73	El Paso, TX	67	71	↘	93	Lubbock, TX	94	80
↘	74	Phoenix, AZ	59	84	↘	94	Indianapolis, IN	89	93
↗	75	Fort Worth, TX	54	94	↘	95	Tulsa, OK	99	55
↘	76	Winston-Salem, NC	74	81	→	96	North Las Vegas, NV	86	96
↗	77	Irving, TX	69	90	↗	97	Wichita, KS	96	79
↘	78	Fresno, CA	75	85	↘	98	Memphis, TN	98	73
↗	79	Detroit, MI	87	48	↔	99	Port St. Lucie, FL	79	100
↘	80	Greensboro, NC	84	68	→	100	Oklahoma City, OK	97	98

KEY



→ ↗ ↘ CHANGE IN OVERALL RANK COMPARED TO 2023