



## SMART MOVES

You've heard the saying "You are what you eat." We propose a corollary: "You are where you live." Certain locales tend to foster healthy behaviors and have lower levels of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and asthma as a result. That's worth keeping in mind if you're thinking of relocating, be it across the country or to a nearby town. Before you make a change, ask yourself the three questions below. And for a dose of inspiration, sneak a peek at this year's list of the fittest cities in the U.S., from the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the WellPoint Foundation.

### ► DOES THE CITY SUPPORT WALKERS AND BIKERS?

Commuting on foot or two wheels is a great way to incorporate activity into your daily routine, as many **San Francisco** residents know quite well. (The hilly city is tops when it comes to the percentage of people who burn calories on the way to and from work.)

How to know if a town or neighborhood is amenable to human-powered transit? Look for well-maintained sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic signals, and walking paths, and check out the number of designated bike lanes and local road closures for riders, says Anthony Luke, M.D., a sports medicine specialist at the University of California, San Francisco. "Bike-share and rental services, as well as lots of bike racks, are good indicators too."

### ► IS THERE EASY ACCESS TO FRESH PRODUCE?

An abundance of farmers' markets—which you'll find in **Hartford, CT**, for

example—is a promising sign. Research shows that living near one is associated with a lower body mass index. "They offer the freshest and most diverse food available," says Liz Comiskey, a membership and outreach coordinator of the Farmers Market Coalition, a national nonprofit organization. Go to [search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets](http://search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets) to find locations near you.

### ► ARE THERE LOTS OF PLACES TO PLAY OUTSIDE?

With 36 pools and 210 tennis courts, **Washington, DC**, spends more public dollars on its parks and recreation than any other American city—a boon not only for exercisers but for those seeking mental tranquility. A recent study in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* found that green spaces have a meditative effect on brain waves. If the town you're looking at is lacking, consider shifting your house-hunting expedition to one of its surrounding suburbs.

### ACSM AMERICAN FITNESS INDEX\* America's Fittest Cities 2013

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\*FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [AMERICANFITNESSINDEX.ORG](http://AMERICANFITNESSINDEX.ORG)

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