

ACSM American Fitness Index 2023 Fact Sheet

Overview

The ACSM American Fitness Index was created to help improve the health of the nation and promote active lifestyles by supporting local policies and programs that develop a sustainable, healthy community culture.

The Fitness Index features an annual ranking that assigns a score to the 100 most populous cities in the United States. The Fitness Index rankings reflect a composite of preventive health behaviors, levels of chronic disease conditions, as well as community resources and policies that support physical activity. The intent of the rankings is to provide a valid and reliable measure of community fitness at the city level.

In addition to the rankings, the Fitness Index provides valuable resources that can help communities focus their policy and programming efforts as well as assist them in developing collaborative activities and partnerships with other organizations that contribute to health promotion.

Our Mission

The mission of the Fitness Index is to increase awareness of how cities are performing across a range of health and community measures to spark meaningful discussion and advance actions to help residents be stronger, healthier and more physically fit.

Why We're Different from Other Lists

The Fitness Index starts with research and understanding the scope of the problem. A better understanding of the prevalence rates for physical activity, obesity and chronic disease related to physical inactivity as well as communities' built environment and resources is the first step toward developing programs, initiatives and policies to increase physical activity and reduce chronic diseases.

Moreover, moving a community toward increasing physical activity and improving community fitness involves an understanding of the individual and societal behaviors and social norms related to physical activity. The key fundamentals for improving physical activity behaviors involve increasing awareness and motivation at the personal level, providing a built environment and resources that encourage physical activity, as well as setting policies to better enable individuals and communities to engage in physical activity as part of a healthier lifestyle.

Other things that make the Fitness Index unique:

- Personal health status indicators, as well as community and environmental indicators, are included in the Fitness Index rankings;
- Data from reputable sources and scientific methodology were used to develop the Fitness Index rankings to increase its validity and reliability;

- To help guide community action, areas of excellence for each city are shown, along with improvement priority areas;
- ACSM will provide technical assistance to cities to initiate locally driven health improvement efforts.

Our American Fitness Index Sponsor

Elevance Health Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Elevance Health, Inc., has sponsored the Fitness Index for 16 years. The foundation works to advance health equity by focusing on improving the health of the socially vulnerable through partnerships and programs in our communities with an emphasis on maternal child health; substance use disorder; and food as medicine. Through its key areas of focus, the foundation also strategically aligns with Elevance Health's focus on community health and becoming a lifetime, trusted health partner that is fueled by its purpose to improve the health of humanity. To learn more about Elevance Health Foundation, please visit www.elevancehealth.foundation or follow them @ElevanceFDN on Twitter and Elevance Health Foundation on Facebook.

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