

2022 SUMMARY REPORT

# ACSM AMERICAN FITNESS INDEX<sup>®</sup>

Actively Moving America to Better Health



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## REPORT AUTHORS

Gretchen S. Patch, M.P.H., CPH, American College of Sports Medicine

Jessica M. Coffing, M.P.H., J. Coffing and Associates, LLC

Terrell W. Zollinger, Dr.P.H., J. Coffing and Associates, LLC

Derek A. Zollinger, M.S., J. Coffing and Associates, LLC

Stella L. Volpe, Ph.D., R.D.N., ACSM-CEP, FACSM, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

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Direct questions and comments on the ACSM American Fitness Index or this report to the American College of Sports Medicine at [afi@acsm.org](mailto:afi@acsm.org).

July 12, 2022

Dear Partner in Promoting Fitness and Health:

The ACSM American Fitness Index® (Fitness Index) is a 15-year partnership between the Elevance Health Foundation and the American College of Sports Medicine. Each year, the Fitness Index analyzes data from the 100 largest cities in the United States, per current U.S. Census statistics, and ranks them based on an extensive list of wellness factors.

By compiling this information, we're also able to take a 10,000 ft. view of national trends — the wider sociocultural stories that transcend local politics, geography, demographics and culture. In short: the Fitness Index gives individual communities specific guidance about the ways they can improve, but it also shows us the challenges we collectively face.

While we adjusted to a life with COVID-19, the pandemic only continued to amplify the disparities that exist in our communities, showing us that we must improve health equity and address health-related social needs. Perhaps predictably, the other main theme that rises from this year's analysis is the need for improved mental health.\* In the wake of an extended period of loss, sickness and isolation, this is unsurprising. One silver lining, though, is that physical activity and exercise provide ample mental health benefits, including a decrease in the symptoms of anxiety and depression, which are often tied to substance use disorder. And we can increase rates of physical activity by creating trails, bike lanes, parks and green spaces.

In other words, we aren't forced to simply stand by and hope that people will discover the benefits of exercise — we have at our disposal the tools to make a substantial change for the better in the lives of our fellow citizens.

In 2022, America's Fittest City is Arlington, Virginia, which has occupied first place for the past five years. It is a testament to Arlington's residents and officials that they have been able to maintain such a high quality of life in their community. Arlington serves as an instructive model for cities working to improve their Fitness Index rankings.

We invite you to review the full report to see where your municipality ranked and why and we encourage you to partner with us to improve the health and well-being of your community and fellow citizens. Together, we can make a significant difference.

Visit [AmericanFitnessIndex.org](https://AmericanFitnessIndex.org) to learn more.

Sincerely,

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

*\*If you or someone you know is in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text the Crisis Text Line (text HELLO to 741741). Both services are free, confidential and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.*

## NEED FOR ACTION

Avoiding sedentary behaviors and engaging in regular physical activity are two of the most important ways people can improve and maintain their health. While a significant proportion of Americans are active, less than 25% of adults meet national physical activity guidelines.



### PHYSICAL HEALTH

For children and adolescents, regular physical activity can decrease body fat and improve bone health, cardiorespiratory fitness, and muscular strength. For adults, regular exercise can reduce the risk of premature death, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, breast cancer, colon cancer, and the risk of falls.



### MENTAL AND SOCIAL HEALTH

Beyond physical health benefits, regular exercise and physical activity also provide mental and social health benefits, including decreasing the risk and symptoms of anxiety and depression in adults. An active lifestyle also improves cognitive function and delays cognitive decline. Designing spaces with parks, green spaces, trails, and bike lanes can not only increase physical activity but also increase a sense of neighborhood cohesion and improve public perception of a city.



### ECONOMIC HEALTH

Physical activity isn't only good for personal health — it's good for a city's bottom line. There is strong evidence of significant economic benefits from local policies and city planning that support physical activity, walkability, and bikeability. Well-designed cities experience increased home values and retail activity, as well as business and job growth.

Increasingly, research suggests that to improve physical and mental health, prevent disease and disability, and enhance quality of life for all Americans, we must create a culture that integrates physical activity into our daily lives.



## OUR APPROACH

“The ACSM American Fitness Index highlights the health and health habits of communities across the United States. It provides us with a snapshot of how we are doing, and identifies what more we can do to make our cities healthier. This past year, as we all know, was a very different year, with the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the Fitness Index continues to help identify how communities can ensure that we have a healthy nation.”

—STELLA L. VOLPE, PH.D., R.D.N., ACSM-CEP, FACSM, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, chair of the ACSM American Fitness Index Advisory Board

The mission of the ACSM American Fitness Index (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 action to make residents stronger, healthier, and more physically fit. The Fitness Index celebrates healthy, active lifestyles and encourages city leaders to enact policies, dedicate funding, and implement local changes to promote these behaviors. We focus on three strategies to support this effort:

1. **INFORM:** Demonstrate the health, social, and economic benefits of physical activity, as well as the policies, funding, and infrastructure that promote healthy behaviors.

The Fitness Index ranks the 100 largest cities in the U.S. on a composite of health behaviors, chronic diseases, and community assets based on the most recent data available. These rankings give city leaders the necessary information to improve their residents' health through local initiatives and policies.

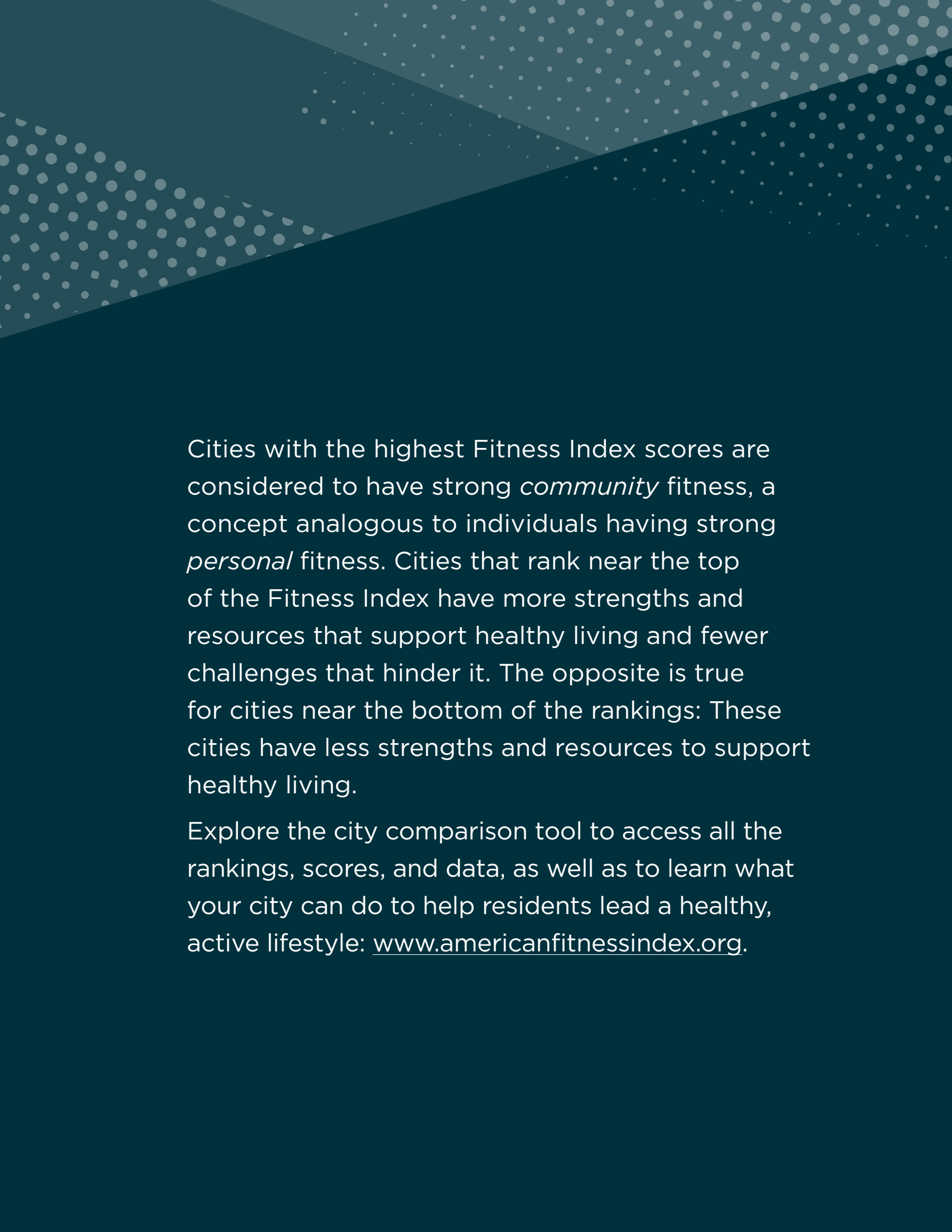
2. **ENGAGE:** Inspire city leaders and residents to recognize and celebrate the factors that contribute to their city's culture of health and fitness.

The Fitness Index has a strong history of widely sharing the annual rankings, as well as success stories from cities making healthy changes through strategic dissemination and communication. Using traditional and social media, ACSM estimates that the Fitness Index reaches 600 million people annually to recognize achievements and stimulate local action and advocacy.

3. **BUILD:** Expand local capacity and partnerships to implement policy and infrastructure improvements that enable physically active lifestyles for all residents.

The Fitness Index is more than an annual ranking of cities. City leaders can access Fitness Index [infographics and resources](#) like the [Community Action Guide](#) and the [Community Fitness Assessment](#). These tools allow any city, regardless of whether it is in the Fitness Index rankings, to assess community health and fitness to develop and implement plans for improvement.

The Fitness Index approach aligns with the [American College of Sports Medicine's](#) (ACSM) work to address health and fitness through research and education. After all, the journey to a healthier future begins where we live, learn, work, and play. The Fitness Index indicators address social and physical environments that promote good health for all.



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 less strengths and resources to support healthy living.

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: [www.americanfitnessindex.org](http://www.americanfitnessindex.org).

# 2022 RANKINGS

2021-2022 TREND	OVERALL RANK		PERSONAL HEALTH RANK	COMMUNITY + ENVIRONMENT RANK
➔	1	Arlington, VA	1	1
➔	2	Madison, WI	2	22
➔	3	Minneapolis, MN	4	3
➔	4	Washington, D.C.	5	2
➔	5	Seattle, WA	3	12
➔	6	Irvine, CA	6	25
➔	7	Portland, OR	12	18
➔	8	St. Paul, MN	19	4
➔	9	Denver, CO	9	27
➔	10	Chicago, IL	22	6
➔	11	Oakland, CA	8	32
➔	12	Boise, ID	18	24
➔	13	Boston, MA	31	10
➔	14	San Francisco, CA	27	17
➔	15	Aurora, CO	17	37
➔	16	Lincoln, NE	26	29
➔	17	New York, NY	21	36
➔	18	Atlanta, GA	36	23
➔	19	Jersey City, NJ	15	45
➔	20	San Jose, CA	11	57
➔	21	Buffalo, NY	55	8
➔	22	Honolulu, HI	25	38
➔	23	San Diego, CA	20	42
➔	24	Santa Ana, CA	7	75
➔	25	Tampa, FL	33	34
➔	26	Fremont, CA	13	58
➔	27	Austin, TX	14	56
➔	28	Sacramento, CA	49	31
➔	29	Plano, TX	29	44
➔	30	Spokane, WA	56	20

2021-2022 TREND	OVERALL RANK		PERSONAL HEALTH RANK	COMMUNITY + ENVIRONMENT RANK
➔	31	Anaheim, CA	10	88
➔	32	Milwaukee, WI	67	11
➔	33	Albuquerque, NM	50	28
➔	34	Raleigh, NC	24	50
➔	35	Tucson, AZ	37	41
➔	36	Richmond, VA	57	21
➔	37	Durham, NC	16	69
➔	38	Pittsburgh, PA	72	5
➔	39	St. Petersburg, FL	63	19
➔	40	Miami, FL	58	33
➔	41	Long Beach, CA	44	43
➔	42	Glendale, AZ	41	46
➔	43	Virginia Beach, VA	35	52
➔	44	Omaha, NE	62	26
➔	45	Newark, NJ	54	40
➔	46	New Orleans, LA	65	30
➔	47	Norfolk, VA	74	14
➔	48	Chula Vista, CA	28	74
➔	49	Colorado Springs, CO	30	72
➔	50	Reno, NV	32	64
➔	51	Orlando, FL	60	39
➔	52	Los Angeles, CA	40	61
➔	53	Winston-Salem, NC	34	73
➔	54	Charlotte, NC	23	92
➔	55	Cleveland, OH	81	9
➔	56	Anchorage, AK	38	67
➔	57	Dallas, TX	51	55
➔	58	Chandler, AZ	47	68
➔	59	Hialeah, FL	61	47
➔	60	Scottsdale, AZ	42	81

# 2022 RANKINGS

2021-2022 TREND	OVERALL RANK		PERSONAL HEALTH RANK	COMMUNITY + ENVIRONMENT RANK	2021-2022 TREND	OVERALL RANK		PERSONAL HEALTH RANK	COMMUNITY + ENVIRONMENT RANK
↘	61	Houston, TX	39	85	↘	81	Corpus Christi, TX	85	51
↗	62	Philadelphia, PA	88	7	↗	82	Fort Worth, TX	68	96
↘	63	Nashville, TN	46	82	↗	83.5	Arlington, TX	69	97
↘	64	Stockton, CA	53	70	↗	83.5	Toledo, OH	98	35
↗	65	Mesa, AZ	43	86	↗	85	Bakersfield, CA	70	95
↗	66	Phoenix, AZ	45	84	↘	86	Lubbock, TX	78	77
→	67	Baltimore, MD	91	13	↗	87	Chesapeake, VA	77	79
↘	68	Cincinnati, OH	90	16	↘	88	Kansas City, MO	87	53
↗	69	San Antonio, TX	52	91	↗	89	Wichita, KS	83	71
↘	70	St. Louis, MO	96	15	↘	90	Riverside, CA	82	80
↘	71	Jacksonville, FL	73	54	↘	91	Detroit, MI	95	49
↘	72	Greensboro, NC	71	62	↘	92	Lexington, KY	86	76
↗	73	Gilbert, AZ	48	98	↘	93	Henderson, NV	92	59
↗	74	Garland, TX	59	90	↘	94	Memphis, TN	84	89
↗	75	Fort Wayne, IN	64	87	↘	95	Las Vegas, NV	93	65
↗	76	Columbus, OH	80	48	↘	96	Louisville, KY	97	66
↘	77	El Paso, TX	75	63	↘	97	Indianapolis, IN	89	93
↘	78	Fresno, CA	66	94	↗	98	Tulsa, OK	100	78
↘	79	Laredo, TX	79	60	↘	99	North Las Vegas, NV	94	99
↗	80	Irving, TX	76	83	→	100	Oklahoma City, OK	99	100

*\*Due to the nature of data collection and reporting by public agencies, some of the data presented in the 2022 Fitness Index were collected prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, these data describe the health and environmental conditions in the 100 largest U.S. cities not long before the pandemic started, as well as during the pandemic.*

## KEY

		1ST QUARTILE			3RD QUARTILE
		2ND QUARTILE			4TH QUARTILE

→ ↗ ↘ CHANGE IN OVERALL RANK COMPARED TO 2021



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Good health starts in our homes, schools, and communities. That's why the Fitness Index looks at both personal health behaviors, meaning what we're doing individually to get and stay healthy, as well as the community assets, like parks, playgrounds, and recreation centers, that help us do so.

For the fifth year in a row, a record for the Fitness Index, Arlington, VA, was ranked as the fittest city in America, with a score of 85.0 out of a possible 100. Arlington also ranked #1 in both the personal health and community/environment sub-scores. At the indicator level, Arlington ranked among the top 10 cities for 19 of 34 indicators, with six indicators ranked #1, including:

- ▶ % exercising in the previous month,
- ▶ % in excellent or very good health,
- ▶ % with poor physical health in the previous month,
- ▶ % with high blood pressure,
- ▶ % with stroke, and
- ▶ % with diabetes.

Leading competitors #2 Madison, WI, and #3 Minneapolis, MN, were virtually tied with each other, scoring 78.2 and 78.0 overall, respectively. Madison ranked in the top 10 cities for 16 indicators, and as the #1 city for playgrounds per 10,000 residents. Minneapolis ranked in the top 10 cities for 14 indicators, and the #1 city for park expenditures, recreation centers per 20,000 residents, and bikeability (Bike Score).

### **NEW IN 2022 - WELCOME, SPOKANE, WA!**

The Fitness Index Advisory Board updated the largest 100 cities based on U.S. Census population data. As a result, Spokane, WA, was included in the ranking for the first time, replacing Baton Rouge, LA. Spokane ranked #30 overall, with a score of 58.2, and ranked #56 and #20 in the personal health and community/environment sub-scores, respectively. At the indicator level, Spokane ranked in the top 10 cities for residents meeting the aerobic activity guidelines and park expenditures.



# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## MOVERS & SHAKERS

Making big moves in 2022, Chicago, IL, broke into the top 10 fittest cities for the first time. Chicago ranked #10 overall, scored 69.6 and ranked #22 in the personal health sub-score and #6 for community/environment sub-score. Chicago ranked #14 last year and has been climbing the rankings since 2018. Chicago improved five indicators by at least 10% over 2021:

- ▶ % smoking,
- ▶ % in excellent or very good health,
- ▶ % with poor physical health in the previous month,
- ▶ % with poor mental health in the previous month, and
- ▶ % with stroke.



*Congratulations, Chicago!  
You're setting a great  
example for other cities  
to follow.*

## DEEPER DIVE

Beyond the overall rankings, the sub-scores and individual indicator data tell a more complete story for each city. Many of the top ranking cities did well in both personal health and community/environment sub-scores. Cities like Arlington, VA, Minneapolis, MN, and Washington, D.C. ranked in the top 10 for both sub-scores. These cities have built a health community that supports healthy, active living.

### PERSONAL HEALTH RANK & SCORE

#### OVERALL RANK

1	<b>Arlington, VA</b>	<b>86.8</b>
2	Madison, WI	84.9
3	Seattle, WA	79.5
4	<b>Minneapolis, MN</b>	<b>76.7</b>
5	<b>Washington, D.C.</b>	<b>75.7</b>
6	Irvine, CA	75.6
7	Santa Ana, CA	74.5
8	Oakland, CA	73.0
9	Denver, CO	72.6
10	Anaheim, CA	72.5

### COMMUNITY/ ENVIRONMENT RANK & SCORE

#### OVERALL RANK

1	<b>Arlington, VA</b>	<b>82.5</b>
2	<b>Washington, D.C.</b>	<b>81.1</b>
3	<b>Minneapolis, MN</b>	<b>80.0</b>
4	St. Paul, MN	79.9
5	Pittsburgh, PA	78.9
6	Chicago, IL	78.4
7	Philadelphia, PA	78.0
8	Buffalo, NY	77.9
9	Cleveland, OH	77.3
10	Boston, MA	77.1



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### ADJUSTING TO A WORLD TURNED ON ITS SIDE BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

We are still being affected by the aftermath of the most significant health event in a century. The COVID-19 pandemic changed almost every aspect of our behavior as well as our environment. Where and how we worked, studied, shopped, and exercised were all affected. As a consequence, our physical and mental health were affected in fundamental and often unexpected ways; the full impact of which won't be known for years to come.

### MENTAL HEALTH

Everyone is affected, either directly or indirectly, by poor mental health. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated one in five Americans experienced a mental illness annually. The pandemic drastically changed many of our physical and social environments, which resulted in greater rates of isolation, anxiety, and/or depression.<sup>1-2</sup> Unfortunately, large segments of the population lost their jobs due to the pandemic, while others were required to work in high-risk service sector jobs; both experiences contributed to significant personal and economic stress. Among those with no prior mental illness, nearly 58% of adults in the U.S. perceive a pandemic-related negative effect on emotional or mental health.<sup>3</sup>

On average, 39.6% of residents in the Fitness Index cities reported poor mental health on at least one day in the previous month, with Miami, FL, reporting the lowest rate at 26.6%. Cities ranked in the top 25 overall tended to score well in personal health indicators; however, one interesting exception was mental health. Only two cities, Chicago, IL, and Honolulu, HI, ranked in the top 25 overall and in the 10 lowest rates of poor mental health. Four cities ranked in the top 25 overall also reported some of the highest rates of poor mental health: Madison, WI, San Francisco, CA, San Jose, CA, and Washington, D.C.



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### LOWEST RATES OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH

OVERALL RANK		
1	Miami, FL	26.6%
	Hialeah, FL (tied)	26.6%
3	Chesapeake, VA	29.2%
4	Orlando, FL	30.7%
5	Irving, TX	31.6%
6	Plano, TX	31.7%
7	Chicago, IL	31.8%
8	Honolulu, HI	31.8%
9	Garland, TX	32.2%
10	Corpus Christi, TX	32.6%

### HIGHEST RATES OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH

OVERALL RANK		
100	New Orleans, LA	51.8%
99	Laredo, TX	51.3%
98	San Francisco, CA	48.7%
97	Washington, D.C.	48.4%
96	San Jose, CA	47.2%
95	Madison, WI	46.7%
94	Lubbock, TX	46.3%
93	Stockton, CA	46.1%
92	Riverside, CA	46.0%*
91	Cincinnati, OH	46.0%*

*\*Values have been rounded to the nearest tenth of a point, resulting in some apparent ties; however, the rankings are based on the full calculated values, which were not equal in those cases.*

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Research has shown physical activity, both aerobic and strength training, to be effective in preventing and reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression, improving mood and self-esteem, and improving quality of sleep.<sup>4-5</sup> Research has shown an 18% lower risk of depression when getting at least half the recommended amount of physical activity weekly and a 25% lower risk when meeting the physical activity guidelines. Further, 11.5% of depression cases could be prevented if less active adults met the physical activity guidelines.<sup>6</sup>

Physical activity may be as effective as medication or psychotherapy, with similar dropout rates, and can be synergistic when used in combination with other treatment approaches.<sup>7-9</sup> Physical activity also has fewer negative side effects compared with medication interventions, can be self-administered, is effective almost immediately, and is a low-cost treatment option.<sup>10</sup>



#### ACSM & CDC RECOMMENDATIONS:

##### 150 MINUTES

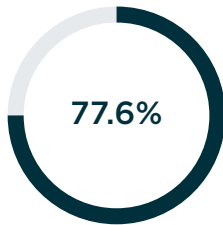
of moderate intensity aerobic activity every week, ~22 minutes per day

##### 2X PER WEEK

muscle-strengthening activities working all major muscle groups

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

On average, 77.6% of adults reported any exercise in the previous month, a number largely unchanged from 2018 when the Fitness Index expanded to the 100 largest cities in the U.S. Roughly 50.9% of adult residents met the aerobic activity guidelines, and just 23.8% met both the aerobic and strength activity guidelines.

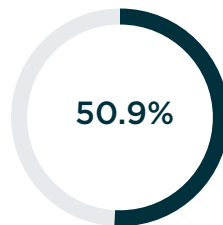


OF ADULTS REPORTED  
EXERCISING IN THE  
PREVIOUS MONTH

### EXERCISING IN THE PREVIOUS MONTH

#### OVERALL RANK

1. Arlington, VA
2. Oakland, CA
3. Fremont, CA
4. Madison, WI
5. Durham, NC
6. Seattle, WA
7. Lubbock, TX
8. Denver, CO
9. Boise, ID
10. Raleigh, NC

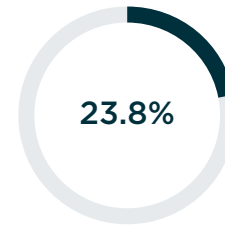


OF ADULTS MET AEROBIC  
ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

### MEETING AEROBIC ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

#### OVERALL RANK

1. St. Petersburg, FL
2. St. Paul, MN
3. Minneapolis, MN
4. San Francisco, CA
5. Madison, WI
6. Spokane, WA
7. Portland, OR
8. Seattle, WA
9. Tucson, AZ
10. Chula Vista & San Diego, CA (tied)



OF ADULTS MET AEROBIC  
AND STRENGTH ACTIVITY  
GUIDELINES

### MEETING AEROBIC & STRENGTH ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

#### OVERALL RANK

1. Anaheim, Irvine, Santa Ana, CA (tied)
4. Hialeah & Miami, FL (tied)
6. Madison, WI
7. Minneapolis, MN
8. Tucson, AZ
9. Atlanta, GA
10. Albuquerque, NM

A side effect of the COVID-19 pandemic was an increase in the demand for community resources to be physically active in a safe manner. Given the extensive impact physical activity can have on both mental and physical health, there has never been a more important time to increase population-level physical activity in all age groups through changes to local neighborhoods, parks, and other community assets.



## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

“Once we normalize mental health the way we normalize an MRI for your tweaked knee or any other medical treatment, that’s when you start to see stigma come down. When you fight stigma, you can save lives.”

— JEROME M. ADAMS, M.D., M.P.H., 20TH U.S. SURGEON GENERAL<sup>15</sup>

Poor mental health impacts physical health and also our efficiency and ability to focus in the workplace. Stressors, whether mental, emotional, or physical, disrupt an employee’s ability to deliver their best efforts, leading to absenteeism or presenteeism and ultimately resulting in a loss of productivity. Many employees feel pressured to work while sick, especially those working from home or in helping professions, leading to increased stress and burnout and exacerbating poor mental health.<sup>11-12</sup> With an economic impact of more than \$300 billion each year, mental illness is a concern for individuals, business leaders, and city officials alike.<sup>13</sup>

While the pandemic exacerbated mental illness, it also renewed conversations around increasing prevention and early treatment. Mental health often lacks the same resources and attention given to treating physical health. Community mental health resources are being stretched to their limits, leaving huge gaps in care for those who need it most. Further, not everyone has financial access to help when they need it. More than 31 million Americans lack health insurance to pay for mental illness treatment, even if it is available in their community.

It is critical that city officials and business and community leaders act together to address the growing mental health crisis. Increasing community-level physical activity must be one part of a multifaceted response that includes:<sup>14</sup>

- ▶ **Using your voice.** Destigmatize mental illness by talking about both mental health and physical health when discussing health.
- ▶ **Making local changes.** Ensure all residents have access to green spaces in their neighborhoods, specifically within a 10-minute walk from their homes, to reduce anxiety, depression, and stress and increase a sense of community cohesion.
- ▶ **Activating existing resources.** Leverage public spaces like parks and recreation facilities to increase civic and social engagement to decrease isolation and loneliness as well as to meet the demand for places to be physically active.
- ▶ **Building capacity.** Train the local workforce, not just first responders, to recognize mental health issues, often known as [mental health first aid](#).
- ▶ **Creating a culture of health.** Develop work environments that meet mental and physical health needs of employees, whether working on-site or remotely.

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.



### **ABSENTEEISM**

Employees physically or mentally ill and absent from work

### **PRESENTEEISM**

Employees present but not working at full capacity due to physical or mental illness

## INTERPRETING THE RANKINGS

It is important to consider both the score and the rank for each city when using the Fitness Index. While the rankings list the cities from highest to lowest score, the scores for many cities are very similar, indicating there may be relatively little real difference among their fitness levels.

For example, Atlanta, GA, scored 62.0 overall and ranked #18, while Santa Ana, CA, scored 61.0 overall and ranked #24. While Atlanta ranked six positions higher than Santa Ana in the 2022 Fitness Index, these two cities are actually very similar across most of the indicators, as evidenced by the close scores (1.0 point difference in scores); thus, there is little real difference in the respective community fitness levels of these two cities.

In addition, while one city ranks #1 and another ranks #100, this does not necessarily mean that the highest ranked city has excellent values across all indicators and the lowest ranked city has the lowest values across all indicators. The ranking merely indicates that, relative to each other, some cities scored better than others. Visit [www.americanfitnessindex.org/rankings](http://www.americanfitnessindex.org/rankings) to compare city indicators and sub-scores using the interactive city comparison tool.

It is also important to remember that a majority of the indicators do not change rapidly, and it will take time for the impact of new initiatives to result in changes to health indicators. While improvements in community and built environment indicators are important investments, a notable change in the health of residents is expected to slowly, but surely, follow. Additionally, some indicator-level changes from year to year may be due to sample size or sampling variation.

Cities with the best scores, and even those with scores close to the best, are commended for their efforts to improve and maintain the health and fitness of their residents. These cities demonstrated the ability to support healthy lifestyles; thus, their approaches may serve as examples to cities working to improve similar indicators.

**The Fitness Index celebrates the tremendous efforts that all cities put into improving the health and well-being of their residents as we all move toward a healthier future for America.**

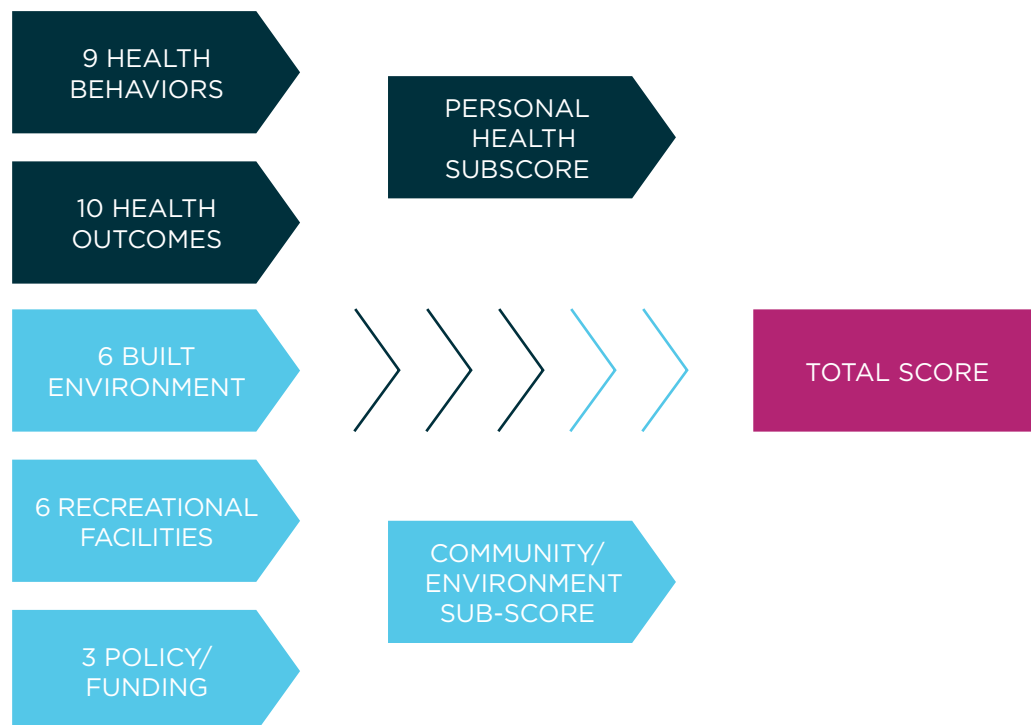


## APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

The Fitness Index's annual assessment of the 100 largest cities in the U.S. provides city officials with much needed data at the local level. Due to the nature of data collection and reporting, some of the data used in the 2022 rankings were collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The effects of the pandemic on personal health behaviors and health outcomes will not be fully understood for several years.

The Fitness Index was calculated using 34 indicators from reliable, publicly accessible, and regularly updated sources. Indicators were combined to create sub-scores for personal health and community and environment indicators. Individual indicators were weighted relative to their assessed impact on community fitness, converted to ranks, and combined using a mathematical formula described in the methodology section on the website. A weighted average of the two sub-scores formed the total score, which was then ranked to show how the cities' fitness levels compared to each other.

The analysis included city-level data when available. All other indicator data were analyzed for the county(ies) where the city proper was located. Groups of counties were used when the city limits extended across county lines. For example, the city of Denver, CO, is located only in Denver County; however, New York, NY, is located in the five counties of Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, and Richmond.





## APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

The Fitness Index Advisory Board reviewed and updated the largest 100 U.S. cities by population. As a result, Baton Rouge, LA, was removed from the rankings and Spokane, WA, was added for the first time.

Due to an insufficient number of Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey respondents, responses from 2017 and 2019 were used for Laredo, TX, for the following indicators:

- ▶ % meeting aerobic activity guidelines,
- ▶ % meeting aerobic & strength activity guidelines,
- ▶ % consuming 2+ fruits/day,
- ▶ % consuming 3+ vegetables/day, and
- ▶ % with high blood pressure.

These indicators were last collected by the BRFSS in 2019. Parks and recreation facilities data were collected by the Fitness Index staff for Fort Wayne, IN, Gilbert, AZ, and Indianapolis, IN.

For more information on the development of the Fitness Index, please visit: [www.americanfitnessindex.org/methodology](http://www.americanfitnessindex.org/methodology).



## APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

### PERSONAL HEALTH INDICATORS

Health Behaviors	Data Range		100 City Average
% exercising in the previous month	61.8	93.8	77.6
% meeting aerobic activity guidelines	34.2	65.4	50.9
% meeting aerobic & strength activity guidelines	15.7	31.0	23.8
% bicycling or walking to work	0.5	19.3	4.5
% using public transportation to work	0.3	55.6	7.0
% consuming 2+ fruits/ day	21.3	41.7	30.9
% consuming 3+ vegetables/ day	8.8	20.9	14.5
% sleeping 7+ hours/ day	57.0	78.8	68.0
% smoking	3.8	21.7	12.8

Health Outcomes			
% in excellent or very good health	31.1	70.1	55.9
% with poor physical health in the previous month	16.1	35.5	27.5
% with poor mental health in the previous month	26.6	51.8	39.6
% with obesity	17.8	52.5	30.0
% with asthma	3.5	18.2	9.4
% with high blood pressure	15.2	45.7	30.4
% with angina or coronary heart disease	0.1	7.8	3.4
% with stroke	0.4	18.2	3.2
% with diabetes	5.2	25.6	10.3
Pedestrian fatalities/ 100,000 residents	0.0	7.5	2.6



# APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

## COMMUNITY/ ENVIRONMENT INDICATORS

Built Environment	Data Range		100 City Average
Air quality index	3.8	99.2	65.3
Bike Score	29.2	83.5	54.2
% with food insecurity	7.2	15.8	11.5
Parks/ 10,000 residents	1.3	11.2	4.1
% within a 10-minute walk to a park	35.0	100	71.6
Walk Score	21.0	88.3	48.0

Recreational Facilities			
Ball diamonds/ 10,000 residents	0.4	5.2	1.7
Basketball hoops/ 10,000 residents	0.8	16.9	3.4
Playgrounds/ 10,000 residents	0.8	6.9	2.5
Recreational centers/ 20,000 residents	0.1	2.3	0.9
Swimming pools/ 100,000 residents	0.0	10.9	2.3
Tennis courts/ 10,000 residents	0.2	6.0	1.8

Policy & Funding Rank			
Local Complete Streets policy	0.0	2.0	1.1
Park expenditure/ resident	\$16	\$302	\$107
Physical education requirement	0.0	3.0	2.8

## APPENDIX: DATA SOURCES

The Fitness Index uses a variety of data sources to calculate the annual scores and rankings.

- ▶ 2019 American Community Survey — U.S. Census
- ▶ 2019 & 2020 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, County Data — CDC
- ▶ 2020 Environmental Protection Agency
- ▶ 2019 Map the Meal Gap — Feeding America
- ▶ 2019 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- ▶ 2021 Smart Growth America/National Complete Streets Coalition
- ▶ 2021 Trust for Public Land — City Park Facts
- ▶ 2021 Walk Score and Bike Score
- ▶ 2021 National Association of State Boards of Education



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## ABOUT US



The American College of Sports Medicine is the largest sports medicine and exercise science organization in the world. More than 50,000 international, national and regional members and certified exercise professionals are dedicated to advancing and integrating scientific research to provide educational and practical applications of exercise science and sports medicine. More details can be found at [www.acsm.org](http://www.acsm.org).

ACSM is a global leader in promoting the benefits of physical activity and advocates for legislation that helps government and the health community make it a priority. ACSM encourages Congress to support continued funding of parks, trails and safe routes to school, as well as the need for all Americans to meet the physical activity recommendations included in the National Physical Activity Guidelines, and the need for the guidelines to be regularly updated every 10 years.



Elevance Health Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Elevance Health, Inc. 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](http://www.elevancehealth.foundation) or follow us @ElevanceFDN on Twitter and Elevance Health Foundation on Facebook.



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