

Nation's capital named 'Fittest city' in US

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Washington, D.C., followed by Minneapolis/St. Paul and San Diego as places that encourage exercise.

(HealthDay)—If you're a resident of Washington, D.C., congratulations—the nation's capital is also the fitness capital of the United States, according to a new report.

Washington, D.C, is the fittest of the 50 largest cities in the United States, followed by Minneapolis-St. Paul and San Diego, according to the eighth annual American Fitness Index (AFI) rankings from the American College of Sports Medicine and the Anthem Foundation.

These metropolitan areas offer residents the best outdoor exercise options and have fairly low rates of obesity, diabetes and smoking, according to experts who drew up the list.

Meanwhile, Indianapolis has the dubious distinction of being named the least fit city in the United States, below Memphis, Oklahoma City, San Antonio and Louisville.

The report's authors—including a panel of 26 health and [physical activity](#) experts— looked at U.S. Census data, data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other sources to compile the fittest cities list.

The report paints a mixed picture of the general health of residents in American cities. The overall rate of angina or [coronary heart disease](#) fell 9.5 percent between 2014 and 2015, and there was a 5.5 percent increase in the overall number of park units in the cities.

However, there was an 11 percent drop in the percentage of people who exercised in the last 30 days, a 7.8 percent increase in the diabetes death rate and a 5.5 percent drop in the number of people who eat enough fruit every day.

"The AFI is two things: a measure of how healthy a metro area is today, and a call-to-action for urban and suburban leaders to design infrastructures that promote active lifestyles and lead to positive health outcomes," Walter Thompson, chair of the AFI advisory board, said in a news release from the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM).

"Our goal is to provide communities and residents with resources that help them assess, respond and achieve a better, healthier life," he added.

Dr. Sam Nussbaum, chief medical officer for Anthem Inc., said, "It is heartening to see a city's health improve, and this year there were some remarkable shifts in rankings."

Inactivity has become an epidemic in the United States, so the ACSM is

encouraging Americans to do at least 30 minutes of exercise and 10 minutes of stretching and light muscle training a day, five days a week.

Ways to boost physical activity include incorporating it into your weekday schedule, setting goals, involving family and friends, and joining walking clubs or other groups. Being more active can reduce your risk of chronic disease and improve your quality of life, according to the ACSM.

More information: Find out where your city falls in the American Fitness Index rankings [here](#).

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