

Free Market Mojo

"Moral crusaders seldom have time for economics." – Thomas Sowell



The American Fitness Index

by Ariel Goldring



The American College of Sports Medicine has just released the latest version of the [American Fitness Index](#), which ranks the health and fitness levels of America's fifty largest cities.

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ACSM AMERICAN FITNESS INDEX™			
RANKING	SCORE	RANKING	SCORE
1. Washington, DC.	73.5	26. Philadelphia, PA.	50.4
2. Boston, MA.	72.6	27. Milwaukee, WI.	49.2
3. Minneapolis, MN.	71.7	28. Buffalo, NY.	48.8
4. Seattle, WA.	70.5	29. Kansas City, KS.	47.9
5. Portland, OR.	70.4	30. Tampa, FL.	47.8
6. Denver, CO.	69.9	31. Nashville, TN.	47.8
7. Sacramento, CA.	65.5	32. Phoenix, AZ.	47.4
8. San Francisco, CA.	64.7	33. Chicago, IL.	47.0
9. Hartford, CT.	64.4	34. Charlotte, NC.	44.0
10. Austin, TX.	63.9	35. Columbus, OH.	42.8
11. Richmond, VA.	62.7	36. Riverside, CA.	42.8
12. Cincinnati, OH.	62.5	37. Saint Louis, MO.	42.2
13. San Diego, CA.	62.0	38. Los Angeles, CA.	40.5
14. San Jose, CA.	61.0	39. Miami, FL.	39.9
15. Salt Lake City, UT.	60.6	40. Dallas, TX.	39.5
16. Atlanta, GA.	57.7	41. New Orleans, LA.	37.7
17. Virginia Beach, VA.	57.7	42. Houston, TX.	37.6
18. Providence, RI.	57.2	43. San Antonio, TX.	36.9
19. Orlando, FL.	55.5	44. Indianapolis, IN.	35.9
20. Baltimore, MD.	53.5	45. Las Vegas, NV.	35.3
21. New York, NY.	52.9	46. Louisville, KY.	32.5
22. Raleigh, NC.	52.4	47. Detroit, MI.	31.9
23. Pittsburgh, PA.	52.0	48. Memphis, TN.	31.6
24. Jacksonville, FL.	51.2	49. Birmingham, AL.	31.2
25. Cleveland, OH.	51.0	50. Oklahoma City, OK.	24.3



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The always interesting Richard Florida along with his [Martin Prosperity Institute](#) colleague Charlotta Mellander took a look at the relationships between the American Fitness Index and other regional characteristics that include temperature, income and education levels.

When it comes to weather:

First and foremost, we find no correlation between fitness and cold locations, measured as mean January temperature. We also find no correlation between fitness and the January to July temperature difference. We do, however, find a significant correlation between fitness and the hottest places, measured as mean July temperature: But it is negative (-.52), meaning places that get really hot in July have lower levels of fitness on average.

When looking at the relationship between fitness levels and economic development, they find some correlations:

It stands to reason that more affluent regions where residents have more resources to devote to health and fitness would score better. And, not surprisingly, that is what we find. We find a significant but moderate relationship between metro-level fitness and economic output per capita (.35), and between it and income (.41), and a somewhat higher association between fitness and metropolitan wages (.54).

Not surprisingly, highly educated cities were more fit:

Metros with more highly educated populations have higher levels of fitness, again not surprisingly. The correlation between fitness and [human capital](#) (measured as the percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher, .66) is the strongest of any of the variables we looked at.