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Austin ranks among top fit cities, again

Austin Business Journal

Austin was listed among the country's healthiest cities on two rankings released last week and Monday.

The Texas capital city fell one spot to No. 10 fittest city on the **American College of Sports Medicine's** American Fitness Index. The ranking, which analyzes statistics from the U.S.'s 50 most populous cities, said Washington D.C. was again the most healthy, taking 73.5 points out of a possible 100. Boston, Mass. took the No. 2 spot, followed by St. Paul, Minn.; Seattle, Wash.; Portland, Ore.; Denver, Colo.; Sacramento, Calif.; San Francisco, Calif.; and Hartford, Conn.

The report factors in preventive health behaviors, chronic disease levels, access to health care and community resources and policies that support physical activity. The D.C. area was cited for having a relatively low smoking rate, higher-than-average population eating recommended daily serving of fruits and vegetables and lower-than-average rates of obesity, asthma, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

The report said education levels were a large factor in top health-rated cities. Areas with high ratios of high school or higher education graduates were more likely to be physically active and have access to care through health insurance.

Texas' other large metros were all ranked among the worst 10 largest metros for health. Dallas fell five spots to No. 40, taking 39.5 points out of 100. Houston was No. 42 with 37.6 points and San Antonio was No. 43 with 36.9 points.

Austin was also ranked 10th fittest last week by **Shape Magazine**. The publication attributed the ranking to the city's large number of parks, 220, and its young, highly active community. Low chronic disease rates were also considered along with famous health advocates, such as champion cyclist and Austin resident Lance Armstrong and **Whole Foods Markets Inc.**, headquartered in Austin.

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