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America's Fattest and Fittest Cities 2005



The Top 25

Location, location, location. It's the mantra of real estate agents, retailers, and, apparently, obesity researchers.

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America's Fattest Cities 2005

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You may think that the place you call home is less important to your waistline than, say, genetics or your heinous eating habits, but you'd be wrong. Sure, those things matter — a lot — but they're not the only factors determining your overall fitness. That's why, for the past seven years, *Men's Fitness* has, well, weighed elements like commuting time, weather patterns, and even the total number of temptations (i.e., Dunkin' Donuts) you face each day as part of our exhaustive annual survey of size.

Our panel of experts put every city on a scale of sorts and considered the real-world factors that make all people — including guys just like you — more likely to put on pounds. What we saw wasn't pretty. But for every horror story (Texas! What the hell are you guys eating?), there were also some encouraging success stories, signs that some cities are cleaning up their act — and slimming down in the process. How does your city measure up?

Top 25 Fattest		Top 25 Fittest	
2005 Ranking	Last year	2005 Ranking	Last year
1. Houston	2	1. Seattle	6
2. Philadelphia	7	2. Honolulu	1
3. Detroit	1	3. Colorado Springs	5
4. Memphis	20	4. San Francisco	2
5. Chicago	5	5. Denver	4
6. Dallas	3	6. Portland	8
7. New Orleans	22	7. Sacramento	10
8. New York	21	8. Tucson	9
9. Las Vegas	16	9. San Diego	14
10. San Antonio	4	10. Albuquerque	12
11. El Paso	24	11. Boston	7
12. Phoenix	18	12. Virginia Beach	3
13. Indianapolis	17	13. Minneapolis	18
14. Fort Worth	6	14. Fresno	15
15. Mesa	12	15. Milwaukee	21
16. Columbus	10	16. Omaha	11
17. Wichita	16*	17. San Jose	20
18. Kansas City	14	18. Jacksonville	13
19. Miami	15	19. Austin	19
20. Long Beach	23*	20. Oakland	17
21. Oklahoma City	13	21. Los Angeles	25
22. Tulsa	19	22. Arlington, TX	8*
23. Atlanta	11	23. Washington, D.C.	25
24. Charlotte	22*	24. Cleveland	9*
25. Baltimore	23	25. Nashville-Davidson	24

*Ranking in the top 25 fittest cities in 2004

*Ranking in the top 25 fattest cities in 2004

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America's Fattest and Fittest Cities



The Top 25 Lists

Never before have so many numbers (and so few abs) been crunched in the name of obesity.

You'd never brag about living in Chernobyl. It's a conversation killer. The stigma of a reactor meltdown--and the creepiness of genetic mutations--is just hard to shake. Even 18 years later. But the truth is, there are plenty of places right here in the U.S. that are more dangerous in 2004. We call them America's Fattest Cities.

Of course, maybe you think residual nuclear radiation sounds like more of a threat to your life than fat. But take your age. Then add 30 years. That's the effect obesity has on your health, according to a recent UCLA study.

And that's why we're naming names and placing blame in our sixth-annual 50-city report. This year's Champion of Chub: Detroit. Baseball's biggest loser is now the fattest of the fat. But it had plenty of competition: Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and Chicago followed closely to round out the Flab Five. (Note to Texans: Bigger isn't always better.)

America's Fattest Cities 2004

- [Survey sources and methods](#)
- [Ways for any city to become fitter](#)
- [Let us know what you think](#)
- [America's Fattest Cities 2003](#)
- [America's Fattest Cities 2002](#)
- [America's Fattest Cities 2001](#)
- [America's Fattest Cities 2000](#)

Top 25 Fattest		Top 25 Fittest	
2004 Ranking	Last year	2004 Ranking	Last year
1. Detroit	3	1. Honolulu	1
2. Houston	1	2. San Francisco	3
3. Dallas	9	3. Virginia Beach	8
4. San Antonio	13	4. Denver	7
5. Chicago	2	5. Colorado Springs	4
6. Fort Worth	16	6. Seattle	2
7. Philadelphia	4	7. Boston	12
8. Arlington	NR	8. Portland	6
9. Cleveland	6	9. Tucson	9
10. Columbus	8	10. Sacramento	10
11. Atlanta	7	11. Omaha	14
12. Mesa	19	12. Albuquerque	17
13. Oklahoma City	23	13. Jacksonville	18
14. Kansas City	22	14. San Diego	5
15. Miami	24	15. Fresno	24
16. Las Vegas	18	16. Wichita	16
17. Indianapolis	12	17. Oakland	15
18. Phoenix	14	18. Minneapolis	11
19. Tulsa	25	19. Austin	13
20. Memphis	21	20. San Jose	19
21. New York	15	21. Milwaukee	21*
22. New Orleans	11	22. Charlotte	10*
23. Baltimore	20	23. Long Beach	20
24. El Paso	17	24. Nashville	23
25. Washington	25	25. Los Angeles	22

*Ranking in the top 25 fattest cities in 2003

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America's Fattest and Fittest Cities

Portland, OR

6th Fittest

Portland is up two spots from last year. This Fit City has an abundance of parks, forests, hiking trails, and fitness centers for the health conscious-at-heart. Portland residents are not couch potatoes either — according to Nielsen Media Research data, residents rank among the top ten cities surveyed for the least amount of time spent in front of the tube. Weather is also a key factor in how people exercise, and with Portland's mild climate — exactly 314 days of exercise-friendly weather per year — there's tons of opportunity for outdoor sports.

America's Fattest Cities 2005

- [Main](#)
- [Survey sources and methods](#)
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BRAGGING RIGHTS AND SOBERING FACTS:

- Portland has twice as many sporting-goods stores per capita than the national average among cities we surveyed — the second-highest in our ranking, and more than 18 times as many as Detroit, which has the least.
- Almost 57 percent of Portland residents exceed their ideal body weight by a wide enough margin to raise their risk for health problems, according to a study by the CDC.
- Washingtonians statewide are a physically active bunch, relatively speaking: More than one out of four get enough exercise to avoid being labeled at risk for health problems related to sedentary living, according to the CDC. Believe it or not, that's actually one of the best ratios nationwide.
- Overweight Portland residents might blame some of their problem on their commute: According to the Urban Mobility Report from the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A&M University, the average Portland commuter spends 38 percent longer commuting in peak traffic than the same trip would take during off-peak times — a little above average for cities in our survey. Commuter stress has been shown to cause increased levels of the hormone cortisol, which is implicated in obesity. Long commutes also cut into time that might otherwise be spent exercising or shopping for and preparing healthy food.

—Natasha Chin

REPORT CARD: Portland, OR

Healthy Habits	
Fitness Centers/Sporting Goods Stores	A
Nutrition	A
Exercise/Sports Participation	B
Risk Factors	
Alcohol	D-
TV Watching	A
Overweight/Sedentary	B+
Junk Food	D
Environment	
Air	C
Climate	B
Geography	A
Urban Attributes	
Commute	D
Parks/Open Space	B+
Recreation Facilities	B-
Health Care	D

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