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Top 10 Fitness Walking Cities for 2007

By [Wendy Bumgardner](#), About.com Created: June 21, 2007

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The American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) surveyed the 100 most populous cities in the USA and used 20 criteria to determine which were the best and fitness walking cities. Criteria were developed with Walkable Communities, Inc. and printed *Prevention* magazine. These include being on the Walkable Communities list, index of physical activity and exercise, percentage walking for exercise, and household expenditure on mass transit. Other criteria include parks, crime, climate, ozone rating, points of interest, schools, and athletic shoes purchased. Also see the [five worst walking cities](#).

1. [Madison, Wisconsin](#)

Madison was on the 2006 top 10 list and this year reaches number one by virtue of its clean air, low pedestrian accident rate, and high rate of athletic shoe sales. But it got to the list by adopting a walker-friendly plan 10 years ago and sticking with it. They have a very high number of walking paths and trails. I haven't yet walked in Madison, but I'll have to!

[More: Madison Tourist and Visitor Information](#)

2. [Austin, Texas](#)

Austin also returns from the 2006 list of top 10 walking cities. This year, exercise and fitness were major factors and Austin scores high for those, and low for ozone. Austin is ringed with trails, and Lance Armstrong might just jog past now that he has taken up marathon running. I've enjoyed a walking convention in Austin and found the route around Town Lake to be highly enjoyable.

[More: About Austin](#)

3. [San Francisco, California](#)

San Francisco boasts more parks and points of interest per square mile than any other city on the list. It also has a pleasant climate and they spend the most on mass transit. Be prepared for some hill walking! One of my favorite walks is from Fisherman's Wharf, along the bay, over the Golden Gate Bridge, then taking the ferry back from Sausalito.

[More: About San Francisco](#)

4. [Charlotte, North Carolina](#)

Charlotte is walking, 40% of its residents walk for exercise, and they buy lots of athletic shoes. It is designated a Walkable Community by Walkable Communities, Inc. I haven't yet walked in Charlotte.

[More: Visit Charlotte](#)

5. [Seattle, Washington](#)

Seattle is a perennial on the top 10 walkable cities list, and returns after a year away. I walked some of my first [volkssport walking events](#) in the Seattle area 20 years ago and it is always a joy to return to walk and explore. The climate can be rainy, but the scenery is wonderful, with the mountains and Puget Sound.

[More: About Seattle](#)

6. [Henderson, Nevada](#)

Just south of Las Vegas, Henderson was on the 2006 list of best places to live. I love the dry air of Las Vegas and have yet to wander over to Henderson. Henderson ranked highest in people walking for exercise and participating in exercise. [Las Vegas for Visitors](#)

[More: About Henderson](#)

7. [San Diego, California](#)

San Diego sparkles with the beach, desert, and mountains nearby. Unlike smoggy LA, it has low ozone. It has a near-perfect climate year round. But watch where you walk, it had the highest number of pedestrian fatalities for a top 10 walkable city. I've enjoyed walks in San Diego and plan to go again very soon.

[More: About San Diego](#)

8. [San Jose, California](#)

Low humidity and great weather put another California city in the top 10. It is included as a Walkable Community on the Walkable Communities, Inc. list.

[More: About San Jose and the Silicon Valley](#)

9. [Chandler, Arizona](#)

OK, I'll admit I've never heard of Chandler, which is just 25 miles southeast of Phoenix. It's a major hub in the "Silicon Desert" and has 6.5 miles of traffic-free walking on the Paseo Trail. It has a lot of people who walk for exercise, a low crime rate, and I bet it's got lots of sunshine and little humidity.

[More: About Chandler](#)

10. [Virginia Beach, Virginia](#)

Virginia Beach also returns to the list from 2006. It has a boardwalk, many parks and a low crime rate. They have a yearly walker-friendly marathon and half-marathon, the [Shamrock Marathon](#).

[More: City of Virginia Beach](#)

[What's Your Favorite Walking City?](#)

[Where does your city rank among 100 cities?](#) Come tell us about your favorite walking city and why.

Source: [APMA](#) press release, March, 2007.

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