

# Pittsburgh ranked No. 10 in places to walk by Prevention Magazine

By [William Loeffler](#)  
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## About the writer

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Walk this way, Pittsburgh.

The city ranked 10th in Prevention Magazine's annual survey of the 25 best Walking Places in America.

San Francisco, Boston and New York ranked 1, 2 and 3, respectively. See the entire list [here](#).

The magazine conducted its survey with the American Podiatric Medical Association and Sperling's Best Places.

"One of the great standout things about Pittsburgh was that you guys were No. 3 of the cities we rated of having the most miles of rails to trails," said Natalie Gingerich, Prevention's fitness editor.

The region has 19 trails spanning 1,757.78 miles, the survey found.

"Obviously, that isn't all within the city limits of Pittsburgh," Gingerich said. "Those numbers are based on the total lengths of the trails that pass through the city, but the bottom line is, if you wanted to head out walking from Pittsburgh, you could go pretty far."

The ranking doesn't surprise Thomas Baxter, executive director of Friends of the Riverfront, which is helping to develop the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, a 37-mile network of trails for pedestrians, cyclists and runners that encompass sections of the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio rivers.

"We're blessed to have lots of riverfront trails and walkable neighborhoods that all flow into the Downtown area," Baxter said. "It's nice that other people will recognize what we've been able to accomplish here and what we're building upon."

Other factors considered in the magazine survey were the number of people in each city who walk to work or ride mass transit.

"That's obviously not walking, but people who take mass transit walk more than people who just walk to their cars," Gingerich said.

The survey considered factors such as crime statistics, the total square mileage of parks, and level of sprawl. Malls and housing subdivisions can discourage walking to work, shopping or school.

Pittsburgh scored points for hiring a full-time bicycle/pedestrian coordinator, Gingerich said. On Aug. 11, Mayor Luke Ravenstahl hired Stephen Patchan of the South Side to implement a program to encourage people to bike and walk in the city. Pittsburgh is the first city in the state to staff such a position full-time.

Walkers seeking a challenge can tackle the city's hills and distinctive flights of steps, said Sean Brady, assistant executive director at Venture Outdoors, which sponsors 200 to 300 walks a year. He cited the well-maintained trails in the city's Highland, Frick, Riverview and Schenley parks and the nine country parks, which total more than 12,000 acres.


"Pittsburgh has a lot going for it, when it comes to outdoor activities like walking," Brady said.

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