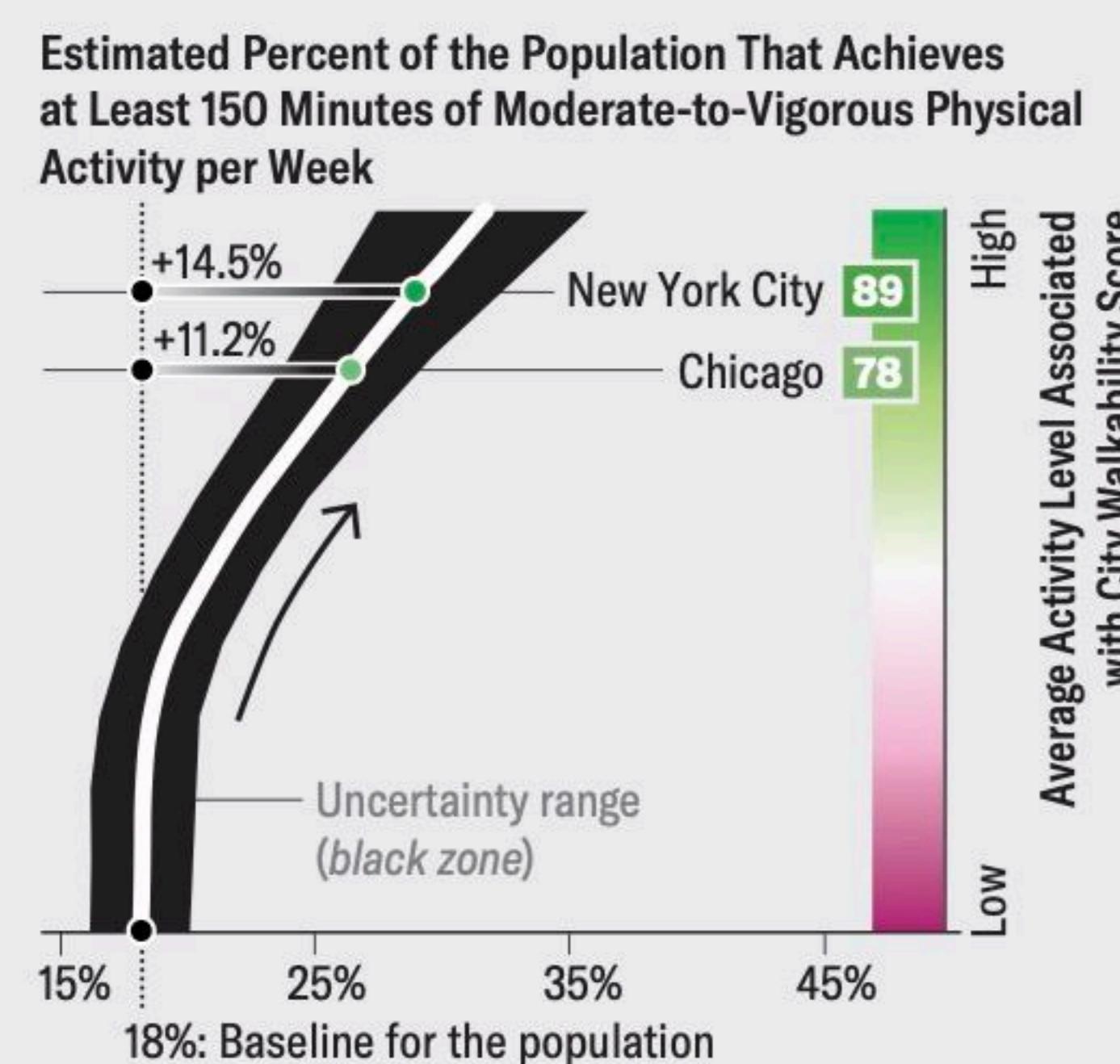


Does Your City Make You Healthier?

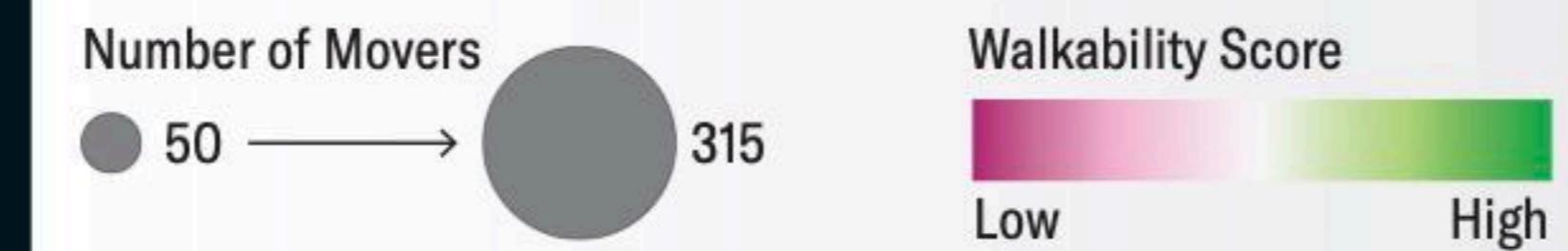
Moving to a walkable city boosts daily locomotion by an average of 1,100 steps **BY EVE LU**

NIGHBORHOOD WALKABILITY is a bit of a chicken-and-egg problem: Does living in a walkable city make you walk more, or do active people choose to live where it's easier to walk? To investigate, researchers analyzed smartphone data from between 2013 and 2016 for two million people, including more than 5,000 people who moved among more than 1,600 U.S. cities. Tim Althoff, a computer scientist at the University of Washington, and his colleagues found that after relocating to more walkable cities, people took about 1,100 more steps a day, equivalent to 11 minutes of extra daily walking. What's more intriguing is that these additional steps were part of brisk walks—physical activity that improves health and could contribute to a lower risk of death all around. Meanwhile, the data showed, people who moved between similarly walkable cities didn't change their activity level. The findings suggest built environments, rather than personal choice alone, might affect not just the amount but the intensity of the exercise their inhabitants get.



HOW TO READ THE MAP

Each circle represents one of 1,609 origin and/or destination cities included in the study. Circles are sized according to the number of people that entered or exited the city during the three-year observation period and are colored to represent the city's walkability score.



Tinted states contain the five most walkable and the five least walkable cities.

City circles that are outlined in bold black and labeled provide context for the chart to the right.

Arrows between cities show what happened when people moved from one to the other. These pairs—and the direction of movement between the two cities—are explored further in the chart to the right. The data demonstrate how moves to more walkable places increased daily steps, whereas moves to less walkable places reduced them.

