

Can an Apartment Help Residents Be Healthier? This ‘Wellness Building’ Hopes So

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April 12, 2021



Photo Courtesy Be DTLA

This wellness-minded apartment complex boasts a top-tier gym, safety features galore—and an on-site TikTok studio

There is no shortage of luxury apartment buildings in downtown L.A., and under pressure to compete for tenants amid pandemic-linked low vacancy rates, some have turned to offering increasingly elaborate amenities and incentives. Now a new building, known officially as Be DTLA by the Souferian Group, is hoping to lure renters with the promise of giving them something more than a place to sleep: Be DTLA sells itself as a “wellness apartment community.”

What does it mean to be a wellness apartment? Apparently a combination of upgraded safety protocols to prevent the spread of disease, top-tier gym and yoga facilities and, naturally, specialized studios for residents to tape their podcasts and create content for TikTok. Also, an on-site speakeasy.

“Even prior to COVID, my vision has been to provide a first-of-its-kind wellness apartment community that redefines residential living. A centrally located environment that emphasizes healthy minds, bodies, spirits, and fun,” says Behzad Souferian, founder and CEO of the Souferian Group, the developer behind the project.



Photo Courtesy Be DTLA

Be DTLA is the first apartment building in Southern California to receive a WELL Health-Safety Rating from the International WELL Building Institute. The rating is sort of like the health equivalent of a LEED certification; attaining the distinction means the building has been verified to meet the third-party's standards across 15 criteria, including cleaning procedures, air and water management, and even emergency preparedness.

But the building goes beyond a nice gym and adding in air purifiers and touchless features, to include a suite of features designed to make long-term working from home a little more comfortable for apartment dwellers. That's where the TikTok studio comes in, along with dedicated spaces for residents to cowork outside their private units.

“Our health is our wealth, and I believe people are searching for something different than ornate or overly-designed spaces,” Souferian says. “We focus on the logistics of wellness post-COVID, but equally on developing beautiful and functional environments for people to be well, be centered, and be home.”

While the building—known under previous management as Sofia Los Angeles—flipped to a wellness-focused concept only recently, the buzzword has been a growing trend in the apartment world for the last several years.



Photo Courtesy Be DTLA

West Hollywood condo complex 1030 Kings has been credited as an early adopter, outfitting its luxurious units with an upgraded fitness center complete with sun-soaked outdoor yoga deck, but building and marketing healthier homes has become a global fixation.

“There is a recognition that building for human health is going to be the core [value],” Ophelia Yeung told Mansion Global. Yeung is a senior researcher at the Global Wellness Institute and co-author of a report on the phenomenon, “Build Well to Live Well: Wellness Lifestyle Real Estate and Communities.”

Yeung’s research, which was conducted prior to the pandemic, found that the global wellness real estate industry was expected to be a \$180 billion business by 2022. That number is about half of what is attributed to the “green building” business—and just like the global boom in sustainable building and practices of the last decade, Yeung told Mansion Global she predicts that wellness oriented development is “going to come like a tsunami” in the 2020s.