

Tech Tuesday - Fitness Trackers

by Emily Blakely

- Why use a fitness tracker?
 - **Knowledge is power**
 - a new breed of gadgets can tell you more about yourself
 - They can reveal the number of steps you take, the duration and intensity level of your activity, your heart rate, what times of day (and seasons) you're most prone to being a couch potato, the number of calories you burn and the length and quality of your sleep.
 - **That which is measured improves**
 - There's good research proving that simply keeping track of what we do can significantly improve our health.* Self-tracking can actually make us follow a healthier diet, sleep better and exercise more— simply by letting us know the areas we need to improve and if we are actually improving them.
 - Fitness trackers provide this feedback in real time.
 - *<http://www.ijbnpa.org/content/6/1/10>
 - **Planning**
 - Once you see patterns in your activity, you can set achievable goals to change
 - After monitoring your sleep and activity patterns and how they affect your overall health, these wrist-worn personal trainers suggest easy-to-make changes and set manageable goals to let you squeeze healthier habits into your daily routine.
 - **Accountability/ Motivation/ Consistency**
 - Set goal, see patterns, be accountable to your goal - The goal of many of these health monitors is to find the habits that are maintainable most of the time so you can achieve long-term results.
 - A fitness tracker is like a trainer/ coach in your pocket reminding you throughout your day. Social support plays a big role. Most fitness trackers let you share your progress with public groups or create private groups to set collaborative or competitive goals, which is another great way to get support and encouragement from friends and family.
 - Seeing your activity levels & goal progress maintains motivation (and motivation is key)
 - **You don't have to manually do it all yourself**, the tracker auto-logs your activity
 - Wireless syncing and online tracking makes it easy to monitor your health/ activity/ diet without having to manually log everything
- Popular fitness trackers - which one is right for you?
 - Wristbands
 - FitBit Flex - \$99.95 <https://www.fitbit.com/product>

- Pros: Cheap alternative to other wristband options, waterproof, syncs wirelessly, vibrate alarms, no fuss, decent battery life**
 - Cons: Does not track stairs climbed, minimal user interface, sometimes you need to re-sync if first try doesn't work
 - Withings Pulse \$119.95
<http://vitrine.withings.com/us/withings-pulse.html>
 - Pros: Biometric data (heart-rate monitor), bracelet for wrist, strong battery life
 - Cons: Not waterproof, Syncing is tricky at times, not as attractive or comfortable as other wristband options
 - Garmin Vivofit - \$129.99
<https://buy.garmin.com/en-US/US/into-sports/health-fitness/vivofit-/prod143405.html>
 - Pros: Battery - no need to remove it to charge, It adjusts your goals based on your activity
 - Cons: Water resistant, not water proof
 - Nike Fuel band SE - \$149
http://store.nike.com/us/en_us/pw/fuelband/90w
 - Pros: Fast syncing (bluetooth 4.0), Social interaction is superior to other trackers, great motivation coach
 - Cons: rigid design, Not waterproof, poor battery life, doesn't have vibration capability (for reminders), expensive option for basic tracking features
 - Jawbone UP24 - \$149.99 <http://jawbone.com/store/buy/up24>
 - Pros: Syncs wirelessly now, sedentary alarm
 - Cons: No user interface for feedback, no Web interface phone app only, Water resistant not waterproof
 - Samsung Gear(s) - \$199.99
http://www.samsung.com/global/microsite/gear/gearfit_features.html
 - Pros: Heart-rate monitor, nice user interface/ watch-like, it's like an extension of smart phone
 - Cons: Bulky, poor battery life, expensive
 - Basis - \$199
<http://www.mybasis.com/basis-fitness-tracker-product-tour/>
 - Pros: Heart-rate monitor, robust tracking - that tracks patterns and looks for ways to break habits.
 - Cons: Bulky, user-interface is not friendly, reviewing data is complicated, expensive
- Tracker clips
 - FitBits \$59.95/\$99.95 <https://www.fitbit.com/product>
- Additional options
 - Bodymedia armband - \$99.99/ \$119.99
<http://www.bodymedia.com/Shop/Armband-Packages>
 - Pro: Body monitoring calorie calculator, Very accurate and lots of data
 - Con: Not waterproof, Financial commitment: online monitoring of data - first 3 months free afterwards \$6.95

monthly membership, if you want a display for your device it's an additional \$19.95

- Misfit Shine Necklace/ wristband - \$119.99
<http://store.misfitwearables.com/products/misfit-shine>
 - Pros: Waterproof, wristband alternative, stylish looking (for some)
 - Cons: limited data tracking, no Web app
- Review of other trackers not mentioned
 - <http://www.t3.com/features/best-fitness-tracker-best-fitness-band>
- Not sure you want to invest in one just yet? (free option)
 - Try Moves App, to get a feel for movement tracking
 - Best Buy has a Health Tracker Buying Guide -
<http://www.bestbuy.com/site/computing-promotions/activity-health-tracker-buying-guide/pcmcat314600050009.c?id=pcmcat314600050009>
- My FitBit Dashboard Fitbit.com/
 - Things I like about FitBit
 - Flex is waterproof/ Force tracks stairs climbed
 - Badges when you hit a goal
 - You can set vibrate reminders
 - When you hit your goal, your device vibrates
 - When you're near your goal, you receive a notification
 - You get a weekly overview of your progress
- FitBit Trackers I use/ used
 - FitBit comparison chart: <https://www.fitbit.com/comparison/trackers>
 - FitBit Ultra
 - Pros:
 - Basic tracker features
 - Steps/ stairs/ calories burned
 - Cons:
 - Poor interface
 - Not waterproof
 - Does not track high intensity activity
 - Easy to lose
 - Easy to put through the wash since you clip it to your clothes
 - Because it's on your clothes and not on your wrist, data is not as accurate
 - Social interaction/ competition is not as good as Fuel Band
 - FitBit Flex
 - Pros:
 - Slim
 - Waterproof, I can wear in shower, pool, or steam sauna
 - Tracks high intensity activity
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 - Social interaction/ competition is not as good as Fuel Band
 - FitBit Force
 - Pros:
 - Unlike Flex, has an altimeter for tracking stairs climbed
 - Much improved interface

- Clock
 - Cons:
 - Bulky fit for women
 - Not water proof only water resistant, so I couldn't use it when swimming
 - Recall of product, it caused an allergic reaction in some wearers (including myself)
 - Social interaction/ competition is not as good as Fuel Band
- FitBit Aria Wireless Scale