Top Fitness Apps

Special Report 2012

Making the most from your smartphone/ tablet

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Top fitness apps

In the age of Smartphones and Tablet computers, we have all the tools available at our fingertips to help us achieve our fitness goals.

Various applications are available from training planners and workout generators to nutrition guides and progress trackers.

We have put together this guide to help you pick the right ones for you.

They include apps for: planning; strength; running; timing and nutrition.

Nothing beats real coaching, but they might help you along the way.

Planning your training

You can use **Evernote** for Windows for tracking pretty much anything- body mass, food intake or training. It is all done by creating a note book and adding notes along the way for whatever you need to keep track of.

Body mass:
You put in your starting weight and every few days add the date and current weight. You can even take photos of yourself and add them to your notebook, allowing you to see your progress along the way.

Food intake:

It is important to know what you are eating, whether you are aiming to improve body composition or concentrating on improving performance. Consciously being able to see what you are eating helps in reaching your overall goal.

Enter each of your meals and snacks on a daily basis and you can look back and link them to your performance/success in reaching your goals.

Activity:

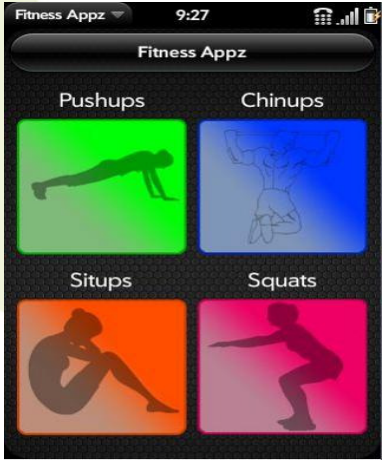
If you plan to run, walk, lift weights or just stand up as part of your new routine, you can use Evernote to track your activity. You can mark down each day what you have achieved, or alternatively you can plan your training and lay out a calendar for yourself.

Note down which days you want to train and which are recovery days.

Strength

If upper body strength is on your wish list, **one hundred push ups** for iPhone is the perfect app to help you get results. It is a six week program whose ultimate goal is to get you to successfully complete 100 consecutive push ups in a row.

Fitness Appz provides you with a similar service but for more exercises. Choose from six week courses to do push ups, sit ups, squats or chinups.



What these apps lack in features they make up for with straight-forwardness and a solid exercise plan.

Running

If you are new to running and find it a bit daunting, **Get Running** for iPhone is the app for you. This will get you running for a full 30 minutes nonstop, by integrating three training sessions a week over a nine-week period, starting slow and building up to the ability to finish a full 5K run.

Get Running is the only 5K app that coaches you like an actual human coach would, so you will feel more motivated to keep progressing as you go through the program.

iMapMyRun

for iPhone is a basic running app that does exactly what the title implies.
It maps your run and gives you related information such as pace, distance and calorific output.

It also features a live route map update in real-time as you go. You also have the option of posting to Twitter and Facebook if you want to keep your friends up to date on how you are doing.

RunKeeper is another good app for running novices or those who have been around the block a few times. In addition to tracking your run, RunKeeper lets you plan training workouts and map your route in advance, giving you an idea of how easy or difficult your run will be.

The app also includes full iPod integration, so you won't have to jump out of the app in order to change tracks or switch playlists. In addition, RunKeeper includes audio prompts that cycle through your headphones to give you information and updates, great to keep you motivated during your run.

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Blackberry's **Endomondo** Sports Tracker is a cross Platform app that allows you to use your devices GPS to track how far you have gone, and couples that with a built in timer to track how long it has taken you to get there.

Not only can it track runs and bike rides, but it can also help keep track of time spent doing other activities such as weight training, yoga and sports activities.

JogStats for web operating system does not have a cloud backend, which means you can't automatically backup your runs and look at them from other devices.
However it does have some good features. The tracking screen displays your elapsed time, total distance, current speed, and current pace (minutes per mile).

You can log individual laps and state how long that lap is to be. For each lap you get basic info like date, time started, and total time, plus how far you ran, how fast you ran, your top speed, and how many calories you're estimated to have burned.

A Graphs button indicates your speed at any given point, and your route with a heat-mapped line showing where you were fast and where you were not-so-fast.

Timers

Whatever your training goal, keeping track of time is important. **Workout Timer** for Windows Phone is about as basic as an interval training app can be.

You can set your work and rest period (in seconds) as well as how many times you want the cycle to repeat. Feedback can sound a chime at each interval or be silent.

Another alternative for customizing workouts is **A1 Fit Interval Trainer** from HP's web operating system. You can specify your warm-up and cool-down times, how long you'd like each high- and low-intensity period to last, and how many cycles you'd like the app to run you through.

A1 Fit has also taken a number of steps to help you workout from a distance, as you are unlikely to have your phone pressed to your face while you train.

There is large bold text for the timers and the background color changes with each interval, becoming orange for the warm-up phase, red for high intensity workouts, green for low intensity, and a cool blue for the cool down period.

A1 Fit also keeps the screen turned on through your workout. It might seem like a simple concept, but proper and consistent timing is important for interval training to be effective.

Push It! Interval Timer allows you to build custom work out timers in addition to three preset interval timers.

Push It! is ideal for training routines such as high-intensity interval training, Tabata and circuits. You can also copy workout programs easily and pin frequently used programs to your start screen.

Nutrition

If you are trying to eat healthier, the free Windows Phone app **Nutrition** is a simple, straight forward app that will let you search and review the nutritional values.

Nutrition is laid out simply with one page to search your favourite foods and another to list any foods you tag as favourites.

Just type in the food you are searching for and Nutrition will display the food items calories, serving size, fat, cholesterol and other nutritional values.

However, healthy eating doesn't just mean counting calories, what we eat can be just as important. If you give your body calories from better quality foods, you get the benefits of vitamins, minerals and nutrients that artificially processed foods just cannot match. **Fooducate** aims to help you be more aware of what's actually in what you're eating.

The main premise of Fooducate is to give different types and brands of foods a letter grade. These grades are based on information provided by dieticians as well as user feedback.

Fooducate provides key information about products like artificial flavourings, colourings and more. If you have specific dietary needs such as gluten free or would prefer to add more whole grains to your diet, you can compare things you are debating buying with alternatives rated higher in quality.

Another very useful tool for tracking the food you eat is **MyFitnessPal**.
It helps you towards a weight loss goal by calculating your required daily calorie intake. This app is free and available on iPhone, Android, Blackberry and Windows. MyFitnessPal also has web interface to allow you to update your daily activities from a desktop computer.

You begin by entering your personal information such as starting weight and desired weight loss target and this helps create your calorie goal. Once you start inputting foods and exercise it will calculate how many calories are available for the day.

Your weight will show in a graph so you can visually see if you are headed in the right direction or not. At the end of each day there is a button to complete logging your food entries for that day, and this will then pop up a message which gives you how much you would weight in five weeks if you continued to eat and exercise the way you did that day.

Summary

Although designed for individuals looking to lose weight, some of these apps can also be applied for athletes wanting to ensure they maintain muscle mass by eating sufficiently, or even those wishing to increase mass.

Fitness logs and timers are great monitoring tools, but the most important thing for success is a well thought out plan.

The **Excelsior Athletic Training System** gets you ready for your sport by following a weekly plan that educates you through video clips, handouts and live podcasts.

If you want to benefit from expert coaching and advice, then try our 2 week trial with Money back guarantee if you aren't satisfied.
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