



# WORKING TECHNOLOGY INTO YOUR EXERCISE ROUTINE

by Jillian McAfee

TECHNOLOGY CAN BE A GOOD THING OR A BAD THING DEPENDING ON HOW IT IS USED. WHILE IT IS FREQUENTLY BLAMED FOR THE INCREASINGLY SEDENTARY LIVES MANY PEOPLE ARE LEADING, TECHNOLOGY DOES NOT HAVE TO BE A REASON TO SIT STILL. IT CAN ACTUALLY BE USED AS A MOTIVATOR TO GET FIT AND AID IN BEHAVIOR CHANGE. EXERCISERS WHO USE TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT THEIR GOALS ARE OFTENTIMES MORE SUCCESSFUL.

## HEART RATE

Heart rate is one of the best indicators of exercise intensity, and a heart rate monitor can be a great tool for monitoring workouts. The heart rate monitor is a strap worn around the chest that measures heart rate to show how hard you are working during your exercise sessions. The watch included with the monitor will display your maximum heart rate, your target training range, and how many calories you burned. It is a great tool for beginners to make sure they are training at the right intensity - burning enough calories but not over-training to risk injury. It teaches you a lot about your cardiovascular fitness and how your body reacts to increased intensity levels.

The heart rate monitor can also be used for heart rate specific training including steady state cardio or interval training. It allows you to precisely monitor the

intensity of your training. With the concrete numbers on your watch, you can then create specific intervals using the training zones based off of your maximum heart rate.

$$\text{MAX HEART RATE} = 220 - \text{YOUR AGE}$$

AIM TO TRAIN WITHIN 65%-85% OF YOUR MAX HEART RATE

## WEARABLE FITNESS TECHNOLOGY

As humans, we do not always think about the future. We are wired to do what makes us feel good right now, often leading to indulgences or inactivity. We are unlikely to know how many calories we are accurately burning, the quality of our sleep, or just how much we move throughout the day.



“ONE OF THE BIGGEST TRENDS IN FITNESS TECHNOLOGY IS WEARABLE MONITORING DEVICES.”

One of the biggest trends in fitness technology is wearable monitoring devices. They come in the form of bracelets or clips, and are meant to be worn at all times. In addition to heart rate, they can measure:

- MOVEMENT
- FLIGHTS OF STAIRS CLIMBED
- CALORIES BURNED
- SLEEP PATTERNS
- SKIN TEMPERATURE
- BLOOD OXYGEN LEVELS
- AND MORE!

They provide an all-encompassing image of wellness. You are now able to see proof of your efforts in real-time, which can be highly motivating. Just turning the device on can promote self-awareness!

Most wearable technology can also sync with mobile apps to help you track your statistics over time in graph form. If you are a visual person this may motivate you to stay on track with your daily goals. Check your activity levels midway through the day to gauge what you need to accomplish before the day is finished! Some of the most popular wearable fitness devices include:



### FITNESS APPS

If wearable fitness technology does not seem interesting to you, you might try an app like Argus for extra accountability. Rather than purchasing a device, it tracks your activity directly through your iPhone. As long as you carry your phone with you, Argus will watch your movements. You can also log other workouts, keep an eye on how much water you drink, and take photos of your food to inspire others.

If you are an avid outdoor exerciser and just need more structure, apps like MapMyRide, RunKeeper Pro, or Nike+ Running may be a great addition. With GPS technology, you can record routes, speed, and search for routes done by other exercisers in your area.

## ONLINE TRAINING

Many gyms and trainers are now offering online personal training or small group classes. This type of technology allows you to workout in the privacy of your own home using your computer or tablet. You do not have to do this on your own! Companies like FitOrbit and Downsize Fitness bring the trainers to you through your computer. Personalized workout routines are created for your individual needs and instructors are there to motivate, educate, and correct your form when needed. This type of training is highly effective, pairing technology with personal connection.



## HEALTHY EATING MOBILE APPS

Food journaling is an invaluable weight-loss tool, and now there are apps that make it quite a bit easier. With our increasingly

busy lives, it is encouraging to know there are numerous apps that support meal planning, nutrition tracking and calorie counting.

Meal tracking is made easier with apps like MyFitnessPal and Lose It! These apps feature an abundant database of foods to help you count calories with an easy-to-use barcode scanner, and they even sync with your wearable technology.

Apps like Fooducate go a little further, giving users information on the quality of nutritional content in the foods they are buying and eating. Fooducate assigns each food a nutritional rating, which in turn helps users create healthy grocery lists with quality food.

## SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

One of the greatest fitness benefits technology can provide comes through social accountability. Accountability is one of the most powerful incentives for behavior change. Devices and applications that have a social element are very effective when it comes to long-term success.

With the click of a mouse, you can join an online community like Spark People to connect with others trying to improve their health. Apps like Fitocracy add a sense of competition with friends to increase your dedication to exercise. Post a status about success or barriers and you will receive support from the community.

With GymPact, monetary incentives are used to encourage you to exercise. It is an app that charges you real cash every

“ONE OF THE GREATEST FITNESS BENEFITS TECHNOLOGY CAN PROVIDE COMES THROUGH SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY.”



time you miss a scheduled workout. At the beginning of each week, you make a “pact” of how many days you plan to workout and how much you are willing to pay if you do not workout. Every week, the money paid by those who did not workout is divided between those who did. The more days you exercise, the more money you make. Talk about motivation!



Social media is also a great tool to help you stay motivated and find support. Join a weight-loss community on Facebook that posts content of interest to you. Create

a vision board using Pinterest with healthy recipes and sample workouts to complete on the days that you are not able to get to the gym. If we are left to our own devices, we often come up with excuses. Allow people to show support through social media, and do not hesitate reaching out to others who are going through a similar journey.

## CONCLUSION

Although an app can never replace personalized, face-to-face coaching, the technology available to aid in your weight-loss journey is pretty incredible. Fitness and wellness technology adds awareness, accountability, and consistency to your journey. Instead of letting it contribute to a sedentary lifestyle, try out a new form of technology that can greatly benefit your health. A new heart rate monitor or the latest app might be a great tool if you are struggling in your weight-loss battle, but those are just two examples. Fitness technology is constantly evolving, and the possibilities are endless!

### ***About the Author:***

*Jillian McAfee is a Personal Trainer and General Manager for Downsize Fitness in Illinois. Jillian also coaches individuals all across the country in an online program called Downsize@Home, powered through Helpouts by Google. She received her Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology from Indiana University and is a Certified Personal Trainer through The American College of Sports Medicine. She has played a large role in many individuals' weight loss journeys and hopes to do so for many years to come.*

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# ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

## LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

### Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
  - Community Discussion Forum
  - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



**JOIN TODAY: GO TO [OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN](http://OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN)**

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