

Florida 4-H Consumer Choices Fitness Apps



Goal:

The goal is for youth to make informed, responsible choices when selecting the best fitness app(s) for their needs

Consumer Skill:

Youth will gain knowledge of the key concepts including:

Selecting a fitness app based on price, phone compatibility, and needed features.

Life Skill:

- Youth will learn decision making skills as they investigate the key concepts and make the best choice.

Suggested Activities:

- Choosing the Best Fitness App* (worksheet)

Situation

It is a well-known fact that obesity is a common, serious, and costly problem among Americans (and many other people around the world). More than one-third of US adults (about 78.6 million people) are obese. Obesity-related conditions include heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer. In 2008, the estimated medical cost of obesity in the US was \$147 billion. In addition, the average medical cost for people who are obese was \$1,429 higher than people of normal weight.

The global fitness industry continues to benefit from growing awareness of health issues and the importance of exercise in maintaining good health. Consumers of fitness services and products are aware that fitness can provide the necessary tools to optimize one's health, improve quality of life and extend life span. Examples of fitness industry services and products include physical training equipment, fitness coaches, and fitness tracking tools, allowing consumers to keep a close record of their progress and fitness goals.

There were an estimated 163.9 million cell phone users in the US in 2014, with this number expected to rise to 220 million by 2018. Between checking our bank accounts to ordering lunch online, many of us rely on smartphones and apps to help get us through the day. In fact, in a survey of social media users conducted by Lab 42, 51% of respondents use their smartphones while exercising. Additionally, 72% say their smartphone increases motivation to workout and 74% say they improve their weight loss efforts.

A quick search in your phone's app store will reveal thousands of health and fitness apps that will claim to be perfect for your needs. They range in cost, features, information needed, and ease of integration with other apps and devices.

Key Concepts to Teach:

- Cost
- Needed Features
- Information Gathered (and where it goes)
- Phone Compatibility and Integration with other Applications and Devices

References and Sources

See Appendix A



Cost

Open up your phone's app store and type "fitness" in the search bar. You will see thousands of apps ranging in price from free to \$10.99 and up. With so many apps available, it is important to consider the cost of the app in relation to what it will do for you. If the app is free but does not have the features needed, you may want to pay a couple of dollars and get what you need. If the app is \$10.99 and all-encompassing but has a lot of extra features that you will not use, you may want to save a few dollars and get a more basic version.

Needed Features

Before purchasing a fitness app, think about what activity you want it to help you accomplish. Are you wanting to run a 5K? Track eating? Count steps? Work toward weight loss goals? Once you have determined your goals, you can identify the criteria you need in an app to help you achieve those goals. You will find a wide variety of options to help you manage and track your food habits, exercise plans, weight loss goals, and other metrics related to diet, exercise, and health. You also will find apps that provide workout activities, motivational strategies, meal plans, and more.

Information Gathered (and Where it Goes)

Many health and fitness apps take in all kinds of personal health information, and it is important to know where that information is going. Is it just stored locally on the phone? Is it stored in a database? Are you authorizing the developer to share your information with third parties? These are important questions to ask. In May, 2014, the results of a study revealed by the Federal Trade Commission show that a good portion of mobile health app developers collect consumer data and share it with third parties, including marketers.

Phone Compatibility and Integration with Other Apps and Devices

Of course, if you plan to use an app, it needs to be compatible with your smartphone. Any app found in your phone's app store should be compatible. Some apps are specific to iPhones, while others are specific to the Android platform. Many are available for both. You also may want to consider whether the app you choose is compatible with other apps and devices such as a smartwatch, FitBit, UP24, Nike, etc. Of course, there are additional costs associated with these devices which will need to be considered as well.



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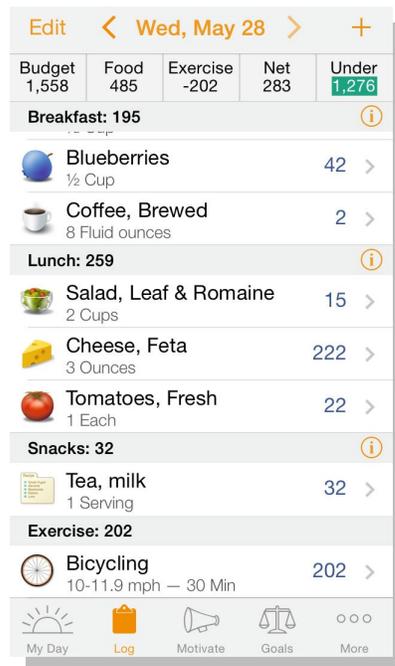
Fitness App Purchase

Purchasing the best fitness app for you can take a little time and research. Know how much you have to spend, the desire you hope to achieve from your fitness app, and if there are benefits in using one compared to the other. Compare each of the factors below; identify the advantages and disadvantages of each product.

When making your final consumer decision, you may find it helpful to use a chart similar to the one below to help you make your final decision. Don't forget when researching different apps that some of them will require you to pay to take advantage of all features available.

Fitness App	Cost	Compatibility	Needed Features	Information Collected	Other	Other

After filling in the columns for each of the factors for various products, consider any additional factors you would like to consider before making your decision. Finally, decide on the best fit for you and your budget.



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Activity: Choosing the Best Fitness App

James is interested in getting healthier through both eating habits and exercise. There is a 5K coming up in several months for which he would like to prepare, and he also would like to be able to track his eating habits. He has a weight loss goal, as well, and would like to be able to track that. James has an iPhone 5 and there are thousands of apps available to him. He would prefer a free app, but would be willing to spend up to \$6.00. He would prefer one app that does all of this but doesn't mind using multiple apps. Help him choose the best app (or combination of apps) to suit his needs.

My Fitness Pal	Run Keeper	5K Runner	Argus
<p>FREE</p> <p>Compatible with iPhone and Android</p> <p>Food tracker; searchable food database; discussion forums; personalized diet profile; weight tracking</p> <p>Some information is shared and can be used for advertisement etc.</p> <p>Privacy policy: http://www.myfitnesspal.com/account/terms_and_privacy?with_layout=true#privacy</p>	<p>FREE</p> <p>Compatible with iPhone and Android</p> <p>Tracks runs/walks/bike rides; chart weight loss; 5K/10K training; display maps of your routes syncs with MyFitnessPal</p> <p>Some information is shared and can be used for advertisement etc.</p> <p>Privacy policy: http://runkeeper.com/privacypolicy</p>	<p>\$2.99</p> <p>Compatible with iPhone</p> <p>8 week 5k program; syncs with RunKeeper; track your history and progress.</p> <p>Very little personal information is required.</p>	<p>FREE</p> <p>Compatible with iPhone</p> <p>Track daily steps, activity calorie counter, GPS run tracker, photo food diary, weight tracker, observe trends over time with all variables to track wellness.</p> <p>Some information is shared and can be used for advertisement etc.</p> <p>Privacy policy: http://www.azumio.com/privacy-policy/index.html</p>



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Answer Key: Plan 4, 2, 1, 3

<p>The 4th option, Argus, seems to be the best choice because it is one app that does everything he wants and it is free.</p>	<p>The RunKeeper, would be the next best choice. Together with My Fitness Pal, he can do everything he wants, and they also sync with one another. They also are free. However, the RunKeeper will place higher than choice 1 since he is wants to track his exercise.</p>	<p>MyFitnessPal would be the third best option. In order to track his exercise, he also would need the RunKeeper. The cuts between choice 2 and 1 are minimal.</p>	<p>The third option, 5K Runner, would be the last choice. It only tracks running, not weight loss or diet. It also is \$2.99.</p>
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1.



Photo credit: <http://www.myfitnesspal.com/>

2.

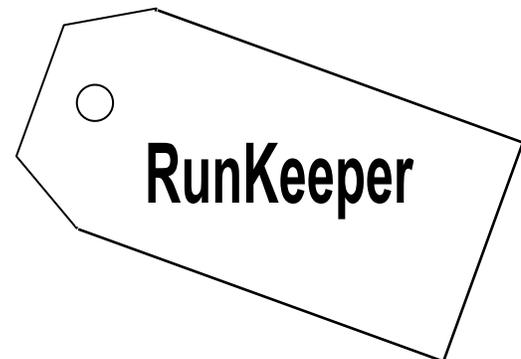


Photo credit: http://runkeeper.com/running-app?appsFlyerMediaSource=Mobile_Nav_Bar&appsFlyerCampaign=



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3.



Photo credit: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/5k-runner-0-to-5k-run-training/id439852091?mt=8>

4.

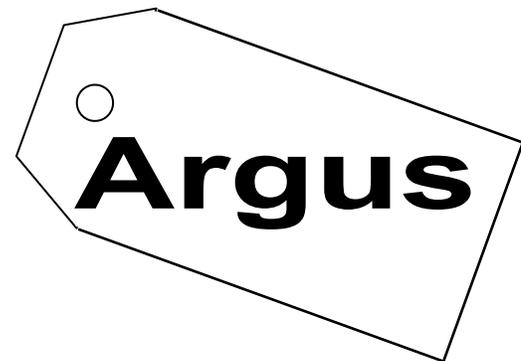


Photo credit: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/argus-pedometer-run-cycle/id624329444?mt=8>



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Key Terms

- **Apps:** “an application, typically a small, specialized program downloaded on-to mobile devices” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/app>).
- **Bluetooth:** “the name for a short-range radio frequency technology that operates at 2.4 GHz and is capable of transmitting voice and data” (<http://mobileinfo.com/Bluetooth/FAQ.htm#g1>)
- **Data:** “a voice plan and text messaging service with an additional Web access plan, also known as a data plan. The smartphone data plan allows the user to access email, browse the Internet, access global positioning satellite service and more” (<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-smartphone-data-plan.htm>)
- **Syncing:** “to download files, especially music or video files, from a PC to a portable device or to upload files from the device to a PC” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/synchronization>)

Resources

- <http://www.statista.com/statistics/201182/forecast-of-smartphone-users-in-the-us/>
- <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/24/us-healthcare-tech-washington-idUSKBN0FT02320140724>
- <http://www.charterfitness.com/fitness-blog/get-app-y-stay-fit-using-your-smartphone/>
- <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/argus-pedometer-run-cycle/id624329444?mt=8>
- <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/5k-runner-0-to-5k-run-training/id439852091?mt=8>
- <http://www.myfitnesspal.com/>
- <http://www.topfitnessapps.com/ios-apps/runkeeper-2014-review/>

Florida 4-H Consumer Choices: Buying a Fitness Application. Prepared by Ricki McWilliams, Northwest District Family and Consumer Sciences Regional Specialized Agent II, and Selena Garrison, Grant Writer, Department of Family and Community Sciences.



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