

Pros and Cons of Health and Fitness Devices

Health technology has significantly improved and developed since the simple and commonly used pedometer. Now, we have many health and fitness technology options, from smartphone applications to advanced tracking devices that provide detailed health and wellness data. All of these options provide insight into your body and can help you set your fitness goals. Still, there are some drawbacks in addition to the benefits when using health and fitness tracking devices.

Pros

- Monitoring aspects of your health can be very beneficial. You can track the number of calories eaten, water intake, energy expenditure, steps taken, heart rate and even sleep patterns. There are also reminder options to help you remember to stretch your legs during the day or go for a walk, for example.
- Getting feedback about your health can motivate you to make healthy choices every day. For example, when you see how taking the stairs instead of the elevator makes an impact on the number of steps you take per day, you may start taking the stairs on a daily basis.

Cons

- Depending on each device's features, the buy-in cost can be high. As with other technologies, these devices also continue to get updated with the newest features, which encourages costly upgrades.
- Some question the accuracy of tracking steps, sleep patterns, calories burned, and other health data.
- Many of these devices require internet connection, so for individuals who are not very technology savvy, this may be a challenge. On the flip side, individuals who are tech savvy may desire to be less "plugged in" all the time.
- Privacy is also a concern for individuals concerned with where all of their data is being sent and stored.

Making the Decision

One survey found that more than half of adults who own a wearable health devices no longer use them. And, one-third of this population abandoned their devices within the first six months of getting them. However, individuals who enjoy tracking their health progress and statistics often continue using their devices long-term.

Whether the devices actually lead to positive behavior change depends on an individual's personality and how they use their health data to their advantage. Motivation is what drives behavioral change. For some, trackable devices provide external motivation, which tends to result in short-term success with goals. Those who are overly dependent on data could become less motivated as time passes. Meanwhile, internal motivators, such as personal gratification, tend to ensure long-term success with goals.

While the health data collected and analyzed by these devices may not always be completely accurate, they do provide a general idea of what an average day is like for you. And, similar to products, the cost of these devices could go down over time, making them more affordable.



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