

Do You Use a Fitness Tracker

DO YOU/CAN YOU
DO THIS?
SHORT WELLNESS
SELF-CHECKS

First I would have no problem recommending a fitness tracking device to a client who is starting off. It might be a good way for some to judge their initial activity so that they can build a base to work from. That being said I do not use one. I feel I would get too caught up in the numbers being concerned more on total steps than quality movement. I do not need a device telling me how much I need to do when I know how much I need to do (see Guideline Article). In my case I would see myself exceeding my daily needs and getting emotionally attached to the numbers. Also there is a high degree of variability with these devices, where there is a large error of estimation either way.

According to some research long term use of these devices are not that great, but the same can be said about exercise compliance in general where only 20% of people meet the suggested exercise guidelines. According to Wired about one third of people who buy fitness trackers stop using them within six months, and more than half eventually abandon them altogether.

So you can give it try and see what happens.

What does the research say: Mixed results

The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology, found that, after one year of use, a clip-on activity tracker had no effect on test subjects' overall health and fitness—even when it was combined with a financial incentive.

A study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* in 2015 found that fitness trackers were more successful than standard pedometers in helping exercisers stay motivated.

Many of the fitness trackers on the market today measure heart rate. But a study looking at four popular fitness trackers found that there was significant variability in the measurements of heart rate among the different devices — and that none were as accurate as a chest strap monitor.

Wearing an activity tracker does not in itself lead to weight loss. A large study in JAMA compared weight loss between two groups of overweight adults — one of which wore fitness trackers, while the other logged their daily exercise sessions on a website. The results showed that the participants wearing the devices lost an average of five pounds less than those who did not wear the devices.

New research into the latest devices, which have more computing power than the previous devices mentioned, showed support networks tied to them to be highly effective at increasing physical activity in unmotivated adults.

In a study mental health of users were studied. In the sample of young people, 65% of them reported currently using a fitness or food intake tracking device. Those using devices reported higher levels of both disordered eating and compulsive exercise than non-users. Those who tracked their activity or food intake primarily to manage their weight or shape (as opposed to health or fitness related reasons) and who used the devices frequently showed the highest levels of disordered eating and exercise.