

## TECHNOLOGY: WELLNESS FRIEND OR FOE?

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Have you ever left home without your phone and felt completely helpless? We have become a technology-dependent society. Tech has become a significant part of our daily lives and communication. But technology is partially to blame for declines in physical and mental health. However, it also provides a source of motivation for improving health and wellness goals. So, does that make technology a friend or foe when it comes to our wellness goals?

### Benefits of Technology & Health Goals

Technology can work to our benefit by enabling us to live healthier lives:

- Health tracking devices monitor our habits to help keep health goals in check.
- Apps support our health including sleep, diet, exercise, heart health, and emotional wellness.
- Wearable fitness tracking devices encourage users to set goals and provide behavior change support to improve health outcomes.
- Tracking data like movement or sleep so that the user can take corrective action to improve their behavior.
- Improved access to healthcare, so you can see a provider virtually, book an appointment at any time, or access health records on demand.

### Best Technology for Health Goals

#### Food Tracking Apps

These can be beneficial for encouraging healthier eating habits or for managing/preventing chronic disease. Food tracking apps can help you understand if you may be lacking or overconsuming a certain food group or nutrient. These apps are intended to be a tool for you to understand how your food choices are impacting your health.

**Recommended Apps:** MyFitnessPal, MyNetDiary, LoseIt!, MyPlate

#### Sleep Apps

Sleep apps can be a beneficial tool in helping people achieve better sleep. They also provide mental health benefits including ways to manage stress and find healthy coping mechanisms, which in turn can lead to better sleep.

**Recommended Apps:** Pzizz, Slumber, Calm, Headspace, Hatch (pairs with Hatch device)

#### Exercise Apps

Exercise apps are excellent at improving motivation to increase physical activity, even without a gym membership! Some have video routines to follow along, while others will track your workouts and provide stats on your activity.

**Recommended Apps:** MapMyFitness, FitOn, Obe, Alo Moves, Apple Fitness+

#### Health Devices

There are also devices that can maximize your health tracking in conjunction with apps. There are a multitude of devices available to help achieve your wellness goals. Here are a few of the most popular options right now:

- **Apple Watch:** Track your workouts, EKG, and sleep. Set goals to move, exercise and stand in your day. It even has medication and mindfulness reminder functions. Apps support our health including sleep, diet, exercise, heart health, and emotional wellness.

- **Amazfit GTR 4:** This Alexa-compatible smartwatch tracks sleep, blood oxygen, stress, and exercise as well as includes GPS. Tracking data like movement or sleep can help the user take corrective action to improve their behavior.
- **Oura Ring:** Sleep and recovery tracker that tracks heart rate, activity, and body temperature. This ring tracks a lot of health metrics in a less distracting, wearable form.
- **Hatch:** Alarm clock that can help you fall asleep, stay asleep, and be more well-rested.
- **Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM):** While CGMs are primarily intended to help people with diabetes manage their blood glucose levels, many people wear them to see how food choices, exercise, and sleep can impact blood sugar levels.

## How Technology Can Detract from Health Goals

As wonderful as technology is, the benefits can become distractions. There are lots of reasons why using tech to assist with your wellness goals could hinder progress:

- Getting stuck scrolling social media for way longer than we intended.
- Logging meals becomes so obsessive that it becomes counterproductive or not making the right choices.
- Relying on apps to exercise instead of getting outside or going to the gym.
- Constantly checking your phone, devices, and apps to monitor progress.
- Notifications distracting us in our day.
- Time on social media or online interferes with mental health and social interactions.

This is when you may realize technology is not helping reach your goals. This reliance on technology and apps creates a dependency. It is important to know that these are just tools to help improve your health, not a requirement to do so. It's easy to take trackers too seriously instead of following guidelines and common sense. Sometimes, it's just best to make a clean break from the tech.

## Looking to Cut Back on Screen Time? Try These Tips!

- Use a real alarm clock instead of keeping your phone next to the bed.
- Cook a recipe from a cookbook instead of using an app or a website.
- Schedule time to catch up with a friend in-person instead of texting.
- Go to a group fitness class instead of using an app or a website.
- Don't eat in front of a screen.
- Set screen time limits on your devices – and ENFORCE them!
- Create tech-free zones in your home.

***Ready to curb your digital dependency? Check out our new “Digital Detox” program providing helpful tips to reduce dependency and time using technology. Contact Wellness Concepts at <https://info.well-concepts.com/contact-us> for more info.***



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