FITNESS TRACKING UNLEASHED

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If you're reading this, then you're probably interested in losing weight and are wondering whether fitness tracking can help you do it.

Well, the answer is definitely *yes* but only if you really know how to make it work for you. Fitness tracking to a lot of people means wearing a cool fashion accessory and counting how many steps they're taking each day. While that does have *some* benefit though, it's far from utilize technology to its fullest for the purposes of weight loss and muscle building.

When it's done right, fitness tracking represents the ultimate marriage of technology and health and it allows you to *precisely* track the exact amount you're eating, the amount of calories you're getting and how much you're moving. Even more than that, it can help you to know when you're recovered and ready to train again, it can offer you encouragement and motivation and it can help you identify problems like low testosterone.

When you apply this science to the process of getting into shape, it allows you to take a far more logical and controlled approach that actually *guarantees* you lose weight or build muscle. As long as you have the motivation to keep doing the workouts and avoid the food you know you shouldn't be eating, you can stay within tightly controlled parameters that have been set up to ensure your body is burning more calories than you're putting in.

In this free report, we'll look at how you should be using fitness tracking to scientifically approach your fitness goals. There's only so much detail we can go into here though, so if you find these concepts useful and interesting, be sure to check out the full eBook for even more.

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You don't actually need a conventional fitness tracker in order to track your fitness. Instead, you can measure your pulse with your fingers and you can measure your weight loss by standing on a pair of scales. When you look at it that way, you realise that 'fitness tracking' has been around as long as exercise itself!

Another great tip is to log your workouts, your diet and the way you feel with a pen and paper. This is an excellent tool as it allows you to spot correlations and potential causes for the way you feel. You may notice for instance that you feel worst on the days you drink milk – perhaps you're lactose intolerant!

If you opt for a fitness tracker though, then the most popular options on the market right now include:

- Fitbit Surge
- Jawbone Up3
- Microsoft Band 2
- Garmin Vivosmart
- TomTom Spark
- Samsung Gear Fit

Many of these come in different varieties and let you pick and choose the features you want. The most crucial features to look for are:

- GPS
- Heartrate monitoring
- Step counter
- Calorie counter
- Sleep monitoring

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Our recommendation is either the Microsoft Band 2 (which some people find a little uncomfortable) or the TomTom Spark.

You can also make use of a few apps to get more fitness tracking on your phone.

- MyFitnessPal – This tracks your calories and makes it easy for you to input the amount you're eating and precisely what's in your diet
- MyRunKeeper – For tracking runs
- Endomondo – For runs
- Bodyspace – For 'social fitness'

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When you think ‘fitness tracker’, you probably think Fitbit, Jawbone or perhaps Microsoft Band (my favorite). All these devices do basically the same thing: they measure your steps, your calories burned, your sleep and maybe your heartrate.

But that’s not all that fitness tracking is and that’s not all a fitness tracker can do. There are actually some much more interesting trackers out there with the potential to provide much more valuable data that’s relevant to the specific way you’ll be training or your particular goals. Read on and we’ll look at some of the best and most unusual trackers out there. Once you start employing a few of these, you’ll be able to learn *much* more about your body.

Atlas

Atlas has the ability to identify specific movements and can tell whether you’re doing a squat, a curl or a push up. There’s no need to tell it which move you’re doing and that means you can launch straight into the next move without stopping to tell it anything.

Of course the move needs to known by Atlas for it to be tracked but the community is constantly adding new ones.

GymWatch

GymWatch can measure the amount of force you’re generating during workouts. This is great for the gym but unfortunately it can register movements on its own and it requires you to stop to tell it what exercise you’re doing after each set and rep.

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Cue

Cue isn't released yet but when it is it promises to give you information about your blood from the comfort of your home. This includes a reading of your free testosterone as well as vitamin D – two very useful figures.

DNA and Blood Tests

If you can't wait, you can actually send off a blood sample to get a report detailing markers in your blood or interesting facts about your DNA. This in turn allows you to see your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to fitness and/or weight loss.

Skulpt

Skulpt can measure muscle 'quality' which tells you how dense the muscle tissue is.

Healbe GoBe

Healbe GoBe is a controversial device that promises to be able to read the amount of glucose in your cells and thereby give you an accurate indicator of the calories you've consumed during the day. If it works, it's game changing. Unfortunately, the jury is still out at the moment.

Moov Now

Moov Now offers coaching right in your ear and can tell you things like when to reduce your stride during a run.

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We mentioned that you could use fitness tracking to literally *guarantee* weight loss. So how is this possible?

The answer is simple: you use fitness tracking in order to calculate precisely how many calories you're consuming and then to compare this with precisely how many calories you're burning off. When you subtract the latter from the former, you'll be left with the difference. If this is a positive number, then you have a calorie 'surplus'. That tells you that your body is collecting and gathering calories throughout the day and eventually these have to be stored somewhere – so they get turned into fat.

On the other hand, if you're burning more than you're consuming, then you'll have a calorie 'deficit'. This then means that your body needs more calories just to get through the day than you're giving it. So what does it do? It looks to your fat stores and it *burns* that fat to provide usable energy.

If you know precisely how many calories are coming in and going out then, you can know for *certain* whether you will lose or gain weight over time. There is no arguing with this – it is very simple math.

The problem for a lot of us is that we don't *realize* where we are gaining the most calories, where we are losing the most weight or where we are making mistakes. Sometimes you *feel* like you've had a 'good diet day' when in fact you've taken in a bunch of calories through a soda drink and you're in a surplus.

Tracking lets you *precisely* monitor this so you know exactly how to achieve your goals.

But what about carbs and protein you ask? Isn't it true that you can lose weight by keeping your blood sugar down?

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Maybe. Sort of. Sure, there is some truth in the fact that different calories affect the body in different ways, but this all gets quite blurry and for the time being, no one knows precisely what the best strategy in regards to meal timing or even if it has a significant impact.

Maybe not all the calories you consume reach your blood stream. Maybe the thermogenic effect causes you to burn more fat when you eat protein. *It doesn't matter.*

In the face of uncertainty, simple 'calories in/calories out' is something you can rely on and that can't be bargained with. If you haven't consumed enough calories to gain weight, then you *won't gain weight*.

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So that's the theory, how do you go about using it?

You'll have to read the book…

Nah, just kidding! I'll tell you the strategy right now.

So first of all, you need to work out how many calories you are burning in a day. The easiest way to do this is by wearing a tracker that's fairly accurate and has lots of sensors. The Microsoft Band or Band 2 for instance will use a heartrate monitor and thereby know precisely how much you're exerting yourself throughout the day and how many calories are getting burned.

If you don't have a fitness tracker though, then you can do this the old fashioned way by calculating your BMR and your AMR. This is your 'Basal Metabolic Rate' and 'Active Metabolic Rate'. The first number tells you how many calories you burn when you don't move. That's right: your body needs to burn calories just simply in order to keep you breathing, blinking, sweating and thinking.

Meanwhile, the AMR is how many calories you burn on a daily basis assuming you move your average amount. This is the number we're most interested in because it says how many calories are going out.

To calculate these numbers, use the following system:

Men:

BMR = 66 + (6.23 x weight in pounds) + (12.7 x height in inches) – (6.8 x age in years)

Women:

BMR = 655 + (4.35 x weight in pounds) + (4.7 x height in inches) – (4.7 x age in years)

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To turn this into your AMR, you then multiply that amount by:

- 1.2 if you're sedentary (little or no exercise)
- 1.375 if you're lightly active (you exercise 1-3 times a week)
- 1.55 if you're moderately active (you exercise or work about average)
- 1.725 if you're very active (you train hard for 6-7 days a week)
- 1.9 if you're highly active (you're a physical laborer or a professional athlete)

There you go, now you have the number of calories you're burning in any given day.

Next up, you need to learn about the number of calories you're going to be taking in.

The best way to do this is to set up an account on MyFitnessPal, or to use the option to input your food on S Health, the Jawbone app or whichever app came with your device.

Now you'll be able to more easily and quickly track what's going into your diet and total up the calories. Not only will you see the total but you'll also see where the biggest culprits lie when it comes to the amount that you're taking in.

What you'll find though, is that this process of tracking your calories is quite a slow going one. It won't take long before you start to get tired and bored of it.

Fortunately, you don't have to keep it up forever. As long as you keep doing it for a *while* you should be able to get an idea of the average calories you're consuming each day and where the most are coming in.

Take this figure and then subtract the calories out from the calories in. This is your surplus/deficit.

Now how to lower it without tracking every last thing you consume?

The solution is simple. Firstly, aim to go about 250 calories *below* the AMR. This means that you'll have some 'wiggle room' so that if you make any mistakes, you'll still be under and you'll still be losing. So this is now your *target* caloric intake.

The next step is to try and keep your diet as consistent as possible. This might mean having the same packed lunch at work every day and the same breakfast. A bit boring? Sure. But it also makes life much easier and helps to reduce the amount of variables.

Now make sure that the combined total of your breakfast and your lunch is around half of your target. That way, when it comes to dinner, you can be a bit more relaxed, not have to calculate anything, and still be safely under. Nice right?

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Of course if you're currently 500 calories over your target (hopefully not…) then that's a lot of calories to cut out of your diet. This is where you need to get creative and look for ways to remove calories that you won't notice *and* to start working out just the right amount (and efficiently enough) to burn those extras.

So how do you cut calories from your diet? Here are a few easy tips:

- Have a black Americano instead of a cappuccino. This will cut about 100 calories from your diet right away!
- Stop drinking soda drinks which are *packed* with sugar. Drink water instead.
- Get off a stop earlier on the bus and walk
- Stop spreading butter on your bread
- Stop adding sugar to your tea and other foods
- Replace crisps with popcorn
- Look for the least calorific sandwich at your local sandwich shop

The last tip? Work out more efficiently. When you do that, you'll be able to burn more calories in the same amount of time and this will also be better for improving your overall fitness.

And that's what we're looking at next…

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As well as helping you to lose weight more efficiently, trackers also help you to train more efficiently.

Some do this in a very obvious way. For instance, the Microsoft Band 2 has the ability to let you train using 'guided workouts'. These are routines written by professional coaches and personal trainers that will optimize the amount of weight you lose or perhaps the amount of muscle you build, depending on the goal you're going after.

Better yet is the option to combine the Band 2 with Xbox Fitness. Here, you can then do things like the Insanity Workout while the app measures your precise performance and helps you to train more efficiently while staying within the best levels of intensity.

Of course something like the Atlas, which we looked at earlier, is also particularly great for talking you through specific moves.

But if you want to *generally* train more efficiently, then all you need is the ability to monitor your heartrate. Even if you don't have a fitness tracker, a lot of CV machines at the gym have this capability and use sensors in the handles in order to measure your bpm.

This then allows you to know precisely how hard you're pushing your body, which in turn will allow you to train in the perfect 'fat burning zone' in order to lose the most weight.

So what is the 'perfect fat burning zone'. That all depends on who you ask and actually the concept is quite controversial.

Traditionally, it was said that the fat burning zone was 70-75% of your MHR – your maximum heart rate. To find your maximum heartrate, you simply look at the highest your heartrate gets during the most intensive exercise.

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The logic was that when you trained at 70-75% of your MHR, you would be training at the optimum rate to burn fat stores. If you train less than that, then you won't tax your body enough and the fat burning will be slow. If you work *harder* than that though, then you'll be in an 'anaerobic state' meaning that your body won't have time to find the fat stores and will have to burn glucose for energy from your blood instead.

So 70% burns fat, 90% burns carbs. Makes sense to go at 70% right?

Well not necessarily. That's because going at 90% *still* burns more calories overall because you're training faster. And when you burn all the carbs from your blood stream, this has a very positive effect on your fat loss for the rest of the day. This is what some fitness gurus call the 'after burn effect'. In other words, if you burn up all the energy that's in your blood, then your body is *forced* to look to other places – such as fat stores – when fuelling activities for the rest of your day.

And actually there is an even better way to train that utilizes both these zones to maximum efficiency. Unfortunately we *do* have to save that one for the main eBook as we're all out of time.

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Hopefully though, that's given you more than enough evidence that fitness tracking *can* change the way you approach your workouts and can almost guarantee you reach your goals. That's because tracking will give you specific numbers that you can stay within in order to see results. There's no guessing any more – as long as you're strict with yourself you *know* that you're burning more than you're taking in.

This makes the process of losing weight highly scientific and mathematical and there's far more to it than that. Did you know about all the social tools involved in fitness tracking for instance? Or how those can help you to feel more motivated and give you more accountability for your actions?

Do you know how to use fitness tracking to improve your sleep? Did you know you could use it as a form of 'biofeeedback' in order to conquer stress? Did you know you could use apps to strengthen your brain?

There's so much more to fitness tracking and all of it can completely transform your fortunes when it comes to health and fitness. So check out the full book and get ready to take firm control over your health, fitness and weight loss!

Dan Grant



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