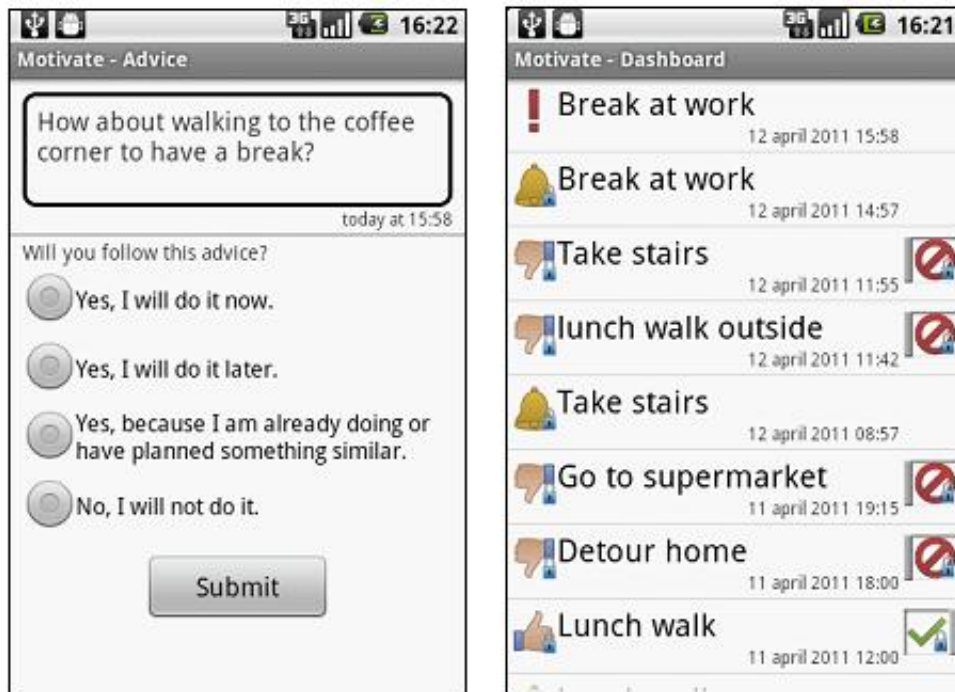


Smart app gives tips for an active lifestyle

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Motivate screenshot.

Getting enough exercise is a big challenge for a lot of people. The solution: an app that provides personal activity tips at the right times. That concludes Yuzhong Lin in her doctoral research at Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e). She has developed a mobile phone app that gives users tips on ways they can get more exercise, based on their location and lifestyle. Test subjects said they felt much more active after using the app. Lin defends her thesis at TU/e on Tuesday 2 April.

[Overweight and obesity](#) are big [health problems](#). Around 1.5 billion adults worldwide are overweight. One way to avoid becoming overweight is by taking regular exercise. But that doesn't work for many people, for example because they don't have the time, energy or [motivation](#). However, research shows that people are more likely to follow [exercise advice](#) if it's given at the right time.

Motivation

Lin shows that a [mobile phone](#) app is a good way to do that. The app that she has developed for Android phones – called 'Motivate' – gives users exercise tips based on their location and schedule, so the tips are easy to follow right at that moment. This increases the chance that users will actually take the suggested action. The app takes into account the weather, so you won't be invited to go outside when it's raining. It also gives tips about cultural activities like concerts or museums, to encourage users to get out and visit them – preferably by bike.

User feedback

The app provides around three to five messages a day. Examples are 'Get off the bus one stop earlier and walk the rest of the way home' or 'Take a walk outside with your colleagues after lunch'. With each tip the user is asked if he or she intends to follow it and, if so, when. This is followed later by the question of whether he or she actually did it. Most of the more than forty [test subjects](#) said after two weeks of testing that they felt they were more active, spent more time outdoors and had a better knowledge of how to stay active.

Potential

"The research shows that this technology has the potential to change

people's behavior", said Lin's supervisor prof.dr.ir. Bauke de Vries. "It's true that there are already apps on the market that help users follow a healthy [lifestyle](#), but this is the first that gives them tips matched to their location and schedule. Further research with a larger number of text subjects is now needed to find out exactly how many more people take exercise with this."

Provided by Eindhoven University of Technology

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