

How to find the best fitness app for you

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There's no reason to set foot in a gym thanks to hundreds of new fitness apps and online workouts, but choosing one can be overwhelming. We asked sports medicine doctors for help finding the one that's best for you.

PERSONALIZE IT

Look for programs that offer personalized screenings and gather details on your past injuries, health conditions and fitness goals.

"There's a lot of cookie-cutter apps out there and people that just want to get your monthly subscriptions, and they're really not concerned about helping you reach your goals or, more importantly, if any of these movements are going to injure you," said David Alexander, who's trained LeBron James and Dwyane Wade and owns DB Fitness in Miami.

"It's beneficial if you can find an [app](#) out there or an online program where you're having conversations via email, phone, or face time with the trainer that can help make sure you're doing the exercises correctly."

Some apps offer daily or weekly check-ins with trainers and a few offer real time feed-back. While those are more costly, you can also pop into a live class in your area to get some pointers so if you're a new yogi starting at home with an online subscription, it's important to take a class a couple times a month to have someone check your form.

HAVE FUN

It doesn't matter whether all the supermodels are doing barre classes if the thought of it totally bores you. Find something you love because you're much more likely to stick with it.

"It's pretty well known that the novelty of these things wears off within several months," said Dr. Daniel Vigil, a UCLA Health doctor who has served as the USA team physician for several international competitions, including the World Cup.

It doesn't have to be super high intensity and it doesn't have to be the 'it' workout. Movement is movement.

"Find the device that truly is the most appealing to you, something that looks good to your eye and makes you have that visceral response, that's what going to make you use it and keep you curious and keep it entertaining."

DON'T BE AFRAID TO MODIFY

High intensity interval training can offer mega results, but if you're just starting out and have never done sumo squats with a kettlebell, make sure to tailor the program to your needs. That means if an exercise comes onscreen that irritates an old knee injury, take a rest, modify it or replace it with a move that works for you.

"That's where I can get a little worried about some of the apps is that folks might be compromising form just to get some of the moves done ... don't stretch to pain," said Dr. Jeff Mayer, who specializes in [sports medicine](#) and has worked with the Baltimore Ravens. "When you're compromising form and you're compromising the integrity of the exercise you open yourself up for an increased chance for injury and we

see that all the time."

Don't be afraid to do fewer repetitions at first and work your way up. Five reps with proper form are far more effective than 10 done incorrectly.

GIVE IT A REST

While your Instagram feed may be full of #fitspo (that's fitness inspiration), it's important to pick an app that includes rest days to avoid injury and physical and mental burnout.

"You want to find something that gives you three workout days and one recovery day, whether it's a yoga day, a stretch day, a Pilates day. Find something that's not high intensity every day while you're building your foundation," said Alexander.

MIX IT UP

You've heard it before, but if it's worth repeating. Cross training is key not just to avoid injury but to keep your muscles from plateauing. It's all about muscle confusion so if you're a die-hard yogi or barre lover, find an app to help you add in some higher intensity interval training.

"It may be a combo of these apps would be best ... it goes back to what's your main goal? Is it to get better cardiovascular fitness, is it to get more flexible, is it to get stronger," said Mayer.

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