

There is An App for That: How Apps Have Changed Our Lives

If you're like most people, after waking up today you probably checked the weather, read a little news, listened to music and checked in with friends and acquaintances before heading out the door. And you probably did all those things using a smartphone or tablet app.

Apps, or mobile applications, as they are formally known, have become a ubiquitous part of our daily lives, changing the way many of us live, work, play, and even fall in love. Experts say the importance of those tiny icons on our phones and tablets will only increase as more and more of the world connects to the Internet via a mobile source.

Games are, by far, the most downloaded apps, followed by entertainment and social media tools. But Health & Fitness was the fastest-growing app category in 2014, according to Google Play data. The king of that category was MyFitnessPal, a free diet app that helps you lose weight by keeping track of calories. Apple and Microsoft offer similar versions under the titles Health and Microsoft Health.

Beside the diet-related content, Health & Fitness apps come in several varieties:

- › **Wearable technology.** These apps, which include Nike+Running, connect users to other technology, such as Fitbits or fitness bands, which help track duration, distance, calories burned and other data related to workouts.
- › **Workout guides.** These offer easy-to-follow instructions for exercise routines, many of which can be performed at home. Among the more popular is 7 Minute Workout.
- › **Exercise trackers.** These apps take advantage of GPS technology in phones to tell users how far and how fast they've run or biked. Some, like Zombies! Run, involve immersive games to encourage longer or faster exercise efforts.
- › **Medical information.** Led by WebMD, these apps offer health information and support tools to aid in understanding injuries, illnesses and general health.

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