

Fit or miss?

By Fiona Russell

If you want to get fitter this spring, maybe try something called a "wearable".

From wristbands to necklaces, watches and belt clips, these mini fitness gadgets claim to track

activity, calories and sleep. The wearables also sync with an app on a smartphone via a cable or wirelessly.

We put five wearable activity trackers to the test.

Accuracy of 'futuristic jewellery' impressed me

MISFIT SHINE

WHAT: A wireless activity and fitness tracker.
WORKS WITH: Bluetooth 4.0 Android and iOS devices including iPhone 4S+, iPad 3+ and via a free app.
COST: £99.
BUY FROM: www.johnlewis.com and www.firebox.com

CLAIMS: Described as an "elegant" fitness activity monitor and made from "long-lasting aircraft-grade aluminium", MisFit Shine can be worn on the wrist, as a necklace or as an accessory and used for up to four months with one battery. Fully waterproof, the Shine monitors walking, cycling, swimming and sleeping patterns.

TESTER: Advertising sales manager and mum-of-two Debbie Atkinson, 41, of Helensburgh.

SHE SAYS: The gadget looks lovely and sleek, like a futuristic item of jewellery.

Sadly, it is also magnetic and I lost mine for a while when it attached itself to a metal bin lid.

Using the tracker is straightforward and details of exercise and calories burned



FAN Debbie Atkinson praised device sync easily with a mobile phone or iPad. I was impressed by the accuracy of the exercise records and I like the information about how well I slept.

You can set goals to achieve and I found this to be motivating.

Another advantage is that the Shine is waterproof so it can be used while swimming.

This is a useful gadget for keeping track of your exercise and pushing you on to do more.



NO CHEATING Gayle Heggie

It gave me motivation to exercise

FITBIT FLEX

WHAT: A wireless, daily activity and sleep tracker.
WORKS WITH: iPhone 4S+, iPod 5 touch, iPad 3+ and some Samsung android phones.

COST: £74 to £79.95.

BUY FROM: www.johnlewis.com

CLAIMS: Fitbit Flex tracks steps taken, distance travelled, calories burned, active minutes, hours slept and quality of sleep.

TESTER: Business enabler Gayle Heggie, 35, of Bearsden, East Dunbartonshire.

SHE SAYS: It's easy to get started with the Fitbit and to download the app. I hardly noticed I was wearing the smart and lightweight wristband.

I was impressed that the Fitbit tracked my walking and running but could tell when I was trying to cheat it - such as clapping my hands at it.

The goal for each day is 10,000 steps and, as an office worker, I thought I'd struggle. However, I didn't want the gadget to beat me so I took the stairs more and walked to the water cooler more.

Other activities, such as a body pump class, needed to be input by me, though I'm not convinced the activity calorie counter is accurate. It doesn't take into account how hard you are exercising, for example.

At night, the sleep Fitbit revealed that I sleep soundly for four hours and then I get restless for another one hour. But what do I do with this information?

All this data synced wirelessly with my phone and offered clear readouts.

If you are looking to get fit and need motivation to walk more and eat less, the Fitbit is a great choice.

It makes you think twice about taking the lift, for example, and eating that afternoon chocolate bar.



Annie Brown

EXPERTS are blaming the ubiquitous selfie for the rise in demand for plastic surgery.

The American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery believe Facebook, Instagram and a myriad of selfie apps are making young people obsessed with their flaws.

They are going under the knife, ironing creases that don't exist and having Botox injected into imaginary lines.

It seems now youngsters have to give as good a selfie as the Kardashians or Miley Cyrus.

They don't only have to look good in reality but they have to photograph well, too.

There was a time when a good shot was only important to a model or an actor but now that we are in the shop window of the web, women have to look desirable at all times.

It is a platform where they are judged by their peers and by the opposite sex. And the pressure for many is quite literally unbearable.

Young people always have and always will be overly critical of their looks and they have always reached for impossible perfection.

When I was a teenager, I secretly bought facial bleaching cream to get rid of the trail of freckles across my nose. I cut my long hair, made face packs out of oatmeal and invested a week's worth of pocket money on clear lip gloss.

My friends permed their hair until it snapped.

It's called puberty and no one said it was going to be fun.

We took photographs, too, but by the time we got round to getting the film developed, we were another year older and it mattered little. We'd giggle over the snaps, then toss them in a drawer and bin the more grotesque ones.

Now decades later when my friends and I pore over pictures of our youth, all we see is how lovely

'Youngsters have to give as good a selfie as the Kardashians or Miley Cyrus, so they're going under the knife'

we were. We're just sorry that we didn't know it then. We may have scrutinised photos among ourselves but there was no global microscope.

The net amplifies our insecurities and pressurises us to airbrush our lives.

I have friends who change their profile picture as often as their pants.

We always played keeping up with the Joneses but without the professional aid of Facebook.

Mothers compete on whose kid is the cutest, children's good marks and trophies are

paraded and kids' birthday parties chronicled for competition's sake.

Blokes flex their muscles in a variety of sporting events from Ironman to marathons. Most of us don't have the necessary hide to withstand being analysed to the Nth degree.

Celebrities, self-obsessed or not, are screwed up by it, riddled with self-doubt and self-loathing. It isn't healthy to be that self-indulgent and to pretend we have a perfect job, a perfect marriage and perfect kids.

One of the most cherished ingredients in real, as opposed to cyber, relationships is honesty. But sadly it seems many young people no longer have that privilege.



to record healthier data each day

UP FITNESS TRACKER

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about my all-round health. The Jawbone UP looks great and fitted comfortably and neatly on my wrist.

It was a little tricky to set up at first but I checked the instructions on the website and that helped.

The wristband connected quickly to the app on my phone

via a cable - not wirelessly - and offered me lots of detail about my daily activity.

The app was easy to read and very useful, providing plenty of information about steps taken, sleep, quality of sleep and food eaten.

I also linked mine to Strava, an online GPS running tracker, so it could record the runs that I logged on that, too. I really

liked this gadget and I found the data very accurate and interesting.

I became really competitive with myself and tried to record healthier data each day, such as more steps, better sleep and improved diet and so on.

