

# APP-SOLUTELY AWE-SOME

## SEVEN TECH HACKS TO GET YOU GOING!

By Jami Appenzeller

**N**eed some motivation and support as the mercury plunges? Has your workout buddy abandoned ship? Don't fret. As the first of the year rapidly approaches, and New Year's resolutions kick into high gear, we wanted to dive into the app world of the moment to uncover some gems. Personally, I'm not a digital native and not necessarily an early adopter of technology (I'm an old-school type of gal; what can I say?) but if one more person tells me to get a Fitbit tracker, I'm going to seriously freak. There's just something about getting an iTunes gift card under the tree. A trick that I often like to do is take to YouTube and search an app that I'm a little interested in. That way, I can land on a review, a demo or just a "commercial" about the app so that I can learn fast if it will benefit me, if it's a game-changer or if it's just a copycat version of an app that I already have.

Apps truly are awesome these days; the problem is that there's so many of them. It's like going into a Mega Bed Bath and Beyond just for dish towels and then having this overwhelming feeling like "Geez... there's a lot of stuff in here."

**Appliced.com** is a welcome alternative to the app store. I love that you can see what apps are on sale and it will also make recommendations for you when you sign up for free. You can very easily search by category (i.e. fitness, nutrition, wellness, etc.) and see ratings and reviews that others authored. You can even opt in to receive alerts when the apps you've been eyeing go on sale. Wow!

### FOR THE SPONTANEOUS TRAVELER

**Mindbody Connect** *Google play/the App Store*

It's free and will actually set you free! Want fitness and beauty at your fingertips? Who doesn't? This app allows you to find and book the best services in your community and around the world. From über-sweaty workouts to sumptuous spa treatments, this app gives you the skinny on what's right around the corner from wherever you might be. Once you've found the perfect trainer, stylist, massage therapist or pool boy (okay, I'm kidding about the pool boy), just add them to your list of local favorites, and you can check their schedule whenever you'd like. Wow! I'm personally obsessing over this app because it makes it harder to self-sabotage your workouts! If you've missed an a.m. class, you can quickly pull up a schedule and find an evening class. Hello! No more excuses! Another convenient aspect of this app is that you can add your credit card information to Mindbody Connect, and you can pay for classes and appointments before you arrive. Millions of users can't be wrong! Read reviews left by other customers too!

Learn more at [mindbodyonline.com/connect](http://mindbodyonline.com/connect). Judging by all the five-star ratings, everyone is obsessed (including me).

### FOR THE STRESSED-OUT, OVERWHELMED WORKING MOM

**Headspace** *Google Play/the App Store/Amazon App Store*

This app is for folks who like to get engaged before they get married (i.e., everyone). Think of it as a gym membership for the mind. Now, I know what you're thinking – I'm so not crunchy granola either. This app forces you to rethink meditation and quiet time. When is the last time



you felt centered? Practice simple mindfulness techniques from a variety of systems. You can listen to Headspace on the go and even download sessions to tap offline. You can engage on your terms, playing any session any time anywhere. Not sure if you want to go hardcore zen? Take their 10-day free trial, which includes a buddy feature (yay – instant motivation)! Then sign up once you're hooked – track your progress and get rewards as you go. They've already got a million users. It's been proven that meditation is an effective treatment for stress, anxiety, lack of focus, relationship problems, addictions and more. Many feel it leads to peace of mind and well-being as well as creativity and a certain palpable openness. I personally love the voice of the narrator, who takes you through your own personal guided journey. Here's a bonus: Andy Puddicombe is a meditation and mindfulness expert. An accomplished presenter and writer, Andy is the voice of all things Headspace. His voice is IMHO – well, dreamy. The British accent fools me into thinking that Jude Law himself is whispering sweet nothings into my hungry ears every day (sigh). Get a two-year subscription for just \$6.24/month. Learn more: [headspace.com](http://headspace.com)

## FOR THE LAZY, BUT WELL-INTENTED JUNKFOOD CONVERT

*ShopWell Google Play/the App Store*

Have you ever dreamt of putting a nutrition expert in your pocket? This app allows you to make smart and healthy food decisions on the go in record speed. I love that you can scan products to get personalized food scores. You can find food that matches your needs. You can get suggested alternatives to some of your naughty food faves and you can create lists that help you stay on track!

Wanna take the guesswork out of food shopping? Don't have time to read label after confusing label? Confused about serving sizes and calorie counts? Need a spreadsheet to compare and contrast dietary info? Forget about it! ShopWell has you covered. Creating a ShopWell profile is your first step towards understanding how well a particular food item fits your nutritional needs (i.e. say goodbye to Krimpets). The ShopWell scoring system combines respected nutrition guidelines from the Institute of Medicine (IOM), the USDA, and peer-reviewed medical research journals with the knowledge and experience of registered dietitians. By specifying your age, gender, medical condition or personal preferences, you will receive a score that is uniquely yours. With over 350,000 products and growing, ShopWell has an extensive collection of foods that you can search. Products come from the USDA National Nutrient Database, Gladson®, and Kwikie®, respected information databases for the food and beverage industry that are constantly updated as new products are added to the market. Yay!

## FOR THE NEUROTICALLY HIGH-STRUNG BOARDERLINE HYPOCHONDRIAC

*iTriage Google Play/the App Store*

If you're like me, you may be prone to spend countless mad hours in front of your desktop computer gazing at info retrieved from WebMD. Now there's a better way to feed your obsession. iTriage is a free mobile app that lets you easily and efficiently get expert medical answers, find care options, and securely maintain your personal health information on the go. Feeling sick? You can literally search thousands of symptoms and possible causes. This handy app is way better than dating a doctor because it guides you to medical answers in real-life language, so you can make confident decisions that are right

for you. The easy user interface allows you to click your way through only information that matters to you without being bombarded with information overload. iTunes reviews are slightly mixed, but I really like the idea of getting instantaneous answers to my most troubling questions via my mobile device.

## FOR THE FORGETFUL WORRIER SEEKING AN EASIER WAY

*PillPack Available for all IOS users*

I know a lot of people who need help with their daily medications. I have often found myself saying "Geez, there's got to be a more simple way to manage multiple medications and schedules for dosing." Once you sign up, this app basically does everything for you. This pharmacy manages all of your refills. From phone calls to follow-up, you just sit by your mailbox and wait. Your co-pays stay the same and they accept most major insurance plans. The magic of this pharmacy is that your daily meds come in cute little packs that take the guessing and thinking out of the chore. The PillPack app is available to everyone, not just PillPack customers, and has several novel features for a medication reminder app.

"The best solution to adherence is simplicity, and the PillPack design tackles this challenge physically with our dispenser and individual pre-sorted packs," PillPack CEO T.J. Parker said in a statement. "Our goal with the app is to further simplify and re-imagine the medication management experience digitally so we can help folks with their medications, whether they're our customer or not, and regardless of the number of medications they take." Since the company launched in February 2014, PillPack has shipped more than 1 million dose packs. This business idea is novel in that it prevents people from having to stand in line and wait in germ-infested pharmacies plus it pings you to remind you to take that med at just the right time! Ingenious.

## FOR THE RUNNER IN ALL OF US, EVEN THOSE WHO DON'T LIKE TO RUN

*Runkeeper Google play/the App Store*

Just get out the door. This is the philosophy and mantra that many trainers, life coaches, and other fitness experts have. This app helps you stick to a routine of running. It's a robust community of online running enthusiasts who also have busy schedules just like you! Here's the kicker: after achieving that well-deserved runner's high, amazing brands like Saucony and New Balance are going to reward you for all your hard work – yeah, just for running! You can celebrate your progress with Runkeeper friends: you can save, discover and build new running routes. You can get a weekly workout schedule tailored just for you and you can even get a goal coach – whoa! From beginners to the marathon set, this app is for everyone who loves running but may need a little nudge. In-app purchases range from \$9.99 to \$29.99. Join the over 45 million users (including me) who've discovered the joy of running with the original and the best running app on the planet. Turn your phone into the GPS tracker that is dedicated to bringing the fun and the motivation you want into your workout routine.

## FOR THE OBSSIVE, ANALITICAL "IN IT TO WIN" IT FITNESS ENTHUSIASM

*Fitbit App Store/Google play/Windows Store*

This all-in-one fitness favorite had to be mentioned on this list. It's been documented that 43% of Fitbit users take more

steps. This points to better overall health, more energy and an empowering feeling of gratification.

On the go or at your desk, your Fitbit dashboard is with you all the time. You can easily see all your achievement badges, analyze your charts and graphs with ease, and get instant access to the Fitbit community, all in one place. It's fun and free (and you don't even need a tracker to use it).

See stats like steps, floors climbed, active minutes, calories burned and more when you chose to use the app with a Fitbit tracker. Log calories fast using the barcode scanner, quick calorie estimator, and meal shortcuts. Or search our database of food items. Scroll up to see supported devices. Use contacts from your phone, e-mail or Facebook to invite friends and family to share stats, send cheers and taunts, and compete on the leaderboard. Bet you didn't know you could monitor your sleep with a Fitbit tracker, then set a sleep goal and review your sleep trends and quality with charts and graphs in the app. Stay focused by setting step, weight, and activity goals. Achieve weight goals with Calorie Coaching by seeing calories in vs. calories out. Log workouts in seconds and see them appear instantly on a monthly exercise calendar. Also, their blog is pretty darn good too: <https://blog.fitbit.com/>

Since it's holiday time, I'd be remiss if I didn't share just a couple of my favorite shopping apps. Did you know that consumers spend 82% of their mobile time in apps that they have downloaded, versus 18% on e-retailers' mobile websites? In-app campaigns can drive app downloads, retain or acquire customers, retarget site visitors, and reach consumers via social media.

#### SHOPKICK

Walking into stores is also part of life for most of us, and Shopkick gets you rewards just for doing that. Whether you've heard of it or not, Shopkick has been hugely active. It's the most used real-time shopping app according to Nielsen, and shoppers have earned \$25 million and redeemed 7 million gift cards since its launch in 2010. Whoa. Plus, get push notifications about products on the shelves that you're passing right then and their. Yay.

#### REDLASER

Scan a barcode with RedLaser and you're locked into information from retail and online stores. It keeps more cash in your wallet while also lightening it by storing loyalty cards. Now that's convenient.

#### RETAILMENOT

Never print out a coupon again (just show the savings barcode at the register) and never miss out on a deal. You can even get automatic alerts about the stores in your immediate area that are having sales. Yeah, it's a little "Big Brother" but who doesn't love to save money and feel like a total insider?

Just a side note – it's holiday time and you'll be tempted by eggnog, sweets, and carbs for sure. Be sure to follow the "everything in moderation" rule and don't deny yourself pleasures that the holiday season brings each year. Step outside your comfort zone and get out there! Go sledding, have a snowball fight, or just take a walk through the neighborhood and smell that wood burning, gaze up at the stars and look at the snow twinkle on the branches. Winter is full of wonder and beauty. Don't hibernate. Get out and get active.

*Stay warm and safe!*



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