

WHAT'S ON YOUR WRIST?

Fad, fashion or function, wellness devices are showing up on the wrists of athletes-in-training as well as on anyone looking for immediate gratification after a vigorous workout or climbing a challenging set of stairs

Story by Susan Friedman



Remember the days when you'd work out and wonder just how many calories you burned during that sweat-drenching jog? Not anymore. With technology leading the way you can effortlessly keep track of the number of steps you've walked, how many calories you've burned and even what your heart rate is during a sprint on the treadmill.

Wellness devices have emerged as the must-have accessory for just about any lifestyle. They're sensor-infused so when you wear them they can read data while you're working out, sleeping and more. Beyond function, wellness devices are super-stylish and even

carry the prestige of a designer label. Consider Paris' high-end fashion house Hermès, which has paired its designs with the Apple Watch. Or the American company Philip Stein that's known for its fashion-forward luxe designs such as the wraparound leather bracelet that houses Philip Stein's Natural Frequency Technology. Inside each Philip Stein bracelet is a proprietary natural frequency disc that is said to help wearers improve focus and cope with stress by channeling alpha waves and other beneficial frequencies.

No matter what design — sporty in bold colors or sophisticated and sleek — these devices share a common bond: to help users achieve goals.



APPLE WATCH



HORIZON



OWLET



A popular brand with professional athletes is Whoop, spotted on the wrists of LeBron James and Michael Phelps. The company is composed of mathematicians, professors, cardiologists, engineers and designers, all on a mission to create products that drive the limits for athletes. Devices gauge performance and calculate exertion levels. Based on workouts and daily lifestyle, the hardware/software combo is a wrist-based heart rate monitor and an online/smartphone app; it offers a holistic analysis of an athlete's strain and recovery levels.

Another sought-out model is the Samsung GearFit2. It keeps you in the zone by automatically recognizing whatever you're doing. This includes monitoring steps, distance and heart rate. But it also offers the ability to map a run with its built-in GPS.

What makes them so much fun to wear is that they can provide immediate gratification and motivation with up-to-the-minute data about our bodies, activities and more. And surprisingly they aren't only for pro athletes. They are being used by new moms for monitoring babies, by seniors who need an incentive to get up and move, and by fitness buffs obsessed with pushing themselves to reach new goals.



Fitbit Charge 2

If you're already an avid believer in the merits of these devices, then you aren't alone. It's now estimated that one in five Americans are proud owners of brand-name wearable tech devices and millions were purchased last year alone.

What's driving the trend depends on variables, including having a friend, relative or colleague who wears one. That's how Michelle McLaughlin of Orlando came to be a Fitbit devotee. "My sister-in-law had one when we were on vacation and loved it. I had been wanting something to track my heart rate, sleep and activity," says McLaughlin, who is a part-time