

## Health Apps Downloaded But Not Used Effectively



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Findings of an online survey show that while fitness and other health-related smartphone apps are acquired in large numbers by Americans, most are left unused after being downloaded. The study will be published in the *Journal of Medical Internet Research mHealth and uHealth* .

The survey was conducted by researchers at NYULangone Medical Center. Data from the survey shows that 58 percent of 1,604 adult smartphone users downloaded one of the estimated 40,000 available health-related mobile applications. 42 percent downloaded five or more of these apps. Most users who downloaded health-related apps were from income groups of \$50,000 or less with an average age of 40 years.

Approximately 65 percent of the respondents said that the apps helped improve their health. A large majority demonstrated a strong faith in these health apps in terms of their accuracy and effectiveness. Health apps that were most downloaded were related to personal fitness, nutrition and physical activity followed by food consumption, weight loss and exercise instruction. Around 65 percent of the respondents reported using their apps daily.

However, 46 percent of the respondents reported that they had downloaded a health-app that they no longer used. Some of the barriers to wider and more effective use of these apps that emerged from the analysis include cost, disinterest over time and privacy concerns. 41 percent of the respondents said that they would never pay anything for a health app while 20 percent said they would be willing to pay only up to \$1.99. Only 23 percent of the respondents said that they would pay between \$2 and \$5.99 at most.

Lead investigator and clinical psychologist Paul Krebs, PhD, explains that there is a need to adequately test and validate the health benefits of such apps and suggests that app developers should address consumer concerns related to privacy, costs and user-friendliness.

“Our study suggests that while many Americans have embraced health apps along with their smartphones, there are challenges to keeping users engaged, and many Americans who might benefit are not using them at all,” says Krebs. “There is still much more to be learned about how we can broaden the appeal and make best use of the wide variety of health apps now available — not just for fitness and nutrition, but for other purposes, such as monitoring sleep and scheduling medical appointments.”

Source: [NYU Langone Medical Center](#)

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