Fitness applications are quickly taking over the app market. With healthy living at the top of people's agendas, fitness apps are experiencing unprecedented growth in number and popularity.

From calorie counting to tracking running distances and monitoring heart rates, there are currently around 31,000 fitness apps available to download. Predictions are that the number of these apps will continue to grow and evolve.

Only this week, Apple announced its iOS 8 update will feature a brand new HealthKit, which will allow users to monitor their health and keep track of their personal stats accrued through fitness apps. And it seems smartphone users can’t get enough of these apps, with global downloads in the millions each month. Even the Government has proposed that GPs recommend apps to patients with iPhones and Android devices. According to Priori Data, in February, there were 26.6 million downloads of health and fitness apps from the app store, and 5.27 million downloads from the Google Play store. Based on current trends, statisticians predict that by next year, an estimated 500 million people worldwide will use a fitness app, turning the industry into a $26 billion business by 2017.

**App Users**

According to a study by Mobiquity, 45 per cent of smartphone owners use a fitness app once a day, while 25 per cent use one several times a day.

Around 30 per cent use apps for goal tracking, 28 per cent to gain awareness of health issues and 27 per cent for motivation.

A further seven per cent use apps to [identify unhealthy habits](http://www.mobile-ent.biz/industry/market-data/infographic-the-appification-of-health-and-fitness/043535), two per cent to connect with an expert and the same number download them for their competitive element.

**Fitness Apps**

The most popular of these apps are 'Map my Run', 'Runkeeper' and 'Nike plus Fuelband'-an app that works with a wearable device. Data from the band syncs with the app, which then provides feedback to the user and motivation.

**Wellbeing Apps**

Also under the category of fitness apps are those that focus on a particular aspect of a person’s well-being such as the ‘Break Reminder’, which alerts workers to take time out away from their desks, and ‘All in Yoga’, that features breathing techniques along with 25 yoga positions and stretches. But what makes these apps so appealing to Apple and Android users? Experts suggest that social interaction is one of the main reasons people are drawn to using health and fitness apps. People enjoy posting their achievements on social networking sites such as Facebook for their friends and family to see. Unlike gym memberships, most apps are free or carry a small charge. They are easy to use and enable users to track their health from anywhere and anytime. These apps also allow people to take better control and manage their own health, which is empowering. As fitness apps become more sophisticated and people become more and more reliant on smartphones, it’s unlikely the growth of these apps will slow down anytime soon.

**Assignment:** **Part I** of your assignment is to research two to three free fitness/health related apps. You need to write a short paper explaining what the app is and detailed information as to how it works. Research when the app was introduced on the market and by whom. You need to do this for each of the two or three apps that you select.

**Part II** of your assignment is to choose one of the free apps that you researched and use it for the next 5 weeks. You need to include your personal opinion on how well or not well the app has been designed. Include your likes and dislikes of the app and why you like or dislike the app, including examples. Include any details on how well the app performs. Explain if it is user friendly. Feel free to include any other pertinent information about the app.

You will include both Part I and Part II of the assignment in your paper that will be due at the end of the first 5 weeks of Marking Period 2. The paper must be a minimum of 3 pages, double spaced and typed in 12” font. Please include your name and date on the heading of the paper.