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Jawbone Up24 review: A great fitness tracker with style and comfort

So long as you don't need a display, the Jawbone Up24's Bluetooth syncing, Android and iOS support, and stylish look put it at the head of the health tracker pack.

**Brian Bennett**

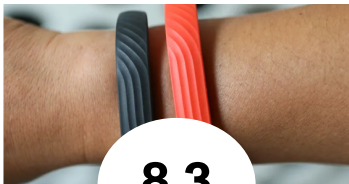
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8 min read 

Editors' Note, March 12, 2014: *This review was originally published on November 13, 2013. It has since been updated to reflect the addition of Android support.*



THE GOOD



Jawbone Up24

The **Jawbone Up24** is an incredibly easy-to-use and enjoyable fitness tracker that counts steps, sleep, and calories. The Up24 is water-resistant, light, and comfortable to wear. The device syncs with iPhones and Android phones over Bluetooth.

THE BAD

The Jawbone Up24 lacks a screen to quickly check your progress.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If having a screen isn't a priority, the Jawbone Up24's superb app, clever advice, and comfy fit are hard to resist.

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When we first reviewed the \$150 Jawbone Up24 fitness tracker, we liked just about everything about it. It looked great, and it offered easy Bluetooth syncing with its companion app. The big drawback was that that app was iOS-only.

But Jawbone has now delivered on its promise to bring Android users into the fold, making a great device available to an even wider audience. The result is a top-notch fitness tracker that now works with the vast majority of smartphones on the market.

The Up24's biggest rival was the [Fitbit Force](#), the \$130 wrist tracker that doubled as a wristwatch, thanks to the built-in display that the Up24 lacks. But Fitbit has since pulled the Force from the market, at least for the time being, while the company retools the product (it caused skin rashes for a small number of users).

When the Force returns to store shelves, we can debate its merits versus the Up24. In the meantime, the Up24 leaps to the top of our most-recommended list for wrist trackers. And unlike a lot of wearable gadgets, the Up24 looks great on men and women -- think "bracelet," not "clunky wristwatch." It's perfect for those who desire a dead-simple and fun UI, with the personal touch of individually-tailored insights.

Design

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Design

Looking at the Up24 for the first time, my immediate reaction was to wonder whether this was indeed a new product. That's because, similarly to Fitbit's refresh of the Flex to the Force, the Up24 is almost identical to its predecessor. Just like the original Up, the Up24 is a thin bracelet-style gadget meant to be slipped around the wrist and worn all day long. It's also encased in a rubbery skin, which hides its sensitive motion-tracking and activity data-crunching components.



The Up24 comes in black and a bright orange color.

Josh Miller/CNET

The Up24's ridged and textured surface also protects its high-tech interior from splashes and exposure to moisture. As a result, you'll be able to shower, wash piles of dishes, and stroll through torrential downpours carefree with the Up24 on your arm. The gadget borrows the Up's unique, and extremely comfortable I might add, buckle-less design.

Rather than having a fastener or pegs that snap together, the Up24's band isn't connected at all. Instead, the device's two open ends sit parallel to each other with the band's inherent spring firmly and softly gripping

your wrist. Outside of a traditional watch strap, it's the most ergonomic wristband design I've used and a cinch to slip on. Also, it isn't at risk of becoming unhinged and perhaps lost like the Force.



The ends of the Up24 do not clasp, but wrap around your wrist parallel to each other.

Josh Miller/CNET

Jawbone, however, decided not to give its flagship tracker an alphanumeric display, something competing products such as the Fitbit Flex and Nike FuelBand SE feature. While those devices can showcase important informational tidbits, including steps taken, calories burned, and the time, the Up24 is visually challenged by comparison.

Like the Up before it, the Up24's indicator light communicates its status only in colors of green, yellow, and red, and in starburst or half-moon symbols. Honestly, the Up24's lack of a display is a huge letdown for me since I like being able to check in a flash how active (or lazy) I've been. Often, rooting around for my phone in pockets or bags, then waiting to fire up an app takes too darn long, especially when I'm dodging slow sidewalk walkers -- you know who you are.

Unfortunately, the Up24 doesn't even gain much of a size or weight advantage by going without a screen. The gadget is a little less bulky than the FuelBand SE (1.28 ounces) and Force (1.28 ounces), but at just under an ounce (0.96 ounce), it's only slightly lighter.

On one end of the Up24 there's a big, flat, squarish button. Tapping or holding it will kick the gadget into its various modes for tracking sleep or simply confirm that the gizmo is alert and powered. The other tip of the Up24 houses what looks like a small 2.5mm headphone jack. The main purpose for the connector is to charge the device's battery using a bundled USB cord. It's a

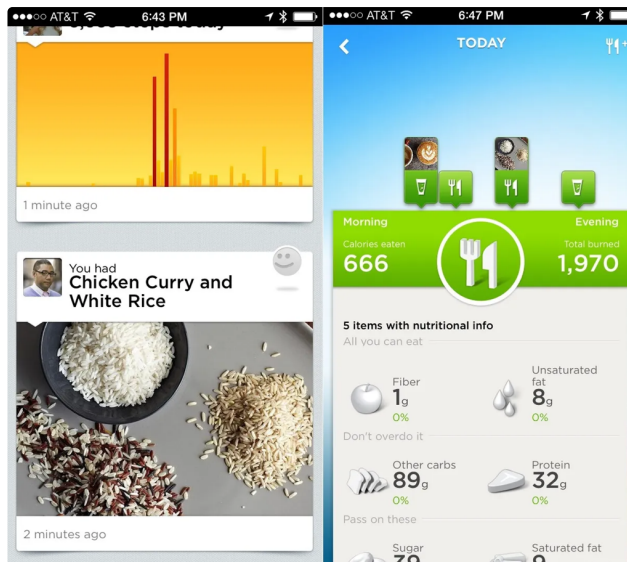
departure from the first Jawbone Up, which had a larger 3.5mm plug that served as both power resupply and a tool for data transfer (via smartphone headphone ports).

Key wellness capabilities

You can think of the Up24 as more of an evolution of its predecessor than a truly revolutionary fitness product. Both fitness trackers provide staple pedometer functions such as logging steps you take and resulting calories burned.

Additionally, you can log meals and snacks you eat through the Up mobile app in an effort to keep tabs on how many calories you consume, and whether they're canceled out by exercise. The Up platform, however, takes food logging a step further.

Not only can you pick dishes, drinks, and snacks from an extensive database, but you have the option of scanning bar codes of packaged foods to quantify nutrition in a flash. Alternatively, the application lets you snap photos of edible items plus select foodstuffs from a glossy Jawbone-curated image gallery.



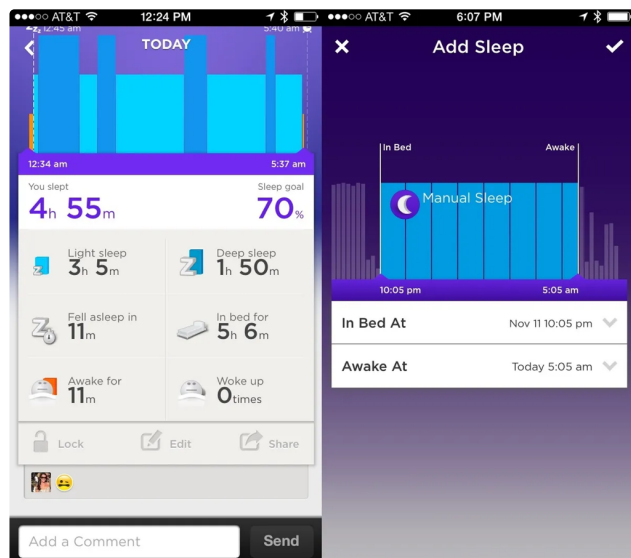
Log food and drinks that you enjoy with the mobile app.

Brian Bennett/CNET

Still, if you're looking for a serious scientific dietary- and exercise-tracking system here, the Up24 isn't what you seek. For instance, there's no way to parse your personal performance in terms of all Up users, those in your age, sex, weight class, and so on. The Up24 also does not link to fancy Wi-Fi scales to provide real-time weight, BMI,

and percentage of body fat data. For that, you'll have to either jump on the Fitbit or Withings systems, which lean on the Aria and Body Scale, respectively.

Counting sheep is right in the Up24's wheelhouse, though. Like its predecessor, the wristband can log the length and quality of your sleep and report back with plenty of detailed stats. For example, you'll see how many times you woke during the night, how much light or deep slumber you had, and how quickly you nodded off into dreamland.



Get detailed stats on how well you sleep or add sleep info later if you forget to log it.

Brian Bennett/CNET

The Up and Up24 cleverly make use of a built-in haptic feedback and sleep awareness engine, as well. A silent alarm lets you schedule alarm times, when the Up will discreetly buzz to gently nudge you awake. It's a feature that the Fitbit Force matches, but one that the FuelBand SE lacks. What's more, Up users can command their bands to wake them up from short "power naps" using a special short sleep mode. I especially like the idle alert wherein the device will vibrate when you've been sitting on your bum for too long.



Bluetooth was sorely needed on the original Up.

Josh Miller/CNET

It's better with Bluetooth

The big improvement the Jawbone Up24 has over the original Up is wireless Bluetooth syncing. It's a capability I really wish the original Up offered, and it makes all the difference. It also puts the Up24 on par with all of today's compelling fitness gadgets including Fitbit's entire lineup (Zip, Flex, and Force), the Nike FuelBand SE, and the Basis B1 Band.

More, Bluetooth is the driving force behind many of the Up24's advanced features. Paired with a new Up 3.0 mobile app, the Up24 keeps a running tally of short-term progress, which Jawbone refers to as streaks.

Essentially, when you hit your daily goal three, five, or seven days in a row, the application rewards you with praise. The app will acknowledge bigger accomplishments, too, termed Milestones, such as when you hit 1 million steps or other impressive long-term feats.

Since the Up24 stays in constant communication with its paired mobile app and pays attention to your behavior 24-7, Jawbone says that after about a week of wearing the gizmo, you should begin seeing tailor-made advice. For example a "Today, I will" message will prod you to drink more water or get to bed earlier if the Up24 thinks you're slacking in those areas. In my case it took a few days longer for these sort of personalized alerts to appear, but they did happen.

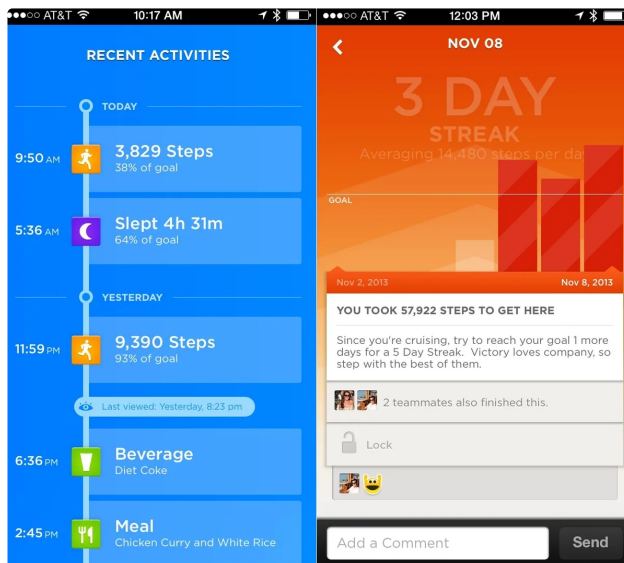


The iOS and Android apps have a lot of features and are easy to use.

Josh Miller/CNET

Other motivational tools in the Up24's arsenal are ways to connect with other Up users, see their progress in relation to you, and get relevant alerts pushed to your phone. You also can log your mood and express feelings to pin to friends' accomplishments and updates.

Android users now have a reason to cheer too. Jawbone has delivered on its promise to provide support for its newfangled Up 3.0 mobile app on Android phones. Originally the Up24 and companion software were only available for iOS.



A new activity view compiles recent info in one spot. The app also praises you for streaks in meeting your goals.

Brian Bennett/CNET

Life with the Up24

Giving the Up24 a spin on both an iPhone 5C and Samsung Galaxy Note 3 test device was frankly a joy. Even though Jawbone was kind enough to provide me with a prerelease version of the Up 3.0 application, it

was immediately clear that a lot of time and effort went into crafting this software experience. A stark contrast to the Fitbug Orb application, Up 3.0 is clean, runs smoothly, and is intuitive. Most critically, especially on the iPhone 5C's small screen, application items are large, color-coordinated, and often stamped with simple-to-digest symbols.

Setting up the Up24 was a cinch, and I linked the gadget to my handsets in seconds. The app clearly reports my percentage progress on my two main goals: sleep and steps (purple and orange up arrows). If I wanted to log food, that would be laid out on the right with a handy calorie total.

Pulling down displays my "recent activities," which is a timeline of Up events like sleep, steps, and meals. Below is the primary news feed where I could see what my other Up friends, or "Team," have been doing. Swiping left reveals numerous personal stats such as goals, Lifeline, and Trends. Here, too, is a listing, called an "app gallery," for third-party apps the Up system supports.

Sliding my finger to the right of the home page pulls up deeper Up band settings such as initiating Sleep Mode (also done by holding down the Up's button for a few seconds), Power Nap, Smart Sleep Alarms (silent alarms), and idle mode.

Jawbone claims that you can expect seven days of use on a single charge. Though I have yet to use the Up24 for a full week, it appeared to be on the road to fulfilling that promise. Indeed, I'd expect nothing less from a 24-hour multiple-day fitness tracker that would match the performance from competing devices such as the Fitbit Force and Basis Band.

Conclusion

With its light and comfortable design, strong water- and sweat-resistant coating, plus lots of ways to help you master your sleep, not to mention nudge you toward being more active, the \$149.99 Jawbone Up24 is no doubt one of the best fitness-trackers you can buy.

Originally, I felt the lack of a display was a big deficiency, especially when the less expensive [Fitbit Force](#) managed to squeeze in a small but alphanumeric display that's capable of showing basic tracking stats. But after using the Up24 over several months -- and thanks to the gadget's extremely intuitive and beautifully designed mobile app -- I have (mostly) made peace with

the fact that the Up24 has no screen. With the addition of Android support (and the unfortunate recall snafu that has stricken the Force), I must recommend the Up24 just to health-conscious smartphone owners for now, at least until Fitbit rectifies the issue.



8.3

Jawbone Up24

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