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Jawbone UP Review

By [Jill Duffy](#)
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●●●●○ 3.5 Good ?

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Jawbone UP tracks personal health and fitness very thoroughly in a stellar mobile app for iOS and Android, but it's not the best fitness tracker we've tested. A few unique features do give it special appeal, though.

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Pros & Cons

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ Excellent and wide-ranging ability to track metrics for personal health. | — For iOS and Android only; doesn't work with personal computers. |
| ✓ Comfortable. | — No data readouts on band itself. |
| ✓ Includes a vibration alarm with a few unique functions. | — Doesn't sync with other devices such as connected scales or heart rate monitors. |
| ✓ Gorgeous, well-designed iPhone and Android apps. | — No wireless syncing. |
| | — Not discreet to wear. |
-

The Jawbone UP (\$129.99 direct) ([\\$28.49 at Walmart](#)) is, in some ways, everything I want from a fitness-tracking gadget. It records daily activity and sleep efficiency, comes with a supremely well-designed mobile app for iPhone and Android, feels comfortable around my wrist, and includes a vibrating silent alarm, which anyone who shares a bed should at least try. And yet, when I compare it with my favorite fitness device and PCMag's Editors' Choice, the \$100 [Fitbit One](#) ([\\$179.99 at Amazon](#)), the Jawbone UP doesn't quite measure up.

The UP costs \$30 more and misses many key features that the Fitbit just gets right. One is discretion—not everyone wants to be seen wearing what is essentially a pedometer. The Fitbit One fits snugly on a bra strap, in a pocket, or attached to your waistband. Also, the Jawbone doesn't connect to any other apps or devices. The Fitbit integrates with all the major calorie-counting apps, as well as a Wi-Fi bathroom scale, the [Fitbit Aria](#) ([\\$179.99 at Amazon](#)), for automated weigh-ins. I wanted to love the Jawbone UP, just as I wanted to love the [Nike+ FuelBand](#). I had high expectations of both, but more of a middling experience in the end. Jawbone UP has a few unique features, though, mostly in terms of how the silent vibrating alarm works, and those alone may appeal strongly to some users.

Design

The relatively thin and flexible bracelet comes in three sizes (small, medium, large) and eight colors: onyx, mint green, light gray, blue, navy blue, red, orange, and hunter green. An embossed zigzag extends the length of the wrap-around band, which is made of medical-grade, hypoallergenic TPU rubber. In theory, you can wear it all the time, even in the shower, although I have not yet given it the full splash test. I'll let common sense, rather than the instruction

manual, guide that decision.

SIMILAR PRODUCTS



Nike+ FuelBand

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What's included? You get the UP band, a not-very-helpful quick start guide that will point you to Jawbone's website for additional instructions, and a USB charging cable. Inside the band is a lithium-ion polymer battery that lasts about 10 days on a single charge.

Some reviewers like the Jawbone UP's look, but I doubt they went to a formal dinner in a sleeveless dress while still wearing it. If a device is meant to be worn 24/7, as the Jawbone UP is, I need the option to wear it discreetly. That's a huge selling point for the Fitbit, and a major con for the UP.

It's All in the App

The best aspects of the Jawbone UP are found in the mobile app, the primary—nay, *only*—way you interact with data. The app shows how many miles you've walked, calories you've burned, charts of your sleeping patterns, your mood, should you choose to log it daily, and a summary of what

or your sleeping patterns, your mood should you choose to log it daily, and a summary of what you've eaten.

But wait. There's more. From the app, you can set a silent alarm that vibrates up to 30 minutes ahead of your designated wake up time if it spots an ideal moment for you to get up based on your REM cycles. Pretty neat, eh? There's also a power nap switch that, when activated, looks at your sleep habits to determine whether your best nap would be a 27-minute rest or a 45-minute siesta, or something in between. It then sets the appropriate alarm. The Fitbit One has a silent alarm, too, but it only vibrates at the time you set. One more silent alarm I like in the Jawbone UP is an "idle alert," which I scheduled to remind me to get off my butt after 90 minutes of inactivity Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Graphics in the app delight the eye with vivacious colors. Interactive gesture-based motions look smooth and fluid. But here's the catch: You must connect the Jawbone to your device's headset jack to sync the data and be able to see it. That is to say, the rubbery and lightweight bracelet tells you next to nothing in itself. There are no readouts or displays on the band. In other words, you *need* an iOS or Android device. (For the full list of supported phones in various countries, see the [Jawbone UP's devices page](#).)

The Fitbit One, meanwhile, spoils you with data in a Web app, in mobile apps, and on the gadget itself. Press its tiny button, and you can cycle through your fitness stats, or just view the time, at a moment's notice.

What's Missing and Conclusions

The latest gadgets in the personal fitness market add a heart rate monitor directly on the device (no chest strap needed). I recently tested the [Basis fitness watch](#) (\$199), which has this feature. A feature such as this one sets the Jawbone UP even further behind the pack.

The few aspects of the Jawbone UP that I like, I *really* like. This device could have been great, but the fact that it's limited to being used only in conjunction with a smartphone decreases its overall appeal for me. And in light of our Editors' Choice, the \$100 Fitbit One, the Jawbone's band doesn't really compete. If you have a smartphone and don't mind not being able to see your data right on the device, it could be a great option, but it's still 30 bucks more than the Fitbit One.

Jawbone UP

●●●●○ 3.5

PROS

- ✓ Excellent and wide-ranging ability to track metrics for personal health.
- ✓ Comfortable.
- ✓ Includes a vibration alarm with a few unique functions.

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CONS

- ✗ For iOS and Android only; doesn't work with personal computers.
- ✗ No data readouts on band itself.
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About Jill Duffy

Contributor



I've been contributing to PCMag since 2011 in a variety of ways. My column, [Get Organized](#), has been running on PCMag since 2012. It gives advice on how to manage all the devices, apps, digital photos, email, and other technology that can make you feel like you're going to have a panic attack.

My latest book is [The Everything Guide to Remote Work](#), which goes into great detail about a subject that I've been covering as a writer and participating in personally since well before the COVID-19 pandemic.

I write about work culture, personal productivity, and software, including project management software, collaboration apps, productivity apps, and language-learning software.

Previously, I worked for the Association for Computing Machinery, *The San Francisco Examiner* newspaper, *Game Developer* magazine, and (I kid you not) *The Journal of Chemical Physics*. I was once profiled in an article in *Vogue* India alongside Marie Kondo. I'm currently pursuing a few unannounced long-form projects.

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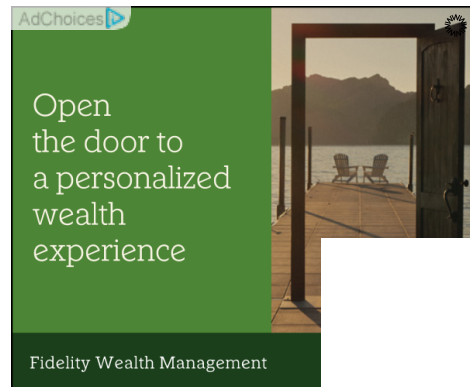
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