



Optimize me!

The wonderful world of wearable technology

2020 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

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The holiday shopping season is upon us, and after an uncertain and stressful year, people are focusing on health and well-being like never before.

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SPORTS MEDICINE PREDICTS THAT HEALTH-FOCUSED “WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY” WILL BE THE TOP FITNESS TREND IN 2021.¹ Many of you may already be familiar with or own a wearable device. In recent years, millions of people have embraced tracking their steps, their sleep habits and their food choices. Wearable technology helps make all these things possible and more, with a new focus on sleek, fashion-forward design. Lockton’s own Tom Diaz, MD, Chief Clinical Technology Officer, reviewed the most popular wearables on the market today with healthcare data analytics and digital therapeutics in mind. In this piece, he provides his expertise and insight into which wearable may be best for specific audiences based on the wearable’s capabilities and how it can support their well-being goals.

Fitness tracker vs. Smartwatch: Which should I buy?

Fitness trackers are smaller than smartwatches, with much longer battery life and a lower price point — and these features are generally their biggest appeal. If you are looking for a simple way to measure steps and calories burned, a fitness tracker is for you. Most of the popular fitness trackers, like the **Fitbit Inspire 2** (\$99.95) and **Garmin Vivosmart 4** (\$149.99) are significantly less expensive than an entry-level smartwatch.





SMARTWATCHES HAVE MORE CAPABILITIES THAN FITNESS TRACKERS, LIKE HEART RATE SENSORS AND TOOLS FOR MORE ACCURATE HEALTH TRACKING, AND A DISPLAY THAT ALLOWS YOU TO CONTROL MUSIC, ANSWER CALLS AND CONNECT TO A WIDE VARIETY OF APPS ON YOUR SMARTPHONE. Different brands will prioritize sleep, exercise and heart monitoring to varying degrees. You can't go wrong with either the new **Apple Watch 6** (\$399) or **Samsung Galaxy 3** (\$399). We'd recommend you buy the watch that goes with the operating system you're already using for your phone. The differences between them aren't dramatic enough to warrant making a switch. Both companies focus on comfort, usability and stylish design — and both get top billing annually for the best overall smartwatch.

The COVID-19 pandemic helped highlight our collective desire to live better, healthier lives. Beyond fitness trackers and smartwatches, there are now wearable devices to help us manage chronic health conditions, reduce stress and monitor the seniors in our lives. Here's an overview of some of the best innovations in wearables this year, for you or anyone on your holiday shopping list.

The next-level fitness fanatic

HAVE A SMARTWATCH AND WANT MORE INSIGHTS AND FROM WORKOUTS? **The Oura Ring** (\$299) fits discreetly on one finger and is a great complement to a smartwatch. Rather than giving you raw data, the Oura measures deviations from your two-week baseline of fitness to offer insight into your personal readiness score, sleep score and activity score — all in a great app interface. Measuring deviations against your own fitness baseline rather than against the general population is more accurate and useful information. Although not a medical device, Oura did partner with the NBA during their COVID-19 “bubble” season to provide health insights to the players and managers.

The best fitness tracker for hardcore gymgoers and trainers is the **Whoop Strap 3.0** (\$21+ per month). It's more than just an activity band. In fact, it doesn't track steps at all, just overall performance. When you're in the gym, it can be placed anywhere on the arm — from bicep to wrist — to accurately track heart rate during sessions. Whoop focuses on your recovery time too, keeping tabs on advanced biometrics like heart rate and sleep, to advise you on when to train and when to rest. Whoop's current claim to fame is its involvement in several COVID-19 studies with prestigious research universities worldwide. You won't pay a thing for the Whoop Strap, but you will need to buy a monthly subscription that costs \$21 or more depending on which terms you choose.



THE DE-STRESSOR

The Fitbit Sense (\$329.95) is the most stress-focused Fitbit on the market. It uses health metrics and sleep data to detect stress in the wearer and then direct them to mindfulness apps for relief. The Fitbit Sense is also the only smartwatch that measures skin temperature, making it particularly useful in detecting the onset of illness. It also measures resting heart rate, heart rate variability (HRV), breathing rate and oxygen saturation — all useful information in a world seeing a rise of contagious influenza-like illnesses.

FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN DE-STRESSING WITHOUT A WEARABLE, A MYRIAD OF QUALITY APPS WILL HELP YOU DO THAT. Our top picks are the Headspace and Calm meditation apps, which are available on both Android and Apple platforms (free trial, then subscription-based). Apple also features the **Day One App**, and Android's competitor is called **Journey**.



THE TECH-SAVVY KIDDO

CHILDREN ARE GETTING IN ON THE WEARABLE FITNESS TREND AT YOUNGER AND YOUNGER AGES.

The Apple Watch 6 and Apple Watch SE (\$399 and \$279) are compatible with Apple's family plan, which allows you to connect with your little ones via text or voice on their watch and track their GPS locations. For a more affordable tracker without the connectivity to mom and dad, try the **Apple Watch 3** (\$199) or the **Fitbit Ace 2** (\$69.95). The Ace 2 is on many "best of" lists as the top tracker for children six and up. Although it tracks the same metrics as its predecessor, like step count, active minutes, hourly movement and sleep, this tracker is more durable and easier to use, and it has a more versatile design.



THE SAFETY-FIRST SENIOR

AGING PARENTS OR GRANDPARENTS MAY BE MORE CONCERNED WITH MANAGING SPECIFIC HEALTH CONDITIONS AND PREVENTING ILLNESS RATHER THAN MEASURING PEAK FITNESS PERFORMANCE.

The **WELT Smart Belt Pro** (\$249) helps prevent falls by analyzing the wearer's walking patterns. It features a sophisticated gait analysis via the sensors in the belt. Any abnormalities are immediately shared through smartphones to help caretakers monitor patients. The sleek buckle and leather belt conceal the wearable device entirely.



THE OUTDOOR ADVENTURER

The Garmin Fenix 65 Pro (\$699.99) features an impressive satellite navigation system and tons of different sport modes for those who take their fitness outdoors and into the wild. It has new power management features to extend the battery life, which is especially important if it looks like you'll end up outside for longer than you planned. **GARMIN'S NEW EMERGENCY ALERT AND INCIDENT DETECTION SYSTEM IS INCLUDED IN EVERY DEVICE, MAKING YOUR ADVENTURES SAFER.**

**FORM &
FUNCTION:
THE IMPORTANCE
OF GOOD DESIGN**



Wearables are the next step in our country's evolution toward patient-centered care. Consumers get the support they need to manage a health condition and live a healthier life. Clinicians get more access to real-time info in a patient's day-to-day life, which helps them support the patient every day, not just during an occasional office visit. The designers behind wearables are arguably just as important as the engineers who create them, because form must meet function to ensure that people actually want to wear these devices.

Here are the top 4 things to consider when shopping for a wearable:

- 01 COMFORT:** Materials should be stretchy, breathable and easy to put on and take off.
- 02 EASE OF USE:** If the user can't figure out how to use the device easily or connect it with their smartphone, it doesn't matter how many bells and whistles it includes.
- 03 PERSONALIZATION:** Accessories are all about showing individual personality, and wearables are no different. Color and style are important.
- 04 LONG-LASTING POWER:** The longer a charge lasts, the more data you can collect and share.

The heart helper

WHILE APPLE WATCH, SAMSUNG GALAXY WATCH 3 AND FITBIT SENSE ALL MONITOR HEART RATE, THE SAMSUNG GALAXY WATCH 3 IS THE ONLY MAINSTREAM SMARTWATCH THAT ALSO MONITORS BLOOD PRESSURE. Nearly half of all U.S. adults have high blood pressure, and only about one in four of those have their blood pressure under control.

The Omron HeartGuide (\$499) is another smartwatch with a built-in blood pressure monitor and is ideal for older adults who are managing heart disease. It uses the same technology found in an inflatable oscillometric blood pressure cuff. This provides the wearer and their physician real-time data to help adjust medications and make more precise recommendations. In addition to monitoring blood pressure, the HeartGuide tracks daily activity, pulse and sleep quality. It stores up to 100 readings in the device itself but also connects to the HeartAdvisor app for unlimited storage.

Technology advancements in all areas of life are moving at lightning speed, and health technology is no exception. With the new 5G mobile network currently replacing 4G technology, the speed with which we will be able to download and process data in 2021 will be unprecedented.

For those looking to technology to help them become healthier, wearables will be a major step toward understanding our fitness and managing our overall well-being.

¹ American College Sports Medicine's "Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2020" source: https://journals.lww.com/acsm-healthfitness/Fulltext/2019/11000/WORLDWIDE_SURVEY_OF_FITNESS_TRENDS_FOR_2020.6.aspx