

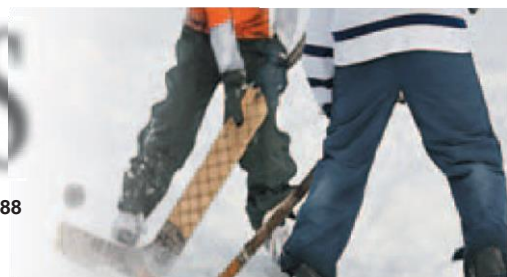


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Use your phone to get your goals organized



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Training Matters



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Our world is quickly converting from paper and pencil methods of tracking to online or app based programs. But are apps more effective, easier and more likely to be used? Let's check out a couple apps that might help you monitor your progress in your goal setting and training.

First, we must acknowledge the fact that some apps are free, some you must purchase, and others may be free to download but include in-app purchases. There are differences between the different types that will also depend on the user and their personal preferences. For the purpose of this article, for ease of access and availability to the masses, we will be looking at a couple apps available as a free download on Apple's iTunes Store.

One to look at is Success Wiz. This app is very user friendly, with lots of easily accessible components. An email sign-up is required, but this allows you to log in to your profile and manage and track your activities. It breaks it down into Plan, Action, and Track categories where you can set goals, structure your routine, and follow your progress, respectively.

Going even further, it allows you to monitor and record activities for various goals in your different areas of life. What is really nice about this app is that you're rewarded points for completion of targets and goals, and the patterns of completion can be viewed in a progress report from the main page. For anyone who is competitive or likes to be rewarded with points (aren't we all?), this is great.

One thing that makes the use of this app difficult is that there are so many areas to click on and around. It's great to have them all, but they can feel overwhelming. The user may find it difficult to find their way around, and the intimidation factor may cause them to stop using it altogether. That being said, there are helping flags that pop up when you switch between categories to help familiarize the user with what to do in each section.

Overall, I think this app would be useful to someone who is very diligent in their planning and is eager to track and monitor their progress.

Another app is called Goalmap. This app allows you to log in using Facebook, Google+, or to register your email address to get started. It looks similar at the beginning, providing lots of different categories to set and manage goals. Everything can be monitored, from Sport and Health, to Travel and Experiences, to your Beauty and Style.

However, what is different is that you must choose one of their suggested goals, and then can track within that. So for example, under the Sport and Health category, one of the options to set a goal is Have a Healthy Diet. Under that, you can only select their choices to monitor, such as fruit/vegetables, water, junk food, etc. For each of those final categories, you can set your target, whether you'd like to meet or exceed any number, and number of times each day. This really limits the goal you can set and personalize, because you can't really make up your own goal.

It seems as though this app would not be as effective in monitoring as Success Wiz, but for those who require more of the set up work done for them, this would be helpful.

All in all, whichever app you choose, will only be effective if you are using it on a regular basis. Just the same with paper and pencil tracking, they will not simply track themselves for you. Our technology hasn't gotten as far as reading our minds, yet! Sure, the apps make it easier to have your tracker on you at all times, but they also face potential issues with your battery running out, slowing down your device, or simply not having enough room to download it at all.

There are perks and pitfalls for both ways of tracking, but the moral of the story is, if you don't track it at all, you'll never really know how close you're getting to your goals. Without being able to see your progress, or lack thereof, you'll be unable to alter your behaviours in favor of your goal achievement.

I guess what I'm telling you is pick the way that works best for you, find a technique you like that you'll stick to, and do it. Then, watch yourself soar!

