

## 7 Great Smartphone Fitness Apps for People 50+

Need to get off the couch or lose a few pounds? These apps can help.

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By [Nancy Fitzgerald](#)

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Kathy Rocchetti, 58, knew she needed to get in shape. It wasn't her doctor who told her; it was her jeans.

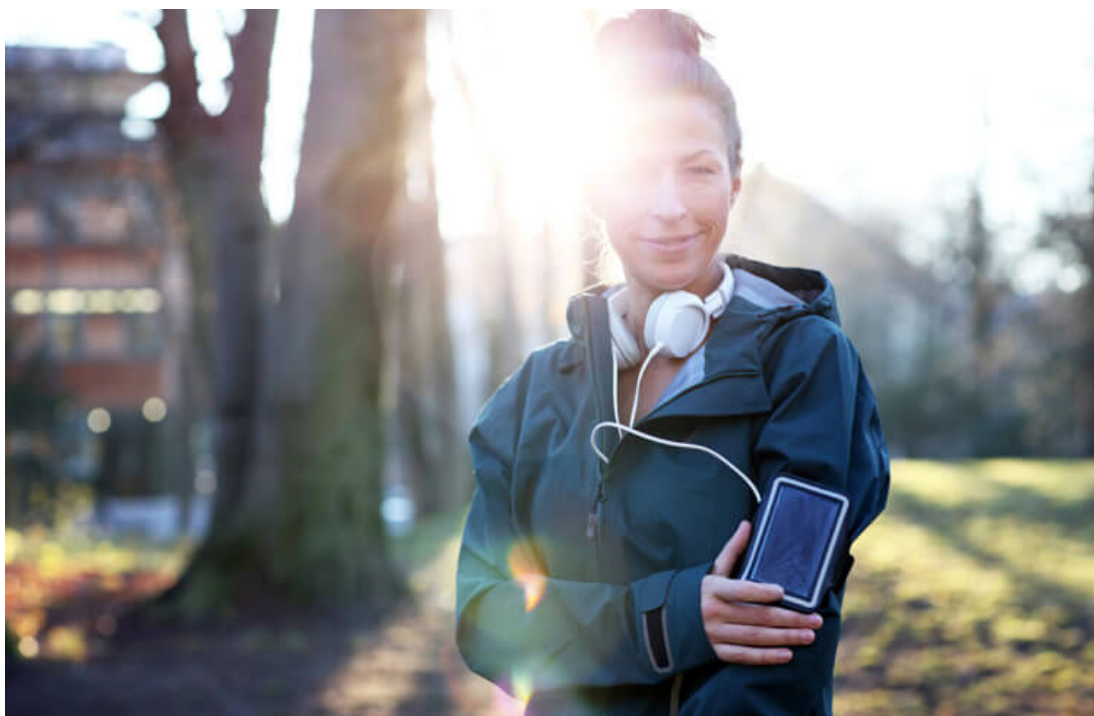
"It was getting tough to pull them up over my hips," the Philadelphia woman recalls, "and it was almost impossible to button them." Now, 20 pounds lighter, those jeans glide right on and look like a million bucks.

What was the secret to her success? "Lots of things," Rocchetti admits, including a wellness program at work.

"But a big part of it were the fitness apps on my

smartphone. It was like

having a coach sitting on my desk all day, telling me to take a quick walk, do some stretches, or drink some more water. And when I'd go out with friends after work, a quick glance at my phone helped me decide what to order and what to stay away from. Apps like My Fitness Pal were great tools to help me reach my goal. Plus, they made it so much fun," she says.



Credit: Adobe Stock

### Putting Your Phone to Work

Rocchetti is part of a growing trend. In a recent AARP survey, 77 percent of participants aged 50-plus reported that fitness apps were useful. And smartphone fitness is definitely not just for twentysomethings — after all, 74 percent of people between 50 and 64 own a smartphone. Maybe you do, too. If so, like Rocchetti, you can put it to work to help you get stronger, slimmer and more energetic.

"The beauty of using smartphones for fitness is that they're already embedded in our lives — you don't have to go out and buy another device," says Ted Vickey, professor of kinesiology at Point Loma University and senior adviser on fitness technology for the American Council on Exercise. "As long as your phone is with you, it can track everything from your daily steps to your pulse rate — and even the quality of your sleep. Plus, it can provide a powerful sense of social support when you share your accomplishments and challenges with family and friends."

### Huge Variety of Offerings

No matter your fitness level right now, there's an app for you.

Just getting off the couch? Try the built-in fitness app that's already on your phone. An iPhone has the Apple Health app, which counts your daily steps, tracks the number of flights you climb and analyzes your sleep; Android phones have similar built-in fitness features, like Samsung Health and Google Fit.

"Start out with one simple app and get comfortable playing with it," advises Fabio Comana, faculty instructor with the National Academy of Sports Medicine in San Diego. "Use it to be more self-aware and build healthy habits. And when you've conquered that app, move on to the next level. Decide what your fitness goals are and find a new app to try."

That's easy — there are untold numbers of apps to choose from. Based on recommendations from experts, here's a list of seven of the best. Most are free, though there may be charges for premium versions.

## 7 Great Fitness Apps

1. **[My Fitness Pal](#)**. Free for iOS and Android. Want to drop a few pounds — or just eat healthier? There's an app for that. My Fitness Pal is a one-stop shop for setting your weight-loss goals, recording what you eat and tracking all your activities. With a food database of more than 5 million items and a barcode scanner, you can make the best choices at home, in the supermarket and in restaurants. There's even a recipe importer to help you cook healthfully — and creatively.
2. **[Map My Walk](#)**. Free for iOS and Android. Walking is one of the best ways to get in shape. Just lace up your sneakers and download this free app. It uses the GPS in your phone to map out walking routes and records details of your workout, including duration, distance, pace, speed and even elevation. It'll calculate the number of calories you've burned and even generate a history of your walks, so you can track your progress over time. (If you're a runner or a cyclist, try Map My Run or Map My Ride.)
3. **[Pocket Yoga](#)**. Free for iOS and Android. Yoga can help you lower blood pressure, ease stress, reduce back pain and even lose weight. But if you're intimidated by the yoga pants and the pretzel-shaped poses, here's a simple, gentle way to get started at home. From a database of illustrations and videos that show you how to do more than 200 poses designed by certified yoga instructors, you can begin your personalized yoga practice — or move on to a more advanced level.
4. **[Johnson & Johnson Official 7-Minute Workout](#)**. Free for iOS and Android. Short on time? Who isn't? With this app, that's no excuse not to exercise. Move through an easy seven-minute workout for beginners; if you're more advanced, try more accelerated versions. Find short instructional videos and a timer that keeps you on task for those seven precious minutes. And, because the app includes a rest interval between each portion of the workout, this is a great way to do interval training, which can help improve heart health and control glucose.
5. **[Instant Heart Rate](#)**. Free for iOS and Android. Everyone knows that exercise can make your heart healthier. But how much exercise is too much — and how can you determine that "sweet spot?" Doctors say the best way is to monitor your heart rate, and the easiest way to do that is with this app. Just put the tip of your index finger on the camera lens of your phone and *voila* — an accurate reading in seconds, plus reports and charts.
6. **[Tai Chi for Seniors](#)**. iOS \$3.99. This ancient Chinese practice has been called "meditation in motion." It's great for both your mind and your body. Studies show tai chi improves flexibility, increases muscle strength and helps with balance and aerobic conditioning. With this app, find 64 demonstration videos with step-by-step instruction from a tai chi master, and audio guides, too. Everything you need to begin your healthful tai chi practice.
7. **[iRideInside](#)**. iOS \$3.99. Has your stationary bike morphed into a coat rack or gathered dust in the basement? Turn it back into a great fitness tool with this app. Customize your workout according to your fitness level, choose music to listen to as you pedal, enjoy coaching videos while you ride and get reports to track your progress.



By [Nancy Fitzgerald](#)

*Nancy Fitzgerald is an award-winning journalist whose work has appeared in Better Homes & Gardens, National Geographic for Kids, Scholastic, Brides, The New York Times and The Christian Science Monitor.*

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