Originally, I was disappointed by the high prices of these watches. I didn't want to drop $700 on a watch when I wasn't sure I would even use a watch. However, I ended up being very happy with the Sport, and I'm convinced it's what I would have chosen even if my funds allowed me other choices-- at least, that's what I tell myself. :) My mom, who also likes to have the latest gadget, got the Watch version, meaning I have a pretty good basis of comparison, so I'll start with that.

COMPARISON: Apple Watch vs Apple Watch Sport

The materials are different between the two watches, with the Sport being a nice matte aluminum with shatterproof Ion-X glass, and the Watch being shiny and kind of flashy stainless steel with scratch-resistant sapphire glass. Sapphire glass is what you really want on a watch face, according to my dad who likes watches, but after a month of regular wear and normal bumps, my Ion-X face looks as good as when it came out of the box; that is, completely scratch free. To be honest, I haven't been babying the watch at all; it's been accidentally bumped against doors and scratched it on zippers and the like. I mean, it's on your wrist, so if you're even a little clumsy, you'll inevitably bump it on things. But the Ion-X glass holds up really great against daily use. It's not a cheap-o material that's going to scratch way more than the sapphire glass or anything. It's a great alternative to sapphire glass, which is an expensive material and probably the main reason the Watch is so much pricier. Hands down, the biggest perk to the Sport is that it's incredibly lightweight. I barely notice I'm wearing it. That's ideal, since I'm a 20-something who rarely wore watches before getting this one. I've tried on my mom's Watch several times, and while it isn't obscenely heavy or anything, it's heavier enough than my Sport that I'm constantly aware of it on my wrist. It would be annoying to wear every day, especially making the transition from never wearing watches to wearing a heavy Apple Watch. Having the basis of comparison really convinced me that the Sport was the right choice for me, and after a month of wear, I'm convinced that even at the lowest price point, this is still a very high-quality product. I don't need my watch to look like jewelry, so it does its job perfectly for me. I have the white silicone band, which is very comfortable, durable, and again, lightweight. You could put a fancier band on it if you wanted to, and there are knockoff bands all over Amazon if you don't want Apple's ridiculously overpriced luxury bands. It's still $350 for a watch, but hey, this is Apple.

PHONE INTEGRATION

So, I'm sure everyone who is considering buying an Apple Watch really wants to know how it changes things with the iPhone. Why should you get an Apple Watch? To be perfectly honest, it's not going to change your life. But it does make things a lot more convenient. You won't have to have your phone immediately on your person at all times; you can leave it in the other room to charge or deep in the depths of your purse without fear of missing a call or text. You know how some people keep their phone on the table during meetings, at meals, or in class? You won't have to be that person, and you'll still stay connected. You can answer calls on it; they sound as good as regular speaker phone, and the volume is adjustable. It's a good hands-free option for driving, and I don't feel like I have to speak directly into the watch. The texting response options are pretty good; you'll get "Yes," "No," and "Maybe" if the person asks a question, as well as "Talk later?" "Sorry, I can't talk right now," "Ok," and "Thanks" for other casual situations. I think I've even seen "I'm on my way" in response to a text involving the word "where." Pretty smart stuff, and it's likely to get smarter as the technology advances. The speech recognition is great if you want to say something else. It works so well that you'd better hope you're not around some prankster, because if they say something before you hit "done," it will add it word for word. However, it doesn't integrate Emojis beyond the basic smiley face, so I often take out my phone to type out my Emoji-ridded regular texts. Also, you have to add punctuation, same as with Siri. So I'll be like "Where are you question mark." It'd probably be funny if I did it in public, so I don't. Another big feature (for me) is the ability to ping your phone. I can't really lose the watch, since it's attached to me, but I constantly lose my phone between couch cushions or maybe just leaving it in another room without realizing. Now, I don't even have to go to the trouble of looking for my phone; swipe up on the watch, tap a button, and the phone makes a locator noise, even if it's on silent! It's ridiculously convenient. You can also decide how much you want it to notify you; if you want it to ping when you get an e-mail, it will. If not, it won't. If you want it to remind you to stand every hour or move around more to meet your daily calorie-burning goal, it will, but you can turn it off if it bugs you. The customizable alerts let you decide how much you want to be distracted by your technology while ensuring that you get the alerts you think are most important. So this can definitely allow you to break free of your iPhone, if that's what you want it to do.

APPS

You're obviously not going to use the Watch for browsing the way you use your regular phone, and Apple was cognizant of that and re-designed a lot of apps to optimize them for the small watch face. You can choose which apps from your phone get put on your watch and re-arrange their order from the Apple Watch app on the iPhone, so that's pretty nice-- no fiddling with settings on a tiny watch screen. You can also choose which apps are shown in "Glances," which is the "swipe up" I mentioned before. These are things you can see and access without going to the watch's home screen. Basically, you get an abbreviated version of the app on the Glances, and if you want more information, you tap the screen and it takes you to the full app. You can set as few or as many apps as you want to show in Glances, and it should probably be things you use a lot. So with the Weather app, it shows you the current local temperature and weather, and if you tap it, it takes you to the full day's forecast. You can have it show the battery life in Glances, or have the Heart Rate app in glances so that you can take your pulse at any given moment, or control your music with play/pause, skip, and volume control. This is really nice, because you never even need to bother with going to the home screen if you use the shortcuts here. Most Apple apps, like Exercise and the texting app, are very well-integrated into the watch experience, as is the New York Times app, which shows abbreviated versions of the top stories that you can then send to your iPhone app if you want to read the full story. The music capabilities are nice; you can select music and it'll play through your phone, even on third-party apps like Pandora, Spotify, and 8tracks. It's kind of a drag if you need to, say, scroll through all your music to find a specific artist, but stuff like that is to be expected with such a small screen, and the Watch isn't really designed for scrolling through music libraries. You can put small playlists from your iTunes library on the Watch for exercising and the Watch itself will play the music through its speakers, but things that require wireless, like Pandora, require your phone to be on your person and usually just play from the phone. Certain apps are better left to the larger phone screen. The Mail app, for example, is pretty annoying to work with, but what do you really expect with such a small screen? There's also an Instagram app, but I honestly don't see the point of scrolling through long feeds on the Watch, so I don't use it much. Third-party apps like that will probably have a learning curve as they optimize the experience for the Watch. Besides that, I think the Watch makes a great smaller companion for the iPhone.

EXERCISING

The biggest thing they advertise is the heart rate capabilities and the workout apps, right? So I figured I'd comment on that. It tracks your motion throughout the day, as well as when you're standing, so if you want it to tell you to stand up every hour, it will, and you can also set motion and exercise goals that go up or down based on whether you reached them that week. I have no idea how it knows whether you're standing, but it's always been accurate. For workouts, the official Exercise app is easy to use; you can select your exercise type (options include walk, run, and cycle, either indoor for on exercise machines or outdoor, plus popular things like elliptical, rowing, or stair stepping) and it reads your heart rate and distance to measure the calories you burn. So that's a great feature for anyone who likes cardio, since the current alternative that tracks heart rate is either a chest strap or those FitBit watches. For something like weight lifting or dancing you can select "other" and it tracks your heart rate and then assumes you're burning calories at a brisk walking pace when the motion sensor can't pick up whatever you're doing. There are doubtless third-party weightlifting apps that probably do the job better that hopefully will gain access to the heart rate sensor in the next WatchOS, and other third-party apps like Strava are available for more specific needs (that one is for running and cycling), as well as FitStarYoga, a yoga app that walks you through the poses. Bottom line: is owning the Watch going to make you more in shape? No. Only you can do that. But if you want it to, it can make you more aware of how much you move around and burn in a day. It can tap you to tell you to move more if you haven't reached your calorie goal for the day. It can track your heart rate and location during a run and let you know how much you burned. In the end, it does what any piece of technology can do-- it can help you motivate yourself, and it can help you track your exercise habits.

There are so few things I dislike about the Watch. The Stand notifications got annoying when I went on a road trip recently, but I didn't know at the time that I could have switched them off. The tiny home screen bugged me for awhile, but I found out online that there's a setting to make the icons bigger-- Reduce Motion makes the icons stay their maximum size rather than shrinking as they get further from the center of the screen; it looks less pretty, but it makes the home screen SO much less of a pain. Passcodes are hard to fiddle with on such a small screen, and I personally don't use them because of that, but I'm not really sure there's a solution to that issue; it's just a small screen. The battery works all day even if I play with the watch a lot, which is exactly what it claimed it would be; I usually have 20-40% charge left at the end of the day when I put it on the charger, depending on how much I played with it throughout the day. You can set it to Battery Reserve (basically, watch mode) for a longer lifespan if you only want to use it during workouts or something; it just won't track your heart rate and do the other battery-draining things it usually does. The Apple Watch Sport a really well-designed product with high-quality materials, as most Apple products are, and it works very seamlessly with the iPhone. Do you absolutely need it? Probably not. But it's a great little gadget that makes life with an iPhone more convenient.