

Heuristic Evaluation of Ataraxia

1. Problem

The Ataraxia prototype is a tool meant to allow users to discover and try new self care activities, then, using the activities they like, build and adhere to a recurring schedule of self care activities.

2. Violations Found

1. H4: Consistency & Standards | Severity 1 | Found by B

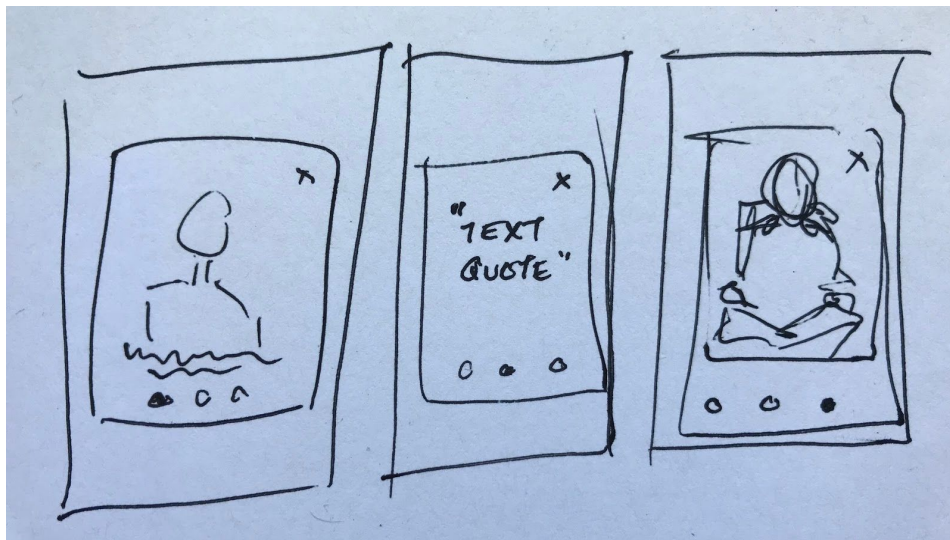
Edit on View/Edit Routine uses a system that iOS users know well but also is a little wonky AKA the context in which it is used in is usually app deletion, in which you hold down an icon to initiate editing.

Fix: Make the title "Routine" with an "edit" button at top left

2. H8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design | Severity 1 | Found by B, C

Resources view is A LOT of text and is also blue, which we learned just last class is not great for text.

Fix: A page-by-page tutorial with images and short descriptive text



3. H1: Visibility of System Status | Severity 4 | Found by A, B, C

It's a hassle to figure out what activities you're in the middle of from the homepage and doesn't make sense to see in an options/settings menu.

Fix: put in-progress bubbles on the home page with some visual indicator for them being in-progress (aka changing shape, using physics to have them cling to the discover button, etc)

4. **H2: Match b/w System & World | Severity 1 | Found by B**
“Completed Activities” is a misleading title for something that could be incorporated into your routine.
Fix: “Activity History” instead.
5. **H1: Visibility of System Status | Severity 2 | Found by B**
Can’t tell if an activity is incorporated into routine from history/detail page.
Fix: from #4 as well as adding in details on current place in routine and edit options (aka daily, once a week, etc).
6. **H7: Flexibility & Efficiency of Use | Severity 3 | Found by A, B, C**
It seems that the “x” button sometimes takes you back to the home screen, but this doesn’t always make sense. For example, if I’m reading about meditating but decide I’d rather call home, I would press the “x” and expect to be returned to the “choose one to try” screen. Not all of your “x” buttons have this problem though. Additionally, clicking on a task from the view/edit page brings up a page that reroutes back to the main page.
Fix: Make “x” buttons always return you to the previous or “underlying” screen.
7. **H4: Consistency & Standards | Severity 1 | Found by B**
“X” on added to in activities pop-up is way larger than other ones. Text is oddly formatted and doesn’t read easily. In general, bubble placement, text, and symbols keep shifting between windows.
Fix: Make things the same consistent size; on the activities pop-up, break up the text by sentence and left-align or justify the text. Make sure bubbles are placed in the same places and fonts are the same style throughout.
8. **H3: User Control & Freedom | Severity 2 | Found by B**
Not sure if there is an option to change notes on activity from the completed activities menu.
Fix: Add an edit option
9. **H7: Flexibility & Efficiency of Use | Severity 1 | Found by B**
Rating/notes page has a lot of extra space, making the notes slide-up just add a few extra clicks/inconvenience for the user
Fix: Make notes adding on the same page.
10. **H9: Help Users with Errors | Severity 3 | Found by B**
User is unable to undo “finishing” a task and must go through designating rating, notes, and scheduling after making this mistake.
Fix: Make a “back/undo” button.
11. **H3: User Control & Freedom | Severity 4 | Found by A, B, C**
Clicking on an activity for “today” doesn’t provide any options for marking it as completed for the day. By clicking on this activity, a user is likely trying to indicate that he/she wants to begin the activity.
Fix: Give the user the ability to mark activities as completed for the day and remove them from the main menu.

12. H3: User Control & Freedom | Severity 4 | Found by B

User has no option to add a task into the schedule if they didn't add it from discover.

Fix: Add options for adding tasks into the schedule from the view/edit menu as well as from the "completed tasks" menu.

13. H3 User Control and Freedom | Severity 3 | Found by A, C

The user has no option to go back to previous screen in most cases.

Fix: Add persistent back button

14. H2 Match Between System and Real World | Severity 3 | Found by A, C

Filing your view activities under "options" isn't very intuitive, as most apps use options to allow for setting of user preferences.

Fix: Rename "options" to something like "activities"

Fix: What if, upon opening the application, instead of viewing the list of completed activities in bubbles on the home screen, the list of in-progress activities is instead visible.

15. H10 Help and Documentation | Severity 2 | Found by A

In the reflection screen, it isn't entirely obvious what the slider bar represents. Should the user slide to indicate how they feel after the activity? Or should the user slide to indicate how much they liked the activity?

Fix: Add a message above the slider bar describing what its purpose is, such as, "use the slider bar to indicate how much you enjoyed meditating."

16. H4 Consistency and Standards | Severity 1 | Found by A

Sometimes when the user wants to indicate that they're done with a page, they click an "x", sometimes they click a button at the bottom of the page, and sometimes they click a check mark.

Fix: Standardize a "done" button standard, or standardize multiple (it's okay to include both a "done" button and an "x" button that do the same thing)

17. H7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use | Severity 3 | Found by A, C

Once the user has added an activity, they must go back to the home screen, go to the in progress activities, and then select their activity before they may indicate that they are done.

Fix: In the "activity added" screen, either add a "reflect" button or add a button that takes you directly to the page containing the "reflect" button.

18. H2 Match Between System and Real World | Severity 1 | Found by A

The wording "tap an activity to resume" implies that the activity was paused to begin with. Often this doesn't make sense for your activities, as one does not usually "pause" taking a bath, calling home, meditating, and so forth.

Fix: Disallow multiple "in progress" activities or change the wording to make more sense in the context of the real world

19. H4 Consistency and Standards | Severity 4 | Found by A, B, C

It's unclear why there is a section for today's activities as well as a section for in progress activities. Perhaps a more intuitive design would be to roll these into one.

Fix: Consider making "today" a hub to start activities that the user is supposed to do today. If the user wants to start an activity not scheduled for today, they may do so using discover, which will take them directly into the activity. Only one activity should be active at once (see number 18 above).

20. H7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use | Severity 2 | Found by A

In the "edit routine" screen, there is no way to cancel all edits made, only a checkmark button.

Fix: Add a "cancel" or "x" button of some sort to this feature.

21. H8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design | Severity 1 | Found by A

Upon clicking the checkmark box after editing one's routine, the user is shown a separate screen that they must "x" out of simply to confirm that the edit was successful.

Fix: Remove this screen and just take the user back to the "view" tab, OR add a small dialogue box that appears at the top/bottom of the screen and goes away automatically if you're especially passionate about keeping the text.

22. H3 User Control and Freedom | Severity 3 | Found by A, C

There is no way for a user to see which activities will occur/have occurred on days other than today.

Fix: Add a "calendar" option so the user can see the schedule for any day. You could even allow users to move activities around during the week/month/etc.

23. H4 Consistency and standards | Severity 3 | Found by C

On the home page, there are a series of delightful bubbles floating around, directly over the "discover" feature. These are very aesthetically pleasing, but, without previous guidance, it is not necessarily clear to the user what these activities are, even with the "today" sign at the top. Are they previously completed activities, part of the day's routine, or in progress activities? Are they other activities that the user can discover?

Fix: While I really enjoy the aesthetic, maybe some sort of variation could make it clear what the specific activities contain.

24. H7 Flexibility and efficiency of use | Severity 3 | Found by C

Related to the home page, when the user clicks on one of the delightful bubbles, they are directed to the "notes" page for that application. What if this was an activity that they wanted to modify the features for. For example, what if they wanted to do x activity more frequently, or remove it entirely from their activities list?

Fix: Right now, once clicking on one of the activities, the user is navigated to the page that allows the user to navigate through that activities notes. What if, that page could instead have, in addition to notes, an individualized "settings" section that allows the user to modify that activity's position in their routine.

25. H5 Error prevention | Severity 2 | Found by C

I wouldn't call this an explicit error, but what if the user fails to report their activities to the app. For example, they journal twice a week, but forget to log it on a specific day. I

can foresee this feature causing this app to be too “pushy” for the user, or conversely, not allowing it to enforce the activities that it promotes.

Fix: This specifically will be a very interesting balancing act between ultra-notifications, and none. I would lean more towards the latter, personally.

3. Summary of Violations

Category	# Viol. (sev 0)	# Viol. (sev 1)	# Viol. (sev 2)	# Viol. (sev 3)	# Viol. (sev 4)	# Viol. (total)
H1: Visibility of Status			1		1	2
H2: Match Sys & World		2		1		3
H3: User Control			1	2	2	5
H4: Consistency		3		1	1	5
H5: Error Prevention			1			1
H6: Recognition not Recall						0
H7: Efficiency of Use		1	1	3		4
H8: Minimalist Design		2				2
H9: Help Users with Errors				1		1
H10: Documentation			1			1
Total Violations by Severity	0	8	5	8	4	25
Note: check your answer for the green box by making sure the sum of the last column is equal to the sum of the last row (not including the green box)						

4. Evaluation Statistics

Severity / Evaluator	Evaluator A	Evaluator B	Evaluator C
sev. 0	100%	100%	100%
sev. 1	37.5%	62.5%	12.5%
sev. 2	40%	40%	20%
sev. 3	50%	25%	87.5%
sev. 4	75%	100%	75%
total (sev. 3 & 4)	58.3%	50%	83.3%
total (all severity levels)	48%	52%	48%

*Note that the bottom rows are *not* calculated by adding the numbers above it.

5. Summary Recommendations

Hey Ataraxia! We just want to begin by saying that we really enjoy using your UI. It's very "delightful," and generally very fun to use. We absolutely love the discover feature as well, and the app is intuitive in many respects. Although there could be some improvements made in terms of specific navigation and activity clarity, we think the UI itself is very beautiful and simple. We've outlined some of the largest considerations below:

- Beginning and completing tasks is arguably the bread and butter of your application, but it is not intuitive or easy as of now. Consider removing "in progress" altogether and having activities both in "today" and "discover" take you to their resources/ready to reflect page. In general, think about what the user will do the most, and make that the easiest and most intuitive task. For example, most days, a user will want to just check off his/her tasks, not look at the notes and resources for those tasks.
- In addition, the configuration of the app, although it somewhat limits user control, also minimizes the user's ability to make a mistake in navigation or selection.
- There are some parts where the user has to make too many steps to do something or is unable to undo their actions.
- Some things that definitely need to happen are making more options for users to update their activity *after* they've discovered something. You've got the first half done: finding activities, figuring out if you initially like them, and planning them, but you're missing things important to updating progress on these such as being able to add extra notes, "complete" activities for the day, and add back in activities they had done in the past.

Overall, you've got the aesthetic down and you're almost there but the flow of use needs a little more work. It might help to draw a map of the functionality of your app and figure out if there are places that users might want to do something that isn't covered as well as see if there are any places where it takes too many steps to do something (such as seeing what activities you're in the middle of or updating a task from the "history" screen).

Severity Ratings

- 0 - don't agree that this is a usability problem
- 1 - cosmetic problem
- 2 - minor usability problem
- 3 - major usability problem; important to fix
- 4 - usability catastrophe; imperative to fix

Heuristics

H1: Visibility of System Status

- Keep users informed about what is going on

H2: Match Between System & Real World

- Speak the users' language
- Follow real world conventions

H3: User Control & Freedom

- "Exits" for mistaken choices, undo, redo
- Don't force down fixed paths

H4: Consistency & Standards

H5: Error Prevention

H6: Recognition Rather Than Recall

- Make objects, actions, options, & directions visible or easily retrievable

H7: Flexibility & Efficiency of Use

- Accelerators for experts (e.g., gestures, kb shortcuts)
- Allow users to tailor frequent actions (e.g., macros)

H8: Aesthetic & Minimalist Design

- No irrelevant information in dialogues

H9: Help Users Recognize, Diagnose, & Recover from Errors

- Error messages in plain language
- Precisely indicate the problem
- Constructively suggest a solution

H10: Help & Documentation

- Easy to search
- Focused on the user's task
- List concrete steps to carry out
- Not too large

