

Problem Space Analysis (Gym Buddy (Fitness Tracker x Mini Game App))

The general concept of my idea is a fitness app that's main premise is to assist users in tracking their workouts and what exercises they do, help figure out what new exercises to try and better their technique, and track the users growth and progress over time. However, sometimes running off your own mental fortitude can be difficult, especially when your schedule gets busier or your body starts to get tired and it can be harder to remain consistent. Therefore, in order to encourage users to stay consistent and increase their interaction with the app, I wanted to add an extra element of a sort of a mini game into the app. It wouldn't be anything complex, but something similar to that of Duolingo where you have a character who you're able to level up and who is kind of a representation of the user getting better over time. For instance, the user would start with a base character that is at Level 1 and over time as the user earns points for completing workouts, upping in weight, reaching a milestone, or something of that nature, they would complete more levels over the time and unlock either a new character or a new variation of their character as well as badges to track their progress. Although a simple concept, it may be something that helps keep users engaged and motivates them to keep going through having an extra element to interact with.

Problem Statement

With life's busyness, it can be hard to find the motivation to stay consistent with the gym and continuously track one's progress. However, sometimes a little boost of dopamine with your tracking can help increase the incentive to be consistent.

Problem Space Research Summary

Existing Solutions

There are many different fitness trackers and apps already on the market that have various features and capabilities, but the three apps that I would want my app to be a culmination of are RepCount, Apple Fitness, and FitBod. When looking at the reviews, I noticed that the users would talk about the different features of the apps that they either liked, disliked, or thought could be improved, and these are things I want to take into consideration when designing my app. For instance, RepCount and FitBod have really positive reviews, and both have relatively similar features but different ways to go about them. With RepCount, the reviews stated that it's great for tracking how many times you've worked out throughout the week, but also which workouts you've done, how many reps and sets you do for each exercise, and even the weight you use. I think these are all great features that I would want to incorporate into my app, but something I want to improve upon within it is providing more examples and suggestions of workouts for the users to do, because that is something the reviews said was lacking. This ties

into the capabilities of FitBod because this app is more catered to educating users on what exercises impact certain muscle groups and giving users workout suggestions based on the muscles they want to focus on, and even the machinery they have available to them at their gym. Therefore, I think this aspect tied to the tracking capabilities of RepCount would be very useful for users. As for Apple Fitness, it received the least amount of positive reviews due to a lot of bugs and glitches the app was having, as well as issues with accuracy. However, something that stuck out to me was how someone said that the app felt “gamified” through receiving badges and rewards, which had a positive effect on them, but would’ve been increased without the glitches and had it been expanded upon, so in my app, I want to incorporate that aspect as well, but add more onto it.

User Communities and Context

Struggling with maintaining motivation to go to the gym or be consistent with a gym schedule is something that I see a lot of people open up about on social media via Instagram reels, TikTok, and Reddit threads. From what I’ve seen, much of this stems from not seeing progress quickly enough or in enough abundance with the effort that has been put in, gym anxiety, disliking what they do in the gym, or overall just getting too busy and having a hard time incorporating the gym into their schedule. Ways that I’ve seen people combat this are giving themselves a workout split incorporating which parts of the body to focus on each day and rest days, taking pictures or videos of themselves in weekly or monthly increments, finding exercises that they enjoy doing, and having a friend or partner tag along with them. Therefore, when creating my app, I want to have features that simulate all of these assets to help the user continue to stay motivated, consistent, and better enjoy their fitness journey experience.

Market and Cultural Context

The issue of losing motivation to go to the gym or not having the courage to start seems to be a growing issue within today’s society. People’s desire to improve their physical health has grown due to the rise in fitness culture, especially within social media, but the capability to maintain a fitness schedule has grown more difficult due to the rise in packed work schedules from the growth of the “grind” mentality and economic stresses. In this economy, it’s been more difficult for people to obtain a more stable 9-5 job that pays enough to finance their everyday living expenses, so many people work jobs that have demanding hours or work multiple jobs or side hustles. Additionally, I think many people tend to not have access to gyms or workout equipment due to financial status and location or are intimidated to go to the gym because of prejudices within the fitness community. I feel that some companies are actively pushing for the increase of fitness like with Apple coming out with their fitness tracker and the Apple Watch or with a rise in more gyms or places that encourage fitness like yoga or pilates studios. However, I feel that a

lot of companies are actively working against this, without realization, due to contributing to that aforementioned “grind” mentality by scheduling employees with more hours and paying them less so that they have to work those longer hours, and therefore causing many to live a sedentary lifestyle because they don’t have time or energy for anything else. Or, even with the gyms or fitness companies, contributing to a decrease in motivation by having such a large paywall behind their memberships.

Target User Identification

I would like to talk to people in different stages of their lives and inherently have different schedules and responsibilities, as well as different fitness goals. I also want to see if the “gamey” nature of the app would still resonate with older audiences. Therefore, my targets would be high school students or teens (13-17), undergraduate and graduate students or young adults (18-late 20s), and adults in the workforce (30+).

Research Questions

What motivates you to keep going to the gym? How do you remain motivated amidst the stress of everyday life or general tiredness? If you were to use a fitness app, do you think a game-like feature in it would help (or hinder) that motivation and how so?

When looking for new exercises or workouts, what avenues do you usually go down to discover them? Do you find that there are trials and errors or frustrations when attempting new workouts? If so, do these trials discourage you from trying the workout again?

Do you find that you tend to have better workouts or be more disciplined to your schedule when you workout by yourself or when you have a partner?

Articles/Forums

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R/Getdisciplined on Reddit: How to Get Motivated to Go to Gym? [Needadvice], www.reddit.com/r/getdisciplined/comments/7xxqe2/how_to_get_motivated_to_go_to_gym_need_advice/. Accessed 18 Sept. 2025.

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