

Interview Checkpoint Assignment

Questions/Interview Guide

1. Can you walk me through your typical workout routine? How do you usually decide what type of workout to do each day? Do you follow a specific workout split or plan, or do you prefer flexibility?
2. Do you run into scheduling conflicts with your workouts? If so, how do you deal with them? What are the biggest challenges you face when trying to stay consistent with your workouts? How do you usually stay motivated on days when you feel tired or don't want to work out?
3. What ways do you go about tracking your progress (strength, endurance, weight, etc.) and have you ever struggled with keeping track? How do you deal with loss of progress or stagnation? Do you find that it tends to hinder your motivation to stay consistent or reinvigorate it?
4. 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 or finding new workouts? If so, do these trials discourage you from trying new things or the workout again?
5. What strategies or tools have you used to overcome challenges like low motivation, lack of time, or energy? What role does accountability (friends, trainers, apps, or communities) play in helping you stay on track?
6. Are you a user of fitness apps? If so, what features in these apps are most valuable to you? (e.g., tracking, workout plans, reminders, progress visualization) If not, then theoretically? Are there features you feel are missing in the apps you've used before?
7. Would you find it helpful if an app adapted workouts to your schedule, energy levels, or available equipment? In what ways would you find it most helpful for you to see measurable progress?
8. How important is community or social connection (sharing progress, challenges, or leaderboards) in a fitness app for you?
9. Do you feel that a fitness app with more "gamified" features (i.e earning badges, leveling up, character progression, unlocking new characters or upgrades, etc.) would increase your overall motivation, desire to interact with the app, or general enjoyment of the app?
10. Looking at your current fitness challenges, what's one way a fitness app could best support you? If you could design your ideal fitness app, what's one feature it absolutely must have?

Interview Summaries (6 Interviews)

**Pseudonyms based from Poptropica names

Lava Thunder, Female, 50, Full-time Global Director of Payroll and Benefits at Fox Factory, Intermediate, 45 minutes, phone call

- Does challenges and programs through an app called Resilience that maps out how many days a week you workout for a certain number of weeks; usually workout 4-5 days a week; variation of weight/strength training and cardio exercises (jump roping, calisthenics, pilates, etc.)
- Prefers a regimen, but when busy with work sometimes either switches workout days or tries to do a more short-form workout (20 minute workout instead of an hour) just to have some kind of exercise that day
- Uses her weight and progress goals as a motivator to stay consistent as well as that being she's getting older and wants to take care of her body so that she can be her healthiest; doesn't want to fall into old family habits or deal with generational pains or health issues
- Likes virtual motivators; gave example of communities on the Peloton app and how they can send each other high fives and other motivational icons/messages while doing their workouts
- Features she would like to most see in an app is the ability to log her progress and intake (water, calories, etc.) and to receive more reminders about logging
- Quote: "You would see all your Peloton friends online...connect with them, and that way while you're riding the bike and they're riding the bike, y'all can give each other [virtual] high fives...Something else to keep you riding on that thing."
- Surprised me: Doesn't really like working out with people in real life, but does like the virtual communication aspect of apps like Peloton and connecting with other people via their communities

Chilly Diamond, Male, 49, Full-time Property Adjustor at Allstate, Intermediate, 20 minutes, phone call

- Uses an app called BetterMe for preselected calisthenics workouts (4 days out of the week); tries to go to the gym at least 3 times a week (sometimes on the same day he does calisthenics); on a 90 day program and likes to adhere to challenges/programs
- Sticks to a schedule based around his work schedule; used to have a personal trainer when getting back into the gym and still follows workout plan although he doesn't use the services anymore; doubles up on workouts if he misses a day
- Similar motivation to workout as Lava Thunder where he knows that as he gets older it's more important to be cautious of his health as well as harder to keep weight off; finds

accountability in being around like-minded people who workout; coworkers who do step challenges and things of that nature

- Not the best at tracking progress, but does use a high-tech scale that calculates your body mass, protein, bone density, metabolic age, and more; uses that to get a gauge of his internal progress and statistics
- Wants an app that has clear and precise workouts since the workout itself is the goal and doesn't want anything too complex
- Quote: "It [community and social interaction in a fitness app] is not hugely important for me. I'm not using that as my motivation."
- Surprised me: Was really the only one to not feel that he would benefit from or care much about the addition of "gamey" elements because he wouldn't interact with them much; surprising because I thought more people would feel that way

Fierce Donut, Male, 22, Postgrad/Full-time Graphic Designer at Mainline Environmental, Intermediate, 35 minutes, phone call

- Follows a 7-week schedule; usually works out 6 times a week with one rest day; tries to do at least a 30 minute workout if the day is very busy so that he isn't fully skipping workouts
- Runs into scheduling conflicts often due to balancing a frequent gym schedule and a busy everyday schedule from work, fraternity chapter affairs, personal life, etc.
- Looks at people on social media that he aspires to be like when low on motivation; has his brother who's also a gym rat hold him accountable
- Mentioned the different rings that the Apple Watch has to showcases different factors like exercise length, how long you've stood up, etc. and how he likes to track his friends' statistics and compete with them; would like the competitive nature of a leaderboard and levels
- A feature he would really like to see is an incorporated set timer because often he takes either too long or too short in between sets so he feels like that would help keep him on track
- Quote: "That [sharing progress with friends and leaderboards] would increase it [interest in a fitness app] exponentially...I used to track and compete with my friends all the time to see who worked out most or who averaged the most so that was very motivational for me and that helped me to be more active."
- Surprised me: That he wouldn't be very interested in challenges given his competitive nature, but I did like that he suggested some challenges or badges that could be earned from some things that people tend to do anyway

Gentle Grape, Female, 22, Postgrad/Flex employee at Joe and the Juice, Beginner, 40 minutes, phone call

- 3 day workout split; use to focus more on cardio, but now focus more on strength training since she has the goal of body recomposition
- Tracks herself through gradual progress such as her mile times getting faster or her upping in the amount of weight that she can push; likes to use the Nike Run Club app to track her runs and mile progress
- Doesn't get discouraged from small setbacks because she knows that she can always go back to the basics; also celebrates small wins; feels like it helps to be real with herself and push herself to do better the next week if she knows she didn't do as well the previous week
- Has her sister check in on her in order to hold her accountable and also has a friend that she sends progress pictures back and forth to, so that she stays encouraged to go to the gym so that she can send those to her
- Would like to see a feature where alongside logging your workouts, the app is able to give a gauge for how many calories were burned during that workout based on the exercises, weight, and length/amount of reps for the exercise
- Quote: "The way I deal with it, it's not more like 'oh, I feel defeated', but more like 'these things happen' and being real with myself...I kind of feel like exercise is exercise, so even if I have to go back down on my reps, I'm still burning calories."
- Surprised me: Gave many helpful suggestions of things to add that I wouldn't have thought about. For instance, she suggested having the app either send personal affirmations as a reminder or give the user an affirmation after they complete a workout

Curious Rock, Female, 19, Undergrad/Full-time architecture student, Intermediate, 30 minutes, phone call

- Use to do a 5-6 day workout split during the summer, but had to go down to around 3 days due to balancing architecture and marching band; focuses on specific muscle groups each day
- Found that it was helpful to have a workout partner in order to hold herself accountable and to help her figure out how to do certain things if the person is more experienced than her
- Big motivation for her to keep going was people acknowledging that she looks good and that they see the differences in her body, especially if she herself couldn't notice the progress
- Has a competitive spirit so she feels like the leaderboards and seeing other peoples stats would help motivate her to keep going to the gym and growing her strength/endurance

- She would like to see something that alongside tracking and giving suggestions for workouts, is also able to track or give suggestions for more nutrition-based factors (ex. calorie intake) and give reminders for drinking enough water
- Quote: “I wasn’t noticing as much progress, so it was kind of discouraging. I feel like I’m not noticing anything, but then other people were like ‘Oh, Curious Rock, you know you’re looking real fit.’ ”
- Surprised me: Said that one time when she went to the gym she was trying a new workout and didn’t feel like she was doing it right and when she looked over people were laughing at her and I was shocked that people would actually do that, but it also made me think about creating safe spaces within the fitness community
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Young Flame, Female, 15, High School Student, Beginner, 20 minutes, phone call

- Usually does 30 minutes of cardio and then some kind of a workout for about an hour; around 4:30 each day; aiming for a 5 day workout split and works on different muscle groups each day; frames her workout schedule around her other obligations (school, violin lessons, beta club)
- Uses same scale as Chilly Diamond and Lava Thunder to help keep track of body statistics and wants take videos of herself so that she can see her progress overtime
- Would generally use her parents to help her stay accountable, but would also like the competitive nature of an app with leaderboards or levels in order to keep motivated from her friends
- Would want to see notifications from the app if the user hasn’t interacted with the app to a while; similar to how Duolingo sends reminders
- Overall emphasized an app that feels personalized , suggests new workouts and correct formations, and would help with organization
- Quote: “I still give myself a challenge, but if the workout is too hard I probably wouldn’t do it because it wouldn’t affect my body as well as it should because I’d probably be doing it wrong, so I pick workouts that are hard, but I would know how to do it with the right form.”
- Surprised me: It didn’t necessarily surprise me, but something that I liked that she touched on was finding the balance between doing something challenging enough so that she makes progress, but not too beyond her skill level or capabilities so that she doesn’t get discouraged or hurt herself

Themes

As I was conducting my interviews, the most commonalities everyone seemed to have was using social media to find new workouts or to motivate themselves to reach their goal from the people that they see, preferring a specific schedule and workout split to adhere to weekly, trying to at

least get a short workout in whenever they're lacking in time, and that the most helpful way to visualize their progress would be through a bar graph or chart. I found it interesting that everyone had this many similarities because of the differences in age groups and levels of experience. Additionally, I noticed that both Lava Thunder and Curious Rock noted wanting to see nutrition-based tracking in the app alongside the tracking of workouts through the implementation of tracking calorie and water intake as well as sending reminders to drink more water. Where I mainly saw the interviewees differ was in the details of their workout schedule such as what exercises they like to prioritize and how many days their workout split spans across the week. I also noticed differences in the use of challenges to stay on track, whether or not they currently use fitness apps, and also that Chilly Diamond was the only one to feel that he wouldn't care much for a "gamified" fitness app. Some words that I consistently kept hearing throughout the interviews were motivation, progress, consistency, challenges, scheduling, personality, reminders, and logging/tracking.

Reflection

Interview format: For all of my interviews, I conducted them over the phone because the majority of the people that I interviewed were not in state or were further away, so it was easier to do a phone call. However, I do wish that I did some of the interviews with Zoom, Teams, or even Facetime so that I could see their facial expressions, but I was able to catch some of their emotion while answering questions through their voice inflections.

How you captured information: Did you record and transcribe? Take notes during the interview? Write everything up right after? I took some notes during the conversation, but I know that I tend to have a hard time catching everything that people are saying, so I recorded and transcribed the interviews so that I could refer back to them while going through the assignment and to have them throughout the rest of the project process.

Note-taking approach: What worked well for capturing their responses? What was challenging about documenting the conversation? Something that worked well was slightly altering the questions based on the person so that I could get more from their response. For instance, I knew that Young Flame had just started working out recently, so for questions that were more time based or something that she could've gauged from experience, I made her answer in a more theoretical sense since she doesn't have much to go off of. Something that I think was challenging was recounting the things that stuck out to me while in the conversations without having to search for it through the recordings. To combat this I should've immediately jotted down these things so that I could reference them later and make it easier on myself.

Questions that worked: What questions got people really talking? The interviewees were very receptive to the first five questions since they focused more on talking about themselves, their routines, and their experiences. I feel that of those questions the ones that people had the most to say were questions 2 and 3. Outside of those questions, people were also very receptive

to questions 6 and 10 because it allowed them to reflect on their likes and dislikes with apps they've used in the past and things that they would like to see in a future app. I was able to receive a lot of really great ideas and insights through these questions.

Awkward moments: Any questions that didn't work or situations that felt uncomfortable?

I think a couple of questions that didn't really land or perform as well were the first parts of questions 5 and 7. For question 5, I feel that a lot of the interviewees just didn't really know how to answer the question and either gave a short-winded response or had a long pause before they were able to give a response. With question 7, I think it was just that it was framed as a yes or no question so many of the interviewees just gave that kind of response and weren't really able to add that much more input.

Biggest surprises: Anything that completely changed how you think about this problem?

I think my biggest surprise was hearing the amount of input and suggestions that interviewees gave. It really expanded my mind to potentially adding more features that I hadn't really considered because they would solve or address problems that I hadn't thought of yet. I also was surprised how interesting I found the interviews. It was fascinating to see how similar and dissimilar everyone's experiences were both in their workout journeys and their experience with fitness apps and to see how that shaped their opinions and suggestions. Overall, I think the interviews gave me a brand new perspective to how I would want to approach the app and generally understand more how app features and UI really impact the users experience.