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Welcome to You've Got This, a weekly podcast for higher education professionals looking to increase their confidence and capacity for juggling the day-to-day demands of an academic life.

I'm your host, Dr.

Katie Linder.

On this episode, I want to offer some initial thoughts, even like an early review on the Apple Watch, which I purchased in late September and have been using for a couple of weeks now.

Now, to some quick background here, I have been a long-term user of the Fitbit brand, and this goes back at least 10 years when I was at an institution who purchased a Fitbit for me as part of a wellness initiative, and I've used it ever since then.

But when the new Apple Watches were announced, I started to explore potentially switching over, and as I was actually making this decision, my Fitbit stopped working.

It just died one weekend, and I couldn't fix it.

I couldn't get it to turn back on.

And so that really sped up the process of me investing in an Apple Watch.

Now, when I first got the Fitbit, this will say how long ago it was, I had one of them that you clipped to your belt or to your waist, and then I would say a couple years back, I switched over to a watch, which I did not normally wear, and I got into the habit of wearing a watch.

So looking at the Apple Watch wasn't that much different.

I will say I was a little nervous that it was going to be large, it was going to be too big, but I will address that when I talk a little bit about the pros and cons of what I actually purchased.

So I did get the Series 10, which is the latest version of the Apple Watch.

And some things that I was most interested in for this particular purchase are it has integrations with the Apple Health app, there's an Apple Fitness app, there's the Peloton app, which obviously I use pretty frequently.

And I will tell you the ultimate nerdy app that I've been using lately is one called Fantasy Hike, where I basically pretend I'm taking the same route as the Hobbits in The Lord of the Rings, and it gives me regular updates.

Super nerdy, but it only integrates with the Apple ecosystem.

And so that was something else that I was like, oh, that would be a nice bonus.

Now I have been a purely Apple user on my phone, on my laptop, on my iPad for years and years and years, and I figured that the watch was kind of the next step to complete the ecosystem because there's a lot of integration across the different Apple apps related to the watch.

So I had used my Fitbit primarily for health and fitness tracking, and that was the most important set of features for me.

I was less interested in getting texts and phone calls and other notifications on the watch.

I really wanted to focus on kind of the fitness components of it in particular.

So we're a couple weeks in to me wearing this watch, and I have to say at this point, I'm a bit of an evangelist.

I love it.

And I'm going to talk a little bit about the pros and cons because there are some cons that I think are really helpful to consider before you consider making a purchase like this.

It's certainly not cheap.

I mean, it is an investment in terms of what you might be wearing, but when I purchase things like this, I use them for years.

And so for me, that made sense to continue to invest in that way.

So let me go over some of the pros and cons of what I've noticed kind of immediately with this particular piece of hardware.

First the pros.

I like that you can set your own goals for the different rings on the Apple watch that you're trying to close every day.

So you might have seen that the Apple watch has these rings, and one of them is kind of exercise, basically like active minutes.

One of them is tied to like calories that you get from exercise, which you know, you may or may not care about.

And then another one is basically standing throughout the day.

Like how frequently are you standing up or moving around in each hour of the day?

These things are all very similar in some ways to the Fitbit in terms of the kinds of things that it was tracking.

But what I appreciate about the Apple watch is you can modify and adjust any of these rings to your own preference.

So when I got the watch, the default was to stand at least once for like one minute, 12 hours of the day.

And knowing my schedule and how much I'm in meetings all day, typically sitting in front of my computer, I do not currently have a standing desk at work.

I immediately set that down to like eight because I knew that it was highly unlikely that I would be able to do 12.

Now I may adjust that over time.

You know, maybe that's something that I set a goal for myself to do, but I appreciated that you could kind of modify that to whatever your fitness level is or whatever your actual goals are.

The second thing that I really like about the watch is that it can offer more reminders to me than the Fitbit could.

So for example, I have the watch remind me to take my medications twice a day and I can log when they're taken.

So I know that I've done it.

And I will just say sometimes in the midst of like a really busy season, I can't remember if I took it in the morning.

If I took it at night, I take the same amount.

It's in the same part of my house.

Like I just, I can't always remember.

And so being able to log it on the watch helps keep me consistent and make sure that I'm taking my medications in the way that I want to.

Another thing that I like is that all of my health information is in the same ecosystem now.

And this was not the case when I was using the Fitbit because the Fitbit is a Google product and sometimes Apple and Google don't always play well together.

And so there was definitely a pro here for me in terms of bringing all of this into the same ecosystem.

And this includes right now tracking my sleep again, because I had not been doing that in the Fitbit.

It was like an extra thing you had to pay for with Fitbit premium.

And I chose not to do that.

And so I wasn't really getting good data on my sleep and now it's built into the watch.

So I'm getting better data on my sleep.

Now I think you all know, if you've been listening for a while, I love a good badge to motivate me and there are badges that you can earn on the Apple watch.

Probably enough said there, but there, there are certain things that you can be kind of like working toward in terms of like doubling your movement goals and things like that, which tend to be pretty motivating for me.

The other thing that was huge for me is that the Apple watch integrates into Peloton.

And because it does that, basically it becomes a heart rate tracker.

So I have a lot better data on that.

So when I start a workout on any of my Peloton machines or in the app, if I'm like taking a walk outside, it immediately goes to the watch and says, like, do you want to start tracking your heart rate?

And I can, I can connect basically the watch to what I'm doing.

And I really like that.

It gives me a different kind of way to think about not just like how hard I'm working in a workout, but just to kind of look at that trend over time.

A couple other things that I really liked about my initial experience with the Apple watch.

I wanted to get a customized watch band.

The, the watch band that comes with the Apple watch is kind of like a, like a rubbery kind of material.

And I had that with my Fitbit and I did not like it.

And so I wanted something that was a little bit more like a fabric material.

And so I found a stretchy watch band that comes in like a six pack of different colors on Amazon, really inexpensive.

There's a lot of third party watch bands that allow you to like dress it up or dress it down depending on what you need.

I will link to the ones that I bought on Amazon and the show notes just in case you're interested, but I find it to be a lot more comfortable on my wrist than when I had like the rubbery consistency on the band.

And then the last thing, as I mentioned earlier, I was worried that the watch would be too big on my wrist, but the sizing is completely fine.

I went with a smaller size of 42 millimeters and I find it to be like not overly sized for the size of wrist I have.

And I would say, I mean, I don't know, it's all relative, but my wrists are relatively small.

And so if you're concerned about that, you could certainly go into the store and try it on, but I haven't found that to be an issue.

Okay, let's shift over to the cons.

I think all of these things you can kind of work within, but they are things I definitely would want to mention.

So the first thing is the overall ecosystem of the Apple watch can be completely overwhelming because there are three interconnected apps.

There's the watch app itself, which is basically where you decide what apps to keep on the watch, what apps to take off the watch, like notifications and things are kind of through the watch app.

Then there's the fitness app.

This is like the Apple fitness app where you can get more data on like the rings part of the app or of the watch, like when you're closing the rings.

And then there's the health app, which is where like your sleep data is and you can like log your medications.

And there's a bunch of stuff there.

I think that there's, and then there's a ton of other apps that integrate into the watch.

So I'll just mention that too.

I think that when you're first starting out, you have to really kind of understand where everything is in each of these apps.

And I could completely understand why that would feel overwhelming for people.

The second thing that I think is kind of tough with the watch is it took me a while to get the right setup because it basically defaults to including all notifications.

So I kept having to keep finding the right settings in the apps and in my system preferences to turn off things that I didn't want on the watch.

So I immediately turned off text and calls because that's not something I wanted to get on the watch, but I also was getting like direct messages from LinkedIn on the watch.

I was getting notifications of like new YouTube videos from channels that I follow.

All of that I turned off.

I don't want any of that coming in through the watch.

So I did spend, I would say the first week to 10 days, like actively as it was happening, I would like go into the watch app, find the thing and remove it just to make sure that I was like remembering to take off all the things that I wanted to.

A third con for me at least is that there is not an obvious pedometer to count steps on the Apple watch on the watch face itself.

You can kind of like click into something and scan, you know, in the watch and like find your steps, but I wanted something on the face itself because I was used to seeing that because of the Fitbit that I've used, you know, for 10 years.

So I actually had to integrate a third party app to get it to show up as the default, like on the watch face.

And I was able to figure this out relatively easily because there were a bunch of people online who had the same issue and they were trying to figure it out, but I will say it was just kind of annoying that I had to do it.

And I'll like the pedometer app that I used in the show notes.

It's fine, but the fact that I had to kind of like do this extra step and it's not built into like a relatively easy thing that you can do on the watch, that was kind of annoying to me.

Another con for some people, I think is that the watch does need to be charged pretty much every day.

That said, there's a speedy charger that you can purchase that I found that the watch gets to pretty much a full charge while I'm getting ready in the morning.

So somewhere between like 20 and 30 minutes is basically what it takes to like fully charge the watch.

And that lasts me, I would say definitely a full day.

And I typically tend to charge it like in bed at night or when I get up in the morning again because I do want to track my sleep overnight.

So I need to have it charged enough that I can do that, but you should be prepared to charge the watch pretty much every day.

And then the last thing that I would say that can definitely be a con for some folks is I've had to be really intentional that I'm not allowing myself to be distracted by the watch in meetings or when I'm with other people.

And when it's like buzzing on your wrist and you're like, what's going on?

Like what is this notification?

This is why I stripped so many of the notifications out because basically what I get notified about now is if I have met some kind of goal on the watch, like if I, or if I've like doubled the goal or tripled the goal or something like that, it tells me.

I also get notified with like these like nerdy little updates from that fantasy hike app where it'll be like, Oh, you've crossed a stream.

Like it gives me some like random update there.

But pretty much everything else got stripped away.

And I feel like I already went through something similar on my phone when I was like, you know, I think early days of Apple phones, depending on what phone you use, this might be different for you, but phones have, I've always been very distracting and I think people always have them out and you're always looking at it and you get different notifications.

And so I remember that feeling of like having to like already do this adjustment on my phone.

And I will note there's a do not disturb option on the watch in case you really need to remove the distractions, but this was something I just, I felt really strongly about and I wanted to be really careful about because I've been in a lot of meetings where people are like looking at this watch and like playing with it and I didn't want to be one of those people.

So it does help me with tracking the fitness piece in particular, which is what was most important to me, but I don't want it like showing up in my life in other ways that are just not, um, I don't know, like there, it's not productive, but it also feels like I'm not honoring my time with other people.

And that feels important to me.

So those are my initial thoughts on the Apple watch.

I don't know that it necessarily convinces you either way of what you might decide to do if this is of interest to you.

But it is something new that I am really, really enjoying and I'm finding is a really good fit for me in terms of my goals and my needs.

Um, of course I would love to hear if you have an Apple watch or if you have a smart watch or if you have something else that you're really enjoying, it's like helping you, um, to stay motivated and kind of accountable to your goals.

I always love to hear about that.

You can email me at hello@drkatylinder.com.

As you know, I always love to hear from you.

Thanks so much for listening.

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