

ADHD-Friendly Healthy Apps

by Avi

IF I ASKED YOU whether staying up late to watch TV at the cost of a good night of sleep was worth it, you'd probably say no, right? Me too. Fast forward to 11 PM tonight, though, and I have a different story to tell. I've just finished a riveting episode of *Mad Men*. It's bedtime, but the show's protagonist Don Draper's hypnotic voice chimes, "One more episode my friend. Sleep can wait." He's a good salesman and three episodes later, I've doomed myself to an unhealthy four hours of shut-eye.

As an adult with ADHD, I know that healthy sleep along with a good diet and regular exercise are essential to nourish my body and mind. Most of us know this. Yet, keeping healthy habits is challenging for anyone. This is especially true for people with ADHD, because the condition tends to create a gap between intellectual understanding and execution.

So how do we cross this chasm in the context of healthy habits? As with most of life's tough questions, the answer is, There's an app for that. Let me take you on a quick tour of a few of my favorites.



StickK

You've made a commitment to work out four times a week. You envision yourself on the treadmill and feel a surge of motivation. Excellent! But we both know that this strong feeling probably won't last.

Now what if I told you that for each week you don't meet your workout target, your credit card will be charged \$100. Oh, and by the way, that \$100 is going to a political party that you don't support?

This is an example of how StickK, a web-based tool, works to help support your pursuit of healthy habits.

Tips on using it: Choose a dollar amount that is painful but doesn't break your bank. Enlist a few friends and family members, which StickK lets you do painlessly. When choosing where your punishment dollars will go, pick a group you can't stand.

Where you can find it: stickk.com.

Avi is a 35-year-old healthcare entrepreneur in the San Francisco Bay Area. He recently divorced his BlackBerry after giving into the allure of the iPhone and its world of mobile apps.



Lark

Knowing that poor sleep can exacerbate my ADHD symptoms, I try to ensure I sleep well every night. Figuring out how to do this can get complicated with so many contributing factors at work. To help me navigate the complexity, I use an app called Lark.

Lark, available for the iPhone (and across the Apple iOS), measures your sleep quality, how long you slept, how many times you woke up, and more. The magic takes place courtesy of a sensor that wirelessly connects via Bluetooth and slips into a comfortable wristband that is worn while sleeping. Lark also coaches you, making tailored suggestions on how you can sleep better.

Another great feature of the product is that it can wake you up with a vibrating alarm that gently nudges you from your sleep. Lark is smart enough to figure out the ideal time to wake you, within a window you specify. The ideal time is based on where you are in your sleep cycle. This means you'll generally wake up feeling less groggy.

Tips on using it: Upgrade to the premium package for more comprehensive sleep stats.

Where you can find it: Lark.com, Apple.com.



Fooducate

Choosing which foods to buy and eat is tricky. I need something to police my behavior, and Fooducate does a good job of keeping me in check as I try to convince myself that Lucky Charms is a healthy breakfast option.

Fooducate, available for both Android and iPhone users, triggers your phone's camera to quickly scan the barcode on food items you're looking to purchase or eat, and quickly grades the food from A through F, based on the health content of the item. If you're trying to change your eating habits and eat healthier with less additives and better ingredients, Fooducate contains a wealth of information and user re-

views about foods we consume on a daily basis. In addition to grading your picks, Fooducate recommends healthier alternatives when you're considering something unwise.

Tips on using it: It's very intuitive. Just remember to use it and don't believe everything on the box of Lucky Charms.

Where you can find it: Fooducate.com (Android app available), Apple.com.

If the apps described above aren't to your liking, explore. Some tips: Read expert reviews, be patient during adoption, and learn all of an app's features. Don't stop looking until you find the right tools to get you and keep you on the path of good health.

Happy and healthy travels. And let me know if you find an app that makes Don Draper less persuasive. **A**

