

# The missing piece: Is mental availability the key to unlocking health and fitness tracking apps' stickiness?

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## **Abstract**

Existing research and anecdotal evidence concerning issues with continued use of health and fitness tracking technology concentrates on deliberate and complex motivational and psychological factors. In this study, we propose a different approach and explore the possibility that continued use of such technologies (or stickiness) might hinge on a simple, involuntary cognitive process: mental availability. Mental availability entails a specific concept (e.g., the brand associated with a health and fitness tracking technology like an app) becoming accessible in memory and 'thought of', with a likely cascading effect on decision-making and actions. Using online survey data, we document the impact of this cognitive process on continued use of health and fitness tracking apps, finding a strong and positive effect. Accordingly, we discuss the implications for advancing research and practice aimed at incentivising behavioural change through these technologies, with the goal of enhancing societal benefits like public health and wellbeing.

**Subject Areas:** *Consumer Behaviour, Decision-Making*

**Track:** Digital Marketing & Social Media