

Apple's new gym partnerships give real perks for working out with Apple Watch

January 24 2020, by Edward C. Baig



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Working out could help you pay down your Apple Watch or gym membership.

Apple is launching an [incentive program](#) called Apple Watch Connected, in partnership with select gyms and health clubs. Among other benefits, club members can earn discounts off their Apple Watch or receive [gift cards](#) to Apple, Nike, and other brands by meeting designated workout goals, both in or out of the gym.

For example, at two Crunch Fitness clubs in New York (with other Crunch locations to follow), people who work out at least three times a week while wearing the watch can shave \$12 monthly off the \$98 cost of membership. But you'll also get credit for running or other exercises you do outside the club, so long as such activities close the fitness rings on the watch face or meet other fitness challenges.

Algorithms based on your age, weight and so on will decide what those challenges are and, depending on your circumstances, could be ratcheted up over time.

Crunch Signature CEO Keith Worts believes he has ready-made customers; more than 75% of the club's members already use an iOS device.

If you don't already have an Apple Watch, Anytime Fitness-owned Basecamp Fitness in California, Wisconsin and Minnesota will give you an Apple Watch Series 5 (GPS version) if you pay \$33.25 a month on top of the regular \$179.99 monthly tab. (It's more for the cellular version.) But you can actually totally wipe out the extra watch charge if you attend three classes a week at Basecamp.

The other launch partners are the YMCA in the Greater Twin Cities area of Minnesota and Orangetheory Fitness at two New York locations, with the balance of the company's studios around the country joining throughout 2020. Other YMCAs across the country are expected to follow.

To participate in the program, the Connected partners all must have custom apps that let you use the watch to check in to the club, sign up for classes, receive notifications, and so on. The clubs also all accept Apple Pay, meaning you can buy water, socks, personal training sessions or make other purchases with the watch.

The facilities also have GymKit-capable cardio or other equipment where applicable, referring to the Apple platform that lets you tap the Apple Watch against the machine to share data in both directions.

For example, tapping a GymKit-enabled StairMaster means you won't have to enter your age, weight other parameters when starting a workout on that machine—such vitals will be added automatically. Meanwhile, the StairMaster can report to the Apple Workout app on your wrist how many stairs you "climbed," during the session, since the Apple Watch wouldn't otherwise be able to record such elevation metrics.

The so-called "Earn With Watch" benefit differs by fitness facility.

Orangetheory will issue Nike and Apple gift cards for meeting various goals and will also let you connect a small OTBeat Link device on the Apple Watch band that can display heart rate measurements taken off the watch on screens inside Orangetheory's studios.

Separate from the new Connected program, Orangetheory created an iOS and Apple Watch app for coaches; you may earn praise from them for achieving personal records.

Meeting digital health goals at the YMCA will help you do good for others.

"Members who participate in 'Move for Good' during monthly challenges with their Apple Watch not only benefit their health, but also

help send kids to life-changing programs at the Y like swimming lessons, camp, sports and the Y's signature Youth in Government program," said Nathan Maehren, senior vice president of digital at the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities.

Questions about privacy

To receive any of the benefits in this program, you've got to opt in, which could make you wonder whether your private workout data will be used to push ads for fitness attire, nutritious foods or other products.

Apple's app guidelines, however, restrict all apps collecting health, [fitness](#) and medical information to only use that data for health purposes and explicitly prohibits the use of that data for advertising.

Apple says the gyms themselves are not going to receive any incentives from Apple for selling you the watch.

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Citation: Apple's new gym partnerships give real perks for working out with Apple Watch (2020, January 24) retrieved 7 May 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2020-01-apple-gym-partnerships-real-perks.html>

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