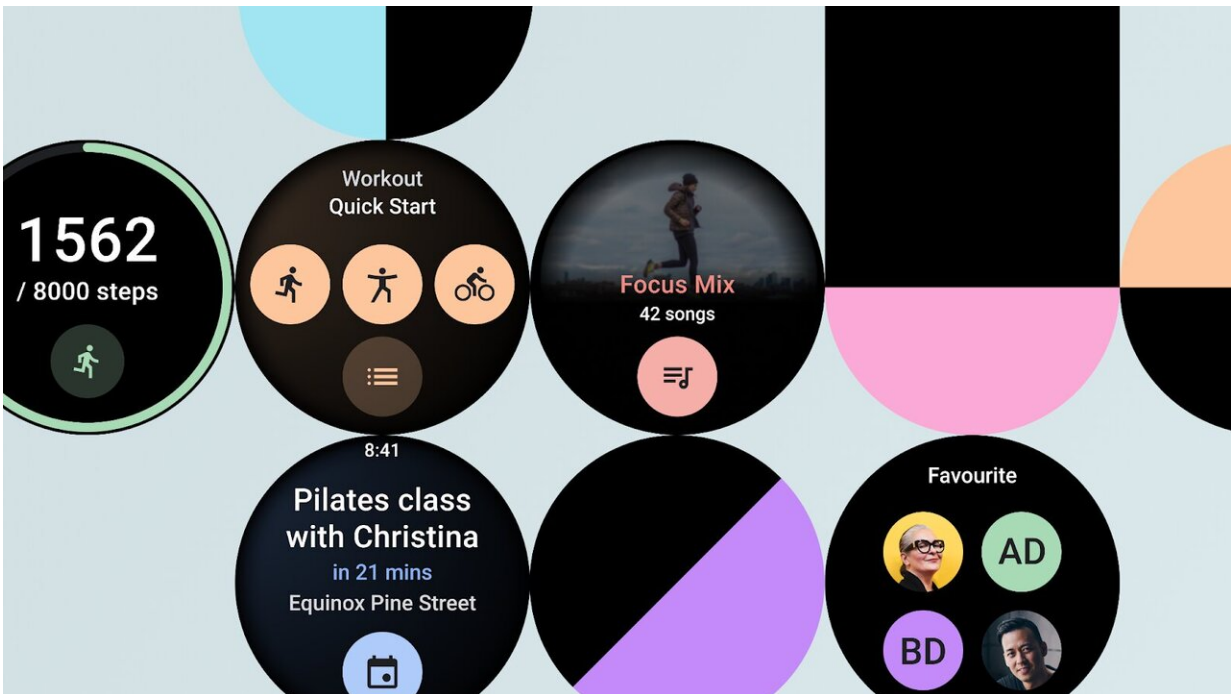


# Google upgrades Wear OS with custom Tiles library

March 14 2021, by Sarah Katz

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Wear OS Tiles. Credit: Google

Since 2014, Google has taken its user base by storm with increasingly advanced features for its Wear OS. Over the past years, Wear OS devices have enabled users to tell time, track fitness and make calls all from a wearable accessory smaller than a mobile phone.

As the base for the renowned Google Smartwatch, Wear OS's latest

feature involves custom Tiles in its Jetpack Tiles library. Introduced in 2019, Tiles offers [users](#) quick and convenient access to desired content, such as date, time and contact lists, all at the swipe of a fingertip.

Now, the Jetpack Tiles library allows developers to create custom Tiles on Wear OS smartwatches. Users will have access to this feature when the upgraded platform releases in spring of 2021.

Tiles help users achieve a variety of daily tasks, including routine activity progress, playing a recent song, sending a message to recent contacts or quick starting a workout. Whereas many apps often require user time and focus to utilize, Tiles aim to distract users as little as possible by loading quickly and prioritizing the wearer's immediate needs. However, if a user requires closer attention to a Tile, they can open said Tile on their smartwatch or phone for deeper interaction.

For ease of use, Tiles are programmable within Android Studio. This trait means users can begin by adding the Wear OS Tiles dependencies. These dependencies include the library necessary to create a Tile, preview the Tile in an activity and render the information to activate the Tile.



Wear OS Tiles. Credit: Google

The majority of this code goes into creating a Tile layout and centers on the command `onTileRequest`. Secondly, the `onResourcesRequest` command passes all necessary resources to render a Tile, including any desired graphics.

While some doubt arose regarding Google's success in developing wearable devices following their acquisition of Fitbit, the Android team has maintained speed by making its original wearable technology fast and easily accessible. So far, the company has equipped smartwatches with the ability to tell time, weather and even track breathing rate for fitness exercises.

For now, the new Tiles library is at the Alpha testing stage, and users will soon be able to use the feature through any Wear OS platform.

**More information:** Verhoef, J. "Creating Custom Tiles on Wear OS by Google with the Jetpack Tiles Library." Android Developers Blog, Google, 12 Mar. 2021, [android-developers.googleblog...h-jetpack-tiles.html](https://android-developers.googleblog.com/2021/03/creating-custom-tiles-on-wear-os-by-google-with-the-jetpack-tiles-library.html)

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