In this day and age, the wide availability of smartphones, tablets and the internet means that information is literally at your fingertips. Certain apps and technical devices focus on health and wellbeing, allowing you to constantly update and monitor your food intake and physical activity levels. This technology helps empower you to make track and monitor your food choices and exercise patterns so that you can make more informed decisions. Many are useful to the change process allowing you to reflect on recorded data and monitor progress.

**Top 5 Apps**

The app which works best for you will be a matter of personal preference. All apps below are free, so why not give them a try and see which suits you best!

1. **MyFitnessPal**: This is the most popular weight loss app out there at the moment. With a database of over 4 millions foods, MyFitnessPal helps you to set realistic weight loss goals, keep an electronic food diary, monitor your calorie and nutrient intake and track your physical activity level. **Main advantages**: a barcode scanner of food products for a quick entry into your food diary; a wide variety of restaurant options and their menus; MyFitnessPal links with activity trackers such as Jawbone UP, Fitbit and the Withings Pulse O2, which enables more effective self monitoring and weight loss. You can add friends who also use the app so you can track and encourage each other’s progress, creating a more social approach to your weight loss.

2. **Lose it!**: This app lets you set out your goals for weight loss, exercise, blood pressure and sleep, which means you are focusing on several elements of a healthy lifestyle, not just diet. **Main advantages**: a robust food database; a barcode scanner; a food and exercise diary; the option to share your progress with friends via Facebook and Twitter; Lose it! links up with activity trackers such as FitBit; allows you to connect with other friends using the app and share progress or create team weight loss challenges.

3. **My Meal Mate**: Designed by nutrition scientists at the University of Leeds, UK, this is the first weight loss app which has been designed using scientific evidence. A clinical trial showed an average weight loss of 4.6kg (10 pounds) by 6 months using this app. **Main advantages**: A huge food and drink database; food and activity diary; helps you to set personal goals for weight loss; stores your “favourite” foods. **Drawback**: no barcode scanner and so all foods must be entered manually.

4. **Walk with Map My Walk**: This app is ideal if you want to improve your physical activity level to help with your weight loss. This app uses your GPS location to track your route, distance, speed, time and calories burnt. **Main advantages**: encourages you to keep improving and enhancing your activity by recording all exercise; you can import activity records from trackers such as Jawbone and Fitbit; access to your music library, can sync with MyFitnessPal so your calories burnt through activity are accounted for in your calorie allowance; suitable for all types of activities. **Drawback**: no food diary option unless connected to MyFitnessPal.

5. **Calorie Count**: Another popular weight loss app. **Main advantages**: wide food database; food and activity diary; can search for foods manually, using a barcode scanner, or through voice recognition; has over 5 million members to interact with via forums, personal journals and direct messaging. **Drawback**: misinformation on the member forums and message boards can be misleading for people.
While it is easy to call yourself an active person, sometimes, the reality is quite different. Activity trackers help you become aware of and understand just how active you are. They encourage healthier habits which may contribute to weight loss.

1. **Jawbone UP**: A combination of a wristband activity tracker and app, this integrated system tracks your activity, sleep, mood and food and drink intake.
   - **Main advantages**: slim and discreet wristband which records activity; the app highlights activity patterns, provides tips for improvement, sets goals and celebrates achievements; you can connect with other users to share your progress or celebrate theirs; can sync the UP app with MyFitnessPal, which allows you to combine your activity level with your calorie intake; by monitoring your activity, sleep and diet, the Jawbone UP system makes you more self aware and enables you to make smarter decisions for a healthier lifestyle.
   - **Drawback**: must have the USB connector to upload data onto your smartphone.

2. **Fitbit**: The Fitbit activity tracker is available as a wristband or clip on device.
   - **Main advantages**: the device wirelessly syncs up with your smartphone and the Fitbit app; tracks your activity as well as monitoring how long and how well you sleep; you can monitor friends’ progress and celebrate achievements; you can log your meals and see your progress toward your weight loss goal; can link with MyFitnessPal and your daily calorie goal will be adjusted to take into account your activity level recorded on your Fitbit.

3. **Withings Pulse O2**: This wristband or clip on activity tracker monitors your movements and calories burnt throughout the day.
   - **Main advantages**: You can track your heart rate, blood oxygen level and sleep cycle; all data is automatically synced to your smartphone via Bluetooth and uploaded to the Health Mate app which shows your progress; links up to MyFitnessPal, so that your calorie intake/allowance can be adjusted according to how active you have been.