Runner Companion Watch + App

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Initial Stage

When first given the task of designing a running companion watch and app, I immediately set out to hear directly from real runners. While I do run every now and then, I would not consider myself an avid runner, therefore I don't truly understand what it is that runners need.

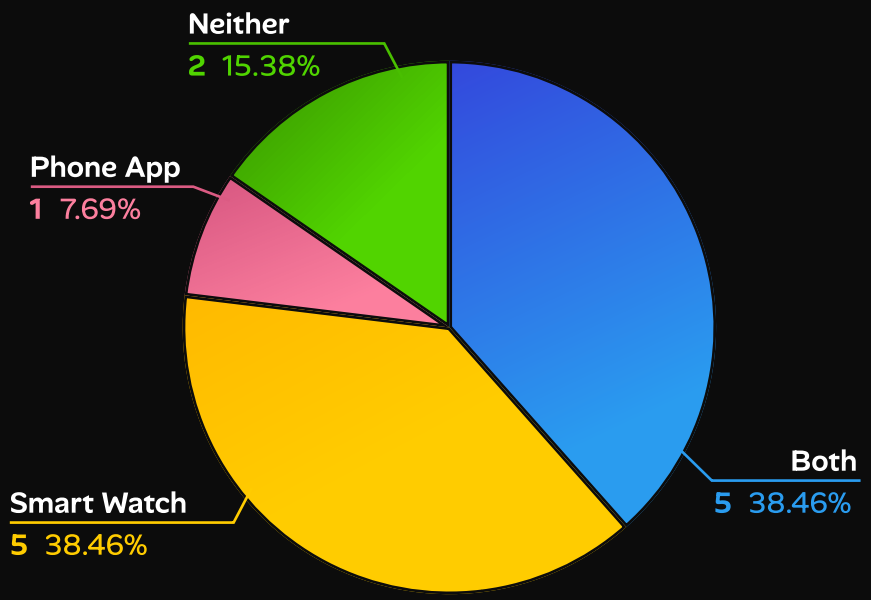
I created a quick survey and sent it out to multiple runners so they can respond, also asking them to share it with other runners so I can gain more input. From this survey I gained many insights which helped me better understand what runners need during a run and their current experience with smart devices they use.

Survey Link

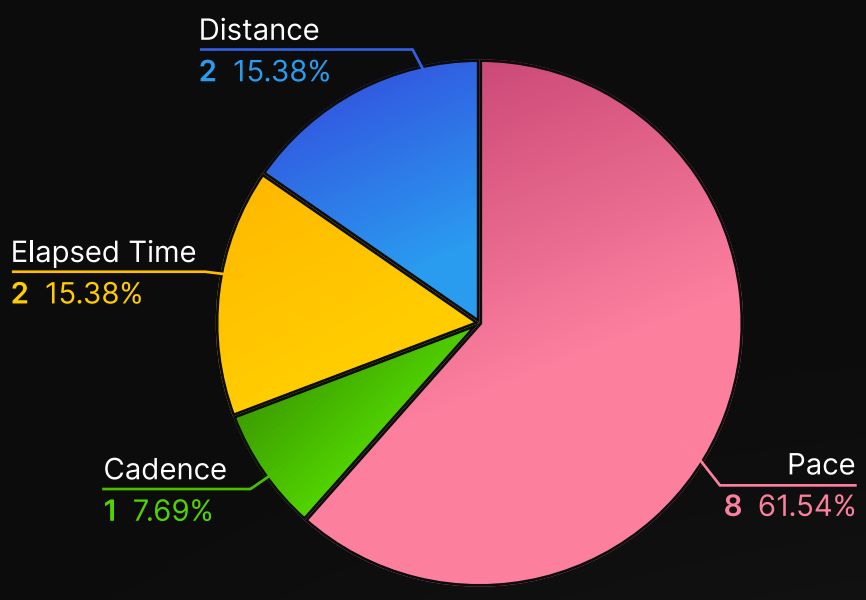
Survey Results

Overall 13 participants filled out the survey, totalling **over 40 written answers**. Through this survey, I was able to listen to their experience of using smart devices during their runs. More specifically, I sought to find what devices they use to track their runs, what information is most important to them on their runs, if they like feedback during their runs, and what benefits have they seen in using smart devices to track their runs.

Survey Data



Do you use a watch or phone app to track your fitness goals?



Which of these performance indicators do you feel is most important to know during a run?

Takeaways

Some of the main findings I gathered were:

- Majority of runners focus on their pace during a run.
- Most prefer constant feedback during their run for different performance indicators.
- Most runners use a smart watch during their runs
- While running they can find it hard to distinguish certain information displayed if there is too much at once
- Runners prefer convenience and quick information.
- They use their devices as a form of motivation to perform better.

“Motivates me to actually run, helps me plan my runs, shows me progress and what I need to work on”

“(I prefer) Constant feedback because I tend to zone out which can lead me to running too fast or slow.”

“(I use a tracker) to be able to improve my fitness and do different workouts based on my performance.”

“During a run I can find it hard to tell what number is the one I need. I feel that these moments can affect my run as I am more focused on the watch.”

Information Hierarchy - Watch

Before creating my designs, I first organized the information that would be displayed within the watch or app based on their importance and relevance.

The watch needs to display current information that is quick and easy to read. During their run, the user is not looking for detailed analysis of their run. They are seeking to learn how they are doing in that moment and focus on their run. The information featured will vary on importance.

Most Important

Heart Rate

Needs to be seen at all times as it is pivotal to ensuring the runners health is always of top priority.

Time Elapsed

Participants mentioned that with their watches they like to keep track of how long they have been running and use the time to better pace themselves.

Pace, Cadence, Distance

These indicators are interchangeable with runners. They can be swappable, with pace being the default as it was the one more participants chose.

Information Hierarchy

The app will include more in-depth information that allows the user to analyse their run better.

Before the run, the user will set up their goals for the run and also what performance notifications they would like to receive during their run.

After their run, the app will display main information about their run (time, distance, average pace, average heart rate, and cadence) and an analysis of their run in different sectors.

Design Goal:

My design aims at creating an experience that is minimal on distractions, focusing on providing the user with relevant information that they want.


9:20am
120 BPM
159
Cadence (SPM)
00:32:16
Time Elapsed
9:20am
120 BPM
6:12
Pace (/KM)
00:32:16
Time Elapsed
GPS: On
9:20am
120 BPM
2.90
Distance (KM)
00:32:16
Time Elapsed

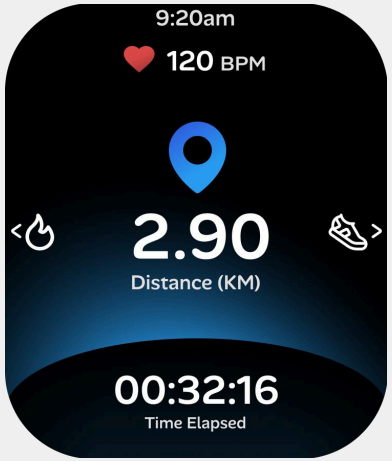

9:20
Run Complete!
Workout Name
Time
00:27:49
Distance
5 km
Avg. Heart Rate
Avg. Pace
5:34/km
Cadence
163 spm
Start
9:20
Set Up Your Run
Distance
Previous
4.5km
Target
km
Pace
Previous
6:35 (4.5km)
Target
/km
Time
Previous
00:28:34 (4.5km)
Target
Progress Updates
Pace
Distance
Time
Pace/km
GPS Tracking

Watch Design

Within this design, the heart rate and time elapsed available at all times. These 2 indicators were found to be the most important throughout all research.

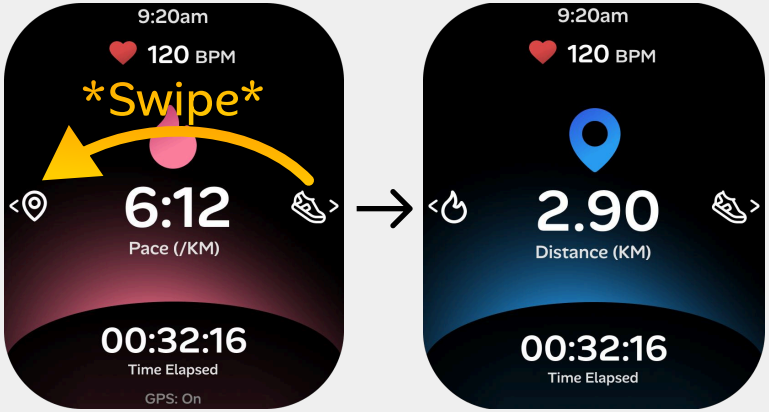
In the center, only one performance indicator is displayed at a time. This has been done as there were some participants that mentioned it can be difficult to distinguish information while running when there is too much on display. With this design, it's ensured that the runner can select which indicator they want displayed and they can easily read it at a glance while running.

[Figma Prototype]



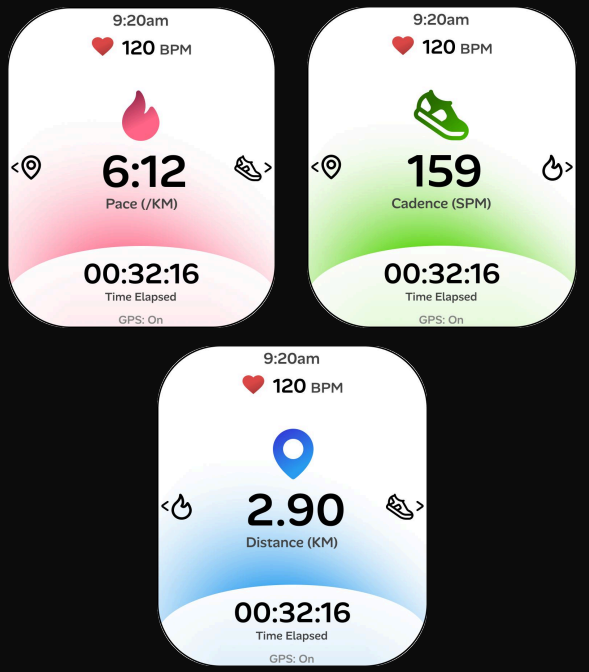
Watch Design

If they wish to see another indicator, they just have to swipe to either side. It is important to allow easy navigation methods between the screens as many participants mentioned that they often struggled having to press certain dials or buttons on their watch to change the information displayed.



The design works in both light and dark mode, so the user can select which one is to their preference. Along with high contrast colours, this design ensures that vital information pops out and is easy to read.

[Figma Prototype]

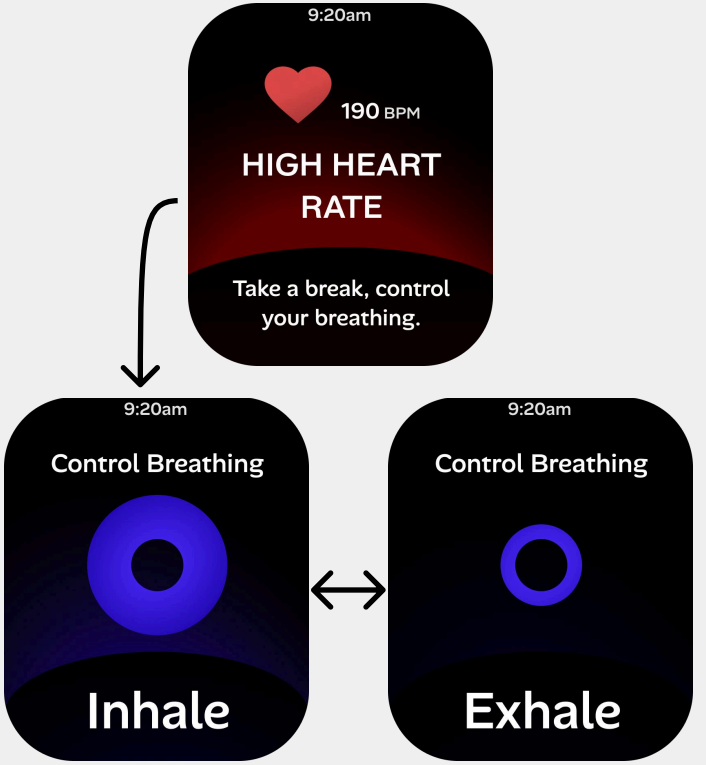


Watch Design

I have also included some examples of feedback notifications. In one, the user begins to fall behind pace. The watch will create a short vibration and alert they are falling behind. Within the run setup on the phone app, the user can select other progress notifications (see page 12).

If the watch begins to detect that the runner's heartbeat is at a dangerous rate, the watch will create multiple strong vibrations to alert the user. The screen will hide all performance data, in order to deter the user from focusing on that data, and display a warning message along with their heart rate. A guided breathing exercise will appear, switching back to the workout once the users heartbeat is back to normal.

Figma Prototype

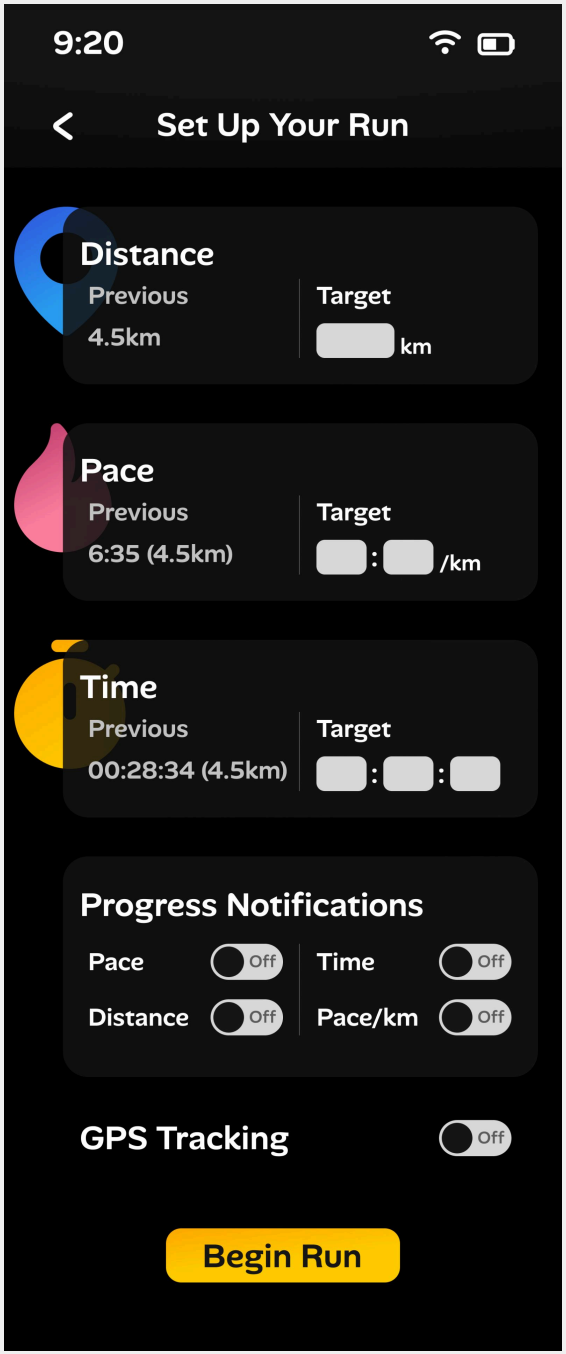


App Design

The user will set up their run within the app. On the setup screen, they will be able to set their desired distance, pace, and time. They will also be able to toggle through various progress notifications (pace, time, distance, pace per kilometer), and if they would like GPS tracking on.

This will allow the user to set up their workout to exactly how they want it to be. Ensuring that the information that is being displayed or alerted to them is relevant to what they feel they need.

[Figma Prototype]



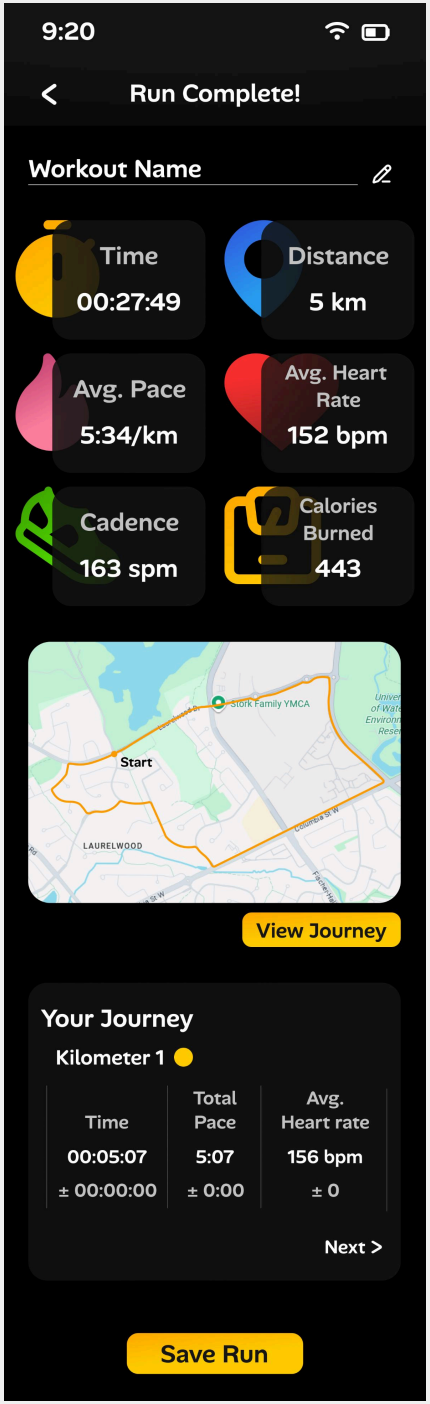
App Design

After the run, the app will display a completion screen. They app displays the final results of their time, distance, average pace, average heart rate, cadence, and calories burned.

Below there is a map outlining their running path (if the user turned off their GPS tracking this would not be displayed). Tapping on “view journey” will show the path divided into separate stretches. This works hand in had with the journey analysis below that breaks down each kilometer ran.

The goal of the app is to provide much more in depth information that would be too cumbersome to view on their watch.

[Figma Prototype]



Next Steps

With more time and resources, some next steps would be:

User Tests

Test the designs with runners, aiming to receive feedback on the design, the information within it, how useful it is to the user, what aspects they do not find important, if the design truly works while in motion, what changes they feel are necessary, and what needs to be done to make this design a successful one.

Re-design

Create an updated design that includes changes and additions reflecting user feedback.

Test

Test this new design again. Gain new feedback, re-design, and test again.

Engineer and Upkeep

Once the design has reached a point that truly connects with the user, it would be handed on to an engineering team to begin creating a working version.

Of course it does not end there as there is still a lot that can be tested with high fidelity iterations and fixed.