

1. Executive Summary

"Sports and fitness apps have become an integral part in the daily lives of millions of mobile users, allowing them to use their smartphones to do everything from tracking running distances, to recording their strength training sessions, to monitoring their heart rates."

- Shane Walker, IHS Electronics and Media^[1]

The social fitness market has expanded vastly in recent years. With smart phones and devices being ubiquitous in modern day life many markets have used the technology to their advantage developing a multitude of apps and hardware to enable fitness enthusiasts to monitor and share their progress, and compete with others all from their smart phone.

One such product is the 60Beat BLUE, a heart rate monitor (retails for £29.99 on Amazon.co.uk) which connects with an iPhone to give you real-time data about your heart-rate throughout your workout session or whilst carrying out day to day activities. The monitor is a chest strap which uses a sensor to electronically detect your heart-rate, this data is then transmitted to your iPhone via Bluetooth where real-time data is displayed through the 60beat heart rate app. The 60beat app shows your current heart rate, time in each heart rate zone and average heart rate at the end of a workout.

Using a heart rate monitor whilst participating in fitness is helpful as it gives an indication of how hard the user is working, they can then tailor their work out to try and keep their heart rate in the optimal zone for what they are trying

to achieve. With my particular user group of pole fitness users, using a heart rate monitor can help with those affected by social inhibition -- where their performance deteriorates in the presence of others -- as it would be clear to see they were still getting a good workout, even if they couldn't manage specific moves .

As I said previously my target user group was participants of pole fitness. They currently have a strong presence on social media platforms, sharing achievements of mastering moves and to find inspiration for moves to learn, because they already have this sense of community, adding the ability to share fitness data and progress seems like a logical step. To confirm this I sent out a survey to members of the Glasgow University Pole Dancing Club and found that 90% of respondents would be interested in using a heart rate monitor during work outs.

To determine the advantages and issues with the product I tested it in many ways, firstly through immersive testing - wearing the strap all day and testing it during various 1.5hr workouts -- then usability testing with a user group of 5 individuals of varying levels of pole fitness ability, and then conducted a comparison test of a rival product -- the Wahoo BLUE HR monitor.

From this testing I found that whilst the app was generally easy to use and functional - with the only recommendation being the addition of measuring calories burned and the ability to share data on social media/fitness apps -- the chest strap had many

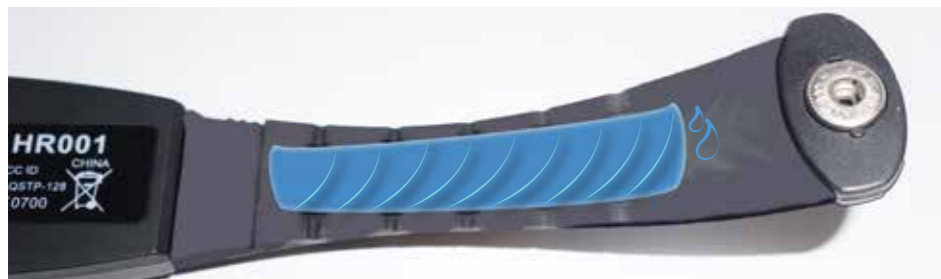
shortcomings making application and use confusing and frustrating for users. The main issues found were the adjustability of the strap, its fastening and the visibility of the heart rate sensors. Also whilst the users like the large display of the phone, in fear of damaging it they would place the phone away from them so they couldn't actually see the screen during a work out.

My proposed changes are to:

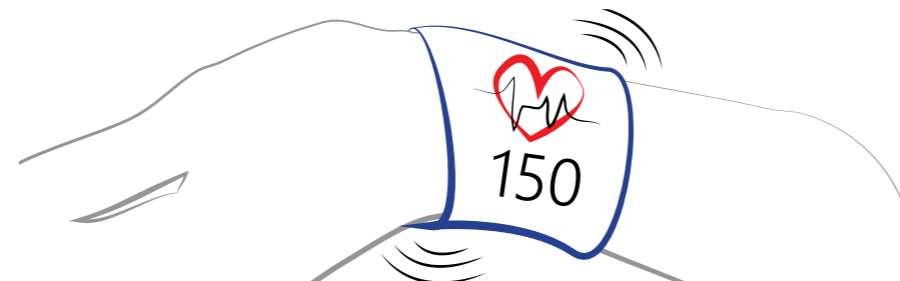
- Increase adjustability of strap
- Replace current clips with snap fastening
- Colour sensor blue and add droplet icon
- Add social media / fitness sharing capabilities to app
- Add calories burned feature to app
- Introduce wristband display, displaying current heart rate and heart rate zone

I took these recommendations, along with concept sketches and sketch models, back to my user group - asked their opinion of the recommendations and got them to try wearing the sketch model of the wristband. Overall feedback was positive and from this session we were able to determine the display is best worn on the inside of the wrist.

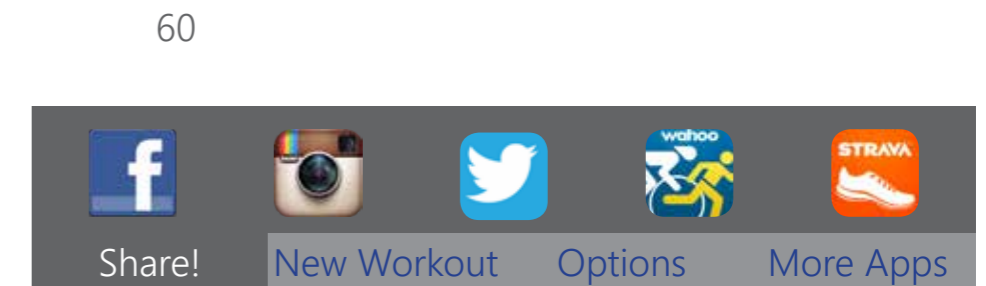
These proposed changes would make the application and use of the hardware much more intuitive, removing frustration with the product. With regards to the app, introducing a sharing function makes it much easier for the user to participate in social fitness communities.



Coloured sensor and water indicator



Wristband display



Social media/ fitness sharing