App Critiques

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Case # + Diagnosis: Case 7 – Neck & Upper Back Pain

     Since technology is proving its usefulness to complete assignments, do research and provide leisure opportunities, it only makes sense that technology be used to help with productivity and health and wellness. Technology can be used in everyday lives, which means incorporating breaks using applications would be deemed useful and allow for a seamless integration into daily routines.

     Provided below are critiques of three apps (for Apple products, ie iPhone or Mac) that can be used to help prompt breaks or lead stretches for people that are working at their computer constantly. There are comparisons between a free app, an affordable app for $0.99, and a costlier app for $3.99. The app for $3.99 also includes a video critique because it was the only app of the three to be advertised on Youtube. However, the quality of the more expensive app comes into question when watching the video and when evaluating the app. Overall, the free or affordable app for $0.99 would be the best options, depending on what the client is looking for or hoping to gain from the apps.

1. Data for App #1

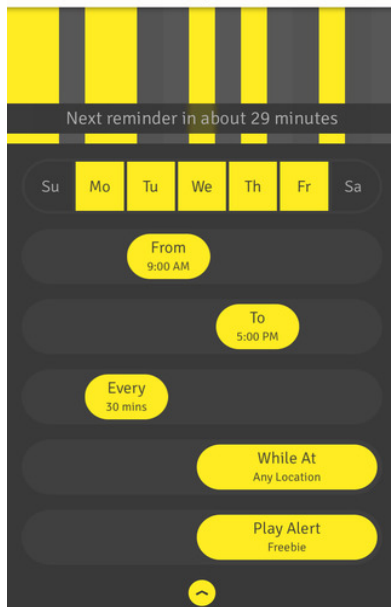| Title of the Application	Stand Up! The Work Break Timer
Price of the Application	Free
Download Location	For iPhone
Application Downloaded	From the Apple Store
Category	Health & Fitness
App Updated Last	September 17, 2015
Size of Application	21.1 MB
Seller	Raised Square, LLC
Comments from the Users	4.5 stars/5 stars
Web Access	https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/stand-up!-the-work-break-timer/id828244687?mt=8 http://www.raisedsquare.com/standup/

Utility of the App

Technical Aspects	
Application Description	This app provides reminders to stand up with confirmation messages to allow progress to be tracked. However, this application does not provide the exercises that need to be done.
Images are clear	Yes. Images are appropriate and provide a visual record of progress.

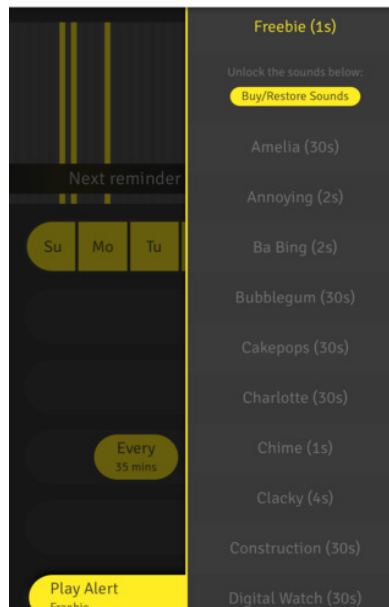Provide further support for the use of this App on your case site.
- This app advertises that it is customizable to ones' work schedule and that one can set reminders to get up on intervals with easy confirmations so one can get a sense of how they are doing. For people that tend to do long periods of work at a computer or desk, this app would be beneficial as they could set it for a specific time that works in their schedule and then it provides the reminder for them to look up from the screen or take a stretch break.
- This would be good for this client as she was a PhD student and currently a professor, which requires her to grade assignments or do research for long periods of time. Thus, this application would allow a constant reminder for her to stretch or stand up and move every so many minutes, which would help with her upper back and neck pain.
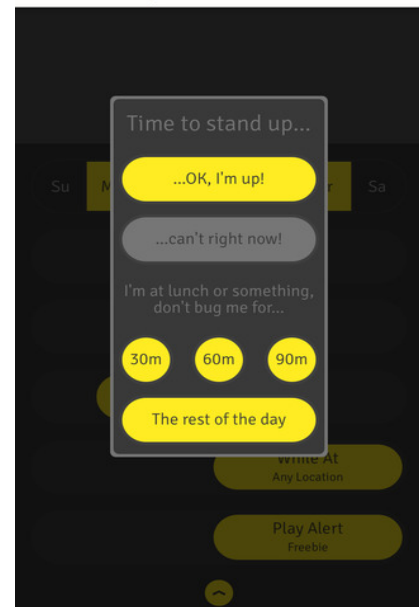
Screenshots of App

2. Data for App #2

Title of the Application	Ergonomics
Price of the Application	$0.99
Download Location	For iPhone
Application Downloaded	From the Apple Store
Category	Health & Fitness
App Updated Last	November 16, 2014
Size of Application	7.2MB
Seller	Stand Up Apps, Inc.
Comments from the Users	4.5 stars/5 stars
Web Access	https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ergonomics/id547689680?mt=8 http://www.ergonomicsapp.com

Utility of the App

Technical Aspects	
Application Description	This app is a complete mobile workplace health solution that offers equipment setup, advice, and a variety of workplace specific stretching exercises, and programmable reminders to help take breaks. This application has also been distinguished as the winner of the People's Choice Award for the Department of Labor App Challenge, and reached #7 in the Productivity section of the App store.
Images are clear	Yes. Illustrations are appropriate and relevant to the topic and stretches. They are hand drawn and original.

Provide further support for the use of this App on your case site.
- This application has two goals which are: to improve workplace health and productivity by encouraging stretch breaks, and to ensure that all workplace equipment is set up ergonomically for the times that are sitting. The stretch feature allows for choice between individual or group stretches that target a specific area of the body. A countdown timer is also included to help properly time the stretches. Also, reminders are included in, which can be customized into one's daily routines. The ergonomics part of the app allows for individuals to learn how to setup a desk, chair, monitor, mouse, and keyboard for enhanced productivity. Quick tips provide a summary of the setup, but the webpage for the app explains that more detailed information is supported by the OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration).
- This application would be the most beneficial to the client in this case because it would not only provide the reminder timer for her to take breaks, but it also provides the stretches that can be done in those breaks. This client voiced that she has several work places across campus. It is difficult for her to customize each workstation to help avoid upper back and neck pain. Thus, this application would provide portable ergonomic instructions so that before she starts working, she will be able to quickly adjust different components of the environment. Ultimately, this application provides several key features that will help the client to remember to take breaks and how to constantly readjust her workstations properly to help avoid pain.

Screenshots of App
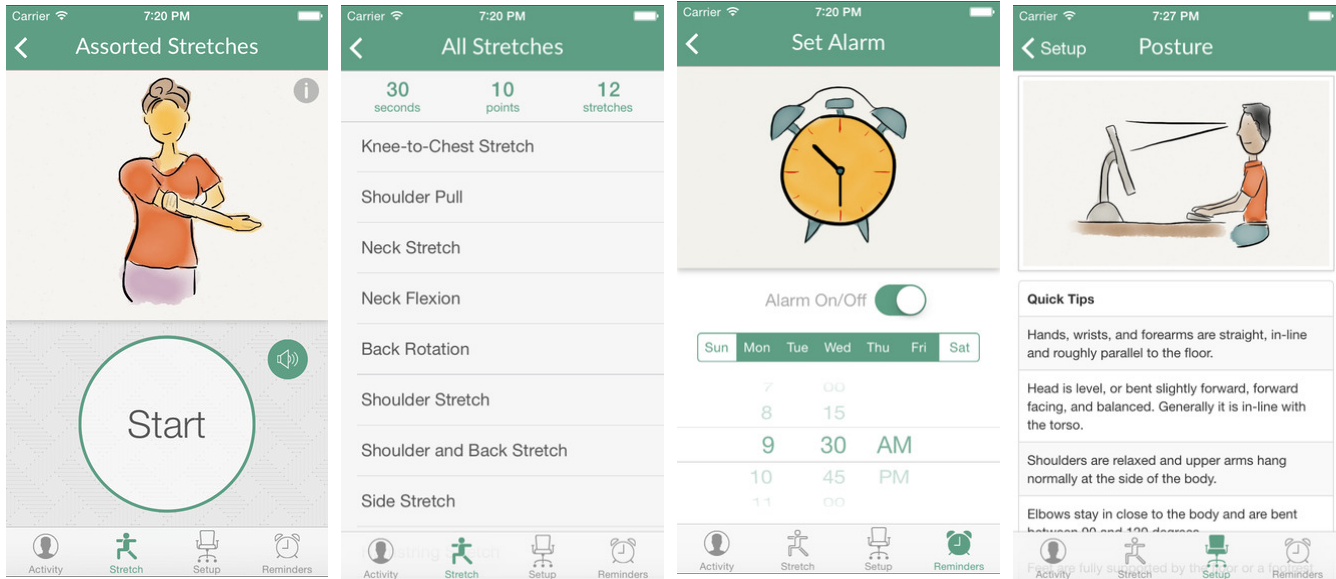
3. Data for App #3

Title of the Application	Stretch
Price of the Application	$3.99
Download Location	For Mac Computer
Application Downloaded	From the Apple Store
Category	Health & Fitness
App Updated Last	October 24, 2013
Size of Application	75.8 MB
Seller	Chanok Opapongpunt
Comments from the Users	Not enough reviews to create an average rating.
Web Access	https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/stretch/id658827081?mt=12 http://www.squidmelon.com/stretch.html

Utility of the App

Technical Aspects	
Application Description	The description of this app states that it is attractive and easy to use. It provides a break reminder and then shows random stretches out of the 40 provided on the app. There is a high quality video and description that has easy to follow directions. A guideline to set up workplace ergonomics is also included.

	This app also shows statistics of using a Mac including mouse clicks, keyboard types, and the length of computer usage.
Images are clear	Yes, images are clear, but images are not appropriate. The girl leading the stretches has been sexualized as she is wearing clothes that do not cover her midriff or are too small or short.

Provide further support for the use of this App on your case site.
- This application is not appropriate for use for clients due to its sexualized nature of the girl leading the stretches. However, the idea of the application as a break reminder and workplace ergonomic setup guideline for computers is useful as the other applications have been for the iPhone. The data collection portion of the application would also be useful as it tracks computer usage of mouse clicks, keyboard types, and computer usage periods. This can help one to track their usage of a computer and have a visual of when they need to take breaks.
- For this client case, I would not recommend this application because of the lower quality for the cost.

Screenshots of App

This app also has a YouTube advertisement video. This was the only app that had a corresponding video. Thus, I found it interesting that the most expensive application, with the least amount of sales and most negative reviews on the quality had a promotional video. Find the critique below.

YouTube Video Critique on App #3

Data for Video

Title of the Video	Stretch – Break Reminder App for Mac
Duration of the Video	0:51 seconds
Number of Days on YouTube	Published June 23, 2013
Total Number of Views	4,461
Any Links to the Video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60k3j9L5Xa4&feature=youtu.be
Comments of the Viewers	Comments disabled for this video.

Criterion for utility in the site.

Technical Aspects	
Images are clear	Images were clear and good quality of instructions. However, the images used to advertise this application are not appropriate to show to clients due to the sexualized nature of the person leading the stretches.
Sounds are clear and background is free from noise	The sound quality is good. There is a soundtrack playing throughout the video.
Time to download is reasonable (about 10-15 minutes at the maximum)	The video loads right away.
Author/creator	
The creator and/or organization providing the video are mentioned	Created by SquidMelonApps
The information about the creator is up-to date	Limited information about the creators, but information is provided about the app being the "#1 top paid health & fitness U.S.A. Mac app store" with a link to download the app.

Provide further support for the use of this YouTube video on your case site.
- The purpose of this video is a marketing technique to promote the app, which is not necessarily as good as the other apps critiqued. In this case, this application that is being advertised would not be as beneficial to the client.

Critique
- This video and application use a sexualized female to direct the stretches. This is not appropriate for people to be using in a workplace environment due to the seductive nature of the person leading the stretches. Ultimately, this would decrease motivation to do these stretches. Comments from users of this application expressed the same ideas as they stated "I'd be way too embarrassed to use this in an office setting" and that "the video model is over the top sexy and flirtatious with her inappropriate attire and skimpy tops that bare most of her mid-drift". However, comments about the concept of the application are positive as they like the integration of a timer and a large variety of stretches available. Some suggestions were to change the format of the stretches to include illustrations instead of the beautified model.