

# Confession of a former FuelBand fanatic

By Lauren Steele, *Outside*

When Nike released the FuelBand in January 2012, my boyfriend at the time was certain it would make the perfect gift for me, raising the bar for my fitness-crazed inner athlete—a welcome development, right? On the fateful day he ordered my wrist-worn, nonhuman trainer, little did he know that he was effectively locking me into a handcuff of obsession. To be sure, there's a good reason why I no longer have a FuelBand (or a boyfriend).

Like most gadgets born of the recent activity-tracker movement—think Fitbits, Jawbones UPs, Basis Watches—the FuelBand uses a triaxial accelerometer to sense movement. (This magic tech trick is what makes an iPhone screen rotate when it's tilted.) The smarts inside the FuelBand tracks time, steps taken, calories burned, and NikeFuel earned on a personal NikePlus account, where you can set goals to earn a certain amount of NikeFuel each day.

So, what's NikeFuel? According to NikePlus, it's a “universal way to measure movement for all kinds of activities.” What NikePlus should say is that it's a “meaningless number, calculated by an algorithm using the laws of obligation and shame, for which a limit doesn't exist.” In sum, NikeFuel points have no meaning beyond the boundaries of Nike World. The concept behind the points is that, unlike BMRs or calories, they're supposed to represent whole-body movements—free from the variables of weight, gender, age, or height. They count every motion equally, from a fidget to a front squat.

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