# Closing the Gap: Reconnecting Users with Apple Health.

A comprehensive usability study to identify barriers and re-engage users with the app's core value.

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# Research & Analysis Team

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# Executive Summary

## Apple Health presents an overwhelming number of features with inconsistent placement and limited actionable insights, often leading to user confusion and app abandonment.

A layered usability testing process consisting of blind surveys, task performance evaluations, and navigation pattern analysis with a range of target users was conducted between June 16–July 16, 2025.

The primary language used in the testing assets was English. Respondents were given four main tasks and a set of alternative tasks related to the Apple Health application. They were asked to complete these tasks using methods such as think-aloud protocols and time-on-task measurements. Participants were additionally probed about the reasoning behind their actions during the task flow.

The primary goal of these tasks was to understand users' mental models, specifically why they chose certain navigation patterns and features over others and to uncover what motivated them to engage with particular features within the app.

As part of the evaluation, we also conducted System Usability Scale (SUS) and Net Promoter Score (NPS) assessments to measure user satisfaction and likelihood to recommend.
**SUS Score**: 44.4
**NPS Score**: -25

## Executive Summary

Based on the insights gathered, key research recommendations include:
- Incorporating widgets for quick data logging
- Restructuring the popularized "Share" feature to boost collaboration among users
- Personalizing and customizing the Summary page to be less text-heavy and more visually engaging
- Replacing the current landing page ("Summary") with the "Browse" section to improve discoverability and reduce cognitive load

Additional suggestions include updating data visualizations, allowing flexible use of widgets, and aligning the visual language across the Apple Watch and the Health app. A task-based evaluation of an iterated design is also planned.

**Through our testing, we found a disconnect between Apple Health's features and user engagement. To bridge this gap, we recommend the following:**

- **Enable quick and seamless data entry**
- **Reorganize the Summary page to match users' mental models**
- **Improve the intuitiveness of the "Share" feature**

**This report outlines how our study led to these insights and recommendations.**

**Introduction**

# Table of Contents

# Methodology

## Research Purpose

- Understand user behaviors with key features.
- Validate or invalidate assumptions about user familiarity and navigation.
- Identify usability friction points and user mental model mismatches.

## Goal

Our goal is to investigating how Apple Health can help users manage their health conditions and identify any existing problems.

## Screening

We recruited a mix of Apple Health and third-party app users through peer networks, survey and social platforms.

## Methodology

We conducted moderated usability testing with scenario-based tasks to evaluate how users interact with Apple Health.

## Debriefing

Throughout the test, we observed moments of confusion, ease, and hesitation, paying close attention to navigation patterns and emotional responses.

## Tasks

We began by identifying common Apple Health use cases and areas where users often feel confused. Based on these patterns, we designed tasks that reflect real-life actions to test how easily users can find and use key features.

## Feedback Interview

After each test, we asked open-ended questions to understand what participants found helpful, confusing, or frustrating.

## SUS/NPS

We used SUS to measure ease of use and NPS to gauge how likely users are to recommend Apple Health. Together, they reflect usability and overall satisfaction.

**Task Overview**

## Main tasks

### Task 1 - Steps

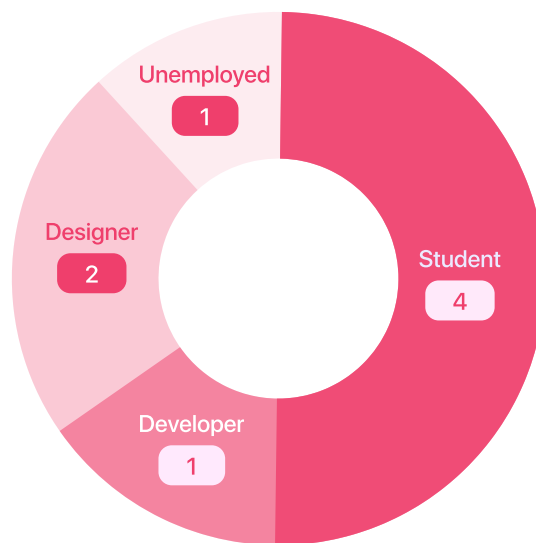**Purpose of the task:** Finds out their knowledge about popular functions.

### Task 2 - Sleep

**Purpose of the task:** Test their understanding about Lesser known function.

### Task 3 - Nutrition

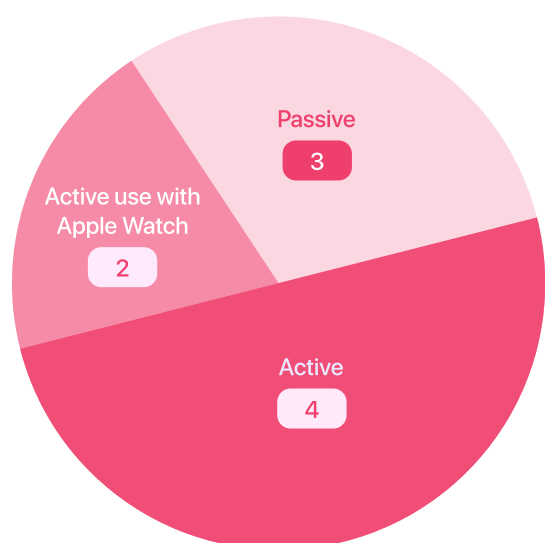**Purpose of the task:** Test a hidden function to see how users think of it.

### Task 4 - Sharing

**Purpose of the task:** Finds out their knowledge about a Promoted Feature.

## Alternative Tasks

### Task 1 - Customize Summary

**Purpose of the task:** Exploring how users think about Apple Health's customization mode.

### Task 2 - Log their mood

**Purpose of the task:** Test their understanding about Lesser known function.

### Task 3 - Review Medical Report

**Purpose of the task:** Test a hidden function to see how users think of it.

# Testing user

Unemployed
1

Designer
2

Student
4

Developer
1

## Occupation

Germany
3

America
4

China
2

## Location

Passive
3

Active use with Apple Watch
2
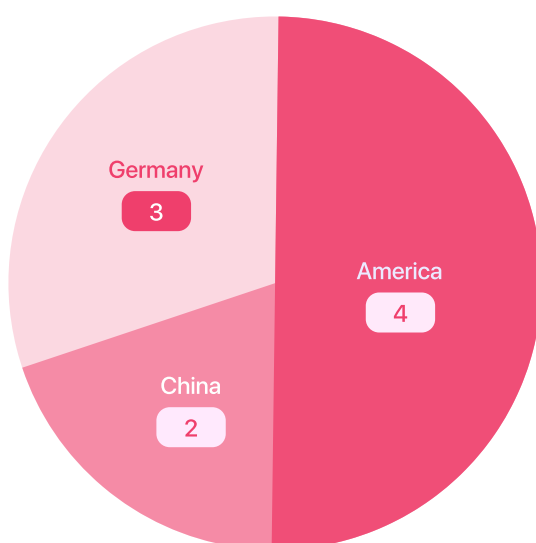
Active
4

## Active/passive

# Over all Insights

### Motivation

Users often struggle to understand the purpose or value of certain health tracking features, leading to low engagement.

### Prioritization

The landing/summary page lacks personalization and presents too much irrelevant or low-priority information. lead users to ignore or disengage from core features.

### Accessibility

Users find it difficult to access certain features due to poor visibility and accessibility within the app.

### Privacy

Users are reluctant to share health data due to unclear data boundaries, limited control over what is shared, and insufficient feedback from the system.

### Data Visualization

Many users find Apple Health's data visualization overwhelming, unfocused, and lacking clarity. While the app captures a wide range of health metrics, it often presents them in raw, disconnected forms.

### Visual

Users find the app's UI and icons confusing and hard to interpret. They also feel overwhelmed by the amount of text, which hurts readability.

**Task Highlight**

# Insights - Steps

Step tracking is the most frequently accessed feature in Apple Health. While users appreciate seeing their daily activity, they often treat it as a one-off glance. The lack of motivational feedback, visual trends, or contextual meaning leads to disengagement. Users want more than numbers, they want to feel encouraged, rewarded, and informed.

## Key Learnings

- Users frequently check steps but rarely explore deeper metrics.
- There's no context or reward for step milestones.
- Data is presented as static, not engaging.

## User Comments

- "I open it to check my steps, but that's about it."
- "I wish it told me when I was doing better than usual."

## Recommendations

- Add visual progress indicators (e.g., streaks or trends).
- Introduce milestone badges or celebratory micro interactions.
- Surface weekly/monthly step trends in Summary.

## User Insights

- Users want to feel like they're improving not just recording.
- Emotional feedback is missing from one of the app's most-used features.



**Users check steps but don't dig deeper.**
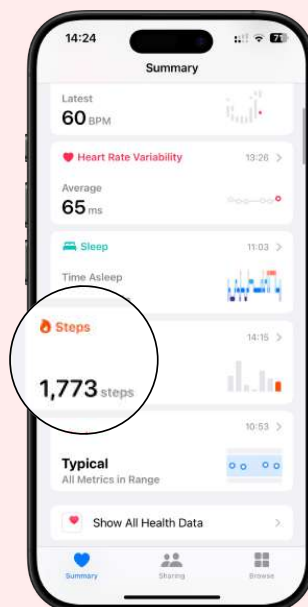


**No trends or progress feedback.**



**Lacks motivation to build habits.**

**Task Highlight**

# Insights - Sleep

Sleep tracking emerged as a misunderstood and underused feature. Many users assumed their sleep would be tracked automatically and abandoned it when the tile appeared empty or inactive. Without clear onboarding, third-party connection guidance, or visible benefits, users feel lost often leaving the feature untouched.

## Key Learnings

- Users were unclear how sleep gets tracked.
- Expectation of automatic tracking without third-party apps.
- Sleep tile appears blank for many, causing frustration.

## User Comments

- "I thought my phone would track sleep automatically."
- "I didn't even know you needed another app for it."

## Recommendations

- Provide onboarding guidance for sleep setup.
- Clarify third-party app connections upfront.
- Use icons and visual language to distinguish sleep data.

## User Insights

- The sleep feature lacks discoverability and clarity, leading to user drop-off.
- Users feel misled when major features appear non-functional without setup.
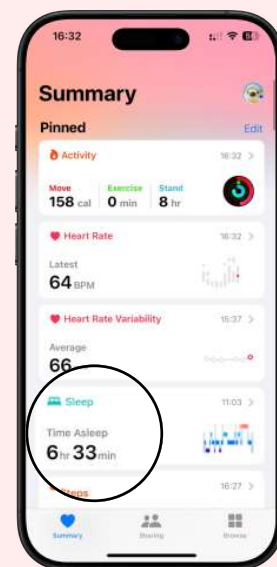


**Sleep tracking setup unclear**
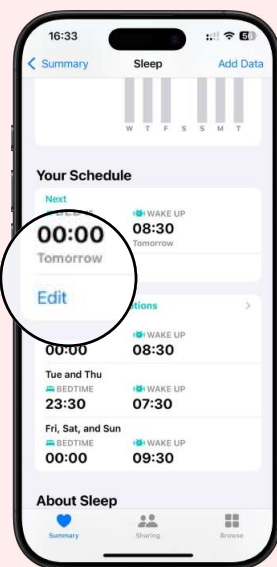


**Arises confusion**
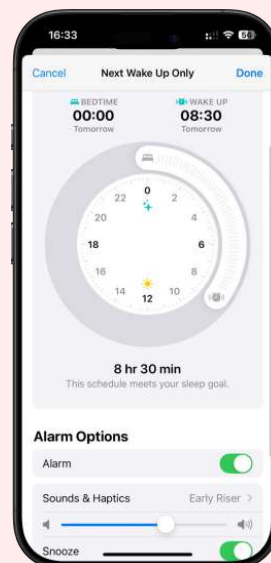


**No prompts or guidance shown**

10

**Task Highlight**

# Insights - Water

Water logging is a hidden and underdeveloped capability within Apple Health. Most participants didn't know it existed, and those who did found it cumbersome to access. The feature lacks intuitive shortcuts, visual feedback, and habit support, making it difficult to incorporate into daily routines.

## Key Learnings

- Water logging was one of the least discovered features.
- Users were surprised it existed at all.
- No shortcut to add water friction discourages habit building.

## User Comments

- "Wait, I can track water in Apple Health?"
- "There's no easy way to log water too many steps."

## Recommendations

- Add a visible "+ Add Water" quick action on the Summary page.
- Use widgets for rapid logging from home or lock screen.
- Design water logging to match mental models (e.g., glasses, bottles)

## User Insights

- Users want frictionless logging and real-time hydration visuals.
- Hidden placement discourages regular usage.
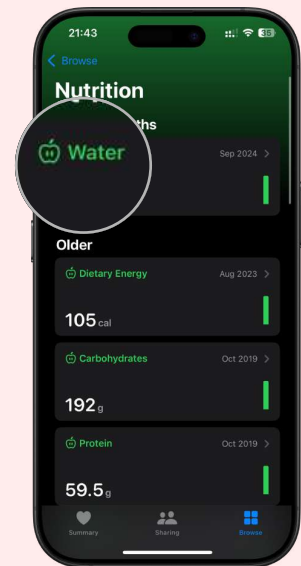


**Feature is hard to find**
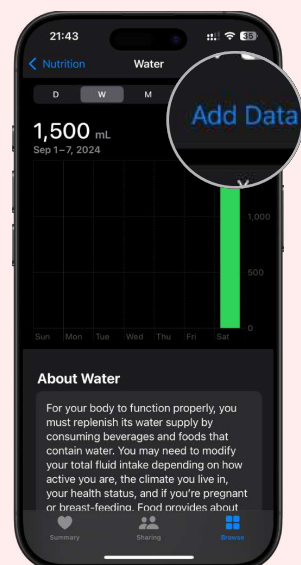


**Logging feels tedious**



**No quick add or visual feedback**

**Task Highlight**

# Insights - Share

The Share feature raised concerns around clarity, privacy, and utility. Users felt uncertain about what exactly was being shared, with whom, and why. The clinical language and technical layout discouraged casual users, while more advanced users wanted clearer control and transparency before opting in.

## Key Learnings

- The Share tab is intimidating for new or passive users.
- Terminology like "Share" and "Data Access" feels clinical.
- Participants don't see the value unless they're managing care for others.

## User Comments

- "I don't really know what I'm sharing or with who."
- "It sounds like it's for doctors not someone like me."

## Recommendations

- Simplify Share language: "Send a copy of your health summary".
- Highlight who can see what in a clear way.
- Show Share as part of proactive care not a technical export.

## User Insights

- Share creates anxiety due to a lack of transparency and relevance.
- Users need clear, human use-cases before they engage.



**Language feels too technical**



**Unclear what gets shared**
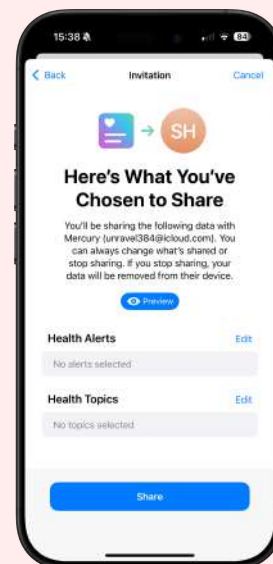


**Trust and control not evident**

**Task Highlight**

# Alternate Tasks

To gain deeper insights into user preferences and mental models, we included alternate tasks tailored to each participant's interests and feedback. These tasks served as a probing method, helping us understand **why users gravitate toward certain features over others** and how they naturally interact with the app based on their personal goals.

## Key Learnings

1. User Mistook "Medications" section as being the same as "Medical Records."
2. Users struggled with finding calories in list due to overwhelming feautres.
3. Users like features that have an intuitive user interface that they feel connected with.

## User Comments

- "I really **need a tutorial** for this part, I can not understand."
- "The **terminology** is hard for someone that does not have enough **knowledge** in fitness."

## Recommendations

- Reanalyze UX writing to align with users mental models.
- Design features to feel intuitive and welcoming to the users.
- Categorize section to allow users to quickly view sections.

## User Insights

- Users seek a **more accessible**, intuitive, and low-friction way to enter data ideally.
- Users express a need for **guided, contextual assistance** to navigate specific feature.
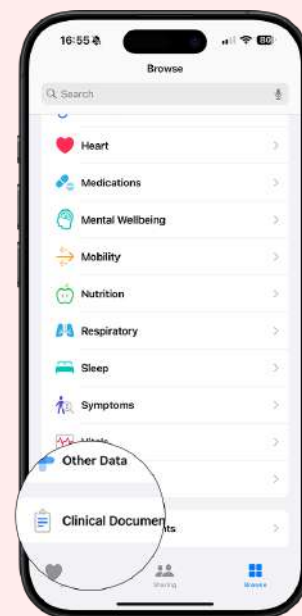


**Review** Medical Records



**Logging** State of Mind
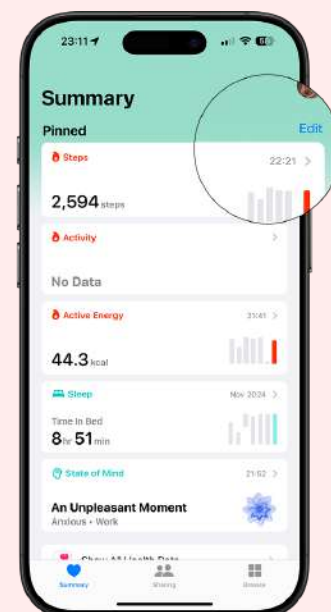


**Customize** Summary Page

13

# Crunching Data

## Navigation Pattern

The success rate of our tasks.
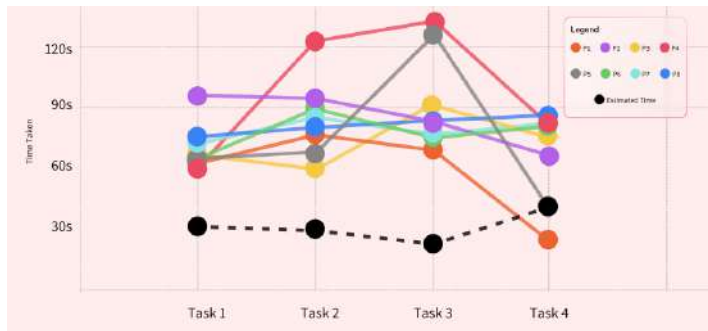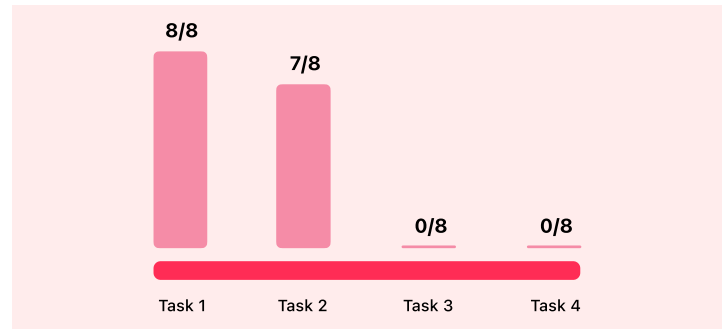


## Time on Task

Predicted time vs. Actual time.



## Mental Models

Insights from the usability test.

5/8 Of participants wants insights or suggestions toward their health condition



44.4/100 SUS

-25 NPS
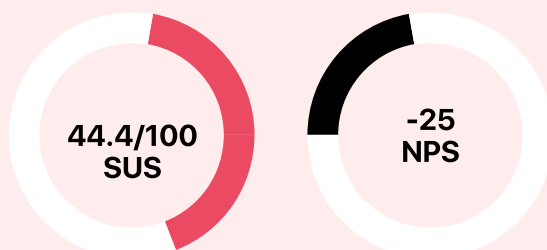
## SUS/NPS

Scores are relatively low.

# Key Insights

### Task 1 - Check steps for today

**Purpose of the task:** The goal is to test the popular feature in Apple Health's app. Check Steps for today and find the summary of activity for past week.

### Task 2 - Set up sleep schedule

**Purpose of the task:** To test a lesser known feature. Using the Apple Health app, locate Sleep and set a new sleep schedule for weekdays.

### Task 3 - Record water intake

**Purpose of the task:** Test the hidden feature in Apple Health. Locate Nutrition data and find water under this section, try to record water intake.

### Task 4 - Share Data with Other

**Purpose of the task:** For this task, we tested the promoted feature in Apple Health. Using the Apple Health app, locate Share and explore how to share profile with others.

**Insights & Key Takeaways**

# High Impact Problems
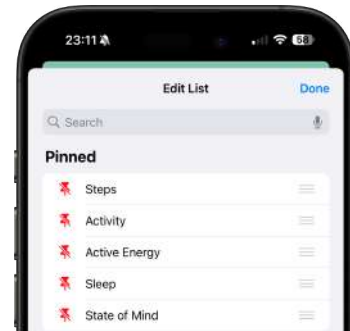




## Problem 1

Users do not have the motivation to record data due to confusing user journey

## Insight 1

The inconvenient flows break the habit loop and reduce data entry consistency

## Problem 2

Users feel overwhelmed by the interface. Don't know where to start or what is relevant

## Insight 2

When users feel overwhelmed, they engage less and don't use features again
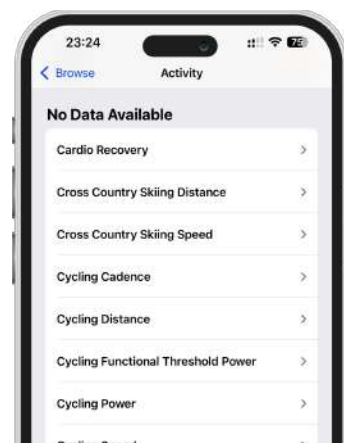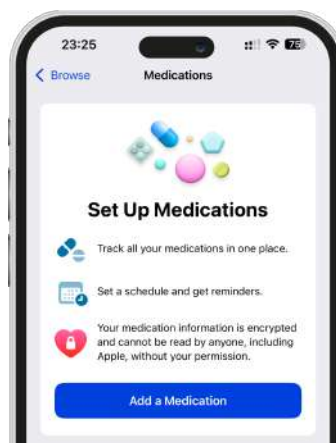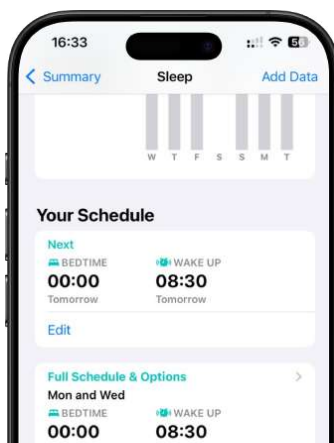






## Problem 3

Key features are hidden and hard to find. Users hard to identify how to add data or find specific functions like medications.

## Insight 3

If features are not visible or intuitive, these features will go unused.

# Low Impact Problems
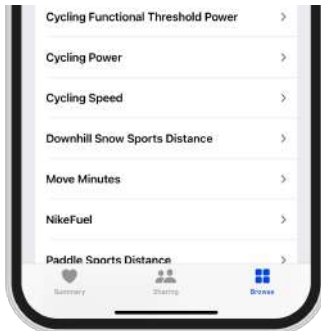




## Problem 1

Users find most of the health categories hard to comprehend the meaning

## Insight 1

Categorization system lacks clarity for users, creating cognitive overload.
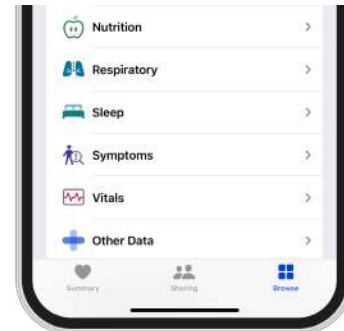
## Problem 2

Users find the app's UI and icons confusing, meaningless and hard to interpret

## Insight 2

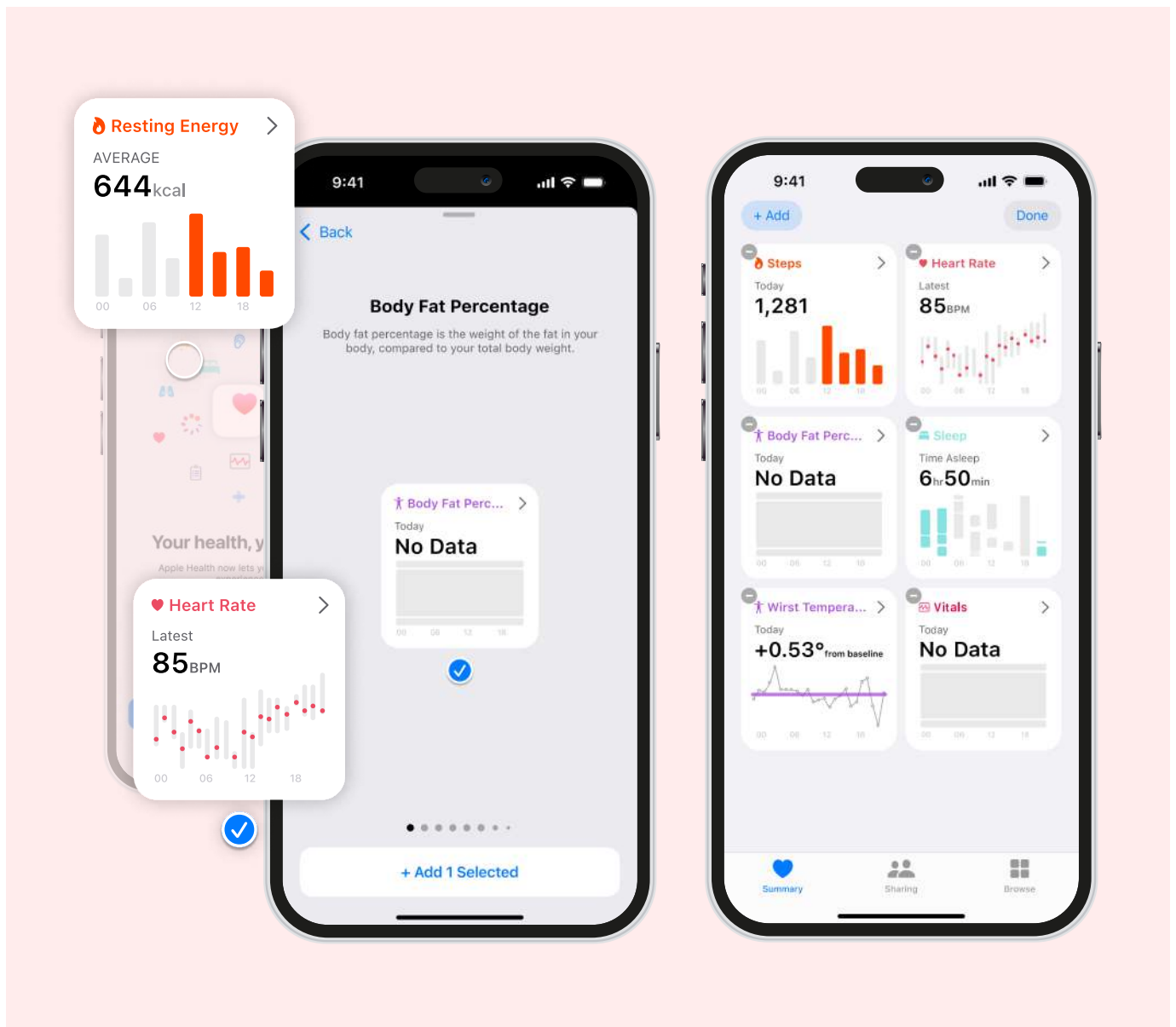Users struggle to interpret what each icon represents, causing navigation friction.
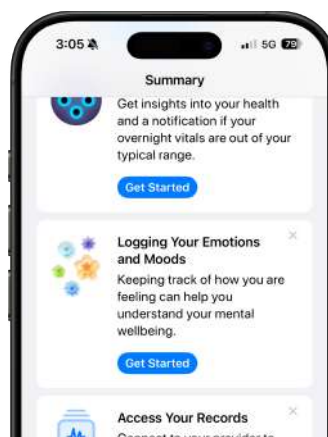


## Problem 3

Users want to have a "beginner mode" that simplifies the interface for users who don't need every data point

## Insight 3

A "beginner mode" would ease onboarding and make the app less intimidating for new or less tech-savvy users.

# The Summary Page

Caption



## Re-organize the Summary Page to Optimize Intuitive Navigation

Reduce irrelevant information and restructure the customization mode to help users more easily find the data they care about.

# Add Widgets

Caption



## Designed Widgets for Features with Complex User Journey

Provide more widgets for users to record quick information instantly.

# The Sharing Feature

Caption
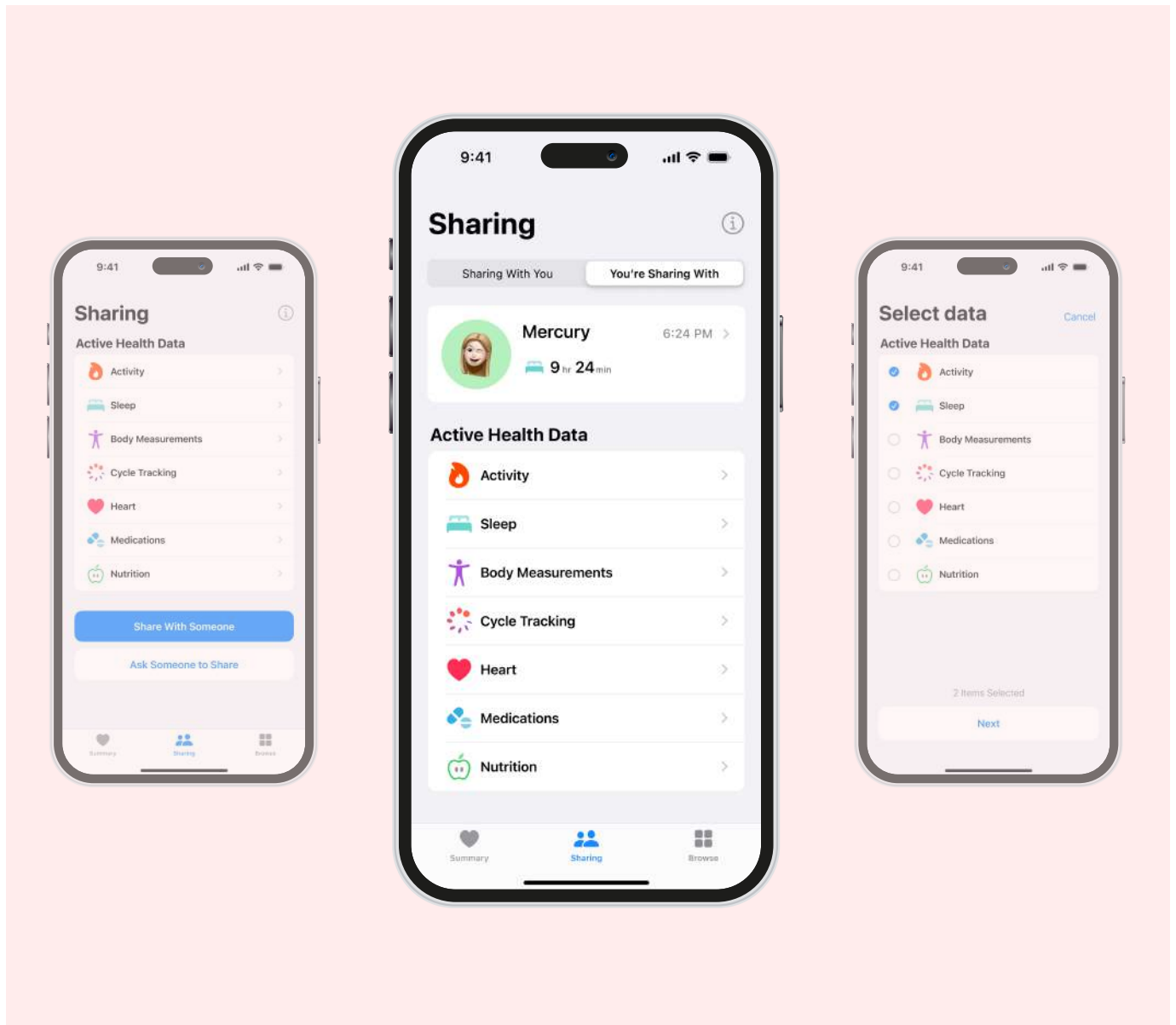


## Re-imagine the User Flow of the Sharing Page

Enhance user flow to match our users' mental model by showing their active data before asking them to select their contact to share their data.

**Design Recommendations**

# Future-Proofing Apple Health

Recommendations for long-term impact.



## Usability Testing

Conducting usability testing on the proposed designs and collecting feedback from real users can enhance the feasibility and effectiveness of the solutions.



## Highlight Data in Sharing Feature

The current sharing feature lacks social interactivity. Introducing data highlights as part of the sharing experience can boost engagement and encourage repeat use by adding a gamified, community-driven element.
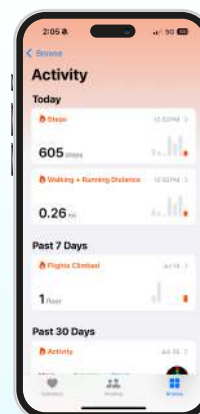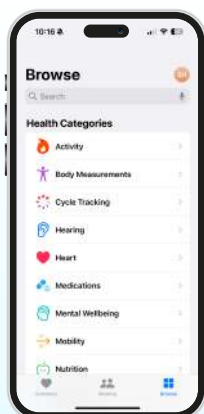


## Re-structure Browse Section

The current Browse section functions as an all-in-one menu. Restructuring it with clear categories, expandable submenus, and overall filters can improve navigation and drive higher user engagement.



## Evaluating Language & Visuals

The current visual design and UX writing contribute to user confusion, negatively impacting the overall navigation experience.

# Conclusion



**Small investment, big impact. This redesign brings users back to Apple Health by putting their needs, behaviors, and expectations at the center.**

Over the course of 10 weeks, our team of six UX designers dedicated 540 hours to reimagining Apple Health at a fraction of Apple's annual R&D budget (just 0.000165%). For less than the cost of an internal sprint, this redesign offers tangible value: improving visibility of underused features, increasing user retention, and reinforcing Apple Health's standalone worth. Through extensive user research, iterative prototyping, and thorough evaluation, our goal has been clear to bridge the gap between users and Apple Health. By enabling quick data logging, reducing cognitive load through clearer organization, and creating a more intuitive experience, we believe this redesign meaningfully reconnects users to the platform.

**Conclusion**

# Appendix

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https://support.apple.com/guide/iphone/view-your-health-data-iphe3d379c32/ios

https://hellopm.co/fitbit-product-analytics-case-study/

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https://www.hearingtracker.com/news/apples-hearing-study

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