



## My Month With a BodyBugg

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[www.logicalloss.com/bodybugg](http://www.logicalloss.com/bodybugg)



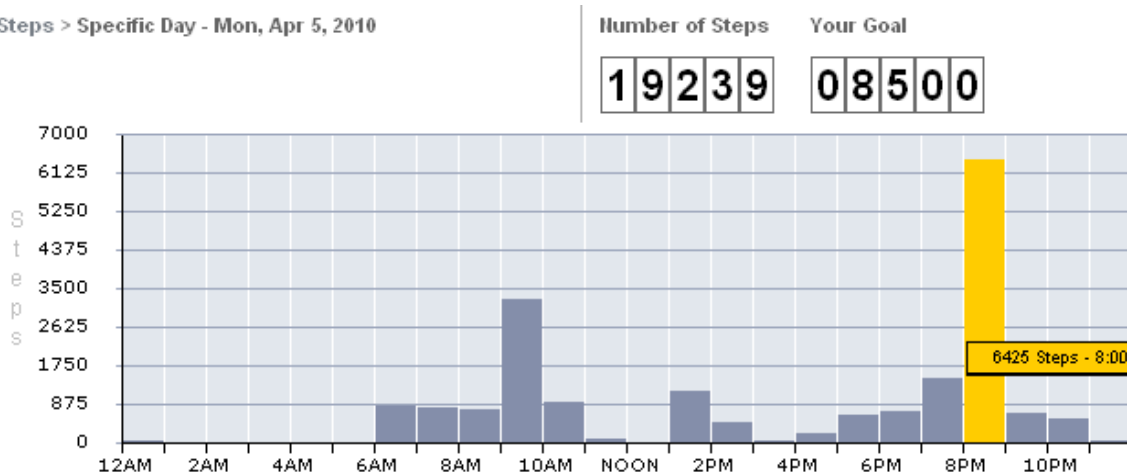
### Disclosure:

Special thanks to the folks at 24 hour fitness for allowing me to test drive a bodybugg.

### My Testing Environment

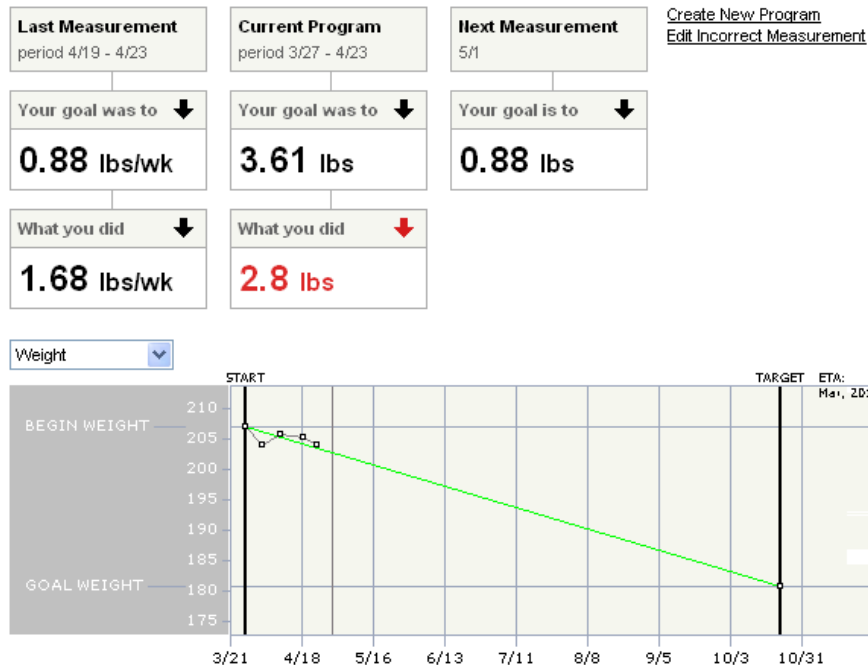
So I've been wearing the bodybugg for a month. Two of those weeks I was on the road, and one of those was playing catch up after being on the road. The first week I had it, I was excited and set some personal bests by walking 19,000+ steps in one day. I was losing weight. Then I went on the road, and finding healthy foods, with normal portions became a challenge. If you're new to the story, the bodybugg system consists of an arm band that has multiple sensors that measures your movement, temperature, sweat and more to make it 90% accurate at determining how many calories you burn. There is also an optional digital display that then shows you live feedback from your arm band. For me, I was all about the digital display. It was quite motivating.

Steps > Specific Day - Mon, Apr 5, 2010



So here are some points and final commentary of my trial of the bodybugg.

It definitely helps to motivate me. For my trial, I was wearing the arm band with the digital display. The digital display reminds me to move more. One night after dinner, I plugged in the USB cable and uploaded my information from the arm band to see I had a 300 calorie SUPRPLUS (so off to the gym I went). I didn't get to my 500 calorie deficit for the day, but I burned off my surplus. One point I want to make is this; you still have to move. The bodybugg does not melt the fat off for you. You still have to eat less, or exercise more (or both). The key is you are now more educated specifically about how YOUR body reacts. If you know how many calories you've burned, you know how many calories you can eat.



At first I wasn't convinced of the arm band's accuracy. I am also not convinced of MY skills in guessing portion sizes (reports show that many people underestimate their food intake by 20%). While I was pumped up when I first got the system (which lead to my 3 lb. weight loss), when I got home the "novelty" (and my energy level) had started to wear. I was tired from the road. I was still committed, but "mailed in" a few too many workouts (and also started concentrating on weight lifting more than cardio). I was also eating too much. How did I know this? My bodybugg software showed it to me in plain English.

I had to turn things around (and did if you look at the graph above). Last night I made a graph showing my progress over the last month. Sure enough, I had a deficit of around 500 calories a day (which was my goal). While this means I'm headed in the right direction, the reasons why the scale hasn't recently moved much were now obvious. If you take the 500 calorie deficit and multiply it over 30 days that's a 4.29 pound weight loss (and I'm down about 3). To this inaccuracy I blame my food tracking. Just this week I found that I was eating closer to 2.5 cups of cereal in the morning (instead of the report 2). These little differences add up to big differences over time. For example that extra half a cup of cereal over a month is 2550 calories.

## Hardware



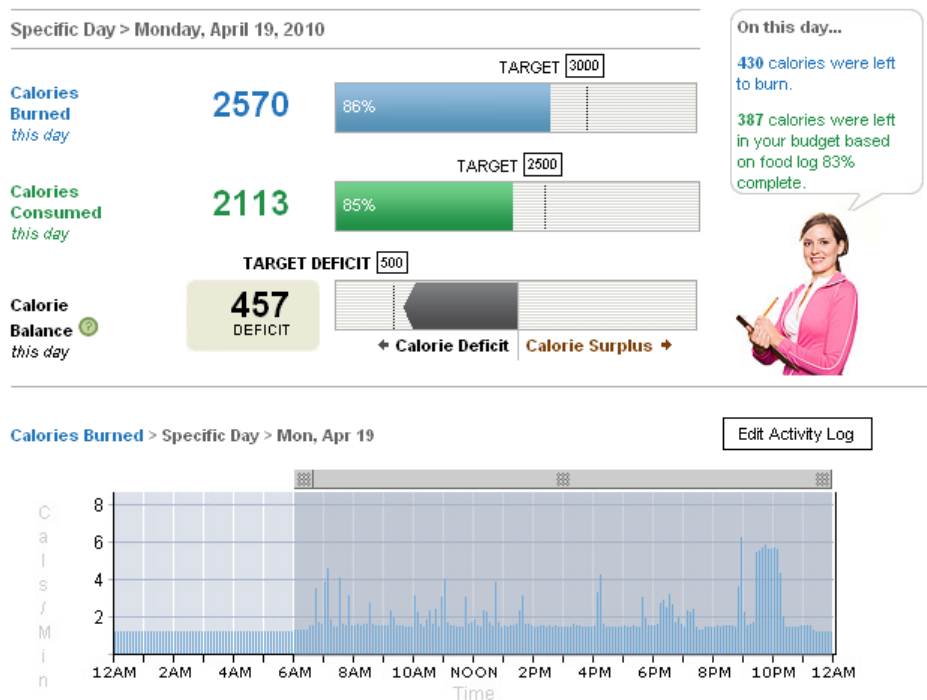
The arm band has a great battery life. I only charged it while I was in the shower. I never saw the battery level go down (specs show it lasting about 4-5 days without a charge). I barely notice that I'm wearing it. When I wear the digital display, it just takes one press of a button to sync the display to the arm band. It was very easy.



The digital display is great. I wore it as a watch. It's very tall as a watch and some times interfered with my sleeves. I could've strapped it to my clothes if I wanted (it's very easy to take off the strap and swap out). One day I just put it in my pocket. All in all the hardware is fine. It doesn't intrude with my wardrobe (even short sleeves), it causes no discomfort, and it's easy to read.

## Software

To get the full effect of the armband, you have to upload the data to the bodybugg website (which requires a subscription starting as low as \$7/month). This shows how many calories you've burned. You then enter the food you've eaten and it shows either a surplus (gaining weight) or a deficit (you lost weight). The software is "ok." By this I mean it's not as pretty as some other websites I've tried, but it's just as functional (and has a good search feature – so it's just as easy). You can easily create custom foods in a matter of seconds. Are there better systems and databases of foods? Yes. Are there worse? Yes. Is it Ugly? No. Is it pretty? Almost. Was it easy to use? Yes. The software gets the job done, and you can track your food in minutes. Ease of use and functionality are more important to me than how it looks.



I read on the bodybugg message boards where people occasionally had issues uploading their data. I did run into this on an "every other day-ish" basis, but I would simply click the "try again" button and it would work. Uploading your data takes about 1 minute. So on the worst occasion where I had to click the "try again" button twice times it "wasted" three minutes. I got a tip that using Internet Explorer works better (I use Firefox) and

when I tried that it seemed to go a bit smoother (again, it wasn't too rough in the first place).

As the system is web based, I could easily add my food during the day at my job, and then after dinner I would finish up at home. If I had an iPod, (which I don't) I could browse their website and enter the food on the run. But wait....

Then it happened. When I went to their website on my droid phone, it became an application to let me enter my food. This was a complete game changer. I loved the ability to do this on other websites, and now I had that same power using the bodybugg website. I am WAY more accurate entering my food when I can use my phone.

### **Pros of the Bodybugg System:**

I am now equipped to make better decisions, as I know how many calories I'm burning.

I barely notice I'm wearing the arm band. For me, another bonus is the arm band never falls off. The display stays on my wrist. I have damaged pedometers in the past as the clips don't work and they fall off. I've lost pedometers as they fall off and I don't hear them hit the ground (like when you're on a hike). With the bodybugg, I put the arm band on, and forget about it. The only worry I had was when I was biking and it started to rain (it's not water proof). It was already under my clothes, and I made sure it didn't peak out, and it was fine.

The battery life is great. I never worried about running out of juice, or memory. There are no batteries in the arm band to replace, and the display uses a replaceable watch battery. This was great when I was on the road and wasn't always uploading my data as frequently.

Even with the occasional error, uploading the data was a piece of cake. I had to upgrade my java when I first got it (requiring a few clicks and a reboot), but in the end once all the software is loaded, it's a breeze. If you get an error, click "try again."

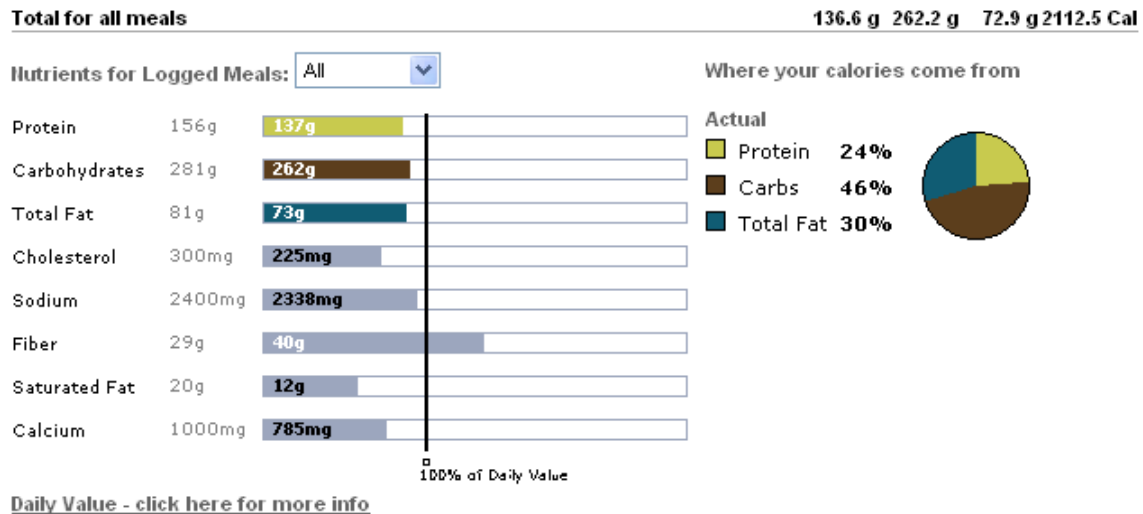
The ability to enter my food on my droid (or iphone) adds so much power to the system. The arm band can hold up to 14 days of data. If I can't get back to a computer I can store that data for two weeks, and then upload once.

The manual for the hardware was good. They have tutorials online for the software. The online manual for the software was good. With the ease of use, I didn't really need it. You can pretty much get the hang of the software by just clicking around. The software on my phone was just as easy (and pretty!).

The online support forum was active and helpful (more on this as a con). For example, in theory you are only supposed to weigh yourself once a week (but folks on the forum alerted me how to get around this).

The support staff (you get a free coaching session), was great, knowledgeable, and friendly.

I can easily get a graph showing the break down of the carbohydrates, fat, protein of my diet.



### Cons:

I would like it to track more detail on the food. For example if you enter a custom food, it doesn't track the amount of sugar. As my mother was a diabetic, I'm always watching my sugar. I would like to add any values listed on a food label. I also would like the ability to report on how much water I'm consuming. I'm assuming their direction is geared towards the "Calories in vs Calories Out" mentality.

You have the ability (if you have the optional digital display) to have it alert you when you reach a goal (like steps taken, activity, calories burned). I loved this feature (as who wouldn't love a digital pat on the back). There is no way to have these alerts show up on the display without an audio alert. This was very inappropriate on Easter Sunday Morning. I have since changed my settings so they never go off now.

They have a fairly active message board on their site (as mentioned above as a pro). The software they use to run this forum is outdated in my opinion. There is no ability to search, or edit a post you make. Keep in mind, the message board is more of a support function (and does not change the function of the hardware or software). Yes, I know I'm being picky now.

### Summary

Yes I know there is no heart rate monitor. But I can see when I'm burning between 9-11 calories a minute (and know I'm pushing my body at a good level). In the end I'm more interested in how many calories I'm burning. Yes, I know the bodybugg is more expensive than a pedometer. Yes, I know it requires a monthly subscription to their

website to use. It's free for 6 months (after initial 6 months the online subscription renewal fees are: \$9.95 for month to month, \$49.95 for 6 months or \$79.95 for 12 months). To me this is money well spent. To this I ask, "How much is the blood pressure medicine that I won't need because I'm exercising? It is showing me in black and white (and more specifically in color graphs) why I am (or am not) losing weight. How I move forward to achieve my goal is up to me. As I said before the bodybugg does not do the work for you, it only reports on the work you do (or not do). As I write this it is 5:30 PM, and according to my bodybugg I've been active for 24 minutes out of the 600 minutes I've been awake (boo!). I've burned 1732 calories and I've consumed 1334 calories (so I have a deficit - but dinner is on the horizon). It is allowing me to make better, more informed choices (and yes I will be hitting the gym tonight if I'm going to reach my 500 calorie deficit goal).

I can't comment on their technical support as I never needed it.

The system is easy to use, and as a motivational tool it is the best I've used to date. With the addition of the free application for my smart phone, it becomes (for me) a "no brainer." I can easily track my food, and the armband ACCURATELY measures my activity. In the same way that a starter home is something that is affordable and it gets your toe in the "home owner" pool, a pedometer or a heart rate monitor are "starter" systems. A heart rate monitor does not tell the calories I burn at my desk (unless I want to wear the uncomfortable chest strap all day – which I've done and had the scrapes to prove it). A pedometer can measure steps, but those steps could be jogging or walking and it doesn't know the difference. A pedometer doesn't track how many calories you burn while you're riding a bike. The bodybugg does all of the above.

For more information on the bodybugg, go to <http://www.logicalloss.com/bodybugg>