

Turning Ideas into Reality

Spend more than an hour with Emily and you'll likely hear her say, "I have an idea." The American University undergraduate is a certified personal trainer and self-proclaimed entrepreneur determined to change how Americans think about health. When Emily heard about the [Big Idea Competition](#), part of [Global Entrepreneurship Week](#) in the Kogod School of Business, she knew this was a chance to turn her ideas into reality.

As a personal trainer at Cassell Fitness Center on campus, Emily sees the confusion that some people experience when going to the gym for the first time. Her latest idea is for a smartphone application that would keep track of the intensity levels of someone's workout. The app would alert the individual when they've reached a recommended amount of exercise at a certain intensity level, depending on their personal health factors. Emily's studies as a health promotion major in the College of Arts and Sciences have helped her to develop the science behind making the app successful. Through classes such as exercise physiology and her own personal research, she has learned that shorter, higher intensity workouts are more beneficial than longer, lower intensity workouts. "I recommend that my clients get 150 minutes of exercise per week," Emily said. "Few people realize this number can actually be reduced if they're engaging in more strenuous workouts. My app would especially help people with busy schedules, like college students, who want to work out but also want to be efficient about their time in the gym." Emily's app seeks to take the guesswork out of exercising and ensures people are getting the most out of their time spent working out. Users can input their health information and receive personalized workout recommendations. It's like having a personal trainer right in your pocket, without the hassle of scheduling appointments or large costs.

[The American Entrepreneurship Incubator](#), a network of aspiring entrepreneurs on campus, sponsors the Big Idea Competition. Faculty in the entrepreneurship division of the Kogod School of Business judge the projects, with the best receiving prize money to make their ideas into reality. Professor William Bellows, who teaches Entrepreneurship and Innovation, in which Emily is enrolled, is involved with the competition. "I highly encouraged Emily to pitch an idea for the competition," Professor Bellows said. "Her passion for health and technology shows through every week in class."

It hasn't been easy for Emily to juggle a full load of courses, an internship and personal training sessions, while also trying to develop her application. Although she has extensive training in the fitness and exercise aspect of her app, the technology side of her project has required her to do a lot of outside research. She's currently teaching herself how to develop websites through programs like Code Academy and plans to audit a computer science course during the spring semester. She will graduate in December and plans to dedicate most of her time starting in January to developing her idea. Emily realizes that being an entrepreneur is tough, but is ready for the challenge. "I'm motivated by the fact that my application could really impact the lives of people who want to take control of their health," she said. "I'm ready to do whatever it takes to make people happier and healthier."