

Older Americans Drive Growth of Wearables

In 2019, 1 in 5 internet users will use a wearable device

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eMarketer Editors

If you're still looking for a holiday gift for a parent or grandparent, a wearable device could be well-received. Americans 55 and older are the fastest-growing group of electronic wearable users in the US, according to eMarketer's latest wearables forecast, largely due to the devices' enhanced health features.

In 2019, 8.2 million Americans age 55 and older will use a wearable device, up more than 15% over this year. While the group still represents a small share of users, it has the highest growth rate among all age groups. In fact, eMarketer has increased its projections for older Americans due to faster-than-expected adoption of wearable devices.

Wearable Users, by Age

US, 2019

Millions

0-11

1.1

12-17

2.7

18-24

9.3

25-34

17.0

35-44

14.0

45-54

8.2

55-64

4.9

65+

3.3

Source: eMarketer, November 2018

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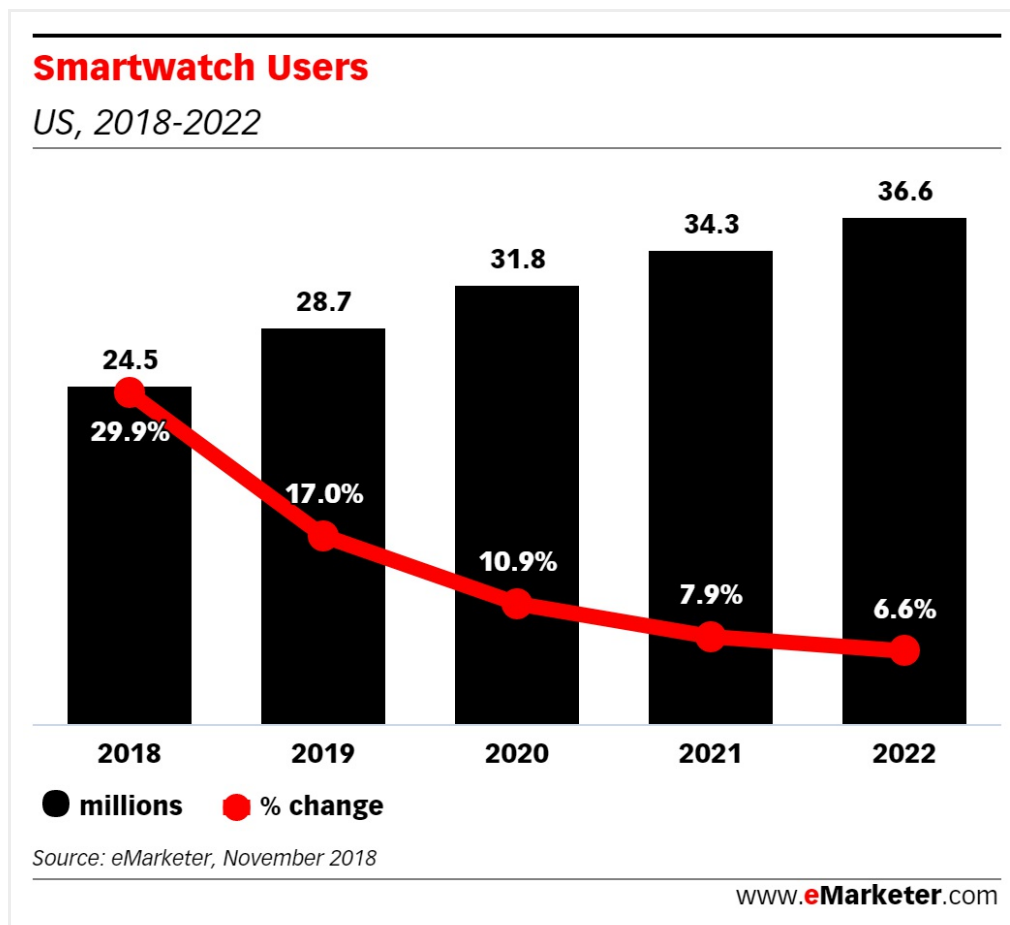
“Wearables like smartwatches are now coming equipped with additional health features, which are especially appealing to older Americans,” said eMarketer forecasting analyst Cindy Liu. “The Apple Watch Series 4 is outfitted with some major enhancements, including ECG [electrocardiography] readings and fall-detection features.”

In 2019, 60.5 million people total will use a wearable device in the US, up 9.2% over this year. While wearables are still far from mainstream, usage will reach a milestone next year—more than one in five (21.2%) internet users will use a wearable device.

SMARTWATCHES

Smartwatches are a key driver of wearable usage. Next year, just over

half of wearable users age 18 and older will use a smartwatch, translating to 28.7 million adults. Also next year, 11.1% of all US adults will be a smartwatch user.



“Continuous improvements in design and functionality are key drivers of smartwatch adoption,” Liu said. “Specifically, LTE connectivity will be a huge driver, as it allows smartwatch users to stay connected while leaving their phones behind. Other improvements, like longer battery life, larger screens and new health features, will be sure to attract new users.”