

Apple Watch Series 7: New model with larger, more durable display—time for an upgrade?

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Apple's newest smartwatch, the Apple Watch Series 7, hits stores on Friday with a larger display and a pair of exclusive new watch faces to choose from.

The iPhone maker and tech giant unveiled the latest watch last month—along with the iPhone 13—and has been shipping units to customers who could place preorders as of Oct. 8. The Series 7 starts at \$399 for the 41mm-sized model and \$429 for the 45mm model.

The displays on Apple's newest watches have 20% more screen area and are 40% thinner than the previous model, the Series 6. For techies, that means easier to use apps on the watch. For those just looking for the basics, a slightly bigger display means punchier pictures and text. Whether these improvements are enough to make the Series 7 smartwatch a must-have for you depends on your needs.

What's new with Apple Watch?

The new Retina display on the Apple Watch Series 7 is the major upgrade this time around. The display's border is also 40% thinner than on the Series 6, allowing your watch face or app to encompass that space. Apple boasts that the display is also 70% brighter indoors than its previous model, making it easier to read.

With a larger display, I found the password function's slightly larger keys easier to tap accurately. In the gym and on walks, I could more easily read the various data displayed: calories, heart rate, distance.

Some new watch faces make use of this additional real estate: the Modular Duo face, a one-stop data hub which can include time and other readouts such as temperature, weather forecast, market trends, your activity, and heart rate; and the Contour face, with numbers pushed to the edge of the display—the appropriate hour grows as it approaches.

In addition to those two Series 7 exclusive watch faces, there's a new World Time face, for all watches capable of running watchOS showing all the 24 time zones and other information you can customize.

The latest watch is tougher, too, Apple says, with a front crystal that's 50% thicker at its peak for better resistance to cracks, and is the first to be certified at the highest level of dust resistance. The watch is also rated for water resistance to 50 meters.

The new model comes with a fast charge USB-C cable, which charges the Series 7 watch 33% faster than the previous model. Series 7 touts its all-day battery, which holds a charge for 18 hours. Should you want to wear the watch while you sleep, you can charge it for eight minutes before you lie down

to get you through the night.

You can choose from five new colors—midnight, starlight, green, blue and red—if you are opting for the aluminum casing. Other colors including black, gold, graphite, silver and titanium can be had in the pricier stainless steel (\$699-up) and titanium models (\$799-up).

What else can Apple Watch Series 7 do?

The sensors—just as those in the Apple Watch Series 6—will track your [heart rate](#) and blood oxygen levels, as well as take an electrocardiogram, which measures heart activity and can indicate whether you might have a low, high or irregular heart rhythm. Wondering if you are getting enough sleep? The watch will track that, too, along with other measurements as you slumber.

You can now use a full keyboard on the Apple Watch, too. Despite the girth of my fingers, I could tap letters or use QuickPath to slide along the keyboard—it was very accurate, but I wouldn't want to do a lot of communicating that way. Also available, a new Scribble screen so you can draw letters for your text.

The watch also can detect if you have fallen thanks to its built-in accelerometer and gyroscope (fall detection is turned on automatically in users 55 or older). Should you fall, the watch will give you a one-touch option to call an ambulance. If you have fallen and don't move for 60 seconds, an emergency call will be made automatically and your emergency contacts are notified.

With last month's release of Watch OS 8 (available for Apple Watch Series 3 and later), fall detection for cyclists and exercisers has been added, too.

Do you need the new Series 7 Watch?

As someone who hadn't worn a watch for decades until recently, I've come around on smartwatches. You don't have to pull out your phone to see what time it is, or to read a text to take a call, for that matter, with one like the Series 7 on your wrist. And the Apple Watch is so light—less than 1.5 ounces in

the case of the 45mm aluminum case model—you can almost forget it's there.

If fitness is a big part of your life, a smartwatch can help with that, too, tracking heart rates, distances and times for your workouts. And Apple continues to build out its Fitness+ service, which incorporates the watch into your activities (you get a free three-month subscription with the purchase of any new Apple Watch Series 3 or higher; \$9.99 monthly after that).

The watch might be a good option if you have a family member with a risk of falling. An Apple Watch with a cellular subscription—or near the owner's iPhone or set up for Wi-Fi calls—can make emergency calls.

However, if you own an Apple Watch released in the last three years—and are happy with it—there's no pressure to upgrade now. (For the health features such as blood oxygen, ECG and fall detection, you need an Apple Watch Series 4, released in 2018, or newer.)

But if a new, larger display piques your interest, by all means consider it.

Smartwatches make up more of Apple's pie

Apple Watch has helped drive the company's wearables, home and accessories category revenue up 30% over the past nine months (for the period ending June 27, 2021), to \$29.6 billion, behind iPhone sales (up 37% to \$153.1 billion) and services (up 27.8% to \$50.1 billion).

Apple holds nearly a 53% market share of global smartwatch market, and in the second quarter of 2021 shipped 46% more units (9.5 million) than the same period a year ago, while Samsung has 11%, and Garmin about 8%, according to Strategy Analytics.

Now through the holiday season, Apple Watch Series 7 will likely be the best seller, says Neil Mawston, executive director for the research firm's global wireless practice. "A bigger screen, faster charging, more durable body, new case colors, and new wellness apps will make Apple Watch 7 a

compelling Xmas gift for many," he said.

But if you really want one, better order as soon as you can, Mawston said. "Component shortages, electricity shortages, shipping bottlenecks, and the specter of unforeseen COVID variants could make production of Watch 7 and other models uncertain or patchy at times," he said. "You may want to buy a new Watch this winter, but getting delivery of it could sometimes be harder than expected."

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