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Hands-on with the GoPro Hero 3+ Black Edition

Published Feb 20, 2014 | [Mike Perlman](#)

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GoPro Hero 3+ Black Edition
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GoPro's latest fleet of little action bricks are fortified with several advanced features that cannot be found elsewhere in the market. The [GoPro Hero 3+ Black Edition](#) (\$399.99) is the newest flagship model, replacing the GoPro Hero 3 by adding some key upgrades. While the GoPro Hero 3+ Silver Edition (\$299.99) and Hero 3 White Edition (\$199.99) have both been upgraded, it's the Hero 3+ Black Edition that really showcases all the brand has to offer. Having owned the first HD Hero and Hero2, I wanted to know if the Black Edition was worth the extra cash, so I spent some quality time testing the camera in a variety of environments.

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What's new?

The GoPro Hero 3+ Black Edition shares many similarities with its predecessor, the Hero 3. Although the Hero 3+ may seem like an incremental upgrade, there are a number of subtle changes that make this action cam stand out. First off, it's 20% smaller and lighter than the first GoPro Hero and Hero2, measuring 2.30 x 1.55 x 0.08 inches (5.8 x 3.9 x 2 cm) and weighing 2.6 oz. (28g). Now while those physical stats remain identical to the Hero 3, the Hero 3+ ships with a smaller housing, with a streamlined lens covering without bolts, and devoid of the slide lock mechanisms. The resulting package is more compact and easier to access. The Hero 3+ also has slightly larger buttons.



A look at the slimmed-down housing. Do you miss the bolt accents around the lens?

GoPro also improved the lens of the Hero 3+, making it sharper and exhibit less artifacts. The microphone is improved to pick up on more subtle sounds and improve wind noise reduction. The Hero 3+ Black Edition's built-in Wi-Fi has also been boosted to 4x faster speeds with a greater range, and the battery life has been increased by 30%. The Hero 3+ Black Edition also introduces SuperView FOV, which is available in select capture resolutions. SuperView is the widest recording angle GoPro has offered to date (I have samples later on in the article). Auto Low Light is a new feature that cuts the frame rate in half when the camera detects lower light levels.

Versus its siblings

The GoPro Hero 3+ Black Edition carries over the same 4K video resolution from the Hero 3 Black, which is roughly four times the resolution of 1080 Full HD. 4K is where most televisions and programming are headed to, and GoPro placed themselves at the head of the game by incorporating the format into a wildly popular camera that is now smaller than it ever was. The Hero 3+ Black Edition also has a maximum still image resolution of 12MP and 30fps burst rate, which is beyond the 3+ Silver and 3 White's capabilities. The latter two are not capable of 4K video recording either. Keep in mind that the 12MP still-resolution is native, not interpolated, so it's a true representation of pixels.

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Fujifilm X-M5 sample gallery: proven image quality on a budget

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DJI's new dual-camera Air 3S drone gets a larger sensor and LiDAR

DJI has announced the [Air 3S](#), an update to its existing dual-camera [Air 3](#) mode. The Air 3S gains a larger Type 1 sensor on its main camera along with features that promise to make the drone easier to operate at night.

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And while all three new GoPros come with built-in Wi-Fi that's 4x faster, the Black Edition is the only model to ship with a Wi-Fi remote. However, I don't think that's a deal-breaker because the GoPro app is far more user-friendly and quick than the remote. Just the fact that Wi-Fi is finally built-in is a win. With the older models, I had to use the Wi-Fi back, which prevented me from using a battery back or LCD back if I wanted remote functionality.



The GoPro Hero 3+ Black Edition ships with the Wi-Fi remote. Here's a look at the whole lot.

The Black Edition does hold white balance adjustment, Protune and simultaneous photo+video recording above the 3+ Silver and 3 White editions as well. Protune is a setting that records videos with less compression and a more neutral color space to aid in the post production process. Just looking at specs alone, it's easy to see that the Black Edition really packs a punch.

In use

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Fujifilm 16-55mm F2.8 II pre-production sample gallery

Our Sample Gallery of Fujifilm's new, lighter weight XF 16-55mm F2.8 R LM WR II lens.

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 Nikon says future firmware will add Content Credentials to Z6III mirrorless camera

Nikon says future firmware will add Content Credentials to Z6III mirrorless camera

One of the announcements to sneak out of Adobe's annual MAX conference this week comes from Nikon, which announced that it is currently developing firmware to add content authenticity features to its Z6III mirrorless camera.

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DxO announces ViewPoint 5 upgraded with support for local adjustments and more

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 Fujifilm wraps up X Summit – teases two more cameras coming in 2025

Fujifilm wraps up X Summit – teases two more cameras coming in 2025

At its X Summit event today, Fujifilm not only launched new products, it introduced viewers to its CLAY design center, shared insights into its design and manufacturing, and teased two new camera models coming in 2025.

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 Fujifilm X-M5 Initial Review: a camera for the content age

Fujifilm X-M5 Initial Review: a camera for the content age

Fujifilm's X-M5 is an entry-level mirrorless APS-C camera with a strong focus on vlogging.

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Fujifilm announces more compact XF 16-55mm F2.8 R LM WR II

Fujifilm has updated its workhorse 16-55mm lens, making it substantially more compact than its full-frame counterparts.

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Fujifilm announces the XF 500mm F5.6

Fujifilm has a new super telephoto prime for bird and wildlife photography.



A look at the Wi-Fi button and side microphone. The Hero 3+ Black Edition is also the smallest and lightest GoPro yet.

Ergonomics

Since the GoPro Hero 3+ Black Edition is 20% smaller and lighter than the original GoPro Hero and Hero2, I was able to enjoy the minor benefits. I usually mount the GoPro to my motorcycle and hockey helmets, and the first two models make it easier to remember that they are strapped to the top of your head, thanks to their bulk. This is particularly evident while turning my head. While the Hero 3+ is not a prodigious reduction in bulk and size, it was definitely noticeable, and certainly more neck-friendly. The size reduction renders the Hero 3+ half the thickness of the first two models, but it retains the same height and width. The newly slimmed-down external housing on the Hero 3+ is the most compact and easiest to access housing yet. The latch mechanism is similar to the first GoPro models, requiring a simple flip lock to be engaged and disengaged to access the camera. The Hero 3 case has a convoluted series of slide lock buttons that made accessing the camera a royal pain. So, overall size and weight is very impressive compared to all previous models.



Notice the absence of the terminal cover? It surfaced after a long vacation on the floor somewhere.



The GoPro Hero 3+ is about 2/3 the thickness of the Hero2.

Now, this size reduction does come at a price. The Hero 3+ records to MicroSD cards, just like the Hero 3. I am not a huge fan of MicroSD cards because I lose things easily, and it's not fun to scour a dirt bike trail for an hour looking for a minute plastic chip. I also noticed the omission of the 3.5mm audio jack, which is something offered on the GoPro HD Hero2.

The GoPro Hero 3+ has only two terminals: USB and HDMI. Both terminals and the MicroSD card slot are covered by a rubberized flap that matches the cross-hatched texture bordering the camera. Unfortunately, the terminal cover is not tethered to the body of the camera, so it popped off and sailed across the room the first time I removed it. It resurfaced two weeks later while digging through some photography equipment. So, for the next model, GoPro needs to tether that thing.

Generative AI is arriving full force in Lightroom and Photoshop

Generative AI is arriving full force in Lightroom and Photoshop

Adobe has announced new generative AI-driven features for its photo-centered software, along with other improvements.

Oct 14, 2024 | 63

Adobe introduces AI-generated video, integrated into Premiere

Adobe introduces AI-generated video, integrated into Premiere

Adobe's Firefly AI can now generate video, and the company is putting to work in its video-editing software.

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The Blue Hour: Our favorite photos from the October Editors' Choice photo challenge

The Blue Hour: Our favorite photos from the October Editors' Choice photo challenge

In our October photo challenge, we asked you to show us the 'blue hour'. Once again, we were seriously impressed with the photos you entered. Here are our editors' favorites.

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Accessory Roundup: magnetic filters, colorful batteries, and Nikon binoculars

Accessory Roundup: magnetic filters, colorful batteries, and Nikon binoculars

This week we're looking at filters, batteries, binoculars, and more.

Oct 11, 2024 | 16

The best cameras around \$2000

What's the best camera for around \$2000? This price point gives you access to some of the most all-round capable cameras available. Excellent image quality, powerful autofocus and great looking video are the least you can expect. We've picked the models that really stand out.

Oct 10, 2024

Panasonic's new entry-level, compact kit lens: 18-40mm F4.5-6.3 Sample Gallery

Panasonic's new entry-level, compact kit lens: 18-40mm F4.5-6.3 Sample Gallery

See how Panasonic's new compact 18-40mm kit lens performs.

Oct 9, 2024 | 82 SAMPLE GALLERY

Astronaut shares photos and videos of ferocious Hurricane Milton from space

Astronaut shares photos and videos of ferocious Hurricane Milton from space

NASA astronaut and photographer Matthew Dominick shared his view of Hurricane Milton

Battery and Wi-Fi

Despite the slim down, GoPro managed to cram an 1180mAh battery inside the Hero 3+, and promised a longer battery life compared to the Hero 3. I put this to the test by recording continuously at 1080p/24fps until the battery died. The GoPro Hero 3+ lasted a full 2 hours and 14 minutes. After researching many accounts of battery life on the Hero 3, my understanding is that it usually croaks at around 1 hour 35 minutes, so the Hero 3+ is a bit of an improvement as far as battery life goes. Of course, when using the Wi-Fi functionality, the Hero 3+ exhibits rather limited battery life. After using the Hero 3+ tethered to the GoPro application on my iPhone, I was down a battery bar after a half hour.



The GoPro Hero 3+ packs in longer battery life.

Another area of improvement is Wi-Fi range and speed. GoPro claims a Wi-Fi range of up to 600 feet with the included Wi-Fi remote and a more limited range with the GoPro application. I got about 145 feet of Wi-Fi range using the GoPro application, but did not test the full range of the remote. However, in my experience, I never lost connection with the Wi-Fi remote, and I have not found an application yet where I would need to be two football fields away from the action. Regardless, the Wi-Fi connection was strong and did not falter. I could keep my phone in my pocket while using the GoPro and it remained connected. Setting up is a snap as well, as the Hero 3+ only emits its own Wi-Fi network that is easily joined by a smart device in a matter of seconds.

through the window of the Crew Dragon Endeavour spacecraft, including a timelapse video showing what it's like to pass directly over the storm.

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Wildlife Photographer of the Year winners showcase wonders of our natural world

The Natural History Museum, London, has announced the winners of its prestigious Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition. Here are our favorite winning images.

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 Panasonic's updating its app and firmware for the S5II/X, G9II and S9 with big improvements

Panasonic's updating its app and firmware for the S5II/X, G9II and S9 with big improvements

The Lumix S9 is now a more powerful video camera and the Lumix Lab app is way more useful.

Oct 8, 2024 | 30

 Panasonic announces 18-40mm F4.5-6.3, the S9's new kit lens

Panasonic announces 18-40mm F4.5-6.3, the S9's new kit lens

Alongside the new bundled lens, there are two new colors of the company's creator-focused camera.

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 Amazon Prime Day: Deals on Gold and Silver award-winning cameras

Amazon Prime Day: Deals on Gold and Silver award-winning cameras

Looking to buy a camera? Here's a list of Gold and Silver award-winning cameras that are on sale right now.

Oct 8, 2024 | 33

 Accessory Roundup: the Nikon museum, a digital picture frame, and more

Accessory Roundup: the Nikon museum, a digital picture frame, and more

For this week's accessory roundup, we're taking a look at lights, camera, a museum, and more.

Oct 6, 2024 | 14

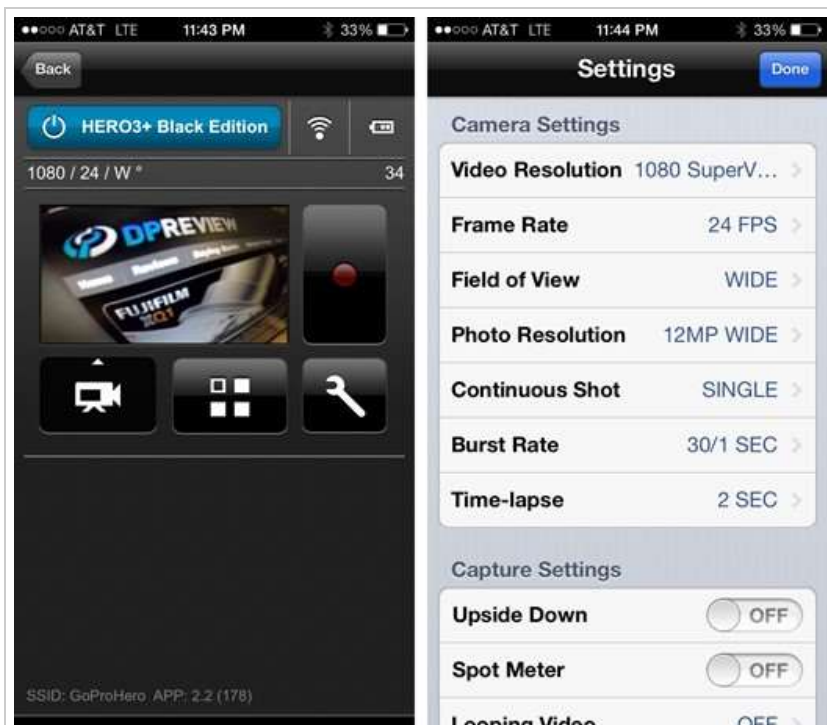
 Nikon Z6III Production Sample Gallery **Nikon Z6III**

Production Sample Gallery

See how Nikon's latest enthusiast full-frame camera performs.

Oct 5, 2024 | 52 SAMPLE GALLERY

 The Sitina S1: How a determined DIY photographer built his own full-frame camera (and open-sourced the project)



The GoPro application makes life much easier.

The choice between the GoPro application and the Wi-Fi remote was a no-brainer for me. While the remote has its advantages in the range and battery life department (you can save your phone's juice), the GoPro application is just too pleasant to use, especially after enduring years of clunky GoPro menu systems on a monochromatic LCD screen smaller than a postage stamp.

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With the GoPro application, I could make nearly every camera setting with a tap. The GoPro application also gave me a live preview of the camera, so I knew exactly how to set the angle for maximum coverage. One caveat is that the live preview is only available in select capture modes, so gigantic resolutions like 4K are not possible to preview. I could also watch what I shot on my phone, power the camera on and off, and start and stop recording, all from my iPhone. Other useful features like battery level status, SD card capacity, camera locator (prompts GoPro to beep if lost), were welcome additions, and I decided the GoPro application would be accompanying me on all of my adventures. Of course, I'll need a backup battery pack for the GoPro and charging stick for my phone in order to make it through a full day.

Microphone

The improved microphone on the GoPro Hero 3+ is twofold. First, its overall pickup quality is said to be improved, with heightened sensitivity to delicate sounds and nuance. Secondly, the wind noise reduction is apparently improved. The latter is a big one, as there's nothing more vexing than sifting through hours of motorcycle footage with the deafening shrill of wind prompting you to reach for another aspirin. I've always wanted more engine sound, less wind noise.

My first test was general audio quality. What could be better than pounding on the drums? I tested the GoPro Hero 3+ with it mounted to my head in the case, and then again sitting stationary removed from its case. What I found was that in or out of the case, the GoPro Hero 3+ had some difficulty with bass, primarily during a thunderous cacophony. However, treble sounds like cymbals and snare hits were crisp and clear, particularly with the Hero 3+ outside of its case. On the in/out of the case debate, I found the sound to be a bit crisper when the Hero 3+ was removed from the case, but it was not a huge difference. So yes - small nuance sound pickup was impressive, but bass was a tad muffled. Now if only the Hero 3+ had that 3.5mm audio jack for attaching external mics.

The Sitina S1: How a determined DIY photographer built his own full-frame camera (and open-sourced the project)

Engineer Wenting Zhang endeavored to build his own full-frame camera, spending years creating the Sitina S1 and open-sourcing the entire project. Find out what it takes to design and build a digital camera from the ground up.

Oct 4, 2024 | 89

 Fujifilm says X-H2/S and GFX 100 II will get AF improvements and new F-Log2 C mode

Fujifilm says X-H2/S and GFX 100 II will get AF improvements and new F-Log2 C mode

The company says an upcoming firmware update will improve subject tracking stability in video, and add a new F-Log2 mode and timecode support for specific devices.

Oct 3, 2024 | 94

 Fujifilm is holding another X Summit on October 14th

Fujifilm is holding another X Summit on October 14th

Fujifilm is holding another event this year on October 14th. The company has previously used the events to announce new products.

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 Nikon Z6III review: all-round ability puts Nikon into top tier

Nikon Z6III review: all-round ability puts Nikon into top tier

A faster sensor, improved autofocus and video see Nikon's third-gen mid-range full-framer go toe-to-toe against Canon's EOS R6 II and the Sony a7 IV. We feel its all-round ability lifts it to the top of the pile.

Oct 3, 2024 | 1149 REVIEW

 Nikon announces collaboration with USC Film School to connect with future Hollywood filmmakers

Nikon announces collaboration with USC Film School to connect with future Hollywood filmmakers

Nikon has announced a deal to provide the prestigious University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts, which has close ties to the Hollywood film industry, with Red and Nikon cameras and lenses.

Oct 3, 2024 | 21

 Sony ZV-E10 II in-depth review **Sony ZV-E10 II in-depth review**

The ZV-E10 II is a capable vlogging camera, with some notable limitations.

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Dp Review Hero 3+ Mic Tests



My second test was of the wind reduction. I found a rare 45 degree window in this unrelenting New England winter and took my newly rebuilt dirt bike for a spin with the GoPro mounted to the Chesty harness. Now this was a noticeable improvement. At around 45-50 MPH amidst cold, thick air, the only audible wind noise was more of an intermittent lower toned muffling. Gone was the whistling, shrill wail-from-hell. At lower speeds, the wind noise was barely audible, and the Hero 3+ really picked up on the ring-da-ding of the two-stroke engine (which is still being broken in and sounds extra rough). I didn't have a chance to exceed 50 MPH, and I'm really interested to see how the Hero 3+ fares at over 100 MPH on my street bike. But based on the improvement at lower speeds alone, I can project improved wind-reduction ability.

To learn about the Hero 3+ Black Edition's image quality and our final conclusion, use the arrows or table of contents below.

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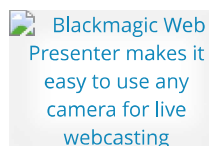
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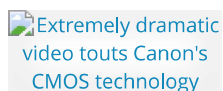
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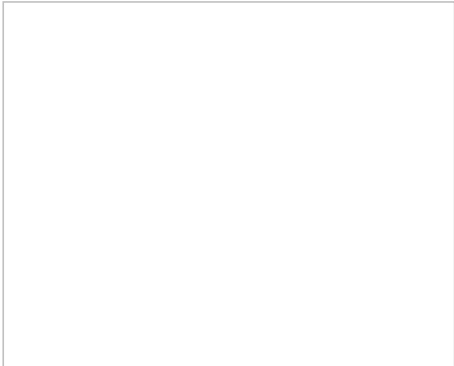


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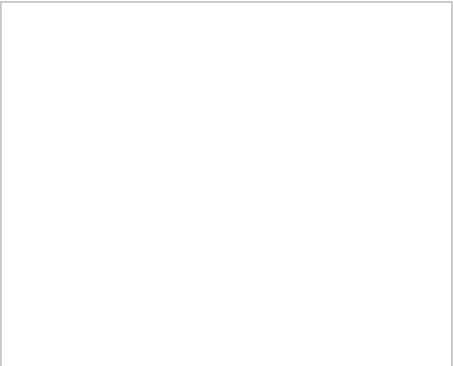


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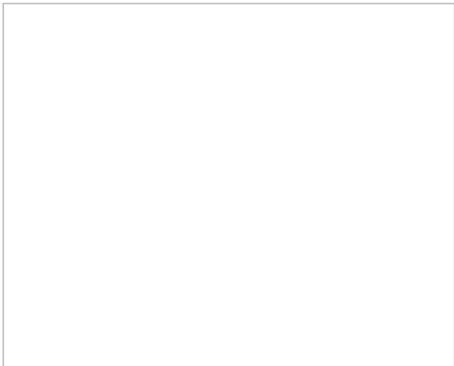
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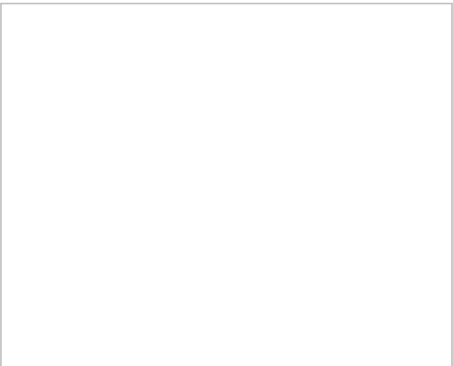
Fujifilm XF 16-55mm F2.8 R LM WR II pre-production sample gallery



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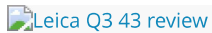
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The ZV-E10 II is a capable vlogging camera, with some notable limitations.



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462

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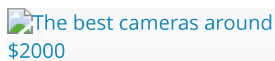
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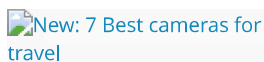
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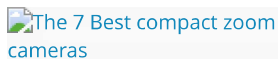
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6 Best high-end cameras

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