

REVIEW

Oura Ring review: love the feature changes, hate the new subscription



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REVIEW RATING

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We're taking a second look at the Oura Ring, a fitness tracker packed into a discreet piece of jewelry, to see how the third generation compares to its predecessors.

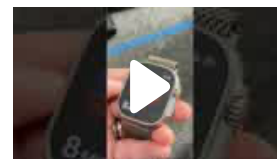
Like many people, I got the [Apple Watch](#) because I was excited to use it to track and record health-related data. And, when it comes to collecting health data, the Apple Watch is king — with a caveat.

As much as I love the idea of the Apple Watch, it isn't an excellent fit for me. For one, adding a screen that is physically attached to me can be a huge distraction. I feel compelled to check it obsessively, even if I've turned off all notifications.

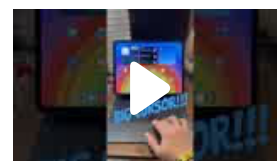
There's also the comfort issue. I write for a living, meaning my wrists spend a fair amount of time on the desk under my keyboard. For whatever reason, this leads to nearly any Apple Watch band pinching the skin of my wrist almost constantly.

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Then, the pinching leads to an eventual bruise that grows until I take a break from the Apple Watch. So, between the bruising and the constant distractions, I wound up trading in my Apple Watch for store credit.

Still, I wanted another way to track my health data. I wanted something I could constantly wear to get as much data about my health as possible.

Enter the [Oura Ring](#).

You may have remembered that [we've talked about the Oura Ring before](#). However, Oura Ring has undergone a few iterations since our first review.

It's equipped with new sensors, comes in a new style, and has a completely revamped app. So we decided to revisit Oura Ring, now in its third generation.

Design, sizing, and comfort

Whenever you order an Oura Ring, you'll have the option first to receive a sizing kit that allows you to find the perfect size ring for you. I highly suggest you take them up on this offer, as the Oura Ring fits slightly differently than a typical ring.

The sizing kit contains eight different-sized plastic Oura Ring stand-ins. Unfortunately, they are available in whole sizes only, so it may take some trial and error to find out what finger Oura Ring works best on.

Oura suggests using your index finger for best results but says using your middle or ring fingers is okay.

It's also essential to wear your plastic sizing ring for a while, as your fingers will

change sizes throughout the day.



The pill-shaped dimple helps you keep the ring properly aligned

When it comes time to choose your Oura Ring, you can pick from two styles: Horizon or Heritage.

Heritage is the classic Oura Ring design, which features a flattened design at the top of the ring, which helps you ensure the sensors are in the correct area. Heritage is available in Silver, Black, Stealth, and Gold, and pricing starts at \$299.

Horizon is more traditional with a uniform design, with a small pill-shaped dimple on the underside of the ring. The dimple ensures that you've got the sensors properly

aligned to your finger.

Horizon is available in Silver, Black, Stealth, Gold, and Rose Gold, and pricing starts at \$349.

The Oura Ring is made of titanium, making it both durable and incredibly light. In addition, it's water resistant up to 100 meters, so you can wear it in the shower or pool if you so choose.

Oura does warn against wearing the ring while doing anything that would repeatedly knock it around — such as handling heavy pots and pans. — or you could lead to some surface scratching.

I knock my hands against things regularly, so my ring has a couple of scratches. However, this is true for any jewelry I wear; honestly, the Oura Ring has fared better than most.



The sensors in the Oura Ring

As far as comfort goes, it's not *uncomfortable*, though it takes a little getting used to. The sensors are a little noticeable at first, but like with all jewelry, eventually, you stop noticing them.

The only downside I've personally experienced is that the Oura Ring can be difficult to wear during workouts. I consistently scored low on the activity rating because I found it impossible to wear the Oura Ring while weight training or using resistance bands.

And, because it's still winter where I live, I'm walking less than usual. So, obviously, your mileage will vary.

Charging and battery life

The Oura Ring is charged via a proprietary charger, which correlates to your ring's size. This isn't great news if you routinely lose chargers, as you'll have to order a replacement at \$58 a pop.

The good news is that the Oura Ring can last up to 7 days on a single charge, meaning you don't need to worry about packing — and subsequently forgetting — your charger for a long weekend trip.

Battery life is determined primarily by whether or not you enable the blood oxygen sensor and use the workout heart rate feature. If you use those, your battery life will decrease pretty significantly.

I left the blood oxygen sensor enabled, and I can manage about three and a half to four days before recharging my Oura Ring.

Charging takes a little over an hour if you fully run out the battery. However, Oura suggests you don't let the battery dip below 30%, as it will auto-disable the blood oxygen sensor to preserve battery life.

Oura app and tracked metrics

The Oura Ring tracks a few different things. It tracks your heart rate, blood oxygen level while sleeping, and movement. It also tracks your nightly body temperature,

which it uses for period prediction.

By using the metrics above, the Oura app gives you three main categories for you to look at over the course of a day.

The first is your overall readiness score. Your readiness score tells you how hard you can push yourself over the next day.

The second is your activity score, which tracks your overall activity for the day. You can choose to display this as either calorie burn or set steps.

Oura calculates your activity score by classifying your movements into regular and irregular movements and measuring your heart rate for each type.

Each category can be tapped, and you can view detailed information, such as past scores, insights, and explanations of how Oura calculates each score.

For me, the sleep category is the most interesting. The Oura app will tell you how much you've moved during the night, any breathing disturbances it's noticed, and your blood oxygen saturation while asleep.

This is a powerful tool if you've got a sleep disorder you're trying to control.

Bonus content

While I'm not the biggest fan of guided meditation, I realize many people are.

That's why Oura includes a selection of guided meditation exercises you can follow. This includes activities geared toward meditation and reflection, breathing, and even ones to help you drift off to sleep.

Good, but not perfect

Mostly, I'm pretty impressed with the Oura Ring's ability to keep track of the health metrics I care about. I wanted it to help me identify things that may be exacerbating existing sleep problems I have.

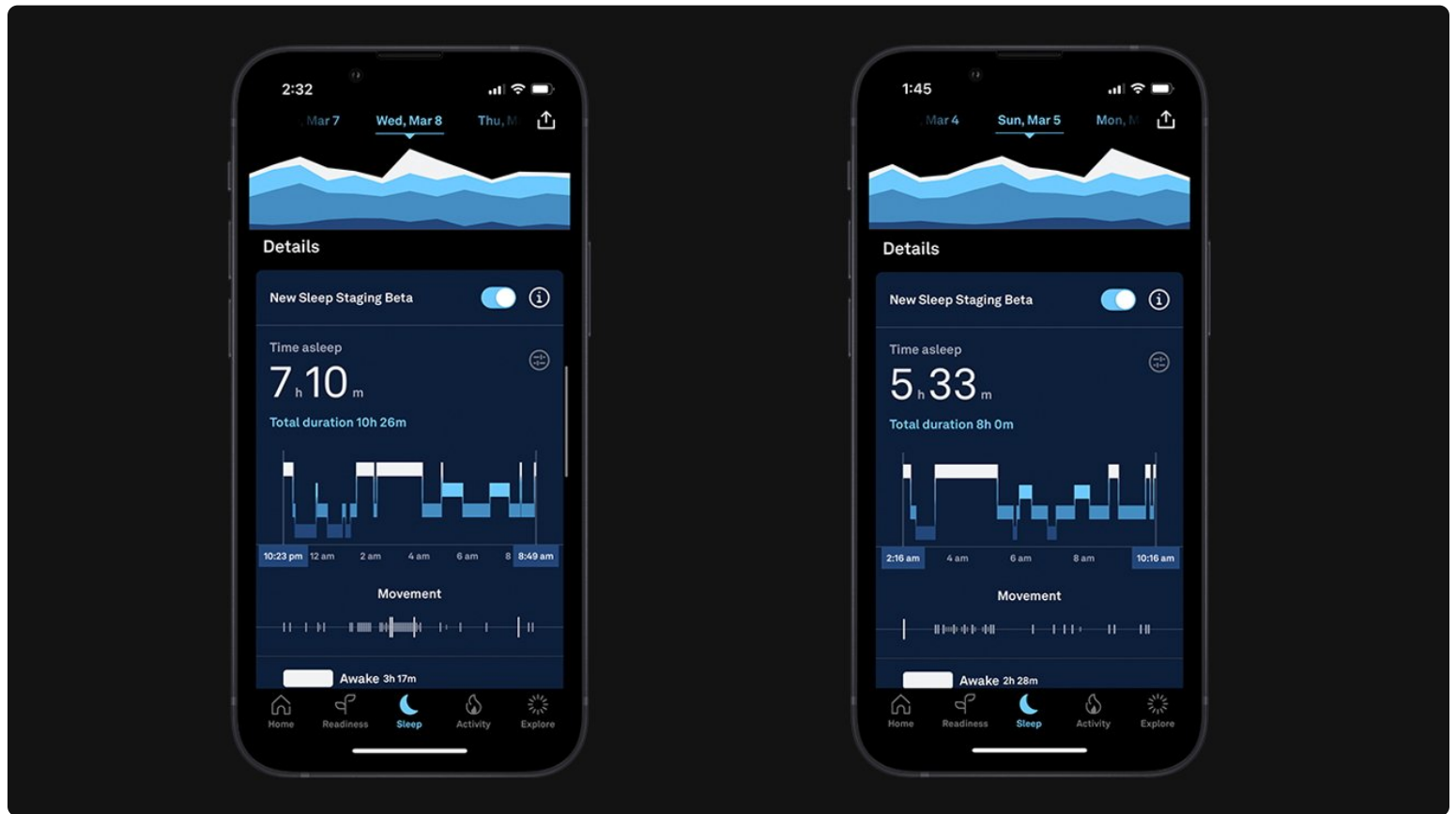
The activity data also seemed accurate when compared with a more traditional pedometer. Of course, there wasn't a 1-to-1 between the pedometer and the Oura Ring, as Oura doesn't detect "steps" in a conventional way.

Still, it seemed to know when I exerted myself running errands around town or moving heavy boxes up and down the stairs.

Really, the only flaw I found was that because I fall on the lower end of an average heart rate, the Oura Ring was keen to think I'd fallen asleep before I actually had.

I noticed this most often when sitting in bed, reading before sleeping. Sure enough, Oura would note that I'd fallen asleep about 10 minutes after I began reading, woke up when I put my book away, and then started tracking my sleep again once I laid down.

Other users have also reported this problem, with some claiming that the sleep metrics are entirely useless. I do not believe that this is true in my case.



Oura sleep tracking

One night I'd wound up with food poisoning, and Oura could tell that I spent more than ten hours in bed, but only seven were spent sleeping.

On another night when I'd had a particularly bad night of sleep, Oura could tell I was awake from 3:30 am until nearly 6:00 am.

So, while it isn't perfect, it did well for me. Unfortunately, like many commercially available sleep-tracking devices, getting a one-size-fits-all solution is impossible.

Fortunately, Oura offers a 30-day return and refund policy, so if it doesn't track your metrics the way you'd like, you have a whole month to return it to the company.

Perpetual payments

There is a pretty big downside — the recurring subscription. While you don't have to pay the \$6 monthly subscription to use the Oura Ring, the ring is severely lacking without it.

The only metrics the Oura Ring will show without a subscription are your readiness, sleep, and activity scores. You won't get to see detailed information in any category, nor will you be able to see past data within the app.

If you've got subscription fatigue, you may not be thrilled to spend an additional monthly fee to unlock features natively tracked by the device you've already purchased.

What you give up compared to the Apple Watch

Of course, if you choose an alternative health tracker, you'll give up some of the benefits you'd get from staying in the Apple ecosystem.

The most obvious is the inability to use the Apple Fitness rings. What I loved most about Apple Watch was its encouragement to ensure I closed all three rings daily.

You also lose the ability to see your heart rate in real-time during a workout. While this may not be a big deal for casual users, the Apple Watch would probably serve athletes and those serious about their workouts better.

But, if — like me — you find a fitness tracker with a screen too distracting and don't want to wear one on your wrist, the Oura Ring is a great alternative.

Oura Ring pros

- Discreet

- Multi-day battery life
- Tracks sleep, activity, and overall readiness
- Easy to use App
- Built-in period prediction

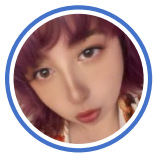
Oura Ring cons

- Expensive
- Reoccurring subscription
- Can't be used in a meaningful way without a subscription
- No half-sizes
- Sleep tracking may be more inaccurate for some users

Rating: 3.5 out of 5

Where to buy

Oura Ring is available directly through Oura [on their website](#). It is available in two different styles and starts at \$299, with pricing up to \$549.



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Amber worked at MacNN and Electronista from 2015 until 2017, reviewing software, apps, games, and tech accessories. In 2019, she signed up with AppleInsider, where she covers all things Apple, with a focus on tech rev...

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