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TECH & TOOLS

I tested the latest Oura Ring 4 for months — is it worth the upgrade?

Oura continues to make arguably the best smart ring on the market. But is it right for you?

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Tech Reporter



— The Oura Ring 4 has a sleek design with no sensor bumps on the interior of the ring. Courtesy Harry Rabinowitz

I know plenty of people who want some sort of wellness tracker or [smartwatch](#), but don't want to be glued to a tiny screen on their wrist that constantly distracts you with notifications. I get it — most of us are already glued to our phones: why add another screen to the mix?

That's where I think smart rings get their appeal. Imagine a small, subtle, stylish health tracker that doesn't grab or need your attention to function. No buzzing notifications, no bulky screen, but all the metrics you might associate with a traditional [fitness tracker](#).

Is that vision a reality with the Oura Ring 4? Sort of. I tested it daily for over two months: here's what you should know.

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What is the Oura Ring 4?

Oura Ring 4

The [Oura Ring 4](#) (\$349) is a smart ring that tracks a plethora of health metrics: heart rate, sleep stages, stress levels, body temperature, blood oxygen and more. It automatically detects and logs some exercise like walking and running, and you can manually record the start and end of any workout using the Oura app.

Since there is no screen, you spend a considerable amount of time viewing data and metrics on the Oura app. The app has been redesigned since the launch of the previous [Oura Ring Gen 3](#) (\$299), with a more intuitive home screen that shows your scores for readiness, sleep, activity and stress at a glance. Because the app keeps track of data over a stretch of time, you can also view trend reports to see things like your sleep score across weeks, months or years.

Improvements over the Oura Ring Gen 3 include a longer eight day battery life (up from seven), a wider range of sizes and a fully titanium build (the Oura Ring Gen 3 was partially made of plastic). The Oura Ring 4 comes in six finishes and sizes ranging from four to 15.

You can buy the ring without paying for a subscription, but you'll get an extremely limited amount of data: only your daily score for sleep, activity and readiness, [according to the brand](#). An [Oura Membership subscription](#) costs \$5.99 a month or \$69.99 a year, and unlocks every tracking feature plus things like guided meditation and sleep stories in the Oura app.

Display: N/A | **Weight:** 3.3-5.2 grams | **Battery life:** up to 8 days | **Built-in GPS:** no | **Sleep tracking:** yes (including naps) | **Heart-rate monitor:** yes, with EKG | **Water resistance:** yes, up to 100 meters (up to 12 hours) | **Works best with:** Oura app (iOS or Android)

How I tried the Oura Ring 4





I compared the Oura Ring 4 (center) to other popular smart rings like the Ultrahuman Ring Air (left) and Samsung Galaxy Ring (right). Courtesy Harr

I tested the Oura Ring 4 for over two months after the brand sent me a sizing kit and ring sample for review. I wore the ring on my right ring finger and compared the fit and data collected to other smart rings like the [Samsung Galaxy Ring](#) (\$399), which I wore on my left ring finger during a week of side-by-side testing.

NBC Select updates editor [Mili Godio](#) coincidentally bought the Oura Ring 4 for herself, and has also been wearing hers for over two months. I spoke with her to get her perspective on the ring and her experience with features I could not test like cycle tracking.

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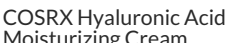
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My experience with the Oura Ring 4

The [Oura Ring Gen 3](#) was already my favorite smart ring on the market. The Oura Ring 4's hardware and software improvements help cement it as the best smart ring you can buy right now.

Still, you should know that it cannot replace a fitness tracker or smartwatch for tracking exercise. And competitors like the Samsung Galaxy Ring and [Ultrahuman Ring Air](#) (\$349) can track similar metrics, minus the subscription fee.

What we like

Improved design and comfort

One of my least favorite parts of the Oura Ring Gen 3 is its sensor bumps — it has three round bumps on the inner side of the ring that house its infrared LED sensors. I am already not a ring person — a ring with bumps pushing against my skin? No thanks.

The Oura Ring 4 has recessed sensors that are nearly flush with the ring — you don't notice them unless you are looking very carefully. This makes the ring much more comfortable than the previous version, in my experience.





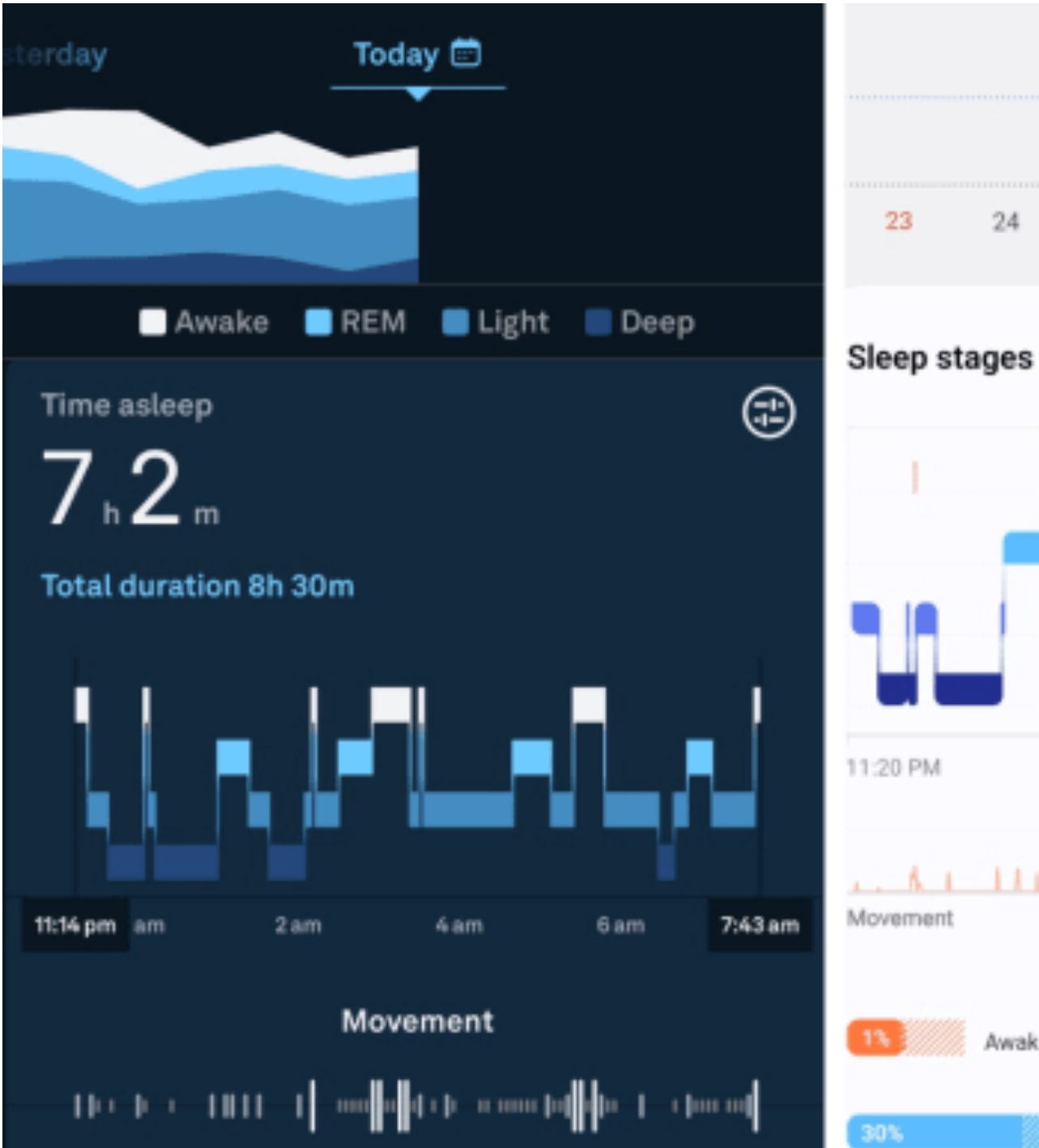
— The smooth interior of the Oura Ring 4 (top) versus the bumps on the Oura Ring Gen 3 (bottom) Courtesy Harry Rabinowitz

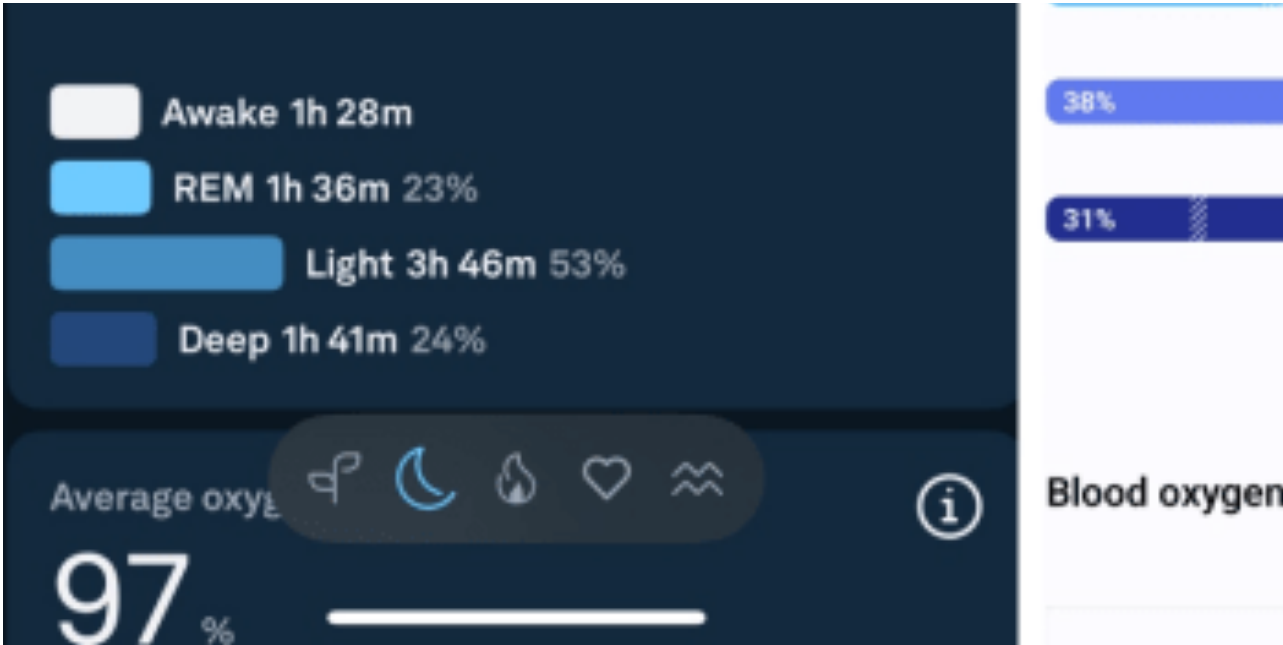
Robust health and sleep tracking

The sleep and health tracking of the Oura Ring 4 is just as impressive (if not more so) as the previous version.

During my testing, I compared a week of sleep data from the Oura Ring 4 to data from the Samsung Galaxy Ring (paired with the [Samsung Galaxy Watch 7](#) (\$299) and the [Apple Watch Series 10](#) (\$399). The Oura Ring 4 had the most accurate sleep data. The competition wasn't wildly inaccurate, but couldn't match the accuracy of the Oura Ring.

For example, I toss and turn a lot while I sleep, and the Samsung Galaxy Ring often logged those movements as tiny wake windows throughout the night. The Galaxy Ring would also log no data at all for the hour or so I was awake in the middle of the night to take care of my baby, throwing the whole evening's data out of whack. The Oura Ring 4 never had these issues.





— Oura Ring 4 (left) was a bit more accurate for sleep data than the Samsung Galaxy Ring (right). Courtesy Harry Rabinowitz

All of the wearables I tested were confused by the early morning hours I spent with my baby. We would sometimes wake up early and I would rock them in a gliding chair to buy an extra hour of sleep. All the wearables I tested thought this was a brief wake window followed by an hour of sleep. I was very much awake, just sedentary (listening to audiobooks on my AirPods) in a gliding chair.

Improved app experience

I hadn't used the Oura Ring app in about five months when I synced the Oura Ring 4 for the first time. The app has changed a lot since 2024. The layout is cleaner, with three primary tabs on the bottom (Today, Vitals and My Health) and all your most important scores in small circles on the top (Readiness, Sleep activity, Heart Rate and Stress). The app also loads data from the Ring 4 much faster than when I tested the Oura Ring 3 in 2024 — it only took five seconds or so to load a full day of activity, in my experience.

Potential drawbacks to keep in mind

You still need to record a lot of things yourself

Ideally the Oura Ring could automatically track everything for me, without any input on my end. After all, if I wanted to micromanage my data and track my heart rate zones as I exercised, I would wear a smartwatch, not a smart ring.

in other areas, namely exercise tracking. It automatically logs walks decently well, but other exercises like yoga and strength training it did not detect at all, in our experience. It automatically detected and logged outdoor runs, but GPS data was sometimes inaccurate.

When we did pull out our phones and start and stop workouts manually, stats and GPS data were usually acceptable.

In this article

- What is the Oura Ring 4?
- How I tried the Oura Ring 4
- My experience with the Oura

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But that's not really the point for Godio and I. Pulling out our phones and manually starting and stopping a workout feels like the opposite of why you would own an Oura Ring. Godio almost never logged her workout classes on her Oura Ring, either because she forgot to in the hustle and bustle of getting ready for class or because the classes themselves had a no phone policy. "If I have to do anything manually on the Oura Ring, chances are I'm not doing it," says Godio.

Cycle tracking is a similar story — it is useful and accurate, but requires a lot of manual input. To get the most accurate info about the average number of days your period lasts, cycle variability and the range of days you can expect each month, you need to be diligent and consistent about manually inputting each day of your cycle, says Godio.

We know the Oura Ring 4 can't magically track everything, we wouldn't expect it to, but making some of these manual inputs faster and easier to do would be a good start.

Subscription price

Oura Ring 4 may be one of the best smart rings on the market, but it is also one of the few that requires a subscription. I am actively trying to reduce the number of subscriptions in my life, and other smart rings that don't have a monthly subscription (Ultrahuman, Samsung, Ringconn) may be worth a look, depending on your priorities.

Who is the Oura Ring 4 for?

The Oura Ring 4 is the best smart ring you can get, in my experience. It automatically tracks most general health, wellness and sleep activity and presents it in insightful, easy to understand scores on the Oura Ring app. It's more comfortable than ever, has improved battery life and a more intuitive app experience.

It's not for athletes like marathoners or [long-distance cyclists](#) — it cannot compete with the live stats and exercise accuracy of smartwatches from Apple and [Garmin](#).

It's also not for anyone looking to cull subscriptions (consider subscription-free alternatives like the Samsung Galaxy Ring and Ultrahuman Ring Air instead).

But it is the best smart ring I've tested. And if you want the best of the best, it's the Oura Ring 4. For now, anyway.

Why trust NBC Select?

I am a [reporter](#) at NBC Select who covers technology and fitness including recent stories on [smartwatches](#), [running shoes](#), [cameras](#) and more. For this piece, I wore the Oura Ring 4 daily for over two months after the brand sent me one to try. I tracked my daily stats, sleep and exercise and compared the fit and feel of the Oura Ring 4 to other smart rings on the market. I also discussed my experience with NBC Select updates editor [Mili Godio](#), who owns and wears her Oura Ring 4 daily.

More tech essentials

My experience with the Oura Ring 4

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Harry Rabinowitz

Harry Rabinowitz is a reporter for NBC Select, where he is constantly trying and reviewing the latest and greatest tech gadgets.
