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Our Review of the Moto 360 Smartwatch

We have been touting wearable tech way before wearable tech was cool.



BILL & PHIL

*The Bill and Phil Show
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But, guess what, the coolness factor has finally caught up with our hype. We say that because we recently purchased the long-awaited Moto 360, Motorola's entry into the Android Wear smartwatch swarm. We were sold on the technology behind smartwatches a couple of years ago, but this year, our non-tech friends didn't make fun of us when we showed off our new Moto 360 during the annual office holiday soiree.

The distinguishing characteristic about the Moto 360 is its stylish round face, as opposed to the rectangular, geeky looking face of some of the other smartwatches that we have acquired and abandoned. The black leather band also helps disguise this smartwatch as just another layman's watch.

But don't let the stylish appearance of the Moto 360 trick you into thinking it is just a timepiece. Indeed, you can customize how the current time displays — from a traditional long-and-short hand dial to an ultra-sleek and modern numeric readout. But you can do so much more with the Moto 360. As with all Android Wear-based smartwatches, you can view this watch as an extension of your Android-based smartphone. However, please remember: There is no need to get this or any other Android Wear-based smartwatch if you don't have the requisite Android-based smartphone.

We expect future versions of these devices will get even better and more user friendly.

Moto 360 users receive notifications of texts, emails and phone calls on the watch without pulling their phone out of their pocket or purse. The integrated mic allows the user to issue voice commands with the familiar "Ok Google" wake-up call. We have been able to ask the watch for navigational directions and then receive turn-by-turn steps on the watch. Of course, this feature is powered by the nearby Android phone, but all of the interaction is on the watch.

For the health conscious, there is a constant heart-rate monitor along with a step counter app that integrates with the phone. There are other environmental monitoring notifications that you can receive on the watch, such as temperature and weather information. Of course, one can download other special apps that are being developed for the Android Wear platform and cover a myriad of functions.

The downside of the Moto 360 is that it, being electronic, requires a battery. With active use, which is defined as constantly accessing your device for notifications, voice commands, etc., the battery

drains pretty quickly. There are ways to conserve battery life, for example, by having the display only illuminate when you tap the screen or bringing the watch up to your face; however, we have found the later feature to be annoying and prefer to have the watch face illuminated at all times, even at the expense of battery life. The good news is that the charging cradle is incredibly easy to use and does not require you to plug anything into the watch. Just simply lay the watch into the charging cradle at the end of the day, and it doubles as a bedside alarm clock while charging.

We have been on the smartwatch train for quite some time, but this technology is still pretty new. We expect future versions of these devices will get even better and more user friendly. Everyone in the industry is holding his or her breath, waiting to see what the long-awaited smartwatch is going to look like in person and, more importantly, what features it will still have. It is scheduled to appear on store shelves sometime in early 2015; [click here to learn more about the watch in this month's High Tech article](#). The Apple Watch will likely be a no-brainer choice for those who already have an iPhone. However, for those of us who use Android-based phones, the Moto 360 is one of the best and most stylish options available. We just wish people would like us for who we are, not just what we wear.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

William Ramsey, Partner at Neal & Harwell, and LogicForce Consulting President **Phil Hampton** are best known for The Bill and Phil Show. The duo tours often and provides technology news and reviews on their website [*www.thebillandphilshow.com*](http://www.thebillandphilshow.com).

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