



Apple Watch Series 12 might make upgrading hard to resist

Summary

The article describes the rumored features of the Apple Watch Series 12. The watch might include a faster chip, a modular watch face similar to the Apple Watch Ultra, and satellite connectivity. The article also mentions that Apple might add Touch ID to the watch, but it is not confirmed.

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[Anurag Chawake](#) 6:00 am, May 12, 2026



Rumors indicate this year's model might look a lot like Apple Watch Series 11, but big changes are coming internally.

Photo: Apple

After years of iterative upgrades, rumors indicate Apple Watch Series 12 might bring real advancements that make the upcoming model hard to ignore. We could see a much faster chip, smarter Apple Intelligence features and maybe even Touch ID.

Here's what to expect from Apple Watch Series 12, which should arrive this fall alongside the iPhone 18 Pro.

Apple Watch Series 12 rumors: Might be time to upgrade

Apple made big changes to the [Apple Watch](#) during its first few years, transforming a smartwatch originally pitched as a fashion accessory into a fitness tool and a [potentially lifesaving device](#). But in recent years, new Apple Watch models have lacked the type of big upgrades that might spur somebody to splurge on a new watch.

This year, instead of delivering a major design overhaul, Apple is likely working on a version of the Apple Watch that feels smarter, faster and far more useful in everyday scenarios. Recent Apple Watch upgrades didn't give users much of a reason to upgrade. In fact, Apple Watch Series 11's marquee feature — [hypertension alerts](#) — also worked with some previous Apple Watch models.

While none of these rumored Apple Watch Series 12 upgrades are confirmed, they hint at a more refined smartwatch experience.

Touch ID? Maybe not — but that's a good thing.

One of the biggest hardware changes possibly coming to the Apple Watch Series 12 is the inclusion of [Touch ID](#). References to the feature were [spotted in Apple's internal software in 2025](#), and the company has secured several patents for biometric authentication on the Apple Watch.

Apple could integrate Touch ID into the watch's Digital Crown or side button. Alternatively, Apple could be developing an in-display optical sensor similar to what some Android smartphones use. That could allow users to unlock the device with their fingerprint instead of entering the passcode every time they strap it on. Touch ID also might add extra security in certain scenarios.

Still, this long-rumored Apple Watch addition might not make that much sense. Apple Watch's Wrist Detection feature means the device remains unlocked while it's strapped on. And leaker Instant Digital said Sunday in a [Weibo post](#) that Apple has decided not to add Touch ID to Apple Watch.

Instead of adding a Touch ID sensor to the watch, Apple reportedly wants to rely on the iPhone to automatically unlock Apple Watch. That means Apple could use the space where a Touch ID sensor would go for more important functionality.

"Apple's current focus is on packing in larger batteries and relentlessly refining its advanced health sensors," Instant Digital wrote. "Integrating a fingerprint sensor, at least for now, only adds unnecessary cost and directly encroaches on battery space, making it highly unprofitable from a product-planning perspective."

The Apple Watch Series 12 might bring new, faster chip

Apple Watch Series 9, 10 and 11 all ran with essentially the same CPU. But for Apple Watch Series 12, Apple reportedly will deploy a new, faster chip.

The upcoming series, identified as internally as "Watch8," is rumored to come with a new CPU code-named T8320. The last three generations used the "Watch7" identifier.

A faster chip would mean better app launch speeds. It also would enable faster AI processing and better battery life as [watchOS](#) continues to gain new features. It also

could make the Apple Watch experience feel fresh again, something recent models struggled to do.

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An Ultra-style modular watch face is likely on the way

Apple also appears ready to bring at least one of the [Apple Watch Ultra](#)'s software features to its regular models.

According to a report this month from [Bloomberg's Mark Gurman](#), Apple is working on a new watch face based on the Apple Watch Ultra's [Modular Ultra face](#). The redesigned watch face reportedly will retain the large clock but remove the huge complication section in the center.

As a result, the large clock would take up the majority of the screen. The row containing the three small complications would show under the time, taking up the rest of the display.

The new Apple Watch face could prove useful for those who want a densely packed, information-rich layout on smaller displays. It might not sound like a game-changer. However, a modular watch face could make the Apple Watch feel much more useful than it already is.

Apple Watch Series 12 could add satellite connectivity

Apple already brought satellite connectivity to the [iPhone](#) and the Apple Watch Ultra, and the Apple Watch Series 12 might be next in line.

On Apple Watch Ultra 3, it enables features like Emergency SOS, Find My and Messages via satellite even when not connected to an iPhone. Plus, watchOS 27 reportedly will include [Apple Maps](#) connectivity via satellite, along with Photos support for Messages via satellite.

If some of those features make it to the standard Apple Watch Series 12, that would provide a huge reason for Apple Watch users to upgrade to the new model. Last month, [Amazon said it would acquire Globalstar](#), the company offering satellite services to Apple. Amazon said it already reached an agreement with Apple to continue offering satellite services on current and future generations of the iPhone and Apple Watch models.

Apple Intelligence-powered health features

The Apple Watch Series 11 came with a slightly different design, so it seems unlikely that this year's model will see any major changes. But *Bloomberg's* Mark Gurman says Apple is working on [new features for the Apple Health app](#).

A paid subscription could offer things like coaching tools, nutritional guidance and personalized wellness recommendations. This would jibe with plans to boost [Apple Intelligence](#) features across the company's device lineup this year. Apple plans to finally roll out the [smarter Siri](#) promised two years ago in its 27 series operating systems.

Apple Watch Series 12 pricing

Most observers expect Cupertino to keep Apple Watch Series 12 prices close to current models, which start at \$399. But considering the rising component costs, it would not be surprising to see a price hike.

If even some of these rumored changes make their way to Apple Watch Series 12, it could end up being the first smartwatch in a long time that existing and new users feel tempted to upgrade to.

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Anurag Chawake is a tech-focused writer specializing in smartphones, apps and consumer technology. His interest in computers began during the Windows 98 era, eventually leading him to explore everything from operating systems to mobile devices and PC hardware. Anurag previously contributed to *The Indian Express*, covering Apple, Android, gaming and the broader technology landscape.