

5 reasons to choose the Apple Watch Ultra 3 over the Apple Watch Series 11

Summary

The article describes five reasons why the Apple Watch Ultra 3 is a better choice than the Apple Watch Series 11. The Ultra 3 is more durable, with a higher waterproof rating and a tougher case. It also offers longer battery life, with up to 42 hours of use per charge compared to the Series 11's 24 hours.

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Opinion By [Dan Bracaglia](#) published December 19, 2025



(Image credit: Dan Bracaglia/Tom's Guide)

The Apple Watch 11 and Apple Watch Ultra 3 offer nearly all the same marquee features, including hypertension alerts, daily sleep reports with numeric sleep scores, ECG readings, SpO2 measurements, personalized AI fitness coaching, fall/crash detection, and more.

But when it comes to price, they are quite different. The Apple Watch Series 11 [starts at \\$399](#), while the Apple Watch

Ultra 3 [starts at \\$799](#). Is the Ultra 3 *actually* worth twice the price of the Series 11? That depends on your needs (and budget).

I've tested both the Series 11 and the Ultra 3. They are two of the [best smartwatch](#) models available today. However, they are aimed at fairly different users. With that in mind, here are the five biggest reasons I recommend the Apple Ultra 3 over the Apple Watch Series 11.

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And for further reading, here's my in-depth comparison of the [Apple Watch Ultra 3 vs. Series 11](#) across seven major categories.

Durability



(Image credit: Dan Bracaglia/Tom's Guide)

The first reason to buy the [Apple Watch Ultra 3](#) versus the [Apple Watch 11](#) is durability. The Ultra 3 has twice the waterproof rating of the Series 11; [100 meters of water resistance](#) versus 50 meters.

If you're a lover of water sports, the Ultra 3 is almost certainly going to be the better choice for you. It's approved for scuba diving and features a nifty depth gauge app. The Series 11, meanwhile, can be worn during brief (~30 minutes) surface-level swims, as well as in the shower, but Apple doesn't recommend you rock it while diving, snorkeling, or performing any high-impact watersports (sorry, no water skiing either).

The case in the Ultra 3 is also tougher-built than that of the Series 11. The Ultra Series boasts an all-titanium case design compared to a softer aluminum case for the Apple Watch 11 (though it does come in a titanium variant for extra dough).

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The standard (non-titanium) Series 11 models sport Apple's Ion-X glass with a ceramic coating for screen protection. It's both tough and scratch-resistant, but not quite as durable as the sapphire crystal glass on the Ultra 3 screen.

So if you're an extreme athlete or just accident-prone, the Ultra 3 will likely take a licking and keep on ticking longer than the Series 11.

Battery life



(Image credit: Future)

Battery life is another huge reason to spring for the Ultra 3 versus the Series 11. The pricier model is rated at 42 hours of use per charge (72 hours in low-power mode) compared to 24 hours per charge (38 hours in low-power mode) for the Apple Watch 11.

In our testing, both models meet or slightly surpass those figures. Ultimately,

the Series 11 needs to be charged nightly, while the Ultra 3 can usually manage to make it through two days of use before needing a top-off. Hate recharging? Get the Ultra 3.

When it comes to tracking outdoor workouts using GPS, the Ultra 3 boasts 14 hours of usage compared to just eight hours for the Series 11. Love to hike and don't want to sacrifice accurate heart rate and/or location data for the sake of longevity? The Ultra 3 is likely going to suit you better than the Series 11.

Screen brightness



(Image credit: Future)

Assuming you go with the larger 46mm Apple Watch Series 11, you're getting roughly the same amount of screen real estate as the Apple Watch Ultra 3. Both devices also use Apple's latest LTPO3 wide-angle OLED panels, which are remarkably easy to read from even the oddest of angles. However, the Ultra model has one noteworthy advantage: a brighter maximum screen brightness.

The Series 11 maxes out at 2,000 nits compared to 3,000 nits for the Ultra 3. This makes the latter easier to read in direct sunlight, especially while on the go — say, when you're jogging or cycling.

Satellite communication



(Image credit: Dan Bracaglia/Tom's Guide)

If you frequently find yourself outside of cellular coverage areas, whether you're a roadtripper, an outdoor adventurer, or a social hermit, the Apple Watch Ultra 3 offers one emergency communication tool you won't find on the Series 11: satellite messaging.

Like the latest [Google Pixel Watch 4](#) (cellular variant) and [Garmin Fenix 8 Pro](#), the Apple Watch Ultra 3 will let you share a message and location details with emergency responders and/or loved ones for assistance when off the grid, assuming, of course, you have a clear view of the sky.

As an avid hiker myself who frequently wanders out of cellular range, this feature offers me (and my loved ones) much peace of mind. If you can relate, the Ultra 3 might be right for you.

Button customization



(Image credit: Dan Bracaglia/Tom's Guide)

Last but not least, you get a wider range of button customization options on the Apple Watch Ultra 3 versus the Apple Watch Series 11, simply because the former provides an additional physical control.

Both models sport a digital crown (which can be both turned and pressed), along with a side button beneath it. However, only the Ultra 3 sports an additional Action button (the big orange one) on the opposite side of the case.

Depending on your preference, a press of the Action button can be set to fire up Shazam and identify a song that's playing (my personal preference), execute any of the accessibility shortcuts, translate audio in real time, create a voice memo, start/stop media, turn the flashlight on or off, turn on Dive mode, start Apple's Backtrack navigational feature, set a waypoint, start or stop the stopwatch, or begin a workout.

Ultimately, a hearty build-quality, brighter screen, longer-lasting battery, better safety communication tools, and more advanced customization options are the five biggest reasons I recommend the Apple Watch Ultra 3 over the Apple Watch Series 11.