

Wearable tech is the newest trend.
Put a slick watch on your arm and check your email.
Strap goggles on your head and look at the Alps in virtual reality.
Glasses aren't exactly new wearable tech, though (ahem, Google, we're looking at you).
But Snapchat Spectacles are different, and here's why.

Wearable tech 101

Technology that you can attach somewhere on your body isn't new.
Back in the '60s, two guys tried to beat the odds in Vegas with a transmitter in a shoe.
(It worked so well the state of Nevada banned all such devices in 1985).
Fast-forward to the era of the '90s smartphone, and wearables take a back seat for a decade.
Then, GoPro launched its first camera in 2004.
Lightweight and durable, surfers and mountain bikers cheered as they strapped cameras to their heads.
At the same time, smartphones started becoming smarter and slimmer.
Now, they're pretty much everywhere ([77% of Australians](#) had them in 2015).
With more lightweight materials and technologies, wearables are once again in the spotlight.
Enter Snapchat Spectacles.

What came before

Google caused quite an uproar a few years ago with Google Glass.
There were early pairs only cool people could get by being specially chosen (and paying \$1500).
There were a million articles written, either praising them or condemning them.
Then Google Glass finally hit the street.
And pretty much fell flat on its face.
Not long after, Google quietly (and mercifully) [killed them](#).
But these Spectacles are not those Glasses.

What Snapchat Spectacles can (and can't) do

Only mostly smart

There's really not much that's smart about these Spectacles, other than their Bluetooth pairing/Wi-Fi connect (which hardly qualifies).
It's easy to snap a picture, or take 10 seconds of video.
If you tap before the first 10 seconds are up, you can string together up to 30 seconds of video.
But that's it.
There's no Twitter feed in your eye, or weather updates scrolling past.
Snapchat Spectacles are definitely more GoPro than Google Glass.

Only one way out

Along with just taking pics or video, Spectacles can only sync with Snapchat.
Apply Snapchat filters to your heart's content once your pics are uploaded, but that's your only option.
Not necessarily a bad thing, but something to know before you buy.

Android and iOS

If you have an Android smartphone, you can transfer your snaps over Wi-Fi.
If you have an iOS phone, you can transfer over either Wi-Fi or Bluetooth.
Either way, the Spectacles will store your pics until you can transfer them.
That's also the only way you can view what you've just taken: there's no playback on Spectacles.

Wide-angle camera

One cool feature is the 115-degree wide-angle lens.

It captures video in a circle!

It's meant to more closely mimic how the human eye actually sees things.

Once it's on Snapchat, the video will automatically adjust to whichever way you're holding your phone.

Also, try tilting your phone *sideways* while watching a snap.

You can actually see *more* of the picture than you normally would.

Get a little practice

You may need a little practice at first though.

Something as small as a stray piece of hair can obstruct the lens and ruin your shot.

Without playback, you won't see your pic until you upload.

Keep that in mind and maybe take a second one to be sure.

Selfies still need a stick (or not)

If you're bent on taking a selfie, you're still going to need your phone.

There's no way to take a selfie with Spectacles, at least not while you're wearing them.

The camera only faces *outward*, otherwise you'd end up with a [super-close-up of your eyelash](#).

Mostly hands-free

Another cool feature of Spectacles is taking pics without having to pull out your phone.

Ever missed an epic shot because you couldn't open your phone app in time?

Now, just watch the action and tap the frame with your finger.

Done!

Plus, you can get closer to what's going on instead of holding your phone out in front of you.

Brightly-colored-creepy, not stalker-creepy

With Google Glass, you could never quite tell if someone was secretly recording you.

Creepy is one word people used (we can't print the others).

With Snapchat Spectacles, that worry is gone.

There's a circle of LED lights on the front of the frame that lights up when you're recording.

Battery life

According to Snap, the battery should last up to a day.

The LED indicator that shows when you're taking a video also doubles as a battery indicator.

Charging made easy

The brightly-colored case isn't just protection, it's also the charger for your Spectacles.

Sure, you'll have to carry it around, but it's dual purpose.

Once the case is charged, it should charge your Spectacles up to 4 times.

But don't lose that cable - it's a proprietary system, so it's the only one that will work.

A less painful price

Wearable tech ranges in price from [\\$50 for a VR headset](#) to \$400 Apple watches.

And in case you missed it, Google Glass was a whopping \$1500!

While these Spectacles may only have a single purpose, the price is geared to match.

At \$130, they're likely the same price as your favorite non-picture-taking sunnies.

You've convinced me, how can I get Snapchat Spectacles?

Right now, Spectacles are only available in the US (at least through Snap).

Sites like eBay already have pairs for sale at *more than 10x* their retail price.

But be careful, Snap won't guarantee the authenticity of the Spectacles you buy from a 3rd party.

In the US, you can buy Spectacles from vending machines that look like life-size Minions.

Their map starts a [countdown](#) 24 hours before the next vending machine drop location is announced.

The not-so-great part is that once the machine sells out, they aren't being restocked there.

A Spectacles [store opened](#) in New York City recently, and is supposed to be open through New Year's Eve.

What else can I do?

Instead of trying to track down Spectacles, you can upgrade your [smartphone](#) camera.

Spectacles are more high fashion than high tech, and reportedly the pic quality isn't top-notch.

Here's how to pick the [best smartphone camera](#) instead.

We can also [repair](#) your current phone - it's easier to see those great pics if the screen isn't cracked!