

LG's battery-powered face mask will "make breathing effortless"

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- Pictured: Gotham's reckoning.
- The filters are removable.
- It has lights!
- This side has a logo.
- A front view.

Big Tech is here to save us from COVID-19! With every responsible, compassionate person running around with a mask on nowadays, it seems inevitable that the phrase "wearable technology" will soon regularly include overly complicated high-tech face masks. One of the first major tech companies out of the gate with a questionably useful product is LG. The "LG PuriCare Wearable Air Purifier" is a battery-powered face mask that the company says will "supply fresh, clean air indoors and out."

The mask really is a tiny air purifier and features a fan+HEPA filter combo on the left and right side. A "patented Respiratory Sensor" detects "the cycle and volume of the wearer's breath and adjusts the dual three-speed fans accordingly." The fans are supposed to automatically sync up with your breathing by speeding up when you inhale and slowing

down when you exhale, which LG says will “make breathing effortless.” (If your breathing is *not* currently effortless, please visit your healthcare provider and/or local COVID-19 testing center.)

The mask looks absolutely huge in LG’s heavily photoshopped picture. LG says you can “wear the unit comfortably for hours on end” but that the 820mAh battery is only good for “eight hours of operation in low mode and two hours on high.” There’s no word on how much it weighs. When it does come time to recharge your face mask, the included case will also disinfect the mask somewhat with UV-LED lights. There’s also an app—of course there’s an app—that will alert you when the mask filters need to be replaced.

Any tech company selling coronavirus-related products deserves a heavy amount of questioning and skepticism, and so far, LG hasn’t proven its mask is effective or safe. LG’s press release actually doesn’t make any claims at all that the mask can help stop the transmission of the coronavirus, nor does it make any claims about the efficacy of its filtering abilities. The sales pitch is purely about “clean air” and nothing else.

The CDC’s mask guidelines state, “Masks with exhalation valves or vents should NOT be worn to help prevent the person wearing the mask from spreading COVID-19 to others,” which would seem to poke holes in LG’s mask design theory. A HEPA filter *can* stop respiratory particles (so does a normal N95 mask), but LG’s press release only says the mask will “take **in** clean, filtered air”—it doesn’t say anything about filtering exhalations.

The mask is out in the fourth quarter in “select markets,” but you should probably just wear a normal, lighter, cheaper, more comfortable mask. Please wear a mask.

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