Mobile game controllers without buttons are monstrosities you can buy now

Ask almost anyone you know and they'll probably agree: all good controllers have at least one button. Who might disagree with that? No one you should trust — plus the several manufacturers, including well-known brands like Anker and HyperX, that have started making controllers for your phone that don't have any buttons at all.

These strange new gadgets won't make controlling games via on-screen controls any easier, though they're not completely pointless for people who play *PUBG* and some other mobile hits that don't have official controller support.

They're mostly power banks with controller grips attached
Anker's PowerCore Play 6K controller is essentially a $36 6,700mAh power bank that's molded into the shape of a controller grip. Look all you want and you won't find a single button. But Anker, having gotten its start making affordable power banks, leans in on the battery side of things, so you don't have to worry about running low while you game.

That 6,700mAh of extra juice should give your phone two to three refills' worth of charge, and it supports up to 15W output to Android phones via its USB-C port and up to 12W to iPhones or any other device you'd want to charge with its USB-A port. Given that playing games can make your phone run hot, it has a built-in fan to pull the heat away. That's neat, but I think I'd like some buttons please.

HyperX's ChargePlay Clutch supports Qi wireless charging, and

it has a removable 3,000mAh battery.
HyperX
HyperX's ChargePlay Clutch is another controller-shaped device that is only concerned with keeping your phone topped up and making it more comfy to hold while you game. Unlike Anker's, this one supports Qi wireless charging in addition to wired charging.

Plus, the 3,000mAh battery on the ChargePlay Clutch is attached magnetically and can be removed, which is a nice touch since I can't imagine too many people would want to carry around a boomerang-shaped battery when they aren't gaming. This one is $59.99, and that's a lot for a controller without buttons. But, if you value its removable battery in place of Anker's built-in fan, it might be worth checking out.

As I mentioned before, these grips do have different designs that prioritize more than just battery life, especially for those who mainly play games that don't have solid native controller support. If you want to see some of the other monstrosities on Amazon, just search "radiator gamepads" and prepare to see some amazing art renders, like this one below that shows your phone blasting off.

Hopefully, the gamepad grip doesn't actually do this.
Granted, some of these options from brands I'd never heard of actually go a step further than Anker or HyperX's grips by bundling in a power bank, a cooling fan, and triggers on each side that press on your phone's screen for you just by clicking them in. (Buttons, what a concept!) As fundamentally limited as some of these faux controllers with few, or no, buttons are, there's currently no other controller on the market that can match the intensity of this model that features realistic pistol grips and triggers.

These grips seem like they were made for a different time.

This sort of thing would have been a delight 10 years ago when phones started ballooning in popularity and console-like games first started to legitimize Android and iOS as gaming platforms.

They make less sense now, when Google Stadia and Microsoft's xCloud are poised to bring true console-quality experiences with complex button schemes to phones that work with controllers like the Xbox One and DualShock 4 via Bluetooth. Plus, gamepads like PowerA's XP5-X attach to your device with a sturdy phone clip, supply a comprehensive button layout, *and* provide extra juice all at the same time. If you want elegance, Razer's Kishi has you settled there, though admittedly at a higher cost.

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