Pandora beats Spotify to offline playback on the Apple Watch

Pandora’s latest version of its iOS app includes a “brand new, built-from-the-ground-up app that’s seamlessly integrated into the Apple Watch experience.” From your wrist, you’ll be able to control playback or give a thumbs up to whatever song is currently playing on Pandora. But even better is that Pandora’s Apple Watch app includes offline playback, so you can leave your phone at home and listen to a playlist while on a run.

Only Pandora’s paying customers are getting this feature, so you’ll need to have a subscription to either Pandora Plus or Pandora Premium – the company’s full-on Spotify / Apple Music competitor – to listen to music on your Apple Watch. Spotify’s Apple Watch app doesn’t yet offer offline listening capabilities. Also, Pandora takes advantage of the whole display on the latest Apple Watch Series 4, whereas Spotify’s app still doesn’t and seems optimized for prior models. Neither will let you stream music with an Apple Watch’s cellular data connection.

When you first open it, you’ll see text saying that Pandora will automatically sync music when in close proximity to your iPhone. After a few minutes, my Thumbprint Radio playlist made its way over, but it’s not entirely clear how to choose what music is stored on the Apple Watch.

Apple’s watchOS 5 is required to use the new Pandora watch app.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/1/4/18169040/pandora-app-apple-watch-offline-playback-now-available