

# AirPods: Apple Reveals Yet Another Cool Upgrade Coming With iOS 14

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Apple AirPods are about to get improved battery management NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

*July 5 update below. This post was first published on July 2, 2020.*

Apple AirPods and AirPods Pro are about to get better. With a slew of announcements made at and after WWDC, Apple revealed a host of brilliant upgrades. You can read all about them in detail [here](#).

The new features include seamless switching between more devices, something called Headphone accommodations to adjust the sound to your particular hearing and audio sharing with Apple TV. Also, for AirPods Pro only, an advanced Transparency mode and Spatial Audio for that surround-sound effect, are coming. But there's one more treat that's been revealed: optimized battery charging.

*July 5 update: Battery technology is clearly crucial for true-wireless in-ear headphones and Apple's Spatial Audio is a key improvement. But it now seems Apple may already have a rival for one or even both.*

*Take the LG HBS-FN6 in-ear set-up which are about to go on sale, it's been announced. Like AirPods Pro, LG talks about Spatial Processing. Since the inclusion of Spatial Audio was such a big part of the WWDC announcement, it's an area that is clearly being taken seriously. And by more than just Apple. In LG's case this is down to tuning from British audio company Meridian and is designed to avoid crosstalk between left and right channels and recreate a soundstage that's realistic.*

*For now, at least, that may mean Apple's Spatial Processing goes further, giving Apple's earbuds a unique edge. It has also just emerged that Spatial Audio may come to other Apple products, such as an Augmented Reality headset, something picked up on by [idropnews](#). It's an intriguing possibility and makes sense as AR and Spatial Audio would work together well.*

*As idropnews has also just commented, Spatial Audio is mostly of interest for people who watch movies or play games using AirPods Pro, but less so for those who don't go in for such experiences. That's true, though I'd say it may well change people's habits of how they use their earbuds, so a sudden uptick of people listening to movies with Spatial Audio seems likely.*

*So, what about the new battery life feature detailed below? True-wireless headphones only have room for a cell which is tiny and lightweight, of course.*

*LG is approaching the issue in a different way by giving the earbuds better battery life than the AirPods Pro can manage. LG claims six hours of playback from one charge, against four-and-a-half hours of music listening on the AirPods Pro. A five-minute charge will give an hour's playback, LG says. Obviously, if a battery lasts longer between charges, it needs fewer charges overall which should help with battery life long-term. The charging case can recharge the headphones for another*

*12 hours, though this doesn't match the AirPods Pro case (18 hours).*

*Incidentally, LG's rival headphones include several other eye-catching features, such as a case with UV sanitizing to remove germs in a matter of a couple of minutes. I've seen this in action but, obviously, I had to take the results on trust – there's no visible difference before and after. Never thought your earbuds were dirty? Well, maybe not, but I bet you thought twice before lending them to a stranger to put in their ears. And, LG says, there's 2,700 times as much bacteria on earbuds as on a kitchen chopping board.*

*Anyway, back to AirPods battery conditioning...*



Apple AirPods Pro APPLE

The thing about rechargeable batteries is they don't last for ever. And, as any smartphone user knows, the battery life dwindles as the months pass.

Although this deterioration can't be stopped in its tracks, charging the cells right can really help. Sony introduced this to its smartphones years ago, recognizing that though day-to-day battery life is important, so is year-to-year.

So, to reduce aging, something we could all do with, I'd say, the new feature coming in iOS 14 could make a big difference.

When your iPhone is on iOS 14, you'll see a new push notification onscreen which will read: "Optimized Battery Charging Enabled: To reduce battery aging, AirPods learn from your daily charging routine so they can wait to finish charging past 80% until you need to use them."

This is something Apple already uses for the iPhone and Mac and is a simple but effective system. Now, as spotted by [MacRumors](#) thanks to a tweet from [@huseyiniyibas](#) the same elegant solution is coming to AirPods and AirPods Pro, too.

AirPods also have “Optimized Battery Charging”  
[#WWDC2020](#)



4:41 AM · Jun 23, 2020

Without optimized charging, your smartphone charger pulses away with electricity until the battery hits 100%. It will then drop down again until the charger decides to top it up again, which can be a near-constant process. Much better to charge to, say, 80% and leave it there overnight and boost things to 100% just in time for you to wake up.

All very good, but how does it do it?

Well, we might not like to admit it, but we're all creatures of routine. The iPhone, for example, can spot that you start using it soon after your regular wake-up time. It can then count back from that time by an hour or so, and start the top-up procedure then.

AirPods Pro have already seen a firmware update since the keynote, though this was likely as much for general audio improvements as to prep the earbuds for forthcoming upgrades.

To get this new feature, you need to update your iPhone to iOS 14. That's restricted to developers just now, but the public beta is coming this month, so it may only be a couple of weeks away.

original article:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidphelan/2020/07/05/airpods-apple-reveals-yet-another-cool-upgrade-coming-with-ios-14/#7919d3bd5cee>