Google releases the next version of the Android Wear smartwatch operating system-- Android Wear 2.0, an upgrade with features such as standalone apps, LTE support and improved fitness tracking.

Android Wear 2.0 is redesigned to be easier to use through simple swipes and the voice-controlled Google Assistant (summoned through the "OK Google" command). Complicated wrist gestures are disabled by default, and watch faces are customisable through 3rd party apps, allowing one to display current weather, stock prices, nearby places or a favourite contact.

Users can also install apps directly on a smartphone through a miniature version of the Google Play Store, while health tracking promises improvements through a pre-installed Google Fit app able to automatically detect workouts and give exercise tips. Notifications also get a boost through grouping and actionable options, such as deleting an email or replying to an SMS.

The first devices featuring the OS come from LG-- namely the Watch Sport and Watch Style. Both run on a Qualcomm Snapdragon Wear 2100 processor and feature round watch faces, with the Sport being the chunky option "for users who enjoy dynamic, athletic lifestyles" and the Style being the slimmer variant in either silver, titanium or rose gold colours.

The Watch Sport and Watch Style should be available by end February 2017. Other smartwatches will also be getting an Android Wear 2.0 update in the near future, including recent LG, Motorola, Huawei Casio, Tag Heur and Fossil models, among others.

Go Android Wear 2.0

Go LG and Google Partner to Develop First Android Wear 2.0 Watches