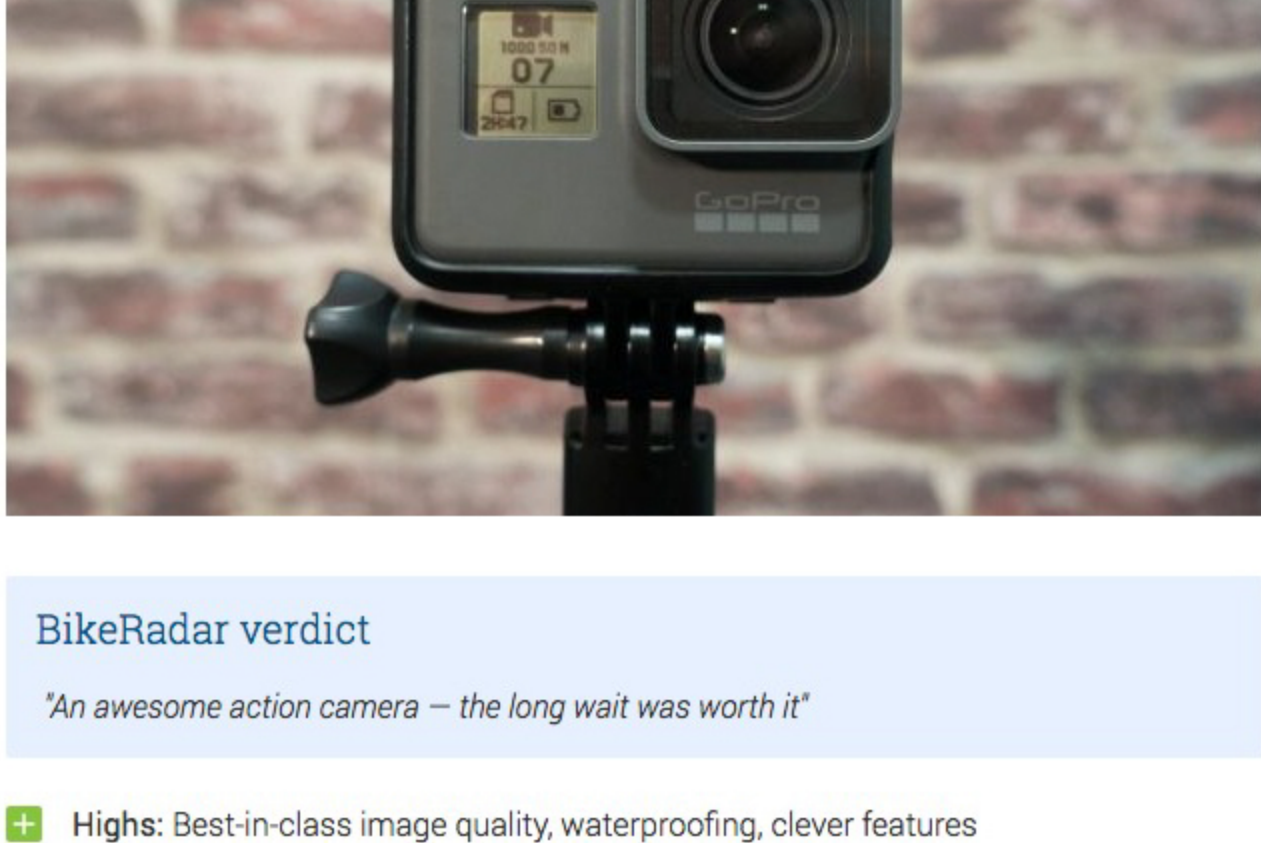


GoPro Hero 5 Black review

Is this the perfect Christmas gift for you or a cyclist in your life?

BikeRadar score ★★★★★ 5/5



BikeRadar verdict

"An awesome action camera – the long wait was worth it"

+ **Highs:** Best-in-class image quality, waterproofing, clever features

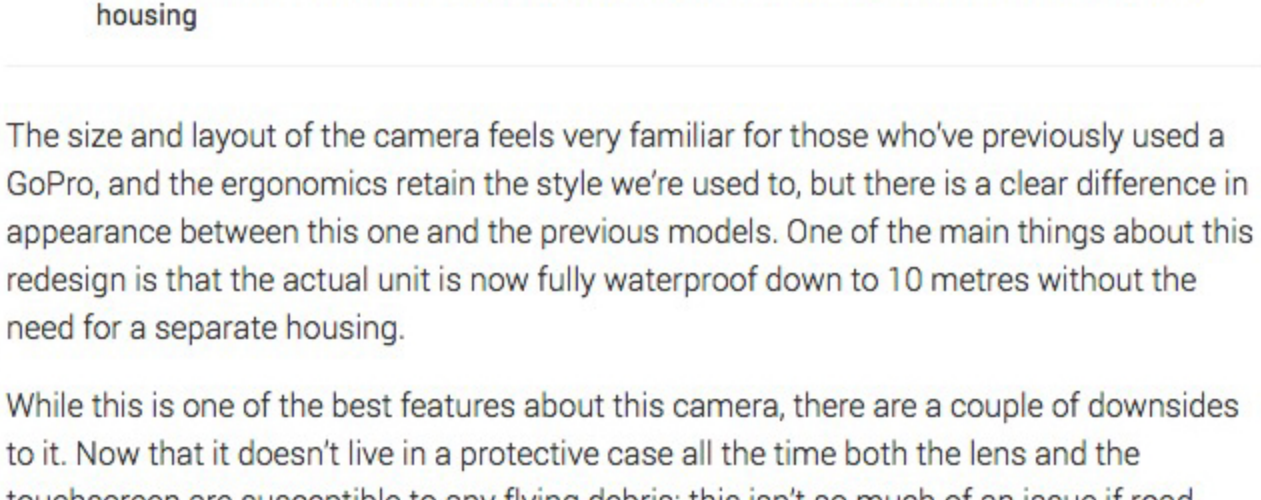
- **Lows:** Battery still doesn't last more than two hours, it's not cheap

✓ **Buy if:** You want superior action footage and you're not afraid to pay for it

Aside from the obvious redesign, the GoPro Hero 5 Black brings a number of new features including voice commands, electronic image stabilisation, a redesigned menu system and updated frame rates. Let's take a look at whether this is now the best action camera on the market, and whether the long wait was worth it, in our GoPro Hero 5 Black review.

The Hero 5 is definitely one of the hottest tech gadgets to come out this year, with people eager to see how much better it could be than the popular GoPro Hero 4 series. The Hero 5 Black was originally expected to launch over a year ago, finally reaching the market in September 2016 along with its smaller stablemate the Hero 5 Session and the Karma drone. We'll be testing the Hero 5 Session over the coming weeks and will update this review as we go.

GoPro Hero 5 Black design



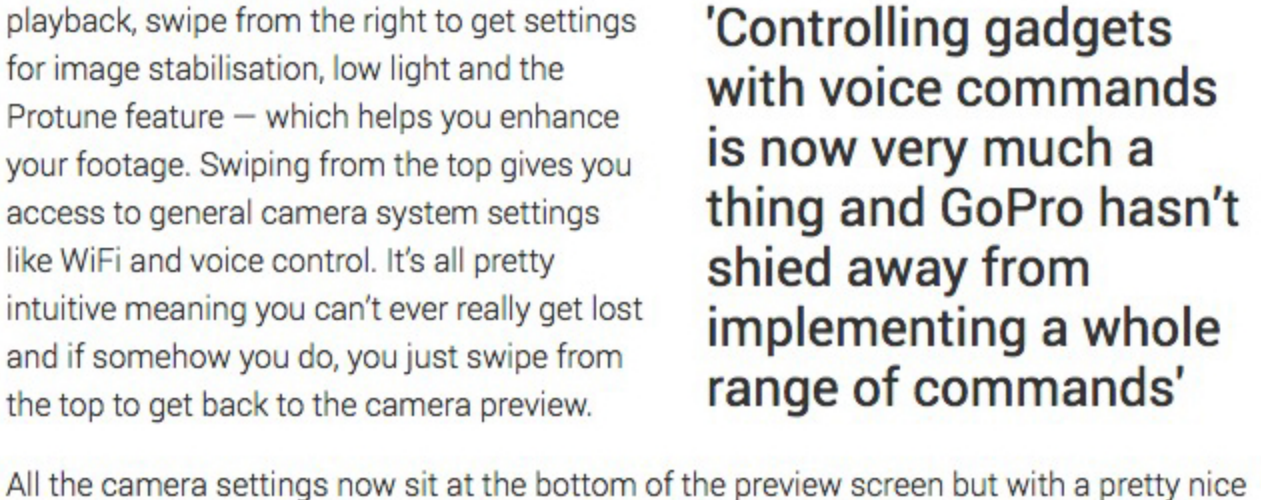
📷 The Hero 5 Black is now a sleek, fully waterproofed unit without the need for a separate housing

The size and layout of the camera feels very familiar for those who've previously used a GoPro, and the ergonomics retain the style we're used to, but there is a clear difference in appearance between this one and the previous models. One of the main things about this redesign is that the actual unit is now fully waterproof down to 10 metres without the need for a separate housing.

While this is one of the best features about this camera, there are a couple of downsides to it. Now that it doesn't live in a protective case all the time both the lens and the touchscreen are susceptible to any flying debris: this isn't so much of an issue if road cycling, or not-very-extreme mountain biking is your bag, but for the more extreme riders out there it's definitely something to consider.

And so to that end, GoPro has released the Super Suit housing. It will protect your GoPro if you ever feel the need to take it down to a depth of 60 meters, want peace-of-mind when riding hard, or if you crash a lot.

GoPro Hero 5 Black menu



📷 The completely redesigned menu system makes operation super easy

The Hero 5 Black sports a totally redesigned menu and it's a dead smart design at that. I thought the Hero 4 Silver menu looked pretty modern and even [Garmin's ViRB Ultra 30](#) had a menu that echoed that, but this version takes that modern feel to a whole new level.

Swipe from the left and you get SD card playback, swipe from the right to get settings for image stabilisation, low light and the Protune feature – which helps you enhance your footage. Swiping from the top gives you access to general camera system settings like WiFi and voice control. It's all pretty intuitive meaning you do't ever really get lost and if somehow you do, you just swipe from the top to get back to the camera preview.

'Controlling gadgets with voice commands is now very much a thing and GoPro hasn't shied away from implementing a whole range of commands'

All the camera settings now sit at the bottom of the preview screen but with a pretty nice feature whereby you choose your resolution and it'll visibly show you which frame rates are available in your chosen resolution. Equally, when you choose the frame rate it'll give you the option to show which resolutions are available.

So for example if I know I want 120 frames per second for some slow-mo then choose 120fps, it says it's not supported in 4K so I tap the screen and I can now see 1080, 960 and 720 resolutions are all available with 120fps selected, which is super nice.

GoPro Hero 5 Black image quality

4K resolution is still limited to 24fps and 25fps, but it's a very clear, sharp image and is considerably better than the 4K in the Hero 4 Black, which is as you'd expect. I'd love to see at least 4K 50fps in the near future and with the way camera technology develops each year, I'd expect to see this before too long.

Another notable new feature is the linear field of view, which is about the same field of view as medium but removes the fisheye effect, turning it into a bit more of a regular camera view – nice for general video or vlogs, but for riding we'd recommend sticking to wide or superview.

GoPro Hero 5 Black battery life

GoPro estimates a battery life of two hours for the Hero 5 running at 1080p at 50fps, with GPS, WiFi, voice control and image stabilisation off. In our own testing we had a full battery drain in 1 hour 54 minutes which is actually reasonably good, and very close to the official line.

With other features activated it'll obviously be reduced, especially when image stabilisation is activated, but even so, we've had about an hour and a half of runtime out of a battery with stabilisation on during a recent mountain bike shoot – which is honestly fairly respectable. Grab a couple of spare batteries and you'll be set for a pretty long day out if you don't record absolutely every second of your ride.

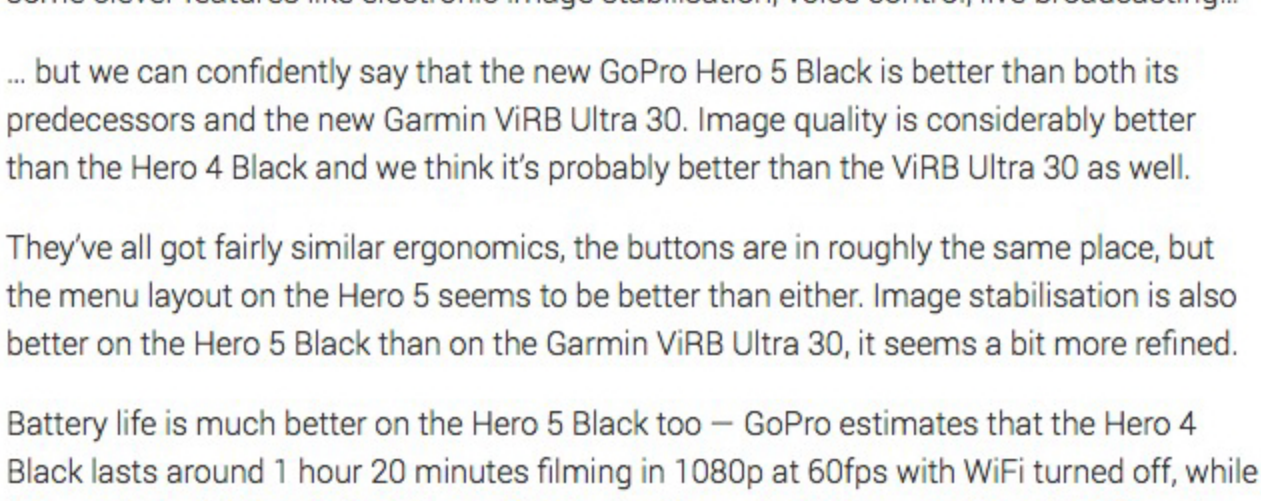
GoPro Hero 5 Black voice commands

Controlling gadgets with voice commands is now very much a thing and GoPro hasn't shied away from implementing a whole range of commands (13 to be exact with seven languages supported), meaning you can control your camera even when it's fully out of reach.

Specific video and photo settings should be dialed in before you start rolling, but in our testing there's very little you'd want to change mid-activity that voice commands can't do – short of changing the battery and then editing footage for you.

Some basic commands include: "GoPro...Turn on" (that's a pretty important one) and "GoPro...Start recording". The more advanced commands are mode switching: "GoPro...Timelapse Mode" and "GoPro...That was sick", which tags a HiLight in the meta data so you can find that moment easily in GoPro Studio.

GoPro Hero 5 Black image stabilisation

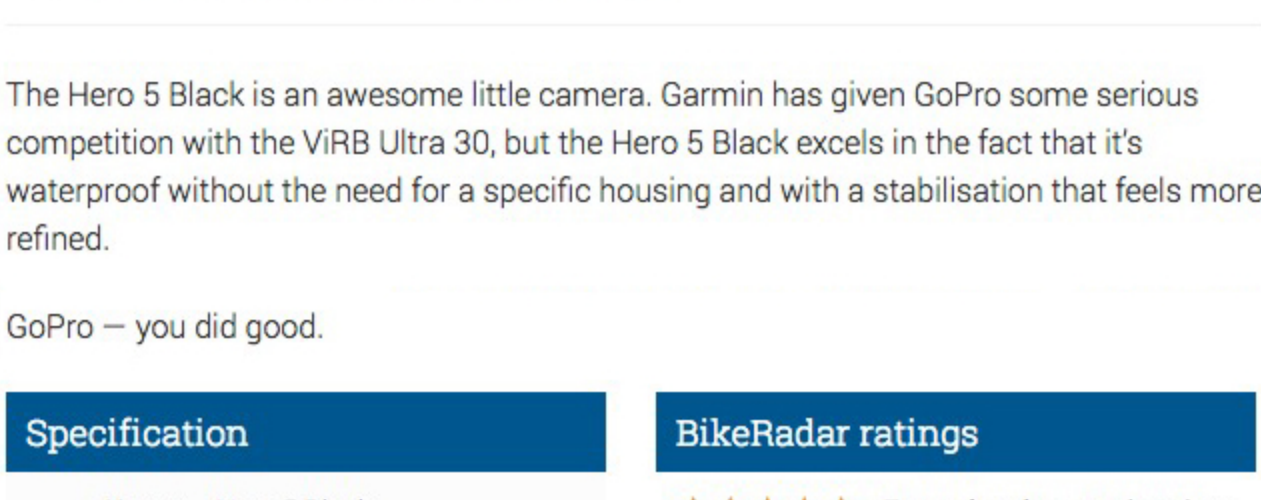


📷 It's got top-notch electronic image stabilisation

As with other new action cameras, like the [Garmin ViRB Ultra 30](#), electronic image stabilisation is now a core part of the Hero 5 family of cameras – and I can safely say that it's been done incredibly well. You get a bit of a floaty feeling with the footage but nothing that ever dips into motion sickness territory.

Stabilisation is available in a mix of resolutions that are below 4k and below 60fps, so you get a decent range of choice. We would say that given how good the stabilisation is, we would consider keeping it on all the time unless battery life is an issue.

GoPro Hero 5 Black vs. Hero 4 Black vs. Garmin ViRB Ultra 30



📷 There's one-touch recording

So far, so good. but how does the Hero 5 Black compare to its rivals? Well we've been using the GoPro Hero 4 Black for ages and like it a lot, in fact it's previously been the go-to action camera for our video production team. We did [recently review the Garmin ViRB Ultra 30](#) though, and loved it – the 4K image quality is better than the Hero 4 Black, its got some clever features like electronic image stabilisation, voice control, live broadcasting...

... but we can confidently say that the new GoPro Hero 5 Black is better than both its predecessors and the new Garmin ViRB Ultra 30. Image quality is considerably better than the Hero 4 Black and we think it's probably better than the ViRB Ultra 30 as well.

They've all got fairly similar ergonomics, the buttons are in roughly the same place, but the menu layout on the Hero 5 seems to be better than either. Image stabilisation is also better on the Hero 5 Black than on the Garmin ViRB Ultra 30, it seems a bit more refined.

Battery life is much better on the Hero 5 Black too – GoPro estimates that the Hero 4 Black lasts around 1 hour 20 minutes filming in 1080p at 60fps with WiFi turned off, while the new Hero 5 Black lasted 1 hour 54 minutes for us in similar conditions. The Garmin ViRB Ultra 30 lasted 1 hour 51 minutes for us from a full charge at 1080p on 25fps, with no GPS or additional connectivity.

GoPro Hero 5 Black conclusion

📷 It somehow looks the same, but also different

The Hero 5 Black is an awesome little camera. Garmin has given GoPro some serious competition with the ViRB Ultra 30, but the Hero 5 Black excels in the fact that it's waterproof without the need for a specific housing and with a stabilisation that feels more refined.

GoPro – you did good.

Specification	BikeRadar ratings
Name: Hero 5 Black	★★★★★ Exceptional: a genuine class leader
Built by: GoPro	★★★★★ Very good: one of the best you can buy
Available Colours: Black	★★★★★ Good: it'll do the job well
Batteries Included: Yes	★★★★★ Average
Splashproof: Yes	★★★★★ Average average: flawed in some way
Case Included: Yes	★★★★★ Poor: simply put, don't bother
Waterproof: Yes	★★★★★ Dangerous, stupid or both
Max Movie Recording Resolution: 4K	
Microphone Included: Yes	
Average Total Run Time: 2	

	Age: 29	Height: 172cm
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Discipline: Cyclocross & road

Preferred Terrain: Mud, gravel and beat up roads

Current Bikes: Focus Mares CX 1, Canyon Grand Canyon CF SL, Cannondale Synapse

Dream Bike: Moots Routt RSL

Beer of Choice: Monkey 47 gin

Location: Bristol, UK

Reuben Bakker-Dyos

Videographer

[Twitter](#)

[Strava](#)