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Mio Alpha Optical Heart Rate Monitor In-Depth Review (Bluetooth Smart/ANT+)

FEBRUARY 12, 2013 by DC RAINMAKER | MIO » PRODUCT REVIEWS | COMMENTS (224)

The Mio Alpha unit may represent the longest I've ever actually tested something before writing   review. I initi lly
got the chance to use a unit back in July for a quick test run as t ev were in the midst of their Kickstarter camp ign

production units. During this time I've been collecting mounds of data. Large stockpiles of it really. I've got a crystal clear understanding of how well the product works, and where it falters. So, how is it? Well, read on to find out.

In doing so, I've got a pretty good grasp on how the unit works, as well as all the inside and out details. In the case of the Alpha watch, I bought and paid for the Bluetooth Smart version, but Mio (company behind Alpha) also sent over two units (ANT+ and Bluetooth Smart) to test ahead of them being publically available. These will be going back to them shortly. Simple as that. Sorta like hiking in wilderness trails – leave only footprints.

Lastly, at the end of the day keep in mind I'm just like any other regular triathlete out there. I write these reviews because I'm inherently a curious person with a technology background (my day job), and thus I try and be as complete as I can. But, if I've missed something or if you spot something that doesn't quite jive – just let me know and I'll be happy to get it all sorted out. Also, because the technology world constantly changes, I try and go back and update these reviews as new features and functionality are added – or if bugs are fixed.

Unboxing:

There are actually two variants of the Mio Alpha unit, one is Bluetooth Smart enabled, and the other ANT+ enabled. For those who bought-in via Kickstarter, they had the choice of either Bluetooth Smart, or ANT+. However, these days, they are also selling the Bluetooth Smart variant.

That said, the packaging is identical on both. With the only difference between the two being the tiny little sticker on the outside, and then the little logo on the back of the band itself. Thus, I'm only going to unbox one, rather than just duplicate it twice.

Each unit comes in a small square box. Slightly larger than a Rubik's cube.

As I noted earlier, the only difference between the two variants from a visual standpoint is the little ANT+ or Bluetooth Smart logo. In this case, both units are the color 'Shadow' (read: Black).

As you crack open the boxes you'll find the heart rate watch staring back up at ya:

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