

Review: Samsung Galaxy S8 Active is a survivor

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Getting a new phone is exciting. Worrying about keeping that new phone safe is not so exciting.

Sure, you can encase it in a protective case from Otterbox, but those cases are not exactly convenient to use when it comes to having to charge your phone or plug in headphones. The little rubber covers are a pain when you need access the ports.

What if the phone manufacturers just made phones that could withstand all that punishment?

Well, Samsung has been doing just that for the last few years with the Active model of their Galaxy phones.

I've been testing the Samsung Galaxy S8 Active (thanks to AT&T for the loaner) and have found it to be quite robust, while maintaining the features that Galaxy S8 customers expect and even doing better on some key features like [battery](#) life.

TOUGH ENOUGH?

So what makes the S8 Active so tough?

Samsung has engineered the S8 Active to some impressive specifications.

It's IP68-certified to be dust and water proof. You can submerge it in up to 5 feet of water for up to 30 minutes.

The S8 Active is also MIL-STD-810G compliant against temperature, dust, shock/vibration and low pressure/high altitude. It has a screen that's shatter resistant from drops up to 5 feet on a flat surface.

So dropping it on the ground or into your pool shouldn't kill it. That's usually what causes most phones to need repair - or replacement.

REALLY A GALAXY S8?

So what does the S8 Active give up in the way of features when compared to the Galaxy S8?

Surprisingly, not so much.

The Active has the same screen, a 5.8-inch with a resolution of 2,560 by 1,440 pixels covered with Corning Gorilla Glass 5.

It also has the same cameras. The main camera has a 12-megapixel sensor and [optical image stabilization](#) while the selfie camera with an 8-megapixel sensor. The fingerprint sensor is next to the camera lens on the phone's back.

They use the same Qualcomm Snapdragon 835 processor and both have 64 gigabytes of storage, four gigabytes of RAM and a microSD card slot for up to 256 gigabytes of extra storage.

DIFFERENCES

The S8 Active differs from the Galaxy S8 and S8-plus in a few ways.

The Active does not have curved edges on its screen glass like the Galaxy S8. It's built more like a traditional smartphone with a flat screen and flat back sandwiched around a metal body that forms the edges.

There are rubber bumpers around each corner to absorb shock for drops.

The other big difference is with the battery.

The Galaxy S8 has a 3,000 milliamp-hour battery, but Samsung has bumped the S8 Active's battery to 4,000 mAh.

I haven't seen any breakout of the increased life expectancy, but I'll just say I never even came close to running down the battery after a day's use.

So, what's the difference in size?

The Galaxy S8 measures 5.86-by-2.68-by-0.31 inches and weighs 5.47 ounces.

The S8 Active is 5.98-by-2.95-by-0.39 inches and weighs 7.34 ounces.

Yes, it's bigger and heavier, but for a phone that is tough to kill and has more [battery life](#) I'm happy to put up with a bit more bulk, especially factoring in you don't need a case for protection.

PRICING AND AVAILABILITY

The Samsung S8 Active is exclusive to AT&T, and it's available in meteor gray or titanium gold. The cash price is \$849.99 (\$100 more than the S8), or \$28.34 per month for 30 months.

CONCLUSIONS

So, who needs the S8 Active?

Anyone who is extra hard on their phone is a prime candidate for the S8

Active.

If you drop your phone, toss it in a bag or even in a pocket with your keys or have had to have phones replaced because you give them a dunk, you'll want to look into it.

If you find yourself searching for a charger in the middle of the afternoon, you'll certainly benefit from the bigger battery.

Sure, it's not as elegant looking as the S8. It's beefy, but I think that's a pretty good look.

If I'm headed out to buy an S8, considering how hard I am on my [phone](#), I'd choose the S8 Active.

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Pros: Tough, waterproof. Bigger battery.

Cons: Expensive

Bottom Line: For me, the S8 Active is the clear choice over the Galaxy S8.

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