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Update: Slingbag backs up Axio's Hardsleeve



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If it seems like we've been discussing a lot of MacBook stuff here lately, yeah, there's been more than we've expected, some interesting, some not. Axio's new **Slingbag** (aka **Sling Bag**, \$50) is on the edge. It's one of those accessories-for-an-accessory sort of concepts: you buy it if you got one of Axio's cool hard plastic Hardsleeves for your MacBook or MacBook Pro, then realized that the Hardsleeve lacked for a carrying strap and extra pockets. Slingbag has enough room inside to fit the Hardsleeve-covered 13" or 15" MacBooks without a problem, and alternately can hold any MacBook up to 17" with no Hardsleeve attached.

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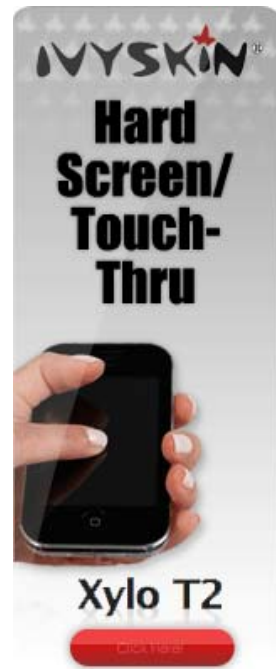
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Well, sorta. In order to hold the thick, big Hardsleeve, Slingbag's laptop compartment has to be on the capacious side, and though it's padded, it's not exactly packed with memory foam or a removable insert to keep your 1" thick, Hardsleeve-less laptop from bouncing around. This is really a bag for the Hardsleeve, albeit a nicely appointed one, with three pockets large enough for any accessories you might want to lug around, two zippered, and one Velcro-shut. One of the zippered pockets features a protected hole for use with an iPod's headphone cord; the other has spaces for pens and keys.



Another surprise is that the front flap is basically just there for padding - what appears to be a zippered compartment near its top is actually just a stylized stripe in the nylon exterior. The case's back, however, actually places an unsecured pocket under this stripe, appropriate perhaps for a notepad, magazines, or something else that isn't loose enough or likely to fall out while it's being carried. An adjustable-length but non-detachable strap is also found on the back, with a generously-sized, nicely padded shoulder piece. As the product's name suggests, Slingbag's intended to be slung, not carried on your back, and the strap makes slinging plenty comfortable.





Necessary? No. The Hardsleeve may well work fine on its own, depending on your needs. But with a total price of \$130 for the Hardsleeve and Slingbag combination, you're looking at about the same total investment you'd make for most of Axio's other full-sized backpacks, such as Fuse '06, Urban, or Swift, and you get the versatility of two pieces that can be used with or without each other. Speaking for ourselves, we'd be inclined to prefer a single-piece option like Swift, or to consider (for smaller laptops such as the 13" MacBook) some of Axio's less expensive hard cases, but the Slingbag/Hardsleeve combination will have its fans.

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