

Poimo, the e-bike

- 1 Researchers in Japan have developed a new twist on the electric bike that's small enough to carry in a backpack. Called Poimo – short for Portable and Inflatable Mobility – the e-bike was developed by a team at the University of Tokyo, who were interested in more efficient ways to handle short and medium distance transportation. They decided to focus on a design for a collapsible, lightweight e-bike that people could carry with them on public transportation and use for what they call 'one-mile mobility'. This could include travelling to locations that aren't close to public transportation routes or moving between neighbourhoods that don't have any direct bus or train connections.
- 2 Poimo is built around an inflatable rectangular fabric frame made from thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU) fabric, according to a report in Spectrum. The bike comes with a small electric pump that can fully inflate the frame in around a minute, reaching a pressure of between six and seven pounds per square inch, half of what a soccer ball would be. Two pairs of small rubber wheels attach to the bottom of the inflatable frame, along with a small electric motor, and a wireless controller that attaches to the bike's handlebars.
- 3 The e-bike weighs just 12 pounds and can be broken down and folded to fit inside an ordinary backpack, making it ideal for carrying on public transportation and using for the last mile or less of a journey. While they hope Poimo could one day become a commercial product, the team says the current prototype isn't quite ready for the masses yet. They're working to make the bike even lighter, sturdier, and more ergonomic in the future. They are optimistic that future versions of the prototype will be able to make it smaller and more durable, allowing them to prepare a final version for commercial release.

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