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BLEEX: Robotic Exoskeleton Making Strides

The Berkeley Lower Extremity Exoskeleton (BLEEX), a DARPA robotics engineering project that is designed to help foot soldiers carry more supplies for longer distances, was demonstrated in California earlier this week.

The user straps the exoskeleton legs onto his own, and puts on a backpack with an engine, control system and space for materiel. The robotic device could also assist other professionals, like firemen carrying heavy equipment.



The user of this device controls it purely with body

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SF Inventions Related to Robotics:

[Droid-](#)

A contraction of "android", it actually describes one of a variety of robots. (GeorgeLucas)

[R. Daneel Olivaw-](#)

A human-like robot, skilled in police work. (IsaacAsimov)

[Mandroid-](#)

A humanoid robot; a robot in the shape of a person. (RichardMorgan)

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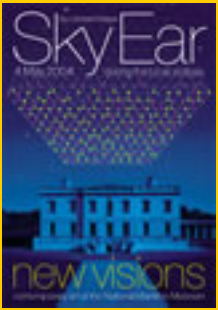
A room or space set aside for machinery when not in use. (WilliamGibson)

[Robot-](#)

An (usually human-shaped) artifact with the same kinds of abilities as a human. (KarelCapek)

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movements. When the user moves his legs, the exoskeleton provides additional power in concert with the natural movement.

This is exactly what Robert Heinlein visualized in his 1959 novel *Starship Troopers*; the [robotic powered suit](#) also had no keyboard, steering wheel or joystick for controls:

"The real genius in the design is that you don't have to control the suit; you just wear it, like your clothes, like skin."

For a more stylish, urban gear version, see the [polycarbon exo](#) from William Gibson's 1988 novel *Mona Lisa Overdrive*. See [Robotic Artificial Exoskeleton Takes the Strain](#) and [DARPAtech 2004](#) for more information.

(Thanks to [Ray Girvan](#) for the tip on this one!)

(Story submitted 3/6/2004)

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