

 **How To Choose The Right Headphones … May 2015**

The pair chosen will depend on your lifestyle, the environment you are listening in and the type of activity you will be using them for. Headphones come in such a great variety that they remain a fascinating challenge. We hope the following information will help you find the right product.

* **Consider the form factor ...**

**Portable – Small Size, Big Performance**

It is always worthwhile upgrading from the standard headphones supplied with your device. Choose from either in-ears (rest in the outer ear) or ear-canals (fit like an ear plug). Ear-canals help to block out external noise; different sized ear buds allow you to customise the fit – and remember this is paramount to the sound quality too. (All our ear bud headphones come with multiple tips – but not all of our customers’ try them all out first – remember too, that your ear canals may be differently sized left and right). Some of our newer designs have four sizes – the CX X.XX range for example, so look this out if you have had problems with ear bud fit in the past). Earbuds are perfect for use on the go, ideal if you wear glasses or have ears that stick out a bit! However, the sound quality in some cases is not quite the same in general as an over-ear pair and some people also find them less comfortable.

**On and Over-Ear – What’s the Difference?**

On-Ear designs usually have small pads that sit against your ears (we call this supra-aural) which means that you experience some sound leakage both ways, even with a closed-design – you can hear outside noise and the outside can hear a little of your music. They are generally the most comfortable and the lightest to carry around. Full-size headphones completely encircle the ear (we call this circum-aural). They tend to be fairly large and come in both open and closed varieties (we will explain what this means in more detail later). Full-size headphones provide great bass, sound clarity and isolation from outside noise. They usually come with a large amount of padding – however, they are also less portable and can make your ears warm when used for long periods.

* **Consider the application …**

# Sport – Sennheiser Products are Extensively Tested via University Studies

Most importantly you should look for a snug and secure design. A pair that are sweat-and water resistant will have a long lifespan. For active sports such as running and cycling a neckband or headband design is popular (and safe), for the gym ear-canals help to block out existing AV systems. A lightweight design and secure fit is also a factor to consider.

# Lifestyle

Enjoy both an eye-catching design and outstanding sound. Consider portability, the weight of the headphones, cable lengths, phone compatibility (choose between MP3, iOS and Android operating systems) and the overall design aesthetics. The MOMENTUM range follows the trend for vintage styling, the URBANITE family has a more contemporary look. MOMENTUM 2.0 now comes in Around-Ear, On-Ear and BlueTooth/noise-cancelling variants. URBANITE comes in Around-Ear, On-Ear and a BlueTooth Around-Ear Design. Colours vary, along with the case design and materials used.

**Travel / Portable**

# Wireless Bluetooth

The latest in headphone technology ... BT offers the maximum in convenience, cable-free. It is designed for portable use. If your PC for example, does not have Bluetooth functionality, it is still possible to use Bluetooth devices with an adaptor eg., BTD 800 USB. BT devices can also be used to make and take calls. Pairing your device is quick and easy and because Bluetooth uses short-distance radio waves to create a ‘personal area network’ of up to 100 sq m, it’s usually reliably interference free. And it’s a global standard which means it can be found in pretty much every piece of new technology around. The MOMENTUM WL Around-Ear and On-Ear range uses the very latest 4.0 protocol (which is also backwards compatible with all other versions of BT). The older MM range uses 2.0.

For advice on pairing check out our instructions manuals on the product pages via our website.

# Wireless Bluetooth with Noise-Cancelling

Ideal for commuters, frequent flyers or even those who work in a noisy office; noise-cancelling headphones use batteries and electronics to block out up to 90% of noise for real listening pleasure. Portability is a factor to consider, along with battery life. The best measure is to look for a drop in dB across a wide range of frequencies, check out the latest MOMENTUMS.

# Home Listening

Here, you have a couple of big decisions to make: wired or wireless. If choosing a wired option, 3m is the ideal length. With a wired pair, you need to consider your budget and what that should deliver. Our high-end Audiophile range (beginning with the HD 5XX series) conveys the more subtle aspects of sound reproduction which also includes the rendition of lower level detail and captures the recorded ambience.

The most common form of wireless headphones use radio frequency technology – with up to 80 sq m range from the source (which could be either TV or Hi-Fi). These are ideal for listening to music or movies late at night without disturbing anyone – or if you would prefer freedom from cables. Our RS range of headphones is designed specifically for use with your TV or HiFi and provides the best quality wireless connection via either FM (RS 120-II) or uncompressed digital audio (RS 165, RS 175, RS 185 or RS 195).

If your TV does not have a headphone socket then you can still use wireless headphones if you have stereo phono outs (usually white and red) – most TVs will have one or the other, if not both. You may also need a TV headphone out adaptor if you do connect via the phono outs in some cases.

Another factor to consider is whether you would prefer an open or closed-back design. Open is the most natural way of listening and can be more pleasing, open and airy, but it also means that everyone around you can hear what you are listening to. In contrast, a closed-backed headphone will both seal out distractions around you and seal in your music for maximum enjoyment and relaxation. However, there’s no right answer!

**DJ or Professional Use**

A closed back design is essential for these applications. This will reduce the amount of sound from outside that you hear as well as preventing others from hearing what you are listening to. Several of our headphones (the HD 25 and the DJ series) offer a flip-away mechanism on one side of the headphones allowing you to listen with just one side of the headphones whilst hearing the outside world with the other – important for DJ’s. A flat-frequency response is also critical.

**PC & Gaming**

Two different ranges of product are available tailored to each application – key factors open vs, closed, Dolby surround, single or dual-sided etc, type of console

* **A couple of final things to think about ….**

# Mic/Remote

Most headphones come with a remote and mic that works with Apple or Android-based phones. For Sennheiser, this is marked out with an ‘i’ on the end for Apple and a G or S for Android. Check out our [compatibility guide](http://senncom.com/comm/home_en.nsf/compatibility.html?ReadForm&lang=EN) if you are still not sure.

# Removable Cable

If you are prone to dropping things, getting cables caught on chairs etc … a replaceable cable might be a good choice!

# Durability and Warranty …

One of the reasons a new headphone is bought is often to replace one that is faulty or broken accidentally. Sennheiser headphones are German engineered and heavily tested. We have a comprehensive two-year warranty across the range.

* **And Finally ….**

IF you can, try them out in store first. Apart from the obvious test of sound quality, test out the fit and your preference between on-ear and around-ear. On-ears (as the name implies) sit on top of your ears. They do not go around your ears. Because they sit on top, some models can have more pressure on your ears than others (with DJ styled products, the fit will be close and compact to allow for active movement). Around-Ear designs will seal out more noise. At Sennheiser, we work to average measurements, but everyone has differently shaped ears and heads! Weight is an important factor too.

Let’s look at sound quality in a bit more detail. The best demo materials are songs that you know well. Old songs are best as they are usually a better indicator of the headphone’s range of sound. Modern music is usually compressed. Classical music is even better since it has so many different instruments that will really show the range of the headphones. Alternatively, it’s something acoustic with vocals, but if you know it, that’s most important. Really poor headphones are easy to judge quickly – you could find that the bass is just indistinct thump and boom. Perhaps the treble makes you want to turn down the volume? And be conscious of differences in volume – a louder headphone is not better because it is louder! Our URBANITE range easily beats the competition in this respect.

Of course, if you can’t listen to the headphones before you buy, check out quality reviews and forums.

Also remember that the first 50 – 100 hours of listening time ‘wear in’ the headphones and bring out the natural sound.

Our advice would also be to figure out how much you want to spend and start looking at models within that price bracket: here is a link to our [price list](http://portal.sennheiser.co.uk/pricelist-94).

Your music will only sound as good as the headphones you plug into it! Sennheiser headphones make music a truly pleasurable listening experience. Remember the beauty of headphones, is that there is something for everyone.

Further Tech Support: Please click [here](http://en-uk.sennheiser.com/headphone-advice) for further advice if needed from our team of Experts.

The Killer Questions!

What do you want/need the headphones for?

Mobile Phone, Tablet, PC, Sport/Fitness (and which type – in-ear vs ear-canal), Travel, TV Listening, Home Hi-Fi, Work, Other? ..

What features do you need/want?

Wired or Wireless (Bluetooth – mobile use or Radio Technology – home use), Noise-Cancelling, Noise Isolation (Passive, Ear-Canals), the ability to make phone calls via an in-line or on-ear mic, volume control, that they are foldable/portable (HD 2XX series, PX XXX series and MOMENTUM 2.0, also URBANITE), or that there is a removable cable eg., MOMENTUM, URBANITE, HD 5XX series and above.

What will they be connected to?

Phone either iOS (Apple), Android (Sony/HTC/LG/Nokia/Samsung), MP3 player (no ‘i’, ’S’ or ‘G’ needed, just audio only), Hi-Fi (HD 5XX series and above) or TV (HD 35 TV/HD 65 TV or RS range )? Also PC or Gaming (PC Chat, Gaming (Dolby options)

What style do I like?

In-ear, on-ear, over-ear, neckband, lifestyle (colour and materials)

Budget

Several factors come into play here. The amount you spend will depend on how often you use them – how important music is in your life. The quality of your device/system is also relevant and also the quality of downloaded music tracks for example.

The basic aspects when choosing any headphones are sound quality, design, comfort, value and durability. For some, sound quality is often the dominant factor in the choice. For others, it is about lifespan; for others it’s about how they look. And for many, most commonly it is the price.