

## Jargon buster

### Get to know your tech talk

■ **BLUETOOTH** Bluetooth is a radio technology that allows devices to work wirelessly. Some common uses for Bluetooth include games consoles and their controllers, some computer mice and keyboards, and phones (for example transferring data, such as a photo, from one phone to another). The devices have to be close to each other, usually within 10 metres.

■ **MULTI-FUNCTION BUTTON**

Bluetooth headsets have few buttons, helping keep the device small and easy to use while it's on your ear. There is usually one button that offers access to most of the main functions.

■ **PAIRING** To link two Bluetooth devices, such as your phone to your headset, they must be paired. To do this, turn both devices on, switching on Bluetooth on your phone as well. Then search for Bluetooth devices with your phone. When the phone finds the headset, select the pair option.

# Talk on the run

## Bluetooth headsets offer an easy, hands-free way to talk on your mobile

You may think they look silly, but Bluetooth headsets aren't just for busy executives – they can help average consumers keep on the right side of the law.

While driving, legally you can't make or receive a call, text or do anything with your phone while it's in your hand, or held between your ear and shoulder, unless you're safely parked, you're in a traffic jam with your engine off, or you have to call the emergency services. Using a Bluetooth headset with a Bluetooth-compatible phone gets around this, allowing you to talk on your phone while driving.

That is not to say that using a Bluetooth headset while driving is completely safe. There is still a

risk of getting distracted, so use it with caution.

You can also use a Bluetooth headset out of the car, wherever you'd like to talk keeping both hands free.

We tested 14 models, and two had some interesting features. The Iqua (9) has an integrated photovoltaic cell that uses light to charge the battery while in use to extend talk time. It did well in our battery-life test.

Although it isn't particularly well built, the Aliph (10) is possibly the most stylish headset on test, and has a noise-cancelling feature to help minimise background noise. This worked well, but overall sound quality on the headset was just average.

## CHEAP CHAT



which? **EXCEPTIONAL VALUE**

The Orange BT4517 (7) is by far the cheapest headset we tested, costing just £13. Yet it outperforms most models on sound quality and offers a table-topping 12.5 hours of talk time. It isn't a Best Buy, however, as it's less easy to use than its rivals. Pairing is a bit trickier, and it isn't as solidly built as some other models we tested. Overall, it's still a good choice, proving that Bluetooth headsets don't have to be expensive.

## How we test



### How the headsets stand up to our experts' examinations

We measure the sound quality of the headset in a special test chamber using a dummy with an artificial 'ear'. We measure the quality of sound sent and received by each headset, both in a silent environment, and with 70db background noise.

### Tumble turns

There are two aspects to our build-quality test. First, we carefully inspect all parts of the headset and supplied

accessories for build construction and quality to see whether there are any loose parts, for example.

Then each device goes through our tumble test. An 80cm metal drum (pictured) turns consistently for five minutes. Afterwards we reinspect the device and see whether it still works. All of these models passed this test, although some suffered cosmetic damage.



**68% Jabra BT5020 £26**

which? **BEST BUY**

Sound quality on this Jabra is very good. If you are in a noisy environment and sometimes struggle to hear your caller, this is the model to go for. It's also the easiest to use. Only below-average comfort and a lack of additional earpieces take the gloss off this Best Buy. It's cheapest at Amazon.

**WORTH KNOWING** As well as the normal ringing alert, you can also set it to vibrate.

Available Online Standby time 300hr  
Low-battery warning sound Yes

## Contacts

**Aliph** 020 3027 2094  
www.us.jawbone.com

**Bluetrek** www.bluetrek.com  
**Iqua** www.iqua.com

**Jabra** 01784 220140  
www.jabra.com

**Motorola** 0871 641 2130  
www.motorola.com/uk

**Nokia** 0845 045 5555  
www.nokia.co.uk

**Orange** 0800 079 2000  
www.orange.co.uk

**Plantronics** 01793 848999  
www.plantronics.com

**Sennheiser** 01494 551551  
www.sennheiser.co.uk

MODEL	SPECIFICATION								WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE				SCORE %
	PRICE (£)	WEIGHT (g)	CHARGE TIME (hr:m)	CHARGING	TALK TIME (hr:m)	EARPIECES	MUTE	HOLD	SOUND QUALITY	VOICE DIALLING	COMFORT	EASE OF USE	
1 JABRA BT5020	26	15.3	2:00	M, U	9:50	0	✓	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	68
2 PLANTRONICS Explorer 220	25	15.6	2:00	M	8:19	1			★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	67
3 BLUETREK G2+	30	13.7	2:40	M	12:09	0	✓	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	66
4 MOTOROLA H680	50	10.7	2:30	M	10:50	3	✓	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	66
5 JABRA BT8040	50	9.8	2:00	M, U	9:55	3	✓	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	65
6 JABRA BT2020	30	15.4	2:00	M	8:27	2		✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	63
7 ORANGE BT4517	13	14.1	3:00	M	12:30	1			★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	62
8 NOKIA BH-701	60	13.3	2:00	M	6:12	1	✓		★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	57
9 IQUA 603 SUN	40	16.1	2:00	M	10:22	1	✓		★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★	56
10 ALIPH Jawbone	60	21.0	2:00	M, U	6:43	4			★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	55
11 SENNHEISER FLX70	45	11.1	2:00	M, C	5:02	3	✓		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	55
12 MOTOROLA H12	52	11.2	2:30	M	4:55	3	✓	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	54
13 NOKIA BH-101	25	14.4	2:00	M	8:10	1		✓	★★★★	★★	★★	★★	50
14 NOKIA BH 209	30	11.0	2:00	M	6:43	2			★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★	45

## USING THE TABLE

The more stars the better.

### Specification

**Price** See p47. **Charge time**

As stated by the manufacturer.

**Charging** Methods available with

supplied accessories: M = mains,

U = USB, C = in-car charger. **Talk**

**time** How long a fully charged battery lasted in continuous use.

**Earpieces** Supplied earpieces of different sizes, in addition to the earpiece fitted to the headset.

### Test performance

**Sound quality** Speaking and listening, with background noise.

**Voice dialling** How well our phone, via the headset, recognised a name spoken and dialled it. **Comfort** Weight, feel, fit.

### Score

Ignores price and is based on:

Sound quality	35%
Ease of use	30%
Battery life	25%
Voice dialling	5%
Build quality	5%



## 67% Plantronics Explorer 220 £25

Although the Explorer 220 looks quite plain compared with other Bluetooth headsets, this model offers the best sound quality overall and good speech recognition when voice dialling. Battery life is good, but not as good as other Best Buys. Unlike the other top models, there are no mute or hold functions. It's cheapest at Maplin.

**WE LIKE** It has the clearest instruction manual on test.

Available Maplin Standby time 200hr  
Low-battery warning sound Yes



## 66% Bluetrek G2+ £30

The Bluetrek's battery lasts much longer than our other Best Buys – we managed more than 12 hours of talk time, and standby time is almost two and a half weeks. Sound quality is quite good, just missing out on four stars. The two volume buttons are a little tricky to work, though it's easy to use overall. It's cheapest at Fonejunkie.com.

**WE LIKE** Unlike most other models, it's good at voice dialling.

Available Online Standby time 400hr  
Low-battery warning sound Yes



## 66% Motorola H680 £50

Although the user manual isn't good, you'll find this Motorola easy to use once you familiarise yourself with it – second only to the Jabra (1). It has good battery life, and is comfortable and lightweight, though there are better headsets for less money. It's cheapest at the Carphone Warehouse.

**WE LIKE** A carry case is included with the headset.

Available Carphone Warehouse Standby time 264hr Low-battery warning sound Yes



## 65% Jabra BT8040 £50

This Jabra is the most comfortable headset on test, partly due to its low weight (9.8g). The sent voice is loud and clear; however, though receiving is clear, it isn't terribly loud. It has some interesting features befitting its higher price, such as being able to pair with two mobiles at the same time. It's cheapest at the Carphone Warehouse.

**WE LIKE** You can charge it using a USB, like the BT5020 (1).

Available Carphone Warehouse Standby time 200hr Low-battery warning sound Yes