

I'm not a robot



























open" is there for marketing purposes. There is no exact definition for the term semi-open headphone. Where the open-back approach has hardly any measure to block sound at the outer side of the diaphragm and the closed-back approach really has a closed chamber at the outer side of the diaphragm, a semi-open headphone can have a chamber or partially block sound while letting sound through via openings or vents. Closed-backClosed-back (or sealed) styles have the back of the ear cups closed. They usually block so operation. Closed-back headphones usually can produce stronger low frequencies than open-back headphones. Main article: Headset (audio)A typical exampel of a headset used for voice chatsA headset is a headphone combined with a microphone. Headsets provide the equivalent functionality of a telephone handset with hands-free operation. Among applications for headsets, besides telephone use, are aviation, theatre or television studio intercom systems, and console or PC gaming. Headsets are made with either a single-earpiece (mono) or a double-earpiece (mono to both ears or stereo). The microphone arm of headsets is either an external microphone type where the microphone is held in front of the user's mouth, or a voicetube type where the microphone is housed in the earpiece and speech reaches it by means of a hollow tube.Sony Ericsson Cordless bluetooth headsetTelephone headsets connect to a fixed-line telephone system. A telephone headset functions by replacing the handset of a telephone. Headsets for standard corded telephones are fitted with a standard 4P4C commonly called an RJ-9 connector. Headsets are also available with 2.5mm jack sockets for many DECT phones and other applications. Cordless bluetooth headsets are available, and often used with mobile telephones. Headsets are widely used for telephone-intensive jobs, in particular by call centre workers. They are also used by anyone wishing to hold telephone conversations with both hands free. For older models of telephones, the headset microphone impedance is different from that of the original handset, requiring a telephone amplifier for the telephone headset. A telephone amplifier provides basic pin-alignment similar to a telephone headset adaptor, but it also offers sound amplification for the microphone as well as the loudspeakers. Most models of telephone amplifiers offer volume control for loudspeaker as well as microphone, mute function and switching between headset and handset. Telephone amplifiers are powered by batteries or AC adaptors.Aviation headset[46]Communication headsets are also used for two-way communication and typically consist of a headphone and attached microphone. Such headsets are used in a variety of professions as aviation, military, sports, music, and many service-oriented sectors. They come in all shapes and sizes, depending on use, required noise attenuation, and fidelity of communication needed.Unwanted sound from the environment can be reduced by excluding sound from the ear by passive noise isolation, or, often in conjunction with isolation, by active noise cancellation.In-ears are among those good for noise isolation.Passive noise isolation is essentially using the body of the earphone, either over or in the ear, as a passive earplug that simply blocks out sound. The headphone types that provide most attenuation are in-ear canal headphones and closed-back headphones, both circumaural and supra aurial. Open-back and earbud headphones provide some passive noise isolation, but much less than the others. Typical closed-back headphones block 8 to 12dB, and in-ears anywhere from 10 to 15dB. Some models have been specifically designed for drummers to facilitate the drummer monitoring the recorded sound while reducing sound directly from the drums as much as possible. Such headphones claim to reduce ambient noise by around 25dB.Active noise-cancelling headphones use a microphone, amplifier, and speaker to pick up, amplify, and play ambient noise in phase-reversed form; this to some extent cancels out unwanted noise from the environment without affecting the desired sound source, which is not picked up and reversed by the microphone. They require a power source, usually a battery, to drive their circuitry. Active noise cancelling headphones can attenuate ambient noise by 20dB or more, but the active circuitry is mainly effective on constant sounds and at lower frequencies, rather than sharp sounds and voices. Some noise cancelling headphones are designed mainly to reduce low-frequency engine and travel noise in aircraft, trains, and automobiles, and are less effective in environments with other types of noise.Headphones use various types of transducer to convert electrical signals to sound.A typical moving-coil headphone transducerThe moving coil driver, more commonly referred to as a "dynamic" driver is the most common type used in headphones. It consists of a stationary magnet element affixed to the frame of the headphone, which sets up a static magnetic field. The magnet in headphones is typically composed of ferrite or neodymium. A voice coil, a light coil of wire, is suspended in the magnetic field of the magnet, attached to a diaphragm, typically fabricated from lightweight, high-stiffness-to-mass-ratio cellulose, polymer, carbon material, paper or the like. When the varying current of an audio signal is passed through the coil, it creates a varying magnetic field that reacts with the static magnetic field, exerting a varying force on the coil causing it and the attached diaphragm to vibrate. The vibrating diaphragm pushes on the air to produce sound waves. This section contains promotional content. Please help improve it by removing promotional language and inappropriate external links, and by adding encyclopedic text written from a neutral point of view. (March 2025) (Learn how and when to remove this message)MEMS speakersMEMS (Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems) speaker technology represents a transformative advancement in the field of portable audio devices.[47] These speakers are fabricated using semiconductor manufacturing techniques, integrating piezoelectric actuators on silicon substrates to create ultra-thin, lightweight, and power-efficient audio transducers. Compared to traditional voice coil or balanced armature speakers, MEMS speakers are significantly smaller, easier to integrate into compact designs, and exhibit superior scalability for modern consumer electronics.[48] The key innovation behind MEMS speakers lies in the use of piezoelectric materials, such as PZT (lead zirconate titanate), which allow precise out-of-plane movements to generate sound. These materials enable actuators to produce high-force, large-displacement vibrations, resulting in deep bass and crisp treble, all from a single, compact transducer. MEMS speakers also consume less power and can be soldered using surface-mount technology (SMT), simplifying integration into advanced devices.Applications of MEMS speaker technology span a variety of sectors.[49] In consumer electronics, MEMS speakers are a natural fit for True Wireless Stereo (TWS) earphones, wearables, and smart glasses, delivering high-resolution audio, transparency features, and ultrasound functionalities. They are also pivotal in hearing aids, especially for models designed for mild hearing loss. In healthcare, MEMS speakers enable MRI-compatible headphones, while in industrial applications, they are utilized in testing high-performance MEMS microphones. As demand for compact, efficient audio solutions grows, MEMS speakers are poised to redefine portable audio standards, providing a scalable and versatile alternative to traditional technologies.[50]Electrostatic loudspeaker diagramElectrostatic drivers consist of a thin, electrically charged diaphragm, typically a coated PET film membrane, suspended between two perforated metal plates (electrodes). The electrical sound signal is applied to the electrodes creating an electrical field; depending on the polarity of this field, the diaphragm is drawn towards one of the plates. Air is forced through the perforations; combined with a continuously changing electrical signal driving the membrane, a sound wave is generated. Electrostatic headphones are usually more expensive than moving-coil ones, and are comparatively uncommon. In addition, a special amplifier is required to amplify the signal to deflect the membrane, which often requires electrical potentials in the range of 100 to 1,000volts.Due to the extremely thin and light diaphragm membrane, often only a few micrometers thick, and the complete absence of moving metalwork, the frequency response of electrostatic headphones usually extends well above the audible limit of approximately 20kHz. The high-frequency response means that the low-midband distortion level is maintained to the top of the audible frequency band, which is generally not the case with moving coil drivers. Also, the frequency response peakiness regularly seen in the high-frequency region with moving coil drivers is absent. Well-designed electrostatic headphones can produce significantly better sound quality than other types.[citation needed]Electrostatic headphones require a voltage source generating 100V to over 1kV, and are on the user's head. Since the invention of insulators, there is no actual danger. They do not need to deliver significant electric current, which further limits the electrical hazard to the wearer in case of fault. An electret driver functions along the same electromechanical means as an electrostatic driver. However, the electret driver has a permanent charge built into it, whereas electrostatics have the charge applied to the driver by an external generator. Electret and electrostatic headphones are relatively uncommon. Original electrets were also typically cheaper and lower in technical capability and fidelity than electrostatics. Patent applications from 2009 to 2013 have been approved that show by using different materials, i.e. a "Fluorinated cyclic olefin electret film". Frequency response chart readings can reach 50kHz at 100 db. When these new improved electrets are combined with a traditional dome headphone driver, headphones can be produced that are recognised by the Japan Audio Society as worthy of joining the Hi Res Audio program. US patents 8,559,660 B2, 7,732,547 B2, 7,879,446 B2, 7,498,699 B2.Planar magnetic (also known as orthodynamic) headphones use similar technology to electrostatic headphones, with some fundamental differences. They operate similarly to planar magnetic loudspeakers.A planar magnetic driver consists of a relatively large membrane that contains an embedded wire pattern. This membrane is suspended between two sets of permanent, oppositely aligned, magnets. A current passed through the wires embedded in the membrane produces a magnetic field that reacts with the field of the permanent magnets to induce movement in the membrane, which produces sound.Balanced armature transducerArmature balanced and exerting no force on diaphragmArmature torqued and exerting a force on diaphragmA balanced armature is a sound transducer design primarily intended to increase the electrical efficiency of the element by eliminating the stress on the diaphragm characteristic of many other magnetic transducer systems. As shown schematically in the left diagram, it consists of a moving magnetic armature that is pivoted so it can move in the field of the permanent magnet. When precisely centered in the magnetic field there is no net force on the armature, hence the term "balanced". As illustrated in the right diagram, when there is electric current through the coil, it magnetizes the armature one way or the other, causing it to rotate slightly one way or the other about the pivot thus moving the diaphragm to make sound.A custom in-ear monitor which uses 8 balanced armatures in a triple crossover configuration (4 low/2 mid/2 high). Headphone designs often use multiple balanced armatures to provide a higher fidelity sound.The design is not mechanically stable; a slight imbalance makes the armature stick to one pole of the magnet. A fairly stiff restoring force is required to hold the armature in the "balance" position. Although this reduces its efficiency, this design can still produce more sound from less power than any other.[clarification needed] Popularized in the 1920s as Baldwin Mica Diaphragm radio headphones, balanced armature transducers were refined during World War II for use in military sound powered telephones. Some of these achieved astonishing electro-acoustic conversion efficiencies, in the range of 20% to 40%, for narrow bandwidth voice signals.Today they are typically used only in in-ear headphones and hearing aids, where their high efficiency and diminutive size is a major advantage.[51] They generally are limited at the extremes of the hearing spectrum (e.g. below 20Hz and above 16kHz) and require a better seal than other types of drivers to deliver their full potential. Higher-end models may employ multiple armature drivers, dividing the frequency ranges between them using a passive crossover network. A few combine an armature driver with a small moving-coil driver for increased bass output.The earliest loudspeakers for radio receivers used balanced armature drivers for their cones.[52]The thermoacoustic effect generates sound from the audio frequency Joule heating of the conductor, an effect that is not magnetic and does not vibrate the speaker. In 2013 a carbon nanotube thin-yarn earphone based on the thermoacoustic mechanism was demonstrated by a research group in Tsinghua University.[53] The as-produced CNT thin yarn earphone has a working element called CNT thin yarn thermoacoustic chip. Such a chip is composed of a layer of CNT thin yarn array supported by the silicon wafer, and periodic grooves with certain depth are made on the wafer by micro-fabrication methods to suppress the heat leakage from the CNT yarn to the substrate.[citation needed]Transducer technologies employed much less commonly for headphones include the Heil Air Motion Transformer (AMT), Piezoelectric film, Ribbon planar magnetic, Magnetostriction and Plasma or Ionic. The first Heil AMT headphone was marketed by ESS Laboratories and was essentially an ESS AMT tweeter from one of the company's speakers being driven at full range. Since the turn of the 21st century, only Precede of Switzerland have manufactured an AMT headphone. Piezoelectric film headphones were first developed by Pioneer, their two models used a flat sheet of film that limited the maximum volume of air movement. Currently, TakeT produces a piezoelectric film headphone shaped similarly to an AMT transducer but, which like the Precede driver, has a variation in the size of transducer folds over the diaphragm. It additionally incorporates a two way design by its inclusion of a dedicated tweeter/supertweeter panel. The folded shape of a diaphragm allows a transducer with a larger surface area to fit within smaller space constraints. This increases the total volume of air that can be moved on each excursion of the transducer given that radiating area.Magnetostriction headphones, sometimes sold under the label Bonephones, work by vibrating against the side of head, transmitting sound via bone conduction. This is particularly helpful in situations where the ears must be unobstructed, or for people who are deaf for reasons that do not affect the nervous apparatus of hearing. Magnetostriction headphones though, are limited in their fidelity compared to conventional headphones that rely on the normal workings of the ear. Additionally, in the mid-1980s, a French company called Audio Reference tried to market the Plasmasonic plasma headphone invented by Henri Bondar.[54][55] There are no known functioning examples left. Due to the small volume of air in a headphone, the plasma or ionic transducer can become a full range driver although the high temperatures and voltages needed makes them very rare. Sony MDR-7506 headphones in stowed configurationA micro audio amplifier for boosting the output power of smartphones etc. to headphones. Used for example to compensate a built-in volume limit in smartphones, the higher volume levels could, however, lead to ear damage.Headphones can prevent other people from hearing the sound, either for privacy or to prevent disturbing others, as in listening in a public library. They can also provide a level of sound fidelity greater than loudspeakers of similar cost. Part of their ability to do so comes from the lack of any need to perform room correction treatments with headphones. High-quality headphones can have an extremely flat low-frequency response down to 20Hz within 3dB. While a loudspeaker must use a relatively large cone (often 15" or 18") speaker driver to reproduce low frequencies, headphones can accurately reproduce bass and sub-bass frequencies with speakers drivers only 40-50 millimeters wide (or much smaller, as is the case with in-ear monitor headphones). Headphones' impressive low-frequency performance is possible because they are so much closer to the ear that they only need to move relatively small volumes of air.Marketed claims such as "frequency response 4Hz to 20kHz" are usually overstatements; the product's response at frequencies lower than 20Hz is typically very small.[56]Headphones are also useful for video games that use 3D positional audio processing algorithms, as they allow players to better judge the position of an off-screen sound source (such as the footsteps of an opponent or their gunfire).Although modern headphones have been particularly widely sold and used for listening to stereo recordings since the release of the Walkman, there is subjective debate regarding the nature of their reproduction of stereo sound. Stereo recordings represent the position of horizontal depth cues (stereo separation) via volume and phase differences of the sound in question between the two channels. When the sounds from two speakers mix, they create the phase difference the brain uses to locate direction. Through most headphones, because the right and left channels do not combine in this manner, the illusion of the phantom center can be perceived as lost. Hard panned sounds are also heard only in one ear rather than from one side.Binaural recordings use a different microphone technique to encode direction directly as phase, with very little amplitude difference below 2kHz, often using a dummy head. They can produce a surprisingly lifelike spatial impression through headphones. Commercial recordings almost always use stereo recording, rather than binaural, because loudspeaker listening is more common than headphone listening. It is possible to change the spatial effects of stereo sound on headphones, to better approximate the presentation of speaker reproduction, by using frequency-dependent cross-feed between the channels.Headsets can have ergonomic benefits over traditional telephone handsets. They allow call center agents to maintain better posture without needing to hand-hold a handset or tilt their head sideways to cradle it.[57][See also: Autocall] Applications from 2009 to 2013 have been approved that show by using different materials, i.e. a "Fluorinated cyclic olefin electret film". Extended periods of exposure to high sound pressure levels created by headphones at high volume settings may be damaging to hearing:[58][59] Nearly 50% of teenagers and young adults (12 to 35 years old) in middle and high income countries listen to unsafe levels of sound on their personal audio devices and smartphones.[60] However, one hearing expert found in 2012 (before the worldwide adoption of smartphones as the main personal listening devices) that "fewer than 5% of users select volume levels and listen frequently enough to risk hearing loss.[61] The International Telecommunication Union recently published "Guidelines for safe listening devices/systems" recommended that sound exposure not exceed 80 decibels, A-weighted dB(A) for a maximum of 40 hours per week.[62] The European Union have also set a similar limit for users of personal listening devices (80dB(A) for no more than 40 hours per week) and for each additional increase of 3-dB in sound exposure, the duration should be cut in half (83dB(A) for no more than 20 hours, 86dB(A) for 10 hours per week, 89dB(A) for 5 hours per week and so on. Most major manufacturers of smartphones now include some safety or volume limiting features and warning messaging in their devices.[63][64] though such practices have received mixed response from some segments of the buying who favor the personal choice of setting their own volume levels.The usual way of limiting sound volume on devices driving headphones is by limiting output power. This has the additional undesirable effect of being dependent of the efficiency of the headphones; a device producing the maximum allowed power may not produce adequate volume when paired with low-efficiency, high-impedance equipment, while the same amount of power can reach dangerous levels with very efficient earphones. Some studies have found that people are more likely to raise volumes to unsafe levels while performing strenuous exercise.[65] A Finnish study[66] recommended that exercisers should set their headphone volumes to half of their normal loudness and only use them for half an hour. Other than hearing risk, there is a general danger of listening to loud music in headphones can distract the listener and lead to injury and accidents.[67][68] Noise-cancelling headphones add ear risk. Several countries and states have made it illegal to wear headphones while driving or cycling.[43]There have also been numerous reports of contact dermatitis due to exposure to in-ear headphones such as Apple AirPods.[69][70] The contact dermatitis would be caused by in-ear headphones that contain gold, rubber, dyes, acrylates, or methacrylates.[69] However, there have been no studies done to prove that exposure to in-ear headphones will cause contact dermatitis, rather that there is a correlation between in-ear headphone use and contact dermatitis cases.[69]Hearing risk from headphones" use also applies to workers who must wear electronic or communication headsets as part of their daily job (i.e., pilots, call center and dispatch operators, sound engineers, firefighters, etc.) and hearing damage depends on the exposure time. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends sound exposure not exceed 85dB(A) over 8 hour work day as a time-weighted average.[71] NIOSH uses the 3-dB exchange rate (often referred to as "time-intensity tradeoff" which means if sound exposure level is increased by 3 decibels, the duration of exposure should be cut in half. NIOSH published several documents targeted at protecting the hearing of workers who must wear communication headsets such as call center operators.[72] firefighters.[73] and musicians and sound engineers.[74][75]Bone conductionDigital audio playerEarbudsHeadphone amplifierIn-ear monitorLoudspeakerNoise-cancelling headphones ~ a b "earphone". Archived from the original on 19 January 2014. Retrieved 4 January 2014. ^ Stanley R. Alten Audio Basics Cengage 2011 ISBN0-495-91356-1 page63 ~ "Headphones: The Ultimate buying guide - Hi-fidelity headphones". StereoCompare. Archived from the original on 2016-03-07. 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