

Bluetooth Headsets

Go hands-free with a headset that fits your style—and your budget.

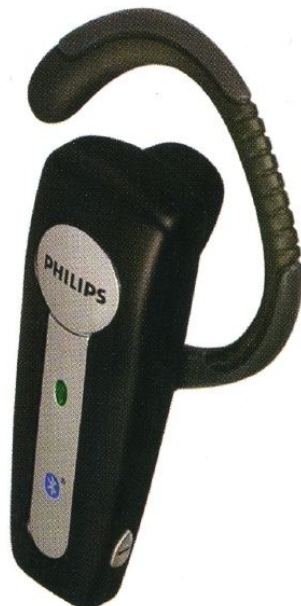
Thinking about upgrading your Bluetooth headset—or buying your first? Unfortunately, choosing one that meets your individual needs can be more difficult than acing a calculus midterm. So skip the headache and take a gander at our recommendations based on the 13 wireless headsets we put to the test. It's also worth noting that the prices we state are the manufacturers' suggested list prices, but you can find nearly all of these headsets for much less money at CompUSA, Amazon.com, and other retailers.—Logan Kugler

UNDER \$50

VOX120

Heavy, bulky, and uncomfortable.

Either our ears are shaped differently than the rest of the world's, or the people who made this clunker have some serious troubles when it comes to headset-mounting design. The VOX120 was easy to review because it doesn't have a single good quality about it—other than its 12 hours of talk time. Stand clear of this one, folks.



COMPANY: Philips
CONTACT: www.philips.com, 888-744-5477
PRICE: \$49.99
GOOD NEWS: 12 hours of talk time.
BAD NEWS: Heavy for its size. Horrible ear mount. Uncomfortable for any amount of time.



Mobile Express

Great price, poor talk time.

By its design, you'd think the Mobile Express was the big brother of the Mobile Traveler (p72), but the Express costs \$30 less. While the Express sounds good, looks good, and even feels better than the Traveler, its flexible ear hook still just doesn't cut it and ranks about the same as the Traveler's for comfort—meaning it's difficult to put on and uncomfortable for extended talking.

COMPANY: Logitech
CONTACT: www.logitech.com, 800-231-7717
PRICE: \$49.99
GOOD NEWS: Awesome price. Good looks. Satisfactory sound quality.
BAD NEWS: Poor talk time. Intolerable fit for any conversation longer than 10 minutes.



H300

Long-life powerhouse.

Packed with more than 700 hours of standby time and 30 hours of talk time, this powerhouse puts all others to shame. Because it's powered by a single AAA battery, it's more convenient for those on the go than a headset that requires you to carry a charger. The only bad news is that it uses Motorola's signature "earring" ear hook, which comes loose with just a few swings of your head.



COMPANY: Motorola
CONTACT: www.motorola.com, 866-289-6686
PRICE: \$49.99
GOOD NEWS: Low price. Long standby and talk time. AAA battery.
BAD NEWS: Insecure ear hook.



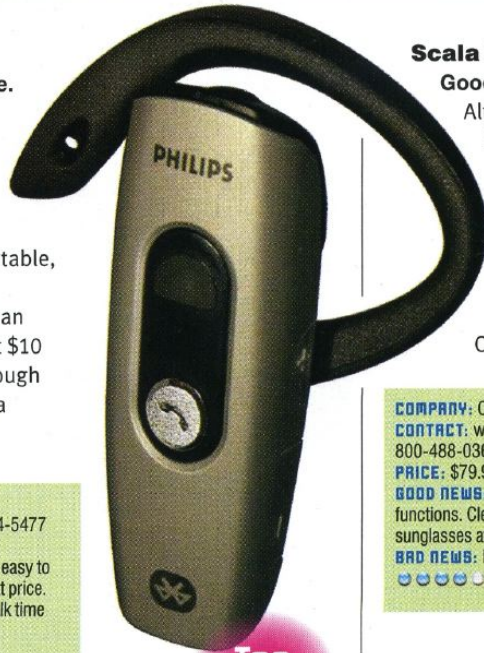
OVER \$50, UNDER \$100

VOX150

Comfortable and affordable.

Five times better than its little brother (the VOX120, p70), the VOX150 is one of the few headsets we've tested that gets its attachment right. It's comfortable, easy to put on, looks good, sounds great, weighs less than half an ounce, and costs just \$10 more than the VOX120 (although we found both headsets for a mere \$29.99 at CompUSA).

COMPANY: Philips
CONTACT: www.philips.com, 888-744-5477
PRICE: \$59.99
GOOD NEWS: Comfortable. Quick and easy to put on. Crisp sound. Lightweight. Great price.
BAD NEWS: It only gets six hours of talk time and 160 hours of standby time.
 ●●●●●



Top Pick!

Scala 500

Good value for the money.

Although it lists for \$79.95, we've found this headset for less than 30 bucks—and at that price, you'd be hard-pressed to find better. The speaker is loud and clear, and the wind-blocking technology keeps out exterior noise. And since it has reject, transfer, and mute functions, you have more control than with most other Bluetooth headsets. There's also a sunglasses attachment, giving you the poor man's Oakley Razrwire (p74).

COMPANY: Cardo Systems
CONTACT: www.cardowireless.com, 800-488-0363
PRICE: \$79.95
GOOD NEWS: Good value. Handy advanced functions. Clear, high-volume speaker. Includes sunglasses attachment.
BAD NEWS: Not the best-looking headset. Loose fit.
 ●●●●●



HS-26W

Good looking but uncomfortable.

Yet another winner of the Awkward Mount Yet Fashionable Design Award, this headset fits securely, but it's relatively uncomfortable and feels awkward on your ear. The sound quality is just OK, and the talk time is poor at only five hours. Its single-button design, while good in concept, is also somewhat complicated.

COMPANY: Nokia
CONTACT: www.nokia.com, 866-596-6542
PRICE: \$59.95
GOOD NEWS: Bluetooth 2.0
BAD NEWS: Uncomfortable. Five hours of talk time and 150 hours of standby time. Complicated single-button design.
 ●●●●●

H605

Comfy and clear-sounding.

It might make you look like you're wearing a conch shell on your ear, but Motorola's H605 wins our praise for being the most comfortable Bluetooth headset we've found. It's also quite elegant when viewed up close—everything from its leatherette trim to its chrome accents. Our only complaint is that the microphone is too sensitive and picks up quite a bit of background noise.

COMPANY: Motorola
CONTACT: www.motorola.com, 866-289-6686
PRICE: \$79.99
GOOD NEWS: Comfortable. Modern design. Impressive sound quality.
BAD NEWS: Overly sensitive microphone. Volume buttons are a bit difficult to distinguish from each other.
 ●●●●●



Top Pick!

CELL PHONE HANDBOOK: BLUETOOTH HEADSETS

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BLUETOOTH HEADSETS

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OVER \$50, UNDER \$100 (CONTINUED)

Mobile Traveler

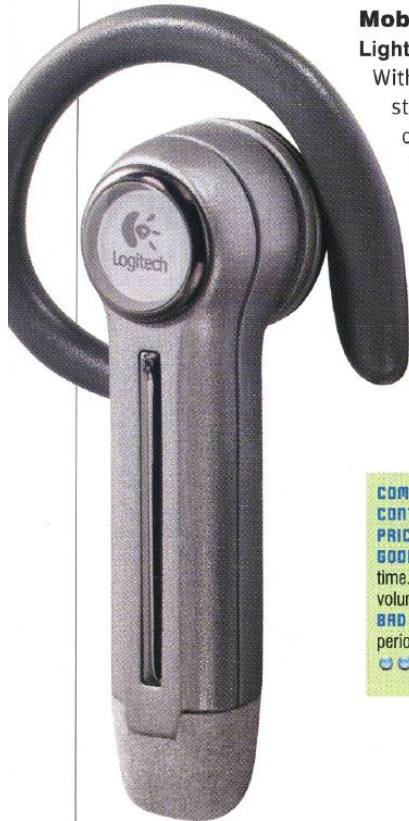
Lightweight and easy to use.

With more than 300 hours of standby time, eight hours of talk time, and a sleek noise-canceling WindStop microphone, this headset is perfect for the busy business traveler. Its only flaws are that it's awkward to put on and isn't comfortable enough for lengthy conversations.

COMPANY: Logitech
CONTACT: www.logitech.com, 800-231-7717
PRICE: \$79.99

GOOD NEWS: Lightweight. Lots of standby time. WindStop microphone. Easy-to-use volume controls.

BAD NEWS: Uncomfortable for prolonged periods. Difficult to place on your ear.



H3

Trendy and impractical.

Designed for the Motorola RAZR, this Bluetooth headset is stylish but impractical—its infamous “earring” mount isn't enough to keep the headset from coming loose after a few horizontal swings of your head. Otherwise, the H3 headset is near perfect because of its simple, Apple-like design and fashionable attitude.

COMPANY: Motorola
CONTACT: www.motorola.com, 866-289-6686
PRICE: \$79.99

GOOD NEWS: Simple design. Chic styling.

BAD NEWS: Not the most comfortable. Easily becomes loose. Sound quality could be better.



BH-200

The HS-26W's evident successor.

Fitted with an almost identical mount as its younger brother (the HS-26W, p71), you'd think this headset would be plagued with the same comfort issues. However, because of its reduced weight and size, it's much easier to put on, it's more comfortable, and it stays in place. The sound quality is also much improved.

COMPANY: Nokia
CONTACT: www.nokia.com, 866-596-6542
PRICE: \$69.95

GOOD NEWS: Comfortable. Easy to put on. Stays in place. Good sound quality.

BAD NEWS: Complicated single-button design. 5.5 hours of talk time. 150 hours of standby time.



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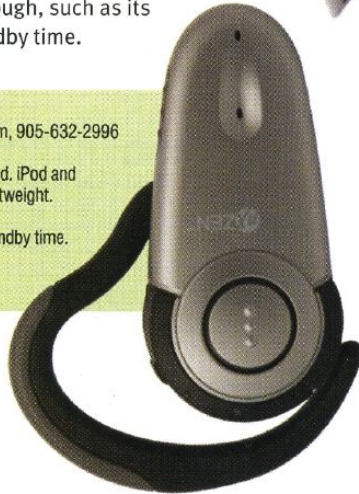
OVER \$100

nXZEN Plus 5500

Advanced technology and MP3 powers.

As the only Bluetooth headset we tested that's MP3 player-compatible, Gennum's nXZEN Plus 5500 headset is more a high-tech, high-fidelity headphone than a Bluetooth headset. It produces better sound than any other headset we tested, and its earpiece creates a strong seal similar to Shure's in-ear iPod earbuds. It does have pitfalls, though, such as its low 100 hours of standby time.

COMPANY: Gennum
CONTACT: www.gennum.com, 905-632-2996
PRICE: \$159.99
GOOD NEWS: Incredible sound. iPod and MP3 player-compatible. Lightweight. Comfortable. Strong ear seal.
BAD NEWS: Pricy. Short standby time. Buttons are a bit stiff. Fragile.



Razwire

Sleek, elegant, and stylish.

When a company moves into a different product category, it's not always the smoothest of transitions. However, like Oakley's sunglasses, the Razwire is a quality product. Its sound quality is superb, it looks great, the comfort is there, and best of all, it's integrated into something most of us use every day: sunglasses.

COMPANY: Oakley
CONTACT: www.oakley.com, 800-431-1439
PRICE: \$245
GOOD NEWS: Superb sound quality. Great looks. Comfortable. Integrated into something you use in your daily life.
BAD NEWS: Pricy. Without reading the manual you'll never figure out how to work its controls.



BH-800

The executive's headset.


Bluetooth headsets don't get more chic and fashionable than this beauty. With all of its chrome accents and jewelry attachments, we thought we should sashay down a runway with it, not trudge down the street. It even comes with a lanyard to hold your headset when it's not in use. The BH-800 really shines with sound quality and comfort but falls short with its mere 160 hours of standby time.

COMPANY: Nokia
CONTACT: www.nokia.com, 866-596-6542
PRICE: \$179
GOOD NEWS: Smallest and lightest Bluetooth headset on the market. Stylish. Extremely comfortable. Great sound quality.
BAD NEWS: Expensive. Short standby time.



Top Pick!



 Logan Kugler has come to the conclusion that unless Motorola does away with the signature "earring" mount for its Bluetooth headsets, lost-and-founds around the world are going to fill up quickly.