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Sennheiser PXC 300 noise cancelling headphones

Can Sennheiser beat Bose in the noise cancelling department

by Stuart Miles published on 2 October 2006

Sennheiser believes it has a cheaper alternative to those who want to cancel out noise and can't stretch to the price of highly impressive Bose QuietComfort 2 or 3, but can the headphone company do it with the PXC 300? We take a closer look. Lighter and more compact than the Bose headphones, the Sennheiser PXC 300 fold in on themselves to fit in the accompanying bag the size of a small paperback novel. At first glance we were amazed that a set of headphone could do as promised and cut out noise on the bus, the train and anywhere else for that matter. According to Sennheiser the noise cancelling performance is down to its NoiseGard Advance active noise cancelling technology. The phones promise to reduce unwanted noise by up to 80% and the optimised circuit technology ensures reduced susceptibility to mobile phone interference. Slipping them on to our noggin the phones are comfortable and very light. Not as comfortable as the Bose offering that cover your entire ear, but none the less fitted comfortably and were sturdy even though they fold, better still because of their size and lightness you don't feel so weighed down. All good so far, that is until you realise that the reason for their lightness is small size is that unlike the Bose QuietComfort headphones, Sennheiser has opted to put the batteries (two AA) in a battery tube that is permanently connected to the headphones rather than in the headphones themselves. This for us was a major annoyance as it means that you've got to do something with the battery tube, either holding it or slipping it in a bag, which is unpractical on a plane. Furthermore while it's nice to see that Sennheiser has opted to include almost 2 meters of cable, with no way of disconnecting it, if you are just wanting to use the noise cancelling element without music you've got a lap full of cables to still content with. Cables and



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battery packs aside the performance of the headphone is actually very good both in noise cancelling and sound reproduction, although, and understandably considering the price, not a touch on the QuietComfort 3s.

VERDICT

Supplied with two adaptors for in-flight entertainment systems (adaptors: 1/4" (6.3mm) stereo jack and 3.5mm double mono jack) on the surface the Sennheiser PXC 300 headphones look like a good deal, they offer a performance almost as good as the Bose headphones at half the price. But, and it's a big but, the battery pack and lengthy cables are so cumbersome that we wouldn't want to use them out and about let alone on a plane. It's a big let down and for us a deal breaker, and means we can't recommend these.

At a glance

What is it?

Noise cancelling headphones

Good

Foldable design, compact, light, sound good

Bad

Battery tube, cable gets in the way

Verdict

The Sennheiser PXC 300 headphones look like a good deal offering a performance almost as good as the Bose headphones at half the price, however the package is let down by a poor design and cumbersome wires

Price £129.99

Our score

5/10

Your score

?/10