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Philips SHE9850 headphones

Time for a headphone upgrade?

by Chris Hall published on 15 April 2008

There has been no end of criticism for some of the "bundled" headphones that have been supplied with the growing number of MP3 players out there. We check out the Philips SHE9850 in-ear headphones to see if they are worth the upgrade.

Headphones are small, especially when you have to stick them in your ear; perhaps this gives rise to the increasing size of packaging for the humble headphone. The Philips SHE9850 follow this trend and in the carefully designed packaging you get the headphones themselves, a selection of rubber and foam tips, a cable clip, a neat metal storage box and a cleaning tool.

The headphones themselves are lovingly constructed with a 3.5mm gold plug on a 1.2m cable and finishing touches such as the metal plug body give a quality feel. We found that the rubber tips gave a secure fit in the ear which was good enough to block out background noise, almost completely.

The secure fit means the sound is much better than a solid equivalent headphone stuffed in your ear, with much richer sound and authentic bass delivery. The elimination of background noise also means that you get more reasonable volume from them, i.e., they sound louder than cheaper headphones so be prepared to turn your player down from 11.

The secure fit has a downside however. It means that your ear canals are effectively blocked so sounds coming from inside your head are much louder, I'm not talking about those strange voices, no, I mean things like clearing your throat, eating an apple and so on. It also means you get increased cable noise, i.e., a reverberation around your skull as the cable sweeps around.

The supplied clip is one way to stop this cable



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movement, but if you spend most of your time sitting, on an aircraft, or in front of the computer then this won't be a problem; but if you are running on a treadmill with these headphones, you will notice this phenomena and may find it detracts from the audio experience.

VERDICT

That Christmas morning joy of breaking into the box is all here and interestingly, once you are inside the package the message reads "Only feel the music". Unfortunately, we could feel every footstep, every cough, every chew of the apple.

Well constructed with a feeling of quality about them, you get great sound from the Philips SHE9850, certainly much better than those standard white headphones that you see everywhere. Despite the minor irritation of the outside noise, the sound quality far surpasses this making them a solid investment.

The SHE9850 will be launching in the UK in May 2008.

At a glance

What is it?

In-ear headphones

Good

Great sound quality, complete kit with accessories

Bad

Noisy cable swing, expensive

Verdict

Despite the minor irritation of the outside noise, the sound quality far surpasses this making them a solid investment

Price £89.99

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10