

Five NewerTech iPhone Audio Accessories Reviewed



review by David Weeks of MyMac.com

There is a place for high-end quality audio. There is also a place for inexpensive audio. Somewhere in the middle there is a sweet spot for most iPod music lovers, and the iHome iH24D Deluxe speaker fits right there.

Looking at pictures online at DrBott.com, I knew the **iHome iH24D** was a small unit, but just how small was not apparently clear until I set it up with an iPod connected to it. This is a very small, but surprisingly robust, speaker. It looks like an older Boston Acoustic shelf speaker I owned back in the early 1990's, but turned on its side.

The look of the iHome iH24D is the most appealing aspect. While not great audio quality, for the price and what it is, it is more than adequate for a small room, or sitting on an office shelf. The woodgrain compliments the black front grill and control knobs well. This is one iPod speaker that does not look cheap or inexpensive.

The front of the iHome iH24D sports three control knobs: a smaller knob that turns it on/off with volume adjustment, and another like-sized knob to control input between iPod, AM, FM, and Auxiliary input. The giant knob on the right front of the unit controls the radio frequency. The look is very 1970's hi-fi gear in appearance, a welcome change from all the plastic black, tan, and white gear we usually see in similar devices that sport an iPod dock.

Speaking of the iPod dock, it's located on the top of the unit, and it does ship

NOTE: The following four items do not require a jack adapter.

iPhone Headphone Jack Adapter

Price: \$8



For a small amount of money you can buy this small adapter that opens your iPhone's non-standard recessed jack to an enormous quantity of non-iPhone headphones, earphones, and earbuds. If you are happy with the earphones that ship with the iPhone, or if you already own special-plug compatible headphones, you won't need this adapter. But if you own or want to buy a set of incompatible headphones, you'll need an adapter such as this one. It's flexible, almost weightless, with a good fit at each end. This product is excellent value for a simple solution. A slightly thicker cable would make it more robust.

MyMac rating: 4 out of 5

iPhone Mic Extender Cable with On/Off Switch

Price: \$15



Third party headphones often fit better and sound better than Apple's earbuds. With this microphone extender cable, any and all non-microphone equipped headphones can be used both for music and conversation with an iPhone. Built-in features are an on/off switch and a small stability clip. We tested it using original Apple white iPhone 'buds. Listeners on the receiving end of iPhone calls said the microphone quality was crisp and clear, albeit with a little too much treble.

This gadget has a lot of potential; plenty of people who already own good-quality earbuds don't want to give them up when they purchase an

iPhone. The fly in the iPhone ointment is that the iPhone's audio jack is not a standard mini-jack receptacle; Apple has engineered it to require a slightly longer plug.

Newer's Mic Extender is an adapter plug with an in-line microphone. You can use any earbuds, and Newer adapts the plug, and provides the microphone, as well.

For the iPhone user, the price is right, and the product does exactly what it's supposed to do.

MyMac rating: 5 out of 5

iPhone Hands-Free Mic & Earbud

Price: \$20



These earpiece drivers are nicely angled for a comfortable fit, with asymmetrical cables left/right. Noise cancellation is minimal, as is bass response. The audio is not something you'd write home about, and it isn't much better than Apple's original iPhone buds.

You can't beat the price on this single solution for iPhone listening and talking. Voice quality is at the "just okay; good but not great" end of fidelity compared to others we've used, but none of them is especially noteworthy in the conversation category.

For music playback, these buds are rather a dud, but again are exceptional value for money. The company web site offers two raves, including one by our pal Bill Palmer. When you're on a tight budget, this mic/earphone will suffice, but considering how much you've spent on iPhone and monthly service, MyMac.com recommends you instead choose a superior competitor.

MyMac rating: 3 out of 5

Improved Bass Response iPhone/iPod Music Earbuds

Price: \$20



These buds may not be for you if you REALLY want improved bass response, friends, but they do a good job for the price. Our listening panel can't determine if the audio is in any way better overall than NewerTech's iPhone Hands-Free Mic & Earbud, reviewed just above. The recessed-jack compatibility is a plus, but if you only want to spend \$20 to achieve enhanced bass, you're out of luck. For best buds per buck under \$50, we still recommend these, reviewed here. On a positive note, the NewerTech "improved bass" earbuds share the exceptional comfort and value of the other items we're evaluating in this roundup.

MyMac rating: 3 out of 5

Portable iPhone & iPod Auto Charger

Price: \$13



Thirteen dollars will not be your lucky number if your car's cigarette lighter cavity is on a diet. This charger won't fit into Nemo's VW Beetle's three 12V accessory outlet, and insertion in Weeks' car was possible only by squeezing hard on the plug's little springs and pushing harder than should be necessary. Once inserted, auto iPhone charging was effortless. If it fits, use it. If it doesn't fit, give it to a friend whose car is more compatible.

MyMac rating: 3 out of 5.

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