

Commercial Headphones

Updated April 13, 2026

RadioShack "Archer Deluxe" Monaural Headphones

These are the first headphones I ever owned: RadioShack "Archer Deluxe" 8-Ohm (Cat. No. 279-200) monaural phones purchased in the mid-1970's. I did not own a stereo back then and I used them primarily to listen to an AM radio I had.



Radio Shack Archer Deluxe 8-Ohm Monaural Headphones

Lafayette Radio SP-55

These are Lafayette Radio SP-55's. They are the second headphones I owned (not these particular ones, acquired on eBay, as my originals developed speaker problems and the cushions wore out). They are stereo and have very soft rubber cushions similar to the gel cushions you see now. They have to be kept in a stable environment as the cushions have a habit of drying out and turning to brown dust (my original set). These were my favorite for a long time, though their audio quality is rather abysmal by today's standards. They were great in their day. For added comfort, the head pad is an inflatable vinyl cushion, similar to a beach ball, which acts as an air cushion.



Lafayette Radio SP-55 Stereo Headphones

Koss SpeedZone SPZ9

These are Koss SpeedZone SPZ9's. They are monaural and I got them at Radio Shack in the 1990's as a replacement for the old Radio Shack headphones I had (see above). Looking back, I probably should have gotten QZ99's (stereo/mono) but Radio Shack did not carry them. I usually use them with my amateur radio transceiver. They are now over 20 years old and I replaced the ear seals with new gel ear seals.



Koss SPZ9 SpeedZone Monaural Headphones

As noted above, the ear seals were over 20 years old and were getting stiff. I decided to replace them with [KORE AVIATION Ultra Plush Silicone Gel Ear Seals](#). They are much more comfortable now and provide better outside noise isolation than the original ear seals.



Koss SPZ9 SpeedZone Monaural Headphones with Kore Aviation Ear Seals

JBL E40BT

These are JBL E40BT Bluetooth headphones. They were a Christmas gift from my sister and brother-in-law a few years ago. I usually carry these in my backpack and use them at the office as they are light weight and also allow me to hear my office surroundings.



JBL E40BT Bluetooth Headphones

The JBL E40BT's are very good headphones but the stock cushions are pretty hard and make long-term wearing somewhat uncomfortable. Thicker softer aftermarket cushions such as [these on AliExpress.com](https://www.aliexpress.com) are an excellent upgrade and make the headphones much more comfortable to wear.



JBL E40BT Bluetooth Headphones with Thicker Cushions

Apple Beats Solo³

These are a pair of [Apple Beats Solo³ Headphones](#) that I received as a Christmas gift from a friend. My iPhone instantly recognizes them with a unique popup message and assigns them a name based on the “Nickname” field of my primary contact record. The audio is decent but I have not found the bass to be exceptional (it is possible I have not yet found the proper settings).



Apple Beats Solo³



Apple Beats Solo³ with included carrying case

Monoprice BHS-839

In mid-August 2019, the headband on my old Nokia BH-604 headset broke. I was able to repair them but it also became evident that due to their age, there would be more issues. Plus, as they were limited to Bluetooth 2.0+EDR support, there were compatibility issues with newer devices that had support issues with older Bluetooth standards (Google Home devices for example). I searched around for new Bluetooth 4.0 headphones with audio support comparable to my Nokia headset. I came across the Monoprice BHS-839 headset that had many good reviews and were priced around US\$22. I found the stock cushions to be a bit stiff (Monoprice offers a cushion upgrade) so I replaced them with a pair of [Linhuipad gel cushions](#) I had on hand in conjunction with a set of [foam ear pad inserts](#). This made them much more comfortable to wear and the gel cushions provide good noise isolation.



Monoprice BHS-839 with Linhuipad Cushions



Monoprice BHS-839 with Linhuipad Cushions (Inside View)

After a week of using the BHS-839's, I was so pleased with them that I decided to purchase a second pair that I could keep at the office to use. I did not have any more Linhuipad cushions on hand but I did have a pair of [David Clark 40863G-02 Undercut Gel Ear Seals](#) and [foam ear pad inserts](#). While they are also gel cushions, like the Linhuipad cushions, they are a different design and thinner. They too are very comfortable and provide good noise isolation. The only downside is they retail for approximately USD\$30, basically doubling the cost of the headphones. However, the cushions are not consumable so if the headphones break, they can easily be removed and used with a different pair of headphones.

There is an [article on blogspot.com](#) that gave me the idea to use these cushions for my second project.



Monoprice BHS-839 with David Clark Undercut Gel Cushions



Monoprice BHS-839 with David Clark Undercut Gel Cushions (Inside View)

Pioneer “Mimy” SE-20

These are Pioneer "Mimy" SE-2P headphones. They are 8 ohms and great for old tube equipment just like the Lafayette SP-55's above. The cushions are a soft vinyl type material that has held up over the years.



Pioneer SE-2P “Mimy” Stereo Headphones

Telex/Califone 610-44s

These are Telex/Califone 610-44s classroom headphones (formerly Telex). They are basically kid-proof and there is a black colored model, the A-610, which is rather expensive, that is used in aviation. 610's date back to the 1970's, though these are a relatively recent stereo model that uses a 1/8" stereo TRS plug instead of the older 1/4" TS plug that the 610's typically used. The audio is lousy but adequate for classroom use. I purchased them for a very low price for my then-4-year-old niece to use when playing computer games, as they are "kid proof".



Telex/Califone 610-44s Stereo Headphones

Califone 2917

These are Califone 2917 monaural classroom headphones. They are also from the 1970's and are basically the same as the Telex 610's in design and audio quality ([Telex is now part of Califone](#)). We used this particular model in my high school. They work great with crystal radios as they have an impedance of around 600 Ohms. These have the classic 1/4" TS plug.



Califone 2917 Monaural Headphones

Military H-43B/U

These are military H-43B/U headphones used with old military Geiger counters (two of which I own: AN/PDR-27R and AN/PDR-27T). They use a UG-88/U BNC connector instead of a more traditional phone plug, but this is due to the need for the connector to be waterproof. They were manufactured around 1991 when, for some reason, the government thought it would be a great idea to order thousands of these only to put them up for sale as surplus about 10 years later. At one point, they were selling at Hamfest's in their original military packaging for around \$4 each (I cannot imagine what we taxpayers paid for them). They are also very high impedance and work great with crystal radios and other sensitive low-energy circuits due to their 20,000 Ohm impedance (3000 Ohms DC resistance).



Military H-43B/U Monaural Headphones

3M™ WorkTunes™ Gel

These are 3M™ WorkTunes™ Gel Bluetooth headphones for use in high noise environments. They also accept a wired connection through a 3.5mm jack, though they must be powered on to use it. They are extremely comfortable, incredibly isolating from external noise and the audio quality is pretty good, though not exceptional.

A major issue with these headphones is they use a microUSB port for charging that is only held to the motherboard by the tiny four legs of the microUSB socket which are soldered to the motherboard and not very strong. Many reviews report that after repeated use, the socket breaks off the motherboard and the headphones can no longer be charged. This happened with this pair and I was able to fix them by resoldering the socket and then applying a small amount of [JB Weld ClearWeld™ Epoxy](#) to the sides of the socket to keep it securely mounted to the motherboard. While this is a covered issue by the one-year 3M™ warranty, the headphones were over a year old and out of warranty.



3M™ WorkTunes™ Gel Bluetooth Headphones



3M™ WorkTunes™ Gel Bluetooth Headphones Speaker View

The WorkTunes™ headband has no padding and is quite rough on my head due to cutouts to provide air circulation. As the WorkTunes™ are a PELTOR™ design, I found a Tactical Headset Cover for PELTOR™ style headbands that works very well and makes the headband more comfortable. It requires a bit of effort to get it to fit, as it is a bit longer than the headband, but works well.



3M™ WorkTunes™ Gel Bluetooth Headphones with Tactical Headset Cover

Astrocom Aural Protectors

These are a pair of military surplus Astrocom Aural Protectors (NSN 4240-00-241-5184) that are similar to the [now discontinued](#) David Clark [Model 9AN/2 \(06504G-03\) Military Grade Hearing Protector \(NSN 4240-00-759-3290\)](#). While not technically headphones, since they do not have any audio components, they are identical to aircraft communications headsets such as the military H-133C/A1C or the David Clark H10-76. This design was also used for Aural Research AR-100 "Auraldomes" audiometric headphones (see next page). They have [David Clark 24505P-02 Dome Filters](#) that replaced the original dried out dome filters and were refitted with [David Clark 40863G-02 Undercut Gel Ear Seals](#). They are some of the quietest hearing protectors I have.



Astrocom Aural Protector with David Clark 40863G-02 Undercut Gel Cushions (NSN 4240-00-241-5184)

Aural Research AR-100 “Auraldomes”

Aural Research AR-100 “Auraldomes” audiometric headphones which are similar to the Astrocom Aural Protector on the preceding page.



Aural Research AR-100 “Auraldomes” Headset with David Clark 40863G-02 Undercut Gel Cushions

Safety Direct Aural Protectors

These are a pair of military surplus Safety Direct MIL-A-23899A Aural Protectors that are similar to the [now discontinued](#) David Clark [Model 9AN/2 \(06504G-03\) Military Grade Hearing Protector \(NSN 4240-00-759-3290\)](#). They have [David Clark 24505P-02 Dome Filters](#) that replaced the original dried out dome filters and were refitted with [David Clark 40863G-02 Undercut Gel Ear Seals](#). The original head pad was replaced with a [foam cushioned head pad](#) used for aviation headphones.



Safety Direct Aural Protector with David Clark 40863G-02 Undercut Gel Cushions (NSN 4240-00-759-3290)

David Clark 9AN/2 Aural Protectors

These are a pair of military surplus [David Clark Model 9AN/2 \(06504G-03\) Military Grade Hearing Protectors \(NSN 4240-00-759-3290\)](#). They have [David Clark 24505P-02 Dome Filters](#) that replaced the original dried out dome filters and were refitted with [KORE AVIATION Ultra Plush Silicone Gel Ear Seals](#) that replaced the original 46 year old ear seals. The original head pad was replaced with a [foam cushioned head pad](#) used for aviation headphones.



David Clark 9AN/2 Aural Protector with Kore Aviation Ear Seals

Gentex/Aegisound DC2 Hearing Protectors

The [Gentex/Aegisound DC2 Hearing Protectors \(NSN 4220-01-604-0299\)](#) were developed for flight-deck crews servicing the F-35 Lightning II, which produces an incredible 152 decibels of sound. When used in a quieter civilian environment, they provide an amazing level of sound silence that has been described as being like deaf. A large quantity of new never-used DC2's were sold as surplus by the Navy several years ago and appeared on eBay where these were purchased. They originally cost the U.S. taxpayers USD\$225 each (GSA Contract GS07F0094V).

These new-in-box DC2's, manufactured in March 2013, sold on eBay in April 2021 for USD\$29.98 shipped (a second pair, purchased in February 2022, cost USD\$31.99 shipped).



Gentex/Aegisound DC2 Hearing Protectors (NSN 4220-01-604-0299)



Gentex/Aegisound DC2 Hearing Protectors (NSN 4220-01-604-0299)

The original ribbed style head pad on the Gentex/Aegisound DC2 hearing protectors, similar to the [David Clark Foam Filled Head Pad \(10133G-41\)](#), was rather stiff and caused irritation on my scalp where my hair is thin. I decided to replace the original head pad with a [softer padded aftermarket head pad](#), similar to the [Crazed Pilot Head Pad](#), which is much more comfortable and does not irritate my skin.



*Gentex/Aegisound DC2 Hearing Protectors (NSN 4220-01-604-0299)
with an Aftermarket Head Pad*

Gentex® Argonaut® Double Hearing Protector and Communications Headset

The [Gentex® Argonaut® Double Hearing Protector and Communications headset \(NSN 4220-01-609-9407\)](#) was developed for flight-deck crew communication in high noise environments and uses a U-174/U male plug which is wired to NATO-US standard. The headset itself has no audio elements. Each ear cup has a [6-pin LEMO® EGG.0B.306 type socket](#) that the audio component plugs into with a plug like the [6-PIN LEMO® FGG.0B.306](#). It is normally used with [Argonaut® Communication Earplugs \(NSN 4220-01-609-9415\)](#) which plug into one of the ear cups. These earplugs sell for a whopping USD\$299.15 so are generally out of the reach of most people. Unfortunately, the Troubleshooting and Maintenance guide is not available nor is there any technical documentation available on how to wire alternate audio elements or even connect it to an audio source.

This new-in-open-box Argonaut® headset was purchased on eBay on June 10, 2023 for USD\$0.99 plus \$12.55 shipping.



Gentex® Argonaut® Double Hearing Protector and Communications headset (NSN 4220-01-609-9407)