

iPOD Shuffle (Silver) Review

Contributed by CB Team
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Play.com also sent us the newer iPod Shuffle this month, which is housed in a silver finish and it measures just under 2 inches in width, making it one of the smallest mp3 players on the market.

PODCAST: We have created a Podcast of the review, which you can play below.

{enclose iPODShuffleReview.mp3}

Box Contents

The box itself reeks of Apple quality, even their outer packages can put most products to shame.

It's housed neatly in a white box and includes the iPod shuffle, headphones (white), USB docking cradle and a small manual - with a nice apple logo splashed on the box as well.

For software you need to download iTunes, which the shuffle is fully compatible with. This will allow you to transfer your music to the device.

Spec

- Plays: Music, podcasts, audiobooks
- Capacity: 1GB
- Songs: Can hold around 250 singles on the 1GB capacity
- Battery Life: Up to 12 hours
- Connectivity: USB through included dock
- Size: 1.62 x 1.07 x 0.41 inches (including clip)

Design

As mentioned the box itself looks really stylish, but the shuffle is also a looker. The first thing you will notice is how tiny the shuffle is and the second thing you will notice is the excellent build quality.

You won't find a screen on the shuffle, as it's mainly designed for runners or keep fit merchants who want simplicity. But you will find a clip that is used to attach the player to your clothing which is both robust and sturdy - with the apple logo etched against the silver finish.

The robust controls at the front for playback are simple in nature and easy to press, especially when running or simply wearing the device around the house.

You will find a little slide switch at the side to turn on the device, with a led showing your battery status. Then you have a separate switch to turn the shuffle function on, which will randomly pick tracks for you.

With the supplied headphones you won't find any pads included in the box for covering the ear buds, but the headphone jack does use the standard 3.5mm port which will allow you to use a pair of your own headphones - if you so wish.

The quality of the headphones was good, with just about enough length on the wire to be comfortable to wear.

You also get a nice cable tidy system attached to the headphones, to allow the two wires to be brought closer to your neck - thus preventing the cable from getting caught up in any gym machinery or hitting your face as your run.

The only other thing to mention is the USB cable, which is now attached to a tiny docking cradle for charging up the IPOD and for transferring files to the unit.

Like the Shuffle, the cradle is also small, but at the bottom you will find the apple logo housed in a rubber base. This allows the cradle to be placed on your desk without it slipping.

Performance

For testing we put the Shuffle through the gym test, which basically involved us wearing the device whilst working out on several machines and doing free weights.

In the two hours spent at the gym, we spent the first half on the running machine, step machine, rower and bike and not once did the headphones fall off or the device unclip from our clothes.

The sound quality was also good, though we did notice a touch of interference evident when the songs were not playing, though thankfully this is not noticeable when the music kicks in. Plus it drowned out the terrible music that is always played on the gyms speakers, so the Shuffle gets our vote for this reason alone.

We then moved onto the free weights/machines and once again the Shuffle did itself proud.

Because the unit is so small its ideal for running and the aforementioned gym, but we did use it around the house and when walking to places. It's great because it does not weigh anything but is also small so it can be concealed and less attractive to thieves.

Using Apples excellent iTunes, we could download content from the iTunes store, drag existing mp3s from our collection or create mp3s by ripping them off our CD's. In total we could get around 250 songs at 128 bit rate and 44.1 kHz sample rate.

Battery

Apple claims the battery to last around 12 hours, but they are being too modest, as the battery lasted a lot longer than this, we reckons at least 17 hours.

We ran the device for 2 hours at the gym and then the next day we left it to continuously play for another 10hours. The following day we then left it on from about 1.30pm for another 5 hours before it finally gave up.

Niggles

The led that indicates your battery life only flashes briefly when you turn on the device or when you pause a track. If it goes amber you are running low on juice, whilst on red you are at critical. A better indication of battery life would have been better.

Yes some people will not like the lack of a screen, but in the environment it's designed for you won't need one. The shuffle function does a great job as well of keeping you entertained.

And finally we suppose 1GB may seem small to most people and the need for the cradle to charge the unit could seem a bind, but having 250 songs is more than enough to do a 2 hours gym sesh or go on several long runs.