

HEADPHONE RECOMMENDATIONS

Great headphones are more affordable than ever; a wonderful boon in a household with two or more “Zoomers” at once. We’ve narrowed the field for you to two questions: 1) in-ear or over-ear and 2) wired or wireless.

IN-EAR WIRED

This type is easiest to travel with: they fold up small and there’s nothing to charge. They’re also the least expensive of our categories. Go with the [Sony MDR-XB55AP](#) (~\$50). They come in red, blue, and black. Color seems frivolous, but also makes it easy to tell which ones are yours.

IN-EAR WIRELESS

Go with the [Jabra Elite 7 Pro](#) (\$200), which include Jabra’s MultiSensor Voice, for “revolutionary call performance.” These Bluetooth earbuds promise noise cancellation superior to Apple’s AirPods Pro 2, 30-hour battery life (combined buds and charging case), and are waterproof and sweatproof in case you lose an earbud in your coffee cup (IP57-rated).

Another option in this category is the [Bose QuietComfort Earbuds II](#) (\$299). Bose is legendary for their noise cancelling technology and premium product quality.

OVER-EAR WIRED

Get something in [Poly’s Blackwire 3300 Series](#) (starting \$50). They are durable and easy to use. The only major choice is deciding whether to get the USB-A or USB-C model. Newer computers are likely to have USB-C and if you’re a Mac user, you only have USB-C on new machines. If necessary, you can get a converter on the cheap to make the wrong USB cable type work with your port.

You will notice that some Blackwire models come in up to four varieties (*e.g.*, Blackwire 3320 USB-A, Blackwire 3320 USB-C, Blackwire 3320 Microsoft USB-A, and Blackwire 3320 Microsoft USB-C). The difference between USB-A and USB-C is simple enough – pick the connector you want. The difference between the “normal” version and “Microsoft” version is that, for the Microsoft one, Poly jumped through the extra hoops of getting the product “certified” to work with Skype for Business and Teams. Having two versions does not mean that only Microsoft models work with Skype or Teams. The Microsoft models merely have gone through the additional time and expense of certification. Such certification matters for tightly-controlled tech environments or circumstances where one is permitted to buy only “certified” hardware (*e.g.*, government procurement or larger firms). However, for attorneys and legal professionals buying a headset for client meetings or court hearings, paying an additional cost for the “certified” version, is unnecessary. In some cases, as with the 3320, all four varieties cost the same, so buy whichever one you want.

OVER-EAR WIRELESS

There are lots of great choices here. The sky and your budget are the only limits. Bose makes great noise-cancelling models that get top marks from Consumer Reports. The [QuietComfort 45 Headphones](#) (\$329) and [Noise Cancelling Headphones 700](#) (\$379) tied for the top score in Consumer Reports. As with Poly (see above), Bose also has a pair of headphones certified to work with Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom, the [Noise Cancelling Headphones 700 UC](#) (\$399). In addition to the certifications, the UC model also includes a pre-paired Bluetooth USB adapter, an advantage if your computer lacks native Bluetooth tech or you use several different machines.

BONUS FOR APPLE PEOPLE

If you're all-in on Apple, including Macs for work, then getting something in [Apple's AirPods](#) line might make sense. Pairing with your Apple products is easier than Bluetooth and that pairing syncs across your iCloud account. Pair AirPods with your iPhone, and they're automatically available on iPads and Macs on the same iCloud account. Wireless in-ear versions (\$129 to \$249) and over-ear versions (\$549) are available.