

What is an MP3 Player?

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'MP3' is the abbreviation for 'MPEG Audio Layer III' ('MPEG' stands for 'Motion Pictures Expert Group'). It's a compressed digital audio file. A player stores these files on a memory chip so that you can play it back at your leisure.

Features and benefits of an MP3 player

- Contains a miniature hard disk drive, which can store huge quantities of data.
- MP3s usually contain music, but the format is also used for general audio files such as audiobooks and [podcasts](#).
- MP3s can be listened to with earphones or headphones, or played through speakers via an external amplifier – for example, a 'dock' with speakers or through a stereo system.
- MP3 players allow the user to play music, podcasts and so on anywhere.
- Music is easily stored and managed on the MP3 player, including skipping tracks or, on some models, arranging playlists.

History of the MP3 player

- The MP3 project began in 1977 in Germany, and the patent for its use was finally granted in 1989.
- The first MP3 player was produced in Korea in 1998.
- Apple produced the iPod in 2001. It has since become the most popular MP3 player in the world, although it actually converts MP3 files into its own file format.

The different types of MP3 player





- Memory flash players: small, easy to use and relatively inexpensive, ideal for joggers but have a limited storage capacity. Batteries are replaceable.
- Micro hard-drive players: smaller than hard drive players but more portable.
- Hard-drive players: much larger capacity, holding thousands of tracks, but their rechargeable batteries can't be replaced.
- Multimedia players: larger and heavier, but allow the user to watch movies; usually have a large colour screen.


Choosing an MP3 player

- Some of the most popular brands of MP3 player are iPod, Philips, Zen and Archos.
- Many of these are available in the micro format – for instance, iPod mini and Zen Micro.
- An interesting alternative is the Eco-Media Player Revolution. This has a wind-up facility – a one-minute wind of the handle gives 45 minutes of play time.

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Next steps

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