

title: **In your experience, would you recommend me to buy noise cancelling headphones?**

num_comments: 66

num_up_votes: 73

upvote_ratio: 0.99

Post Text

I've heard about noise cancelling headphone often recommended in the ADHD community, since they are pricey I want to make sure if it's worth the investment for my situation. I basically mostly work from home, most of the annoyance in terms of noises happens to be dog barks, loud car/motorcycles exhausts, too much car honking and people's voices. That's about it. In that case, should I buy noise cancelling headphones? Like the Sony WH-1000XM4? Problem here is I've been told that they probably won't help much unless I'm travelling like if there's a plane engine next to me or I'm outside the house.

Comments

Commenter_2

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 57

XM3 were life-changing for me! Noise cancelling headphones even when there's no noise help so much to focus

Commenter_3

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 14

I swear by these headphones. The microphone is awful but the sound quality and noise cancelling is second to none.

Commenter_4

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 13

Yep. My XM3's were life-changing. I often don't even have audio playing while I'm working. The reduction noise is incredibly helpful. I think it's also a good environmental cue for me: headphones on = time to work.

Commenter_5

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 5

I just got the XM4 and love them, and this also coincided with my decision to return to the office and they are truly life-changing.

Commenter_6

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

Co-sign, couldn't work in the office without them

Commenter_7

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

Bought the XM4 on impulse just yesterday, and they are just magic...

Commenter_8

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

Jep, best buy ever! I also sometimes put them on after work or when I'm over stimulated and just need a bit of quiet time.

Commenter_9

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

Yeah ditto here. It totally changed the world of audio for me. It's an investment - but it's worth every cent!

Commenter_10

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

Same here! I love my XM3s. The only caveat is I can't wear them for too many hours on end, because it gives my ears this dull throbbing feeling I can't explain.

Unknown_User

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 12

[deleted]

Commenter_3

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 6

To avoid confusion the xm3's are the in the Sony WH-1000's range.

Commenter_11

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

YES these are awesome. And very durable.

Commenter_12

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 7

Depends.

Most of the time I'm not overly sensitive to noise. I always listen to music and regular overear or inear headphones are enough for me.

But in shared spaces like the office or if you are visiting family, whatever, and need to work NC can be a blessing. Especially if you don't feel like listening to music. But it doesn't work super well for voices or loud laughter which are the main things that bother me wen I'm overstimulated or try to concentrate.

And yeah, for traveling it can be really nice.

For NC I use some cheaper Audio Technica Bluetooth overears. Less expensive than sony or bose but works well enough for me. Not sure what model since I misplaced them recently...

Commenter_13

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 6

My wife has recently tried a couple things. The super-cheap "budget pick" on wirecutter.com, the Anker Soundcore Life Q20, is surprisingly good at noise cancellation, although their sound quality for music reproduction is as bad as you'd expect at that price point.

She also tried AirPods Pro and an even more expensive set of Bose earbuds. Neither came anywhere close to those \$40 headphones when it came to silencing our roosters. She ended up keeping the AirPods for the overall feature set, but if you just want comfortable silence, try the Ankers.

Commenter_14

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 3

I have the Q30 ones and they're great, not that expensive and decent enough sound. Muffle or completely block most things, definitely helpful even without music. I'd say it's worth a shot, pick something in your budget and see for yourself.

Commenter_15

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

Same, they are incredibly low budget fit the whole ear inside so not much discomfort from long

time usage.

I use mine for about 14h a day.

For night usage I recommend Sony WFxb700. Really good bass.

Commenter_16

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 4

I WFH too, and I found a huge difference just using in-ear earbuds (whether I'm actually playing audio or not).

You could see if peripheral noises are actually impacting you without shelling out a lot of money by testing out some plain ear plugs and see if you notice a difference...?

Unknown_User

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 4

I'm in the XM3 boat and they're one of the better investments I had made even for in-office work before the pandemic, and have only gotten better for WFH

My experience is that just turning them on is by itself not enough to prevent outside noise from spamming my brains "HEYWHATSTHATS HEYWHATSTHAT HEYWHATSTHAT HEYWHATSTHAT" button. They have to be combined with pl some kind of audio

Depending on how goldfish brain is behaving on a given day, I will alternate between 1. Main/current spotify playlist 2. audiobooks/podcasts or 3. lo-fi playlists separate from what I would normally listen to. When playing one of these isnt working for preventing the HEYWHATSTHAT brain button spam, I switch to whichever one feels better at the moment

Commenter_17

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 6

For me personally I work a lot better with headphones on, because I cant drown out the side noises without. My go to for work has become this <https://youtu.be/2GjCQHZIDvM>, as it fades perfectly into the background and drowns out everything else except the problem in Front of me.

I tried different Options so far but mostly prefer wireless earbuds as they are a bit less irritating longer term.

Recommendations:

Airpods pro

Galaxy buds pro

Sony wh1000 are also fine!

Commenter_18

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

Having a bad ADHD day, going to give your YT recommendation a try!

Commenter_19

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 4

I just bought some and for me it's life changing! I am super sensitive to sounds and surroundings. I almost constantly wear them, even when I'm not listening to music.

I have in-ears(Apple AirPods) so you still hear some surrounding sound but super silent , so you don't miss anything important.

Commenter_20

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 3

I was just about to comment this. I love my airpods pro, my non apple friends have reported the same. I especially love that I can switch from hearing environmental noise to noise cancelling so easily. Definitely wear those bad boys while not listening to music for sensory overload from like barking dogs or road noise. It's like earplugs without the hassle.

Unknown_User

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

You can try listening to brown noise while doing your stuff, you can listen to music or other stuff without it getting on the way at all, it just isolates the sound better

I have noise cancelling headphones but they're not super great since they were cheap, it doesn't make that much of a difference at home, but it's nice when I'm on the bus or at the gym

Commenter_21

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

Personally I love using them, and having them on is when I'm most productive. I have the Sony 900N's (a step down from those 1000XMs) and they were worth every penny. I use them literally every day. They're about \$100 cheaper, without much of a drop in quality [according to [rtings.com](https://www.rtings.com/headphones/tools/compare/sony-wh-xb900n-wireless-vs-sony-wh-1000xm4-wireless/886/16490?usage=19&threshold=0.10)](<https://www.rtings.com/headphones/tools/compare/sony-wh-xb900n-wireless-vs-sony-wh-1000xm4-wireless/886/16490?usage=19&threshold=0.10>)

I've found I'm very sensitive to little sounds around me. You say your distracting noises are dogs and cars....but you would be surprised at all the things your brain is actually picking up. The refrigerator humming. Air moving through a window or vent. Footsteps in a different room. etc.

Even with no music playing, I find the sound-dampening effect combined with the physical pressure on my head gives me a cozy, tiny-space feeling that helps me focus. However I tend to either listen to ambient fake-nature sounds (something like <https://asoftmurmur.com/>), or those "high focus"/"lo-fi beats" type youtube/spotify channels that other people have recommended.

Commenter_22

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

I have used the Sony Noise Cancelling Headphones WHCH700N for years. I love them and are selling for less than \$100 now. I might buy another pair.

Commenter_23

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

Personally I don't recommend active noise cancelling headphones. I will also note that the reason is in part because I have really sensitive ears.

There is a difference between active noise cancellation and noise isolation. I strongly prefer noise isolation as it doesn't any sound like noise cancellation.

I do some audio engineering on the side and because of that I have a set of in ear monitors that have incredibly good noise isolation. I use them pretty much everyday while working or studying and as long as I have something playing I can't hear people talking to me with them in the majority of the time.

OP

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

>in ear monitors that have incredibly good noise isolation

Which ones? Elys?

Commenter_23

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

I use shure se425, I've also used the se215 and they're good for every day stuff but don't have the sound detail I wanted for mixing.

I will note that these may not be a good fit for many people. I know someone who really doesn't like them in their ears. And by design you can hear pretty much every detail and sometimes that can be overwhelming.

Commenter_25

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I get over ear noise blocking headphones. For cheaper ones search "osha approved headphones" on Amazon or whatever. These are basically construction site ear protection but with bluetooth or an audio jack. The sound quality is often not excellent in the cheap ones but I have gone with them and been fine, my latest though we're 50 dollar 3m ones with better sound. Some prefer in ear though im into big over-ear headphones. I have heard shooting earmuffs can be even more isolating, but I haven't tried and I'm not sure what the audio options are

EDIT: make sure if you go that route that the product does actually have audio. Amazon will probably mix in muffs that are just simple sound protection with the "osha" search too.

Commenter_26

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

For the love of god and all that is holy yes. Do it. Worth every penny. They're a game changer.

Commenter_27

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

I just broke my 30yr old ear muffs that I bought for going to the shooting range.. they were superb for blocking out annoying noise. I'm probably going to replace them with a modern pair of non-electronic over-the-ear muffs. I can't stand anything in-ear for long periods.

Commenter_28

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

If you have a hypersensitivity to sound, it can help. I use Airpod Maxs while coding and it seems to suit me well. However, in my experience, unless you are traveling or are working in an environment with a lot of droning sound, you can get away with a good set of closed back headphones or even good IEMs if you don't mind how they feel in your ears. Noise Cancelling Headphones are a "nice-to-have" but there are plenty of other options if you don't want to break the piggybank

Unknown_User

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

As has been alluded to, active noise-canceling headphones are really designed for continuous background noise like airplane engines and AC systems. They're not designed for, nor do they really work for blocking voices, dogs barking, and the like. Passive noise cancellation will mitigate but not eliminate those. So it depends on what you find distracting and which trade offs you're willing to make.

If you just want to minimize all sounds as much as possible, a cheaper and better solution is industrial grade earmuffs (like 3M's Peltor Optime) coupled with a good pair of earplugs.

If you want to play music or white noise but still minimize the amount of background noise, there are also Bluetooth- and radio-enabled variations of the aforementioned earmuffs. The one that comes to mind is 3M's WorkTunes headset. These run about twice as much as the regular earmuffs, but they're still cheaper than a lot of the ANC headphones and they're likelier to work better for your use case. Since these are designed for industrial use, they're also probably sturdier than ANC headphones. You can still use earplugs to block

out the remaining noise you hear and turn the volume up a little more to compensate.

Commenter_29

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I bought XM4s. No regrets. I mostly use it for noise cancelling and no music.

Commenter_30

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

For me blocking even small noises gives me a boost of productivity and focus so I often wear ear defenders, plugs, ear buds etc... Everywhere.

Commenter_31

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

Bose Quiet Comfort changed my life

Commenter_32

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

Yes.

I use Airpod max's cuz I'm pretentious but any over the ear active noise canceling headphones will do wonders. I also have a playlist called "How About We Fucking Focus" that helps me a shitload

Unknown_User

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

Yes. I have the XM3 headphones and they're exceptional! Definitely pick up the XM4

OP

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

Where do you use them? I was told they don't do a good job at blocking noises of dogs bark and people voices. It costs 265\$. I don't mind paying that much but I hope they'll be good.

Unknown_User

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I work from home so I just wear them around the house a lot. They're best at blocking constant noises, like a fan or an HVAC vent or airplane engines. You'll still hear some stuff, it's not like total and complete noise isolation, but it's still remarkable how well it works.

Hell, I often wear them in noise canceling mode without anything even playing, just because the silence is so nice!

Commenter_33

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

For over the ear cans I recommend Bose qc35 (although I just saw the 45 was released but idk any feedback on itnyet)

For buds I really like the galaxy buds I just bought at Costco. 2 different noise canceling modes and they're comfy

Edit: almost forgot, ironically. I have ADD and noise canceling helps me a lot. Work in Web Tech Support

Unknown_User

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

[deleted]

OP

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I was considering IEM's instead like the Etymotic research ER4SR. But I guess they're the same as ear plugs? Thing is I'm currently using earplugs but they're uncomfortable for the long term, so maybe the IEM will also be uncomfortable for long term use.

Commenter_34

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

SkullCandy Venue. Best purchase I've ever made.

Commenter_35

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I personally benefit a lot from headphones in general. I tend to be hypersensitive when it comes to hearing and being able to listen to certain music really helps me get into the zone and get stuff done to an extent where without it it's nearly impossible to do anything.

Commenter_36

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

My Bose quiet comfort 35s stay ON during sex.

Commenter_37

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I've had my xm4's for over a year now and they're easily one of my favorite purchases. My brain will shift and fixate on any sort of noise so even the differences between a pretty quiet apartment with a computer running and noise-canceling headphones are huge for me.

The WH-XM4s have the best ANC in the under \$500 range from everything I've tried. It's best at blocking low-frequency noises which are the ones that typically annoy me the most. On a plane flight, it reduces the noise by about 80-90%. At home, it completely eliminates the noise from the AC unit and my computer. Outside traffic, a car alarm, a dog barking, and really any other noise would be reduced by around 70-80%. They do have the faintest white noise hiss but you really have to sit there with no music on and pay attention to it for it to be noticeable and even then I find it far more pleasant than not wearing them. If you play any music at all it completely covers this effect and it actually seems to make the noise cancellation more effective. I typically will put on a lowfi or study playlist at ~10% volume and it puts me into my own little bubble where I can work distraction free.

Commenter_38

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I use AirPod Max and they changed everything for me. The ANC is totally transparent for me, unlike my old Bose QuietComforts that would emit this really odd high frequency tone that drove me insane. I usually use them plus music to get total isolation but sometimes (like right now) I'll just turn on ANC to kill noise from my neighbors, outside, the HVAC system, etc,...

Commenter_39

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

The XM4S were a MASSIVE game changer for me. They help me hyper focus like nothing else. I really didn't expect how much they would help. I highly recommend, it's been the best investment I've made for my SW Engineering career.

Commenter_40

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I'm on airpod pros after using Sony over ears. IMO the fact I can have them in my pocket for use any time

outweighs the full immersion of over ears and the noise cancelling is pretty impressive

Commenter_41

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

So I'm going to give my own anecdote here, I would say no purely based off the fact that noise cancelling (or active noise cancelling as it was in the models I used) have me headaches and is apparently a known thing. Not saying it'll happen to you, it's just my experience of them.

Commenter_42

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

Noise cancelling headphones can still cause tinnitus because of the way they work. I can't suggest them for that reason. Tinnitus has the potential to drive you absolutely insane more so than ambient or environmental noise already does.

Commenter_43

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I've only tried cheap nasty noise cancelling headphones. They worked but they cause pressure on your ears.

I've got a ATX-M40x. They're life-savers. I would have gone on a manic office stabbing spree long ago without them.

Commenter_44

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

Absolutely.

Commenter_45

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I've got the QC700's and honestly not just downing out the noise but the constant thrum of German death metal kept me on task long before I was medicated

Unknown_User

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I made a post about wireless headphones on r/ADHD less than a year ago! They're great. I leave mine on almost constantly, even when going downstairs or talking to people. Sometimes I'm listening to something, but often I'm not. The slight blocking out of noise makes me feel like I'm more contained within my own mind and less susceptible to being distracted by random external sounds. I would totally recommend it.

I have the XM4's you're talking about. I got them used for a little under 200 dollars. They were fine but the earpads were slightly worn down, whether because they're used or just because Sony made them poorly, I don't know. I got replacements from Dekoni which made the noise cancelling slightly worse but made them much more comfortable. The worse noise cancelling actually makes it easier to leave them on all the time since I can still somewhat hear my surroundings without it being intrusive. I bet you could find a replacement pair that had good enough noise cancelling and was close to/the same as the original pads if you needed to (assuming you go the used route) but I got the Dekoni ones specifically because of how deep and comfortable they are - which I can confirm.

As far as the sound quality and everything else for the XM4's, they're perfectly fine. Doesn't blow me away, but really it doesn't have to. After about a week of use you'll get used to the sound and it will go from "mediocre" to "perfect", at least that's how it always works for me with new headphones. I never use the app after that first time where I applied the EQ I found on reddit to improve the sound. They simply just work.

Commenter_46

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I feel really vulnerable when I can't hear.

What I usually do is give a YouTube video of someone talking about nothing in particular. Helps me concentrate immensely.

Commenter_47

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I just got a \$10 set of silicon earplugs; discreet, comfy and lets me hear people talking directly to me but filters enough noise to make focus easier.

Commenter_48

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

The last time I used active noise canceling headphones, something in the way it was working made me feel sick to my stomach, but my inner ear is very sensitive. I think they were Bose.

I've since switched to passive headphones (over the ear, chunky ones) and work with them, and they work well. I need very specific types of music to keep me focused, but it helps me keep the background out.

I use Beyerdynamic dt770 pro, 250ohm with a schiit amp/dac stack. Sound amazing and help me stay on track. They're not portable, though, so if I need something elsewhere I have to get another set of cans. I'm a teacher, currently, so when I'm not instructing, I'm mostly in a quiet classroom so it's not too much of an issue outside the house.

Commenter_49

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I have some wireless noise cancelling headphones now and I like them a lot but I also had a few pairs of regular over the ear headphones that were 1/3rd the price for over 8 years and they were good enough. If you're listening to music you won't hear anything anyway, especially at home

Commenter_50

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

My girlfriend has the wireless sennheiser NC earbuds ~\$120 & swears by them for her anxiety. They muffle the city noises and replace them with whatever soundscape you desire. I love mine as well. The newer ones have faster processors and can cancel higher frequencies.

Commenter_51

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

A good, inexpensive test drive is this from MonoPrice: BT500 ANC. They may be less than \$50 by now. I have had them for nearly 2 years.

Commenter_52

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I've tried a few and I don't think it's worth it. I'm listening to music most of the time anyways, so over-ear headphones are enough to drown out any background noise and they (ANCs) don't help at all against irregular noise (anything that is not, as you said, the buzzing of a motor/vibration)

Commenter_18

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

XM4 has by far been my best purchase of 2022. Like you I work from home so I didn't know if it was going to be worth the investment. TBH I didn't realize how much the minor sounds (people watching tv in the other room, dogs, etc.) were adding up and creating an undercurrent of distraction and frustration.

Commenter_53

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

for me noise cancelling headphones just drop some ambient noise but tgey dont really stop from hearing people talk (unless im playing music).

instead i purchased some construction earmuffs. many of them have Bluetooth connectivity.

it's a game changer

Commenter_54

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

I have some Jabra in-ear bluetooth headphones that have a white noise function that seems helpful.

Commenter_55

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 0

I don't use noise canceling headphones because I'm concerned there will be a sound I need to hear, such as an alarm, something falling, pet in agony, etc.

Since you work from home, do you have the opportunity to have your work room upgraded with sound dampening and a nice audio system?

Off on a tangent, life pro tip for dealing with barking dogs, when you hear a dog bark say "Awwwww, someone wants to gossip" and smile. This will help retrain your brain to increase the pleasant feelings. Luckily the smiling makes the magic happen, even if it's a forced smile.

Commenter_56

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 0

I be aware they can get quite hot on the ears, as that is what I experienced and found that to be more distracting, old gen airpods are amazing for comfort i've found.