

# Beats Studio Buds+ review: Apple's latest for Android and iPhone

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The latest Beats earbuds from Apple improve the noise-cancelling and sound of their predecessors – and make them easier to use across almost all phones while adding a fresh transparent option. The Studio Buds+ cost £179.99 (\$169.99) and, as the name suggests, are enhanced versions of the already good Studio Buds from 2021. The size and shape remains identical to the older buds, which means they are just as compact and fit well, coming with four sizes of earbud tips. While they are sweat resistant, I wouldn't rely on them for exercise as they lack stabilising wings to keep them in place. The top of the bud projects slightly from your ear making them easy to grip. The "b" button handles controls: press once for pause/play, twice and thrice for track skip, or press and hold to switch noise-cancelling modes or adjust the volume. The battery lasts about six hours for playback with noise-cancelling, which is an hour longer than their predecessors and is better than many competitors. The case is pocketable but slightly bigger than the best. It can fully charge the earbuds three additional times for a total playback time of about 24 hours. The case takes two hours to charge via USB-C, while a five-minute quick charge is enough for an hour's playback when low. Apple and Android connectivity A big advantage of the Beats is the extensive cross-compatibility between Android and iOS. Made by Apple, they have greater integration with an iPhone than competitors, including hands-free Siri, access to controls through quick settings, instant pairing and iCloud syncing. You only need to pair with one Apple device to use them across iPhones, iPads, Macs and other gear. But they also support similar features on Android with instant pairing and syncing between Google devices, including auto-switching between Android and Chromebooks. Controls and other settings are accessible via the Beats app, which also includes battery widgets and other features. The earbuds integrate into Apple's and Google's Find My systems, so that you can locate them if you misplace them regardless of platform. Specifications Connectivity: Bluetooth 5.3, SBC, AAC Battery life: 6 hours ANC/9 hours off, up to 24 hours with case Water resistance: IPX4 (sweat) Earbud weight: 5g each Earbud dimensions: 15.6 x 21.6 x 19.8mm Charging case weight: 49g Charging case dimensions: 51.5 x 73 x 25.6mm Case charging: USB-C Upgraded sound and noise-cancelling The Buds+ sound a little fuller than their predecessors, producing good easy-listening audio across a range of genres. They are capable of hitting deep notes, but the bass is nicely controlled and accompanied by well-balanced treble and high tones. They can't beat the best from Sennheiser or Sony, lacking a little energy at times, but they avoid sounding overly clinical with suitable rawness when required. Their predecessor's problem of noise-cancelling affecting the sound has been much improved for the new buds. The earbuds support spatial audio on Android and for Apple Music on iOS but do not support head tracking or more advanced surround sound features for movies. Noise-cancelling

reduces the nuisance sounds of a city better than the buds' predecessors. They effectively suppress rumbles, thumps and other lower notes, and manage to dampen higher tones better than before, but voices, keyboard taps and similar still break through when not listening to music. The Buds+ can't match the best from Bose or the AirPods Pro but they are decent for the money and size. The transparency mode is also improved, sounding more natural and open, easily good enough to hold a conversation or listen out for traffic. Call quality in quiet environments was crisp and clear if a little low in volume. My voice was clear on noisy streets with very little background noise audible on the call. Sustainability Apple does not provide an expected lifespan for the batteries but they should last in excess of 500 full-charge cycles with at least 80% of its original capacity. Apple offers a "battery service" for £85, while replacement buds and cases are available. The earbuds and case are made from recycled plastic, tin and rare earth elements but Apple does not publish environmental impact reports for accessories such as headphones. The company offers trade-in and free recycling schemes, including for non-Apple products. Price The Beats Studio Buds+ cost £179.99 (\$169.99) and will be in store from 13 June. For comparison, the Beats Studio Buds cost £160, the Beats Fit Pro cost £220, the Apple AirPods Pro 2 cost £249, Samsung's Galaxy Buds 2 cost £99, Google's Pixel Buds Pro cost £179 and the Nothing Ear 2 cost £129. Verdict The Studio Buds+ are another great set of earbuds from Apple that court Android users as much as those with iPhones. They build on their predecessors with a compact fit, good sound, solid noise-cancelling and longer battery life. But it is their support of enhanced features on multiple platforms that makes them appealing. If you use an Android phone with an iPad or Mac or some other combination of devices, the Buds+ are one of the best options available. In their transparent colour option they are particularly good-looking. But the battery is not replaceable and the earbuds are not repairable, ultimately making them disposable and losing them a star. Pros: good sound and solid noise-cancelling, cross-platform compatibility with enhanced features for iPhone and Android, great battery life and case, compact and comfortable fit, good button controls. Cons: do not pause music on removal, no head-tracking spatial audio, onboard controls for either volume or noise-cancelling but not both, not repairable.