

Audio-Technica ATH-M50xBT2 from £170

Bluetooth headphones are popular for many reasons. **Jon Musgrave** pairs with this updated design from Audio-Technica

CONTACT WHO: Audio-Technica **WEB:** audio-technica.com **KEY FEATURES DESIGN:** Closed back, over-ear **DRIVER:** 45mm **FREQUENCY RESPONSE:** 15Hz to 28kHz **SENSITIVITY:** 99dB/mW **BATTERY:** Approx 50 hours **FEATURES:** Built-in Alexa, Bluetooth fast pairing, microphone, low latency BT **ACCESSORIES:** Pouch, USB cable, audio cable **PRICING:** Black, £170; Blue £200 **WEIGHT:** 311g

Audio-Technica's ATH-M50xBT is a Bluetooth model of its popular ATH-M50x wired headphones and is based on the same 45mm large aperture drivers that use rare earth magnets and copper-clad aluminium wire voice coils. The latest BT2 version of these headphones is now available in both black and blue editions. They are over the ear DJ style headphones with hinged and rotatable ear cups, and heavily padded ear cushions and headband. When you put them on they provide excellent isolation and in this respect are perfect for both recording, DJing and general use. When you want to pack them away the ear cups fold properly inwards so they're pretty compact, fitting nicely into the included pouch. Further included accessories are a jack cable and USB-C to USB-A cable.

The M50x BT2 works either via Bluetooth or wired (one cable is included), and wired mode is a pass through connection that bypasses the onboard electronics. In Bluetooth mode the headphones have an integrated comms, with dual mics used for calling and voice assistant features. The mics and a number of other performance features are refined and improved in the ATH-M50xBT2.

In Bluetooth mode, on-body controls include power/start/stop and volume, with a further dedicated voice assistant button (to access Alexa, Siri, and Google Assistant). This last button replaces the tap touch ear cup used on the previous version and should provide more predictable performance.

To access deeper settings you'll need the A-T Connect app (iOS and Android). This is well worth grabbing as it reveals a bunch of handy extras including two 5-band EQ options (graphic and parametric), L/R adjust, volume control step division, audio codec mode (Auto, AAC and SBC) and the low latency setting. I found this last option delivered excellent results and some of the best timing I've had from Bluetooth headphones. Other cool aspects include beamforming for the dual onboard microphones and multipoint pairing, which keeps you connected to two devices.



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From a sonic perspective the over-ear design delivers solid bass which can at times feel a bit too much. That said, I think the general balance is very good for this type of headphone and is considerably better than some of the excessively hyped designs available. If you're using them via Bluetooth you can of course adjust the EQ, adding your own presets to the handful of library ones. On the subject of Bluetooth, there isn't limitless onboard gain available, and I found it important to have a healthy source signal level.

In terms of comfort the over-ear design fits well and although the Bluetooth components add to the weight, at 311g they are not substantially heavier than the wired version (285g). Also positive is that the new version quotes a battery life of about 50 hours, which is a

noteworthy improvement on version 1 (40 hours).

Overall I like the ATH-M50xBT2. The new model finesses rather than reinvents its predecessor, and continues to offer good value and excellent performance. **FM**

FM VERDICT

8.7

Audio-Technica's update delivers better overall performance and more features while retaining the core sound and fit

THE PROS & CONS



Extensive onboard tweaking via app

Improved battery life

Good passive noise cancellation

Low latency Bluetooth mode

Comfortable over-ear fit



Sound editing is only available in Bluetooth mode