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Sports Earbuds Are Not Slippery When Wet

Polk Audio UltraFit 3000 sports headphones [Mobile Audio](#), [Sports & Outdoors](#) · \$100 · [Polk Audio](#)Reviewed by [Kyle Stack](#) · December 20, 2011[Like](#) [Tweet](#) 17

Sweating through a workout has its rewards, but one undeniable hindrance is when headphones continually pop out of your ears.

The issue arises when sweat builds up, lubricating the ear tips. All that movement, all that flexing, and the buds fall from the ear canals all too easily. Rather than listening to your favorite adrenaline-soaked AC/DC track to help you finish that set of biceps curls, you have to hear the guy next to you disgustingly grunt out his bench press reps as your headphones dangle at your side.

It's a problem many manufacturers are trying to solve by making sports-specific earbuds—listening devices designed not only to withstand the sweat of your workout, but also to keep the damn things in your ears.

Along these lines, Polk Audio has introduced an entire family of earphones for athletes. Polk's new UltraFit line is led by the \$100 [UltraFit 3000 in-ear-canal model](#) I tried. Sonically, they're a huge step up from the \$10 buds you get at your local electronics superstore, but they're also engineered to stay wrapped around your ears no matter how many ounces of sweat you work up.

The wrap-around design is critical to the fit. A couple seconds of cajoling nestles the plastic pieces behind your ears, where they remain secure. They never fell off my ears during the month I wore them to my gym, including consistent running sessions and one rousing hour of full-court layup drills (These are the things I do to try to bring you a well-rounded review).

Music sounds great. The bass throbs and pulsates, and nothing sounds strained, even at the higher volume levels. Polk Audio ships the 3000s with seven pairs of differently-sized tips, which is more options than most in-ears. Finding the correct tip, and thus attaining the proper seal to get the best sound performance, is easy with all those options.

My favorite design detail: color-coded left and right cables. While each side still has the 'L' and 'R' near the ear bud to delineate which ear it should go in, the differently-colored cables are smart. You know which ear's which at a glance.

Users have a choice between two cables: a 14-incher and a 41-incher that has its own microphone/remote assembly. This is where being an Apple connoisseur pays off. For everyone else, myself included, not so much. The remote controls and mic are compatible only with the following models: iPod nano (4th generation or later), iPod classic (120/160GB), iPod touch (2nd generation or later), iPhone 3GS, iPhone 4 and iPad 1 and 2. The remote is supported by the iPod shuffle (3rd generation and later) while the audio is supported by all iPod models. The pause/play button also worked with my HTC Incredible phone.

I had one big complaint. I prefer to attach my iPod's carrying case and belt clip onto the waistband of my shorts. The two cable choices are both awkward—the 14-incher is too short and a 41-incher is too long. The long one gets caught too easily, like around my knee when I bend down to put a dumbbell on the floor. I could alleviate this by using the shorter cable and attaching my iPod to my shirt with the shirt clip that comes with the 3000s, but that's not comfortable for me. A modest quibble, considering the performance.

WIRED Fantastic sound. Design prevents buds from popping out. Color-coded cables let you tell left from right at a glance. Various ear bud sizes ensures comfortable fit. Carrying case is anti-microbial.

TIRED Microphone/remote works only with Apple products. Length of 14-inch and 41-inch cables are problematic, limiting where you can attach your iPod.

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