

In the UK, 7.1 million people are now listening to podcasts weekly, a figure that has doubled in the past five years (Ofcom).

Audio content consumption continues to grow and understanding a few key audio production skills can greatly improve the quality of your content.



This blog post focuses on recording audio only, for tips on improving the audio quality in your video productions, please see [this post](#).

## Equipment

Although it is possible to record good quality audio through the microphone on your phone, you will yield better results with a dedicated setup.

Using a [dynamic microphone](#) is ideal in-home recording situations where you can't control the acoustic your recording space. These microphones help to block out unwanted sounds.

With all of the microphone selections below, you will need a microphone stand and an audio interface and XLR cable (except for the Rode Podcaster) to connect to your computer. (An adapter will be required for connecting to phones/tablets).

The Rode Podcaster is a USB microphone and an all-in-one solution that plugs directly into your computer. This can be a good option but if you're looking to improve your microphone in the future, you will need to get an audio interface.

## Microphones

[An affordable dynamic microphone](#)

- [A better dynamic microphone](#)

## Audio interfaces

- [An affordable interface](#)
- [A better interface \(with 2 inputs\)](#)

## Alternative

- [Rode Podcaster](#)

## Accessories

- [Microphone stand](#)
- [Desktop microphone stand](#)
- [XLR cable](#)

## Software

[Audacity](#) is a free program for Windows and Mac that allows you to record and edit audio. It is very popular and there are many tutorials online to teach you the basics. Alternatively, you can use any audio recording software you already have or that you'd prefer.

# Recording

It is important to take your time setting up as more than 50% of a quality recording comes from placement and technique, rather than the equipment itself.

## Step one: Find a place to record

When recording at home, find a space with very little echo. A room with lots of soft furnishings and the curtains drawn can work, or even a cloakroom or airing cupboard. Go into each room in your house and clap your hands – which room has the least echo?

The space should also have as few external sounds as possible (cars, birds, fridges, etc). If you live on a busy street, it's better to record in a room at the back of your home.

## **Step two: Place your microphone**

Set up the stand with the microphone at a comfortable height, facing your mouth about a handspan away. If reading from a book or script, make sure you can read comfortably from this position as you do not want to move too much once recording.

## **Step three: Get ready to record**

If your software allows, you should record in WAV format (Waveform Audio File Format) and at a sample rate of 48khz (the latter is particularly important if you plan on syncing to video).

## **Step four: Technique**

Think about the speed at which you are reading. Speak as if you were in church and think of the pace you would use, allowing time for the listener to absorb and reflect on what you are saying. At the same time don't be too deliberately slow – listen back and decide if it feels natural.

Take some time to focus on the level of your voice. Dynamics and inflexion are important but try to keep to a steady level throughout. There can be a tendency to become quieter at the end of a section or to start a new take particularly loud and fast.

## **Step five: Test recording**

Record a few lines and listen back to check how it sounds. You may want to consider the following:

**Plosives** – these are caused by strong P and B sounds. To alleviate this either move the microphone further back or place it to the side of your face, at an angle still facing your mouth.

- **Sibilance** – you might find your S and T sounds are too strong. Try raising the microphone a little so that it’s not pointing directly at your mouth. Placing it further back may also help.
- **Boominess** – certain microphones can be more “boomy” the closer they are to the sound source. If your recording is lacking some clarity, move the microphone back a little to help.

## Step six: Editing

For your first recordings, it’s probably better to focus on getting a good recording in one take. However, you may wish to edit together and cut down recordings. Tutorials are widely available online for most audio editing programs (such as Audacity).

For finalising your audio, the website Auphonic has a selection of useful tools and is free to use for up to two hours of audio. Use the Adaptive Leveler to smooth out a recording that varies a lot in volume, and the Loudness tool to bring the overall level up similar to that of commercial productions. This can be done in Audacity but Auphonic makes this process more straightforward.

**Remember, with all these tips take your time and try a few different setups to see what works best for you!**

### James Newhook

Audio Producer

Keep up to date with all things digital and join our Labs Latest newsletter.

[Subscribe here](#)

- Images and copyright: A guide to using images online legally

19/04/2024



- How to make the most of Instagram to reach your audience in 2024

12/04/2024



- Everything you need to know about the Church Organiser

05/04/2024



**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/digital-labs/blogs/audio-recording-home>