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Audeze LCD-1

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Audeze LCD-1 ★★★★★ 5 out of 5, based on 1 Review

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Overall:



its comparative cost



music production. Audeze are already recognised for their high-end Headphones which utilize innovative planar technology - a unique approach to headphone manufacture. The LCD-1, despite taking the planar technology (and Audeze's other expertise) to a more affordable price.

By getting Audeze's lowest-cost Headphones, nothing is lost or compromised, these are well-made, comfortable, non-fatiguing, and importantly, sound very good, and therefore, good value for money.



Price: US \$399; UK £380; Euro 449 (approx. prices) inc. cable, adapter, case, and certificate of authenticity.

Specs:

Quote:

Style: Over-ear, open-circumaural
Transducer type: Planar Magnetic
Magnetic structure: Single-sided Fluxor™ magnet array

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Diaphragm type: Ultra-thin Uniforce™

Transducer size: 90 mm

Maximum power handling: 5W RMS

Maximum SPL: >120dB

Frequency response: 10Hz - 50KHz

THD: <0.1% @ 100dB

Impedance: 16 ohms

Sensitivity: 99 dB/1mW (at Drum Reference Point)

Ear Pads: Memory foam, genuine lambskin leather

Weight: 250g

The [LCD-1](#) package includes: a nice case, a 6ft/2m cable terminating in 3.5mm mini-jack, with a 6.35mm regular-jack adapter - all gold-plated. The cable has a braided cloth material cover: this looks neat and makes the cable less noisy and twitchy/slippery when rubbing on surfaces. More importantly the material softens the transmission of mechanical noise from the cable into the headphone shell/diaphragm.

The [LCD-1](#) ear cups are foldable by a rotary hinge mechanism on each side; this allows for DJ-style 'one ear off' and also for small footprint portability aided by the light weight. The ear pad cushions are made from memory foam covered with lamb's leather; the [LCD-1](#)'s felt super-comfortable right out of the box.

The frequency response, from 10 to 50,000 hz is remarkable, and I never heard any strain, hype, distortion, or compression. There was plenty of potential listening energy available; the [LCD-1](#)'s (at 16Ohms) required less interface gain than other [Headphones](#).

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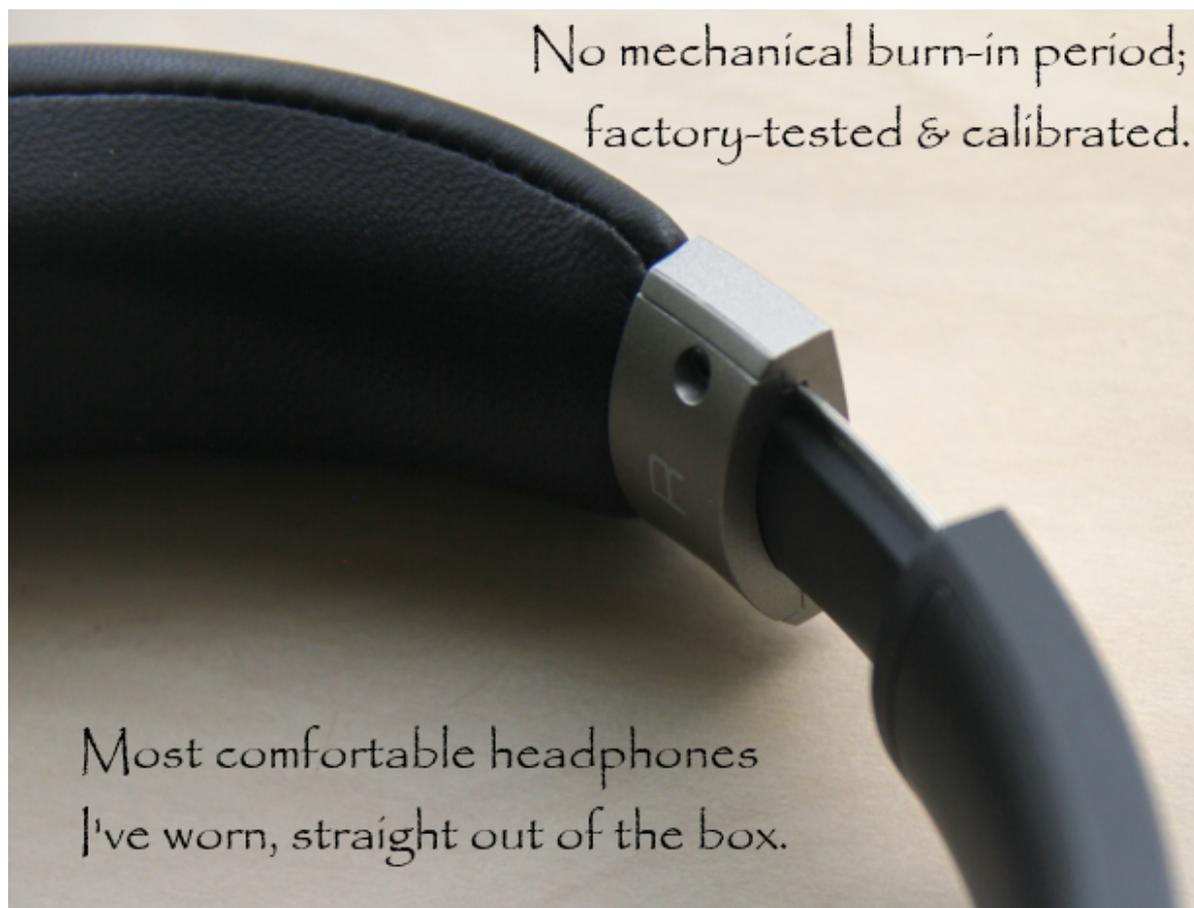


Planar tech explained: The diaphragm is a thin sheet floating between magnets; this lack of attachment and low density allows the diaphragm to vibrate freely. Traditional voice-coils create a resonant peak in the speaker cone; the [LCD-1's](#) planar membrane allows the energy of the voice-coil (a nano-thin strip of low dielectric material deposited onto the membrane by vacuum-deposition) to be equally distributed across the surface, and with perfect electrical insulation. This results in a cleaner, dynamic sound with no sonic artifacts or resonance; this is evident on listening.

Whereas a regular cone speaker will have a resonant frequency or region and this will be noticeable as a weak, deficient or hyped signal, the [LCD-1's](#) planar tech sounds consistent across the entire bandwidth.

The [Audeze LCD-1's](#) also feature a 'Fazor' waveguide - essentially a vertical grid between diaphragm and the earcup, and this ensures a consistency of directional sound relative to the ear. Dispersion is minimised and the waveguide counteracts the effect of the magnets in the sound's path.

Another patented feature is the Fluxor magnet array (which holds the voice coil/diaphragm membrane): with a variable width voice coil, which compensates for variable surface flux density, a uniform magnetic flux is generated across the surface of the diaphragm. This balanced flux means less distortion and results in more Uniforce (the diaphragm isn't working against itself) and a 'happier' sound - a smoother sensitivity curve - less stressed than regular [Headphones](#).

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In Use: Subjective impressions in a review are no replacement for hands-on testing/listening. I appreciate many readers cannot demo and rely on reviews as a guide.

I could say that the [Audeze LCD-1's](#) are more dense than AKG, less sharp than Sennheiser, more velvet than ADAM - but in use they are all comparable as being excellent working tools and/or suitable for leisure-listening. The differences between them are quite nuanced and don't really impinge on how close to a reference they are - although some notes/regions/frequencies are better handled by one brand/model or another. If there is a perfect headphone, I haven't yet heard it; yet this doesn't spoil my enjoyment of listening to music or creating or working with music.

As a user, the [Audeze LCD-1's](#) ticked a lot of boxes: comfortable? non-fatiguing? sonically-revealing? overall value-for-money? All yes.

The padded ear cups are smooth and feel natural; the [LCD-1's](#) are light and I could detect no loose mechanical parts or rattles when moving my head. The [Headphones](#) felt secure without clamping. I normally use open-back [Headphones](#); the [LCD-1's](#) didn't feel claustrophobic (albeit I needed to pull them back to let some air in every 30 mins or so). I didn't test in hot summer conditions but I think (with the occasional 'air-break')

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Another point is that the [LCD-1's](#) are comfortable with glasses or sunglasses; not all [Headphones](#) are - with some the earcup can pivot on the spectacle frame and move the position of the glasses. Out of all the [Headphones](#) I've tried, the [LCD-1's](#) were, by far, the most comfortable when wearing glasses and sunglasses, and for spectacle wearers this is important for production work e.g. on-screen editing, or even for leisure use e.g. when watching a film or reading a vinyl record cover whilst listening.

The light-weight plastic design doesn't feel cheap and the rotating parts and hinges all work smoothly and firmly - like a luxury car. The [LCD-1's](#) don't feel tacky. In fact, they are so light and comfortable, it's easy to forget about them in a physical sense...leaving the soundstage.

I tested the [LCD-1's](#) with a range of interfaces and headphone amps - from entry-level (Audient Evo4/Focusrite Saffire) to higher end (Sound Devices, [KRK Ergo](#), and Moog); the [LCD-1's](#) were not wasted on any sources, nothing sounded 'bad' as such but they really shone and got the best out of a quality headphone amp.

Essentially, in use, the [Audeze LCD-1](#) is very near the perfect headphone - sonically and ergonomically - and, at the price, we should expect this.

Neural Plasticity and Audio Soundstages: Compared to my usual listening via monitors and [AKG K702](#) open-back [Headphones](#), my immediate impression was that the [LCD-1's](#) soundstage lacked forward and rear depth. I wondered if this was due to the strong (but not exaggerated) side info.

The centre image wasn't lacking whatsoever but I didn't get the sense of depth I was used to. I checked with Audeze that the [LCD-1's](#) didn't need a 'burn-in' period (this is done at the factory) and decided to experiment.

My hunch (which proved correct after a few hours) was that my hearing would adapt to the new soundstage - neural plasticity. My experience of listening and mental concept of how the soundstage should sound would 'level things out' and this would actually involve cognitive development (learning or familiarisation) and the growth of neurones (the physical mapping of the new soundstage in the brain).

The only issue...is noise transferred from the cable to the headphone. If the cable is rubbed or knocked then that sound can be heard particularly as a disturbance in the illusion of the soundstage. The good news is that the noise doesn't resonate in the ear cup shell (like the ADAM SP5). It's more of a low-mid/bass frequency disturbance rather

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prevent it.

Conclusion: 400 of most currencies is not insubstantial - particularly for the home studio market. For that money one should expect a competent product with no flaws: comfortable, accurate, non-fatiguing - and the [Audeze LCD-1](#) provides this. Further value is added in that the [LCD-1](#) benefits from the 'trickle-down tech' of Audeze's top-tier [Headphones](#).

Although there are diminishing returns with high-end gear (marginal improvements with greater prices) when one spreads the extra cost of e.g. a £200 headphone, over several years life-span, then we're talking pennies per day extra. I think the extra cost is justified for the [LCD-1's](#) over a competent £200 headphone in terms of the smoothness of long-listening where accuracy is needed - for mix/production decisions, or for the pleasure of listening.

There's nothing remarkable about the [LCD-1's](#); they are just good honest [Headphones](#) that you forget are there and don't impede the music by drawing attention to themselves. This is what makes them near perfect; and highly-recommended.

Gearslutz Points.

Sound Quality 5/5 Clear, comfortable, revealing, accurate, non-fatiguing. The detail created by musicians, engineers, mixers, and producers is clearly audible and the [LCD-1's](#) offer great insight into ambience, low-level detail, texture and room sound.

Features 5/5 Everything you need and nothing more. Replaceable cable.

Ease-of-Use 5/5 Transmission of vibration through cable and into resonant shell of the headphone. That aside, great ergonomics and no downsides IME.

Bang-for-Buck 5/5 The [LCD-1's](#) do the job with aplomb. Well-designed and manufactured. Great presentation. They sound like \$400 [Headphones](#) plus.

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Super-comfortable. Solid, non-fatiguing listening experience.



Minijack Gold-plated output. 3.5mm minijack to headphones adapter. 2m/6ft cable with braided-material cover > Left/right auto-detect



No mechanical burn-in period; factory-tested & calibrated.

Most comfortable headphones I've worn, straight out of the box.



The hinges and swivels are very smooth and balanced...

...the LCD-1's float on the head.

Last edited by Arthur Stone; 9th April 2020 at 07:27 PM..

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