

## Review: Sennheiser HD 558

by Matt Ho | January 19, 2012



While Sennheiser doesn't have the celebrity branding certain companies like Monster has, it maintains the reputation of being one of the best headset manufacturers on the market. The HD 558 is a pretty good example of why the company can still give its competition a run for its money; after all, Sennheiser's been in the game for a long time.

### Design

The HD 558 is the standard over-ear style with a retractable headband for adjustments. The construction feels strong and durable, so unless you decide to go hulk on it, it's sturdy.

The ear pads are one of the highlights because the circumaural design comfortably encompasses the ear for a better fit and the velour material (also placed under the headband) definitely ups the comfort level. While a humid summer isn't comparable to the heat during my crammed hour long subway commute wearing a scarf and a Canada Goose jacket, the headphones do a good job keeping the ears cool. Should perspiration come along, I find it more comfortable than sweating over leather. Ear pads can be removed if it gets gnarly, but it's a bit of a pain in the ass to do so since it's stuck fairly tight.

### Sound

The sound for the HD 558 is impressive: it's crisp, clear and the Eargonomic Acoustic Refinement (E.A.R.) technology does channel audio into the ear very well. The bass holds its own and it isn't overbearing even when it's boosted in the equalizer. I blasted hip hop, rock and electro music with these on and it hasn't been a let-down. Some prefer to fiddle around with the equalizer for the right sound, but even without it, the sound quality is clean and balanced.

If you're looking for noise-cancellation, then you're looking in the wrong place and I might as well point you towards Sennheiser's more specific Travel Noise Cancellation line. I tested these outside and it does block out external noise for the most part, but don't expect absolute silence. The sound of public transit approaching, arguing commuters and subway announcements will still be audible. Even with my iPod operating at full volume, there are still hints of outside noise. But keep in mind that the model is built for multimedia use at home, so under that scenario, indoor sound will likely be blocked – unless your entertainment system is next to the laundry machine for some reason.

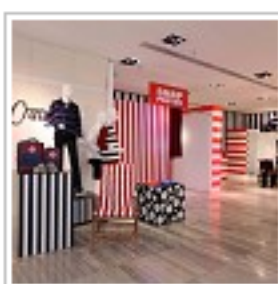
### Conclusion

Overall, the Sennheiser HD 558 is a good pair of headphones perfect for the home, but if you want something to travel with, it's better to look somewhere else. Otherwise, the sound is clear, balanced and the circumaural design makes the user feel comfortable without feeling the need to rip them off after a certain period of time.

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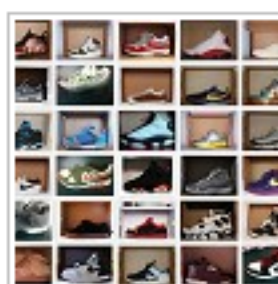
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