

# Tascam DR-05 Linear PCM Recorder £109

A portable stereo recorder at a very attractive price from the home recording specialists *by Trevor Curwen*

Tascam has had a range of pocket-sized portable stereo digital recorders available for some time now at various price points, and regularly releases new models. The latest, launched earlier this year, are the DR-07 MKII at £139 – an updated version of an earlier model, now replete with stereo mics that are adjustable rather than in a fixed configuration – and the DR-05, which at the lowest UK price yet seen for a Tascam machine in this genre, will appeal to those on tighter budgets and looks set to go head to head with the likes of the Zoom H1.

Running off a pair of AA batteries, an optional mains adaptor or USB bus power, the DR-05 is a useful size and shape for holding in the hand but will also sit on any horizontal surface on its four small rubber pads, or attach to a tripod stand via a threaded socket recessed into its body. Tracks are recorded to Micro SD cards with optional recording quality from mp3 up to 24/96 wav files, and the signal can be captured by the DR-05's inbuilt mics or through a 3.2mm mini-jack external mic/line input – there's no provision for plugging a guitar directly in. Playback is also through mini-jack line output for headphones or an external powered speaker system, but you also get a tiny inbuilt speaker for doing instant audio checks.

Any recorded audio can be transferred to computer via USB and you can also import music, a useful feature if you want to learn to play something using the DR-05's rudimentary phrase training facility – you can set loops and repeat playback and vary the playback speed from 50 per cent to 150 per cent without changing the pitch. Other features that guitar players might find useful are an onboard chromatic tuner and

self-timer recording, which will give you five or 10 seconds to get your hands back on your instrument before recording starts. You can also set up a pre-recording buffer so that two seconds of audio are recorded before you hit the record button, just in case...

## In Use

We like to test portable stereo recorders by seeing how quickly we can switch on and start recording. The DR-05 clocks in at under 10 seconds, making it ideal for capturing ideas before you forget them. That's with the default recording quality setting of course, but it's only a matter of seconds to change that if you want to. Apart from the prominent record button and a clever home button that turns the unit on as well as operating the stop and return-to-zero functions, and taking you back to the main screen from any menu, the remaining nine front panel controls are laid out in a circular formation that's extremely intuitive to use – we quickly got up to speed with the DR-05 with no issues.

Sound-wise, there are no worries either. The inbuilt mics do their job extremely well and can handle sound pressure levels up to 125dB, so if you want to record a whole gig you can just set the DR-05 in place and go for it – a hold button on the side ensures that no-one can accidentally knock it out of record, while a peak reduction function, optimised for music recording, will automatically set the recording level. You can also set the level manually and utilise an built-in limiter if you so desire.

## Verdict

Whether for recording gigs and rehearsals or instantly archiving your musical ideas, no one can doubt the value of having a stereo recorder that



you can carry around with you at all times for instant use, and the DR-05 is just that. It's not the smallest on the market but it will easily fit into your gigbag, guitar case or pocket and seems rugged enough to take a few knocks and survive. If you want more in the way of features, there are other Tascams that you could seek out, but if you want a quality, basic, go-anywhere stereo recorder at a value-for-money price, you can't go wrong with the DR-05. **G**

## The Bottom Line

**We like:** Easily portable; simple to use; solidly built; phrase training facility

**We disliked:** No standard jack guitar input

**Guitarist says:** Take-away recorder with a side-order of phrase training for a price that won't hurt

## The Rivals

**Zoom's H1 Handy Recorder** (£100) was the first of this genre to come in at £100 and offers an X/Y mic array and easy operation. **Alesis' Palmtrack** has been discontinued, but you may still be able to find one with a street price of around £80. It is squatter than the DR-05 and has four onboard mics for stereo or omni recording. **Yamaha's Pocketrak C24** (£173) is a significantly more expensive option that puts portable stereo recording into an extremely small and light package.

## Tascam DR-05

**PRICE:** £109

**ORIGIN:** China

**TYPE:** Portable digital stereo recorder

**RECORDING MEDIA:** Micro SD card (64MB-2GB) and Micro SDHC card (4GB-32GB)

**RECORDING/PLAYBACK**

**FORMATS:** Wav 44.1/48/96kHz, 16-bit/24-bit; mp3 44.1/48kHz from 32-320 kbps

**SIMULTANEOUS RECORDING:**

Stereo track

**CONNECTIONS:** 3.2mm mini jack stereo mic/line input with plug-in power, mini jack stereo headphone/line output, USB 2.0 (Mini-B type connector)

**EFFECTS:** None

**OTHER FEATURES:** Built-in microphones, built-in playback speaker, chromatic tuner

**DIMENSIONS:** 61 (w) x 141 (h) x 26mm (d)

**POWER REQUIREMENTS:** 2 x AA batteries (included), AC adaptor, USB

**INCLUDED ACCESSORIES:** 2 x AA battery, 80cm USB cable, 2GB Micro SD card

**OPTIONS:** Power Adaptor PS-P515U (£TBC)

**RANGE OPTIONS:** DR-07 MKII (£139), DR-08 (£179), DR-02 (£279), DR-100 (£399)

**Tascam UK**  
**01923 438888**

**www.tascam.co.uk**

## Test results

<b>Build quality</b>	★★★★★
<b>Features</b>	★★★★★
<b>Sound</b>	★★★★★
<b>Value for money</b>	★★★★★

**GUITARIST RATING** ★★★★★