

**1** V-Moda  
Crossfade LP2  
£129

**2** Yamaha  
HPH-MT7  
£132

**3** Pioneer HRM-6  
£139

## Mid-Priced Headphones

Every new pair of headphones promises the best quality/price combination, and so this month in our group test we've selected five closed-back models around the £150 mark to hear how much quality that will buy you





**4** Pioneer HRM-7  
£169

**5** Audio-Technica  
ATH M50x  
£158

**1** The LP2s are the smallest headphones of the bunch and they're light too. They grip the head a little too well: great for jogging, less so for listening. There are plenty of accessories, but no one appears to have included sound quality. With a 32 impedance they drive easily, but what it produces we don't want to hear, regardless of volume. The bass is overbearing, pushing the mids right back. The HF region is far from flat, rolling off to the point where it's a strain to hear the tops. Overall they sound like an HDTs pirate film soundtrack.

[www.v-moda.com](http://www.v-moda.com)

**VERDICT 5.8**

**2** Compared to the HRM-6s these headphones are more 'open' in the high frequencies, which is also helped by a less beefed up low-end; we'd still like to hear more 'air'. The bass-end is well-balanced, though it gets a little muddy heading into the low mids in a thick mix, though this can be a boon as much as a bane. There's plenty of distortion-free power handling, though we're not prepared to risk our hearing to discover how much! These are light and relatively comfy for long listening periods.

[www.yamaha.com](http://www.yamaha.com)

**VERDICT 8.6**

**3** These are light, comfy and offer a physical flexibility perfect for club monitoring; they also pack down super small. With an impedance of 45 there's plenty of range to turn them up (good power handling). They possess a full sound, though the low mids

are more forward and the HF range more rolled off than you'd expect in studio mixing headphones. This does mean there are no nasty peaks in the critical/sensitive upper mids though.

[www.pioneerproaudio.com](http://www.pioneerproaudio.com)

**VERDICT 8.2**

**4** Despite being the second-heaviest pair, the HRM-7s are unnervingly light, making them easy to wear for long periods and unsuitable for dancing. The sound quality is great from top to bottom. They're a tad snappier than we're used to, which is probably a good thing (ie transient response). The bass-end is full and clear – no mud here. The clarity is excellent for spotting unwanted noise (hiss, clips, etc), as well as shaping a mix. A clear professional choice.

[www.pioneerproaudio.com](http://www.pioneerproaudio.com)

**VERDICT 9.0**

**5** The reissued M50 ('x' = detachable cable) is a popular model across the audio world, competing directly with Beyerdynamic and AKG. They are comfortable, fold and bend in all the right places, and are relatively light (285g). The sound quality is good overall, though they do shy away from a detailed, airy HF region. The mids are clear and forward, while the bottom-end extends down without any peaky resonances. As with all the low impedance designs here (38), they are easily driven beyond our comfort threshold. These are probably the best all-rounder of the group.

[audio-technica.com](http://audio-technica.com)

**VERDICT 8.4**

## FM VERDICT



**THE BEST VALUE** Yamaha HPH-MT7: Of the actual mid-priced headphones the Yamahas are the best value, outperforming the HRM-6s for slightly less money.



**THE HIGH PERFORMER** Pioneer HRM-7: Easily the best quality, and well worth the extra £30 or so over the Yamaha MP7s. These are impressive in critical listening roles, as well as for pleasure.