

Getting your sound right

Ask yourself – what did you think the last time you saw a video on social media with terrible sound? Unprofessional maybe? How long did you spend watching it? It's a fact that more smartphone videos are ruined by rubbish sound than anything else.

Even a basic lapel microphone clipped to a jacket or top will transform your audio quality.

TIP: make sure any audio kit you buy has TRRS connectors, which have 3 black bands on the jack. TRS jacks have only two black bands, and will not work on smartphones (though you can buy a TRS to TRRS adaptor, [Rode SC7](#) (£13))



Lapel microphones: ideal for interviews

[Rode Smartlav+](#) (£50) robust, good quality (*below L*). I use these for my own projects

[Boya BY-LM10](#) (£15) – we use this on our courses. Try also the [Boya BY-M1](#) (£15) (*below R*)



I'd recommend buying an extension cable as the cables on these mics often don't stretch quite far enough, especially with social distancing

TIP: if you don't have an external microphone with you, use the microphone on the earphones that came with your smartphone (below). Quality can be surprisingly good!



TIP: Apple took away the audio jack port from the iPhone 7 onwards, so you will need an adaptor (£9) to fit a 3.5mm audio jack into the charging port. Some Android phones have also ditched the audio jack so you will need a USB-C adaptor (£5)

Directional microphones: great for general audio and interviews. A directional microphone records audio in front of the camera, filtering out sound from the sides and rear, which is what you want on location

- Rode VideoMic Go (£77). Buy with Rode SC7 TRS to TRRS adaptor (£13), otherwise it won't work with a smartphone.
- Rode VideoMic Pro (£135) features controls to cut out low frequency noise (like aircon) and a dB boost to increase sensitivity. Worth the extra money.
- Takstar SGC-598 (£34). Great value for money option. You will need a Rode SC4 TRS to TRRS connector.



- Rode Videomic Me-L (£70) plugs directly into the lightning port of an iPhone (see pic above R). Another version (£45) plugs into the 3.5mm port on the phones that still have them.

TIP: buy a windjammer or muffler (sometimes called a deadcat) that fits over your microphone on windy days. Buy one for any microphone you plan to use outside, or your shoot will be ruined by wind noise

Boompoles: can be vital for social distancing when recording interviews. Rode's range starts with the Micro boompole (£45), which extends to 2 metres. I've also heard good things about the Andoer 3.5m pole (£43), though I've not tested it myself. To cut handling noise, consider a shock mount (£8) to go at the end of the pole.

Radio microphones: these remove the need for cables and take out a lot of the hassle in shooting interviews. Useful for social distancing interviews too. Up till recently, they were too big, too bulky and too expensive for smartphone shooters. Not any more!



Rode have the amazing WirelessGo for less than £180 (*above*). The receive and transmit units are small enough to fit in the palm of your hand. Range is around 70 metres using the 2.4GHz licence-free frequency.

The TX (transmit) unit has an in-built microphone so you can just clip it to clothing if you're in a hurry. A clip-on wind muffler is included. For best quality, plug a lavalier mic into the TX unit, though you will need a Rode SC3 adaptor (£11) to make this work.

Handheld or stick microphones: ideal for high quality interviews. The microphone can be easily moved to and fro between interviewer and interviewee.

Rode Reporter (£115) Has 3 pin connector, so can't be plugged directly into your smartphone (*below L*). I use an iRig Pre (£35) as an interface; this also gives me more control over audio levels. You'll also need an XLR cable

IK Multimedia iRig HD2 (£105). Plugs straight into your smartphone (*below R*)



TIP: *monitoring your audio via headphones while recording an interview is a real plus. Use a splitter, which combines both a headphone and microphone input.*

- *The Rode SC6 (£13) has a 3.5mm jack, so you'd need to combine it with a lightning port adaptor for IOS.*
- *The SC6-L (£70) has a lightning jack for IOS.*
- *Cheaper generic splitters are also available for USB-C smartphones*

I use a lot of Rode products, which is why I've recommended so many, as they are good mix of quality and value for money. But I'm hearing good things recently about Deity, while Sennheiser is a high quality brand, though their products are usually pricier.