

ENTERING A NEW XONE

They've monopolised a huge chunk of the DJ mixer market already. Now Allen & Heath are taking on the DJ headphones market.

can go wrong, and rigid sturdy plastic has a tendency to be more brittle than bendy plastic. But they certainly feel as strong, or stronger, than other pairs of this type. And on the head they feel pretty comfortable, although you get the sense that too much vigorous headshaking could see them slip off.

LOUD & PROUD

The most important thing about any pair of phones is the sound and Allen & Heath certainly haven't skimped — these things are big and loud! Fortunately, loud doesn't mean ear-splitting and the sound stays very clear, even at high volume with the biggest drivers on the market and widest frequency range. It can lose a little clarity in the upper mids compared to some other top-end models, but the bass is seriously heavy.

This last point doesn't actually make too much difference in a club when mixing, but it does give extra weight when using them with your iPod.

Our one reservation with the earpads is that they don't offer the same level of sound isolation as something smaller, like the HD25s, as their size means they sit over your whole ear, rather than sitting on them, thus creating a complete seal between your ear and the padding, but this can cause some people quite a bit of discomfort after prolonged use. Ultimately, this means you get slightly more ambient noise bleed, particularly in a club setting with loud monitoring, so you end up needing to turn up the volume in the cans a bit louder.

Still, this size of design is very trendy right now, and some careful earpiece design means that Allen & Heath's XD-53s actually offer more noise isolation than most others that adopt this type of earpiece, including the aforementioned Technics model.

SWIVEL

The only other feature of note is the swivelling earpieces, but to be honest, for everybody who finds these a comfort aid, there are probably three who think they just end up causing the earpiece to flip around and get stuck under your chin! So, what haven't Allen & Heath thought of? Well, not much, although it would have been nice to see a headphone cable that was detachable at both ends, which would have been much easier to replace. Still, it is a nice long and solid cable, and has a nice screw-on 1/4" adapter to convert the smaller 1/8th" jack.

In the end though, Allen & Heath have come up with a very competent pair of headphones, albeit verging on expensive. We don't think they will end up as an industry standard, but if you prefer a bigger pair, want something that folds up, or just want your phones to match your mixer, then you should give the XD-53s a try. ☆

VERDICT SCORES OUT OF 5

BUILD QUALITY	4.0
EASE OF USE	4.0
FEATURES	4.5
VALUE FOR MONEY	4.0
SOUND QUALITY	4.0

HYPE

Big, clear and loud sound with wide frequency response.

GRIPE

This type of folding design can be fiddly.

If this style of headphones is your bag then you'll love the XD-53s.

TECH VERDICT (OUT OF 5)

4.0

GEEK SPEAK

- ★ Weight 350g
- ★ Impedance: 36 ohms
- ★ Closed-back dynamic earpads
- ★ Frequency response: 5 – 33,000Hz
- ★ 1/8" or 1/4" connector
- ★ 53mm driver
- ★ Maximum input power: 3500 mW
- ★ Sensitivity: 105 dB/mW at 1KHz

SPECS

PRICE

£129

CONTACT

xone.co.uk
01326 370192

TECH

- ★ Swivelling earpieces
- ★ Carry case to keep them safe in your bag or box
- ★ Folding design for easy storage
- ★ Large design for comfort
- ★ Sturdy plastic construction for durability
- ★ 1.2m coiled cable to avoid strain and damage
- ★ Soft earpads for a comfortable fit

EVERY now and then you get a DJing range that attains enormous status in our industry. Allen & Heath's XONE range is just such a brand, and their latest offering is the XONE: XD-53 set of professional DJ headphones.

The basic design is very similar to the Technics RP-DH1200s, incorporating a single thick solid band with large earpieces and a folding design for easy transport. And, as with most sets of DJ phones these days, a soft carry case is supplied.

First impressions are good. The plastic seems quite tough and the build generally solid. Still, with this many joints on a product we're worried there's more that