

How to listen to podcasts

“I don’t even know how to listen to a podcast!”

We hear this ALL the time. Actually if we had a quid for every time we heard this, we’d be well off enough to do our big shop in Marks & Sparks. This is the number 1 reason people don’t listen to podcasts – they don’t know how! But we want to show you how simple it is, even for the most technophobic people out there - yes even you there who’s hiding behind your keyboard! So, here’s a dead simple guide – no jargon, just simple instructions to get podcasts in your lugholes!

First things first...what is a podcast?

Put simply, a ‘Podcast’ is a nugget of audio, that anyone can make, that anyone can listen to, anytime that they want – over the internet.

These nuggets of audio live on the internet and can be heard using ‘Podcast Players’ (also known as ‘podcast catchers’, ‘podcast apps’...). Sometimes they also live on the websites of the people who have made that podcast.

There’s lots of different Podcast Players out there, but for the purposes of keeping it totally simple and straightforward, we’re going to focus on the big boys Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts and Spotify. It’s then up to you if you fancy exploring more.

Most podcasts will be on all Podcast Players, so don’t feel like you’re missing out by choosing one over another!

Importantly, all of these **COST NOTHING – PODCASTS ARE FREE TO LISTEN TO – REPEAT ALL OF THESE ARE FREE**

So if you see the word ‘subscribe’ it’s not a pay point (more on this later).

Whilst there’s starting to be more ‘paid for’ content in podcast land, for the most part podcasts cost nothing to listen to.

First, choose what you'll be listening on...



iPhone, iPad

Search your devices for an app called '**Podcasts**' – many IOS devices already have this built in. If not, head to the apple store and download it (for free!) - You're looking for the icon above.



Android phone / tablet

If your device is a Google Pixel, Samsung, HTC, Moto, Huawei, Sony, odds are your operating system is Android. This means you'll need to download the '**Google Podcasts**' app from the Play Store (for free!). You're looking for the icon above.



PC Desktop / Laptop

Head to a Podcast Players that have websites that you can play podcasts on like **Stitcher** or **TuneIn** Google podcast also have a website . You can listen via the podcast's website if they have that option too – like we do for our [Armchair Adventures Podcast](#).



Alexa

There's a great article here on how to listen to podcasts on your Amazon Smart Speaker. It's dead, dead easy.

[Read article](#)



Google Home

It's as easy as asking it to play a podcast. Instructions here. Again, super simple.

[Instructions for listening to podcasts on Google home](#)



Smart TV

The best app we've found to listen to podcasts on a smart TV is TuneIn.

[TuneIn app](#)



Mac Desktop / Laptop

Listen via the new apple podcast app for mac. A very helpful guide to get that up and running here

[Read article](#)



Spotify

Ok, so not strictly a device, but if you have Spotify on any of the above, you can listen to podcasts on there too - you can listen to BBC podcasts on spotify also.

[Spotify](#)



BBC Sounds

If you want to just explore BBC podcasts then download the BBC Sounds app, for free or if you're on a desktop head over to the BBC sounds website.

[Visit BBC Sounds](#)

Now you have a Podcast Player lined up, you now have the means to listen to podcasts! HOW EXCITING! And easy was that? You have at your fingertips a WEALTH of amazingness. Literally, millions of podcasts.

Some people say to us “podcasts aren’t for me”, well I bet your bottom dollar that you’ll find something you’re interested in, love, binge, can’t get enough of!

Now over the years these podcast players have made huge improvements to the way we discover podcasts. So, take advantage of the search function that the Podcast Players have. It works the same as most search boxes you find on websites or search engines. Most of these podcast players also have suggested podcasts and lists of categories too for you to target your exploration. They have curated lists or themed playlists to really help you to find something that’s going to float your boat.

You can also create lists of your favourite podcasts, more on that below...

Terminology

Now, there’s going to be some words flying about in Podcast land that’s going to make you go ‘urgh, I have no idea what you’re on about!’

Subscribe

Most players have a ‘subscribe’ button associated with a podcast. What this means is that you’re telling your podcast player that ‘this is one of my favourites and to deliver me the latest episode as soon as it’s released.’ This doesn’t mean that you’re parting with any money at all. Subscribing in podcast land simply means you’re creating a library of your favourites. You can unsubscribe at any time too.

I use the subscribe button to save a podcast for later, perhaps if someone recommends one to me, I can quickly subscribe so I have it in my library.

Rate & Review

A function only currently available on Apple podcasts, is the ability to give that podcast a rating out of 5 and leave a review. This is a really important and useful feature. So, the higher the rating and the more reviews a podcast has, gives it increased visibility on the podcast app. The fancy behind the scenes algorithms see this activity and place it higher in the podcast charts (yes there’s podcast charts) and on various podcast lists that the apple creates. The more visibility it has, the more people will discover that podcast. So, it’s really good for podcast makers (like us!) if you can leave a review and rating (and in our case a 5 star one please!). In fact, do it now apple podcast people!

Rating and reviews are also useful for potential listeners who use them to choose whether or not to listen. Much like an amazon (I never buy anything with one star!)

Enjoy

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