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Plantronics Blackwire C725 headset

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TechnologyTell Review

Many of the headphones reviews on TechnologyTell are for audio enthusiasts and not much for the office environment. But since I like to review all sorts of products and mix it up once in awhile, I present to you one of the latest productivity-centric headsets from Plantronics.



Design & Connectivity

The design of the [Plantronics Blackwire C725](#) ^[5] headset is simple, which is likely appropriate for an office/work environment anyway. You don't need anything flashy or visually loud – you want hardware that is going to perform and last on a day-to-day basis. Although the Blackwire C725 is made of light weight plastic, the construction is both flexible and durable. If you had to be rough with this headset, folding it up compact and tossing it into a bag, it can take it.

As long as you're not trying to seriously abuse it, it will last. Just take care with the ear cups, since they have the most fragile of connections throughout the entire body. The microphone boom, which sits on the left ear cup by default, has a wide rotating motion. It's smooth, but holds its place wherever you've left it. The boom arm is also flexible, letting users position the tip closer or further away from the face.

Overall, the Blackwire C725 is a simple, corded on-ear headset that works with desktops and laptops. You can connect it to a mobile device with an OTG cable, but you'll only benefit from sound and not from the microphone. Otherwise, this headset is plug-and-play; your computer should automatically install the basic drivers required for operation. Depending on your set up, you may have to instruct the operating system to set the Plantronics Blackwire C725 as default device for both audio and recording.

Although this headset has a tether, the cord should be long enough for one to move about and attend all corners of a standard bullpen or cubicle. The Blackwire C725 features an in-line remote for quick access to volume, the ANC (active noise cancelling) switch, microphone mute button, and the call button. Since this headset has a built-in sensor to automatically accept phone calls once you put it on, that call button may not see much use! The remote is easy to feel so you can press what you need without having to look. At the same time, the headset itself provides beeps to acknowledge your actions. There is also a clip on the back of the remote to pin it to clothing for convenient access.

If you're not using some kind of softphone interface/application that also provides custom settings, you can download the Plantronics Hub to configure options to your heart's content. But you can expect this headset to work great right out of the box.

Despite a standard focus toward office productivity, the Blackwire C725 works well in a pinch as an effective gaming communication headset. Sure, it may not be equipped with all the latest 'gaming' features and design, but it's also not saddled with the baggage that can come with. If all you need/want is left & right channels, a quality microphone, and an in-line remote to toggle mute, volume, and ANC, then the Blackwire C725 does it. Best of all, it's comfortably feather-light for long work (or play!) days.



Comfort

In some ways, the padding on the Plantronics Blackwire C725 is more for show than not. Well, at least with the headband part. A foam cushion lines the bottom of the band, underneath a wrapping of soft, breathable leather. These headphones are so light and rest so well on the head, that the padding could have been omitted. But who is going to buy a headset that doesn't have any cushioning, right?

The padding on each of the ear cups is ample enough, bordering on minimal. They don't press on or interfere with my glasses stems, which is always greatly appreciated when it comes to headphones/headsets. Even though the pads appear flat, the foam that presses against each ear is in the shape of a ring. The full, on-ear leather material warms up a little, but not to the point of sweating. Not even after a full day of use with only a few breaks. Fatigue is kept at an admirable minimum with these

on.

Thankfully, the ear cups have a pretty good reach when fully extended. The band gives off a soft click as you pull each side down with ease. I have a big head, so sometimes headphones are barely able to reach my ears in a good spot, leaving very little room for adjustment. But not these Blackwire C725, as they are long enough to provide me more options to position either the band or the cups for maximum comfort.

I really like how the Blackwire C725 ear cups have 180 degrees (actually a fuzz more than that) of swivel motion. Not only does it let the pads lie down flat, but you get fantastically equalized clamping force on the side of the head. The free movement lets the headset contour all shapes and sizes without any pinching or direct pressure. As long as the ear pads are centered well, you'll get a good seal that keeps audio leaking to a minimum.

The very middle section of the headband is flexible and adjustable. If you gently bend it, you can see where stiff housing for the ear stems end and the malleable material begins. This is where you can fine-tune the desired level of clamping force for that perfect fit. It moves quite easily, and the memory is excellent. Combined with how light the material is, the band adjustment helps to make it feel as if you're not even wearing anything.



Audio & Voice Performance

With the volume pushed up to the point where it almost gets uncomfortable, sound does leak from the Plantronics Blackwire C725 headset. You'd have to be within a meter of it, and the environment would have to be quiet. Not library quiet, but maybe like a grocery store on an early Tuesday morning. But either way, no one is going to notice it over the sound of normal conversation if you happen to be talking in the microphone. Although I feel that the maximum volume is more than enough, some may think it could use more of a boost. Even with system and headset volumes turned all the way up.

Even though the Blackwire C725 may be meant for office/productivity, there's nothing wrong with using them for audio entertainment. While one may not achieve the same level of depth and detail as with music-centric headphones, you won't be disappointed for casual listening. Mostly. It also depends on what you choose to listen to.

If the music you like features a lot of lows (e.g. EDM, jungle, club stuff, etc.), you won't be that impressed. But, I mean, it's more for work. Relax, haha. While you can hear the lows, they have the least amount of attention and weight behind them. Totally flat and boring, arguably. Too much of it starts to make everything take on a muddy tone. But if rock, jazz, classical, or acoustic recordings with a focus on vocals, mids, or highs are your thing, you should like what you hear.

Put on some Journey or Hozier, and you can hear the crisp clarity of instruments and, especially, vocals. Considering how the Blackwire C725 is meant more as a communications headset, it makes sense. Most of the attention to detail applies to the fine edges of instrumental sound and vocal nuances, though you can hear all prominent elements of a music track. The lateral movement between the left and right cups is very smooth and dynamic. Despite individual elements being separate enough from each other, there isn't much depth to the soundstage.

Back to work, right? The Plantronics Blackwire C725 flexes its true strength for voice communication. So long as the other side of the conversation doesn't have terrible equipment and/or a bad connection, you will hear other's voices very clearly. Although the headset doesn't do much to filter out their background noise, it does bring their spoken words up to the front to make it easier to hear.

As for your own voice, it's like crystal. I've been told that my voice comes through very well, as if I were talking to the person only from a few feet away and not through a connection of electronics. Again, the quality is mitigated if the other side has sub-par equipment capturing their words. The microphone on the Plantronics Blackwire C725 does well to focus on me, ignoring other non-voice noises. While this headset can't block out sharp or loud pandemonium, it does minimize most all of the random background activity that drones on in an office.



Active Noise Cancelling

The active noise cancellation of the Blackwire C725 headphones is a reminder of why Plantronics has been in the business for such a long time. They know how to get ANC done right. While the level of ANC may not be the most powerful that Plantronics has to offer (it's something better answered when multiple products are side-by-side for me to compare), it packs enough for your everyday office environment.

When you flip the ANC switch, you hear only the teensiest of a 'click' before having sound washed over by a void. There is no hiss - a telltale sign of poorly implemented active noise cancelling - although good ears can hear a very thin, high-frequency pitch.

The dull roar of air conditioning, appliances, freeway/street traffic noises outside of the building, and the hum that comes from electronics (e.g. internal cooling fans of desktops and laptops) are practically eliminated. General white noise and hushed conversations also disappear into nothingness by the Blackwire C725.

Sharper noises and higher frequencies are still audible. So while the ANC will block out monotonous and/or machine-level noise from the floor-standing copier, the pitched whines and chattering from gears filter on through. If it happens to be raining, the ANC turns the sound of water hammering on the roof into a light tinkling of dainty bells. More or less. Anything that is sudden and/or loud enough can still be heard with decent clarity through the ANC. You'll hear if a pen drops on the floor nearby, but probably not someone softly snoring in the cubicle/room next to you.

Plantronics Blackwire C725 would be useful to cut out airplane engine noise, although it works only when plugged into a device USB port. An external battery pack won't do it, but a smartphone or tablet that supports OTG connectivity (and you'll

have to have an OTG cable, too) will work. Then all you have to fuss about is the long cable.

Verdict

If you're going to be sitting around with a headset all day long, comfort should be the top concern. Thankfully, the [Plantronics Blackwire C725](#) [5] gets the comfort down with its even clamping force and light weight frame. When you decide to take a break at work, it won't be due to headphone fatigue - you're probably going to be taking a lunch or a brief 15 minutes.

The Blackwire C725 delivers the quality communication that one would expect from Plantronics. Voices on both sides of the conversation are crisp and clear. And if part of your break includes streaming audio, this headset does a fine job at playing music in stereo. Best of all, the ANC on this headset is fantastic for blocking out all the ambient noise one is likely to encounter in a work environment.

At the end of the day, the Plantronics Blackwire C725 folds down for easy carrying. Being such the quality headphone device that it is, I'd recommend bringing it home nightly. You never know who might want to secretly borrow yours without permission! Tell them to go buy their own - they won't be disappointed.

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English

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