

Plantronics BackBeat 500 Series Wireless Headset Review

Terms:

[Consumer](#) ^[1] [2017](#) ^[2]

Published Date and Time:

4/6/17

Royal Flush Magazine

<http://royalflushmagazine.com/technology/tech-review/plantronics-backbeat-500-series-wireless-headset-review/2/> ^[3]

News Organization:

Royal Flush Magazine

Plantronics has been producing headsets covering various wearing styles and price points. The BackBeat Pro 2 is Plantronics' top tier wireless listening product, an over-ear headset coming in at \$200. The BackBeat GO 3 is Plantronics' latest wireless ear bud model going for a modest \$99. As far on-ear headsets go, the BackBeat Sense is Plantronics' wireless option coming in at \$179. However, now the BackBeat Sense is not Plantronics' only on-ear option, nor is the BackBeat GO 3 the most affordable. Enter the BackBeat 500 Series, an on-ear wireless headset coming in at \$79.99.

Build, Comfort and Features

The BackBeat 500 Series is Plantronics' latest entry into the wireless on-ear headset market, with the goal of continuing to give you Plantronics quality sound at a very approachable price point. The BackBeat 500 Series headset houses on-ear controls for full media control and phone call handling. It comes with the full assortment of items one would ever need for an on-ear wireless headset: A micro-USB charging cable, a carrying sack, and a removable 3.5mm for when you wish to use the headset passively, while it's powered off.

The BackBeat 500 Series headset has a very light frame, with memory foam behind leatherette skin for the headband and ear cups. The ear cups house 40mm drivers designed to deliver Plantronics signature audio. On the right ear cup, you have a button for call handling and a switch that acts as the power toggle for the headset as well as a wireless pairing control. The left ear cup houses a standard set of controls for media and separate set for volume. Ports for the 3.5mm cable and USB charging are also found on the left ear cup.

The BackBeat 500 Series starts off as a pretty comfortable headset, with a tight grip. The cushions on the headband and ear cups feel nice, with the ear cups themselves doing a pretty good job at passively isolating sound. That tight grip, while appreciated in most outdoor settings, however did lead to some minor fatigue after about 2 hours of non-stop wearing. So whatever is your method of breaking-in or loosening headphones, you will most likely have to employ it here if you wish to engage the BackBeat 500 Series for extended periods of time. Luckily the headset is VERY light, so the only pressure you'll feel is against your ears.

The controls of the headset are a breeze to get accustomed to, with almost no learning curve at all. All of your media controls are on the left ear cup, with the volume controls placed in a very distinctive manner: press up to raise volume and down to lower it. For music track controlling, press towards the "front" of the left ear cup to move forward in tracks, and vice versa. Your seldom-accessed controls such as pairing, power and call handling are on the right. Since you're more than likely to use the BackBeat 500 Series headset for listening rather than call handling, you won't find yourself mixing up the two.

Overall, the BackBeat 500 Series headset has a nice build despite its fatigue over time due to its grip. At the very least, you can rest assured that the headset is acceptably secured on your head. Perhaps stretching out the headset with even more wear and tear outside of my 3 weeks plus usage would alleviate some of that long term tension. Otherwise, the build is sturdy and flexible with controls being easily accessible. The headset can even connect to two devices simultaneously for faster hopping between your two favorite media sources. Last but not least, each of the various color options are pleasing to the eye, offering three style options.

Given the approachable price point of the BackBeat 500 Series headset, I was ready to apply some leniency to the sound quality. Luckily, that wasn't necessary as the BackBeat 500 Series produced a full and pleasurable sound experience with a nice bass presence. The sound presentation definitely felt as if it leaned towards the bass, but not too much at the expense of mid and high range sounds like vocals and percussion. Sound was clear and enjoyable with each of the various ranges coming across quite well.

Audio queues did well at advising us on the various battery levels of the headset at the time, whether it be low, medium or high. You won't have to worry too much about that since the BackBeat 500 Series lived up to its touted battery life of 18 hours. Starting a Monday on a full charge, I wore the BackBeat 500 Series on 30 minute trips to work and home and about 3 to 4 hours of listening throughout the work day. While the headset informs you generally about its battery level every time you turn it on, it didn't actually complain about low battery until mid-Thursday, with the above usage. Not bad at all.

Call-handling worked pretty well. Just press the button on the bottom of the right ear cup to pick up an incoming call, and press it again to hang up. The BackBeat 500 Series' mic projected my voice well to callers on the other end, while being susceptible to picking up wind or loud passers-by. At the very least, a long calls in the office or short calls outdoors were well-accommodated by the BackBeat 500 Series. As with all headsets, just mind your surroundings when it comes to ensuring that others can hear you. Even though Plantronics excels at developing telecommunication headsets with hi-end mics, the focus here with the BackBeat 500 Series resided in audio enjoyment.

On the unique use case front, I will say that the tight grip and the specific color of our review unit teased me into bringing the BackBeat 500 Series to the gym. While I must stress that they aren't designed for such activity, they did well to hold up and hang onto my head during the bulk of my workout. It wasn't until close to the end of my work out that they started to slide off thanks to my excessive sweat and hairless head. Although, I'm sure you'll still be fine with the BackBeat 500 Series if you're just jogging, weight-training or if you simply have more hair than me.

In the end, the Plantronics BackBeat 500 Series headset is a great buy for anyone looking for a Bluetooth headset under \$100, especially for those looking for something that's not a pair earbuds. I still like the Backbeat GO 3 for that role after all. However the BackBeat 500 Series is still a great on-ear option that performs well, has great battery life, and is easy to use. The grip tension may take some getting used to or at least some breaking-in to alleviate. However, it makes up for it with the nice sound quality you get for only \$79.99

Language:

English

Source URL: <https://newsroom.poly.com/news/consumer/plantronics-backbeat-500-series-wireless-headset-review>

Links:

[1] <http://newsroom.poly.com/category/universal-categories/%5Bcatpath-raw%5D>

[2] <http://newsroom.poly.com/category/news-category/%5Bcatpath-raw%5D-4>

[3] <http://royalflushmagazine.com/technology/tech-review/plantronics-backbeat-500-series-wireless-headset-review/2/>