



10 Audio Improvements in Apple's New AirPods Max 2

Summary

Apple's new AirPods Max 2 feature the H2 chip, offering significant audio improvements. These include enhanced Active Noise Cancellation, Adaptive Audio, Transparency mode, and high-fidelity audio with richer bass and more natural vocals. The AirPods Max 2 also support Bluetooth 5.3, reducing wireless audio latency.

Juli Clover Monday March 16, 2026 3:28 pm PDT



Apple refreshed the AirPods Max today, and the main new addition is an H2 chip that replaces the H1 chip. The H2 chip has previously been used in the [AirPods 4](#) and the AirPods Pro 2 and later, but it's new to the AirPods Max. It brings multiple audio improvements alongside an updated high dynamic range amplifier.

We've listed all of the audio features that are new to the AirPods Max according to Apple.

- **Active Noise Cancellation** - The [AirPods Max 2](#) have up to 1.5x more active noise cancellation because of the more powerful H2 chip and a new computational audio algorithm that detects and counters external sound.
- **Adaptive Audio** - The AirPods Max support Adaptive Audio, adjusting the level of ANC based on your environment.
- **Transparency** - Apple says it is using a new digital signal processing algorithm built for the H2 and the AirPods Max microphone array to make Transparency sound more natural. Your own voice will sound more realistic, and so will other sounds. Transparency lets you hear what's going on around you, with environmental noise filtered through the AirPods Max microphones.
- **Loud Sound Reduction** - Adaptive Audio includes Loud Sound Reduction and the AirPods Max will automatically reduce loud environmental sounds like lawn mowers or construction equipment.

- **Personalized Volume** - Another Adaptive Audio feature, Personalized Volume learns your volume preferences across different environments over time and automatically adjusts.
- **Conversation Awareness** - When you start to talk, Conversation Awareness kicks on and lowers the volume of what you're listening to while amplifying voices so you can hear a response. When you're done talking, the sound returns to its previous volume.
- **High-fidelity audio improvements** - Apple says the H2 chip and a new high dynamic range amplifier provide more headroom for the driver, resulting in richer bass, more natural vocals, and improved localization of instruments. Users can expect more accurate and consistent bass along with more natural sounding mids and highs.
- **Adaptive EQ** - Apple retuned Adaptive EQ for the H2 chip, and the feature now extends to higher frequencies. Adaptive EQ uses inward-facing microphones to sample what you're hearing, adjusting playback in real-time. According to Apple, users will get a more consistent listening experience across different fits, movements, and ear geometry.
- **Voice Isolation** - Voice Isolation isolates your voice in noisy environments so people can hear you when you're on a call. Voice Isolation also lets creators capture high-quality vocals.
- **Reduced wireless audio latency** - Apple says latency is lower with the H2 chip in the AirPods Max 2. The AirPods Max support Bluetooth 5.3, up from Bluetooth 5.0 in the prior model.

There are other features enabled by the H2 chip that aren't tied directly to audio, like Live Translation, camera remote functionality, and the option to activate [Siri](#) without using "Hey." The AirPods Max 2 also still have all of the other features from the original AirPods Max, like personalized spatial audio, quick pairing, device switching, and more.

Apple did not make other design changes to the AirPods Max, and the overall fit and look have not been updated. Compared to the [AirPods Pro 3](#), the main AirPods Max benefit is lossless audio. With a wired USB-C connection to a device, the AirPods Max offer 24-bit 48kHz lossless audio, which the AirPods Pro can't match.

The AirPods Max are priced at \$549, and Apple plans to accept pre-orders on Wednesday, March 25. A launch will follow in early April, but Apple hasn't provided a specific date yet.