Subject: Cassettes
Posted by Newjack on Tue, 23 Apr 2019 04:56:58 GMT
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I recently moved. When I was going through all my belongings and packing I came across a huge store of old cassettes. What a trip! Had to chuckle at a few of my purchases. :lol: I no longer have anything that plays cassettes but was thinking of purchasing a cheap, second-hand player. Does the audio quality degrade over time?

Subject: Re: Cassettes
Posted by Wayne Parham on Tue, 23 Apr 2019 13:02:55 GMT
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Quality will degrade if the cassette is exposed to magnetic fields. You also don't want them exposed to extreme heat or to dust. Heat can warp the case and dust can act as an abrasive.

Don't buy a cheap dual-transport deck. Get a three-head deck that has a bias adjustment for recording. You'll be very happy with the quality from a good deck, provided your tapes are well recorded.

Subject: Re: Cassettes
Posted by Kingfish on Fri, 26 Apr 2019 16:01:31 GMT
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Newjack wrote on Mon, 22 April 2019 23:56 Does the audio quality degrade over time?
Yes. This is the main selling point of all the advanced audio players and equipment that have made their way to us through the years. Streamed music will never degrade in quality.

I look at it this way though: Playing old music on old technology takes me back to that time. Elton John records on a turntable will transport me back to 1975, and that's a good feeling to have.

Subject: Re: Cassettes
Posted by Reggie on Thu, 04 Jul 2019 14:04:41 GMT
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Besides the things that Wayne said about keeping the cassette tape in good order, I would like to add that you keep it away from humid areas because molds can ruin even the best cassette tape.

I had the Sony Walkman before, and I brought it everywhere I go. Now I use my mobile phone.

Subject: Re: Cassettes
Posted by Airforce 3 on Mon, 30 Sep 2019 15:37:21 GMT
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These replies make me realize that the care you have to take to keep different types of media in good working order helps you appreciate the music even more. It makes the ownership more personal.

Subject: Re: Cassettes
Posted by Miami on Wed, 13 Nov 2019 16:51:09 GMT
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If we're going to be honest about things, I was never a huge fan of cassettes and 8 Tracks. The 8 Tracks especially, when compared to vinyl, were too much of a hassle for me to deal with.

Subject: Re: Cassettes
Posted by Azuri on Wed, 20 Nov 2019 00:40:26 GMT
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I don't think the flimsy tape material itself will degrade the sound, as Wayne pointed out. But rather the plastic casing and those two wheels could degrade over time compromising the movement of the tape.

Subject: Re: Cassettes
Posted by Mulcahy on Sat, 29 May 2021 22:26:35 GMT
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Anyone still creating or collecting cassettes? My partner has a few lecture tapes from his grad school days, and I have one tape I want to digitize: a good recording of my late dad's voice.

Subject: Re: Cassettes
Posted by Echo on Mon, 06 Dec 2021 09:50:43 GMT
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Oh! Good old cassettes LOL. I think I still have a cassette player somewhere in my basement from when I was a teenager. I treasure those oldies like gold :d

Subject: Re: Cassettes
Posted by Leot55 on Fri, 01 Apr 2022 23:01:34 GMT
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How did it turn out? Do the tapes still play? I am in a similar situation and just wondered whether it worked out for you.

Subject: Re: Cassettes
Posted by gofar99 on Sun, 03 Apr 2022 14:23:31 GMT
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Hi, Contrary to some thoughts...the plastic (or Mylar etc) portion of a tape is pretty durable. The oxide coating is not so durable. Heat and humidity will cause the binder to deteriorate. This leads to shedding of the oxide. No oxide equals no sound. Properly stored tape has an extremely long life. The last figures I saw for it was over 100 years and it was thought to actually be longer. The length of storage was not so much an issue as how it was first played after storage. Usually this entailed a gentle rewind followed by playing on a well maintained player at minimal tension. I personally have numerous reel to reel and cassette tapes that are over 50 years old and they play as good as they did back then. One thing to remember that except for commercial r-r tapes many made back then on home machines were rather marginal by modern standards. My favorite cassette recorder was an Harmon Kardon that would do as much as 75 db S/N and respond 30HZ-22K. At that time the individual machines were tested and signed off by Harmon engineers. To be sure you paid for the quality. Budget machines then were lucky to go 50-12k at 60db S/N. New budget machines are equally bad regardless of their hyped specs. So if you have old tapes that were stored well they could be just fine.

Subject: Re: Cassettes
Posted by Madison on Sun, 03 Apr 2022 14:46:20 GMT
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That was a fascinating share, gofar99. I'm bookmarking your post for later. I like to watch How It's Made on the Science Channel, and your remarks reminded me of that.

Subject: Re: Cassettes
Posted by Wayne Parham on Mon, 04 Apr 2022 13:51:55 GMT
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I'm with you on that, Bruce. Ever since the late 1970s, I've had a very good cassette deck, one capable of treble extension past 20kHz. I was amazed how many decks couldn't even reach 15kHz. But better decks were out there for a little more money. And not crazy money either, just a little more. Well worth it, in my opinion.

Even in the early 1980s - after I got a reel-to-reel deck - my cassette recordings were as crisp and high-quality as any other media I had. It was a bit surprising, given the difference in tape speeds. But with a good deck, one can make very high-quality cassettes.

I had an Onkyo three-head cassette deck in the 1980s. It made incredible-sounding tapes, many

that I still enjoy today. Nakamichi also made great tape decks back then, and I considered getting one. But the Onkyo I had was superb, and so a Nakamichi purchase just wasn't justified.

Ten or twenty years ago, I bought a Sony three-head deck that is equally capable. Sony made cassette decks until very recently, so you can still buy 'em in good shape. Just make sure it's a three-head design and has adjustable bias.

Subject: Re: Cassettes
Posted by Cole on Tue, 10 Feb 2026 08:14:55 GMT
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Kingfish wrote on Fri, 26 April 2019 11:01Newjack wrote on Mon, 22 April 2019 23:56 Does the audio quality degrade over time?
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I totally agree with what you said here. The thing is that sometimes, it is about having that experience and not necessarily about the sound quality. Playing old songs on some older devices brings back those memories and that is what I would like to experience.