

Hot Tips

Good info for the new ham, and old stuff to refresh your memory



An external speaker might help

Your radio likely came outfitted with a good built-in speaker, to let you hear the operators on the opposite end and other sounds. If you and others nearby want to hear what your radio's receiving, then your little speaker is probably more than adequate for your needs. Still, there seem to be times when it's better to listen to what's coming across your radio loudly or in a more naturally sounding voice. For that, you might think about getting hold of an **external speaker** to do the job.

An external speaker is one that you can attach or plug into your transceiver, to modify the sound or place or direct the sound somewhere other than straight out from your radio. On many mobile or HF base radios, the internal speaker is mounted such that it points straight up in the air, or worse, straight down onto the table. This positioning often makes the audio sound muffled or quiet. Also, the typically small size of their internal speakers can make the audio sound tinny or enclosed in a can.

You don't need to purchase anything expensive for your external speaker. Of course, you can get a [nice speaker](#) that appears to complement your radio look or style if you want to, but a cheaper, aftermarket one will perform the same if you don't care as much about how it looks. You can often find good-quality external speakers at a local thrift store for less than ten dollars. Be sure each is labeled with an "8-ohm" or "8 Ω " impedance rating.



You'll likely need to attach your choice of mono, not stereo, connector on the wires extending from the speaker, since most modern transceivers are outfitted with mono audio jacks. For your handheld radio, it might require a little research on your part to find out what kind of external speaker is appropriate for it, due to its unique connector type. One way to solve that problem is to purchase an inexpensive speaker-microphone, cut off the microphone, and attach the correct wires to your external speaker.

The wooden box that your external speaker is mounted in can help your received audio sound deeper and richer. And you can point your external speaker in any direction you wish, like toward some students for whom you're trying to demonstrate your station setup. During times like at Field Day, an external speaker allows you to share your experience with nearby listeners in a slightly noisy environment.

