



The Amateur in You, Part 1

What have you been pondering?



How to test your HT

If you've ever suspected that there might be something wrong with your HT (handheld transceiver), you might also have wanted a way to test it and be sure it's working as it should be. Seems pretty simple; just turn it on, push the PTT, and ask for a signal report on the air. But, it can be difficult to know that your radio is working if nobody answers you. Here are a few things you can do, to help you be sure, not necessarily in any order:

Set yourself up for success

- Ensure your battery is fully charged
- Check that your radio menu settings can be changed and set (they're not locked)
- Make sure you don't have a receive tone set (displayed as **TSQL** on many Yaesu HTs and **R-CTCS** on many Baofeng HTs)
- If you're using a Baofeng HT, be sure its [squench settings are correct](#), which can only be set by computer; they don't come from the factory properly pre-set, so it'll be up to you to get them set up, or your HT won't receive as perfectly as it should
- If you're going to transmit to a repeater, be sure the offset, shift direction, and tone are set correctly
- Be sure your HT is not [on reverse](#)
- Start out by using a good antenna, one that's better than the stock antenna your HT came with
- Arrange for a friend to listen for you and let you know on the air how you sound

When making a test transmission

- Turn on your HT and go ahead and call out for a signal report; avoid using "CQ" or "break" or "testing" (if you use the word "testing" it's understood that you don't

want to be disturbed by a reply while you're making a test transmission)

- Be sure your volume is turned up sufficiently to hear somebody answer you
- If you transmit into a repeater, you should be able to notice that your frequency changes when you press the PTT, and then you should be able to hear the repeater's courtesy tone or a squelch tail afterwards



- You can listen for your own transmission by using a second radio to listen to, or by [EchoLink](#) if you have that set up
- There might be a nearby VHF or UHF [webSDR](#) you can transmit into, then hear yourself on your computer
- Listen for a reply, for another operator, for the repeater, to yourself; but listen

Finally

What you're after here is not how well you sound, but whether you can be heard at all. Still, if your signal can be heard by others, and you can hear them, but they sound a little tinny or slightly unintelligible, it's possible that your bandwidth setting is set to Narrow. Be sure it's set to Wide.