



Choosing a music player

A guide to MP3 music players
for people living with dementia,
based on research conducted
by **Playlist for Life**

MP3 music players are great for people with dementia

An MP3 player is a small music player that you can carry with you wherever you go. The music is stored on the device and so it is perfect for people who do not have an internet connection.

With so many MP3 players available to buy, it can be confusing and overwhelming to select the right player for someone living with dementia, not to mention expensive! Playlist for Life worked with 29 people living with dementia and their family carers to carry out in-depth testing on three commonly available players.



Music worked!
90% of people with dementia reacted positively to music

What the testers said



Using the MP3 player completely uplifts her. I use it to get her to walk around the house when she's struggling with her mobility. The music just gets her going.



The player literally brought music back into her life!



I found the music player a really useful tool...he enjoyed his music choice immensely, transporting him back to easier times.

The MP3 players and feedback



Cost	Under £15*	Under £30*	Under £50*
MP3 player	Bush 4GB MP3 Player	Bush 8GB MP3 Player With Display	Solo USB Personal Audio MP3 Player
Where to buy	Argos	Argos	Kings Access Technology
The pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cheapest option ✓ Easy to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Has a screen showing the song and artist playing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Designed for people with visual impairments
The cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ The on/off switch was hard to use ✗ Hard to find a specific song 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ The on/off switch was hard to use ✗ Screen navigation can be confusing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Most expensive MP3 player tested
The overall feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 76% of respondents thought the size of the buttons were 'just right' ✓ 70% agreed that the buttons did what they expected 		
Our advice	The Bush 4GB MP3 Player may be best for people whose dementia is more advanced or those who are unconfident with technology	The Bush 8GB MP3 Player With Display may be best for people who have previously used an MP3 player or smartphone	The Solo USB Personal Audio MP3 Player is good for people with visual impairments

*prices were correct at April 2020

Advice for carers

Each of these MP3 players is relatively easy to use, but many people with dementia will need some support from a carer to get the most out of it. Here are a few top tips we discovered from our testing:

✓ **Recharge the battery regularly**

You'll need to buy a separate charger if you don't have a computer to charge it from.

✓ **Buy headphones**

The Bush players come with in-ear headphones but we recommend buying more comfortable over-ear headphones.

✓ **Buy songs**

The players don't come with any songs, so if you don't have any on a computer already you'll need to buy some from an online music store.

✓ **On/off switch**

Our testers found the on/off switch on the Bush players tricky to use. A solution to this would be to leave the player on – the main 'play' button will wake up the player.

✓ **Screen**

If you buy a player with a screen it's a good idea to familiarise yourself with how it works. Some people with dementia found the navigation confusing.