

We review a lot of gaming headsets but today we're sharing something special: the Audeze Mobius. It's one of the most exciting headsets we've come across and nothing short of a game-changer. Audeze is well known for producing high-end headphones for musicians, engineers, and audiophiles, so coming into the gaming space, they knew they had to do something special. Well, they did, and it might just change the headphone industry as we know it.

That's quite a statement, I realize, and don't say it lightly. Over the last year, we've reviewed lots of gaming headsets. Everything from \$40 budget cans all the way up to \$500 (USD) audiophile headphones with a ModMic. The Mobius has phenomenal sound - that much is expected - but what I didn't expect was just how fantastic its built-in surround sound could be. Even calling it that is reductive. This is more than just surround sound. The Mobius is VR for your ears.

Hidden under its surface is a full sensor array that tracks the position of your head 1,000 times a second. Unlike normal headsets whose sound follows the position of your ears - the sound moves with you - the Mobius allows you move in the soundscape, keeping sound sources in the same position while you move your head within it. It's true to life in a way other headsets just aren't and feels almost uncanny in use.

Imagine walking through the woods and hearing footsteps following your own; a deer creeping through the underbrush, perhaps. You're not sure where, so you cock your head to the side, change the angle the sound hits your ear. It's a natural, human behavior that allows us to pinpoint the direction that sound may be coming from. When you tilt your head and turn your body, the sound doesn't move, you do. Without thinking, you use the science of your body and inherent understanding of sound to hone in.



## SPECIFICATIONS

- **MSRP:** \$499.99 CAD
- **Style:** Over-ear, closed-circumaural
- **Transducer type:** Planar transducer
- **Diaphragm:** Ultra-thin Uniforce™
- **Phase management:** FAZOR
- **Magnet type:** Neodymium N50
- **Diaphragm type:** Ultra-thin Uniforce™
- **Transducer size:** 100 mm
- **DSP:** Audeze Cipher DSP
- **Amplifier:** Built-in balanced amplifier (output 1W)
- **Maximum SPL:** >120dB
- **Frequency response:** 10Hz – 50kHz
- **THD:** < 0.1% (1 kHz, 1 mW)
- **Earpads:** Contoured memory foam: artificial leather
- **Microphone:** Detachable with separate volume control
- **Battery type:** Lithium-polymer
- **Wireless Connection:** Bluetooth (SBC, AAC, LDAC)
- **Wired Connection:** USB-C, USB-A, 3.5mm analog audio
- **Weight:** 350g (including battery)
- **Key Features:** Planar magnetic drivers audiophile-grade cinematic sound; Full 3D emulation with support for popular surround sound modes (7.1, 5.1, 5.0, 2.1, 2.0); Integrated head tracking that tracks the tiniest movements of your head 1000 times a second; Pinpoint sound localization; Anatomy calibration to tailor the sound to the user; Full room emulation; Mobius integrates Waves Nx technology for real-time 3D processing in hardware; Wired and Wireless Connections

It works and it's the best surround sound I've ever heard. By a lot. In games, virtual surround sound varies wildly and even when it's good can sometimes be off base. The Mobius takes your in-game audio and positions your head right on your avatar's shoulders (so to speak). The small movements of your head when playing a game like Fortnite allow that sound source, like shots in the distance, to move ever so slightly giving you a much better idea of where it's coming from and how far away it is almost immediately. For competitive games, it's a true advantage and in single-player games makes the experience much more immersive and real. The Mobius is easily the best gaming headset I've ever used and may just be the best ever made.



That is the magic of the Mobius, and it works without any software. Now, there is software which allows you to perfect the math that makes it all work. You can dial in your own anatomy, like the radius of your head, to perfect exactly how it positions and presents that sound, and, of course, customize your EQ profiles. But the core 3D functions are baked into the headset itself.

That means that the same amazing surround sound can be applied to anything. The first thing I listened to was a live recording of Coheed and Cambria. The planar magnetic drivers deliver powerful bass and clear highs - so the fidelity was just fantastic - but it's as if you're floating above the audience facing the stage. Turn around and the sound shifts behind you.

For movies, it's especially good. Your living room can feel more like a theater than ever before.

As you might imagine, these headphones are divine for VR. Even a simple headset, like the Gear VR or Oculus Go, is taken to a whole new level with the Mobius. It's no exaggeration to say this is "audio VR," so HTC and Oculus had better be taking notes. VR headsets need this technology.



Turning all of it off, you're still left with an audiophile quality headphone. They feature massive 100mm planar magnetic drivers which are known for delivering rich bass without sacrificing clarity in the rest of the spectrum. Having used a number of high-end cans at this point, I've been extremely impressed at how full the sound is without drowning the intricate details in the mids and highs. The design is also sleek enough that you could easily detach the mic and take them out of the house without drawing unwanted attention.



They'll also connect to just about any audio device you might have. For PC, you'll want to use the USB cable so you can take advantage of the software and apply firmware updates. When you're on the go, you can also connect with a standard 3.5mm cable or through bluetooth, which includes LDAC, SBC, and AAC support for your hi-res audio files. Though, if the final retail product is the same as the version we received, you may want to replace these with something with a little more length. At my larger desk, each cable was just too short for me to sit comfortably in front of the monitor. Still, the Mobius is a multifunctional device that's just packed

with technology.

As a result, you'll need to take some time to learn the controls. Everything is conveniently placed on each earcup. Buttons tend to have multiple functions, so tapping the 3D button, for example, will center the audio in front of you. Holding it will change the setting or turn it off. It's the same thing with adjusting the volume and changing the EQ preset. It's not hard to learn but worth reading the manual before using none the less.

I'm also very impressed at the build quality on display in the Mobius. It features a sturdy construction with articulating ear cups. The joints are reinforced for durability and the headband is quite flexible without creaking or straining. It should easily fit most users. The cushions also work fantastically for isolating sound at the expense of needing to be vented occasionally. The earcups are also closed-back so you won't need to worry about bothering anyone else in the room and, thanks to 3D, can still experience a wide open sound stage.

Lastly, we have the microphone. It's not as feature rich as the rest of the headset - it's just a mic, after all - but it remains quite good. My teammates were able to hear me clearly and the capture featured a healthy amount of body, unlike many headset mics which are very thin and compressed.



## FINAL THOUGHTS

Audeze has simply nailed it with the Mobius. Without question, it is the hands-down best gaming headset we've ever had in. The 3D surround sound is innovative and revolutionary; this is the headset we should be benchmarking against and the high-water mark other headset makers should be chasing. The biggest challenge to mainstream success is that price point, however. At \$399, it's about as premium as gaming headsets come and then some. Yet, when you consider how much technology it bears, how many R&D hours, and that, at the end of the day, this is still an excellent audiophile headphone, that price becomes much more reasonable.



*If you can afford it, the Audeze Mobius is likely the best gaming headset money can buy.*

### PROS

- 3D surround sound with head tracking is amazing - best in class
- No software required to use 3D - works great for movies, music, and games
- Great build quality
- Full, rich sound thanks to planar magnetic drivers
- Lots of connectivity options

### CONS

- Expensive compared to other gaming headsets
- A tad heavy - can definitely feel it on the top of your head after several hours

