

# ALPINE MUSICSAFE EARPLUGS

Gerry Fursden turns the volume down on the world.

Our sense of hearing is a delicate one and easily damaged. Avoiding extremely noisy environments is often not entirely practical but, thankfully, protecting our ears is. Attenuating earplugs aren't a new invention by any means, but until recently few met the requirements of audio

professionals. Most earplugs are designed to provide a high level of attenuation, with little regard to maintaining an even frequency response. However, the science and manufacturing of earplugs has improved considerably in recent years and some of the current models are very good indeed.

One candidate, the MusicSafe, is produced by a Dutch company called

Typical Attenuation Values (dB)

| Hz     | 125  | 250  | 500  | 1000 | 2000 | 4000 | 8000 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Purple | 14.8 | 15.0 | 15.7 | 18.7 | 26.6 | 24.4 | 18.9 |
| Yellow | 18.8 | 15.6 | 16.0 | 18.5 | 27.7 | 28.9 | 22.0 |



## SoundField Portable ST350 Microphone System

### the front end...

The new ST350 Portable offers SoundField's unique technology in a miniaturised package.

Powered by battery or mains the ST350 offers a 'pocket-size' solution in 5.1 recording for HD broadcast or location recording for film and DVD productions.

The system consists of a lightweight multi-capsule microphone and fully featured compact mic-pre/control unit that generates surround and stereo simultaneously at balanced line levels.



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### post-production...

The ST350 combined with the SoundField Surround Zone software represents the most comprehensive surround and stereo recording/post-production package available.

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Alpine Hearing Protection and distributed in the UK by Sensorcom. Supplied in a neat blue fabric case, the kit comprises two soft plastic earplugs and two pairs of interchangeable attenuating filters, plus a plastic tube that can be used to aid insertion. One size fits all, although the larger rear collar on the earplug can be trimmed for those with particularly small ear canals. Once inserted, there is no pressure in or on the ear, which makes them comfortable enough to wear for long periods, if necessary.

The supplied instructions explain the difference between the two filter sets and how to size and clean the earplugs. The filter element looks like a small plastic bolt, which is inserted into the outside end of the white earplug body. The purple filters are intended for normal use, and provide around 18dB of attenuation at 1kHz (see table), while the yellow filters give about 4dB more attenuation at high and low frequencies.

I found the MusicSafe earplugs easy to insert using the tube, and extremely comfortable to wear. They didn't detract from what I was listening too at all, and there was no sense of an imbalance in the spectrum - which I have noticed with some designs in the past. This MusicSafe design is priced attractively, nicely packaged, easy to use, and seems to do a good job. How precious are your ears?

Jhs



Sensorcom  
Tel: +44 (0)870 901 6070  
www.sensorcom.com  
www.alpine.nl

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