

iPod & iTunes HACKS™

100 Industrial-Strength Tips & Tools



O'REILLY®

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HACK

#2

Exercise with Your iPod M W L

Whatever your favorite way to sweat, you've got options with your iPod. Your iPod can become your constant exercise companion.

Exercising without music is unthinkable for some people. It might help psych you up to work your body through those boring miles on the treadmill or the endless reps and sets while weightlifting. Or it might transport you into a meditative state where, in the music's groove, such things as long-distance running, skiing, or even practicing yoga seem to get easier. Given the happy marriage between music and exercise, it's a wonder that Apple has produced such an inadequate case to help us work out with our iPods.

The case supplied with iPods these days isn't very useful. In fact, it can be best described by the things it *doesn't* do. It doesn't stop the iPod from running out of gas 20 minutes (the time limit of the iPod's built-in RAM) into a good run. It isn't waterproof, mud-proof, or drop-proof. In short, it doesn't let you jump around like a hooligan without fearing for your iPod's safety. Luckily, other manufacturers have stepped in to pick up the slack.

A slew of products is out on the market now that claim to make exercising with your iPod a safe and enjoyable experience for both you and your sleek little tune dispenser. Some are better than others, but depending on the type of exercise you like to do, there is a product that can protect your iPod and/or enhance your overall workout. If you're sick of walking around clutching dearly to your iPod, this hack gives you lots of alternatives.

On the Road

The product that seems to give avid runners, bikers, and other cross-country exercise enthusiasts the most for their buck is Speck Products's iSport (<http://www.speckproducts.com/isport/index.html>; \$44.95). It has been carefully designed to meet the rugged requirements of long-distance runners, as well as the casual exerciser. Furthermore, it feels secure whether you're a New York City bike courier or you're running the Boston Marathon, because it sits snugly in a belt around your waist.

Unlike an armband, the belt adds no more weight to one side of your body than the other, and it keeps your arms wire-free—a good thing as you're whizzing down a busy street. The iSport is also equipped with a mesh cloth back where it touches your body, so that your iPod is encased in plastic, but you are not. Thus, you can sweat in it without creating an anaerobic pool for stinky bacteria to flourish in. Basically, it's a well-planned, high-tech fanny

pack with a built-in flashing safety light that increases your visibility and zippered pouches that allow for easy storage of credit cards, money, and ID. There's even a separate pouch for keys, so their jingling doesn't get in the way of your listening pleasure.



Another great thing about this case is that it fits *all* iPod models, so if you're like some who let their old iPods languish on the shelf while they parade their new minis around town, it's *okay*. Whether you're loyal to your first iPod or always in search of the latest model, they all fit in the iSport.

When you are running or biking, you need to be able to hear a little of the outside world, so spending a lot of money on truly expensive **headphones that block out all ambient noise** [Hack #4] is not a good idea. What is helpful is to have headphones that stick securely in or on your ears.

The headphones that come with the iPod don't do that for everybody. A good bet for this type of exercise is Koss's KSC-50s (<http://www.headphone.com/layout.php?topicID=3&subTopicID=26&productID=0020130050>; \$19.95), because they clip securely to your ears. While it might take a few tries to get used to clipping these headphones to your ears, they're worth the effort; there simply isn't a better-sounding headphone under \$20. They also fit under most bike helmets (but always be careful while biking with headphones on!).

At the Gym

If you like the idea of carrying the iPod on your waist but don't need bells and whistles, or if you don't want to look like you're wearing a fanny pack, Macally's Podcase (http://www.macally.com/new/new_cbipodw.html; \$19.99) is for you. Its lightweight, simple shape keeps the iPod securely in place around your waist, like a holster, while you do your thing at the gym. It comes in chic grey or black.

Or perhaps you prefer not to wear your iPod around your waist. Tunebelt (http://www.macally.com/new/new_cbipoda.html; \$19.95) makes a lightweight armband that stays securely around your upper arm while you move to the groove. It also lets you view the LCD right side up and gives you easy access to the touch wheel and buttons—a bonus at the gym between sets. What's more, should you walk out at night wearing this iPod armband, it's got a reflective strip that will make you more visible to passing cars.

While you're at the gym, you can get a little extra motivation, on the cheap, from your iPod. MP3 Gym (<http://www.mp3gym.com/index.html>; \$19.95) provides an audio personal trainer that prods you through a workout. After

all, once you've got your iPod armor, you might as well arm your iPod with its own trainer genie. There are 60 different exercise routines to choose from on the MP3 Gym CD, and each of them is illustrated in PDF format. Download them to your iPod, and during your workouts you'll learn proper body mechanics for each exercise. At the same time, the personal trainer and supporting music inspire you to do your best with peppy phrases and exercise tips. Whether you find this uplifting or just annoying is a matter of personal preference. But if you need an extra kick in the derriere to sculpt your body, it could be just the thing for you. To check it out before you plunk down the money, go to the web site to see and hear examples of what's on the CD.

Another good bet at the gym is the Teski Roadie (https://www.teski.com/shopping/search_display.asp?searchstr=iPod&x=67&y=10; available with a color pack combo for \$29.95), designed to give you full access to your third-generation iPod's controls during physical activity. With a clear plastic cover and a back that changes seamlessly from a belt clip to an armband, it provides a lightweight and simple solution for toting your iPod at the gym. It also comes with three faceplates in three fashionable "colors": black, clear, and sport orange.

In the Water

If you like your sports in or near water, you're in luck. There are some good watertight cases out there. Which one you choose will depend on what you need it for—in short, how deep in the water you go. If you want to skirt the water's edge, confident that if you fall in once or twice your iPod will stay dry, a water-resistant case is fine. However, if you swim laps in the ocean every day or tend to frequently capsize your canoe in deep water, you clearly need to waterproof your iPod.

Water-resistant cases. The best water-resistant cases are the Lilipod (<http://www.lilipods.com/lilipods.html>; \$39.99) and the oPod (<http://www.otterbox.com/product.cfm?product=168&code=NA>; \$49.95). Both of these advertise themselves as suitable for dips in a bit of water, but they fail to guarantee a completely waterproof experience.

The Lilipod has a compact, 2-mm thick, hard plastic case that is well padded on the inside, and it offers multiple attachment options to ensure your iPod safe passage through all sorts of places that it will find new and exciting. For example, if you're climbing a cliff in the rain and want to make extra sure you don't drop your iPod, it has a tenacious clip on the back that fastens to many types of clothing or belts. To make your iPod doubly secure, you can wear it over your shoulders on the Sterling Rope® lanyard.



You can also don the rope if you're not wearing anything the clip can attach to, as in the case of skinny-dipping, but bear in mind that the case is only water-resistant!

The Lilipod also lives up to its lily pad allusion; if you drop it in the water, it floats nicely to the surface.

Perhaps the only down side to using the Lilipod is that, as with some other types of amphibious cases on the market, you cannot adjust the playlist while the iPod is in its case. On the plus side, it has a built-in ISC-engineered water-tight stereo connector that allows you to plug in any set of headphones, while making sure that no part of your iPod is exposed to water.

If you want to tinker with the playlist while your iPod is encased, the oPod is the case for you. Users of third-generation iPods can tap the buttons through the clear membrane to access music selections, volume control, and more. The protective case allows easy access to the remote port and headphone jack. All connections remain water-resistant and keep out sand and dirt. Another nice thing about the oPod is that you can accessorize it with, for example, an armband (<http://www.otterbox.com/product.cfm?product=168&code=NA>; \$14.95).

Waterproof cases. If you need more protection than water-resistant cases offer, don't despair; you can swim, snorkel, jet ski, and more with your iPod in a see-through vinyl case that, together with waterproof headphones, guarantees an earful of tunes up to 15 feet under water. Put your iPod in the Aquapac Connected Electronics Case (<http://www.waterproofcases.net/555.html>; \$49.99) and slip the wire through the TC clip to lock it down. The case is foam-padded for extra protection; it also floats. It offers three ways to secure your iPod to your body: an adjustable waist belt, a carry cord, and a belt clip.

Headphones. If you want a complete waterproof set, get waterproof headphones to go with your Lilipod, oPod, or Aquapac. Find a decent pair at Waterproof Cases.net (<http://www.waterproofcases.net/headphones.html>; \$24.99).

All-Terrain iPod

We've covered a lot of ground, and water, in this hack, but for those who don't care where they go as long as they get rugged exercise, the most durable case out there might be the previously mentioned oPod. It's a smaller version of the Otterboxes that have been used by the military to keep things bomb-proof. Rest assured, no matter where you go to play or exercise, your iPod can come too.

—Meiera Holz Stern