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Portable Entertainment Gift Ideas [2010 Cool Yule Tools]

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The days of having multiple devices for listening to music or watching movies is basically over – Apple dominates the market so much so that it's hard to find interesting devices that don't immediately compare themselves to the iPod or the iPad. So a lot of the gear in the portable entertainment space this year focuses on the headphone space, where we are seeing lots of different choices, designs and styles. Here are our picks for favorites in the portable entertainment space:

SleepPhones Headphones Described as "pajamas for your ears", SleepPhones are a simple, great idea – build headphones into a comfortable headband that can be worn while sleeping. As I understand it, many people have trouble falling asleep at night, leading some to dangerous prescription drugs, but many try the old-fashioned fall-asleep-to-music remedy. Of course, your partner/significant other/whatever might not appreciate your choice of tunes, but, apart from in an already uncomfortable airplane seat, have you ever tried to fall asleep wearing headphones whilst even partially horizontal? I thought so – it doesn't work too well, does it?

That's what makes SleepPhones such a wonderful approach. Our review product came in a medium-grey shade (yes, matching my natural hair color, thank you for mentioning that), and has the usual 3.5-mm stereo plug at the end of a thin white cord. Just plug it into any stereo source, like the iPod I used, and...

Well, you'll need to adjust the placement of the speakers within the headband, and you're not going to get kick-down-the-door bass out of these. But they are indeed comfortable, even lying down, and my significant other tells me that they are even quite fashionable (and she has them on long-term, um, "test" now, refusing to give them back). Yes, your sleeping mate might be able to hear these depending upon your choice of volume and genre, but there's no more leakage than with most consumer headphones. And, no, they don't sound as good as the headphones we use for recording in our studio here, but they serve their mission well.

Because I live on airplanes, I'm waiting for a noise-cancelling version, which I hear is in the works. In the meantime, this is one great gift for just about anyone on your holiday list – highly recommended!

Cool Yule rating: 5 stars Price: \$58.95 (direct) [Company Web site](#) Reviewed by C. J. Mathias