

By Thorsten Loesch

# XBass - Totally Addicted to Bass

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*"LISTENING TO THE RADIO I FEEL SO OUT OF PLACE*

*THERE'S A CERTAIN SOMETHING MISSING THAT THE TREBLE  
CAN'T ERASE*

*I KNOW YOU CAN TELL JUST BY LOOKING AT MY FACE*

*A WORD ABOUT MY WEAKNESS I'M TOTALLY ADDICTED TO  
BASS"*



**THE PURETONES – "TOTALLY ADDICTED TO BASS"**

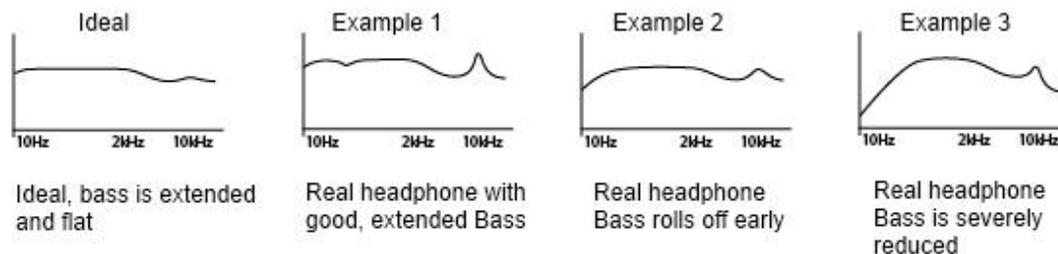
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0teP99JFwjs>

## To have Bass or not to have Bass, that is not the question here

Listening to great music is always a positive experience; from the most humble to the most extravagant system, all are capable of providing great enjoyment. However just as in the song by the Puretones, if the Bass is not right, then "There's a certain something missing that the treble can't erase".

With headphones bass performance varies widely. Some headphones have prodigious bass, some have perfect, even-handed bass, yet many others are bass shy or have severely missing bass. There is no direct link to cost in this, some rather inexpensive headphones can have killer bass, while rather more expensive headphones are found lacking. Of course, bass performance is only ONE factor in Headphone sound quality.

Here are some representative frequency responses of different headphones:



Source: iFi

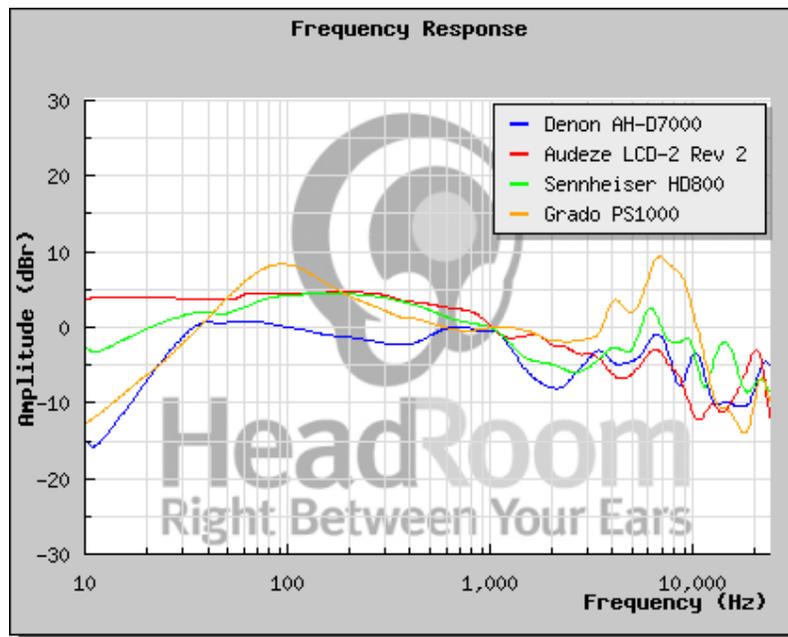
Leftmost is the ideal curve, this is what a headphone SHOULD measure like. Real ones never do. The other three are examples of REAL headphones and show their varying degrees of bass response.

Going from second left, real world Example 1 has very good real bass. Such headphones are quite rare though.

Example 2 has some attenuation in the bass. This is often found even with rather expensive headphones. This curve is indicative of a certain US\$ 1,500 Headphone which is all around excellent and of the best ever made, yet the bass is still a little lacking, not much that one would call it bad, but always leaves one wishing for more.

Example 3 is typical of many smaller headphones. Bass is noticeably absent; not just a little at the very bottom, but a big chunk. Such headphones do sound distinctly lacking in bass; thin, weedy and unsatisfying. They make some correction mandatory.

Another possibility that is not shown is that the headphone will have a very heavy, boosted bass, some DJ Headphones and some in-ear-monitors types are like this. Depending on music and taste this may be perceived as a good thing, or not. For such headphones it is very important that the headphone amplifier has a very good damping factor, so that the extra bass is well-controlled without becoming boomy. To show what actual, real headphones look like, here a comparative shot of four different ones.



Source:

## Hey DJ, where's the Bass!

At iFi we have been aware of this common bass problem with many headphones. Oddly, headphones with the best bass are rarely those with the cleanest midrange or the best imaging. Hence buying headphones is often a compromise.

One could buy a set of headphones that has almost everything and give up a bit of bass. With the player software, the equaliser function could be adjusted to compensate for the lack of bass.

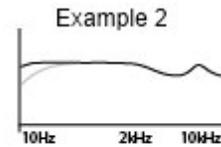
And of course, with your iPod or Laptop, the limits become obvious: the limited power output simply cannot supply the extra power needed for the equalised bass and sound becomes distorted, so you have to turn the volume down, but you do regain some lost bass. It still often does not sound that natural either, as few of these equalisers are correctly tailored to compensate for the shortcomings of headphones...



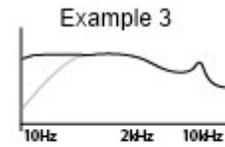
## Enter X-Bass

If your headphones leave your craving for deep, clear, solid bass unsatisfied, you need something eXtra. You need eXtra-Bass.

Unlike equalisers that need to be adjusted by hand and often have the wrong frequencies to compensate for headphone bass roll-off, XBass has been designed to compensate for both: headphones with some gentle Bass roll-off (X-Bass \*) and those with severe bass attenuation (X-Bass \*\*\*). For both types, XBass restores the Bass to what it should originally be.



Headphone with some Bass rolloff and X-Bass ( \* )



Headphone with severe Bass rolloff and X-Bass ( \*\*\* )



Further, as XBass is integrated in the iCan Headphone Amplifier we have both enough power to add the bass back without distortion AND thanks to DirectDrive, we have good control so the extra bass is tight, crisp and precise.

Wanna make your 'phones the Ace of Bass, then you should checkout **XBass...**



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