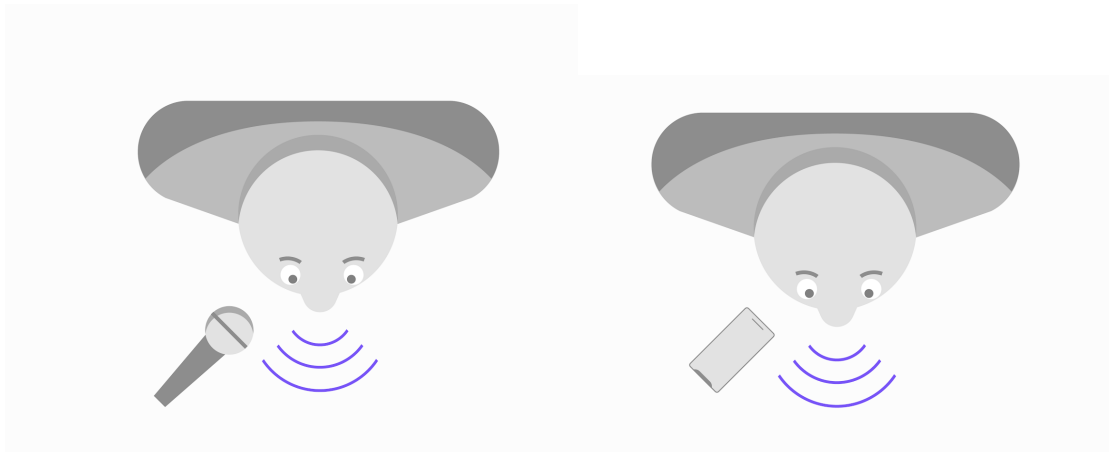


# High-quality recordings

## IMPORTANT RULE #1 Mic your subject appropriately

- The mic should be held 3-5 inches from the subject's mouth. The distance depends on how much the person projects.
  - If you hold the mic too far away, you will get too much ambience competing with the voice.
  - If you mic too close, you will get distortion and an unnatural sound.
- Don't mic directly in front of the mouth; instead, hold it slightly to the side or under (pointing upwards) so the airflow doesn't go into the head of the mic, but the sound does. This helps avoid sibilance and p-popping.



- Do not fidget with the recorder or mic while recording. Plant your hand on the mic in a comfortable position and keep it there throughout the recording.
- DO NOT place the mic or phone on a table because the subject will sound off mic. Hold the mic or phone to the subject's mouth as they talk. If the interview is longer than a few minutes, try these strategies for avoiding arm fatigue:
  - Brace the arm holding the mic by resting the elbow on the other arm crossed across the torso (but make sure to be close to the subject)
  - Seat you and your subject straddling a table corner. Brace your mic on the table.

## IMPORTANT RULE #2 Control the environment

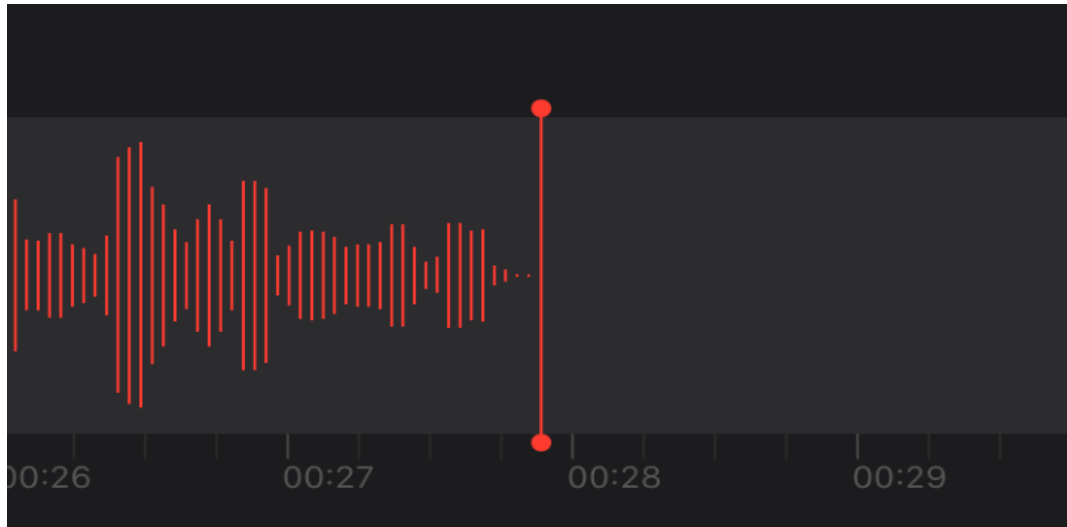
- Find a quiet place to record where there is not too much background noise, such as people talking, music, machinery sound, fluorescent lights, air conditioning, wind noise, traffic, hums, hisses, airplanes, buzzing.
- Avoid recording in rooms with hard, dense, shiny surfaces that reflect the sound. Fabric and carpeted rooms help absorb the sound.
- Point your mic away from the noisy background sounds when you are interviewing.

### IMPORTANT RULE #3 Check your levels

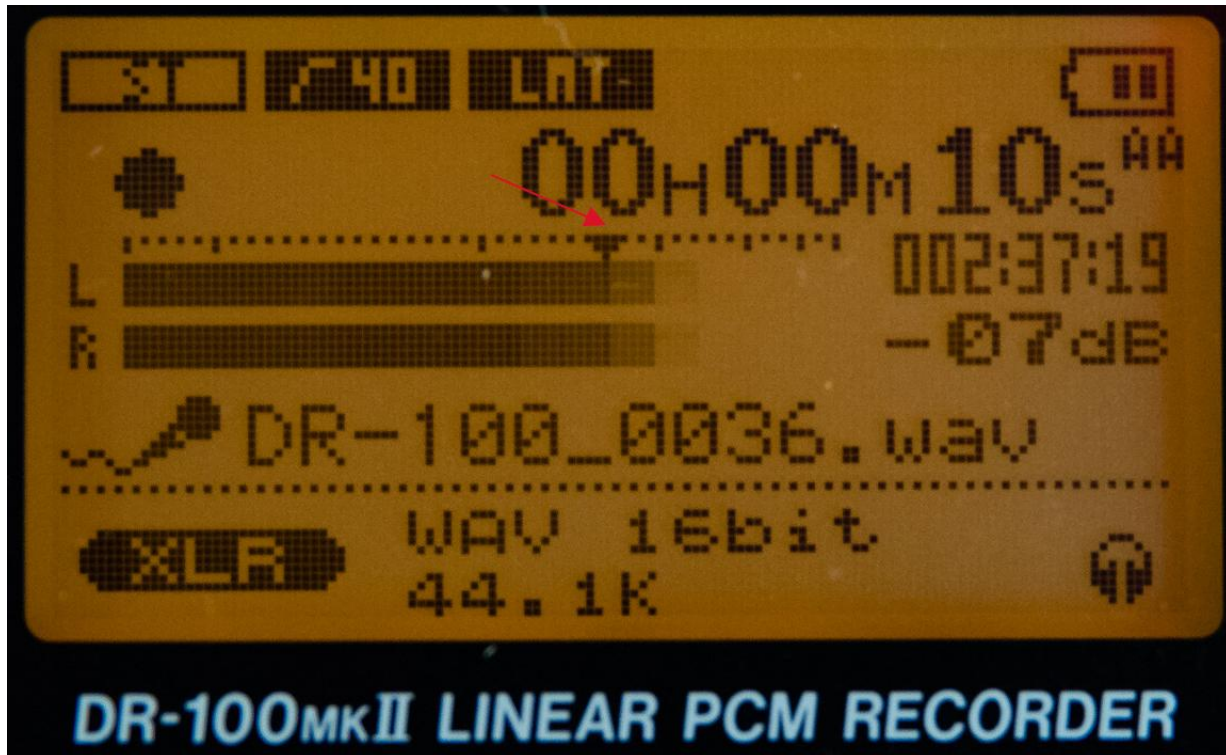
The “audio level” is the decibel level you are recording.

- Levels that are too high distort.
- Levels that are too low can be unusable or if you boost them in post-production you also boost the background noise and hiss.

The Voice Memo apps that come with smartphones don't tend to have controls that you can adjust during the recording process. Below is a good representation of what the wave forms should look like.



If you are recording with a dedicated audio recorder and mic, your recorder will usually have indicators on the metering system around where the audio should peak, such as the one below :



### Recording on a smartphone:

For info on how to record using voice memos on iPhones or Androids, see [here](#).

- Make sure your battery is charged up
- Switch phone into AIRPLANE MODE
- Find a quiet place to record
- Know where the mic is located
- Do a test; check for wind and static before you do the recording
- Listen back on headphones to make sure it sounds good
- Follow tips above for getting good audio