

The “How to Start a Podcast” Checklist

The step-by-step checklist to make sure you don't miss anything

#1 Come up with your idea

Before we start tackling questions about podcast name, format, and length, you'll want to ask yourself “Why am I starting a podcast?” and “What is my podcast about?” Once you've answered the why and what for your podcast, the rest of the concept will fall into place.

Why are you starting a podcast? _____

What is your podcast about? _____

What is your podcast's name? _____

How will you know if your podcast is successful? _____

#2 Choose your podcast format

Some podcasts just have a single host, others are scripted stories, and others feature in-depth interviews. The most important thing to remember is that the format should fit what your podcast is about and be a format you're comfortable with.

- What is the format of your podcast?** *(Circle One)*
 - Interview ← **Most common**
 - Solo Commentary
 - Scripted Storytelling
 - Fiction
 - Non-fiction

- Approximately how long will each episode be?** *(Circle One)*
 - 10 - 15 minutes
 - 15 - 30 minutes ← **Most common**
 - 30 - 60 minutes
 - More than an hour

- How often will you publish new episodes?** *(Circle One)*
 - Daily
 - 2 episodes a week
 - 1 episode a week ← **Most common**
 - 1 episode very two-weeks

#3 The best microphone for podcasters

Podcasts are awesome because they have such a low barrier to entry. You can start recording a podcast with your iPhone headphones and grow your way into a \$20,000 podcast studio. Just remember, your content is the most important part. Nobody listens to a boring podcast just because it has great sound quality.

Which Microphone are you going to use?

- Audio-Technica ATR2100 - [\\$64 on Amazon](#) ← **Our pick**
- Samson Q2U - [\\$58 on Amazon](#)
- Blue Yeti - [\\$129 on Amazon](#)
- Other _____

What editing software are you going to use?

- Garage Band – [Free on Mac](#)
- Audacity – [Free for Mac, PC, and Linux](#)
- Other _____

Extra: If you're doing remote interviews, we recommend signing up for [Zencaster](#).

#4 Record your first episode

When people ask Stephen King how to become a great writer, he always tells them to start by becoming a great reader. In the same vein, you'll become a great podcaster by listening to podcasts. If you don't listen to podcasts already, start by subscribing to a handful and listening to some episodes.

Write an outline or script for your first episode

One of the biggest mistakes new podcasters make is that they tend to ramble. The best way to fight this tendency is to write a podcast outline. You don't have to write your podcast verbatim, but taking 15 minutes to sketch out an episode with bullet points will lead to a dramatic improvement.

Choose a place to record

Try to find a room with few reflective surfaces or lots of material that can absorb or diffuse the sound: furniture, carpeting, or even a closet full of clothes can help. This means that for a lot of podcasters, the best place to record is in their walk-in closet.

Find the "sweet spot" for speaking into your microphone

In general, you want to position your mouth 2" - 4" away from the microphone for the cleanest sound, but the optimal distance may vary based on your microphone. Try recording yourself talking at a consistent volume at several different positions to find the "sweet spot" for your microphone.

Record your first audio segment

You've written your outline, picked a place to record, set up your microphone, and practiced your mic technique. It's time to grab a drink and start recording your first episode. Having a glass of water, coffee, or whiskey nearby will do wonders if your voice starts to get dry. Don't worry about mistakes, stammers, or a little silence. You can make all the necessary edits in the next step.

#5 Edit your podcast episode

Once everything is recorded, you're on to the editing phase. Let your content goals be your guide here—are you looking for a leaner, faster pace? A shorter runtime? Does it make sense to preserve a conversational dynamic? Is it a narrative format, an interview, a monologue?

Choose your podcast theme song

- [Audio Jungle](#)
- [SoundCloud](#)

Make sure you search for music that is free for commercial use and that you give credit to the original artist.

Mix your episode

- Intro
 - Theme song
 - Podcast introduction
 - Explain what the episode will be about
- Main Segment
 - Interview, or
 - Solo narration, or
 - Story
- Outro
 - Recap the episode
 - Give your listeners a call to action
 - Tease the next episode

Watch the tutorial video on how to edit your podcast episode

These are some great resources for editing your audio files from Pat Flynn.

- [Garage Band](#)
- [Audacity](#)

- **Export your episode**

- **Optimize your episode in [Auphonic](#)**
 - Output Files
 - Format: WAV or MP3
 - Select “Mono”
 - Audio Algorithms
 - Select “Adaptive Leveler”
 - Select “Filtering”
 - Select “Loudness Normalization”
Set Loudness Target to “-16 LUFS”
 - Select “Noise and Hum Reduction” if you have background noise
Set Reduction Amount to “Auto”

- **Upload your episode to [Buzzsprout](#)**
 - Signup and login to Buzzsprout
 - Click **Upload New Episode**
 - Follow the instructions to publish your first podcast episode

#6 Get into Apple Podcasts

Create artwork for your podcast

While excellent episode content should always be the focus of your podcast, your podcast cover art is the first thing new listeners will see. Start by reading these tips to [create great artwork for your podcast](#). Then use one of these services to create artwork:

- Fiverr.com
- 99Designs.com
- Create your artwork yourself

Podcast image specifications: 3000 x 3000 pixels, 72 dpi, in PNG

Write your show description

Publish your first episode or podcast trailer

Submit your podcast to each of these directories:

- Apple Podcasts
- Google Podcasts/Play
- Spotify
- Stitcher
- TuneIn

#7 Launch your new podcast!

- Choose your “Grand Opening” date

This should be the same day of the week as you’ll normally release episodes, but don’t let it be more than 2-weeks in the future.

- Share your podcast with family and friends

Ask them to subscribe, listen, and give you an honest rating in Apple Podcasts.

- Contact relevant Facebook Group admins

Ask for feedback and if they like the podcast ask if they’d like to share it with their audience.

- Contact relevant blogs

See if you could do some cross-promotion or if they’d like to feature your podcast.

- Celebrate your accomplishment!

You just launched a podcast! Make sure you celebrate and enjoy your accomplishment.

Extra:

- Join our [Buzzsprout Podcast Community on Facebook](#)

It's a group where podcasters can ask questions, share podcasting best practices, and bounce ideas off each other. We'd love for you to join and be part of this vibrant community.

- Check out the [Buzzsprout Blog](#)

Learn the ins-and-outs of podcasting with simple how-tos, articles, and FAQs.