

# 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?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**What is your podcast about?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**What is your podcast's name?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**How will you know if your podcast is successful?** \_\_\_\_\_

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## #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.