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AudioEngine B1: Would You Like Top-Notch Bluetooth With Your Powered Speakers?

by [Stefan Etienne](#) August 30, 2014 at 3:07 pm





This isn't going to be a very elaborate review, first of all.

Secondly, this is the AudioEngine B1, a small accessory designed to turn the two well-renowned powered AudioEngine PC speakers — the A2+ and the A5, both reviewed here and here — into wireless, Bluetooth speakers.

Sounds very awesome in our book, but is it really? Time to find out.

Price as Reviewed: \$189 at AudioEngine

Using It





The B1 has an incredibly simple setup. First of all, it requires to be powered via USB to either wall outlet or USB port. Now, the most interesting aspect of this is that the bigger A5 speakers feature a built-in USB port, so one can simply plug it into the left speaker for power, then attach the two audio cables, and voila.

The B1 will activate whenever the speakers are turned on, and turned off. It's perfect.

From there, pair via Bluetooth, and the show of bass and clarity begins. Interesting to note, the first two days of usage were what I expected, on both the portable A2+ speakers and the behemoth A5 — very clear with excellent range and bass. but then, I looked at the quick start guide, and it mentioned that during the first 72 hours, the B1 has a break-in period, so quality usually improves further — as an audiophile might know, going wireless always decreases audio quality.

AudioEngine's engineers combated this awful truth about gadgets and sound by using the aptX codec paired with 24-bit upsampling DAC and the range extender; thus, a pretty good solution (or at least a runaround) to the sound quality issue of Bluetooth.

But in the AudioEngine B1's special case, it improves (or rather, improved after the first 72 hours of usage). While it might have been difficult for the non-trained eye to hear, once broken-in, anecdotally, I realized that there was a slight power boost of sounds, no matter what was coming through. That of course, required tuning on my part, so that I didn't start an accidental block party.

Oh, and the wireless range is about 100 feet — of course the accuracy of this statement depends on what Bluetooth device it interfaces with, as well as the interference conditions in your home, but in my scenario, it even worked between floors (however, with the occasional skip, so I'd avoid using it that way).

Conclusion

Score: 10/10



One of the best accessories I've ever reviewed (and one of the most expensive), the AudioEngine B1 is a must-have for those with the company's powered speakers. It's also just cool, because despite it being the year 2014, truly eclectic wireless audio is hard to come by; however the B1 is one such exception.

Pros:

- Works like a charm
- Make some of the best desktop speakers out there wireless
- Small and compact

Cons:

- It is pricey



— **Stefan Etienne**

Founded tech site LaptopMemo. 17-years-old, loves tea, tennis, reading, tech, gaming, + more.

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