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Having the best audio converter software on your PC or Mac is an extremely useful tool. If you love music, work in video creation, or you want to digitize physical media like CDs and DVDs, sound converters are essential. What they do is take one audio track, and record it to create another – usually an MP3, WMA, or other commonly used audio format file. Many will optimize the sound too, and let you cut or combine tracks that you need, splitting your sound exactly how you need it. Most will even notice it and add extra metadata also fully preparing the audio file for whatever device you want to use it on. Our reviews of the best audio converter software packages include free and paid options, and we've chosen those that suit almost every need. If you just want to convert a lot of CDs or older music files to MP3 so you can listen on your smartphone, there are several options for you. If you dig deeper and want to become a Spotify big user, and to mix new audio into video projects, there are converters who offer extra features to help you on your way. When evaluating audio converter software we considered several factors. Almost everyone has support for the major audio file formats, so we looked at the conversion rate, the quality and reliability of the final product, the value (if it's a paid app) and the additional features on offer. All audio converters are relatively easy to use, but we also took this into account. Below are the best audio converters for 2020. If you need more, we also have a guide to the best video editing software and the best voice recording software too.

1. Audials Music: Best audio converter software overall (Image credit: Audials) Perfect for Spotify users Very fast conversion Loads of extra features Rea foxno Mac version Audials Music is the latest version of Audials Tunebite, and it's a big step-up from the previous versions. This software is definitely packed with features, making it a little more complicated to use than other converters, but what you get is huge. When you convert to any of the large selection of audio file formats supported by Audials it will do all the extra work for you, including tagging and adding meta data to your songs. Because it integrates so well with Spotify there are extra options for anyone who wants to take tracks from the streaming service and listen to them offline. Not only will it pull individual songs from playlists on both premium and free versions of Spotify, but you can also use it to download charts and specific genres so you can discover new music easily. You can easily order the tracks you download to new playlists and upload back to Spotify. Conversion itself is lightning fast, matched only by Switch, and is again optimized for Spotify, it will convert playlists in minutes. There is even an option to convert audiobooks with 10x which is handy considering most of these are 10+ hours long. Yes, Audials Music is relatively expensive, but if you use all the features, it's a great tool for far more than audio conversion. Read our Audials Music review.

2. Switch Audio Converter: A good all-round converter (Image credit: NCH Software) Switch Audio Converter Plus was our top audio software for several years, but has lost ground to some rivals. Although not the most functional, it's fast, easy to use and has all the tools you need to batch convert audio files efficiently. It has broad support for all the major audio file types: in total, it is compatible with 40 audio formats that can be converted to 26 output formats. Not only can this software convert audio from larger lossless formats to smaller formats to save space, it can extract audio from DVD and other popular video formats like AVI, MOV and MPEG. If you convert from older formats, the switch has audio normalization, which will improve the quality of recording, and remove some of the noise. While all this is done automatically, you can also adjust levels and cut your audio files manually, to maintain overall control. What's more this is done quickly and the Switch is the fastest of all the converters we tested, making it ideal if you have large batches of files to be converted in a single session. There is a free version of switch, but it has limited features and will only convert batches of five audio files at a time. It's perfect for testing the software, though, so you should at least give the free trial a go. Upgrade is less than \$25 and you get good value with the 'Plus' version. Read our Switch Audio Converter review.

3. Freemake Audio Converter: Best free converter (Image credit: Freemake) Freemake is (mostly) free audio converter software. We say 'mostly' because even though it is actually free to download, this version only lets you convert audio to files in three minutes or less. So if you convert audio to MP3 to listen to music on your smartphone, this is not suitable for most tracks you need to convert. If you want the full function set you have to pay to upgrade. Freemake also tries to download an additional program to your PC when you download Audio Converter, so you should opt out. Apart from this, however, it is a decent piece of audio converter software, especially since it is free. While the conversion of files is slow compared to Switch and Audials Music, Freemake can handle batch conversion and will optimize audio for you to a decent degree. It's easy to use and won't take up much space or resources on your computer. What is impressive here is the list of supported audio files – at 50+ it is one of the widest and most comprehensive programs we reviewed. Freemake can also convert video to clean audio tracks too, just like any other audio converters. Read our Freemake Audio Converter review.

4. Stellar Audio Converter: Very simple to use (Image credit: Stellar) Very simple layout Has audio features Stellar Audio Converter is a mid-range tool with a very easy to understand if you need a reliable program that is very basic to use, this is a good option. It's a solid performer who doesn't really do any better or worse than the other packages in this guide. It's mid-priced, mid-speed, and has limited (but not entirely sparse) features. But a bit of advantage here is that Stellar has a built-in video editor, making it a one-stop software for anyone who converts audio to add to their video projects. You can make all kinds of videos and add converted audio that you choose, whether it's the same format, cut down, or stitched together with other files. You can even use this to make gifts too. On the negative side, Stellar struggles with normalization, and doesn't bring as many sound editing options as other apps. For example, if you convert from streaming services, you're better off looking elsewhere. Read our Stellar Audio Converter review.

5. Xilisoft Audio Converter: Good for older sound (Image credit: Xilisoft) Simplicity is the most important factor, then Xilisoft Audio Converter is a good option. It is fully compatible with Mac and PC, and is easy to use on both formats, especially if you want to convert audio into individual files or small batches. The normalization here is particularly good, so is a good software to pair with any kind of audio conversion from cassettes or older LP records. There are, however, drawbacks. The price is one – this software costs as much as the Switch, but is much slower in its audio conversions, so if you make larger batches of files, we really can't recommend it. It has all the same compatibilities as other software, which is good, and it can also be used to take audio from video formats. Xilisoft also has basic sound editing tools built in, but not nearly as many as more specialized programs like Stellar. If you want to do limited manipulation of your audio files, and are looking to bring over a handful from older formats, this may be converter for you. Read our Xilisoft Audio Converter review.

Best cassette for MP3 converters | Best headphones | Best home computers Why to convert sound at all? Now that CDs have traveled down the same path to obsolescence as cassette and eight-track tapes, the ability to effectively archive your music library in the digital world has become a valuable commodity. We tested all the features of free and pay audio converter software to ensure we recommend a product that can handle all your audio manipulation needs for current and future music formats. Although there are free software options, like iTunes, that can extract audio from a CD and convert it to smaller and more manageable file size, we found through our testing process that you can spend less than \$30 on a good audio converter software and future-proof your ability to collect, archive and share music efficiently. We also acknowledge that you may have a temporary to convert a few files so we tested the best free audio converters so we could recommend a product that will not introduce spyware on your computer. We have also spoken to Ben Westgarth, senior audio software engineer at NCH Software, about the best lossy audio formats for archiving a music collection. He told me that there is a contentious debate on the subject among industry professionals and casual users, but there is a clear winner in terms of file size for sound quality conditions. It is widely believed that AAC is a superior format – it can compress to a smaller size for the same quality compared to mp3. The primary concern about converting to AAC instead of MP3 is compatibility with media players. AAC was developed by a group of companies including Nokia, Dolby and Sony. It is promoted as a successor to the MP3 file format and is used by major streaming platforms like Apple and YouTube. But it still can't match the ubiquitous device support that MP3 offers. Although AAC is a better loss format in terms of sound quality, Westgarth strongly suggests against converting MP3 files to AAC. In this scenario you take one loss format and compress it to another and it will only reduce the quality of your sound - don't improve it! (Image credit: NCH Software) Important audio formats for uploading music to streaming sites is important for audio converter software to work quickly and efficiently as well as to have a wide range of file format options, including lossless and lossless formats. Each music streaming service has a preferred format for streaming and archiving music – unfortunately, not all services use the same format. WAV is an acceptable lossless format for most services. However, depending on the service, the file can be converted and compressed to a different format. MP3 files can be uploaded to all the popular streaming services, but there is no need to convert to a lossless file format, such as WAV, to MP3 if you don't have to. Spotify uses the lossy Ogg Vorbis (OGG) format to stream music through its desktop and mobile apps, and you can convert a WAV file to OGG using a trusted audio converter software, instead of relying on Spotify to do the conversion for you. Apple Music uses a format called AAC, and Amazon Music uses MP3. Tidal and Deezer stream music of the highest quality using the FLAC format. Allowing the streaming service to compress and convert your audio files doesn't necessarily mean that quality deteriorates, but some compression algorithms increase the top signals enough for sound to be distorted. When you use a trusted program to convert your files to the correct format for each platform, you can listen to each one to get a good idea of how it will sound when it's released. Play DRM encrypted files on multiple devices Large digital media distributors, such as Apple and Amazon, use Digital Rights Management (DRM) encryption for copyright protection and to authenticate the media player you authenticate to play the encrypted files. When you buy an album or song iTunes, the DRM-protected file can only be played on Apple device associated with your Apple ID. To play that song or album on an Android phone or tablet, use a copy of the file that doesn't have DRM encryption. To see if a file is encrypted or protected, right-click it and consult its properties. Audio converter programs, like Audials Music, are a legal solution to play DRM-protected audio or video files on any device. Instead of removing DRM encryption, Music detects the audio or video file and converts it to a format that you can use on any media player. If you legally purchase movies, music, audiobooks, and podcasts, it's legal to make DRM-free copies for personal use on multiple devices. However, if you decide to share the unencrypted file on a file-sharing platform or distribute the file with the intention of making money, you cross the legal limit. Carefully read the terms of service of the platform you use to purchase digital media before using audio converter software to make copies of DRM-protected files because each country's copyright laws are different. (Image credit: Audials) Important attributes for audio conversion software import and export formats It is important that an audio conversion tool can import all available audio formats and convert them to a format that you can use. There are more than 50 audio file types in use today, and the best converter software programs can work with all of them. The free converters we tested can import the popular lossless formats, like WAV and FLAC, and convert them to popular lossy formats, like MP3 and AAC, but the best for-pay converters can also import lesser-known formats, including proprietary audio formats from companies like Sony, Microsoft and Yamaha. Conversion Speed Speed Speed May not be an important consideration if you need to convert just a few files. But a quick converter software can save you hours if you have a lot of files to convert, or find yourself converting files often. Slow conversion speed is the biggest drawback when using free converter software. Extraction features The best software applications for audio converters can not only convert and compress files, but they can also extract audio from video files, streaming services, and CDs. If you're using streaming services like Spotify or Amazon Music, some of the audio converters we tested can record a playlist and convert songs to small files so you can upload them on a mobile device and listen without using cellular data or WiFi. One of the converters we tested can also record streaming video from services like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. The Audio Home Recording Act explains the legalities associated with recording audio from streaming services. Basically, it is legal to record a streaming service if it is done in your home and for non-commercial use. This article summarises the law's and what it means for someone who buys audio converter software for this purpose. What is an AMR file & How do I open it? The AMR AMR file type was developed by Ericsson, the once popular mobile phone manufacturer, and is now used by Android phones. It was created and optimized for cell phone voice recordings and is a popular format for voice memo apps. Because the AMR file type is specifically designed to record speech, phones and apps that record audio using this format are not ideal for recording more dynamic sources like natural sound and musical instruments. There are a few popular video players that can open and play AMR files without installing a codec pack on your PC, like VLC Player and QuickTime. However, most media players, like Windows Media Player and iPhones, require a conversion. If you have an AMR file you want to open with an iPhone or other mobile device, convert it to a more universal audio format like MP3 using one of the converters we tested. Because AMR is a compressed audio format, you risk not losing reliability when you convert it to another loss format. However, don't expect sound quality to improve when you convert the file. If you only need to convert a small number of files that are less than a minute long, we recommend a free program like Freemake. However, if you have multiple files that you need to convert and edit, we suggest using a more robust converter like Switch or Audials because they are significantly faster and make it easier to batch convert multiple files at once. The best for-pay audio conversion software we tested also includes simple editing tools you use to trim unwanted breaks and parts of recording you don't need. Mobile Converter Mobile Apps Audio conversion mobile apps are much slower than the best applications we tested, and even the best crash occasionally. However, if you need to convert an audio file using your phone, these are the best options. Switch Audio File Converter Switch is our favorite audio converter software and it is also available as a mobile app for Android devices. It is compatible with more than 40 input and output file types and has a batch conversion feature that runs in the background while using other apps. This allows you to view tracks before you convert them, and all music tags are retained in the conversion process. Audio Converter This app is only available for iPhone and iPad, but the user interface is clean and easy to navigate. It imports more than 30 file types, including popular video formats, and exports to 10 of the most popular audio formats. The input and output file types aren't as extensive as the Switch app, but this app has a more user-friendly interface. There's a file browser feature that makes it easy to find the audio file you want to convert and share your converted file across popular social media platforms directly from the app. Audio MP3 Cutter Mix Converter This audio converter mobile app is only available for Android devices, but it is free and has an impressive to convert and manipulate audio files. It supports all the popular audio sound including MP3, WAV and AAC, and has a comprehensive list of features for editing and merging audio files once they are converted. The Sound Editor is easy to use and allows you to zoom in on part of the audio file, trim the clip, and set it as a ringtone or message tone. This app also has a feature that merges multiple songs together to make a custom remix. iConverter iConverter is a free mobile app for iPhone and iPad. It has a good selection of audio input and output file types in addition to its exhaustive list of supported document and video file types. This conversion app works seamlessly with the File app and lets you drag and drop files into shared-screen tasks. iConverter has a simple sound editing tool and supports the most popular compression formats that help send large folders via e-mail or text. (Image credit: Freemake) Free vs Paid audio converter software The most eye-catching and important difference between free and for-pay software is the speed of conversion. During testing, Freemake, the best free audio converter software, took four times as long as the fastest program, the Switch, to convert a 625MB WAV file to MP3. The second free converter we tested, File ZigZag, is an online converter tool that was 30 times slower than the Switch at converting our test file. It also limits you to a file over 180MB per day and 2GB or smaller files. If you need to often convert files or a large number of files at once, we recommend spending between \$20 and \$30 on a program that doesn't crash frequently and can batch convert multiple files at once. I spoke to the senior audio software engineer in charge of switch and asked him why you should pay for conversion software. He told me, Reliability, stability and quality. He pointed out that NCH Software has constantly updated and improved the Switch for more than 20 years, and every time a new version is released, it passes through a wide range of intensive internal testing procedures. If you are serious about the quality of your music collection and other audio files, it is worth spending a few bucks to ensure that the software does not provide unwanted artifacts or noise during the conversion process.

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