

Control bluetooth speaker volume with phone

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When looking for the best smart devices for your home or gifts for your friends, you may come across both the terms: "Bluetooth speaker" and "smart speaker." The differences aren't immediately apparent, and sometimes the terms are applied to the same device, so we know it can get a little confusing. We're clearing up the mess right now by explaining just what these two categories mean, where they overlap, and what term may be most useful depending on the sort of speaker experience you want. Let's go! Basic definitions JBL Let's start with an overview to provide a quick summary of Bluetooth speakers vs. smart speakers on the market. Bluetooth speakers: These are lightweight speakers, often made for on-the-go activities, and designed to connect to a mobile device like your smartphone for music playback via a Bluetooth connection. They help get music in places or situations where it would otherwise be difficult to have it. Something like the JBL Flip series is a classic Bluetooth speaker example. Smart speakers: These are speakers that can be controlled via an app, voice command, or other means, and are a way to add smart features to audio in a specific location, like a kitchen, lobby, bedroom, or great room. They tend to come with more features and be more stationary than Bluetooth speakers. Something like the Sonos One, Apple HomePod Mini, or Amazon Echo would qualify as a smart speaker. Now let's take a closer look at specific features and how they differ between the two. Portability and power Bluetooth speakers are the masters of portable sound. Brands like JBL, Sonos, and Ultimate Ears (UE) have made names for themselves by creating speakers you can take anywhere, including the outdoors. Some are even small enough to clip onto a carabiner or loop on a pack, and most have resistances to water and dust...or even the ability to survive a dunk in the pool. All this is enabled by their rechargeable batteries, which can provide at least several hours of music playback before needing to be recharged. Smart speakers are less portable. They are generally designed to be placed in one central location on a shelf, desk, or table. They typically need a nearby outlet to connect for power, too, and don't usually have batteries. Again, there's certainly overlap between these speaker categories. Some smart speakers are also highly portable (check out our Bose portable speaker pick on our smart kitchen speaker list as an example), and some Bluetooth speakers aren't made for on-the-go, outdoor use. However, it's more common for a Bluetooth speaker to have a rechargeable battery, a handle, and resistance to water and dust — while it's more common for a smart speaker to need a wired connection, be larger, and not have a design made for portability. Sound quality Bluetooth speakers are somewhat bound by their natural portability, which means their drivers and other components can't be as large. Today's technology can do seriously impressive things with these small speakers and they generate a lot of sound for their size, but audio quality often pays a price. Smart speakers, which tend to be central and often (but not always) larger, are the clear pick when it comes to sound quality. Many smart speakers support connections to TVs, speaker bars, and home entertainment systems for this reason (some, such as the Echo Studio, are specifically designed for it). If you really want Bluetooth speakers to put out house-filling sound, there is an option: Both Bluetooth and smart speakers usually have the ability to link to other models of the same type, allowing you to play the same audio through multiple sources. Voice assistants Bluetooth speakers can have voice assistant compatibility (the JBL Link Portable, for example, has Google Assistant), but it's not guaranteed, and unlikely on the smaller models. As the name suggests, they are more focused on using the Bluetooth wireless protocol for controls and playback. Smart speakers don't always have voice assistants and their accompanying mics either, but it's much more common, and has become an expected feature in recent years. Amazon's Echos have Alexa, the Nest Minis use Google Assistant, and HomePods have Siri. Other brands often offer a combination of Alexa and/or Google Assistant support. Voice assistants allow the smart speaker to serve as a hub for many kinds of interactions. The right voice commands can help you ask questions about the weather, get updates on sports games, schedule events, and call one of your contacts. They can also connect to supported smart devices around your home and allow you to control them with voice commands. Bluetooth speakers are not usually capable of these things. Controls and indicators John Velasco / Digital Trends Controls for Bluetooth and smart speakers are relatively the same. Both tend to have options for power, volume, and playback. Smart speakers may be a little fancier in how those controls are displayed, with larger LED lights or rings as indicators, but they have the same function. The big difference here is that smart speakers typically come with mics and an extra mute button to shut those mics down for privacy. Smart displays John Velasco / Digital Trends Smart displays are an added touchscreen that's typically only available on a smart speaker, like an Echo Show or a Nest Hub Max. Bluetooth speakers are too small and portable for a touchscreen, and it wouldn't be nearly as useful. If you are interested in an added touchscreen, focus on smart speaker options. Bluetooth vs. Wi-Fi Sonos, Floyd Bluetooth speakers generally don't need a Wi-Fi connection to work. A direct Bluetooth connection to your phone is enough to stream music and other audio. This capability also helps them save on battery life, and makes setup a lot easier. Smart speakers have both Bluetooth and Wi-Fi connections, and they often need Wi-Fi connections to operate properly. This is why they are bound to the home or office. However, that Wi-Fi connection is also what makes extra features possible, like voice assistants, smart device control, and more. Note: This is different from streaming audio over Bluetooth vs. streaming audio over Wi-Fi. Smart speakers can require a Wi-Fi connection without enabling Wi-Fi streaming, although some do offer Wi-Fi streaming as well as Bluetooth connectivity. Bluetooth speakers generally can't stream via Wi-Fi at all. Some people prefer speakers that can stream via Wi-Fi because that can make streaming from a computer more reliable, you don't have to worry about range as much, and it makes complex setups a bit easier. Editors' Recommendations By William Kinsey | volume maximum image by nfrPictures from Fotolia.com Speaker volume controls are used to aid in balancing speakers. These are most commonly used with home entertainment systems that are custom-built to match irregular room shapes. Every room has unique harmonics, so the same speakers in two different rooms will sound differently. Speaker volume control resistors are used to help custom set each speaker to match a room's unique harmonics. The sound level from each speaker should be equal at the central listening point. Identify the maximum output of both voltage and current for each channel of the stereo system. The speaker resistors chosen must be able to handle this power level. For longer life, it is recommended that the resistors have a higher power dissipation rating than the maximum output of the stereo system. Use a logarithmic resistor rather than a linear resistor. This will allow the change in speaker voltage to follow the speakers' natural response curve. This is important when fine-tuning is the primary goal, rather than just turning the volume down. A logarithmic resistor is more accurate and expensive than a regular linear resistor. Choose a resistor that goes with the natural theme of the room and does not take up a large amount of space. Since there will be at least one resistor per speaker, smaller is better and easier to hide. Good Housekeeping There's no need to get caught up in a tangle of wires when you want to listen to music in different rooms of your house or out in the garden. Investing in a great Bluetooth speaker means you can bring your music with you wherever you go with ease, whether that's relaxing by a pool, in the park or at home. Here are our top picks: Best Bluetooth speaker: Bose Portable Home Speaker Runner-up Bluetooth speaker: Ultimate Ears Megaboom 3 Best Bluetooth speaker with wifi: Sonos Move Best compact Bluetooth speaker: Bang & Olufsen Beoplay A1 Best Bluetooth speaker for holidays: Bose Soundlink Micro Best Bluetooth speaker for parties: Ultimate Ears Hyperboom Best Bluetooth speaker for outdoor use: JBL Xtreme 2 Best for connecting to other speakers: Ultimate Ears Boom 3 Best Bluetooth speaker for sound control: Bang & Olufsen Beoplay P6 Best Bluetooth speaker for internet radio: Pure Discovr Best Bluetooth speaker with lights: LG XBoom Go PL5 Best budget Bluetooth

speaker: Fresh 'n Rebel Rockbox Bold S Which is better: Bluetooth or wifi speakers? Bluetooth is the quickest and easiest way to connect your smartphone and speaker together. It doesn't require much power so the portable speaker can use a rechargeable battery rather than a wired connection. Both devices have to be within range of one another though (usually anywhere from 10m up to 45m) and the music won't continue playing if your smartphone receives a call or if you switch to a different app. If a speaker has wifi, you can control the music from anywhere (as long as both devices are connected to the same network), whether that's within the same room or not. It also means you can take calls or use your smartphone without the music being interrupted. On the whole, wifi speakers are mains-powered, although there are some that include a rechargeable battery too. What should I look for when buying a Bluetooth speaker? Battery life: Bluetooth speakers can last anywhere between five to 24 hours from one charge. The louder they're cranked up, the quicker the battery will drain. Size and weight: You'll appreciate a smaller, lighter device if you're using your Bluetooth speaker on the go - also look out for a handle or strap. Bigger, heavier speakers will have a much more powerful sound and are better suited to home use. Speaker output: The number of watts a portable speaker can put out ranges from under 5W up to around 300W. This doesn't refer to how good the sound quality is though, rather the volume. The more wattage you have, the louder the sound can go without suffering from any distortion. Not all brands provide this information because of the confusion between sound quality and volume. Voice assistants: Some Bluetooth speakers come with built-in Google Assistant or Amazon's Alexa, so you can use your voice to control the music, ask for the weather and find information on the web. Pairing two or more speakers together: Bluetooth speakers usually won't have the same volume capabilities as wired home speakers, but some will let you pair multiple speakers together to boost the sound. They either do so in tandem with each other or to create a left and right stereo sound. Waterproofing: There are a lot of waterproof Bluetooth speakers (some even float), making them good for the temperamental British weather or to use by the pool on holiday. How we test At the Good Housekeeping Institute, we test Bluetooth speakers in the same way you'd use them. We look at everything from how easy they are to use, the quality of the sound for a range of genres (including rock, pop and jazz), how long the battery life lasts, and how much control you get over the music. We also test out all of the extra features on offer, like built-in voice assistants and smartphone apps. 1 Best Bluetooth speaker amazon.co.uk Bose Portable Home Speaker 2 Runner-up Bluetooth speaker amazon.co.uk Ultimate Ears Megaboom 3 3 Best Bluetooth speaker with wifi amazon.co.uk Sonos Move 4 Best compact Bluetooth speaker amazon.co.uk Bang & Olufsen Beoplay A1 5 Best Bluetooth speaker for holidays amazon.co.uk Bose SoundLink Micro 6 Best Bluetooth speaker for parties johnlewis.com Ultimate Ears Hyperboom 7 Best Bluetooth speaker for outdoor use currys.co.uk JBL Xtreme 2 8 Best for connecting to other speakers currys.co.uk Ultimate Ears Boom 3 9 Best Bluetooth speaker for sound control amazon.co.uk Bang & Olufsen Beoplay P6 10 Best Bluetooth speaker for internet radio amazon.co.uk Pure DiscovR 11 Best Bluetooth speaker with lights amazon.co.uk LG Xboom Go PL5 12 Best budget Bluetooth speaker amazon.co.uk Fresh 'N Rebel Rockbox Bold S

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