

[ERGO 2 Headphones - True Earspeakers!](#)

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Sugg. Retail: \$400 US/CAD
Manufacturer: Precide SA, Switzerland
North American Distributor:
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The **ERGO** headphone line comes from the same company that pioneered the *Jecklin Float*, always a flawed design to my ears. But here I think they've got it right. The **ERGO 2** uses a pair of thin-film dynamic drivers mounted to be close to the ears without making the same kind of contact as conventional headphones.

According to the **Precide** web site (www.precide.ch), "A) The ERGO headphone rests lightly on top of the head, the weight, mere ounces, distributed over a large insensitive surface. This light weight and soft foam headband cushion result in complete freedom from pressure and allow the scalp to 'breathe' naturally. B) A foam strip, at the rear of each speaker panel, rests lightly behind each ear. These do not contact the ears to cause any deformation, which would obstruct the natural soundfield created by the speakers. C) The speaker panels are fixed in the correct position to maintain optimum vertical and horizontal angles of sound dispersion. D) Since the speaker panels do not physically contact the ears, the intervening spaces permit a fresh air-flow from below the ears, which avoids the heat, perspiration, and listener fatigue so commonly experienced with conventional headphones."

There's more, but I think you get the idea, which is to have free-floating "earspeakers" to literally transcend the confinement of conventional types. I am, however, a bit concerned about the comment about my (and your) head being "a large insensitive surface". Maybe it is, and I just don't feel it.

I always liked the *Jecklins*, but where was the bass? And they weren't really all that comfortable, and not adjustable vertically. Well, heads are all different, and the **ERGO** solves these problems neatly. The adjustment is simple, in steps on either side, where the earspeaker meets the headband, while the vertical foam pieces behind the ears help improve bass response, something I discovered when I had to re-attach those on my review sample with new double-sided tape.

Another vote for freedom for the wearer of the **ERGO 2** is the 3-metre sturdy cord, which allows plenty of movement. It is also of a construction that discourages twisting and self-tying, the 4 conductors each having their own insulated rubber section side by side to make for a flat structure, wider than most, with a moulded 1/4" jack at the end. So many well-used headphones die by the cord, especially when they are rather tightly (and neurotically) wound up for storage or transport.



The **ERGO 2** is the middle model in the product range, distinguished from the **1** by neodymium magnets, while the **3** **AMT** is a more elaborate and expensive *Heil* driver design that replaces the *Jecklin Float* electrostatic model. I've never been much of a proponent of electrostatic cans, the best in my experience being the short-lived *Koss* effort of a decade or more ago. But I'd be surprised if the **AMT** is not as free of such sizzly sound, and has the smoothness and sweetness of the Heil-based speakers.

Frankly, though, after living with the **ERGO 2** (which I plan to continue doing), I'm not much inclined toward that model, which comes at thrice the price. I've shown the **2** on top of my *Nagra IV-S* at left, because the two are a match made in Heaven. The **ERGO 2** exhibits a higher impedance than many dynamic phones, and gets more clean level out of the *Nagra's* state-of-the-art headphone amplifier than I have ever heard before. I always thought the *Grado SR-125* was the closest to speakers I'd heard on my head, but it's easily surpassed by the **ERGO**.

And it is very comfortable for long listening periods, so I can monitor and mix at times when I would otherwise disturb my early-to-bed (and early-to-rise) distaff. The frequency balance is very neutral, with a clean, open top end, and though it may not have quite the bass extension of the *SR-125*, it's very good, a very acceptable tradeoff for the comfort and speaker-like imaging. There is also a seductive midrange clarity and sweet, but not intrusive, treble that extends beyond what I can hear, I'm sure. The bass is quite punchy and solid, though I do admit that I won't monitor my next organ recording on the **ERGO 2**.

I own quite a few headphones, including two nice *Panasonic RP-HT722s* with a cute surround matrix feature run by a single AAA battery amp, but the **ERGO 2** offers a much fuller and more spacious sound, and, most important, a more realistic portrayal of what I'm listening to or recording. Therefore, it will remain an important part of my listening (and documenting) audio arsenal.

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<http://www.audio-ideas.com/reviews/accessories/headphones/ergo2.html>