

# PRODUCTS

## Maximum protection, minimum interference

TESTED BY EMILY DAMMENT

I was very impressed with the new CENS Dx5 digital ear plugs from the off. My impressions were taken by a very nice man on the Pluggz stand at the British Shooting Show, and it was just a short wait before a package turned up at the door addressed to me.

Unpacking the smart storage case, I quickly pulled out the plugs, wiggled them into my ears and began wandering around the house fiddling with the modes and volume settings. I'll admit – I was more than a little excited about these turning up.

The first thing I'll say is that they are blissfully comfortable (I couldn't feel them once in place) and the controls are so simple that even an overexcited journalist with butter fingers who hadn't so much as glanced at the instructions could master them within minutes.

The tiny rocker switches looked fiddly at first glance, but once the plugs are in your ears they become very easy to operate using a thumb on the switch and the crook of the first finger to steady the module. There are two buttons on each ear – an 'on/off', and a rocker switch which controls volume and chooses between the five modes available (Game, Clay, Range, Wireless Comms and Hunter).

Short presses up and down increase and decrease the volume, with a little beep to reassure you of each increment, and a longer hold changes the mode – hold until you hear the lady's voice telling you which mode you have entered. I found the volume change beeps and the vocal feedback of modes very useful for keeping track of where you are (the current mode is also announced as you first press the 'on' button).

Thanks to the remarkably soft and flexible ProFlex silicone, it is easy to remove the metallic electronic module and replace it with the plastic passive one.

Battery changes are equally simple, with a little flip-up cover and a magnetic tool to help you insert the tiny supplied batteries.

The large zip-up case houses the batteries, lubricant, cleaning wipes, a keyring attachment, a cleaning blower, the stereo neck loop and a miniature case for the plugs themselves, making it easy to keep everything together. For presentation, usability and comfort, these score 10/10 without a doubt. Next, it was time for a field test.

Unsurprisingly, they worked a treat, and were a complete revelation for me, having predominantly used chunky over-ear defenders

### TOP-NOTCH PROTECTION

All CENS devices are tested to AN352-2 and EN352-7 and are certified as PPE; they are also IPIL tested to ANSIS12. 42-2010. This is the pinnacle of hearing protection certification and, surprisingly, not all plugs carry it. Find out more by visiting [bit.ly/2Hgowrf](http://bit.ly/2Hgowrf)



in the past. You will need to have a good play around to establish the best mode and volume settings and, for me, 'clay mode' on a low volume was ideal for busting some targets down at Lains Shooting School. For once, I could hear the advice being given to me clearly, and felt strangely liberated from that disconcerting bubble of silence that I find other hearing protection traps me in. There was a minute amount of fuzz detectable, but I do mean minute, and all-in-all I could hear everything apart from the BANG perfectly clearly with wind presenting no issue at all. They stayed firmly in place and it was easy to forget I was wearing them.

I like to go running from time to time – after Christmas, a week before summer – and thanks to my tiny ear canals (as informed by Mr Pluggz during impression taking) standard headphones simply won't stay put if I want to listen to motivational music. These did, and I must admit it felt safer running on roads while still being able to hear approaching cars (just bear in mind that they wouldn't be ideal for blocking out the world with music on a flight or similar, as ambient sounds still filter through). Just put them into 'wireless comms' mode, plug the neck loop into your phone or ipod, tuck it into your T-shirt and off you go!

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