

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Using the Audio Technica 1800 series Wireless Microphone



The Audio Technica 1800 Lavalier System is an extremely effective tool for picking up great audio for both mobile and static shots. Let's start by looking through the kit.

In the kit are two devices: the larger device is the receiver, the smaller is the transmitter. Each needs AA batteries.

You will also find a case holding a short XLR/4 pin cable and the lavalier microphone cable, and some AA batteries.

The batteries for the receiver are located on the face of the device; open the latch, open door, and place the four batteries oriented to match the directions in the compartment.

The batteries for the transmitter are located on the bottom right side. Slide open the latch, and the door should spring open.

If the battery is placed in the device the wrong way, the latch will not close- remove the battery and double-check its orientation.

To connect the wireless receiver to your recording device, first connect the 4-pin end of the XLR cable to the port on the receiver.

Face the small button on the microphone cord towards the front of the device- this should help orient the prongs correctly. Gently push the plug in until it clicks into place.

The button you used as orientation is a locking device- when you remove the cord from the transmitter at the end of your shoot, push the black button in to release the lock before you (gently) pull the cord out.



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Plug the other end of the XLR into the audio input on your recording system, whether that means directly into a camera, a dedicated audio recorder, or a mixer.



Gently press down on the “Power/Set” button on top of the receiver, and hold it down while the display reads WAIT.

Soon the frequency number of the system will show in the display window, and the “Power/Peak” light will be illuminated. The receiver is on.

The ‘arrow’ buttons are for re-setting the frequency. Your lavalier system has a frequency pre-set, so do not alter that. You do want to be sure that the frequency number is the same on both the receiver and transmitter.



Some cameras have a patch of velcro on them, so that you can mount the receiver directly to the camera (seen here with a Lectrosonics Wireless Receiver unit). In other cases, the tripod might have a velcro area to attach it to.



To connect the microphone cord to the transmitter, line up the pins. If you have trouble getting it exactly, gently turn the end until you ‘feel’ the pins orient correctly. When they are lined up, gently push the connection straight in.

When you put the cable away, take care to coil it gently and neatly. The wires are very delicate and can easily be damaged if crimped or stretched.



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Slide open the safety door on the transmitter. Here you will find controls matching those on the receiver. Press down on the “Power Mute” button until you see the frequency numbers displayed.

Pressing the button more quickly will activate the ‘mute’ function, so be aware of that.

Once the device is on, close the door again to protect the buttons from accidentally being engaged while in use.

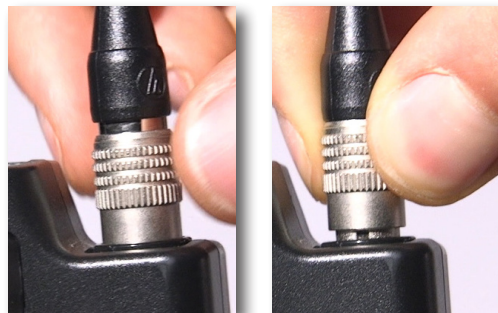


Now that both devices are on, the recording device is receiving an audio signal. If you are not seeing a signal on the recording device, backtrack your way through the process to be sure that your device’s connection is live, and that all wireless connections have been made securely, batteries in and devices on.

Monitor levels with headphones as well as the visual readout on the recording device.

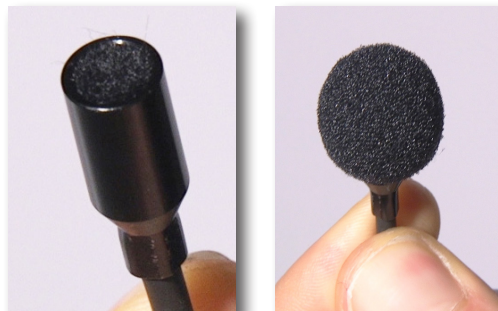


To unplug the microphone cord, lift up on the collar and then gently pull it straight up. The collar serves as a locking mechanism when the cord is engaged so that it does not accidentally come unplugged in use.



A lavalier accessory is a small wind muff, which you can place onto the microphone.

This will reduce noise from the rustling of a shirt, wind, or sibilance from a person’s speech.



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Some notes on using a wireless lavalier microphone:

Find a suitable place on the talent's clothing to attach the microphone using either the clip found in the blue accessories box or a folded piece of tape.

Determine this based on the level of their normal speaking voice, if they need to move or walk during the shot, and what sort of clothing they are wearing. If the microphone needs to be hidden consider running the cord underneath a shirt or other appropriate piece of clothing. Ask politely before touching the talent's clothing. Even better, ask them to run the microphone cord through themselves.

The transmitter should be out of the shot. If the talent has pockets clip the transmitter inside their pocket, with the device hidden. Pull the end of the cord out from wherever it was fed through, and plug it into the transmitter. Make sure the transmitter is switched on. Beware again of leaving the switch on mute.

The transmitter can also rest somewhere out of frame if the talent does not have pockets and is seated for an interview.

When your shoot is finished, the first thing to do is approach your talent and retrieve your audio equipment. Unplug the microphone cord from the transmitter, as we discussed earlier. Allow the talent to pull the cord out from their shirt, or ask them if you can, unclipping the microphone and being sure to pull the cord out from the top. It is important to unplug the cord from the transmitter first.

Make sure the microphone and wind muff are placed back into the microphone case.

Un-mount the receiver from the camera, simply pulling until the Velcro releases. Unplug the XLR cable from the camera or other device. Unplug the 4-pin end of the cable from the receiver by pressing in the black button in and pulling. Turn off the receiver.

Put everything back into the kit. Make sure the two devices are off. Place the devices in the case so that they fit easily. Carefully coil the XLR and lavalier cable and place them back in the case. Spare batteries can be placed in the front pocket. The kit is now just how you found it, and ready for the next person who uses it.