

Google's Pixel Buds sound noticeably better with new bass boost, but connectivity issues remain

Google pushed out a significant firmware update to its Pixel Buds this week, adding several new features to the true wireless earbuds including a "bass boost" setting, sharing detection (so you can individually set volume for each earbud when sharing one of them with someone), attention alerts, and more. The updated firmware was also supposed to address the connectivity and audio dropout problems that some early Pixel Buds buyers have been complaining about.

After some time listening to the Pixel Buds today, I'd say Google succeeded at the first bit; bass boost makes for a very real improvement to sound quality if you were disappointed by low-end performance before. But the Pixel Buds' wireless signal is still weaker than it should be, and the frustrating music disruptions remain.

After applying the update, you'll find bass boost under the "sound" section, which also includes the new, experimental attention alert options. Toggling it on adds a substantial amount of extra oomph to the lower frequencies. If you found the Pixel Buds to be a little flat previously, you might be pleasantly surprised after trying bass boost. It makes a difference without overwhelming the mids and higher frequencies, so Google has done a nice job with the EQ tuning.

But the connectivity fixes aren't what I hoped they'd be. The Pixel Buds have always worked fine if you're just sitting at

home on your couch or at your desk. And in all honesty, I didn't notice many issues during my time reviewing them. But I have in the weeks since. The problem comes when you venture outside. I just moved to a fairly busy street in Brooklyn, and this morning I walked a few blocks to get a sense of whether Google has overcome the Pixel Buds dropout issues. In my experience, the (disappointing) answer is no. I still encountered signal loss and one earbud – usually the left one – cutting out for a couple seconds at a time.

If I hold my phone at around chest height, most of these problems clear up. But when it's in my pocket, the Pixel Buds' connectivity can be a mess and less dependable than other true wireless earbuds. Your results may vary, and I'm seeing reports from some people on the Google Pixel subreddit who are running into fewer dropouts than before. There's more work to be done, though, and I doubt Google is finished with trying to optimize stability for the Pixel Buds.

<https://www.theverge.com/2020/8/21/21395865/google-pixel-buds-bass-boost-connection-problems>