# Turtle Beach’s new React-R controller brings handy audio features down to a lower budget

The Turtle Beach React-R is the latest controller from the gaming accessories brand, newly available in the USA today for $39.99. It’s a wired Xbox and PC controller with a detachable USB-C cable, officially licensed by Microsoft, and it mixes some of Turtle Beach’s audio chops from its headsets into an affordable gamepad.

The React-R is a bit like Turtle Beach stripped down its Recon controller and gave it a slightly worse name. For $20 less than the Recon, the React-R offers nice quality face buttons, sticks, triggers, and two programmable rear buttons. Some of those buttons, particularly the shoulders, sound a bit more hollow in their clickiness — but that wasn’t something that felt especially premium on its pricier counterpart either.




*Lights in the top buttons for Superhuman Hearing mode and mute only illuminate when a headset is plugged in.*




*The React-R has two rear buttons, which can be programmed on the fly without any software, just like the Recon.*

There are textured bumps all along the React-R's shoulder buttons, though not as prominent as the ones on the Recon. The raised texture along the hand grips of the React-R are grippy and comfy enough, though they don't feel as nice as the Recon's soft-touch rubber grips. However, a big feature that's trickled down to the React-R is Turtle Beach's excellent audio tricks.

The React-R has Turtle Beach's badly-named-but-actually-good feature, Superhuman Hearing. Just like on the Recon, when you have *any* wired headset plugged in, you can press the S icon button, and the React-R balances the game audio mix to draw out sounds like character footsteps and gunfire. This was the feature that tipped the scales and convinced me to give the Turtle Beach Recon the nod for best controller for shooters in our buying guide. It's either the best gaming audio feature around or an amazing placebo effect that leads me to having a better KDR, but either way, it's cool to see it offered in a cheaper pad.




*The React-R branding on the white and purple model blends in*

*nicer than on the black version.*
While the React-R inherits Superhuman Hearing from the Recon, other features didn't make the cut. It doesn't have the audio EQ presets, microphone self-monitoring, or Pro-Aim features. I'll concede that those are maybe less of a big deal here, so I'm okay with losing them. In fact, with some of the Recon's extras shaved off, the React-R becomes a much less complex controller to pick up and use. All those buttons that were littering the top of the Recon like some small, light-up warts? Most of that's all gone now, and the controller looks a little sleeker for it – even if Turtle Beach had to go and emblazon an ugly REACT-R label on its top.

One other thing the React-R did not sacrifice is quick control of game volume and audio / chat mix when using wired headphones. You now control those by holding the top button above the Xbox guide button and pushing one of the labeled four D-pad directions. Sadly, though, the chat mix control remains an Xbox-only feature, as it's not compatible with Windows.



*The Recon (right) is the more robust controller, but the new React-R (left) has much more streamlined controls.*




*The textured dots aren't as prominent as the Recon's, but thankfully the React-R also has a USB-C port — now with a plastic surround for a little protection from accidental tugs.*

Still, the React-R offers quite a bit for just $39.99. I suspect that Turtle Beach was gunning for the likes of PowerA and its Enhanced Wired Controller, which remains an excellent option — Micro USB port notwithstanding — since it so frequently goes on sale for well under $30. While the React-R has the edge on PowerA with its audio features and USB-C connectivity, it could learn a thing or two in the color department. The black React-R controller is, well, fine. But the purple and white model launching alongside it could have used a more elevated look beyond its slightly '80s aesthetic — like monochromatic face buttons and a color-matched cable.

The Turtle Beach React-R shows some promise in the time I've spent with it so far, and it makes some of the right sacrifices in the right places to reach a lower price point. Now, if this $39.99 controller gets discounted with some

regularity, it may become an easy recommendation for anyone seeking a budget option with nice added features, especially for playing online shooters.

*Photography by Antonio G. Di Benedetto / The Verge*

https://www.theverge.com/2022/8/17/23309780/turtle-beach-recast-xbox-pc-controller-hands-on-impressions-price-availability