



# FIELD RECORDING GUIDE

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# INTRODUCTION

Thank you for being interested in participating! This guide is mainly aimed at people trying out recording for the first time, so we'll go into more detail on Smartphone recording than on handheld recorders such as Zooms and Tascams. If you do need help using a handheld recorder, there are lots of tutorials online on how to get the best quality recording from them - and, of course, there will be full instructions in the device's manual. Below there's some general information on recording, and more detailed instructions for getting a nice recording using your Smartphone. Hopefully it helps - please feel free to get in touch if you have any suggestions or recommendations that might be helpful to novice recordists.

## GENERAL RECORDING PRACTICE

### OVERVIEW

Our preferred submission format is **stereo .wav file (24bit, 44.1khz)**, without distortion. If you have external mics to use, that's great - but no problem if you don't.

### RECORDING QUALITY

→ **LOSSLESS RECORDING**

Please record in the highest quality available to you (.wav, .aiff, .flac, 44.1khz, 24bit).

→ **LOSSY RECORDING**

If you're recording as an .mp3, .m4a or .ogg, please use a **320kbps bitrate or equivalent** if possible.

### BEFORE YOU START RECORDING

Before starting your main recording, do a short test recording of about 60 seconds, and listen back to it on headphones. A few things to watch out for when you listen back to your test recording:

→ **BACKGROUND NOISE**

Obviously there'll be some 'background noise' that you actually *want* to include. But listen out for anything you're not intending to capture: distortion, wind noises, etc.

→ **WIND...**

Too much wind noise will sound like bass rumbling and loud pops whenever the wind blows onto your phone mic, which may block the quieter background sounds being recorded properly.

→ **BALANCE**

Check that you're happy with the balance of sounds you want to record when you make your test recording. For example, if you're planning to record the sounds of birds in a park, be careful that cars on a nearby loud road don't take over the recording. Unless that's what you want to record!

## RECORDING LEVELS

It's important to not record a file that is too loud, or you may risk having a distorted effect on the final recording. It's much better to err on the side of a quieter recording as a rule of thumb, because we will master each recording (i.e., adjust the audio levels so that your recording sounds great on air.)

### → GOOD RECORDING LEVELS

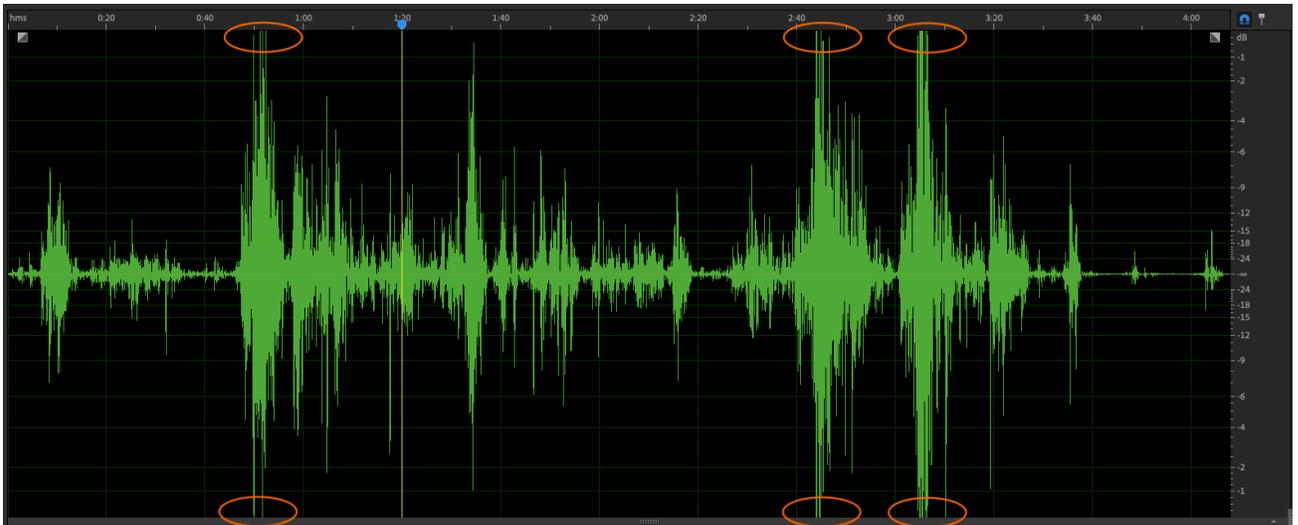
The screenshot below shows good recording levels, with lots of sharper and more varied peaks, and no levels at 0db (which means that your recording is distorting).



No distortion - a good amount of room between the loudest peak and 0DB, i.e. the empty space at the top and bottom edges of the graph, marked by the orange arrows.

### → DISTORTION

If your recording is distorting, the levels will go above 0db, creating sharp peaks that come right up to the upper and lower boundaries of the graph, as marked below in orange. Your recording device may also display a red 'distortion' light or warning if the recording is too loud.



**→ AVOIDING DISTORTION**

As well as the peaks being visible as you create your test recording, your recording device may display a red 'distortion' light or warning if the recording is too loud. If you're trying to avoid wind noises, consider using a muffler or a sock as a DIY option to cover the mic, as below. This should reduce wind noise and unwanted rumbles.



Start recording, and then slip your phone into a sock to cover the built-in mic.

# RECORDING WITH SMARTPHONES

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** After listening to your test recording, but *before* you start your final recording, unplug any headphones from the phone. This is to ensure that you're using the phone's built-in microphone to record, rather than the built-in mic on some headphones.

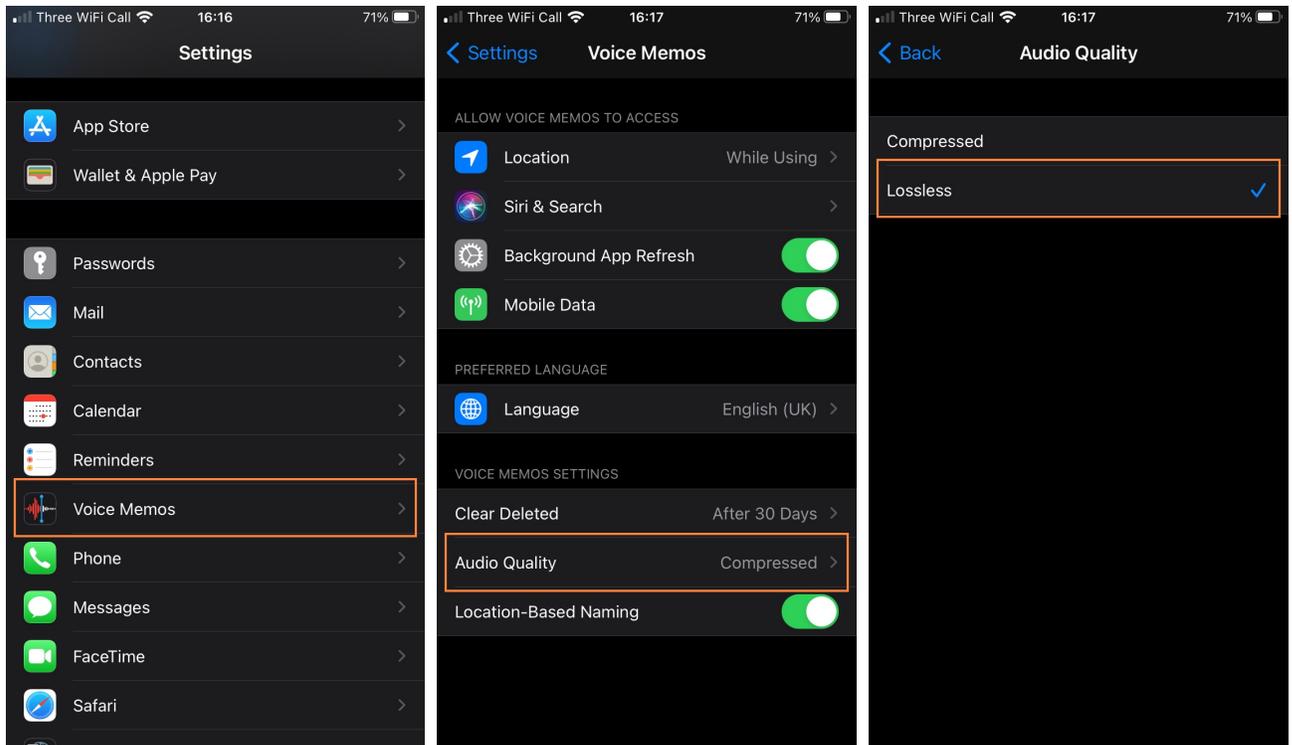
## IPHONE

To record in lossless, i.e., highest quality available, use the Voice Memos app.

### → STEP 1: SET RECORDING QUALITY

To make sure you're recording in lossless, go to: 'Settings' > 'Voice Memos' > 'Audio Quality' > change from 'Compressed' to 'Lossless'.

→ NB: This will take up more storage space on your iPhone, but give you a higher quality recording.



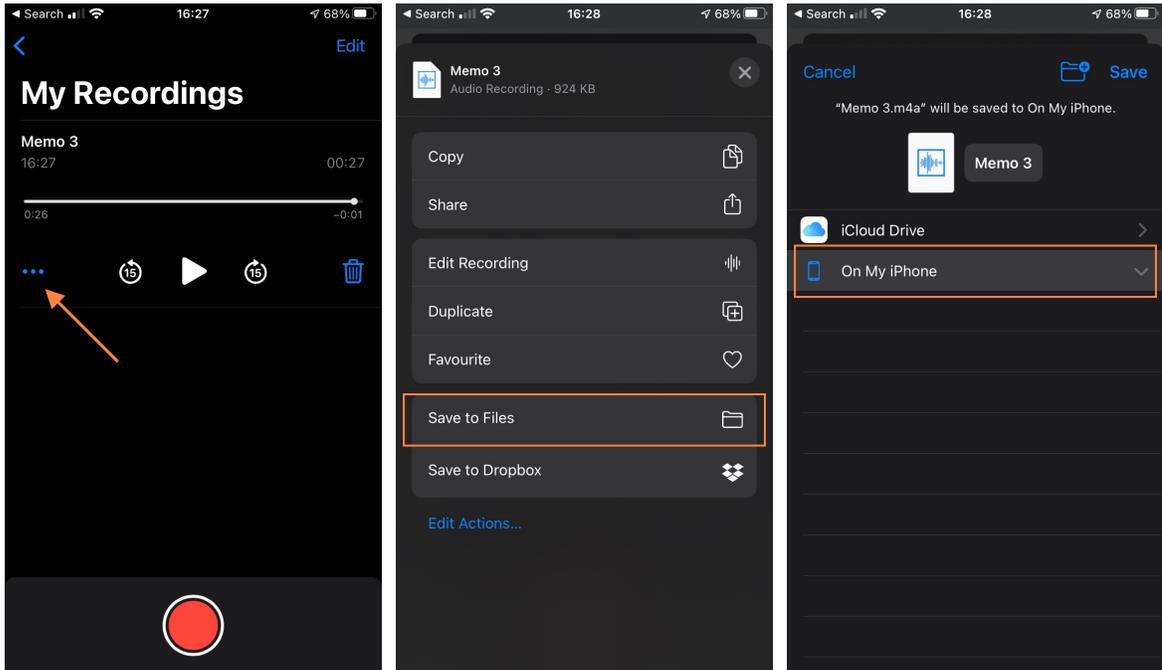
### → STEP 2: START RECORDING

Hit the red button to start and stop recording.

→ **STEP 3: SAVE YOUR RECORDING**

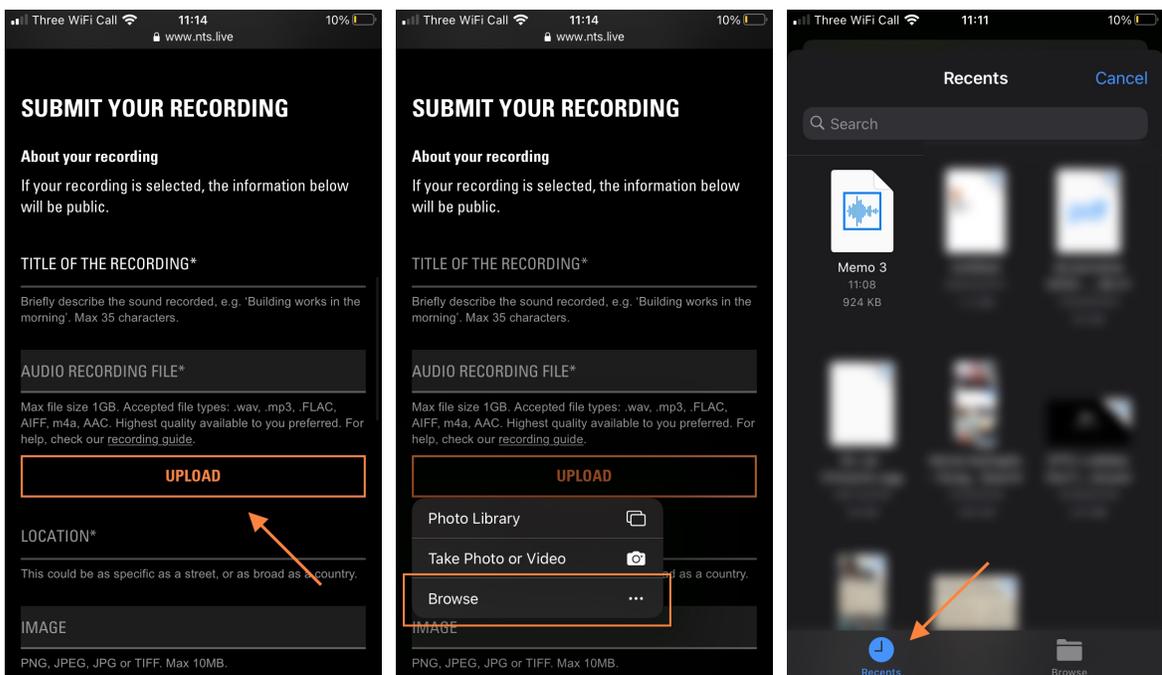
Save your recording by clicking the more options icon (the three dots to the bottom left of your recording) > 'Save to Files' > 'On My iPhone' > 'Save'.

→ NB: You don't necessarily need to select a specific location for your recording, just select 'On My iPhone' and then 'Save', and the file will be stored in your 'Recent Files' folder. You can also select 'Share', to upload your file to a file-sharing service of your choice.



→ **STEP 4: SUBMIT YOUR RECORDING**

To submit your recording, go to the **NTS submission form**. Once you've entered all your information, click 'Upload' > 'Browse' > 'Recents' > select your file.



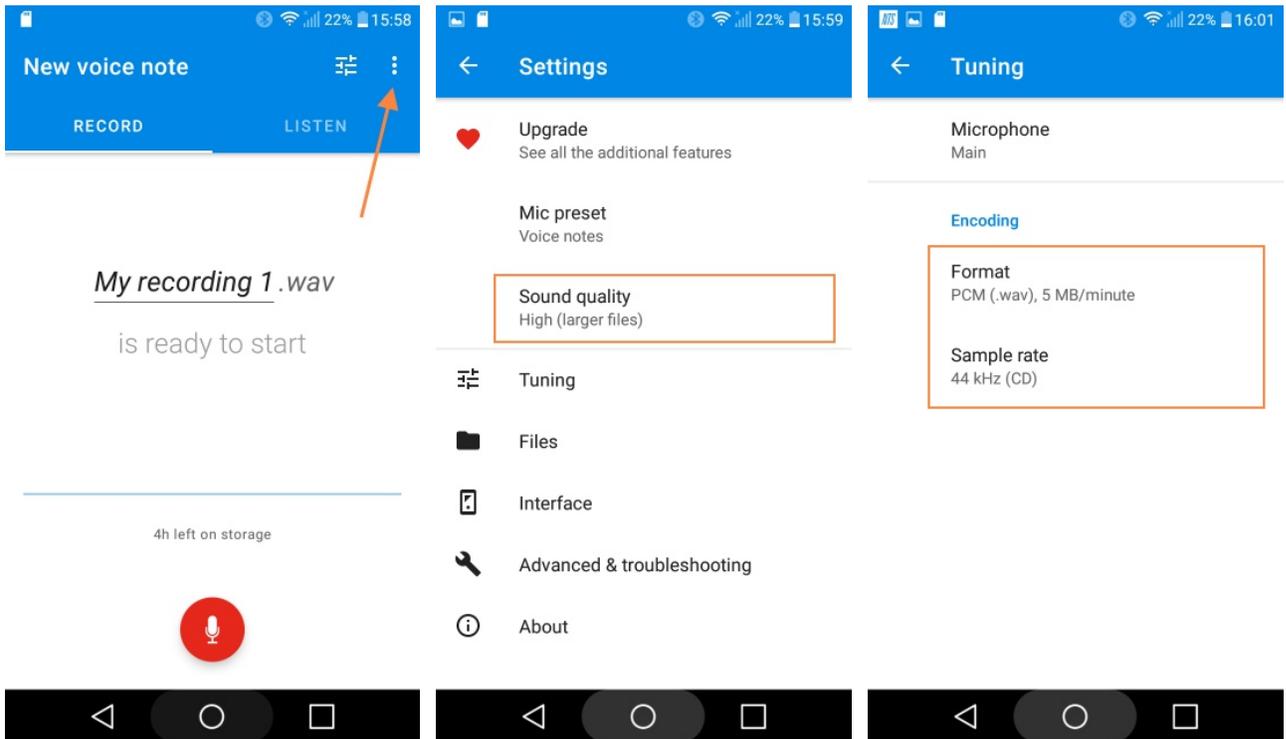
# ANDROID

You'll need to first download a free app for recording. We suggest using the Easy Voice Recorder app, and recording as a .wav file.

→ **STEP 1: SET-UP RECORDING QUALITY**

In the Easy Voice Recorder app, go to 'Settings' (click the three dots in the top right)  
 → 'Sound Quality' > select 'High'

Go back to 'Settings':  
 → 'Tuning' > select 'Sample Rate 44khz'

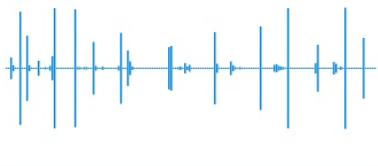


→ **STEP 2: START RECORDING**

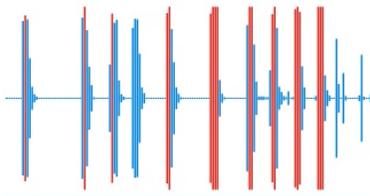
Hit the red button to start recording.

→ **STEP 3: CHECKING LEVELS**

Watch out for distortion whilst recording your test recording.



✔ Good recording levels

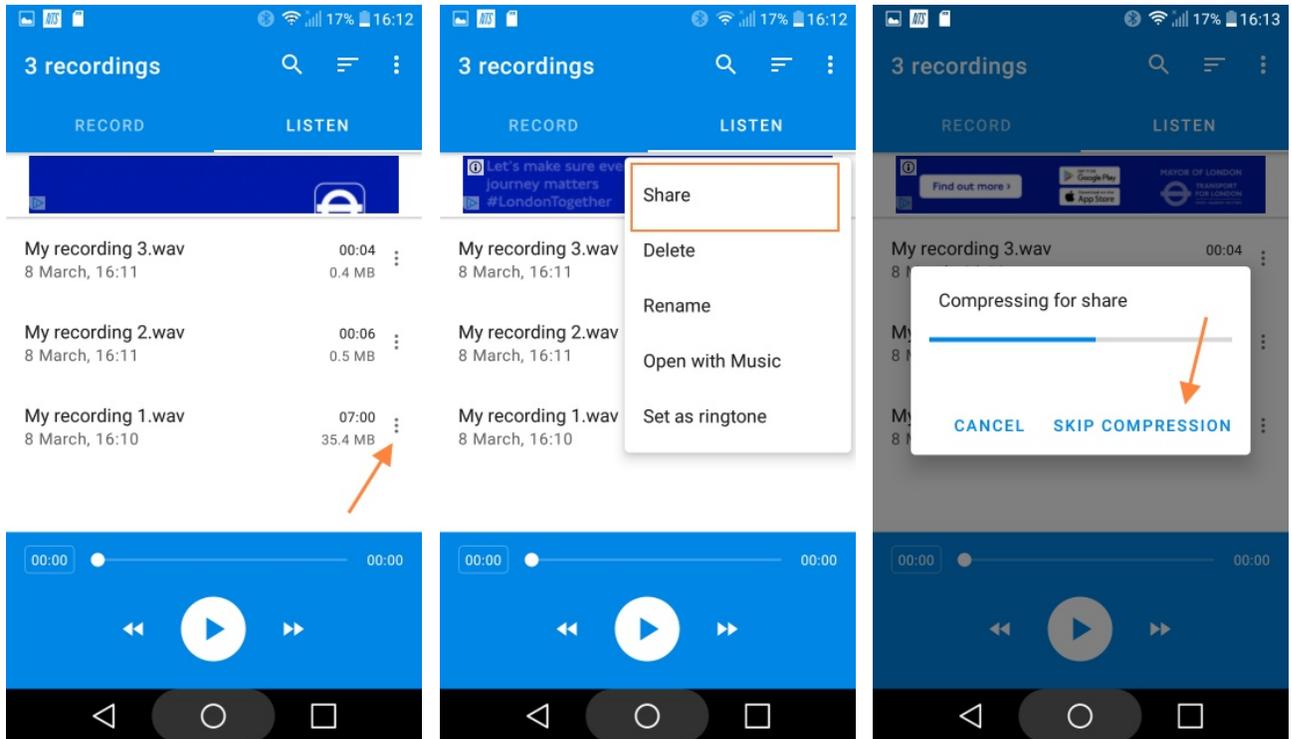


✘ Bad recording levels  
 see peaks marked by red lines.

→ **STEP 4: SAVE YOUR RECORDING AS A WAV FILE**

Stop recording. Go to the 'Listen' section to access your recording.

- Click the options icon (the three dots to the right of your recording) > 'Share' > 'Skip compression'
- NB: this will keep the file in .wav format, rather than converting to .mp3



→ **STEP 5: NAME AND UPLOAD YOUR RECORDING**

After recording, click the options icon (the three dots) to access 'Settings' again, and name your recording. Then upload it to **the submission form** directly from your Smartphone. You can also upload your file to a file-sharing service of your choice.

**THANK YOU**  
**ENJOY RECORDING!**