

KRK KNS Series

from £90

Jon Musgrave plugs up the latest incarnation of these long established headphones from speaker giants KRK

CONTACT WHO: KRK Systems **WEB:** krkmusic.com **KEY FEATURES** TYPE: closed back
DRIVER TYPE: Low weight neodymium **IMPEDANCE:** 36 ohms **SENSITIVITY (1mW):** 95dB SPL (KNS 6402), 97dB SPL (KNS 8402) **FREQUENCY RESPONSE:** 10Hz to 22kHz (KNS 6402), 5Hz to 23kHz (KNS 8402) **PRICING:** KNS 6402 £90, KNS 8402 £139





KRK are best known for their studio monitors, but for about a decade they've also produced some pretty decent closed back headphones. Those headphones (KNS 6400 and KNS 8400) offer a solid mix of price and performance and the KNS 8400 in particular often crops up on our recommendation lists. Both models have had a refresh and been replaced by the suitably named KNS 6402 and KNS 8402. Once again, the two models hit different price points and have their own sonic signature.

Design matters

Both designs are built around 40mm neodymium-based drivers with body components primarily made from impact resistant materials. They use a robust, sliding metal headband design, and the ear cups rotate (up to 90 degrees) and pivot. At 202g and 232g, respectively, they're also reasonably light, so it's no surprise that I found them pretty comfortable over long periods. What's more, when the time comes, both headband and ear pads are easily replaceable. Each pair includes a 2.5m detachable locking cable and KRK also sell various other lengths and types of cable, should you require something different. There's also a handy inline volume slider cable, which is included as standard with the KNS 8402. Both bundles are rounded off with a carry pouch and microfibre cleaning cloth.

Despite the similarities there are some fundamental differences between the two designs. First up, the KNS 8402 uses memory foam rather than cellular foam for both headband and ear pads. This not only makes it more comfortable, but also no doubt contributes to its better ambient noise isolation. The KNS 8402 also has better sensitivity and better frequency response at both extremes. Comparing them to the original versions, it's also quite clear the KNS 8402 has had a proper visual makeover, with subdued branding and a new metal plate design on the outside of the ear cups. The KNS 6402, meanwhile, looks more like the previous version.

Sounds about right

The two headphones sound in many ways quite different. The KNS 6402 has a very clear mid-range, reasonably subdued higher frequencies and not too much bass. On paper this sounds unattractive, and it's certainly not a profile you'd want for leisure use. However, in a tracking situation where you want to be able to get your pitch and timing right, I'd say this is an ideal frequency response. And coupled with the decent ambient noise isolation, you can see where they're coming from.

In contrast, the KNS 8402 has a more extended and beautifully smooth high frequency response, very usable low frequency extension, a slightly subdued lower mid range and a present but not hyped upper mid range. In essence, they sound pretty good, and are certainly better tuned

for mixing, mastering or general listening. The general consensus is that the original KNS 8400 sounded great but lacked a bit of bass. I don't think the same applies to the KNS 8402 and from a mixing perspective, for me, if anything there's marginally too much bass, although this is by no means a dealbreaker.

Overall, this refresh has clearly impacted the KNS 8402 the most and this now has a slightly different sonic signature and an overall more professional look. That said, both models are still robust, repairable and very competitively priced headphones. Extremely worthy of your attention. **FM**

FM VERDICT

KNS 6402

8.5

KNS 8402

9.2

KRK's headphones continue to offer great sonics and excellent value. Each model is best suited to different tasks, but the added comfort and overall fidelity of the KNS 8402 make it my preferred choice

THE PROS & CONS



Closed back design ideal for recording

Memory foam padding of 8402 very comfortable

Detachable cable with various additional cable types available

Volume control cable option

Replaceable earpads and headband



Each model is best for different tasks