

# iPod & iTunes HACKS™

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#26

## Stream Music with AirPort Express



Using Apple's AirPort Express to free your music's collection from your computer and play your music on any stereo.

The more you get into your iPod and iTunes, the more your computer will become the center of your musical universe. All those ripped CDs and iTunes Music Store purchases add up. At some point, you will scratch your head and think, “Hmm, how can I get all that music to play on my stereo without burning a CD?”

“Stream Music Around Your House” [Hack #25] is one option. Apple's AirPort Express (<http://www.apple.com/airportexpress/>; \$129.00) is another.

AirPort Express is a small, self-contained unit that you plug into your wall. Its size betrays its power. Using AirPort Express, you can stream music from your computer to anywhere within your house (within 150 feet), share a USB printer, and extend your Apple AirPort network. For iTunes users, AirPort Express liberates your music from your computer, allowing you to play it anywhere in your house.

Apple calls AirPort Express's music streaming capability AirTunes (<http://www.apple.com/airportexpress/airtunes.html>). To use it, all you need is a Mac running Mac OS 10.3 and an AirPort or AirPort Extreme Card. On the Windows side, you need Windows 2000 or XP and a Wi-Fi-certified IEEE 802.11b or 802.11g wireless card.

Connect your powered speakers or stereo to AirPort Express's audio port. You can use either an optical digital or analog audio cable. These do not come with AirPort Express; you'll need to purchase the AirPort Express Stereo Connection Kit (\$39.00).

Plug your AirPort Express into an electrical outlet. There is no On switch; the base station turns on automatically once it's plugged in. The status light glows yellow until you've completed setup.

AirPort Express includes an install CD with an AirPort Express Assistant and the latest version of iTunes (in case you don't have it already). The software runs you through all your options, detects your AirPort Express automatically, and installs software on your computer to get things going. You will also have the opportunity to name your AirPort Express unit.

Once you've installed the software, your AirPort Express's status light turns to green, indicating everything is good to go. To start streaming music, open iTunes. Your AirPort Express will show up in the lower-right corner. Just select the name you chose for your AirPort Express (I named mine *Living Room* in this example) from the pull-down menu, as shown in Figure 2-7.

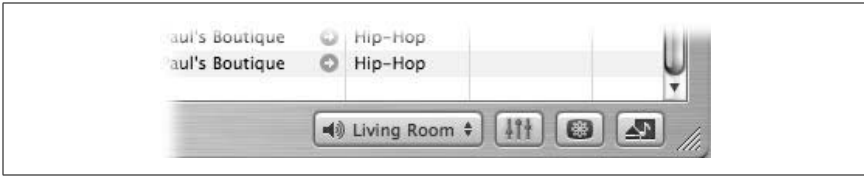


Figure 2-7. Music to your living room, just like that

Now that you've set up your AirPort Express, let the fun begin! Got a barbecue? Simply take your AirPort Express and plug it in outside. Hook it to your boom box or Tivoli Audio's iPal (<http://www.tivoliaudio.com/pPALIPOD.htm>; \$129.99), and your barbecue will be rocking with your iTunes.



You can place multiple AirPort Express units throughout your house; however, you can stream to only one unit at a time.

One limitation of AirPort Express is the lack of a remote control. Ostensibly, your computer is the remote control. However, using “Control iTunes from Your Palm” [Hack #23] or “Control iTunes from Your Mobile Phone” [Hack #24], you can easily overcome this limitation.