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## [How to Minimize Wind Noise When Using a Shotgun Microphone](#)

Mar 30, 2009



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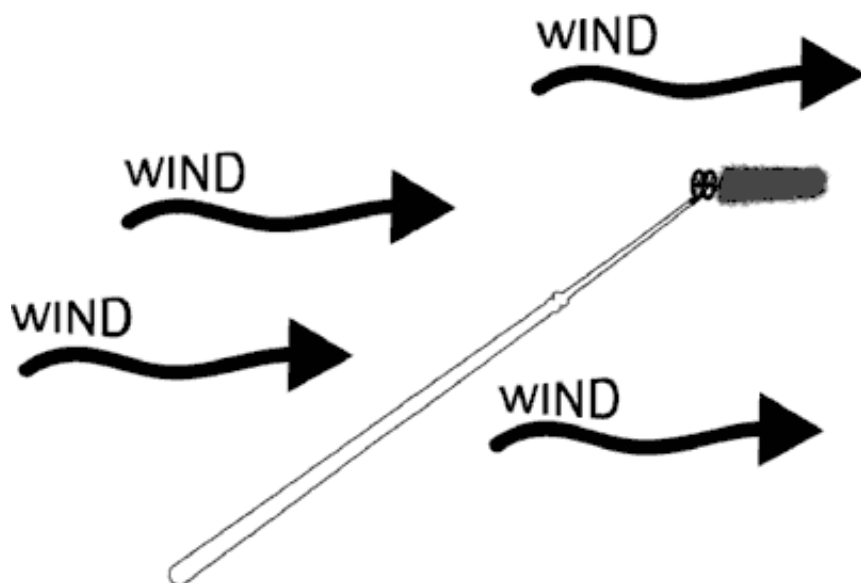
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Avoid Costly Mistakes

*By Sam Mallery*

A shotgun microphone is an indispensable tool for capturing sound from short distances away, but like most microphones, shotguns suffer from a severe sensitivity to wind noise. Even a relatively gentle gust of air can completely distort the audio signal a shotgun microphone is capturing. Without the necessary

accessories, even the finest of shotgun microphones are useless when environmental conditions are less than ideal.

**Tip: Whenever possible, keep your microphone parallel to the direction of the wind.**



When purchasing a shotgun microphone, one must always take into consideration how and where the microphone is going to be used. This is necessary to determine what additional tools will be needed for proper wind protection. In other words, a person recording an outdoor hunting show will need a different level of wind protection than someone recording an in-house board meeting.

There are three levels of wind protection for shotgun microphones:

- 1) **Foam windscreens**
- 2) **Softies**
- 3) **Blimp systems**

**Foam windscreens** are the minimum required amount of wind protection. They only protect microphones from wind gusts up to 9 MPH. They're often used indoors where drafts of air can create wind noise. They are the most common type of windscreen because they're often included accessories with new microphones. B&H sells products called [Wind Muffs](#) that can be pulled over a foam windscreen to increase a microphone's resistance to wind.

Pros

Inexpensive

Cons

Minimum wind protection

**Rycote Softies** essentially add an additional layer of wind buffering material on the outside, and feature a combination of lightweight materials and a chamber of air in their interior. More often than not, the additional outside layer of material is short synthetic fur, hence the name "Softie." Softies are often the best choice for the budget-minded user, because they allow you to continue using a shotgun microphone in windier environments with clean results...and without breaking the bank.

**Pros**

Good wind protection on a budget

Lightweight

**Cons**

Not as effective in extreme wind situations

**Blimp & Zeppelin systems** offer the highest level of wind protection available. Blimp systems differ from the other forms of wind protection because they are complete systems with mounting hardware, an external casing, and exterior wind buffering fur. Instead of layering foam and other materials directly on the microphone itself, they create an open chamber of space around the microphone. So even in high-wind situations, the microphone sits in a chamber with still air around it. The outside layer of the blimp is often long synthetic hair, to diffuse wind. The walls of the exterior of the blimp are made of a tight mesh material to further diffuse the rushing air. These systems are very versatile because you can remove the exterior fur, or even the blimp's casing when they're not needed. The interior is hollow, and the microphone resides in the center on an internal shock mount.

**Pros**

Highest wind protection &amp; versatile

**Cons**

Pricey, Heavy

**Find the perfect fit**

When battling nature, it's crucial to find wind protection that fits your microphone as snugly as possible. Wind can find its way into your microphone's capsule from any direction, so having a uniformly tight seal is critically important. B&H is your best resource for determining what wind protection system suits your needs, and we'll be able to tell you which products are perfectly suited for your specific microphone. Our audio experts can be reached online through live chat on our website, on the telephone, or in person at our SuperStore in New York City. There are also sizing resources on the internet at various manufacturer's websites, such are [Rycote](#), [Windtech](#), [K-Tek](#), and [Lightwave](#).

Because of the multitude of different microphone sizes and their accompanying windscreen options, we don't have the means to chart every available product. Instead we have listed examples of some of the more popular wind protection choices in each of the three categories:

**Level One – Foam****The Windtech SG Series**

The [SG and BG series from Windtech](#) are popular foam choices for shotgun microphones. They're

available in sizes that fit popular shotgun models like the [Sennheiser ME66](#). As mentioned earlier, a second layer of wind protection called a [Rycote Mini-Windjammer](#) can be purchased to use together with the foam. Pictured below is a [Windtech MM-101](#) wind muff that's been pulled over a foam windscreen on a shotgun microphone:



### **The Windtech MM-101**

#### **Level Two – Rycote Softies**



### **Rycote Softie**

**(A styling brush is included for maximum fluffiness)**

This [Rycote](#) is a popular option because it offers robust wind protection at an affordable price. A softie like this cannot protect a microphone in high-wind situations the way a blimp system could, but it does perform well in many different wind conditions. Note the rubber gasket at its base to protect wind from entering from behind, a feature sorely missing if you're only using a foam windscreen and a mic/muff combo. Once you've decided what wind protection equipment you're going to need, it's a good idea to consider how you're going to travel with it. B&H sells a wide variety of [windscreen cases](#) so you can protect your investment.

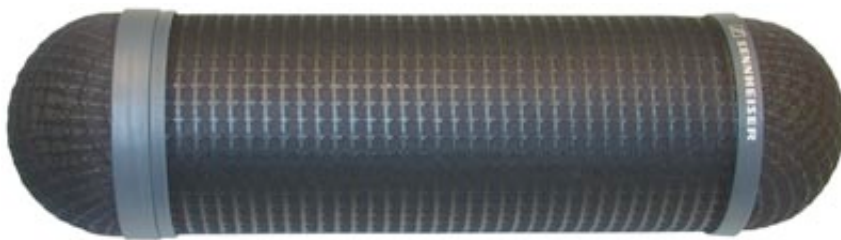
#### **Rycote Smoothies**



### The Rycote Smoothies

Rycote Smoothies are almost as effective as a Softie, and are an excellent choice for on camera use when you need more protection than standard foam. They can be used in conjunction with [Rycote Mini-Windjammers](#) if more wind protection is needed. Their eye-catching bright colors also present the opportunity to dress them up with your company's logo.

### Level Three – Blimp Systems



### Sennheiser B&H Blimp Kits

For the ME66, MKH416, and MKH60 – [SEBS2](#) \$799.95

For the ME62 + ME64 & MKH 20, 30, 40, 50 – [SEBS1](#) \$779.95

For the ME67 and the MKH70 – [SEBS3](#) \$749.95

Blimp systems offer the highest level of wind protection available. They are modular systems that have specifically sized parts, dependent upon what microphone you intend to use with them. Complete blimp systems tend to be in the \$700 - \$800 price range. The new [S-Series](#) from Rycote (bottom left photo)



which isn't as versatile as a regular blimp system, is a more affordable option. The S-Series is a lightweight complete blimp system with an integrated pistol grip shock mount featuring an internal XLR cable. The exterior fur is not removable, and it has less attenuation than a standard blimp kit. B&H offers a number of preassembled [Blimp kits](#).



Just for the record, the champion of all wind protection systems for a shotgun microphone is the [WINDPAC](#) by DPA Microphones. The WINDPAC features a complete mounting system and will protect your shotgun from wind noise in gusts of up to 85 MPH. Another advantage is that it collapses down to a much smaller size than other blimp systems.

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[simon](#)

12. Aug, 2009

Cheers for the article - helped a lot.

As far as using a shotgun in an interview based situation (out and about / on the street) - what's the best way to prevent mic noise?

ie - the hand rubbing on the microphone.

Cheers,  
Simon



[Attawlasterne](#)

18. Aug, 2009


yeh right.. great post, Thank You

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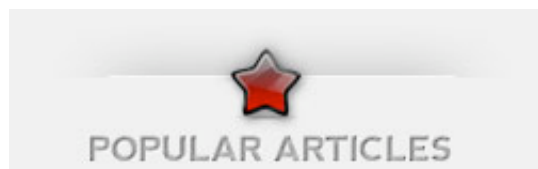
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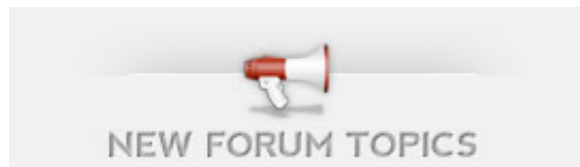
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