

## Ringtones - What They Are, And How They Work

The simplest description of a Ringtone is that it's the sound your mobile phone makes to announce there's an incoming call or text message. But far from being a dull and dreary phone feature, ringtones have evolved to stage where they are now virtually the ultimate way to personalize your phone.

No matter how many fancy "bells and whistles" your phone has, or how great it looks, it's unlikely that anyone else will ever know unless they get "up close and personal" with you and your mobile phone.

That was before ringtones exploded into popularity. A ringtone makes a statement to everyone within earshot every time your phone rings. That's got to be a fantastic thing for the extroverts of the world!

Nokia first developed the RTTTL (Ringing Tone Text Transfer Language) technology to enable ringtones. What it does, in laymans terms is to identify an incoming call or text message, which in turn triggers a tiny computer program that plays whatever ringtone you have instructed it to.

Ringtones have become popular for several basic reasons:

1. You can tell immediately if it's your phone that's ringing. There's no need for everyone in the room to reach for their phones every time a phone rings.
2. You can set up distinctive ringtones for certain incoming numbers, and know instantly if a call is important or not.
3. You can set your phone to play whatever your "song of the moment" happens to be, to announce your incoming calls.
4. You can change you ringtone as often as you like. Whenever the mood takes you.

There are millions of possible tunes and tones that you can have as a ringtone, but they all come under one of three categories. There are:

1. Monophonic ringtones - these are just a series of single tones following on from each other, creating a very basic tune. Not very musical, but they do their job ... at least you know when a call is coming in!
2. Polyphonic ringtones - capable of up to 16 notes at a time and some real music can be created. Generally speaking, if it can be played musically, then you can probably download it from somewhere in this format.
3. Digital ringtones - virtually any man made or computer generated sound can be made into a ringtone using either mp3 or wav files. The sky is the limit with digital technology.

Ringtones are available from many sources. There are always some pre-programmed into your phone before you buy it. You can download them to your computer from the internet, get them through a WAP service, via an SMS message, and more recently as the technology has evolved, by direct download to your phone from compatible websites.

For those people that just have to have a unique ringtone that nobody else on the planet has, you can even create your own personal masterpiece and upload it to your phone. Mind you, whether it ends up sounding as good as something created by Mozart or the Rolling Stones is another story altogether!

Mobile phone technology is developing at such a rate that it's almost impossible to predict what will be available this time next year, but you can bet your very last dollar that it will be "old stock" and outdated within months of release

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

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David Neehly writes about Mobile Technology, including Ringtones on his website at <http://www.ringtonesfreeinfo.com>, where you'll find more interesting articles. Don't forget to subscribe to his FREE newsletter, it's full of expert advice, freebies, and the latest updates in the world of Ringtones.