Microphones/ Mic Techniques

Listen When You Record

It is always a good idea to listen with headphones when recording. If you really have to take them off at least check everything with them on and watch the levels on your recorder.

Popping Ps

Some people have problems with popping Ps. A windscreen on the microphone should help with this. You can also adjust the angle you are talking into it from. Try talking over or across the microphone, not directly into it. If this is a problem for you, you should experiment with how to not get these loud explosive sounds when saying letters like P which quickly push air at the microphone, momentarily overloading it.

Bass Proximity Effect

With some microphones when sounds get close to them more bass is picked. This means if you record with a mic, which has Bass proximity effect, really close to someone's mouth his or her voice will sound lower pitched.

Overloading Mics

Microphones can be overloaded, this sounds bad. Even if you turn down the input to your recorder so the levels look good, if you are recording in a very loud environment you can get a staticy/clipping noise on your recording. If you are listening with headphones you can usually hear this but in loud conditions it isn't always easy to hear what's coming from your headphones. If you have to turn down the input levels a lot in order to get a good level on your recorder it is a good idea to try to move the mic somewhere quieter.

Cables/Jacks

Most microphones have a connection for an XLR cable. XLR is a higher quality, mono, balanced, cable/adapter. Almost all mini-disc recorders have a stereo mini (1/8th inch) mic input jack. It is important to use a cable with a stereo jack on it, you can ruin your mini-disc input by using a mono jack, which is slightly larger. The cable can be mono it's just the mini plug on the end. A stereo plug has two lines on the metal part, and a mono only has one line.

Don't jiggle cables

You can create clicks/pops and drop-outs if you jiggle or move cables. Sometime it doesn't matter but if any of the connections are loose or the contacts aren't clean and secure you can ruin the sound you are recording.

Microphone pick-up patterns

Some mics pick up ("hear") sound coming from all directions, these are called omni-directional. Others pick up sound coming from either side, bi-directional, or in front and somewhat to the sides but not really behind, cardioid (the pick up pattern is kind of heart shaped), or very much just in front, hyper-cardioid, often called a shotgun mic. Cardioid mics are sometimes just called directional. When

recording ambience, crowd noise, etc. omni-directional mics are nice but when recording interviews they can pick up more noise.
There are also stereo mics which are really two directional mics pointing in opposite directions.