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# Panasonic SJ-MR100



**Attention MDers:** I will be offering 5 FREE blank MD's to the first person who emails me and purchases a minidisc unit from Japan Direct. They are not paying me to give these away. I will ask Japan Direct to confirm that the purchaser has purchased from Japan Direct. Please email for details if needed.

[Minidiscs@aol.com](mailto:Minidiscs@aol.com)

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[Aiwa AM-F70 Minidisc Review](#)

[Comparison of the Sharp MT-821, Aiwa AM-F70 and Sony MZ-R55](#)

[Sharp MT-821 Minidisc Review](#)

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### 1. Minidisc Introduction

If you still don't know what a minidisc is, I recommend that you follow this link before continuing: [Minidisc Community Page](#). You'll find a lot of useful information about the basics and details of the minidisc. What you will find on this page is a review and opinion of the Panasonic SJ-MR100. I purchased the Panasonic SJ-MR100 through Japan-Direct which is an online internet seller that ships from Japan. They provided great service and were prompt to me. They are one of the few companies that offer 1 year warranties with their products. One of the important things to me when choosing a retailer is making sure that the retailer provides a proper warranty. Without a doubt I have to recommend their service.

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looking to purchase from an internet retailer. Some factors to look at besides prices are: time it takes for them to ship the goods, customer service, reliability of the company, and what warranty service they provide.

### 3. Size

The Panasonic like all other recently released portable recorders is a little bit thicker than 2 blank mds with their cases on. The size is very nice, while Panasonic mentions that they have the smallest and lightest portable recorder available as of June 1999. The measurements and weight are as follow:

Dimension	Units
Length	84.0 mm
Width	77.0 mm
Thickness	18.9 mm
Weight with internal battery	161 grams



### 4. Battery Life

The battery life with the internal nickel metal hydride for the Panasonic on playback function is very good with 10 hours. The battery life for recording with the internal nickel metal hydride battery is only 6 hours which is shorter than the Sharp MT-821 (8+ hours). Ironically, the Panasonic battery is very similar in design and structure as the Sony MZ-R55 battery and can be interchanged. If you feel that the battery life is not enough with the internal battery, you may choose to use the external battery pack which accepts 1 AA battery. The nickel metal hydride battery by Panasonic is part #RP-BP140H and produces 1.2 volts with a 1400mAh

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Type of Usage	Life
Playback with Internal Battery	10 hours
Record with Internal Battery	6 hours
Playback with External Battery	14 hours
Record with External Battery	2.5 hours
Playback with Both Batteries	25 hours
Record with Both Batteries	12 hours



## 5. Recharge Time

Recharging with the AC adapter takes approximately 3 hours to completely charge the nickel metal hydride battery. This unit does not allow you to play/record and charge at the same time like the Sharp MT-821 or Sony MZ-R50. You must completely stop the unit for it to charge. To charge, one only needs to plug in the power supply to the unit and wait several seconds as it begins to charge. It does not require you to press a button to charge it like the Sony MZ-R55.

## 6. Remote

The LCD on the remote is small, but clear. The backlit on the remote is a very nice blue. The remote includes the standard buttons such as volume, forward, reverse, play, stop and hold. It does also include mode, bass boost, and display. Unlike the Aiwa AM-F70 remote, you can not get into record mode or program tracks. One little difference that the Panasonic has which is similar to the Sony MZ-R55 remote is the "track mark" button. Several of the buttons on the remote double as two function buttons. By pressing either "main" or "sub" on the remote, it will allow you to use different functions. For example if you are on "main" and press the two right buttons, it will adjust the volume. However if you press "sub" the same buttons will be used to function the "play mode" and "eq (different bass modes). The clip on the back is adequate, but it appears fragile. If you're used to the Sony or Sharp remotes, you should have no problem getting used to the remote. For those who own the Sharp MS-200, the end of the plug of the remote cable which plugs into the unit is very similar in design and structure. Like most newer remotes, you can use a regular headphone plug which can be purchased at the local electronic stores. Previous Sony Minidisc Recorders such as the MZ-R30 or MZ-R3 had its own special plug for the remote and required a special adapter to use regular headphones/earbuds. This is not the case with the Panasonic remote. One last thing I would like to mention is that if you hold down "play/pause" for three seconds or more, it changes the remote from non-beep to beep or

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(Back of remote)



## 7. Shock Protection

With newer portable recorders, most of them now have 40 seconds of shock protection. It seems that 40 seconds seem to be sufficient for some people. For me, 40 seconds of shock protection is plenty.

## 8. External Battery Pack

The battery pack takes a total of 1 AA batteries. It is similar in design like the external battery packs on the Sony's and Sharp's. It clips on to the top of the unit and is screwed in like the Sony's and Sharp's. It is not big like the Aiwa AM-F70 external battery pack, however it provides less than what the Aiwa AM-F70 provides.



## 9. Playback Functions

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... does have the normal repeat of the entire minidisc, repeat of a single track, and random play of a track.

## 10. Record Functions

You can record by two main methods. You can use a mic or a cable, either analog or digital cable to record from another source such as a CD player. One records by pressing the "REC Pause" button located on the bottom left. Like the Aiwa AM-F70 and Sharp MT-821 you do not have to press "End Search." The Panasonic also has a Sychro record allowing the unit to only record when there is a source. You also have the ability to "mark" tracks during the recording. You can have the unit mark tracks in increments of 3, 5, or 10 minutes. One thing different than other units is the ability to mark tracks even on recordings not done by a mic. Other brand units can only mark tracks when you record with a mic which is different on the Panasonic. The Panasonic also allows you to record an entire CD and have it as one track. Like other units, this unit allows you to record in mono and stereo mode too. There are no buttons on the unit to adjust the record level. This is the only unit on the market that I am aware of that doesn't allow you to adjust the record level like the Sharp MT-821 or Sony MZ-R55. You only have two choices. It's either "Rec Sens H" (Record Sensivity High) or "Rec Sens L" (Record Sensivity Low). I really did not have any problems not being able to adjust the record level like other brands. I did notice, however when I had the record input volume on the Sharp MT-821 at its max and the record sensitivity level on the Panasonic on high, the Sharp MT-821 was slightly louder.

## 11. Connections

The Panasonic has the 4 standard connections. One is used to connect to charge the unit. The connection used to plug the AC adapter is a small connection which is similar in size to the Sony MZ-R55 connection. Another is a Line in (analog and digital), another is the mic-in. While the other connection is the earphones/lineout. I tried using it as a line out for the car and at home and it is sufficient enough for me. Unfortunately, it does not have a line out like the Sony MZ-R55 or other Sony series recorders.



Type of Connection	YES/NO
Mic in	YES
Line in (analog/digital)	YES (combined)
Headphone	YES
Separate line out	NO
Remote	YES



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## 12. Sound Quality/Bass Boost

The sound quality on the Panasonic is very good. One complaint on the Panasonic is that there is only one bass setting. For those individuals who like the boomy bass on the Sharp series recorders, the bass may not be boomy enough for you on the Panasonic. If you're a person who doesn't require so much bass, you will probably consider the Panasonic having a "natural sound." My other complaint is about the loudness on the unit. In my opinion, I feel that the unit is not loud enough. At first I thought it was the earbuds, so I took the earbuds from the Sharp and it improved it, but I still feel its not as loud as the Sharp. The sound quality between the Sharp and Panasonic both sound great. (Loudness and sound quality are different.)

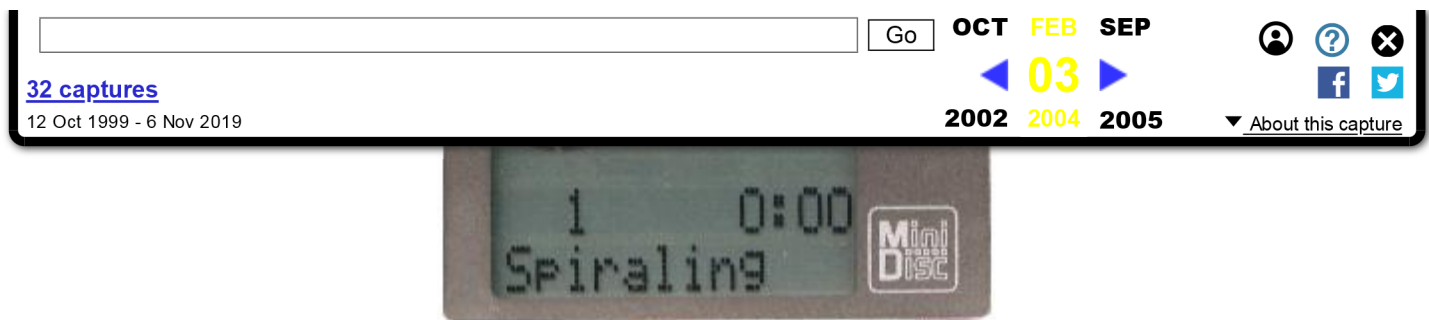
## 13. Accessories

The version of the Panasonic I purchased came with the unit itself, analog cable, nickel metal hydride battery, carrying pouch, manual (half in English), remote, earbuds, external battery pack and AC adapter. The carrying pouch is made out of a plastic nylon material that is similar to those found on backpacks. The AC adapter appears to be a Japanese (100) volt version. The end of the plug of the AC adapter is the same size as the adapter for the Sony MZ-R55.

Accessory	YES/NO
Remote	YES
Earbuds	YES
Optical cable	NO
External battery pack	YES
Stereo Mic	NO
Manual	YES
AC Adapter (1.8 volts-500mAh)	YES
Carrying Pouch	YES

## 14. LCD on unit

The LCD is clear to look at (shown below) however it is not backlit like the Aiwa AM-F70. It displays the usual functions such as title name, spinning minidisc, track number, time of track, and battery life. Overall, the Panasonic has a nice and clear LCD to look at.



### 15. Loading Mechanism

The loading mechanism on the Panasonic is a clam shell mechanism which is similar in design to the Sharp MT-821, Sony MZ-55, and Aiwa AM-F70. It's slides in easily and is fairly simple to use.

### 16. Future Improvements

There are several improvements that could make this recorder better. Longer battery life for recording with the internal battery would make the unit better. I wish Panasonic would provide more than one bass setting as other units have at least 2 bass settings. I also wish the Panasonic unit would allow you to change the record level during recording. Another thing I don't like is when titling and when you are done titling, the unit takes you all the way back to Track 1, even if for example you are editing Track 6. The ability to recharge the battery while playing/recording is the feature I would want most.

### 17. Appearance/Construction

The appearance of the unit is very nice. The Panasonic looks like a silver color. The unit is not built as solid as the Sharp MT-821, however it feels lighter than the Sharp MT-821. The unit appears very well made and does not appear as though it will fall apart. In my opinion, the Panasonic is one of the best looking units available on the market.

### 18. Buttons

The buttons on the unit are nice but are not backlit like the Aiwa AM-F70. The buttons such as the stop, play and pause are a little bigger buttons and are easier to press while the other buttons are small and they remind me of the Sony MZ-R55's buttons. The jog dial on the unit is nice for titling. While not titling, the jog dial is the forward and reverse buttons by default. The forward and reverse buttons are not like Sony MZ-R55 or Sharp MT-821 and it feels weird using the jog dial only to move through tracks. Unlike the Sony MZ-R50, you could use either the jog dial or the separate forward and reverse buttons to move through tracks. The jog dial is similar in function to the Sony MZ-R50 jog dial in that everytime you spin the dial, there is a groove. Pushing the jog dial in like one would push on the Sony MZ-R50 jog dial will activate the "enter" button. The Panasonic takes Sony's jog dial idea and puts it in a different orientation and position. The turning of the jog dial is not as easy as the jog dial on the Aiwa AM-F70 or Sony MZ-R50, however Panasonic was pretty clever in placing the jog dial on the unit.





## 19. Titling/Editing

Titling can be done while a MD is playing or in stop mode. One titles during playback by pressing "edit" button. It will then say "Edit Title?" and by using the jog dial you can do several things such as erase the track, erase the entire thing, divide, combine, move or title. You can title a single track or title the entire minidisc. Like the Sharp MT-821, you view the characters you can use and view the characters that you have inserted. Another thing similar to the Sharp MT-821 is that you can copy names of tracks from one minidisc to another. Like the Sharp you can only copy all the names of the track from one minidisc to another. Sharp calls it "Mojo stamp," however I'm not sure what Panasonic calls it. One thing I don't like about the Panasonic is that when you title a certain track and you finish titling the track, it takes you to the track #1 even if you are editing for example track #9. With other manufacturers when you title a certain track, the unit will stay at that track. Another thing to mention about the Panasonic is that it has a "divide and rehearsal mode." The divide and rehearsal mode allows you to divide tracks and replay the divided part again to confirm that you will like to divide the track at that section. This function is similar to the function on most home decks and the Aiwa AM-F70.

## 20. Overall Opinion

Overall, the Panasonic is an excellent recorder. There are improvements, which could make it better, however it has many useful features such one of the smallest sizes and the nice jog dial. Overall, I would recommend it. In comparison to the Sharp MT-821, I think they're both excellent but they're different. I don't think the Panasonic is the perfect recorder, because of some of the missing features (discussed above) that I would like to see. If you already own the Sharp MT-821 or Aiwa AM-F70, I really don't see a reason to upgrade to the Panasonic SJ-MR100. However, if you're going for your first MD purchase, I'd give the Panasonic SJ-MR100 a chance. Lastly, I think the Panasonic was made for a person who wanted a simple to use unit. The Panasonic is one of the easiest units I have used, from recording, playing and editing tracks. However, because of simplicity, it feels lacking in features.

## 21. Pictures

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**Right**



**Left**



**Rear**



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