



## Restoration Tips:

### Cleaning the Surface of a Record

Here are some simple steps that we've found to be very helpful in vinyl and other vintage recording restoration.

1. When dealing with a one-of-a-kind or a very rare recording, it is strongly advised that you make a transfer of the recording before beginning any cleaning process. (The reason for this is so that you at least have something to work with in the event that you inadvertently damage the recording in the cleaning process.)
2. Clean the surface of the recording. There are several methods to best clean your recordings...here are several suggestions:
  - Use a machine designed for this purpose if you have one available. The type which deposits a "bead" of distilled water and then removes it with a stylus, string, and a vacuum system are probably the best for this purpose. If a system such as this is not available:
  - Clean your record with a lint-free cloth and distilled water.
  - Avoid the use of solvents or wetting agents that do not contain Benzine derivatives as they have the propensity to leave behind a residue. These residues can attract particulate matter over time and clog the bottom of the record groove.
  - If you are cleaning either wax cylinders or Edison Diamond Discs, or other records containing wood or paper cores, do not use water because of the potential for damage by the solvent. Use only a lint free cloth on these items.
  - Be very careful not to get fingerprints on wax cylinders. The oil in your fingerprint will provide the "seed" necessary to trigger fungus growth on the wax surface. This will destroy the cylinder groove wall in time.
  - Blue Amberol cylinders can be cleaned with a cloth which has been moistened with distilled water. However, be careful not to allow any water to come into contact with the plaster core, because it may swell up cracking the record surface.

**Warning:** Do not use solvents such as alcohol or acetone on acetate (transcription) recordings! These solvents **will destroy** the recording. We have seen grown men cry after utilizing this method of cleaning on acetates (and in one case the transcription was a one-of-a-kind recording.)

**In the case of old Disco recordings...**the best method for restoration that we've found is called Gas 'o lean. It can be found at several roadside receptacles designed to dispense this fluid. You simply sprinkle a generous amount on your original recordings, add some sort of fire-type product and in several minutes, your older disco will sound better than ever! **For those of you that are "Joke Impaired", this is of course, a joke. We don't really want you starting your own Disco Inferno!**

3. Play the record in a "dry run". Play the record once on your turntable using one of your smaller tip stylus (approx. 2.3 mils). Obviously, you do not need to be able to listen to the recording during this process, and so you may want to consider using a separate turntable that you will use exclusively for this purpose which is not necessarily connected into your sound reproduction system. The purpose for

this step is to kick up any accumulated dirt located at the bottom of the groove before re-cleaning the record surface.

4. Clean the Record Surface Once Again. Clean the surface once again using the procedure outlined in step #1. The reason for steps #2 & #3 are that this "phantom" playback process will "kick-up" much of the dirt located at the portion of the groove where the stylus is riding; this dirt should be removed from your disc before transferring the recording in order to minimize surface noise transfer.

Now your record is cleaned. You'll want to check several other elements before recording. See: *Setting up a pre-amplifier for lateral 78 RPM recordings; Verifying your turntable speed; Setting up your pre-amplifier's equalization curve to match the recording; Choosing the correct stylus; Fixing tracking problems; Using Half Speed Mastering to correct skipping; Adjusting the Gain and Balance of the audio signal driving your sound card.*

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