

RESOLUTION CLASSIC- INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions by Origin live ©

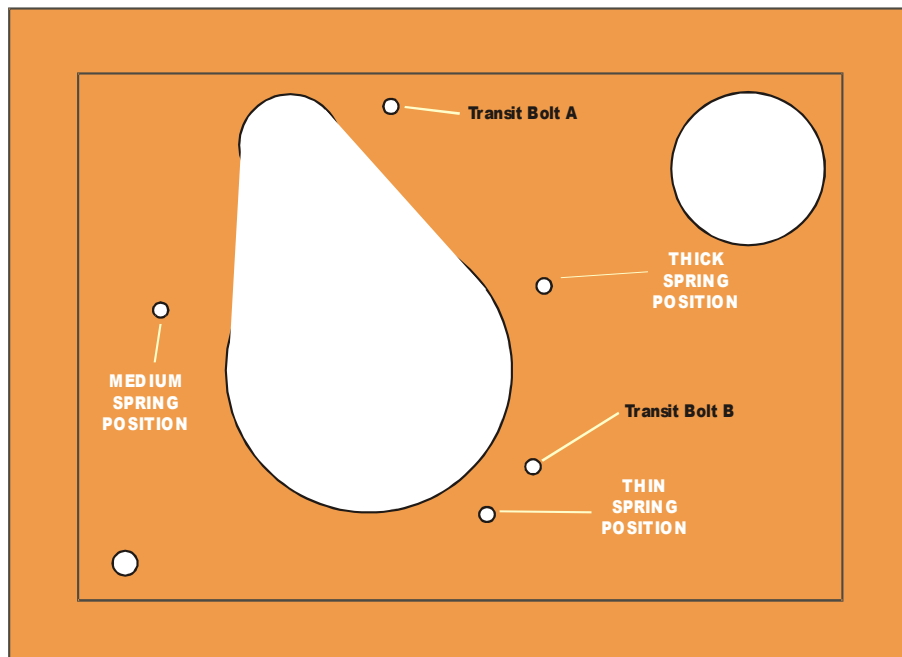


UNPACKING

Please follow the instructions below carefully so as to correctly unpack turntable. ALWAYS KEEP THE DECK ROUGHLY UPRIGHT to prevent the sub-platter and thrust washer from falling out of the bearing house. Please carry out the following.

- 1) Remove the 2 transportation screws locking the sub-chassis to the plinth - as shown in the diagram below.
 - a. Remove the nut and large washer from transport bolts A & B. The sub-chassis can then be gently lowered down onto the suspension system where it can then be adjusted at a later stage.

DIAGRAM OF TRANSIT BOLT ARRANGEMENT



PARTS LIST

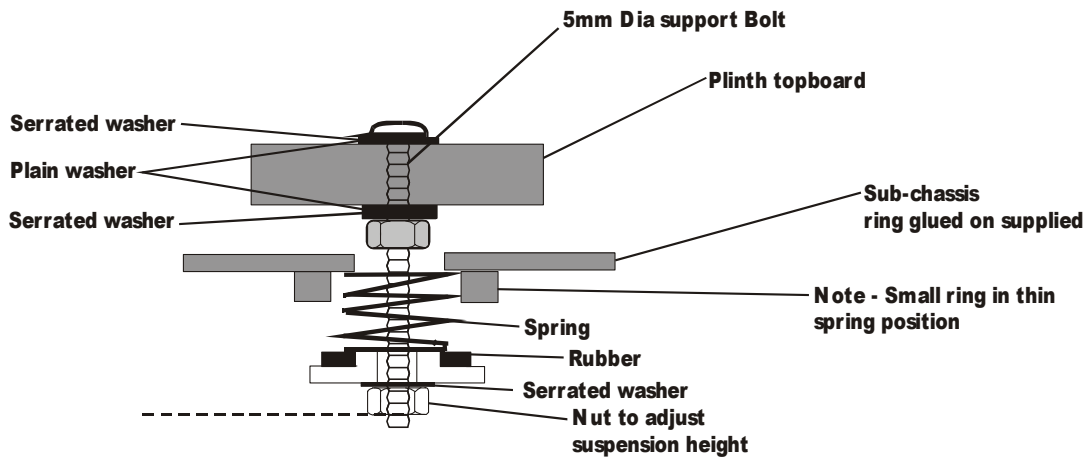
- Plinth
- Sub-chassis (MDF damper & spring plate, Sliding VTA adjuster, Aluminium sleeve, allen set screw , motor)
- Set of 3 springs / 3 spring seats & 3 rubber washers / 3 M5 serrated washers, 3 M5 nuts, PCB & switch
- Sub-platter
- Lid, (usually fitted with 2 off Lid hinges bottom & 2 top, 4 off M4 x 10mm bolts, 4 off M4 nuts, 4 off M4 brass washers).
- Spoked Platter
- Bag – Belt, 1 off large cable clip for arm leads, 1 No6 x 1/2” cross head screw, 3 springs / 3 long M5 bolts / 3 spring seats / 3 rubber washers / 3 off M5 serrated washers / 3 off M5 nuts, 3mm Allen key
- Oil
- 8 Volt transformer for 230 volt or 110 volt mains supply
- Arm (optional)

PAPERWORK

- Turntable instructions

☐ Strobe card

DIAGRAM OF SUPPORT BOLTS AND SPRING ARRANGEMENT



INSTALL THE ARM

It is necessary to fit the tonearm to the deck, before final “levelling” of the sub-chassis so that the weight distribution is correct. At this stage the arm simply needs to be in position – it does not need to be adjusted for height or have the cartridge fitted etc.

Ensure that the Aluminium sleeve is the right way up with the recess on the top side. This ensures that the arm goes all the way down into the sleeve. Place the arm in the aluminium sleeve and then clamp it in position via the set screw in the side of the VTA housing (i.e the sleeve is forced in to grip the arm’s threaded base). Only tighten the set screw sufficiently to clamp the arm in position – over-tightening can make the arm sound bright. Do not fit a threaded VTA adjuster if you have the sliding adjuster. You do not need the large nut on the base of the arm.

FIT THE ARM CABLE - FOR OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE

Fasten the arm cable - this should be supported by a cable clip supplied screwed into position underneath the plinth - leave a slight droop on it so that it isn’t “tight” This is helpful to minimise vibration of the cable. Avoid pulling the external wires at the base of tonearms as they are not indestructible and can become detached if excessive force is used to manipulate them.

FIT THE CARTRIDGE

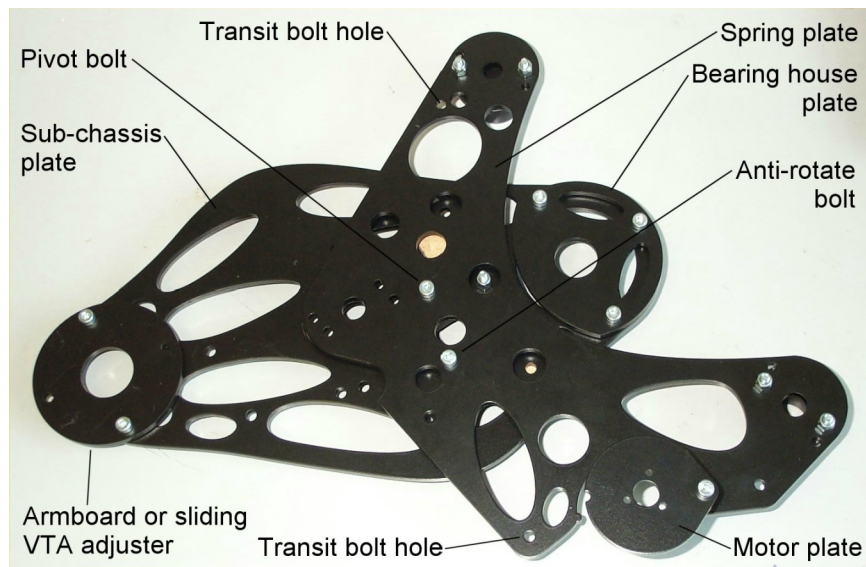
If you are new to fitting Hi-Fi cartridges please see the notes provided under the heading “Hi-Fi Cartridges - setting up procedures” but do not carry out any fine tuning at this stage as you only need the cartridge bolted to the headshell for arm height adjustment purposes.

INSTALL THE SUB-PLATTER & PLATTER

Gently remove the sub-platter and with the syringe supplied, run approx 5 drops of oil into the top of the bearing house. Wipe the sub-platter spindle surface to ensure that it is absolutely clean and very gently insert the sub-platter into the bearing house (If the oil does not overflow when the spindle touches the bottom then try 2 drops at a time till you just achieve overflow - wipe away excess oil) and then place the platter on top. The bearing needs a few minutes to “run in” and should run silent when truly vertical and full of oil - if it doesn’t do so, there has probably been contamination with dust and you will need to clean it out with a lint free paper towel or similar wrapped around a thin rod. If you do this, be sure to also wipe the oil off the spindle as this also may contain microscopic contamination that is not visible.

Level up the platter using the nuts under the spring assemblies but only approximately at this stage. Ignore the fact that the spring support plate is not level - it hangs at a slightly different angle to the actual sub-chassis that supports the arm and platter - this is by design.

DIAGRAM OF SUB-CHASSIS ASSEMBLY (GUIDANCE ONLY AS THE PHOTO IS OUT OF DATE)



The top of the platter should be approx 32 - 34mm above the top of the arm board (or top of the VTA adjuster if present).

Fit the belt over the motor pulley and sub-platter after cleaning all the running surfaces with methylated or surgical spirit. Place the platter again on the sub-platter and level the platter by adjusting the nuts underneath the spring seats. Ideally you should use a small spirit level for this purpose. You should also aim to get the top of the arm-board (or VTA adjuster) roughly level with the top of the plinth top-board. Note that the sub-chassis should bounce freely without contacting anything. It need only bounce up and down 1mm or so. Unlike some decks such as the LP12 you do not need to achieve an “even” bounce - the Sub-chassis takes most of the weight on one spring so it doesn’t bounce very evenly.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Please note that very occasionally the bearing house will not be truly vertical due to slight variations of the thread pickup on the nuts. It is purely a matter of trial and error to get this right by rotating the nuts and bearing house slightly. Aim to get the platter parallel with the arm-board in at least the plane that affects cartridge “azimuth”. For definition of “azimuth” see section on “hi-Fi Cartridges – setting up procedures”. You can always alter the height of the arm to get the other plane true.

Be careful in moving or transporting the deck - it is possible to bend the spring supporting bolts if a severe side movement occurs (bear in mind that the sub-chassis etc. is quite heavy). Ideally it is best to use the transit bolts to hold the sub-chassis rigidly to the plinth topboard when transporting the deck. In the unlikely event of a sub-chassis foul on a support rod, the answer is usually to bend the bolt to the correct position. Only resort to such measures after you have checked all other possibilities such as springs not locating in their sub-chassis housings etc.

Set up of motor and power supply

In the first 4 hours of use from starting up the motor, the speed tends to drift but then settles down permanently. To burn in the regulator board components we recommend at least 4 hours of running the motor before you accurately set the speed.

If you look under the deck in the area of the switch you will see a PCB screwed in a position such that you can adjust the motor speed using the two rectangular blue trimmers

CONNECT UP THE MOTOR & TRANSFORMER

VERY IMPORTANT – if the leads are not correctly connected you can burn out your motor – For this reason follow the procedure outlined as follows –

The thin output wires from the power supply are only 12 volts maximum and therefore safe to handle. Voltages inside the transformer are dangerous so the transformer case should not be unscrewed or opened.

First connect the plug on the flying lead from the MOTOR to the CONNECTORS emerging from the regulator board under the plinth (if not already done so) The connections push together – excess wire can be pushed, tapped or tie wrapped out of the way so that they do not foul the sub-chassis assembly.

Now connect the lead from the in line TRANSFORMER (power supply) to the DC connector socket at the back of the turntable. It is useful to screw lock this connector.

Plug in the power supply to the electrical mains supply – allow 10 minutes or so for circuits to warm up before carrying out any speed checks.

When the rotary switch is turned fully anti-clockwise the motor is off. One click of the switch clockwise is 33.3 rpm and the second click clockwise is 45rpm. Use the strobe card provided to set the speed of your deck. Speed should only be checked with the cartridge dragging on a centre track of a record. It will take 4 hours for your dc regulator board to run in before you can set the speed accurately without “drift”.

SETTING THE MOTOR SPEED (NORMALLY SET AT FACTORY - JUST CHECK USING THE STROBE CARD)

The motor speed is set by 2 rectangular blue trimmer resistors. Access to these trimmers is possible from the underside of the deck (this is most easily achieved by getting the front left hand corner of the deck to overhang an edge of furniture or similar. You must let the board components “run in”- we recommend 4 hours for this. The reason is that the motor speed changes significantly while components burn in but they “settle” after 1 to 4 hours. This is best carried out with the motors running fast so turn the pre-sets clockwise as outlined below.

When the rotary switch is turned fully anti-clockwise the motor is off. One click of the switch clockwise is 33.3 rpm and the second click clockwise is 45rpm.

Now adjust the motor speed as follows using the 25 turn resistors P1 and P2 on the regulator board (P1 is the blue component nearest the centre of the printed circuit board and P2 is the other blue component situated nearer the end of the board). Note:- to increase speed turn the presets clockwise using a small screwdriver in the top slot. The pre-set screw will not fall out and may need a fair number of turns to set the correct speed so keep turning until the speed changes. If the screw reaches the end of it's travel you can usually hear a faint clicking sound for a complete turn.

With the switch set at the 1st click - set P1 so that the platter turns at 33.3rpm . Use the strobe disc provided to set the speed (full instructions are on the card). However if you have problems using the strobe card, then count the rpm using the following method. Counting the 33.3 revs per minute is best accomplished by placing a small piece of sticky tape on the perimeter of the platter and then counting 100 revolutions. 33.3 rpm is exactly 100 revolutions completed in 3 minutes. To save time in the early stages it is easiest to count 50 revs in 1 minute 30 seconds (or 25 revs in 45 seconds) and save the 100 count for the final check. When setting the speed, place the arm on the centre track of a record so that the cartridge is tracking the grooves this ensures that the drag of the cartridge is taken into account (even though the difference is only 0.8 % from setting the speed without the cartridge on the record). Speed variations of up to plus or minus 2% are quite common on decks and the dc kit is capable of plus or minus 0.3% - the advanced dc kit measures 0.1% accuracy..

Please note the following points when setting the speed. Firstly all the figures below are based on setting the speed on the deck using the centre track and letting the deck play for a good 5 minutes beforehand with the stylus on the record so that the whole system has settled down. The regulators seem to take about 5 minutes to warm up, so speed is about 2mins 58 seconds for 100 revolutions when the system starts from cold. In other words it is $2/180 \times 100 = 1\%$ fast when started from cold. Speed variation with the dc kit varies minutely depending on the track played and cut of record. Usually outer tracks play 0.26% slow and inner tracks play 0.26 % fast. When the speed at the centre track is set using the strobe and then timed, the drift is usually 1 second in 100 turns from the rpms timed on the 1st track to the rpms timed on the last track. i.e outer track measures 2min 59.5 seconds for 100 turns and inner track is 3min 0.5 seconds for 100 turns. This means a plus or minus 0.26 % speed variation.

Click the rotary switch to the 2nd click clockwise and set P2 so that the platter rotates at 45rpm using the above method.

The dc motors may be slightly noisy to begin with and are never completely silent as a/c motors are - This is thought to be because they rely on a different type of precious metal brush. Having said this they still sound a great deal better in performance terms. To assist "running in" you can disconnect the brown wire from the rotary switch and remove the belt. The motor then runs at full speed. Allow this for approx 5 hours. After the running in period, reconnect the brown wire and the motor should be quieter than when it first ran

Like most turntable manufacturers we recommend that you leave the turntable running between changing records as this reduces the belt wear that occurs with constant stopping and starting.

Notes

Do not use the power supply for anything other than the dc motor or the power supply will definitely be irreparably damaged and so might the equipment it is connected to.

Always de-power the circuit when troubleshooting by removing the power supply plug from the wall socket. The circuit will take around 8 hours to run in and sound it's best.

In the first 4 hours of use from starting up the motor, the speed tends to drift but then settles down permanently. To burn in the regulator board components we recommend at least 4 hours of running the motor before you accurately set the speed.

Set up & maintenance of turntable

SET UP

Carry out a final check on the levelness of the platter with the turntable resting on the surface that is going to be it's final residence. It is best to use a spirit level for this purpose.

You can now move on to the section on "arm set up".

NOTES & MAINTENANCE

NOTES

The Platter works best without any type of mat (including the Ringmat) or record clamp.

MAINTENANCE

The deck is not prone to going out of tune - we recommend that you check the level of the platter after the first few days as the springs initially need to "bed in" and every year or so after this.

Depending on your use of the deck, the belt should ideally be replaced every 2 years or so.

If you withdraw the sub-platter spindle you should put in a drop of oil to compensate for any possible loss.

Wow on the speed – can be caused by 4 main factors as listed below. Most of these relate to the freedom of rotation of the sub-platter. A useful check is to see how freely the sub-platter "glides" round at slow speed with only the gentlest of nudges.

- Insufficient belt tension
- Sub-platter "bottoming" on the top of the bearing house – check that there is a space of over 1mm or over so between the top of the bearing house and the underside of the sub-platter
- The brass insert at the bottom of the bearing house has somehow got lost – this is very rare but it is just possible – the bottom of the bearing house should be flat due to the presence of an insert sitting in the bottom – you can feel this with a long thin screwdriver or use a torch – if the surface is coned as you would expect in a drill hole then the insert is missing and you should request a new one.
- Insufficient oil in the bearing house – try adding a few drops to see if you get overflow – keep adding oil till you achieve this. Please note that it is not a cause for concern if your Oil has turned black in the bearing house – this does not affect performance.

Set up of tonearms

FINAL ARM SET UP AND NOTES

This section of the instructions apply to Rega arms and arms with similar mounting geometry – i.e. These arms require dimensions such that the centre of the platter to the centre of arm hole is approx 223mm plus or minus 2mm tolerance and the hole diameter for the arm is 24mm to 25 mm. The Oasis S specifically designed for such arms – if you have something different such as a Linn arm (which requires a centre to centre distance of 211mm) then there are various ways to make the arm fit the deck. We do not at this time provide the armboard for this and so you will need to manage the solution on your own.

Please note that for the Origin Live Silver 250 tonearms - do not adjust bearing tightness - this is carefully set at factory - it may seem that there is slight “play” in the bearings - this is deliberate and must be left alone or degradation will result - it is not actually play in the bearings but carefully designed clearance tolerances of other components.

FIT THE CARTRIDGE (IF NOT FITTED ALREADY)

Fit the cartridge to the arm using an alignment gauge and ensure the headshell wires are bent so that they are clear of the record surface. If you are not familiar with fitting cartridges then please read the section “Hi-Fi Cartridges – Setting up procedures”.

SET TRACKING FORCE & SIDE FORCE BIAS

Ensure that the bias adjustment slider is set to zero. Set the tracking force to the manufacturer’s recommendations using a stylus force gauge (stylus balance). When tightening the counterweight, set it so that the Allen bolt is at the side of the arm (not at the top) see figure “Rear end view of counterweight” and tighten firmly - check tracking force is still correct after tightening.

Once the tracking force has been set you can set the sliding control for tracking bias – For Rega arms and arms with a similar bias adjustment you should set the value of approximately 1 or less due to the fact that the bias adjustments on Rega arms and similar arms tend to under-read the true value of side force produced. . The settings you read on the Rega, OL1 or Silver arms are not always dead accurate so it may be worthwhile to fine tune the setting using the following method. Find a test record or a record with approx 10mm of blank vinyl between the end of the lead out groove and the record label. Place the stylus needle on the blank uncut vinyl and see whether the needle skates inwards towards the centre of the record or outwards. You are aiming to achieve a situation where the needle drifts *slowly* towards the centre of the record so adjust the side bias until this state is reached.

USE OF STYLUS FORCE GAUGE

Most stylus force gauges work on the same principle as a set of scales or balances. For example with the Ortofon Stylus Force Gauge, first place the stylus on the inscribed or graduated portion of the scales. Then try the stylus at different points until you find the point where the beam “balances” freely in a roughly level position. You then read the force that is being exerted –(1gram = 10 mN if the scale is in mN). From this number you can assess whether you need to increase the tracking force or vica-versa. Move the tonearm counterweight accordingly and re-measure the tracking force. Repeat this procedure until the correct tracking force is obtained. The Shure stylus force gauge works slightly differently so follow the instructions that come with the gauge.

SET THE VTA (VERTICAL TRACKING ADJUSTMENT)

To allow the cartridge needle to track at the correct angle it is necessary that the base of the arm is at the correct height in relation to the platter. Usually the optimum setting is such that the TOP edge of the arm is parallel with the surface of a FLAT record – you can use a piece of card with parallel lines drawn on it to check this. Place the cartridge on the record with the deck switched off. Hold the card edge onto the record in a position alongside the arm and see whether the top edge of the arm is parallel. Raise or lower the base of the arm till you achieve parallel position. Most cartridges have a height of 17mm. If this is the case, the base of the arm should rest approximately 31mm below the top of the platter surface –see diagram “cross-section of sub-chassis”. If your cartridge height is different you can work out where the base of the arm should be from the preceding figures.

It is worth experimenting with VTA adjustment. Slightly raise or lower the arm and then listen - if the sound is relatively bright then the arm is too high, if it is relatively dull and bass heavy then the arm is too low.

- **If you have no VTA adjuster** Raise and lower the arm by fitting spacing washers under the arm. Alternatively you can raise or lower the height of the platter – this is easily accomplished by removing the platter & sub-platter to re-set the height of the threaded bearing house (see “diagram showing threaded bearing house arrangement”).
- **If you have the threaded VTA adjuster** Raise and lower the arm by rotating the VTA adjuster. If you find your arm is too high in relation to the platter with the VTA adjuster set to give the arm its lowest position then you need to raise the height of the platter a few millimetres – this is easily accomplished by removing the platter & sub-platter to re-set the height of the threaded bearing house (see “diagram showing threaded bearing house arrangement”).
- **If you have the Origin Live VTA sliding adjuster** – Raise and lower the arm in the aluminium sleeve and then clamp it in position via the set screw in the side of the VTA housing (i.e the sleeve is forced in to grip the arm’s threaded base). You do not need the Rega nut on the base of the arm. Only tighten the set screw just sufficiently to clamp the arm in position – over-tightening can make the arm sound relatively bright.

SET THE ARM FASTENING TIGHTNESS

It is best to experiment with the tightness of the large Rega base nut (if fitted) by listening to music. This may seem laborious but you will be richly rewarded as this adjustment is **CRITICAL** for performance. The mistake is often made of over tightening this nut with the result that the music is deadened.

WARRANTY

We guarantee arms supplied by ourselves to be free from fault for 2 years and will undertake to correct any faults providing the arm has not been modified by any party other than ourselves and has not received maltreatment of any kind. Our OEM arms and modifications are not guaranteed by Rega so in the event of a warranty claim you should contact ourselves rather than Rega.

NOTES

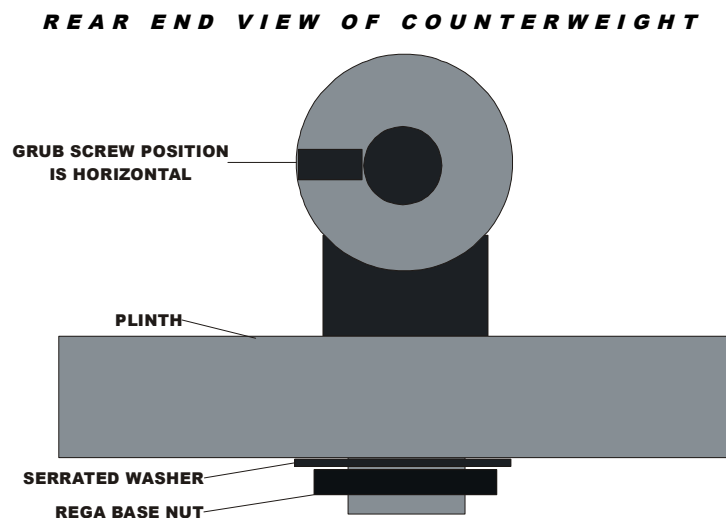
A detailed description of Cartridge set up and care is included in the end sections of this manual.

Please note that the occasional rewired arm can make a slight “rustling” noise through the speakers when it is lifted across the record. This should not be a cause for concern as it is only caused by microphony of the internal litz cable - under normal playing conditions this is inaudible.

The earth lead should be connected to the earth of your pre-amplifier or amplifier. This earth lead is best separated slightly from the arm signal leads so do not wind it around them for best performance.

Now that all the hard work is over you can settle back and hear the results - we wish you many hours of enjoyable music and rediscovering your record collection.

The sound of the deck will improve over the first 2 weeks or so as items “bed in” and the arm wires burn in.



Hi-Fi cartridges - setting up procedures

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL COMMENTS

As we supply most makes of hi-fi cartridge we get asked questions from time to time about various issues regarding set up and care. To help newcomers to this area we have published the following notes. These guidelines are of a general nature - we publish them only to be of help and although widely accepted they are not formally authoritative - we cannot accept liability if you choose to use them and neither do we encourage the time consuming occupation of answering queries surrounding the procedures outlined - these are best referred to the manufacturer of your specific hi-fi cartridge.

For those new or inexperienced to fitting hi-fi cartridges we would state that this is NOT difficult and much of the detail and perfectionism outlined below is for those who like to experiment. We ourselves do not normally check azimuth, or vary tracking forces from the manufacturers recommendations - neither would we worry if the arm was up to 3mm away from the recommended distance from the spindle - although all these details are audible they are generally of a fairly low order, although tracking force and VTA are worth trying should you feel anything is lacking. If things seem complicated we would encourage you not to be put off as it all becomes clear once you get started.

Before fine tuning the set up as described below you should allow the cartridge to "run in" properly - at least 40 hours for some cartridges.

IMPORTANCE OF CARTRIDGE SET UP

Hi-Fi cartridges travel like a bobsleigh through the grooves of a record only a few thousandths of an inch wide. You hear groove displacements of the order of a few millionths. (That's like splitting a hair into one thousand pieces.) Every bit of motion or vibration allowed at this level can be heard enormously amplified through your speakers. For this reason it is good to set up the turntable and arm correctly so that the audio cartridge can do its job properly. For instance a turntable out of level can produce side forces on the pickup cartridge tip that will wear it more on one side than the other as well as have a slightly degrading effect on the wear of your records.

LEVELNESS

When a turntable goes out of level, the platter bearing performance and the arm's dynamics, specifically anti-skate, are negatively affected. So be sure your turntable platter and tonearm mounting board are level - use a spirit level. If the platter is out of level, first adjust the surface that the deck stands on. The suspension (in the case of a suspended sub-chassis design) may also need levelling if it has subsided over time.

HI-FI CARTRIDGES ALIGNMENT

Alignment for hi-fi cartridges needs to be optimised in three different planes. However, it cannot be perfect in all three planes, so it must be optimised for an overall best balance or compromise. The final authority should always be your ears and preferably over an extended period of listening time. Bear in mind that each record is cut slightly differently. Here again, optimise for an overall balance of good sound over a wide range of records. The three alignment planes are as follows. (Please note that it is the stylus, not the cartridge that is being aligned.)

▪ Lateral tracking angle

Viewed from above, the hi-fi cartridges arcing movement across the record must maintain the stylus in the same relation to the groove as that of the cutting stylus's straight-line tracking; this is Lateral Tracking Angle, or Tangency. Apart from linear tracking arms this is always a matter of the best compromise.

▪ Azimuth

Viewed from head on, the stylus must be perpendicular in the groove so as not to favour one groove wall, and therefore one channel, over the other wall/channel; this is Azimuth.

▪ Vertical tracking angle (VTA)

Viewed from the side, the stylus must sit correctly in the groove, at the same angle as the original cutter; this is Vertical Tracking/Stylus Rake Angle. VTA, however, varies from record to record. Therefore, this alignment must be set by ear, even more than is the case with the other adjustments).

HI-FI CARTRIDGE ALIGNING TOOLS

Tools required are an alignment gauge, a tracking force gauge, a FLAT record, a screwdriver or Allen keys of the right size (usually 2mm), a good light may also be helpful. Small needle-nose pliers and a magnifying glass all help. It also helps to have the hi-fi news test record. Treat the arm with care as some parts are fragile. To this end ensure that tightening of any bolts is carried out gently and without causing undue strain.

CHECK HI-FI CARTRIDGE CLIP CONNECTIONS AND MOUNTING

Tonearm wiring uses a standard color code for left channel (L) and right channel (R) and polarity. Coding is as follows: White = L Hot, Blue = L Ground, Red = R Hot, and Green = R Ground. If the cartridge pins aren't color-coded the same way, they will have letter identifications next to them. Make sure that the arm's wires, wire clips, and solder joints are in very good condition. At minimum, clean the contact between cartridge pins and wire clips by removing and replacing each clip. Holding the clips with needle-nose pliers can make this easier, but be careful that you don't strain the wires where they join the clip. Check the clips for a proper fit on the cartridge pins, and adjust them if necessary. "Proper" means snug but not tight. To check clip size, hold the cartridge tail-up close to the head wires, grasp a clip firmly right behind its tubular part with the tweezers, line it up with the cartridge pin, and press. If it does not slide on with moderate force, the clip needs opening-up. If it slides on easily but flops around when attached, it needs tightening. Sizing is the operation most likely to detach a clip. The trick is to avoid bending the wire at its attachment point or putting too much tension on it. To avoid either, always hold the clip with its wire slightly slack-looped behind it while adjusting. For opening a clip, hold it firmly with the tweezers or needle-noses, right behind its tubular section, and press the tip of the jeweler's screwdriver into the open end of its longitudinal slot until you see this widen very slightly. (Here's where you'll probably need the headband magnifier or reading glasses.) You're dealing with thousandths of an inch here, so a barely visible spreading may be all that's needed. Try it for fit, and repeat until it does. For tightening a clip, press a toothpick inside it as far as it will go, then use the needle-nose pliers to gently squeeze together the sides of the clip near its free end, while watching the slot for any change. (Attempting to squeeze a clip without the toothpick inside it will flatten its sides.) Try it for size, and resqueeze if necessary until the fit is correct. When it is, close up the middle section of the tube to match the end

Cartridge mounting screws (usually 2.5mm allen bolts) should be tight. Steel allen bolts are the best for mounting hi-fi cartridges - aluminum or brass are OK but difficult to tighten up hard (as they should be).

SETTING UP HI-FI CARTRIDGES

MOUNTING

Mount the hi-fi cartridge in the headshell if this is not done already. This is best done with the hi-fi cartridge stylus guard in place but it may be necessary to remove it during at least one phase of the installation. If you do, replace it as soon as possible. Be especially careful when the stylus guard is off, as many MC cartridges have a strong magnetic field at the base of the cantilever. If this attracts the tip of a steel-bladed screwdriver, it can destroy the stylus - there is no hope of resisting it. The best precaution is to keep the screwdriver well away from the cantilever, use a nonferrous screwdriver, or keep the stylus guard on when you're using the screwdriver near it. The other main hazard is children so don't forget to warn prying fingers.

The headshell screws should be finger-tightened just enough that the cartridge cannot fall off but still loose enough that the cartridge is easily moved around. Work whenever possible with the stylus's safety cap in place. Set tracking force at nominal, then do the tangency alignment procedures, then the azimuth. Do not deviate from this sequence as each step affects the subsequent one — change the order and the setup will be wrong.

TRACKING FORCE

This adjustment is carried out on the counterbalance weight of the tonearm or spring dial if one is in place. At this point, use your tracking force gauge and setting tracking force according to your cartridge instructions — final adjustment will be done later by ear.

If you do not have a tracking force gauge, but the arm does have a calibrated counterweight, defeat the arm's anti-skate mechanism or set it to zero. Set the counterweight so the arm is level and balanced. Be very careful of the unprotected stylus — you cannot do this with its safety cap in place. Once the arm is balanced, lock it in its cradle and, using the calibrated counterweight, set the tracking force according to your cartridge's recommended weight.

TANGENCY ALIGNMENT

(lateral tracking angle) - Follow the manufacturer's literature and the dictates of your alignment gauge — different gauges use slightly different methods. As you square up the hi-fi cartridge body with the gauge's markings, be sure that the cartridge sides are square or your alignment will be wrong. When all adjustments are correct, carefully tighten down the hi-fi cartridge mounting screws. Keeping a firm grip on hi-fi cartridge and headshell together so nothing shifts, delicately tighten each screw down a turn or so, then repeat until tight. Tightening down one screw all the way before tightening the others is almost certain to twist the cartridge out of alignment. However careful you've been, always check the alignment again after tightening.

VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE (VTA)

Unless your tonearm has a special VTA adjuster, adjusting arm height is usually carried out with the use of spacing washers (as with Rega arms). In arms with a pillar / collar type vta adjuster it helps to put pencil or pen marks on the pillar to keep track of various heights. See your tonearm manual for its recommendations on adjusting arm pillar height. The best approach is to tune-in VTA gradually by listening to music. You know the arm needs to be lowered at the arm pillar when the overall sound is hard and bright, with thin bass or no deep bass, edgy highs, and harsh midrange (of course, this could also be tracking force which is too light). Distortion obscures low level details between the musical notes so dynamic range is reduced. Transient attacks may be too sharp. Raise the arm when the sound is dull and damped, the highs rolled off, the lows muddy and lacking definition, and transient attacks are dull. Mind you, this sounds an awful lot like the effects of changes in tracking force (too light is edgy, too heavy is heavy and dull). They are different sounding but hard to explain. Start with the arm a little low and very gradually raise it, first to where it is parallel to the record, and then so the back of the cartridge is tilting up. Keep track of your settings so you can return to the one you like best where everything snaps into focus. The range of adjustments can be quite broad, as much as 3/4" or even more (at the arm pivot). Play with the full range so you know what it sounds like and don't be diffident.

ANTISKATE FORCE (PIVOTING ARMS ONLY)

This applies an opposing, balancing force to the natural inward drag of a pivoting arm while playing. Left uncontrolled, the stylus would push up against the inner groove wall, causing distortion both from mistracking and a cantilever skewed in relation to the cartridge generator. To set, lower the stylus down near the label of a record with a wide run-out to it. Increase antiskate until the arm starts to slowly drift outward, away from the label. Again, this should be finalized by ear as you listen to music. If image placement is a little off-center, or if things don't seem to be locked in solidly, experiment with antiskate. Also, watch the stylus when you set it into a groove. Does it move to the right or left relative to the cartridge body? This indicates too much or too little antiskating.

FINE TUNING

You now have three adjustments approximated. Tracking force, VTA, and azimuth. It's a matter of reiteration to optimize the sound. The change in sound with each of these individual adjustments can be similar. It's therefore necessary, in optimizing all three, to experimentally move from one type of adjustments to the next, then to the next, in order to balance the optimization for all three. It's helpful to listen to female vocals as you proceed. Firstly try deviating from the cartridge's recommended tracking force by small increments - about 0.2 of a gram deviation above and below the manufacturer's basic recommendations. Don't worry about record damage from heavy tracking as most record damage is actually caused by mistracking in the middle-to-high frequencies with too little tracking force rather than with too heavy. If you're getting mistracking at the low (lightest) end of the range and yet the low range is generally sounding the best (and on moderate signals, not heavy passages), then chances are you have either a dirty stylus, a bad record, an accumulation of crud in your cartridge, or a cartridge that's getting old. Changes in tracking force can change how you want VTA and azimuth adjusted. If azimuth was initially adjusted by ear, experiment with it.

Proper care and maintenance of Hi-Fi cartridges & records

CARE OF HI-FI CARTRIDGES

Replace your cartridge when due - hi-fi cartridges have a lifespan for their cantilever suspensions and stylus needles. This will vary from manufacturer and type of cartridge as well as other factors like the cleanliness of your records and the care you take of the cartridge. It is wise to enquire on the expected life of your cartridge to the manufacturer, so that when the time comes it is replaced accordingly - most importantly this will preserve your records as well as enable you to enjoy the best performance.

If there is a build-up of dust and dirt where the needle enters the cartridge body you should use a small soft brush to brush the debris out. Always brush from the direction of the cantilever to the stylus or you may do damage.

Care of stylus - One well known method of cleaning styli is the Linn green stuff which is a very fine abrasive paper - this may be OK on some cartridges which do not have fine stylus tips and fragile cantilever mechanisms. However there is a danger of causing fractures or chips in your diamond stylus on certain fineline tips. This method can also strain the cantilever mechanism.

There are a number of fluids on the market that increase stylus life and help to clean gunge from the needle - a word of caution though - some of these can loosen the stylus glue on the cantilever over time - some fluids can also attack the cantilever or coil material itself or harden the suspension - consult your cartridge manufacturer over this. One key factor is to use the liquid very sparingly on a cotton bud such that it is just damp (not running with fluid) - this minimises the fluid which can run up inside the cartridge.

RECORD CARE AND CLEANING

The stylus itself does a pretty good job of cleaning the grooves and should itself therefore be kept clean. The proprietary brushes etc. for cleaning records will often do little more than brush dirt deeper into the record grooves and are best avoided if possible. Also keep records in high quality non-scratch record sleeves - preferably good ones.

A record cleaning machine is really the only answer for cleaning records properly as they suck out the debris and dust in the record grooves using a powerful vacuum. Tests using a microscope prove that this does the job with 100% success. The performance improvement is also very noticeable when it comes to even new records being played. We supply and highly recommend the Moth record cleaning machine as this is very effective from personal experience and comes with many glowing endorsements – see our web site for details and reviews.