

Mini-Review - The Record Pro Vinyl Record Washer System

Or.... Rub-A-Dub-Dub Spin a Record in a Tub!



What: Record Pro Vinyl Record Deep-Clean Washer Kit

Why: Clean Those Grubby Vinyl's

Bought where: Amazon -

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07HMCLCDJ/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1

How Much: \$59.95

The Story

When I purchased my new turntable a few months ago I also purchased an inexpensive record cleaning system at the same time.

I have a very modest collection of 166 LP's all of which are no newer than 1984 and most were purchased in the 70's.... and a few even date back to the 60's. While I had what I considered a substantial collection as a teen, there was a slight case of arson at the house that myself and four other fellas were renting while at school in Louisville KY. At least 200+ of my precious records were reduced to little blobs of smoldering vinyl along with my humble Philco playback equipment. The handful that were saved were hiding out at my girlfriend's house. The collection began again when I got out of school and started "real work" and building through the 70's and 80's re-making my small collection into what it is today.

My first, and only, cleaning method used during those 70's and 80's (and since) has been the ubiquitous DiscWasher brush and their "Special" proprietary cleaning liquid (Distilled/Ionized water?) that I had purchased in the seventies. Even before that, as that aforementioned wayward teen, I just used a damp cloth and dishwashing soap and probably doing more harm than good.

When I decided to purchase that new turntable last December (2019) I also decided that the entire collection needed to be deep cleaned.

Not wanting to invest in a record cleaning system that cost multiple times the new turntable itself I perused my choices on Amazon and settled on the something that received high marks in

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reviews, looked fairly innocuous, and contained everything needed to “Deep Clean” (*I hoped!*) my long neglected records.

There were several different vendors selling, what looked to be, basically the same product right down to the drying cloth and rack. I just chose one that wasn't the most or least expensive based on the reviews and went with the “Record Pro Vinyl Record Deep-Clean Washer System”.



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Set up of the “System” is easy...

1. Just pull the stuff from the box
2. Disconnect the, hidden in the base, drying rack from the holding tank (very clever that!)
3. Spread out some paper towels or some additional CLEAN micro-fiber towels
4. Fill the reservoir to the fill-line with distilled water
5. Insert the twin brushes in place
6. Insert the rollers in the correct position for the size of record being cleaned (45, 78, LP)
7. Pour two capfuls of the supplied cleaning fluid over the installed cleaning brushes
8. After waiting thirty seconds to ensure the cleaning liquid has spread evenly through the brushes you are ready to go!



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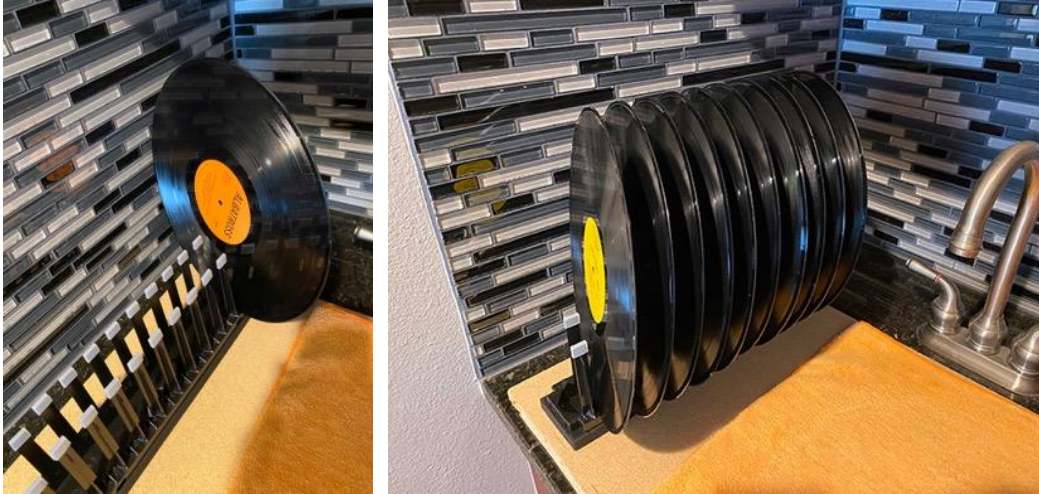
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Operation was Simple Enough:

1. Place the record vertically in the bath pushing it between the brushes until it is resting against the rollers on each side of the tub
2. Slowly rotate the record **USING BOTH HANDS** three times in one direction and then rotate three times in the opposite direction
3. Grasping the record on the top edge with the small micro-fiber "Handling Cloth" slowly and steadily pull the record up and out of the bath
4. Lay the record on some paper towels or a clean micro-fiber towel placed on a ***flat and solid surface***
5. Holding the record carefully in place wipe around the surface of the record in a circular motion with the supplied drying cloth
6. Flip the record over onto another dry paper towel (or micro-fiber cloth) and repeat the drying procedure
7. Handling the record by the edges move to the supplied Drying Rack and allow the record to air dry for at least forty-five minutes or until completely dry
8. REPEAT nine more times :-)
9. Once the records are dry, re-sleeve and place back into your vinyl collection all spic-and-span and ready to play!



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Since the drying rack holds ten records and several of my LP's are double albums it took, maybe, nineteen sessions to wash all of them spread out over five days or so.

When finished with your batches for the day just pop the lid back on the reservoir and hang your towels to dry!



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Results

Results seemed to be good. I went through all one hundred and sixty-six records in serial washing sessions. After a little practice I could whip through ten records in about eight minutes or less. The key is organization :-)

The records dried to a nice glossy finish and were clean to the eye and to the touch. I didn't put them under my electron Microscope (I don't have one anyway :-) but did inspect a few with a magnifier and they still looked nice and clean under 10X magnification.

A few of my oldest and most played (and most abused) albums like **James Gang – Yer' Album**, **Jimi Hendrix – Into the West**, **Argent – Ring of Hands**, among others... were previously unplayable even after a swipe or two from the DiscWasher brush. Too many skips, pops and surface noise made them either extremely unpleasant or impossible to listen to.

I gave those albums a special double cleaning (6x in each direction X2). To my surprise in every case the LP became, if not new and pristine, at least listenable. In a couple of cases very listenable!

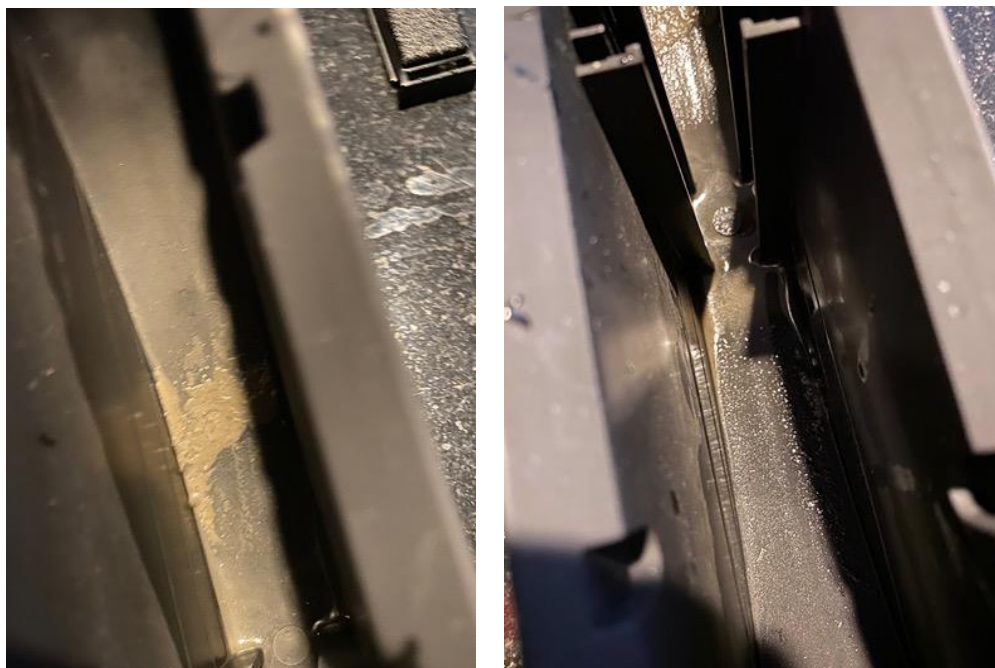
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Caveats!

There are some things that you would need to be mindful of and use care when using this system.

1. The tank is rather narrow by design and the brushes clamp tightly to the record. If not careful it is easy to tip and slosh the water from the reservoir or even (gasp!) dump it over entirely. While that did not happen to me there were several close calls!
2. The brushes did not really “Lock” into place as advertised and the brush on one side rose up with the record as it was removed. The solution for me was to use one hand to hold the offending brush (and the tank at the same time) down while pulling directly up with the other hand.
3. If cleaning more than thirty records I would pull the brushes and clean them before continuing on.
4. The labels on the records are said to be protected from getting wet. While that is somewhat true, water does drip over the label during the rotation and cleaning of the record. Simply blot the water from the label using the drying cloth and there should be no issue.
5. I didn't really change the water bath and probably should have. If cleaning more than sixty records (or, just pick a number) I would dump and clean the reservoir, replacing the distilled water before continuing. Whatever was washed off seemed to settle between sessions, so I did not notice just how effective the washing was until I dumped the water from the reservoir at the end to find a lot of “Gunk” that had been released from the records settled at the bottom of the reservoir.



The Puckie that Remains

6. Keep in mind those extremely dirty records will require more than one cleaning.

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Summary

This is a good system, albeit a manual system, for deep cleaning records. If you have the time and energy and don't want to, or can't, spend \$1200 to \$12,000 on one of those uber "fancy-schmancy" record cleaning systems this is a good alternative.

I'm not going to tell you this system does just as good a job as those high-dollar machines... I can't. And, in many cases it may not!

But what it will do is a credible job, occupy a much smaller footprint, and **NOT BREAK THE BANK!** You will just have to invest a little sweat equity into the operation.

While I note that this particular system is no longer available on Amazon there are still several kits available that are obviously, and quite literally, cut from same mold.

Once you have deep cleaned your vinyl collection go ahead and break out that forty-five-year-old **DiscWasher Brush** and **ZeroStat Gun!** A couple of *swipes*, and a couple of **ZAPS!!**, before each play and you will be good to go!

