

**KNOW HOW**

Vinyl is the format that just refuses to lay down and die. Just take a listen for yourself and you'll soon understand why

**SAY GOODBYE TO BAD VIBES**

The motor drives the platter – the bit that the record sits on – with a rubber belt or directly through the centre spindle. It's a major source of vibration so tends to be isolated from the main turntable structure, the plinth, or even housed in a separate stand-alone unit to minimise interaction

**IS THE GROOVE ARM HARDER?**

The tonearm (or 'arm') is the part that holds the cartridge. It has to be rigid, and have minimal play in its bearing, for the cartridge to track the record groove properly

**IF YOU'D ASKED** us a decade ago whether record players would still appear regularly in our pages, we'd have said no. We would have predicted that people wouldn't want the hassle of keep records clean, or putting up with the fussy nature of the players. How wrong we were! While it's true that vinyl will never be the mass-market force it once was, the format is still going strong.

A record player's job is simple: spin a disc at the right speed and let the cartridge track the record groove without outside disturbance. It's simple to explain, but almost impossible to get right. The vibrations caused by someone walking into the room, traffic on the road outside, or even the sound coming out of the speakers can spoil the results. And that's before we get to the difficulties in spinning the record at exactly the right speed.

Yet despite all this and more, records can sound fabulous. At its best vinyl has the kind of dynamics, naturalness and timing integrity that even the finest digital players struggle to match. That's why those black discs continue to thrive.

**YOU SPIN ME RIGHT ROUND...**

The platter spins and supports the record, aiming to give the cartridge the easiest ride. An inert structure is a good thing

**KEEP IT ROCK SOLID BELOW**

Everything is mounted on the plinth. If this is a low-resonance and solid unit then that's the ideal start

**CHOOSE THE BEST CARTRIDGE**

This is the part that makes contact with the record. Make sure it's in good condition and properly aligned, otherwise it'll spoil your discs. There are two types of cartridges: moving magnet and moving coil. The latter are usually more expensive to buy and have a lower output, though their sound tends to be cleaner and more detailed overall

**KEEPING THE PRESSURE ON**

Cartridges have to track at a precise weight to deliver the optimum performance. The counterweight sets the downforce. It's important to get this right, as if it's set too high the sound will be dull and thick in the bass. If it's too low then the sound will become edgy, thin and possibly even distorted

