

How to set up a turntable

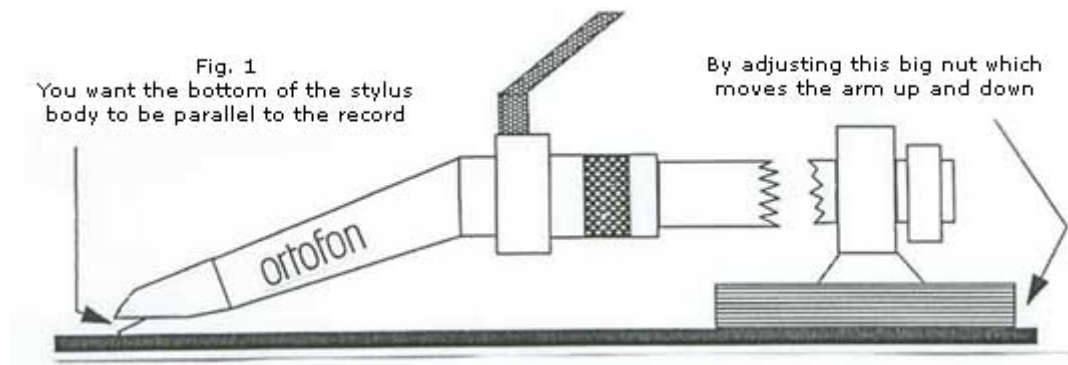
We have noticed that many DJs will spend a pile of dough on gear and records without being too fussed about setting everything up correctly. Remember: *a poorly adjusted turntable will wear your stylus and records out far more quickly than if you have everything adjusted optimally.* The needle will also skip and jump far more if you don't have the best settings.

Firstly - there are endless combinations of settings that the turntablist employs for special effects and to do all the tricks that we know and love. For these artists there is no correct way to adjust and tune the incredibly versatile musical instrument that the turntable has become. But for club DJs and others who want the best sound and trackability with the longest record and stylus life, here are some tips.



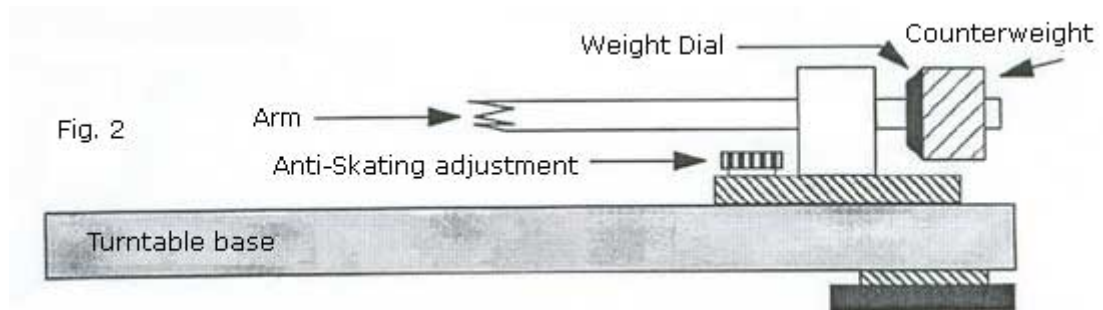
Make sure the turntable is reasonably level by adjusting the screw in feet if your turntable has them. If you are a fanatic you can use a mini spirit level from a hardware shop. Otherwise just do it visually.

Set the arm height. (Fig 1) Put a record on the turntable and put the stylus on the record but don't switch the turntable on. Rotate the large adjustment nut on the arm base (which raises and lowers the arm) until the bottom of the stylus housing is parallel to the record.



Align the cartridge in the slots in the headshell, if you are using a standard 1/2" mount cartridge. Use the alignment card supplied with the turntable if available. If you don't have one, place the cartridge half way up the two slots in the headshell. If you are using an Ortofon Concorde then no alignment is required as it screws straight into the arm.

Set the tracking weight and anti-skate. (Fig. 2). Set the anti-skating control to zero. Next turn the counterweight on the back of the arm so the arm balances without falling either up or down. While holding the weight stationary, rotate the adjustment dial on the counterweight until it reads zero at the top. Now screw in both the counterweight and dial gauge *together* to the recommended tracking weight of the cartridge (usually between 2 and 5 grams for most Ortofon cartridges). Now set the anti-skating adjustment to the same setting as the tracking force unless you're scratching or doing other tricks, in which case back off the anti-skating to half the value of the tracking force.



If the needle is not skipping in the groove, resist the temptation to crank up the tracking force greater than recommended. If you are working in a club with very bassy speakers, you may need to increase the weight a little to stop the needle from skipping. You can crank most Ortofon cartridges up to 5 grams if you need to.