

## How To Play and Store a New Vinyl Record



Intended Audience: This instructional guide is meant for people who are just starting their vinyl collection and need help on avoiding rookie mistakes. I had made these mistakes in the past and I am willing to share my expertise to prevent others from making these same mistakes. Though, there are also other tips that are useful to established vinyl collectors regardless of how long you are collecting.

# How To Play and Store a New Vinyl Record

## Two Parts

### Things You Need:

- A Working Record Player
- Record Cleaning Brush (Fig 1)
- Record Anti-Static Brush (Fig 1)
- A Place to store vinyl records (varies, must allow records to stand vertically, Fig 1)
- A Vinyl Record (Fig 1)
- Record Inner Sleeves (Fig 1)

The one I recommend: [Invest In Vinyl Rice Paper Anti-Static Inner Sleeves](#)

- Record Outer Sleeves (Fig 1)

The one I recommend: [Invest In Vinyl Protective Outer Sleeves](#)

- OPTIONAL: Vinyl Record Cleaning Solution (Fig 1)

Fig 1:



## Terminology:

- Jacket: The cardboard casing that houses the vinyl record and sleeves. Often has the album cover and track list on the cover. (Fig 2, 3)
- Sleeve: The casing that houses the vinyl record. (Fig 2)
- Vinyl Record: The circular disk with grooves. This allows a tonearm to read the grooves and play music. (Fig 2)
- Gatefold: A type of jacket that opens like a book. Art from the album is usually displayed inside the gatefold. It sometimes has credits and lyrics as well. (Fig 3)
- Turntable: The spinning platter with a knob located on the record player. This is where you place the vinyl record so it could be spun. (Fig 4)
- Tonearm: The pole with the needle at the end. The tonearm's needle gently rides the grooves as the vinyl spins and transcribes the grooves to soundwaves. That's how a record player reads a vinyl. (Fig 4)
- Cue Lever: A mechanism that controls the height of the tonearm. When the cue lever is up, this allows the tonearm to freely move around without disruption. When the cue lever is lowered, it lets the tonearm fall so the tonearm can follow the grooves. Some record players might not have a cue lever. (Fig 4)
- rpm: rpm stands for "Revolutions Per Minute". For most modern records, the rpm is either going to be 45 rpm or 33 rpm. This informs you the spin speed that the turntable needs to be to hear the vinyl record correctly. (Fig 5)
- Center Label: The center label is the circle paper label on the center of a vinyl record. This center label holds information on which side is being played, the rpm, the album name, and more. (Fig 5)



Fig 2



Fig 3

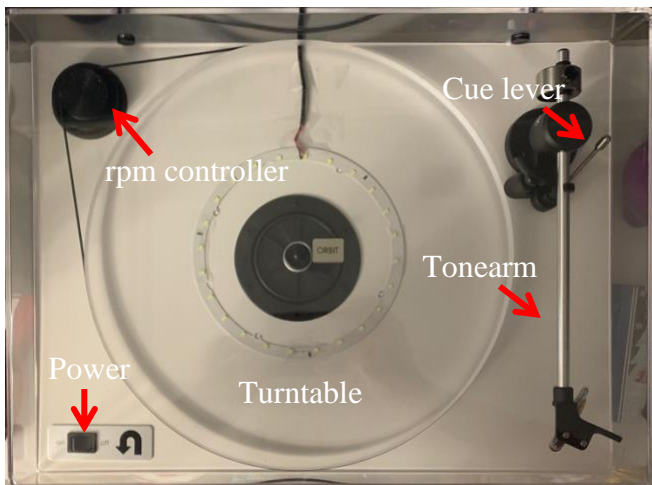


Fig 4



Fig 5

## How to play a new record

### **REMEMBER: NEVER TOUCH THE GROOVES OF A VINYL RECORD.**

1. Open the new vinyl on the side where the lip of the jacket is located.



Note: Most new records are wrapped in plastic. For the longevity of the records, I like to just cut the plastic wrap where the opening of the jacket is located. Keeping the plastic wrap on the record allows another barrier from dirt, dust, wear, and tear. This is ideal if the vinyl record is not a gatefold. It is okay if you don't want to keep the plastic wrap.

2. Pull out the vinyl record and the sleeve. The vinyl record is located inside the sleeve.



Note: Some records also have posters and other items within these jackets. It is ideal to keep them inside the jacket if you are not going to be using or displaying the additional items anywhere else.

3. Remove the record from the record sleeve. Place the record on the turntable (Fig 8). It is important that you hold the record safely (Two ways noted in Fig 6 and 7).



(Fig 6)



(Fig 7)



(Fig 8)

Note: Keep in mind which side you want to play. Depending on the record, the sides might be numbered instead of lettered. If you want to play a certain song, take note which side the song is on. The jacket should tell you which side a certain song is on. The side you want to play should be facing up.

- Return the record sleeve back into the jacket if the sleeve is printed.



Note: If the record sleeve is just a plain sheet of paper with no art on it, it is recommended to recycle the sleeve. These paper sleeves are not great at housing vinyl records. This is due to micro paper particles being left on the record when slipping the vinyl in and out the sleeve. Over time, these particles can end up scratching your record, which will affect the record's longevity. If the record sleeve is plastic, this can replace the inner sleeve that will be used later. Keep the plastic record sleeve out for later use.

- Turn on the record player so the turntable is spinning and set it to the correct rpm (check player manual to fix rpm/spin the turntable). Rpm can be found on center label (Fig 5).

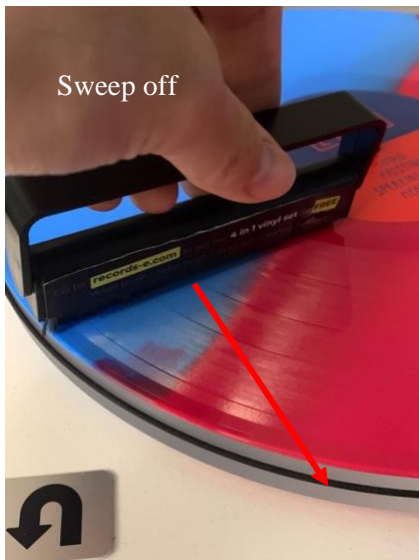
Note: Sometimes, the rpm is missing from the vinyl record. Most records spin at 33 rpm (Sometimes noted as 33 1/3 rpm, though it's the same as 33 rpm). Other records, mostly 7-inch records, spin at 45 rpm. If the record sounds slower or faster, chances are that the rpm is not set correctly. No damage will be done to the record, it just affects how the record sounds.

6. Use a cleaning brush to wipe away any dirt, grime, or other debris off the record surface.



Note: A cleaning spray is optional. It is recommended to spray the cleaning solution on the brush itself so no damage to the center label is done. Hold the cleaning brush at a 45-degree angle, let the vinyl rotate around, and slowly brush away the dust in one sweep. Repeat if necessary.

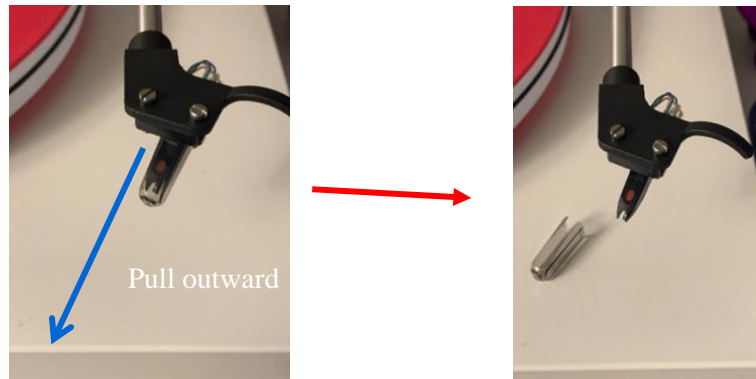
7. Use the anti-static brush to lower the static on records.



Note: Most new records will have static. This is normal. Over time, the static will dissipate once the record is housed in a proper inner sleeve and cleaned with the anti-static brush. Use same technique as the cleaning brush, but the angle of the brush does not matter for the anti-static brush.



8. Remove the needle cover and set the tonearm at the desired location on the record.



Note: The record begins on the outer most rim. There are empty spaces in the grooves to signify the beginning of the next song. Use the track list to determine which groove section is your desired song and place your needle at that location. Some record players do not have a needle cover, which that step could be skipped.

9. If there is a cue lever, lower the cue lever and enjoy the music! (Fig 4)

## Storage

How to store a single vinyl record:

**REMEMBER: NEVER TOUCH THE GROOVES OF A VINYL RECORD.**

1. Grab all materials needed: jacket, vinyl record(s), one outer sleeve, and one inner sleeve per vinyl record.

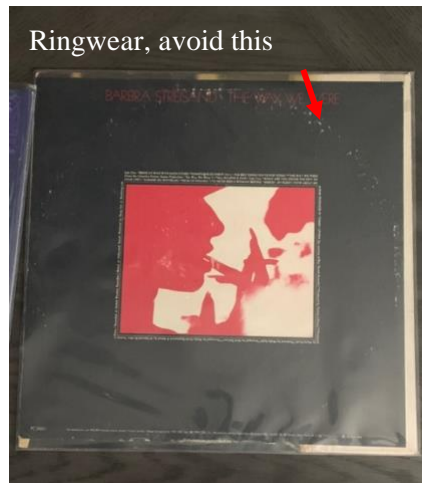


2. Place additional items inside the jacket if needed. Keep the vinyl record out of the jacket. If possible, leave the vinyl record on the turntable or on top of the inner sleeve.



EX: If the record came with a poster, a printed inner sleeve, stickers, a code, or any other items, place them back inside the jacket. This will ensure your items will be kept safe and can be found again in a later time.

- Put the vinyl record inside an inner sleeve. Repeat this step if there are multiple vinyl records.



Note: It is advised to keep the vinyl record outside of the jacket to prevent “ringwear”, which is a permanent outline of the vinyl record imprinted on a jacket. This can be seen mostly on older records. For longevity, it is best to prevent this wear and tear from occurring. So, to combat this, we place the vinyl record outside the jacket.

- Get an outer sleeve and slip the jacket inside the sleeve. The outer sleeve should have its opening on the top of the jacket. The opening of the jacket should not be able to be accessed when housed in the outer sleeve.



Note: The reason why we include an outer sleeve is to prevent normal wear and tear. This can occur when the jacket rubs against other records when sliding in and out of a collection area. The plastic sleeve will prevent that friction from occurring. We also have the opening of the jacket blocked by the outer sleeve to prevent warping of the jacket itself.

5. Place the inner sleeve inside the outer sleeve behind the jacket.



Note: It is preferred to have the vinyl record facing out on the back of the jacket so the album cover can also be viewed as well. I personally like to have the opening of the inner sleeve facing sideways from the outer sleeve's opening so no dust can enter, though this note is optional.

6. Return the sleeved record back to your collection. Assure that all records are standing vertically, not stacked on top of each other. This will prevent warping on the vinyl records.



How to store multiple vinyl records:

**REMEMBER: NEVER TOUCH THE GROOVES OF A VINYL RECORD.**

1. Follow the first four step of “How to store a single vinyl record”
2. For the next upcoming step, there are many iterations on how to store the records when there are multiple vinyl records depending on the type of jacket the record is. It is recommended to always have one vinyl record on the back of the jacket inside the outer sleeve. It is up to you how you want to store the rest of the vinyl records. I have listed some instances on how I would store the records depending on the situation, though it is up to you how you want to store them:

- If there are two vinyl records and it’s a jacket: Take out the jacket from the outer sleeve and place one sleeved vinyl records inside the jacket. Return the jacket inside the outer sleeve and place the remaining vinyl record on the back of the jacket inside the outer sleeve.



Sleeved vinyl record inside jacket



Sleeved vinyl record slides down

Inner sleeve is between the back of the jacket and the outer sleeve

Jacket slides down

The back of the jacket

Outer sleeve slides up

- If there are two vinyl records and it's a gatefold: Take out the gatefold from the outer sleeve and sandwich one vinyl record between the gatefold. By keeping the vinyl record between the gatefold and not inside the jacket will still prevent ringwear. Put the gatefold back inside an outer sleeve and slip the remaining vinyl record behind the gatefold inside the outer sleeve.



Gatefold



Gatefold Opened Inner sleeve between gatefold



Gatefold closed



Sleeved vinyl record slides down

Inner sleeve is between the back of the jacket and the outer sleeve

Gatefold slides down

The back of the gatefold

Outer sleeve slides up

- If there are more than two vinyl records: Use your best judgement. It is okay to have a vinyl record inside a jacket with an inner sleeve. Always try to have one vinyl record behind the jacket inside the outer sleeve. If possible, try to have one or multiple vinyl records between the gatefold.
3. Return the sleeved record back to your collection. Assure that all records are standing vertically, not stacked on top of each other. This will prevent warping on the vinyl records.



Sleeved Vinyl Record joins the collection! Stored vertically, not stacked on top of one another