How to Replace a Turntable Cartridge, Stylus, and Headshell

Learn how to replace your turntable's headshell, cartridge, and stylus.

Written By: Javier Torres
INTRODUCTION

High quality turntables are only as good as the stylus and cartridge actually playing the records. Learn how to replace these components as they wear out over time.

TOOLS:

- Phillips #0 Screwdriver (1)
Step 1 — Cartridge, Stylus, Headshell

- Identify headshell by opening the turntable dustcover.

Step 2

- Remove stylus from cartridge.

⚠️ Do not pull aggressively as to break the plastic.
Step 3

- Turn tonearm nut toward you to release headshell from the tonearm.

Step 4

- Remove screws with phillips screwdriver #0 to release the cartridge.

ℹ️ Use standard turntable head screws found at a local audio shop if missing.
Step 5

- Unplug wires from pins.

Step 6

- Replace with new cartridge
  - Plug pins in reverse from removal

  - Pay attention to matching the colors from wire to pin

- Screw cartridge in in the same way it was removed.
Step 7

- Insert new stylus into cartridge before mounting headshell

Step 8

- Screw assembled headshell onto tonearm.
Step 9

- Test new needle and allow for a break-in period.