

PRINT THIS OUT AND KEEP FOR YOUR USE

Steel Needles

Steel needles were used on the most common hand crank record machines made from 1890s to the 1930s! The Reproducer or “Sound Box” is the circular device at the end of the tonearm. Each Reproducer had a small round thumbscrew that was tightened and held the needle into place. The metal needle became the standard to follow for record technology, for almost all phonograph companies at this time.

What is the difference in Loud, Medium and Soft Tone?

The thickness of the needle shaft is what makes the volume higher or lower in tone. The Loud tone needles are thicker and the soft tone are about 1 half of the thickness of the loud tone. Loud tone is recommended if you would like to listen to your music in your entire house. Soft tone is recommended for those who are in apartments or want to play the electrically recorded records. Medium falls in between those two volumes. You can control the volume by closing the doors on your Victrola too, if it has them. But volume is personal preference in how loud you would like your music played.

How many records should I play per steel needle?

One time, one song, about 4 minutes of play, and then discard properly. Record needles are cheap and are can be bought in bulk, so make sure you have plenty on hand.

Does a steel needle damage a record?

A new steel needle will not hurt an older shellac 78 rpm record if you are playing the right kind of record disc with the correct type of Reproducer. If the tone arm doesn't swing smoothly or the Reproducer is at a wrong angle, too heavy or unbalanced, or wrong for your machine, then records may be damaged even by new steel needle. If the record is heavily worn, cracked, chipped and the grooves are not clean and prominent, then a metal needle may skip or travel due to the poor condition of the record. These records are usually put to the side.

Metal needles were made to take the brunt of the force from being dragged within the grooves of the hard material of the record. The tip of the needle gets filed down and therefore, requires to be changed out after every play of a record.

Rotating a needle after a play won't give you extra life of a needle. Victor Talking Machine Co. literature stated, "It is unreasonable to think that after playing one selection you can turn the needle and use it a second or more times without detriment to the record. The worn point of the needle becomes a scraping tool from the grinding it had in the previous reproduction, and is bound to scrape and injure the grooves of the record if its use is attempted for a second reproduction." New needles can be found at VictrolaNeedles.com

How come the needle isn't staying in the Reproducer?

Each reproducer has a little thumbscrew that held the needle into place, by tightening the screw. Sometimes these get lost or borken and then the Reproducer becomes unusable. If your soundbox has one, make sure the shaft of the thumbscrew is long enough to hold the needle into place. Sometimes the soft tone is too skinny for your thumbscrew to be held into place. Therefore, you will need to find a thumbscrew with a longer threaded shaft if you want to use the soft tone on your reproducer. There is nothing wrong with the needle itself, it's the shaft of the thumbscrew that is not long enough to put pressure onto the needle to hold into place.

Can I use these needles on Edison or Pathé discs?

Edison Diamond Disc and Pathé records required a special stylus made specifically for their brand of records. After the flat “lateral groove” record became the standard, both Edison and Pathé made “lateral” groove records that used the metal needle. Some Brunswick reproducers had several stylus' on them to play Diamond Disc, Pathé and the standard “lateral” discs.

Can I play my LPs at 33rpm with these needles?

Do not play record albums from 1950 and newer on your phonograph with a metal needle. These were made of soft materials such as plastics and made specifically for an electric pickup/stylus made for that phonograph. Playing them can cause severe damage to the grooves of the album. Elvis, Neil or Elton and any of these type of albums.