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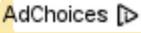
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## [Cleaning 45s](#)

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## [Cleaning 45s](#)

by [sentjourn](#) » Thu Oct 12, 2006 3:53 am

Need advise on how to properly clean 45s. I am a 78rpm collector and do a great job on them but I recently aquired a large batch of 45s, most of which look to be in very nice shape except they are very dirty. I do not know how to clean them properly. Help!!!!

[sentjourn](#)

Senior Member

**Posts:** 104**Joined:** Fri Apr 21, 2006 10:44 pm**Location:** Dublin, Pa[Top](#)by [Record-changer](#) » Mon Oct 16, 2006 4:41 am

It partially depends on what the particular records are made of. There are four kinds of materials used in 45 rpm records:

1. Vinyl (polyvinyl chloride) - You can use a 50-50 mix of 91% isopropanol and distilled water to clean vinyl records. You can recognize vinyl records by their flexibility (the other kinds are rigid). A very soiled record might respond better to distilled water to which a very tiny amount of Dawn dish soap is added. Rinse with pure distilled water afterward.
2. Filled vinylite - This is polyvinyl chloride to which a cheap binder was added to make a cheaper record. The record is not flexible. The best solution for these is distilled water with a tiny amount of Dawn, followed by a pure distilled water rinse.
3. Styrene - This record does not have the shiny surface that the other types have, and is thicker than most other 45s. The record is rigid. Many children's records are styrene. Under no circumstances use any kind of alcohol on styrene. It adds noise to the grooves. The same prescription applies to styrene as to filled vinylite.
4. Shellac - A very few early 45 rpm records were made of shellac by foreign companies not licensed by RCA. They are even thicker than the styrene records. Since shellac is easy to chip, the record probably has tiny chips on the rim. These records are not only rigid, but brittle. The center

holes of these records are necessarily small. Never use alcohol on shellac records - it dissolves shellac. The best cleaner is distilled water.

In any case, do not get the cleaner on the label. If the label needs cleaning, use the soap solution and dry it immediately.

Another trick is wet play. After the preliminary cleaning, put the cleaning solution on the grooves and play the record once. This dislodges stubborn substances from the grooves. Use a cleaning arm and pad to pick up the grime and keep the cleaning solution flowing over the grooves being played.

<http://midimagic.sgc-hosting.com>

Daylight-stupid time uses more gasoline.



[Record-changer](#)

Senior Member

**Posts:** 980

**Joined:** Fri Apr 21, 2006 8:11 pm

**Location:** Bloomington IN

- [Website](#)

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## [Re: Cleaning 45s](#)

by [victrolaguy](#) » Tue Oct 09, 2007 11:38 am

Cleaning and Proper Care of Your Records: a dummies guide... 🤪  
(Works for me. Some people are against this, but it works)

First of all, you must know what kind of records there are.

Vinyl:

Vinyl records are usually tapered at the outer edge of the record. If you have a colored record or picture disc, you can be 99.9 percent sure that your record is vinyl. Vinyl records will tend to be heavier than the other types of records. If you thump a vinyl record (not recommended) on the label, you

Eric Lee



[victrolaguy](#)

Regular Member

**Posts:** 42

**Joined:** Tue Oct 09, 2007 10:39 am

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### [Re: Cleaning 45s](#)

▣ by [victrolaguy](#) » Tue Oct 09, 2007 9:32 pm

To anybody who read my post thoroughly, I meant **Shellac 78's, not graphite**. DUH!

Eric Lee



[victrolaguy](#)

Regular Member

**Posts:** 42

**Joined:** Tue Oct 09, 2007 10:39 am

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### [Re: Cleaning 45s](#)

▣ by **Guest** » Thu Jan 24, 2008 10:58 am

(Hmmm... most of my post was deleted...? Hmmm)

Here it is again!

First of all, you must know what kind of records there are. There are several different types of records.

Vinyl:

Vinyl records are usually tapered at the outer edge of the record. If you have a colored record or picture disc, you can be 99.9 percent sure that your record is vinyl. Vinyl records will tend to be heavier than the other types of records. If you thump a vinyl record (not recommended) on the label, you'll hear a hearty, low "thud" reverberate loudly from the record. Almost all 12" LP's will be made from vinyl. Only budget labels, sold originally at a much lower price, will be made out of anything but vinyl.

Styrene:

Styrene is a material mostly used from the early 1960's onward for '45' rpm records. Styrene records are seldom, if ever, tapered at the outer edge of the record. Unlike vinyl records, styrene records are not at all flexible, and break very easily. They most always have thin paper labels, which may show signs of peeling away from the record. During the late 60's and early 70's, some record companies such as Bell and Mala used a "painted" label. These records, in my experience, are not common... but don't usually garner a higher price either. If you thump a styrene record (not recommended) on the label, you will hear a very light "dink" reverberate quickly from the record. Some budget label LP's are also made from styrene. They will exhibit most of the same qualities as a styrene '45'.

'45' rpm records have long been the workhorse of the industry. Selling at a much lower price than the album version, they were subject to repeated plays. It is harder to tell the surface quality of a vinyl '45,' but styrene '45's show it easily. A worn styrene '45' will exhibit a white hue to the record's surface when viewed in strong light. Any good styrene '45' will still be shiny and should reflect strong light. Still, with styrene, you can never be sure. Handling of most '45' rpm records was haphazard, at best. More often than not, they were stored without being placed back into their paper sleeve. Finding a '45' in an original company sleeve is always a plus! You should also note that most '45' rpm records exist on both vinyl AND styrene, so always be on the lookout. That worn out styrene record you have may show up at some flea market in a "worse looking, but better sounding" vinyl form!

Cardboard and "Film Plastic":

Plastic-coated cardboard records actually came to prominence during the Great Depression. They were used as a cheap alternative to the graphite records of the day. During the late 40's through the early 90's, cardboard records were most often used as "premium" items, appearing in and (if you can believe it) ON cereal boxes. They were also sent through the mail as postcards with birthday greetings or religious messages on them. You should easily be able to tell if you've got one of these. Be careful, however, they bend and crease very easily.

What I call "film plastic" records are usually square, extremely thin (like 35mm negatives,) and are extremely flexible. They were used throughout the 70's into the 80's as magazine inserts. I have three in my collection: one from National Geographic, one from Hustler, and one from Reader's Digest. When trying to play one of these records, you will almost always have to place a heavy coin on the label to keep it from slipping on the turntable. Most of these will play at 33 and 1/3 rpm.

Other Forms of Interest, RCA Victor's "DynaFlex" Vinyl:

What was the most prominent record company in the USA (perhaps the world) thinking when they introduced DynaFlex in the early 70's? I mean, you could literally turn a DynaFlex record into a taco! This was a flop, to say the least. Whether it was to cut back on vinyl use, or shipping weight

(or both,) it was a bad idea. The sad thing about it is, a lot of great albums saw their original release on this atrocity of a medium. The up side to this is that RCA did re-release many of these records in the 80's on standard, yet still thin, vinyl. RCA records never did get back to the great vinyl they used before DynaFlex. My advice: Unless you have to have the original pressing, buy a version of the album that doesn't have the word DynaFlex at the bottom of the label. DynaFlex RCA Victor records have black, orange, and tan labels that always say DynaFlex at the bottom.

How to Clean Your Records, and What Records You Should Never Clean:

Records You Should NEVER Attempt to Clean:

-Non-vinyl 78's. Unless you are highly skilled, and know what company used what materials, never attempt to clean a non-vinyl 78 with water. Some companies actually used a cardboard biscuit at the center of their records that will swell and destroy the shellac coating on the outside. Most 78's only have value if they are in pristine condition anyway, and almost all have an inherent amount of surface noise. Due to the fact that they were being phased out as a format, 78's from the late 50's and early 60's are very valuable and should be handled (if at all) with care. If you play a 78, try to use a lightweight tone arm with a modern turntable. If you have the option, always play a 78 with the MONO switch on. Another option: Turn your balance to the channel that sounds the best during playback. Only London records experimented with stereo 78's, but I don't know if any went into production.

-All cardboard records. Simple explanation? Water and paper don't mix!

-"Film Plastic" records. Never wash them directly with water and soap. Sprinkle a small amount of water on a clean cotton cloth, and lightly wipe in the direction of the groove while using a slight lifting motion, periodically switching to a clean section of the towel.

Cleaning Your Vinyl Records

What You'll Need:

Start by going to Wal-Mart and purchasing Equate Hypoallergenic Tearless Baby Wash. It's super mild, it removes stuck in dirt and mold from the grooves, and it's cost effective. It can be applied directly to the record, or mixed half water, half product, and dispensed from a bottle with a pump directly to the record. It sells for around \$.98, and the modern collector should always have some on hand.

You will also need some very soft, clean cotton cloths to dry the record with. I use plain white t-shirts that have outgrown their usefulness. They tend to be extremely soft, due to being washed several times over, and are also very absorbent. Never use a t-shirt with applied graphics, as they will scratch the record.

It would also be helpful to have a floor fan to carefully prop the record against after drying. This will help speed the drying of the label.

Speaking of labels... never wash the label too hard. The label will deteriorate if washed too hard. RCA Victor '45' records from 1949 with gold print should never be wet. The gold print comes off when you touch it, let alone get it wet! Paper labels on styrene have a tendency to come off slightly, or altogether. Try to keep these as dry as possible. If a label does come off, gently set the label aside (printed side down,) and dry the groove portion of the record. Pat the area dry where the label was located, then gently pat the label dry. If the label sticks to your cloth, then there's a good chance there's enough glue on the label to reattach it to the record. Allow the record to dry thoroughly. If that doesn't work, you may also use a small amount of paste or Elmer's school glue, applied in an even layer around the label area with your fingers. Replace the label carefully, and allow the glue to dry overnight. Handle the record with care, and never wash it again. I will address stickers on labels later on in the directions.

Now you are ready to clean!

If you skipped the above section, it would benefit you to read it before you start.

**IMPORTANT!** If your record is extremely dirty, try to remove as much dirt as you can by running it under cold water first. If you try to clean a record in this state, you'll just grind dirt into the grooves. I've cleaned records that were so dirty they were brown, just to end up with a VG++ record!

1. Turn the COLD tap on to a moderate stream. Cover the record with enough water to activate the soap. (You may also wash in a bathtub full of water if you have a lot of records to clean. Just submerge the record quickly in the water.)
2. Use a small to medium amount of the soap. I usually apply a thin strip all the way around both sides of the record.
3. Using the flat part of your fully extended fingers, gently rub the soap into the grooves using a circular motion. Try not to get any soap directly on a paper label. Concentrated soap will release the glue.
4. Continue step three until you are satisfied that the record is clean.
5. Rinse the record under a gentle stream of water until you see no more evidence of soap on the surface. Do this twice, if you're not sure!
6. Using your cotton t-shirt in your left hand, grasp the record with the cloth, and use the remaining cloth to wipe the record dry following the

direction of the groove. This practice will insure that you are drying the grooves effectively. The record will still be damp, so switch to a dry section of the cloth, or another t-shirt, and begin again. NEVER rub the label, instead, pat the label with a dry cloth until dry.

7. Place the record in front of the floor fan on a low speed. This will accelerate the drying process. In lieu of a floor fan, place the record at an angle against a wall, and allow to dry overnight. Never place a freshly cleaned record flat, or in a sleeve. That's how mold is born, and mold eats paper.

8. After cleaning a '45', you may notice that a small amount of water has seeped into the label around the spindle hole. 90 percent of the time, this will go away when the record is completely dry. If it doesn't, you can try to push it out by gently pressing the afflicted areas. This doesn't always work.

9. After cleaning ANY record, handle it with care, and never touch the surface. Washing a record once is okay. Washing a record several times may damage it.

At this point, I'd like to discuss removing stickers from labels. Most of the time, you'll find records from the 50's that someone loved a lot, and didn't want to loose. They will have a "catalogue number sticker" somewhere on the label, or you might find a "this record belongs to..." sticker somewhere near the top of the label. 9 times out of 10, the record is perfect, except for the sticker. Here's an advanced option for the collector to restore this item. NEVER do this to a paper label (you WILL remove the label itself), or any record made after 1970. Chances are the glue hasn't deteriorated enough to try this.

1. Right after step 5 above, place a concentrated amount of the recommended soap on the sticker with your fingers, and gently work it into the sticker for a few seconds. Run a full sink or tub of cold water, and wait one or two minutes.

2. While holding the record submerged, gently start rubbing the sticker carefully, paying close attention to the state of the label. If the label starts to peel, stop and dry the record; that label won't come off. If the sticker starts to come off, firmly take the largest detached portion of the sticker and gently pull the sticker diagonally with even pressure. The trickiest part of the whole operation is right at the end. As you perform this operation, you should do it slower at the end. Don't get excited and rip it off. Chances are you'll take part of the label with it. When the label is removed, follow steps 1 through 9 from above (to insure that all the glue is gone before you dry it,) and enjoy that pretty label as it spins on your turntable. As a side note, I have found nothing that will take ink or pencil off a label or dust jacket. Trust me, I've tried everything! Never try to erase pencil from a dust jacket or label. I would rather know that "Suzie" loved the record than look at a discolored spot! Just stay on the lookout for a clean copy, and enjoy the one you have.

If you're new to my process of cleaning records, don't try this right off the bat. Better yet, take a G condition record with a sticker on it, and practice. Practice does make perfect.

Clean records last longer, sound better, and look better. They also command higher prices. Besides, who wants to show off a record with

fingerprints and dust all over it? If you follow my detailed directions, your records will last a lifetime! Happy listening!

**Guest**

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