

096T-SCAN

Isonoe: space-age deckology



INFO

PROS

- >> Reduces feedback by half
- >> Improves vinyl and CD audio quality
- >> Look damn sexy

CONS

- >> None

VERDICT

VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USER FRIENDLY	★★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

ISONOE ISOLATION SYSTEM

SOUND ISOLATING DECK FEET

CUSTOMISING DECKS IS QUITE A POPULAR PASTIME WITHIN THE DJ FRATERNITY. SOME MODIFICATIONS ARE INTENDED TO IMPROVE LOOKS ONLY, BUT THE ISONOE ISOLATION SYSTEM PUTS ITS BEST FOOT FORWARD.

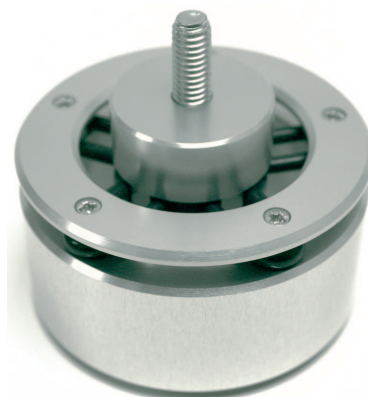
PRICE: £90 INFORMATION: WWW.ISONOE.COM CONTACT: 0208 300 7563

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ISONOE have been researching acoustic isolation for over four years and have come up with a new product that promises to reduce external vibration from negatively effecting sound quality in turntables and CD players.

The new Isonoe isolation feet fit 90% of turntables, including all the major decks from the likes of Technics, Numark, Vestax, Gemini, etc. The feet also fit the Technics SL-DZ-1200 CD turntable - basically any piece of equipment with a 6mm thread fitting.

The benefit of isolating a player from the sound source is not just to prevent feedback loops (loud uncontrollable hum). Minor feedback resonance can also effect the sound quality during playback, which alters the characteristics of the original recording.



Similarly, good isolation can improve the sound quality of CDs players since the laser can't always read every last byte of information, especially when there are vibrations, therefore all players have built-in error correction. The less the player has to compensate for errors, the closer to the original sound it will be.

THE KIT

The isolation feet are designed for DJs, clubs and even audiophile hi-fi users. They comprise of two parts, the centre piece which screws into the deck, and a cylindrical outer foot which is coupled to the screw by a 'visco-elastic polymer'. What this means, in layman's terms, is that the deck sits on a push rubber-band cradle so there is no direct contact with the supporting surface.

The feet are made from one of the most dense, yet light metals available, magnesium alloy. This stuff literally repels resonance. At the bottom of the feet are ball-bearings to reduce the surface area for vibrations to be transmitted; similar to the spikes used in hi-fi gear.

When placed on a smooth surface on their own, the feet can slip about easily. Luckily, Isonoe also sell 'boots' made from Sorbothane, an acoustically dead material used for aeroplanes and sensitive medical equipment.

These rubber boots further reduce vibrations and literally stick the feet in one place as if they are glued. The boots come with glass discs which sit inside and are designed to appease the audiophiles even further. However, these

are not intended for DJ use as the metal feet eventually slide off the glass with the inevitable cueing and scratching when used by a DJ.

ON TEST

We could have tested the isolation feet in a laboratory environment, but DJmag reckoned the more important test for DJs is a real life situation. Isonoe were quick to point out that a lot of feedback can be airborne and affect the tone-arm and cartridge itself, but again, the most significant consideration is to discover if changing the feet makes a difference overall. We performed several tests, but the most concise one was to loop a banging part of a track on a CD player to mimic varying frequencies such as kick and deep bass. A speaker was placed on the same surface as the deck and its needle rested directly on the stationary platter, with no record or slipmat. We then hooked up the deck output directly to the FinalScratch ScratchAmp and used WaveLab recording software to monitor the input to measure the level accurately in dB. We found that with the Technics feet, there was an average peak level of -23dB. With the Isonoe feet it reduced the volume by 2.6dB, and with the Isonoe feet and rubber boots together, it reduced the volume by 3dB compared with the Technics feet.

While this doesn't sound like much, it actually takes a doubling of power for each increase of 3dB, so the feet are typically halving the energy transferred.

Isonoe have tested up to 9dB of attenuation in

more rigid tests, which exclude factors such as the tone-arm and cartridge. They are also having the product scientifically tested at Southampton University's Institute Of Sound & Vibration Research (ISVR). Their results will no doubt make it onto the Isonoe website, and you can find out more about the work of the ISVR at www.isvr.soton.ac.uk.

IN THE MIX

It's all very well having great isolation, but not if it affects the performance of a DJ's scratch and cueing. Luckily, the isolation feet aren't springy, particularly considering that they are mounted on an elastic polymer cradle. The material used seems to slowly reset itself rather than spring back and can even dampen the impact of scratching.

London venue Fabric have installed them into every room of the club, and have found that they not only reduce feedback but also work fine for the scratch battles that take place there on a regular basis.

"We first tried them out in the drum & bass room because the sound is immense and we sometimes had feedback problems," explained Fabric's technical manager Sanjeev Bhardwaj. "Since we've added the feet there's never been any feedback. It actually makes the decks sound a bit better too. You can double the power before you get any feedback with these. It was about time someone sorted this out." Considering Technics replacement feet are £20 each, the Isonoe feet offer value for money at only £10 more for four. ■