



This article was kindly donated by Lloyd Walker, Walker Audio

SST

Q: Why is my bottle of SST not full?

SST is sold by weight, not by volume. Once you begin to use it, you'll find you have more than enough to do your system many times over and to share with your friends. SST comes with a 30 day guarantee of satisfaction. If you are not satisfied, you can return the unused portion to us for a full refund, less shipping.

VIVID

Q: Can Vivid be used with SACDs?

Yes. Vivid is safe to use on regular SACDs. There are a very few SACDs that have a gold external tint. These SACDs specify that no cleaner should be used on them. We recommend you follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Q: How does Vivid CD and DVD Enhancer compare to the Esoteric Mist from Jena Labs, Audience Auric Illuminator and the Disc Doctor?

There have been many shoot-outs between Vivid and the products you referred to. They are all good. Of course, we prefer the Vivid. For third-party comments, go to our Reviewers' Comments page, then click on the Vivid link. Here you'll find links to reviews (where available) and comments from customers who've tried Vivid.

Vivid improves sound and video quality by 10 to 30 percent. This depends on how dirty the disc is to begin with and how well the disc was recorded originally. The better it was recorded the more dramatic the difference. Why not give Vivid a try. If you don't like it, you can return it and get a full refund less shipping. You might also want to try the Valid Points Resonance Control Kits and the High Definition Links for your speakers. I think they will make a huge improvement in your sound. These also come with a 30-day guarantee. You only have to risk shipping costs and a little of your time to find out what these products can do for you.

HIGH DEFINITION LINKS

Q: I purchased the High Definition Links before the Ultimate version was available. Can I upgrade them to the Ultimate?

If you have the early version of the HDLs, they can be upgraded to the MkII version. Call us for details. The original HDLs and MkIIs cannot be upgraded to the Ultimates. The Ultimate uses different parts inside.

Q: Do you maintain the polarity of the HDLs if you are inverting polarity at the speaker end? I have a preamp that inverts phase.

You should always invert at the amp, never at the speakers. The HDLs install normally. You may want to try turning the HDLs around and give a listen. It will not hurt anything and you can decide which sounds better.

Q: I have read a review of the HDLs in Listener, but am unsure exactly how you attach these to my speaker?

The installation is very easy. Just loosen the nuts on your speaker cables at the speakers. Hold the speaker cable against the speaker, slip the spades of the HDL between the speaker cable and the nut and tighten the nut.

Q: I just purchased your HDL MkII. I have biwireable speakers - using one set of speaker cables with jumpers. I've used silver banana plugs with the HDL. Do they work better behind the jumpers without banana plugs?

Yes, they work a little better. They work even better with our bare silver jumpers.

Q: I currently use banana plugs going into a five-way binding post at the speaker end. Can I still use the High Definition Links (HDLs)?

Yes, although we prefer that you do not use banana plugs. However, if you are using them, place the HDL as if it were a spade connector and then insert the banana plug as usual.



OMEGA MIKRO

Q: Do you recommend applying Nordost Ecco anti-static spray to the Omega Mikro Planar III or IV speaker cable's black shield?

Try it. I know it works on most cables. I tried it once on the Omega Mikro cables and it didn't seem to do much.

Q: I just learned about the Omega Mikro cables and while they are supposedly fantastic musically, they also are said to be quite fragile. How do you care for them and protect them from the normal everyday "stuff" at home?

Although the Omega Mikro cables do require a little extra effort, it is really not that much. I have used the same cables for three years and take them in and out all the time. They are very lightweight and easy to route. If you stop and think about what you are going to do and how you are going to do it, you'll find that you will have no problems. They do not require any special maintenance or protection from the everyday "stuff" at home. Just don't step on them or vacuum over them. For a little effort, you'll be amply rewarded. There are no other cables that I've heard that even come close.

Q: What are the pros and cons of bi-wire or tri-wire speakers?

It depends on the speaker and the speaker cables used. Usually if a complex crossover is used with many drivers, bi- or tri-wire may be better. You have to listen. With our Omega Mikro speaker cables, usually single-wired is best, but the jumpers supplied with the speaker must be replaced. If the speaker is large with many drivers, then it would be better bi-wired with our cables.

VALID POINTS

Q: The standard kit comes with five discs. I know I put three under the points. Where do I put the extra discs for maximum effect?

Every system is different. You must experiment with the discs to discover the arrangement that is best for your components. The application and installation instructions will give you guidance. You might also find our article on Evaluating Components on our home page helpful. Here are some thoughts on getting started.

Feel the pre-amp. If one side or end is heavier, place two points under that side, point down into discs. Example, two points in rear, one in front. Then you may want to try two in front, one in rear. Always put the rough side of the disc down. Then put one disc on top near the center and listen. Then put the second disc on top, spacing the two discs a few inches apart and listen. Then experiment by taking one disc off the top, center the remaining one. Take the one you removed and place it on top of you transport or CD player or the the turntable near the arm and listen.

Q: How is the Valid Points Resonance Control System different from other isolation devices?

It is not enough to just sit your components on cones or other devices. Some can help to stabilize the component better than the rubber feet that are originally supplied. However, most do not block vibrations from the component from radiating into the shelves or isolate the component from the vibrations already resident in your shelves.

In fact, many such devices actually can create more problems with frequency peaks. Some very soft isolation feet can isolate from shelf vibrations, but do not control the vibrations of the component. The result is a soft slow blurred sound.

The Valid Points Resonance Control Kits offer a true resonance control system. While the special brass cones stabilize the component, the resonance control disc under the cone provides a place for the energy to drain into and isolates the unit from high frequency vibrations emanating from the shelves. The resonance control disc on top of the component controls case resonance.



OTHER PRODUCTS

Q: Can the Precision Motor Drive be used with a Linn LP 12 record player?

Yes, if the Linn motor is an AC motor, some are not. For specifics, please call us.

Q: Why does the Walker Phono Amplifiers use solid state instead of tubes?

I love tubes, but not for a phono amp designed to work with low output moving coil cartridges. The noise and distortion levels of tubes are too high for low voltage amplification. Adding more expensive tubes and closely matching them can reduce this some, but then you create more problems than you solve. We've heard nothing that sounds better than our Reference phono amp and it sounds the same everyday... trouble-free.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: What music should I use to set up my system with?

Here's the real key: Start with well-recorded classical music. It will show up any flaws in your cables, resonance problems and room acoustic problems. Any changes you make will be very apparent. The sound stage should be deep, wide, transparent, dynamic and natural. Cables with skin effect problems and high in dielectric effect or which are highly colored will congest and distort complex music. Unfortunately, cables with these problems can make simple, poorly recorded music sound good, but well-recorded music will reveal the systems flaws and sound awful.

Use the best recorded complex music you can find to set up your system. Then use simple, well-recorded music - solos of sax, voice or piano, for example - to final tuning for tonality.

Q: What is the skin effect?

High frequencies travel on the outside of a conductor, but low frequencies will actually go through the conductor. This causes a time delay between the low and high frequencies. The larger the conductor is the greater the effect. Both the skin effect and the dielectric effect (see below) affect the music signal. Transparency, detail, focus and dynamics are reduced. The music becomes dull and loses its vitality. The Omega Mikro cables were designed to address the skin and dielectric effects. The difference is very noticeable.

Q: What is the dielectric effect?

The insulation around a conductor is a dielectric. The insulation will absorb a small amount of changing electrical energy and release it out of phase. The poorer the dielectric is the greater the effect. Putting your cables on the carpet, which is a bad dielectric, increases this effect. That is why the sound improves when you take your cables off the carpet and keep them from touching other cables. The Omega Mikro cables were designed to address the skin and dielectric effects. The difference is very noticeable.

Q: What should I clean my records with?

We have tried most cleaning solutions. The best we have heard (and use) is the Disc Doctor kits. You must also get the carbon fiber Audio Quest brush. It works! Use it on the record before you lower the arm and also lightly brush the arm before lowering it to the record. If you lift the arm, re-brush the record and arm before playing.

Q: What should I clean my cable connectors with?

The best product we've heard and use is Pro Gold. We use it on all our connections, including speaker cables, interconnects, power cords and on low level tube pins and sockets. Here's a tip: Clean the tube pins with very fine sandpaper to remove the dark oxidation before spraying with the Pro Gold. We use the standard Pro Gold, not the high temperature Pro Gold.

Do you have a question that you'd like to see answered on this page? If so, write your question in the box below and submit. Only questions of general interest will be used. **When you submit a question here, your e-mail address is not attached to your message and we cannot reply.** If you have a question specific to your system, please call or email us.