

SEPTEMBER 2007



FURUTECH deStat & RECORD FLATTENER



Reviewer: John Potis **Review component retail:** deStat \$360; DVF-1 Record Flattener \$1,480

Furutech deStat

"deStat completely removes dust and eliminates static on CD, DVD, LP, A/V equipment". That's what the press release on the Furutech deStat said, anyway. But I've heard such things before. I took Furutech's claims with a grain of salt. When I was offered to review the deStat, I accepted it on a conditional basis - if I liked it, I'd write about it. If not, back it'd go. The fact that you're reading this should pretty much sum up the rest of the story.

The hand-held deStat works by bathing the static-charged component to be treated with a balanced ion flow. Balanced refers to the fact that the ions are both positively and negatively charged and the process is said to neutralize the existing static charge. The deStat incorporates a fan to both facilitate the ion flow as well as to help blow away dust as it is no longer attracted to the treated component. The deStat measures 7 inches wide by 3.25 inches high by 2 inches thick and it weighs 1.25 lbs, uses four AA batteries and was developed in cooperation with ORB High End Systems of Japan.

The process itself couldn't be simpler. Hold the deStat 10 cm (about 4 inches) away from the item to be neutralized for the duration of about 10 seconds while depressing the red button, making sure the fan is blowing in the direction of the component being treated.



The deStat got thrown right to the wolves in my listening room. I'd spent the afternoon spinning vinyl and was concluding an afternoon listening to a series of George Thorogood albums and enjoying doing so. Appropriately enough, I was spinning *More George Thorogood and the Destroyers* [Rounder Records 3045] when I decided to give the deStat a try. Throughout the afternoon I'd noticed something just a little odd, something a little peculiar about the sound of the recorded saxophone. There was both a haze surrounding it as well as something that I'd suspected was mistracking - a little distortion at the instrument's upper reaches. It seemed subtle but I'd just picked up this series of albums and was yet to become acclimated to what they held so it was simply standing out as a question mark. As I said, I'd just unpacked the deStat and I was skeptical. Nevertheless, I gave the LP I'd just spun a treatment and replaced the stylus on "I'm Wanted".

"Wow" was my reaction. First, the aforementioned distortion surrounding the upper reaches of the saxophone was gone. The difference was not subtle and once the distortion was gone, in retrospect it was not subtle at all. The sax now sounded cleaner with no such hint of distortion. Almost more importantly -- certainly as obviously -- was the fact that it now also had much greater focus; as did everything on stage that I'd been viewing through my mind's eye. It was as though a fuzzy dimly-lit aura that had been surrounding the images was now gone. Rather than illuminating the images though, this aura had been obscuring and blurring instrumental outlines and upon its removal, the background had now become much darker. This new darker backdrop increased textural, microdynamic and tonal contrast, which just made the music *pop*. Overall there was an increase in solidity and tonal saturation combined with a sense of ease to the presentation. This became a common theme throughout my use of the Furutech deStat.

... I had a brainstorm of sorts, albeit of diminutive proportions. The Accoustic Arts Drive 1 transport isn't a front-loader, it's a top-loader. It's also felt lined. As it was seeming that the more CDs I listened to, the less effect the deStat was having, was I building up a static charge in the player? There was only one way to find out. I treated the CD compartment.

BAM! This was the missing piece of the puzzle. I'd still not effected a change of the same magnitude as on the vinyl LP but there was no doubt that things had changed for the better. The bass was more liquid and palpable. The stage was more vivid and perhaps most importantly, the music had newfound microdynamic life and more boogie factor. A little over a minute into "The Keys To Her Ferrari", there's a percussive instrument off to the left of the stage. It sounds like someone is smashing something against an extremely flimsy metal box of sorts. Where before all I heard was an almost indecipherable *splash*, it now had much more character, body and detail. I still can't identify for certain what they're hitting but I can hear much more of it...

The Furutech deStat turned out to be a piece of tremendous value and it'll take permanent residence next to my turntable - which isn't all that far from the CD player and it may even make the occasional excursion out to the DVD player in the next room. We'll see. If you're not happy with the performance of your system, the deStat won't change that. Its effects are not that pronounced or dramatic. But a careful listener will easily be able to appreciate just what the deStat does and it will take your vinyl listening pleasure to the next level. I can also well imagine that those living in drier climates may feel as strongly about the deStat when used on CDs and other silver discs as I did on vinyl. But even in my room I feel that the deStat has an important place as one of the smaller pieces needed to complete the digital puzzle. Good for digital, great for vinyl? That makes for a pretty solid universal recommendation. Go check one out and see if I'm right.



DVF-1 Record Flattener

When I first became aware of the DFV-1 Record Flattener, I was excited. When offered one for review, I didn't hesitate. I wanted to try it. I've got a fairly extensive record collection and despite pretty good care, record warps just remain a fact of life for me. Some months ago I sat down for a listen to Pink Floyd's *The Wall* and couldn't believe my ears. A two LP set, I discovered that the first disc had become horribly warped - pinch warped to be exact. While the second disc was close to mint, the first disc was unplayable. I won't lie and tell you otherwise, I wanted a review sample to *repair* my precious LP.

I love the fact that Furutech has designed the DFV-1 while keeping in mind how precious shelf space is to the average audiophile. A completely vertical design, the DFV-1 can be placed just about anywhere. With a foot print of 19 by 7 inches, there's no room where it can't easily be stowed and its 21.5-inch height shouldn't be an issue either. At 24 lbs, this is one piece you won't need the help of your buddy to move around either.

In use, the DFV-1 couldn't be much simpler. It comes with a two-piece plug slightly larger than the holes on the LP. Assemble the two pieces through the LP's center hole and then use it to center the LP within the DFV-1. You open the two spring-loaded latches at the top of the DFV-1, lay the LP inside against the side that flips down and insert the plug into the centering hole and close and latch it up. Switch on the power, wait 5 seconds for the display to, well display, and one touch of the mode button later, you're in business for a 1.5-hour heating process to be followed by a 2- hour cooling process. The LCD display tells you exactly where you are at in the process at all times. Additional pressing of the mode button allows for additional time in the heating process, to accommodate thicker pressings or more severe repairs. You press the mode once for 1.5 hours, twice for 2 hours and a third time for 2.5 hours.

As the LP slowly heats, it's pressed into shape by two smooth plates of what seems to be tempered glass. Because the hinges that close the DFV-1 are spring-loaded, as the LP softens, the flattening panels are allowed to do their job while the DFV-1's hinges draw the panels together. Truly a no-muss, no-fuss operation. Furutech even includes

white cotton gloves and a synthetic feather duster to keep the DFV-1 clean. You won't want to press any dirt, dust or lint into the vinyl. In practice, that's really not all that much of an issue as most of the DFV-1 will never make contact with the precious grooves. Contact with the panels will be made at the center of the LP and the outer groove guard (the outermost raised portion of the LP). Only LPs with that groove guard can be repaired.

The Furutech DFV-1 performed exactly as advertised and I can say that I wouldn't change a thing about it. It seems awfully well built and as long as the heating elements keep heating, the device should last a lifetime though it's only guaranteed for one year. It couldn't be easier to operate and I love the vertical design. Once it's finished with its cycle, the display flashes at you as if jumping up and down alerting you to the fact that it's ready to play. This thing even emanates enthusiasm!

John Potis

Quality of packing: Very good.

Reusability of packing: Very reusable.

Ease of unpacking/repacking: Very easy.

Condition of component received: Very excellent.

Completeness of delivery: Very complete.

Quality of owner's manual: Very sparse as is very common for small Japanese products. However, all pertinent information is there.

Website comments: Very full of product information- and Furutech makes a great many products.

Warranty: Very comprehensive for the first 365 days.

Human interactions: Very non-applicable. All communications went through Jonathan Scull of Scull Communications as Furutech's press liaison rather than Furutech and were very satisfactory.