

# WIRED

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## The Workhorse : Technics SL-1200 Turntable

"The Technics 1200 is the only turntable," says Moby. "That's where all the samples come from." Techno music's man of the hour is merely stating the worst-kept secret in electronic music. Since its introduction to the home stereo market almost 30 years ago, the Technics SL-1200 has been the tool of choice for professional DJs as well as sampling musicians. The deck has endured because it's built like tank: Made of steel and diecast aluminum, it weighs in at 27 pounds, and has incredible rotational stability and a very long service life.



Technics began selling the SL-1200 in 1973, and New York-based proto-hip hop DJs like Grand Wizard Theodore and Afrika Bambaataa almost immediately began to creatively misuse the decks. They invented scratching when they found that the motor would continue to spin at the correct rpm even if the DJ wiggled the record back and forth on the platter.

But turntablists and beatheads are still finding ways to hack the SL-1200. **Influenced by the hyperspeed mixing techniques of techno DJs like Jeff Mills, Detroit ghetto tech DJs like Disco D (real name Dave Shayman) sling together short blasts of Miami bass, drum and bass, and "booty" records with surreally filthy lyrics, playing every track at impossibly fast speeds. Disco D routinely opens up the turntable, adjusts a little-known small blue knob in the rear right corner of the deck, then reassembles the machine, which is then capable of spinning records up to 14 percent faster than they were meant to be played.**

"Some people say you can never get a 1200 back to normal after you've adjusted it that way," explains Disco D. "Actually, I've run into problems with promoters who aren't so happy I've done that to their turntables. But I specify right there in my booking contract that that's what I do. If you want me to play, I'm gonna have to mess up the turntables."