Subject: Re: Turntable Needles
Posted by gofar99 on Tue, 28 Jan 2014 20:38:38 GMT
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Hi,  There really are two parts to the answer.  First just the stylus (AKA needle) and second the cartridge itself (the thing the needle fits into).  Many decent cartridges allow for user replacement of the stylus and within some brands like AT, Shure, Grado and Ortofon you can upgrade the performance by upgrading the stylus.  An example is the Ortofon OM series.  They often come with an OM3 or OM5 stylus.  Since the cartridge itself is the same you can go to an OM 10, 20 ,30 without any problems. Naturally each step along the way is more costly and offers better performance.  In many cases the cartridge supplied in budget phonographs is quite cheaply made and has very minimal performance.  Even with upgraded stylus it will still be rather mediocre.  In such cases the cartridge itself ought to be replaced with a better one.  Depending on the turntable itself upgrades may or may not be worth the cost.  This question appears on some forums with great regularity. It goes something like...I just got a XXX brand all in one thing from ..... for (cheap price) and want to know how to make it sound better with records.  99% of the time the answer is to give it away and acquire a really suitable turntable.  This can be a costly adventure.  There are now some actually made in the US by a called Orbit that can be bought for about $200. According to users they are rather good entry level machines.

If you already have a high quality turntable then I would probably opt for an upgraded cartridge.

Let us know what you are trying to upgrade and perhaps a more specific answer can be made.