
Subject: How To Make An iPod Sound Like a \$1.5K CD Player

Posted by [AudioFred](#) on Thu, 28 Apr 2011 18:34:02 GMT

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I just received my new Onkyo ND-S1 Digital Media Transport. "Digital Media Transport" is a pretentious name for iPod dock, but that's what they call it, and it's sound merits a pretentious name. The ND-S1 is an iPod dock with no analog outputs - it outputs only the iPod's raw digital signal via a coaxial, optical, or USB cable, to your own DAC.

I assume most users would use the DAC in their HT receiver, but I'm using the digital input on my Cambridge Audio 840 CD player, which has a very good DAC section. I can synchronize a CD with my iPod and do an A/B comparison of the two, and the signal from the ND-S1 is every bit as good as the sound of the actual CD I ripped into iTunes. Of course you have to rip your CD to Apple Lossless or some other like-quality file and not to a lossy format like MP3.

The good news is the ND-S1 is only \$165 versus \$370 for the only other iPod dock that accesses the digital signal, the Wadia. According to some reviews by knowledgeable technowoks the Onkyo is a much better design. The bad news is the Onkyo isn't sold in the US - you have to buy it on Ebay from a Japanese exporter and pay \$38 air freight, but that's not exactly an arm and a leg in high end audio.

File Attachments

1) [002.JPG](#), downloaded 2534 times

Subject: Re: How To Make An iPod Sound Like a \$1.5K CD Player

Posted by [Adv eser](#) on Thu, 28 Apr 2011 23:08:26 GMT

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Onkyo also makes stereo PCI sound cards that sound like what you describe. The make one that's about 90 bucks that I would only use for pure digital transport, and a 300 dollar model that I would use for analogue output. It has swappable op-amp support.

Subject: Re: How To Make An iPod Sound Like a \$1.5K CD Player

Posted by [AudioFred](#) on Thu, 28 Apr 2011 23:08:49 GMT

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Here's a link to some technical info about the Onkyo:

<http://www.diyaudio.com/forums/digital-source/157594-inside-onkyo-nd-s1-ipod-transport.html>

Subject: Re: How To Make An iPod Sound Like a \$1.5K CD Player

Posted by [MusicJunkie](#) on Sun, 01 May 2011 14:48:32 GMT

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It looks like you have a great setup there! \$38 is not really all that much for shipping considering it is coming from Japan. I don't have a dock anymore as I connect via bluetooth to my stereo system. It works nice when I want to change songs on the fly.

Subject: Re: How To Make An iPod Sound Like a \$1.5K CD Player

Posted by [iDummy](#) on Mon, 02 May 2011 22:13:26 GMT

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It goes to show you how little knowledge I had about this. I am glad you guys share your knowledge. I am checking this things out because I really want better sound from my iPod.

Subject: Re: How To Make An iPod Sound Like a \$1.5K CD Player

Posted by [AudioFred](#) on Mon, 02 May 2011 22:22:46 GMT

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iDummy wrote on Mon, 02 May 2011 17:13It goes to show you how little knowledge I had about this. I am glad you guys share your knowledge. I am checking this things out because I really want better sound from my iPod.

Keep in mind, to use this thing you need a separate DAC or a receiver with a built in DAC, which almost all HT receivers have today. There is no analog output, so you can't connect it to the analog inputs of a receiver or amplifier.
