INDEX

Click on the page numbers to jump directly to that section

INTRODUCTION 8

WHAT THIS GUIDE ISN’T & IS 10

EQUIPMENT INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW VIDEO 12

SCRATCH DJ EQUIPMENT NEEDED 13

MY PERSONAL DJ EQUIPMENT HISTORY 14

MY SETUP 18

A WORD ON INEXPENSIVE EQUIPMENT 19

TURNTABLES 22

Introduction 23

Technics 1200 / 1210 mk II 26

Technics 1200 / 1210 mk 5 30

Vestax PDX 3000 mk II 32

Vestax QFO 35
Numark TTX USB
Super OEM Turntables
   Audio-Technica AT-LP1240-USB
   DJ Tech SL 1300 mk 6
   Stanton STR8.150
   Stanton ST.150
   Reloop RP-6000 MK 6
   Reloop RP-7000
   Reloop RP-8000
   Nearly new / Used / Second hand Turntables

MIXERS

   Introduction
   DJ Tech DIF-1S
   Rane TTM 56S
   Rane TTM57sl
   Rane Sixty-One
   Rane Sixty-Two
   Traktor Kontrol Z2
   Pioneer DJM T1
   Vestax 05 Pro IV / 4
   Ecler Hak 360 / 380
   Rodec Scratchbox
   Used / Second hand Mixers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superseal</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other popular Scratch vinyl</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scratch Science</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCRATCH SOUNDS: DIGITAL VINYL</strong></td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultimate Scratch Samples</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even more Digital scratch samples</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUMENTALS TO SCRATCH OVER</strong></td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultimate Beats for Scratch Practice</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even More Instrumentals</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DVS</strong></td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serato</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traktor</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HEADPHONES</strong></td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sennheiser HD-25-II</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AMP + SPEAKERS / POWERED SPEAKERS</strong></td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATED EQUIPMENT REVIEW SITES</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEXT STEPS</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDIO SCRATCHES RESOURCES &amp; TOOLS</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultimate Beats for Scratch Practice</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio Scratches Beat Store</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Simple Guide To Scratching eBook</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-E’s School of Scratch</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scratch DJ Equipment Page</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTRO &amp; THANKS</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABOUT THE AUTHOR</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LET’S CONNECT - SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

This guide is the result of many people asking my advice on which equipment they should purchase when starting out scratching.

I honestly find this more difficult to advise on than you might think, as I am definitely not a DJ equipment expert and am probably one of the least technical people you will meet!

I have a scratch DJ setup that I am very happy with that I haven’t changed for many years and I love to keep things simple and minimal. I’ve always preferred to focus on the actual art of scratching and the practice that goes into it.

That said, I am aware that I am not the only person that might feel overwhelmed by the constantly changing world of DJ equipment and choices available.

High quality DJ Equipment won’t make an unskilled DJ better, but the right equipment and tools will most definitely make the practice of learning smoother and more enjoyable. Conversely, poor quality DJ equipment can really impact your learning and make the experience difficult and frustrating.

In this guide, I have gone right back to basics, taken an unbiased look at what DJ equipment is currently available and researched what it has to offer. I approached fellow scratch DJs with varying levels of experience for input and finally combined it with my own 13 years of scratching experience in order to bring you the very best recommendations possible.

I have aimed to make this DJ equipment guide as clear and simple as possible, so you can get the setup you need and then get on with the fun of scratching.
My hope is that it empowers you to do just that.

Enjoy this guide!

- Emma Short-E
WHAT THIS GUIDE ISN’T & IS

I just want to clarify what this guide isn’t and is so you know what to expect and to aid your understanding:

THIS GUIDE ISN’T...

• An in depth technical review of each item of DJ equipment. There are plenty of specialist DJ Equipment sites that do that.
• An exhaustive look at every single piece of equipment on the market.
• A look at non-vinyl midi controllers or CDJs.

THIS GUIDE IS...

• Designed to show you the main equipment options that the majority of established vinyl scratch DJs use and could confidently recommend.
• Mine and other scratch DJs honest opinions and general consensus.
• A comprehensive summary and high level overview.
• A quick start guide.
• Designed to make it simple for you to choose your setup.
• A starting point to give you the knowledge you need to do your own research and discover your own preferences.
PLEASE NOTE...

I am not affiliated with the companies represented in this guide or sponsored by them in anyway. I am independent. I do not receive any payments from these companies to feature their products.

I clearly state where I have and haven’t used the equipment covered. Where I haven’t had hands on experience of using the equipment, you can trust that I carried out thorough research, utilising reviews, personal views / recommendations from professional DJ friends and took the overall approach of:

“if I was new to scratching, what would I do if I had to buy equipment without being able try it out”.

Trying out equipment is not always possible for most of us, myself included.

All prices are a rough guideline only and often change, so please do your own research. I have included the LOWEST prices I could find for the USA and UK using Google.

Known issues are stated where I have encountered them. Issues do happen from time to time with the manufacture of electronics, but I want to make them clear and known so you have all the information.

I cannot be held responsible for your DJ Equipment purchasing decisions. Please do your own research and make up your own mind.

Phew, that’s the explanations out the way, and now... onward to the guide!
Before we begin exploring the options, let’s take a look at each element of a scratch DJ equipment setup.

This is my equipment overview video that I think you will find useful to watch before you dive into the full written guide (click link below):

Click here to watch my “Equipment You Need for Scratching” video
SCRATCH DJ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

As mentioned in the previous video, here is a list of the equipment you need to begin practicing scratching in comfort and with minimal frustration.

SCRATCH DJ EQUIPMENT SETUP

• A direct drive, high torque turntable.
• A 2 channel mixer (the crossfader needs a sharp cut in and preferably curve adjustment).
• Needles & cartridges.
• Slipmats.
• Scratch samples / sounds vinyl records.
• Instrumental music source - a second turntable, iPod or computer.
• Headphones or amp & speakers / powered monitor speakers.

ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL NEEDS

• Digital Vinyl System (DVS) for scratching with mp3s and playing instrumentals.

This setup is suitable for the complete beginner, all the way up to the pro DJ. At the heart of our scratch DJ equipment needs lie a few minimal and simple key features.

We really don’t need lots of effects and additional features to enjoy the art of scratching.

The equipment listed above is everything that will be covered in this guide.
MY PERSONAL DJ EQUIPMENT HISTORY

In this section I give you an overview of my personal DJ Equipment history so you can see my choices and also avoid the mistakes I made and benefit from my experience.

PHASE 1 - EARLY 2000

SoundLAB Direct Drive decks - I bought these mainly for mixing, for which they were OK, but once I got into scratching, there was simply no way these could stand up to the task at hand.

SoundLAB Mixer - Again, this was fine for basic mixing, but once I got into scratching it was game over. It was just not built for scratching. The only redeeming factor was the punch out buttons I could use instead of the crossfader for transforms. There was no cross fader curve adjustment and new crossfaders would break in a single day.

I call this period of time my “Instant frustration” phase!

PHASE 2 - SEPTEMBER 2000

I upgraded my mixer to the Vestax 06 Pro A when I started scratching and the faders in my Soundlab mixer would break in a single day. This new mixer was... AHHH BLISS! It opened up a world of possibilities. Watch my scratch tutorial videos to see this mixer in action.

Throughout the time I owned this mixer (9 years) I prologned its life by upgrading the crossfader a number of times:
CROSSFADERS I USED IN MY VESTAX 06

1. **Standard PCM fader** that came built into the mixer
2. **Penny and Giles** (around 2002) - At this time, DJs were modding the Vestax faders with credit cards and spacers to reduce the cut in time, but I wasn’t really set up to do that technically. You cannot buy these anymore but if you want to see what it looked like you can [here](#).
3. **Pro X Fade** (2008)
4. I was planning to get the **Innofader** after trying it out in Chris Swift’s [QFO](#) and loving it, but I was very fortunate to be able to afford and move up to a much better mixer (see Phase 7 below).

**PHASE 3 - 2001**

I sold my Soundlab decks (for not that much, boo) and bought 1 x Vestax PDX 2000 purely for scratching on (I wasn’t mixing much at this stage). The logic was that it is better to have just one good turntable to scratch on, rather than 2 mediocre tables which you have already seen didn’t work out so well. It made the world of difference.

**PHASE 4 - 2001**

I later bought a second Vestax PDX 2000.

**PHASE 5 - 2002**

I practiced scratching with other people who were using Technics 1200 / 1210 mk II and I much preferred the feel of the Technics to the Vestax PDX 2000. They just felt more solid and less plastic. It does come down to personal choice but I ended up swapping my Vestax for a set of secondhand Technics 1200 (silver) MK II and haven’t
looked back. I seriously LOVE these decks. They are industry standard and a part of hip hop history.

**PHASE 6 - 2008**

I bought a DVS - Serato box - Scratch Live 2 / Rane SL2. So I could mix and scratch with mp3s and travel light when I went to DJ abroad.

Here it is getting ready to be sold on eBay as I moved into Phase 7 below:
PHASE 7 - 2010

9 years after buying my first ever scratch mixer, I upgraded my mixer to the Rane TTM 57sl which had in built Serato for use with Scratch Live to give me more flexibility. A serious upgrade that I have never regretted.

PHASE 7A - 2013

I purchased the DJ Tech DIF-1S to try out alongside the Rane, not as a replacement, but simply as research to see if this is a good entry level scratch mixer for the many people that ask me. It is, but more on that later!
MY SETUP

I AM CURRENTLY USING THE FOLLOWING GEAR:

• Technics 1200 MK II second, (actually third) hand (approx. 15 - 18 years old).
• Rane TTM 57sl mixer
• DJ Tech DIF-1S mixer
• Butter Rugs Slipmats
• D-Styles Tablecloth v3 Slipmats
• Shure M447 Needles / Cartridges
• Sennheiser HD25 headphones
• Genelec 6010a powered monitor speakers

FOR DIGITAL DJING WHICH IS NOT ESSENTIAL, BUT A NICE OPTION TO HAVE:

• Serato Scratch Live
• Macbook Air 11”
A WORD ON INEXPENSIVE EQUIPMENT

This is something I want to talk about up front as it is important and may change how you view the equipment I cover that might seem “expensive” to you at first.

With some hobbies it is possible for beginners to start off with cheaper, lower quality equipment, but this is definitely not the case for scratch DJing, nor is it advisable. There is really no such thing as “beginner” scratch DJ equipment, only high quality and low quality.

Please understand that there here is a hidden cost to buying inexpensive, lower quality DJ equipment.

EXAMPLE

I went down the inexpensive equipment route myself when I started. Whilst it did allow me to explore whether I wanted to pursue DJing seriously, I outgrew the equipment extremely quickly (almost instantly) once I began scratching. The crossfaders broke and the cheap direct drive turntables were just not built well enough to withstand the rigours of scratching, making for a very frustrating learning experience.

Scratching is already challenging enough, without being let down and held back by equipment that doesn’t perform properly.

So, the reason I do not advocate purchasing cheap equipment is because if you decide that you really love scratching, you will need to replace your gear in next to no time at all so that it can keep up with the demands of scratching. This seems to be
the universal experience of all the DJs I have spoken to that went the inexpensive route.

**PROS AND CONS OF BUYING INEXPENSIVE / LOWER QUALITY EQUIPMENT**

**Pros**
- Allows you to get you up and running quickly
- Let’s you explore if you really want to stick with scratching

**Cons (the true hidden costs)**
- Frustration.
- Quickly leads to the need to upgrade.
- Gear $£ depreciation.
- Cheap gear may be hard to resell.

**A BETTER, RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE OPTION**

A better option that I endorse is to invest in quality gear right from the start.

Although buying quality equipment does not replace the need for practice and skill development, it certainly does makes it possible to perform techniques without being hindered by poor equipment performance.

The money you could lose by buying inexpensive gear and then reselling is actually not that different to the money you could lose if you bought expensive gear and then resold it. So if the losses are equal, why not take some time to save and invest? Trust me, from my experience, it’s well worth it!
PROS AND CONS OF BUYING EXPENSIVE / HIGH QUALITY EQUIPMENT

Pros
• Allows you to get started with minimal equipment hassles.
• Provides a better learning environment.
• Reliable and longer lasting.
• Expensive gear holds value and is easier to sell if you decide to.

Cons
• Initial setup cost.
• The time it takes to save up to afford the equipment.
• You may decide you don’t want to stick with scratching.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Whilst I understand that you might not want to spend a lot on gear that you are not sure that you want to invest in, please be aware that you might outgrow lower quality, cheaper equipment very quickly and need to spend more on some serious quality kit. Unless you can sell your old equipment you may end up losing some money that could have been invested in quality gear right from the start.

The advice I give to new scratch DJs is to save up then buy one high quality turntable and high quality mixer. You can always add a second turntable at a later date.

Join the discussion on this topic and see other DJs opinions here:

http://www.studioscratches.com/beginner-scratch-questions/
TURNTABLES
Platter, tonearm and so much more.
TURNTABLES

INTRODUCTION

The first important piece of equipment to consider in your scratch DJ Equipment setup, (the other being the mixer). You need a high quality turntable to keep up with the demands of scratching. Essentially, you are moving the record backwards and forwards at varying speeds and pressure and need something sturdy.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Direct Drive
- High torque
- Tonearm quality
- Build quality
- Reputation amongst Pro Scratch DJs

Optional features:

- Reverse
- Ultrapitch
- Straight tonearm
A WORD ABOUT STRAIGHT TONEARMS

The theory behind straight tonearms is that they are designed to skip less when scratching.

Let’s take a look at the pros and cons:

**PROS**

- Less skipping of your needles

**CONS**

- Increased record wear
- Sound quality suffers

Interestingly, Ortofon premium needle manufacturer says:

“Since straight tonearms which are shorter-than-normal tend to provide better skip resistance in some scenarios, DJs with traditional S-shaped arms have emulated this design by rotating their headshell-mounted cartridges (like our OM series) 23 degrees counterclockwise.

Since these straight arms cause significantly more vinyl wear, a cartridge mounted to emulate these arms will also cause immediate damage to the record being played. This is not to mention that there will be more distortion during playback, because the diamond is being held at an improper angle.

In some cases, DJs feel this is a worthy trade-off, because the stylus tends to stick to the groove better than with traditional alignment. Other DJs feel that this is a short-cut to proper scratching technique, and that a well-seasoned DJ should not rely on this method in absence of proper skills."
It is Ortofon’s perspective that this should not be done, as it does reduce the life of the stylus, damages the record prematurely, and leads to lower sound quality. This has not stopped DJs from using this method, but the pitfalls of it should be understood first before deciding to do so.”

I have personally never had a problem with my needles skipping when scratching with S shaped tonearms. By setting up your turntable tonearm correctly, skip free scratching is attainable.

For the purposes of this guide, either a straight tonearm or “S” shaped tonearm can be recommended. If you think you might be particularly heavy handed, a straight tonearm may help, although proper scratching technique can prevent skipping. Plenty of scratch DJs use “S” shaped tonearms so have a look at these models too.
TECHNICS 1200 / 1210 MK II

$ Discontinued / second hand only
UK £300 single / £500 - £1000 pair approx*
USA $650 single / £1200 pair approx*

*Prices according to eBay completed listing searches for USA and UK and do vary.
OVERVIEW

An absolute classic that needs no introduction.

Still considered by many people (myself included) the best turntable ever made. It is industry standard and features in most clubs that still have a vinyl option.

Once you have used a Technics and feel the quality, you will instantly understand why this turntable commands respect and reverence from DJs worldwide! Despite its age, it still competes with others for quality and durability. Pressing the technics start and stop button is an experience in and of itself! Other manufacturers have imitated it, but there really is no substitute.

Model notes:

- **1200** = Silver. I prefer these - the silver tonearm fixtures look great.
- **1210** = Black.
- The **Mk II / 2** is considered by many to be superior in terms of build quality and almost “cooler” than the mk 5 which has additional features that some think are unnecessary.

FEATURES

- Basic in terms of features compared to new turntables, but compensated by the extremely high build quality.
- Minimal features - allows you to focus on the art of scratching.
- High torque.
- Accurate pitch.
- Solid construction.
• High quality tone arm.
• +/- 8% pitch.
• The body and major components are made of steel (most other turntables are made of plastic).
• The bottom of the body is made of a dense rubber that eliminates distortion and feedback and adds extra weight for stability.
• Most of the basic parts are readily available and user replaceable.
• Very high resale value.

SUMMARY

My #1 recommendation in any model number, although I love the classic design of the mk II. Made from 1979 - 1989 they were designed in an era where products were built to last.

Despite its age, this turntable features everything you need for scratching with quality. Other modern turntables may be a much better spec on paper, but none of them feel like these. They have a tactile quality that has to be experienced to be understood.

It is possible to get a pair of quality used Technics for cheaper than the current new top end tables.

Still favoured by scratch DJs all over the world including previous DMC Canadian Champion DJ Brace who said to me recently; “Technics are still my fave!”.

I tried using many different turntables but I agree with Brace. My favs! For me, nothing else comes remotely close.
WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
TECHNICS 1200 / 1210 MK 5

$ Discontinued / second hand only.

UK: £500 single / £1200 pair approx.

USA: $600 single / $1200 pair approx.

*Prices according to eBay completed listing searches for USA and UK and do vary.

OVERVIEW

An upgrade to the mk II with some useful new features.

FEATURES

As per the mk II with the addition of:

- A recessed power knob making it harder to accidentally turn off.
• No click in the pitch fader (great for beat jugglers).
• A button that disables the pitch adjustment and locks it at 0%.
• The M5G has a pitch fader that switches from +/- 8% to +/- 16%

SUMMARY
As per the mk II /2. Very highly recommended.

WHERE TO BUY
Click here to view buying information
VESTAX PDX 3000 MK II

$798 / £565 - Becoming harder to find, discontinued according to some.
OVERVIEW

Top of the range scratch turntable that has a completely different design and feel to Technics in part due to the moulded plastic body. The previous PDX 2000 was the first serious scratch DJ turntable outside of the Technics range.

I haven’t used this model, but have used the first generation PDX 2000.

MAIN / TOP FEATURES

• Anti Skipping Tone-arm System.
• Direct Drive DC Motor.
• High-precision platter.
• Digital Torque Simulator.
• Midi compatible.
• Ultrapitch +/- 50%. Combined with the fine pitch fader, a total pitch control of +/- 60 % is possible.
• Reverse.

SUMMARY

Loved for ultrapitch by hardcore scratch DJs. A good Technics alternative. Some love them, some hate them. You will see many top scratch DJs using these.

WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
VESTAX QFO

Included just for Fun!

$800 / £500 approx. Used / second hand only.
OVERVIEW

Designed by DJ Qbert, this is a compact turntable with a built in mixer which functions as a semi portable option. I have used one of these with an innofader in, which was really fun. Simply plug in a music source such as your iPod and get scratching.

Considered by some a gimmick! If you search YouTube you can find videos of Qbert and DJ Traps scratching at the beach, out of there cars. Power supply still required!

MAIN / TOP FEATURES

- Standard CF-PCV fader which can be upgraded to the innofader (recommended).
- Original high-torque direct drive taken from the stable and reliable PDX-2000.
- 2 sets of Start/Stop, 33/45 RPM, Reverse, and Quartz Lock controls.
- Pre-loaded PMC-05PRO III mixer circuitry.
- 180-degree spin slide pitch control.
- Total pitch adjustment up to +/- 60%, with a spin slide control placed around the platter.

SUMMARY

Expensive collectors item that is fun if you can get your hands on one. Consider the cheaper LE version without the tone arm that you can use vertically. Replace the crossfader with an innofader for best results.

WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
OVERVIEW

Updated and redesigned feature packed modern turntable, with some great features at a good price.

It is worth mentioning that historically, the first generation TTX1 model of this turntable suffered from some problems including overheating, platter problems, platters not spinning, going backwards or just stopping under the slightest finger pressure.
I know at least 2 people personally who have had the issue with the TTX1s, but I am assured that these have been fixed with the second and now this third generation of turntable.

I haven’t used these personally.

**FEATURES**

- USB connection for easy conversion of vinyl to digital media.
- Ultra–high user adjustable torque.
- Interchangeable aluminum tonearm system includes both straight and S–shaped tonearms.
- Interchangeable pitch fader and button cartridges for club and battle style.
- Blue illuminated display provides pitch, RPM, BPM and motor settings.
- Aluminum target light and strobe with super–bright white LED.
- Solid–core steel top and rubber base construction diminishes vibration and unwanted noise.
- Anti–drag aluminum platter reduces excess rotating friction.
- Precise cue, height and anti–skate adjustments.
- Reverse and adjustable start and brake times.
- +/-8, 10, 20 and 50% selectable pitch ranges.
- Key Lock to maintain any key while changing tempo.
- Onboard auto BPM counter.
- 33, 45 and 78 RPM with reverse.
- Selectable phono/line level output (no ground wire required).
- Detachable power and audio connections, illuminated output bay.
SUMMARY
Great modern turntable with all the modern features you might need that gets plenty of love from scratch DJs all over forums on the net.

WHERE TO BUY
Click here to view buying information
SUPER OEM TURNTABLES

WHAT IS A “SUPER OEM” TURNTABLE?

Mark Settle, owner of DJ Worx / ScratchWorx explains what a Super OEM turntable is, with specific reference to a Reloop model:

“The Reloops are what are known as super OEMs - a standard unit available from Hanpin - www.hanpin.com.tw - that is customised depending on the customer’s (i.e. Reloop, Stanton, American Audio etc) requirements.

Reloop don’t do much to the original design, whereas Stanton make considerable changes to the base design. Overall, the super OEMs are excellent decks. The STR8-150s are super OEMs and get huge amounts of respect, and generally seen as the successor to Technics.

PROS

• More features.
• Ultrapitch.
• Higher torque.
• Adjustable start and stop times.
• Selectable pitch ranges, typically +/-8%, +/-16% and +/-50%.

CONS

• Tonearm quality is not as high.
• They don’t have the same quality overall quality “feel” as Technics.
• Less likely to be in a club so if you are used to using them you might find Technics strange and limiting / off putting.
• Tonearm screw occasionally comes loose - known issue, apparently user fixable.

There are many models to look at but I will cover the most well known and widely adopted by scratch DJs.
OVERVIEW

I haven’t used these.

FEATURES

- Reverse play button.
- S-shaped tonearm with adjustable tracking force, height adjustment, and anti-skate adjustment.
- Powerful, high torque direct drive motor.
- Hydraulic arm-lift mechanism.
- 33 / 45 / 78 rpm speeds.
- Dual start / stop buttons.
- Start + brake control adjustments.
- Removable RCA cables.
- Removable stylus target light.
- USB cable.
- Powerful, high torque direct drive motor.
- Dampening, cast-aluminum platter.
- Accurate pitch control.
- Button for quartz speed lock (speed goes to 0).
- 3 way adjustable tonearm.
- RCA + power cords are detachable.
- Closed design under the platter offers dust protection.
- USB output for direct to computer connection.
- Built-in preamp.
- High gloss black finish.
- Rubberized base.
- Includes dust cover.

**SUMMARY**

A solid customisation of the standard Hanpin model. Almost identically designed models like the Reloop RP-6000 (covered later on) seem to be preferred over these Audio-Technica in the scratch DJ community. With DJs like DJ Angelo and Fong Fong using their products, Reloop have built up brand trust and confidence. Some seem to prefer the rubberised matt finish of the Reloop RP-6000 as opposed to the gloss finish of this particular model. It comes down to personal choice and brand reputation. Great price though and should perform very similarly.

**WHERE TO BUY**

[Click here to view buying information]
DJ TECH SL 1300 MK 6

$499 / £ Unknown.

OVERVIEW

Another somewhat brighter iteration of the Hanpin model!
Pros like Qbert and Shortcut can be seen in videos cutting it up on them recently at Namm 2014.

FEATURES

Also available in black and grey!
• Quarz-driven DJ turntable with upper torque direct drive.
• DIRECT Drive Turntable with 3 speed Full manual.
• Support for both 33 1/3, 45 and 78 RPM Playback speeds.
• Phono and line output (no grounding necessary).
• USB Output for REC function Compatible with Windows / Mac.
• Plug & Play USB compatibility for PC and MAC.
• High Glossy paint finish.
• Height adjustable S-shaped pickup arm with anti-skating.
• 330 mm aluminium die-cast turntable platter.
• ± 10,20,50 % adjustable pitch control.
• Static balanced S-shaped tonearm with detachable headshell.
• Easy-to-exchange, freely revolving stylus illumination with super bright LED.
• Reverse mode.
• Shock-absorbing feet.

SUMMARY
Another Super OEM option if you want to go down that route.

One of DJ Tech’s older models. They are currently working on a brand new low priced non-OEM turntable, the “DJ Tech LF-12”. It will be interesting to see how it develops, especially when you consider how popular their DIF-1S mixer has been.

Get a first glimpse of their prototype turntable here courtesy of DJ Worx.

WHERE TO BUY
Click here to view buying information
STANTON STR8.150

$599 / £499
OVERVIEW

One of the most popular non Technics / Super OEM new turntables on the market. I have used these. You will see pro DJs using these, e.g. DJ Qbert.

FEATURES

- Straight arm (or S on the ST.150 model below).
- Adjustable high torque.
- More similar to Technics than the Numark TTX or Vestax PDX 3000 mk II.
- Built in ground cable.
- Power switch at the back.
- Separate phono cables not soldered in - easy to replace if they get damaged.
- Removable pilot light.

SUMMARY

My own experience of using these decks was that they are a good solid deck that allowed me to scratch well. The torque is superior to Technics and the ultrapitch is cool. These felt pretty nice to cut and the closest to Technics out of any other deck I have tried so far. A good alternative if you don’t want to buy second hand Technics or want a new table with additional features.

KNOWN ISSUES

The actually Stanton turntable I tried out I did unfortunately suffer from the Super OEM loose tonearm issue. It was a hire unit and doesn’t necessarily represent the rule, but my search online revealed that some super OEM turntables can have this specific issue with the tonearm needing to be tightened. It is apparently a simple fix and if you dig through the forums you can find specific instructions, but I wasn’t really into doing this myself.
Others I have spoken to who bought them new have not had this problem and swear by them. You be the judge! Just be aware you may have to tighten it up yourself.

WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
STANTON ST.150

$599 / £499

As the STR8.150 above, but with an S shaped tonearm.
RELOOP RP-6000 MK 6

$529.00 / £350.00
OVERVIEW

Reloop are a growing name in the DJ world and get good reviews with this deck offering a more sleek curvaceous look that the Stantons.

As used by turntablist DJ Angelo.

I haven’t used these personally.

FEATURES

• 3 speeds, fully manual.
• Quarz-driven upper torque direct drive.
• Speeds: 33 1/3, 45 and 78 RPM.
• High Torque.
• Adjustable starting torque.
• Classy rubber paint finish.
• Phono and line output (no grounding necessary, only available for EU version).
• Direct interconnection of turntable and motor for maximum stability.
• Adjustable start/stop speed.
• Metal chassis.
• Extra heavy design.
• Height adjustable S-shaped pickup arm with anti-skating.
• Pitch range +/-10%, +/- 20%, +/- 50%.
• Easy-to-exchange, freely revolving stylus illumination with super bright LED.
• Quartz lock.
• Reverse.
• Additional start/stop button for battle mode.
• Rubber ply to reduce vibration and ambient noises.
• Detachable mains and RCA cable.
• Immersed connection cavity for easy case installation.
• Shock-absorbing feet.

**SUMMARY**

A quality packaging of the standard Hanpin model from a brand that is gaining traction in the DJ world.

**WHERE TO BUY**

[Click here to view buying information](#)
RELOOP RP-7000

$569 / £375
OVERVIEW

An upgrade to the previously curved RP-6000, featuring a more classic Technics 1200 / 1210 look and feel. Similar to, but slightly cheaper than the Stanton ST/STR8.150.

I haven’t used these personally.

FEATURES

- Quartz driven DJ turntable with upper-torque direct drive.
- Adjustable torque.
- Classy painted metallic finish.
- Phono and line output (no grounding necessary).
- Direct connection of turntable and motor for best possible stability.
- Adjustable start/stop time.
- Metal housing.
- Especially heavy construction.
- Vertically adjustable S-shaped tonearm with anti-skating.
- Pitch Range +/-8%, +/-16%, +/-50%.
- Easy to exchange, freely revolvable needle illumination with super bright LED.
- Quartz lock.
- Safety mains switch.
- Reverse switch.
- Additional start/stop button for vertical positioning.
- Rubber inlay for reduction of vibrations and ambient noise.
- Removable mains and RCA cables.
- Shock proof feet.
- Vibration-resistant base.
SUMMARY

Solid Super OEM with all the features of all modern turntables matched together with a classic design that Technics lovers will appreciate.

WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
RELOOP RP-8000

$799.99 / £495.00
OVERVIEW

Next generation hybrid turntable controller. Allows you to use timecode-vinyl together with the integrated, designated cue point, loop roll, and looping buttons.

These videos give you a better idea of how they can be used:

DJ Angelo Showcase
Fong Fong Showcase

Also worth watching Fong Fong’s comparison video:
Technics MK2 Vs Reloop RP-8000 Showcase

I haven’t used these personally.

FEATURES

• Advanced Hybrid Torque Turntable.
• Digital DJ turntable with upper-torque direct drive.
• MIDI compatible control section consisting of Trax encoder, 8 backlit drum pads and 4 combinable performance modes (cue, loop, sample and user).
• Large Trax encoder.
• Auto deck-assign feature.
• Turntable link USB port.
• Digital LC-Display for pitch display, deck assignment and firmware settings.
• Adjustable start/brake & torque.
• Metal top panel with metallic finish.
• Phono and line output (no grounding necessary).
• Direct connection of turntable and motor for best possible stability.
• Especially heavy finish.
• High end tonearm.
• Pitch range +/-8%, +/-16%, +/-50%.
• High resolution pitch fader.
• LCD pitch display.
• Easy to exchange, freely revolvable needle illumination with super bright LED.
• Quartz lock.
• Safety power switch.
• Reverse switch.
• 2 start/stop buttons for vertical positioning.
• Smart USB link for up to 4 turntables.
• Rubber inlay for reduction of vibrations and ambient noise.
• Removable mains and RCA cables.
• Sunk-in connection cavity for easy case installation.
• Shock proof feet.
• Vibration-resistant base.
• Serato Scratch Live mappings available.

**SUMMARY**

A high priced, featured packed turntable that is not absolutely essential but very nice to have and could be an investment if you would like to incorporate midi triggering of samples and loops. A first in the world of turntable design and relatively new, so unknown if it will become widely adopted.

**WHERE TO BUY**

[Click here to view buying information](#)
NEARLY NEW / USED / SECOND HAND TURNTABLES

RECOMMENDED:

- Technics 1210 / 1200 mk II (2)
- Technics 1210 / 1200 mk 5
- Vestax PDX 2000 mk 2
- Vestax PDX 3000 mk 2

These are the trusted models for the used market.

For additional help with buying a second hand Technics, please see this article:

MIXERS

Crossfaders, upfaders, volume and EQs.
MIXERS

INTRODUCTION

The other major part of a Scratch DJ equipment setup. The fine controller. Your first hand is on the record, the second on the mixer’s crossfader. Please be aware that there are many scratch mixers out there but I am covering the most popular and ones that I would consider myself if I was starting out again.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

• Crossfader quality.
• Sharp cut in.
• Crossfader (CF) curve adjustment.
• Reverse / hamster switch.
• Number of channels - 2 for most, but you might want 3.
• Outputs - RCA / XLR.
• Power supply type.
• Connectivity to DVS software e.g. Traktor / Serato.

To keep it simple I am covering 2 channel mixers only (club mixers use 4 channels for 2 turntables plus 2 CDs & other inputs, which we don’t need at this stage).

There are basically have 2 types of mixers:

• **Non DVS** - you will need an extra DVS hardware interface if you wish to scratch with mp3s / use a Digital Vinyl System.
• **DVS** - An interface is built into the mixer that you can connect direct to your laptop via a USB Cable to control the DVS software.
DJ TECH DIF-1S

£129 / $199 (!!!)

OVERVIEW

Previously, before this mixer was available, beginner scratch DJs wanting a high quality mixer only had 2 options:

1. Buy an expensive, tried and tested recognised brand name mixer.
2. Buy a high end, used / second hand mixer to save money and hope that it lasted.

Either way, it costed way more than the cost of this new option.
People always ask me which scratch mixer to buy when they are on a budget of around £100 / $200 and up till now the choices haven’t been vast. I found it tough to suggest anything. I couldn’t usually really recommend anything at that cost brand new. Now I can safely say that this is the way to go.

I heard such good things about this mixer that I bought one out of my own pocket to try it out. I have put this mixer through its paces and it does a really great job! The mini Innofader keeps up with all the cuts I can do on my much more expensive Rane TTM 57sl.

Watch my side by side comparison video:

![Image of DJ Tech DIF-1S vs Rane TTM 57sl](image)

**DJ Tech DIF-1S vs Rane TTM 57sl Video**

I think you will agree that it is hard to tell the difference between these 2 mixers and the fader is even looser than on my Rane TTM 57sl.
FEATURES

- High performance 2-channel scratch DJ mixer.
- Integrated premium quality contactless Mini innoFADER crossfader.
- Compatible with the original full-size innoFADER should you wish to upgrade (to give finer control over crossfader cut in, curve and tension).
- Adjustable crossfader curve and reverse / hamster switch.
- DVS mode: Switch between the traditional vinyl / CD setup and DVS software setup without reconnecting a single cable. Useful for if you get a DVS interface like Serato or Traktor in the future.
- RCA booth output with dedicated volume control.
- 6.35mm and 3.5mm headphones output.

INTEGRATED DVS?
No, not at this price! Traktor A6 or Rane SL2 needed.

SUMMARY
All in all a truly awesome entry level mixer at a very low price which gives the beginner and even top level scratch DJ everything they need to get scratching without compromising on quality. If this mixer was around at the time of buying my Vestax 09 I would definitely have gone for it! Very highly recommended! DJ Tech are also releasing a midi version (DIF-1M) and a new turntable coming later in the year which, by all accounts got great reviews at NAMM 2014 where it sounds like they dominated turntablist attention.

WHERE TO BUY
Click here to view buying information
OVERVIEW

The TTM 56S is a classic, full-featured battle mixer with Rane’s patented magnetic faders, isolator EQs, reverse and contour controls for all faders and rugged road-worthy construction. This TTM 54 descendent has been a top choice of serious turntablist for many years.
The original TTM 56 was available from 2001-2008, and had an external RS1 power supply. It was replaced with this TTM 56S and features various improvements.

I haven’t used this particular model, but have used it’s big brother the TTM 57sl.

**FEATURES**

**Improvements over the TTM 56:**

- Internal universal power supply that works anywhere in the world.
- All four inputs are now Phono/Line switchable - plug in 4 turntables or 4 CD players, or any combination.
- Includes both 1/4” and 3.5mm headphone jacks.
- All controls moved to the top panel.
- The Transform switches are now Kill switches.
- Operation is simplified by putting all the controls on top, increasing the width by one inch. Text is now readable in the dark under black light.
- The three long-lasting non-bleed magnetic faders did not change, as they are still the best in the business!

**Main features:**

- Non-contact magnetic program faders and crossfader.
- Continuously adjustable Contour adjustments for all faders.
- Phono and Line input with Transform switch.
- Input Gain control.
- 3-band Accelerated-Slope, full cut (+6 dB to off) EQ.
- FlexFX effects loop assignment with Wet / Dry control.
- Auxiliary (session mix) Input / Output with Level controls.
• Balanced Mic input with Level control with: 2-band EQ and independent Effects Loop.
• Independent Balanced and unbalanced Master Outputs.
• Two 10-segment meters feature peak-hold with: Source switch for dual-mono Cue or stereo Master.
• Headphone monitoring with: Master / Cue select switch with Cue Pan control.
• Powerful headphone amplifier with Level control.
• Add Serato Scratch Live plug-and-play DVS capability with an SL2 or SL3.

INTEGRATED DVS?
No. Traktor A6 or Rane SL2 needed. Most use a Serato SL2 with this as it is also manufactured by Rane.

SUMMARY
Some great upgrades that make the classic TTM56 even better to use. No crossfader cut in time adjustment feature, but this doesn’t appear to be a problem for scratch DJs. An absolutely solid, reliable and trusted mixer. Recommended.

WHERE TO BUY
Click here to view buying information
RANE TTM57SL

Discontinued.
$1449 / £899 where still sold.
Used / second hand options around $750 / £500.

FEATURES

- Combines all the performance and features of the Rane TTM 56 with Scratch Live software and also includes internal effects with six stereo insert points.
- Inputs for a combination of digital and analog sources.
• Plug and play connectivity with Serato Scratch Live, so there’s no need to wire in an interface.
• Scratch Live Control Surface to navigate through the library, load tracks, trigger cues and loops and control effects all from the mixer’s control panel.
• Simple mix record function allowing you to record your DJ mixes with a click of a mouse.
• A range of advanced on-board hardware effects to enhance your mixing, with professional studio-quality sound.
• Input Gain, Left / Right Pan controls, and 3-band full-cut EQ with kill switches.
• Mic input with level and EQ controls.
• Rane’s patented magnetic faders for the fastest and most accurate response, and durable performance.
• 1⁄4” and 3.5 mm headphone outputs.
• RCA, TRS & XLR outputs, each with dedicated level controls.

INTEGRATED DVS?
Yes - with Serato Scratch Live!

SUMMARY
My current mixer of choice that is an extremely reliable, high performer and all round joy to use. Easy and simple integration with Serato Scratch Live for effects and cue point triggering. Featuring the same super high quality crossfader as the TTM56s, there is no cut in time adjustment, but again I have never found this a barrier to scratching. Upgradable to an Innofader should you want really fine cut in controls, although I consider this largely unnecessary and know many scratch DJs using the stock Rane faders as a preference. A great second hand option that has held it’s resale value as a high quality piece of equipment.
RANE/ SERATO IMMINENT CHANGES

Please be aware that the TTM 57sI will only be supported officially for use with Serato Scratch Live software until 2015 as in February 2014 they are switching to their newer, more up to date software Serato DJ. I am keeping mine until then and maybe even beyond! I will cover these changes in the Serato DVS section later on to keep it simple.

WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
OVERVIEW

Very latest mixer release in the Rane range for use with Serato DJ, the updated Serato DVS software. The first option as a replacement for the discontinued TTM 57sl, although it does not contain effects or Serato control surface and is more akin the to
TTM 56s. It is effectively a Serato DJ enabled version of the TTM-56S. I have not used this model.

“The Sixty-One is a plug-and-play package supporting two-deck digital vinyl simulation, software effects and all the record and playback channels you need. The Sixty-One Mixer supports both analog and Digital Vinyl Simulation (DVS) playback. The mixer is bundled with Serato Scratch Live and includes ASIO and Core Audio drivers for use with other audio programs. Two Serato Control Vinyl Records and two Serato Control CDs are included.

A typical setup includes operation with two Serato Noisemap DVS channels, SP-6 sample player on an independent USB Aux playback channel and Software effects enabled on the USB digital insert in the FlexFx loop. This setup also allows recording Deck 1 post-fader, Deck 2 post-fader and the Main mix.”

FEATURES

- Robust mixer bundled with Serato Scratch Live.
- USB 2.0 port supports 6 stereo record and 4 stereo record channels.
- Pristine 32-bit/48kHz audio processing.
- Integrated 20 channel sound card.
- Fully MIDI-mappable.
- 3-band EQ, gain, pan, HP/LP filter control.
- Magnetic faders with contour and reverse control.
- FlexFx assign, headphone cue, Q-peak meter.
- USB aux input for SP-6 sample playback.
- Four Phono/CD Inputs plus mic, session I/o, and main out.
- Compatible with BOTH current Serato Scratch Live software and forthcoming upgrade and transition to Serato DJ 1.6 (February 2014).

INTEGRATED DVS?

Yes - Fully compatible with Serato Scratch Live / Serato DJ (from Feb 2014).
**SUMMARY**

Very high end mixer that will take you into the future in style. A very high price tag for beginners and pros alike, but a quality investment that will last, no doubt about it. For users looking to upgrade their TTM 57sl, this is not really a replacement, due to the lack of midi controller surface and built in effects.

**WHERE TO BUY**

[Click here to view buying information](#)
RANE SIXTY-TWO

$1,999.00 / £1550.

OVERVIEW

All singing, all dancing top of the range integrated Serato mixer with built in controls for Serato Scratch Live. I have not used this model.

The Sixty-Two is the ultimate plug-and-play package supporting two-deck digital vinyl simulation, software controls, two USB ports for easy DJ transitions, on-board beat...
effects, software effects insert and all the record and playback channels you need. The Sixty-Two Mixer supports both analog and Digital Vinyl Simulation (DVS) playback. The mixer is bundled with Serato Scratch Live and includes ASIO and Core Audio drivers for use with other audio programs.

FEATURES

- Direct control of over 40 Scratch Live software controls.
- Fast and intuitive on-board control for library, cues, loops, and samples on two computers (2x DJs with their own laptops can share the mixer).
- Each USB port supports six stereo record and four stereo playback channels.
- ASIO and Core Audio Drivers.
- 32-bit floating point audio processing sampled at 48kHz.
- Mic/line input on XLR/TRS jack with gain trim, two-band EQ, Flex FX assign and On/Over controls.
- Internal Effects Engine includes Filter, Flanger, Phaser, Echo, Robot and Reverb effects.
- External analog insert for analog effects processor and USB Insert for software effects.
- USB Aux Input for SP-6 sample playback with HP/LP Filter, Headphone Cue and Flex FX assign.
- Magnetic crossfader and channel faders with reverse and contour controls.
- Universal power supply.
- Compatible with BOTH Serato Scratch Live software and forthcoming upgrade and transition to Serato DJ 1.6.

INTEGRATED DVS?

Yes - Fully compatible with Serato Scratch Live / Serato DJ (from Feb 2014).
**SUMMARY**

Super duper quality, top of the range, high end mixer that will take you into the future in style, with all the functionality that you could ever hope for, with a price tag to match. A major investment that you can grow into as you develop your skills. Obviously a non essential to starting out in scratching, but worth knowing (dreaming?) about for the future. Also on my list for when my TTM 57sl expires.

**WHERE TO BUY**

[Click here to view buying information](#)
TRAKTOR KONTROL Z2

$599.00 / £499

OVERVIEW

High end DJ mixer, Traktor controller and 24-bit audio interface. Designed by Native Instruments who make both the hardware and the Traktor software, so you know they are going to work well together.
Pro DJs using this mixer include:

- DJ Shiftee
- DJ Qbert
- Rafik
- Craze
- Unkut

I have not used this myself.

**FEATURES**

- Includes Traktor 2.5 software with control vinyl + CDs.
- 2 stand-alone channels + 2 full Remix Channels on the DJ mixer.
- Sturdy, aircraft grade aluminum construction.
- Ergonomic and intuitive layout.
- Multi-colored Remix Deck / cue point trigger buttons and LED loop display.
- 3-band EQ w/ dedicated filters per channel.
- Premium (mini) Innofader faders + high end knobs and buttons.
- Built-in powered USB hub for up to 2 add-on controllers like Traktor Kontrol F1 or X1.
- Macro FX and Flux Mode for expressive sound manipulation and effect control.
- Lossless post-fader effects with the included Traktor effects suite.
- Pro XLR outputs + booth output Summary.

**INTEGRATED DVS?**

Yes - Fully compatible with Traktor Pro 2 software.
KNOWN ISSUES
There was an issue with the integrated mini Innofader made by Audio Innovate which appears to have been fixed. For more info see this forum post from the manufacturer.

SUMMARY
Great mid priced entry into the world of DVS / digital vinyl scratching.

WHERE TO BUY
Click here to view buying information
PIONEER DJM T1

$699 / £569

OVERVIEW

One of the very first high performance Traktor certified mixers that featured integrated Traktor controls.

Once a high priced option (over double the cost at $1599 / £1279), this mixer underwent a firmware update to provide even more direct control over advanced Traktor software functions such as all eight Hot Cues, individual sample volume control, FX3 and FX4, plus a significant price drop that allows it to compete with the Traktor Kontrol Z2.
As used by Pro DJs Qbert & DJ Shiftee. I have not used this, but have seen plenty of great reviews.

FEATURES

- 2 stand-alone channels & 2 full remix channels.
- TRAKTOR 2 Series Control.
- Scratch Control Capability.
- High Quality Performance Faders.
- Clean and Powerful Audio Outputs.
- Internal USB Soundcard.
- Includes timecode vinyl & CDs for Traktor DVS system.

Other features

- Microphone and auxiliary inputs located on the front of the mixer.
- Improved grip with rubber knobs for ISOLATOR/EFFECT/LOOP volume controls.
- Multi-input selector for switching between CD/PHONO/USB inputs.
- Three band isolator type equalizer for a wide range of level control from +6 dB to -∞ (cut) for HI/MID/LOW ranges individually.
- MIDI signal output enable fader/isolator operation data for transmitting to external devices.
- LFO CONTROL outputs MIDI signal that changes at beat-by-beat intervals for precision control.
- "P-LOCK Fader Cap" locking mechanism on channel fader and crossfader knobs designed to prevent fader caps from slipping.
- Auto Standby automatically recognizes the current state of operation and input signal, switching the power to standby mode when there’s no activity or input detected for a period of time.
- Booth output volume control.
INTEGRATED DVS?
Yes - Fully compatible with Traktor Pro 2 software.

SUMMARY
A solid mixer. A real high quality alternative to the Traktor Kontrol Z2 (featured next) from a respected brand in the DJ equipment arena. It may not be as streamlined but it is still a cost effective integrated DVS mixer for entry into the word of digital scratching with Traktor Pro 2 software.

WHERE TO BUY
Click here to view buying information
VESTAX Q5 PRO IV / 4

$799 / £575
OVERVIEW

High quality 2-channel scratch mixer with built in midi controls that allow DJs to control DVS software such as Traktor Scratch and Serato with the addition of a hardware interface.

I have not used this mixer, although I can testify to the build quality of my previous Vestax 06 Pro.

FEATURES

- 2 channel mixer.
- 8 inputs, including mic.
- Thru In/Out connections on the rear for DVS users. These Thru connections allow the DJ to connect a DVS system such as Traktor or Serato, without having to unplug the CD player or turntable while it’s playing.
- Dedicated MIDI controller section for looping, cue points and loading tracks within your favourite digital DJ software.
- MIDI compatible with various DJ software to enable the DJ mix without operating keyboards.
- Carefully designed control layout to pursuit operability.
- High quality 3 band equalizer per channel.
- CF-X2 digital non-contact magnetic fader with adjustable cut lag sensitivity with adjustable curve, reverse & cut lag.
- Input fader curve adjust & reverse.
- XLR master, 6.3mm jack booth & RCA phono aux outputs.
- Send / return.
- XLR / 6.3mm jack combi mic input.
- Extra RCA phono input on mic channel.
INTEGRATED DVS?

No - Traktor A6 or Rane SL2 needed.

SUMMARY

In the same class as the TTM 56sl or Ecler Hack 360 / 380. Connects to the DVS interface of your choice, so if you change your mind from Traktor to Serato, you are still good to go and won’t have to change your whole mixer. A quality mixer used and loved by many scratch DJs.

WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
ECLER HAK 360 / 380

360 - $650 / £400
380 - $750 £500

OVERVIEW

After my Vestax 06 Pro, this was once of the first higher quality mixers I got to use at a couple of different friends houses. I was blown away by the smoothness, lightness and quality of the fader and the sleek design. High quality non DVS mixer.

“Professional battle mixer featuring the award winning ETERNAL magnetic crossfader with 5-year warranty.”
Designed and manufactured with expert consultation from DMC and ITF champions all over the world, the HAK 360 has endorsed top performers like Jekey, Noisy Stylus, Silk Kuts, Goldfingers, Ritchie Ruftone, Woody, Rocky Rock, Jazz-T, Presteez, Peril, Vinyl Richie, Mr Brown, Mana and Fly to name a few.”

FEATURES

• Second generation of ETERNAL contactless technology magnetic crossfader that includes a warranty of 5 years.
• High end sound quality.
• Professional fader shape adjustments.
• Hamster switch.
• "Fat designed" CUT switches, smooth and durable. Multidirectional, offering 8 adjustments accessible by removing the front panel.
• Advanced monitoring system.
• Effect send switches.
• Balance - One Balance short slider per channel allows the DJ to execute "Stereo-Pan-Scratches" in a fast and easy fading manipulation.
• Powerful 3 band EQ.
• Master Out 1 & 2 and REC output.
• Session channel - daisy chain formation connection for team mixing.

The 380 model features all the above with the addition of:

• **Smart Scratch Cue** - A revolutionary feature allowing DJs to cue their scratch on the headphones before playing it live. Safe feature assisted by LEDs and smart microprocessor preventing accidental release.

INTEGRATED DVS?

No - Traktor A6 or Rane SL2 needed.
SUMMARY

High quality scratch mixer. Amazing featherlight fader - you can literally blow the fader from one side to the other - with a very fine cut in point that is fully adjustable. Great price. Probably my choice for the next jump up in price from the DIF-1S to a higher quality mixer without integrated DVS support, unless you want to spend extra on the Rane TTM 56s. Still one of my favourite mixers and recommended.

WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
RODEC SCRATCHBOX

$999 / £749.99

OVERVIEW

Super high quality non-integrated DVS Scratch mixer, designed to the highest quality standards possible, with input from world class respected turntables lead primarily by Lamont & Grazzhoppa (Belgium).

“And then we got the idea to create the ultimate scratch mixer...
A team of professional Scratch Deejays and our R&D department tested every available scratch mixer on the market.
Our goal was to improve every available feature and used component.
To live up to the RODEC reputation this mixer needed the RODEC Quality, Sound, Headroom and Equalizer.
Our DJ team provided the necessary refreshing new features. After more than 2 years of development the result is "the RODEC Scratchbox" in our opinion the ultimate scratch mixer without unnecessary bells & whistles."

I haven’t used this.

FEATURES

- Super smooth infinium crossfader with tension adjustment, lag control, reverse and full curve control.
- All 3 faders are replaceable and can be replaced with analogue or digital faders.
- Effects send return loop with a wet/dry fader for adding an effects unit and a 3 position transform switch per channel which can be configured allowing you to perform lightning double speed transform scratches.
- Front & top-panel in elegant matt silver paint.
- Aluminium anodised smooth scratchplate, no obstructions by any paint of text print on the panel.
- Front-handles to carry the mixer and to avoid unwanted moving of the buttons during use and during connection of the mixing panel.
- 4 x input channels, 2 x phono inputs on gold plated RCA connectors.
- 4 x line inputs CH1 + CH2 + CH3/FX-return + CH4/session/backtape-in.
- 1 x microphone input on COMBO (XLR-JACK) connector.
- 2 x master outputs on RCA connectors.
- Symmetrical output with XLR connectors on master.
- 1 x AUX/FX-send output on RCA connectors.
- 1 x record/AUX/session output on RCA connectors.
- 1 x strong head-phones output on JACK (6,35mm - 1/4") and mini-JACK (3.2mm - 1/8").

INTEGRATED DVS?

No. Traktor A6 or Rane SL2 needed.
SUMMARY

A bit more an of an unknown as this mixer has not really become established or widely adopted. Rated by Gizmo & Deft at DJ Worx and gets nothing but positive reviews from what I can tell.

A somewhat older style mixer, with newer mixers leaning towards featuring integrated DVS such as Serato and Traktor and seem to be leading the way.

It competes and probably even beats the TTM 56s, Hak 360 / 380 nad Vestax 05 Pro IV in terms of quality, although its on the higher end of the pricing. My only concern would be the optical fader, when you consider that the other mixers in its class all feature magnetic faders, but there have been no complaints from all the reviews I have seen. Replacement parts could potentially be an issue for a less well know brand when you consider brands like Rane are more more widely adopted and have freely available parts.

So, to sum up, a super high quality non DVS mixer. Probably top of its class for non DVS mixer again with the matching price tag.

WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
USED / SECOND HAND MIXERS

RECOMMENDED

- Vestax 05 06 07 08 - with the addition of an optional new Innofader.
- Rane 56 / 56s / 57sl.
- Traktor Kontrol z2 - these don’t appear so much as they are so new, second hand market and quality largely unknown.

All of these mixers are generally known and trusted in the second hand market. They are considered solid and reliable.

All other mixers listed are still relatively new, especially the Rane sixty series and don’t come up for sale that much but its worth keeping an eye out.
CROSSFADERS

Clickity click.
CROSSFADERS

INTRODUCTION

THE most important part in getting a crisp scratching on / off sound, one that DJs spend the most time getting right.

You will be spending a great deal of time clicking that fader open and shut and you need something designed specifically for scratching that is sturdy and up to the task.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

• Cut in time / distance aka “fader lag” - you need a very short sharp cut in.
• Curve adjustment CF adjustment - this allows you to vary whether the cut in curve is sharp / instant on or a smooth fade.
• Smoothness.
• “Butteryness” - a made up word to describe the smoothness and lightness of the fader.
• Ability to and necessity of cleaning and maintaining the fader yourself.
• Ease of fitting.
TYPES OF FADER

Before we look at what’s out there, it is helpful to understand the types of crossfader.

TYPE 1 - CONTACT FADERS

A - CARBON TRACK

- Low cost.
- Small form factor.
- Can have a ‘grainy’ feel.
- Longevity issues.
- **Examples:** DJ mixers not designed for scratch markets, many MIDI controllers.

Not recommended for scratch DJs.

B - CONDUCTIVE PLASTIC

- Smooth feel.
- Long lasting.
- Require intermittent cleaning.
- **Examples:** Vestax PCV, Pro X Fade.

Cleaning these types of fader generally restores their smoothness.

TYPE 2 - CONTACTLESS

There are three main types of contactless faders found in the scratch DJ world.
1 - OPTICAL FADERS

- Low cost, contactless technology
- Most susceptible to environmental interference (smoke, dirt and disco lighting can fool the sensors).
- Temperature can create delays in response time.
- Issues with accuracy in low cost designs.
- All optical faders are not created equal, the light sensing device can be designed as a photo resistor, transistor, or diode. Photo diodes are very quick, and high performing, but they are much more expensive. Photo resistors react much slower in comparison, and can lead to movement not being accurately transcribed.
- **Examples:** Focus Fader (Stanton), Infinium fader.

2 - MAGNETIC FADERS

- Extremely accurate.
- Pretty much immune to environmental factors.
- Expensive.
- Smooth contactless technology.
- User maintainable.
- **Examples:** Rane Magnetic Fader, Ecler Eternal Fader, Vestax CF-X2.

As you can probably guess, one of the preferred faders for scratch DJs. When the Rane magnetic fader first launched there was a video of it being submerged in Coca-Cola and still working (obviously do not try this at home). Top choice.

3 - CAPACITANCE FADERS

- Accurate.
- Expensive.
- Resistant to environmental influences.
- Smooth contactless technology.
- **Examples:** Innofader

The quality of capacitive faders and magnetic faders is very similar. Top choice.
INNOFADER

$150 / £139 - Innofader Pro.
$125 / £124.99 - Innofader PNP (Plug n Play).
$£ TBC - Innofader Mini PNP.

OVERVIEW

Very high quality widely adopted standalone and OEM crossfader that is super adjustable according to user preference in terms of cut in time (lag), curve and tension.

“The success of a mixer is largely down to the feel of the crossfader. It’s a highly personal experience that is often ignored with stock faders. You need to make it your own and feel that the fader won’t break in your hands.”

I have personally used this in friends mixers and in a QFO and I loved the quality feel.
The Innofader comes in 3 main configurations:

- **Innofader Pro** - For maximum compatibility with mixers.
- **Innofader PNP** - Simple “plug n play” for easy fitting in most well known mixers.
- **Mini Innofader PNP** - (Launching spring 2014). A smaller non adjustable version of its big brother, the Innofader Pro / PNP.

You have to fit it yourself, so you need to consider and check if it is compatible with your mixer of choice:


**FEATURES (NON MINI VERSIONS)**

- Advanced non-contact capacitance technology.
- Solid steel 8mm steel fader stem - designed to withstand even the hardest battering from a heavy handed scratch DJ.
- Polished Steel rails - runs as smooth as butter, responding to even the lightest touch.
- On-board curve and cut-in control.
- Tension adjust control.
- Silicone rubber stoppers at the end of the rails - to eliminate the much despised "clicking" noise often experienced with other faders.
- Long life, ultra low maintenance.
- Knowledge and confidence fitting electronics is needed.
- Check the Innofader site for full mixer compatibility and product info.

**SUMMARY**

A high quality, tried and tested crossfader that is favoured by many scratch DJs.
A truly cost effective way to turn an existing mixer into a high performing scratch mixer (at least in terms of the crossfader, which we know is a major consideration).

You can customise this fader according to your preferences to get it just right for your style of scratching, with the adjustable cut in time, curve and tension controls.

Probably the number one choice when upgrading a crossfader.

**WHERE TO BUY**

[Click here to view buying information](#)
MINI INNOFADE

A word on the mini innofader as currently used in the DJ Tech DIF-1S & Native Instruments Traktor Kontrol Z2 mixers.

"Description:

The mini Innofader is a very compact, low cost version of the Innofader. It comes standard with either a light tension for scratching or slightly higher tension for mixing. Other options include different stem types and height and grounded vs. ungrounded stem. Both grounded and ungrounded stems work but the grounded stems will also allow the fader to work properly even without a knob.

Like its larger Innofader cousin, the mini Innofader is also designed to last more than 4 million cycles and is buttery smooth. We use the same reliable and long lasting capacitance technology but in a more compact form. The mini Innofader has also kept the on-board calibration button so no matter how long you use and abuse the mini Innofader, it will always be possible to recalibrate it later.

Currently as of 10/2012 the mini Innofader is only available as an OEM (product. Based on customer demand we are also looking at doing retail replacement versions in the future but don’t have them available yet. Thank you for your support and confidence in our product!”

Although the mini Innofader is currently only available to OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers) to integrate into their products, according to the Innofader website, starting in Spring of 2014, you will be able to replace virtually any crossfader imaginable with a mini Innofader PNP.
KNOWN ISSUES

There were recent issues with the mini Innofader that is featured inside the DJ Tech DIF-1S & Native Instruments Traktor Kontrol Z2. The issue was reportedly fixed in December 2012, but some are still some left in circulation. Read full explanation here.
PRO X FADE

$Price unavailable / £90
OVERVIEW

Conductive Plastic user adjustable analogue crossfader.

I used this in my Vestax 06 Pro for a couple months. It was definitely an upgrade from the PCV and then Penny and Giles crossfader which prolonged the life of my Vestax 06 Pro.

FEATURES

- Advanced 100% Conductive Plastic Technology.
- Tension Torque Control.
- Customisable Cut-in Point.
- Interchangeable Mixer Interface.
- Double Wide 8mm Fader Stem.
- Easy Accessible Assembly Housing for cleaning.
- Professional DJ Endorsement.

Accessories and Extras

- Caig© Lubrication Oil.
- Fader Knob.
- Torque Adjustment Tool.
- Cleaning guide and tool.
- Mixer Compatible Face-plate and screws.
- Mixer Compatible Interface Cable.

Check the manufacturer’s site for mixer compatibility.
SUMMARY

Although possibly overshadowed by the Innofader, the Pro X Fade presents another option for scratch DJs looking to breathe life into their mixers and have increased control over the adjustments and setup of their fader.

WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
Do people buy used crossfaders? My eBay search for completed listings didn’t return anything. This is possibly because people buy them new and then just hang onto them or sell them on inside their mixers.

For the price you pay, it’s probably best to invest in a new crossfader with a warranty, then there will be no surprises!
NEEDLES & CARTRIDGES

Put your needle on the record when the drums beats go like this...
CARTRIDGES & STYLUS / NEEDLES

INTRODUCTION

So, you’ve got a turntable and a mixer with a good crossfader. You’re gonna need some needles! Without which there is no sound. Do not neglect this part, it’s really important! Poor quality needles and cartridges = low quality sound and a horrible skipping needles experience.

A quick overview:

- Cartridge - connects to the headshell & tonearm and contains all the wiring.
- Stylus / needles - connect to the end of the cartridge.
- You need both a cartridge and stylus which are sold together.
- Replacement styluses are priced lower for when you need to replace a worn needle.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Loudness
- Sound Quality
- Skip proofability or skip proofness? How skipless the needles are!

TOP CHOICES:

- Shure M447
- Ortofon Qbert
SHURE M447

$54.95 Cartridge + Stylus
$30.00 Single Stylus

OVERVIEW
My cartridge & needle of choice and the choice of most turntablists worldwide.

FEATURES
- Amazing skip resistance.
- Extremely low record wear.
- Booming low end perfect for hip-hop DJs.
- Extremely high output (loud).
- Affordable.
- Used by most respected scratch DJs.
• Replacement stylus available so you don't need to replace the main cartridge each time.

Disadvantages:
• Harsh on the high end sound.
• Only comes as a headshell mount, which means you need to buy headshells if you don't have any already. Most turntables come with them though.
• Tend to gather fluff or dust. But just clean your records! Easy!

SUMMARY
Pretty much bomb proof if set up correctly. (Setup tutorial video at the end of this section.)

I have always used these carts and they have been excellent. Great quality, value for money and stability, you need look no further really! Highly recommended!

WHERE TO BUY
Click here to view buying information
I use this official Shure crush proof and water tight case to protect my needles when I am travelling. Works a treat!
ORTOFON QBERT

$73 - $115

Q.BERT OM “OPTIMUM MATCH” STYLE

Q.BERT CC “CONCORDE” STYLE
OVERVIEW

Co designed by DJ Bert who has probably spent more time scratching then the rest of us put together.

- **OM** Stands for Optimum Match which are designed to match most tonearms perfectly.
- **Concorde** - derived from the look of the cartridge.

The sole difference between OM and Concorde cartridges is the housing and contacts found on the cartridge.

- The OM range requires mounting onto an appropriate headshell (usually supplied with your turntable).
- The Concorde range conveniently attaches directly to the tonearm.

There is no difference in sound between the two ranges, within the respective series of cartridge (ie OM Qbert versus Concorde Qbert).

FEATURES

- Co-designed by world leading scratch DJ Q.Bert especially for scratching and back-cueing.
- High tracking ability (less skipping)
- Ultra high output!
- Unsurpassed handling.
- Low wear characteristics.
- More subdued high end, which helps to minimize surface noise from worn vinyl,
- Accentuated mid-range to help bring scratching to the front of the sound stage.
- Higher sound quality than that of the M44-7.
- Less dust buildup than m447.
• Very expensive.

**Q.BERT MODELS OVERVIEW**

**Q.BERT CC TWIN - €223 / $275.99**

- 2 Concorde cartridges
- 2 preinstalled styli
- Stylus brush
- Aluminium Flight case

**Q.BERT CC SET - €147.00**

- Concorde cartridge body
- 1 preinstalled stylus
- 1 replacement stylus
- Stylus brush
- Aluminium Flight case
Q.BERT CC SINGLE - €115

- Concorde cartridge body
- 1 preinstalled stylus.

Q.BERT OM SINGLE - $73

- OM cartridge body
- 1 preinstalled stylus.

Q.BERT STYLUS €44

The Q.Bert Replacement Stylus is a genuine replacement part for Ortofon Q.Bert series cartridges.
SUMMARY
High quality cartridges and needles coming in at a more expensive price, co-designed and endorsed by a leading turntablist himself. I would like to try a set of the Concorde version out myself for sure.

WHERE TO BUY
Click here to view buying information
USED / SECOND HAND NEEDLES

Not recommended! For the price you pay, you are better of getting a brand new set with a warranty.
HOW TO SET UP YOUR TONEARM FOR SKIPLESS SCRATCHING

I recommend watching my video on how to set up your tonearm and needles to ensure skip free scratching:

Click here to watch my “How To Set Up Your Tonearm for Skipless Scratching” video
SLIPMATS

They’ve got to be slippy!
SLIPMATS

INTRODUCTION

Slipmats might seem like a small consideration, but it really can affect your scratching.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- A thin slipmat to allow great record control.
- A good amount if slippyness!
- Design and colour if you are fussy!

AVOID AT ALL COSTS:

Thick slipmats like the standard technics felt mats. If a slip mat is too thick, it means that when you touch the record it moves or wobbles up and down and as a result, your needles and tonearm will bounce off the record.
**OVERVIEW**

Created by DJ Qbert, I have always used these for as long as I can remember and can recommend them from personal experience.

**FEATURES**

- Thin for ultimate record control.
- Low-friction, high-performance, i.e slippy!
SUMMARY
The standard all round great choice.

WHERE TO BUY
Click here to view buying information
OVERVIEW

I have been testing these out and they also rock! I use these and Butter Rugs interchangeably. I have some see through records that look better on the black slip mat rather than the white Butter Rugs.

You can see a brief overview of the table cloths in this video (click link below):

[Click here to watch my D-Styles Tablecloths overview video]
FEATURES

- Thin, felt like construction and slick underside give you excellent control over the record.
- 4 slip sheets which are thin plastic sheets that you place between the platter and slipmat for even more slickness and control.
- High quality feel.
- Feel more durable than Rutter Rugs which can fray around the edges after prolonged use.

SUMMARY

Very high quality slipmat used by world class scratch DJ D-Styles that I can 100% recommend.

WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
SCRATCH SOUNDS & SAMPLES

Ahhh, it’s sooo fresssssh!
INTRODUCTION

So, you have your setup, and now you need something to scratch with. This is where scratch vinyl / battle tools come in. Scratch records or battle tools are records that have a series of sounds on that are suitable for scratching with.

Classic sounds include:

- Ahhh / beep
- Fresh

Even the most basic of scratch records usually contain “ahhh” and “fresh”, which are considered the standard “vanilla” sounds for scratching. These sounds are good long sounds that are great to learn to scratch with before moving onto more complex words and phrases.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Skipless Vinyl - if you are using a regular vinyl record and not Serato, it always helps if it is skipless.
- Range of quality, differing samples.

REMEMBER

Most importantly, please remember you DO NOT need to spend tons on vinyl.

I have covered the most widely used scratch records next.
OVERVIEW

Probably the most famous of all scratch records and my personal favourite since I first got my hands on it. If you can only buy one real scratch vinyl, get this one!

skipless

FEATURES

A good selection of classic samples including:

- Ahh / beep
- Fresh
- Ah yeh
• Funky fresh
• 1, 2, 3, 4
• Drop
• Woooooo
• It’s fresh

SUMMARY
If you only buy one scratch vinyl, get this one!

WHERE TO BUY
Click here to view buying information
OTHER POPULAR SCRATCH VINYL

There are waaaaaay too many scratch vinyls to list here, but these are some of the more popular:

Anything by Dirt Style Records / Thud Rumble.

DJ Babu’s Super Duck Breaks / Super Duper Duck Breaks:

DJ Craze – Bully Breaks
DJ Atrak – Gangsta Breaks

Alternatively, just type do a search for “battle records”, “scratch records” or “DJ tools”.

This range of ultrapitch scratch records also come highly recommended, the only downside being that they are very hard to find and no longer pressed! Definitely worth a mention though. Put them on your wish list then if you come across them you can snap them up.

**FEATURES**

- Skipless.
• Ultrapitched sampled for ultimate record control - you must have an ultrapitch feature on your turntable to use these types of record.
• Good selection of original samples.

The most popular releases are:

• DJ Hertz – Grasshopper Break
• DJ Hertz – Grasshopper Break Volume 2
• DJ Hertz – Grasshopper Break Volume 3
• DJ Hertz – Enter the Scratch Game
• DJ Hertz – Enter the Scratch Game Volume 2

SUMMARY

For a full overview of scratching with ultrapitch records in general, see this article:

SCRATCH SOUNDS: DIGITAL VINYL

INTRODUCTION

Scratching with digital vinyl has meant the advent of more choice for scratch DJs, as samples are easier to produce and acquire by simply downloading.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Everything as per the Vinyl section plus:

- Skipless - less of an issue when using DVS as you can use relative mode, but it can be helpful to know which samples are on which track of the record.
- High production quality mp3 / wavs.
- Range of quality, differing samples.

Once again, remember you DO NOT need to spend tons on digital samples. Download one and get going!
ULTIMATE SCRATCH SAMPLES

DIGITAL SKIPLESS SCRATCH RECORDS

I make a range of skipless scratch sample records for use with DVS systems like Serato and Traktor to get you going.

Available here:

Ultimate Scratch Samples
INDIVIDUAL SKIPLESS SCRATCH RECORDS

Also available as individual packs for those on more of a budget:

Digital Skipless Scratch Record 27

Digital Skipless Scratch Record 28
Digital Skipless Scratch Record 31

Digital Skipless Scratch Record 33
EVEN MORE DIGITAL SCRATCH SAMPLES

The following artists have a range of scratch samples for digital scratching:

- **Symatic** - Skipless ultrabeat samples.
- **Le JAD** - Large collection of scratch sentences.
- **Peabird** - Scratch Tool Series.
INSTRUMENTALS TO SCRATCH OVER

Drop that beat!
INSTRUMENTALS TO SCRATCH OVER

INTRODUCTION

So, you have your setup, and some sounds to scratch with, now you need some instrumental music to scratch over.

You can scratch over any instrumental. The most common being hip hop and electro style beats. Find a beat you like and get scratching!

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- “Break” or “battle” records.
- Classic Hip Hop instrumentals.
- Electro instrumentals.
- Loopers.

For beginners, DVS is not essential, it just is very convenient for playing music and loops.

If you do not have DVS, you will need to source the instrumental music you are scratching over as one of the following options:

- An instrumental record on a second turntable if you have one.
- A computer or mp3 player with a line out into the line in on your mixer.
- Loopers on your computer as above.
ULTIMATE BEATS FOR SCRATCH PRACTICE

I created this instrumental loops pack for scratch DJs which features a wide range of different styles and tempos:

Ultimate Beats for Scratch Practice

Also available as individual beat packs.
EVEN MORE INSTRUMENTALS

Here are some more resources if you are looking for beats to scratch to.

- **Gold Voltron** - Large collection of beats from a very generous beat maker.
- **Le JAD** - Large collection of mainly euro style / electro beats.
- **Your Looper** - animated flash programs where you plug the output of your computer into your mixer to load up loops.
DVS

Hardware and software for digital DJing.
DVS

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A DVS?

If you want to scratch with mp3s you need a Digital Vinyl System.

Put very simply, a DVS allows a DJ to physically manipulate the playback of digital audio files (mp3, wav, aiff, ogg and non-DRM aac) stored on a computer, using traditional vinyl turntables together with special timecode vinyl records.

You only need a DVS interface if one is not built into your mixer (such as Traktor Kontrol Z2 / Rane TTM 57sl).

WHY DO SCRATCH DJS USE IT?

• Allows DJs to play and scratch with any mp3 sound you like - you get the best of both worlds.
• DJs no longer need to buy, store and carry records.

A DVS IS COMPRISED OF 3 PARTS:

• Hardware interface e.g. Traktor A6 / Rane SL2 or interface that is pre-built into a mixer e.g. Traktor Kontrol Z2 / Rane Sixty One.
• Timecode vinyl (or CD).
• Vinyl Emulation Software e.g. Traktor Pro 2 / Serato Scratch Live / Serato DJ.
WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The main factor here is using a recognised industry standard DVS that is most commonly used by professional scratch DJs. If others are using it then you can be confident that it stands up to the demands of scratching.

The software most widely used by both Scratch DJ and DJs alike is **Serato Scratch Live / Serato DJ** and Native Instruments **Traktor Pro 2** which together, dominate the industry. In the following section I will cover the respective hardware interfaces that connect to the software.
SERATO

$499 / £349

HARDWARE - SL2
SOFTWARE

Scratch Live (being discontinued in 2015)

Serato DJ (just launched February 2014)
OVERVIEW

Serato is the longest standing, most stable professional DVS option.

Currently, Serato DVS interfaces are made exclusively by Rane.

Important note - There are some imminent changes to Serato happening involving the discontinuation of Scratch Live and the full switch to Serato DJ.

Please watch this official video that explains all the changes and a summary is as follows:

Serato Scratch Live software is being discontinued. Supported until 2015.
SL1 and TTM 57sl - discontinued, supported until 2015.

Serato DJ with features more stability launches in February 2014.
Serato DJ with DVS is compatible with Rane 62, 61, rane SL2, 3, 4 interfaces as of February 2014.

SERATO DJ SOFTWARE FEATURES

- More stable, robust and increased ability to update.
- Improved user interface.
- More cue points - 8 not 5.
- New effects.
SL2 FEATURES

- Compact, professional two-deck interface packed with creative features to give DJs a competitive edge.
- Boasting high quality 48 kHz, 24-bit audio, the Rane SL2 outputs a warm, punchy sound that you have to hear to believe.
- Inputs for two deck mixing on turntables or CD decks.
- Two software-switchable analog Thru connections for regular vinyl or CD.
- Studio-grade phono preamps, and 48kHz 24-bit audio processing for superior sound quality.
- Advanced, low latency USB 2.0 drivers.
- Built-in galvanic isolation to eliminate computer noise and interference.
- Compact and ultra rugged hardware for portability and simple setup.
- ASIO and Core Audio Drivers for studio production with third-party software.
- Bus power from USB port or with optional external power supply.

SUMMARY

Very high quality, stable, industry standard DVS. Great personal support via email and the forum. Used by Pro scratch DJs worldwide. Highly recommended. Use the SL2 for 2 channels, SL3 for 3 channels and SL4 for 4 channels.

My current DVS of choice. Do not underestimate Serato!

WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
OVERVIEW

- **TRAKTOR PRO 2** is the software.
- **TRAKTOR AUDIO 6 / 10** are the interfaces.
- **TRAKTOR SCRATCH A6 / A10** are the combination of the software, interface and timecode vinyl.

Another quality DVS that is the main alternative and competition to Serato. It has been gaining popularity, especially since Qbert, Shiftee and many other Scratch DJs started using it and fast is becoming a favourite.
TRAKTOR PRO 2 SOFTWARE FEATURES

- Remix Decks let you select from up to 64 loops and one-shot samples per deck.
- Ultra-precise looping and cueing functions - eight hot cues per track.
- TruWave hi-res colored waveforms.
- More than 30 professional DJ effects, all synced to track or master tempo.
- Loop Recorder - record live loops from any channel (single or multiple), the live input feeds, or the master output.

TRAKTOR SCRATCH DUO A6 FEATURES

- 6-channel premium audio interface.
- TRAKTOR PRO 2 software.
- TRAKTOR SCRATCH timecode media.
- 6 ins/outs and 24-bit Cirrus Logic converter.
- Flagship TRAKTOR software with Remix Deck.
- Powerful looping, cueing and 30+ DJ effect.
- Purchase the A10 package for 10 ins and outs.
- Accurate and responsive timecode - twice the resolution of most competitors.

The Traktor hardware interface is built into the following mixers:

- Traktor Kontrol Z2.
- Pioneer DJM T1.
SUMMARY

A high quality DVS interface with some great features at a lower price than Serato. Used and endorsed by pro scratch DJs. I found the customer support from Native Instruments took longer than Serato for my Maschine hardware.

The higher resolution timecode compared to Serato translates to more accurate record movements especially when scratching with slow record movements.

Qbert did this comparison video you could check out to see if you can tell the difference.

I don’t think there is much in it and it boils down to personal choice.

WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
HEADPHONES

OVERVIEW

Although headphones are probably the least important part of scratch DJing, I thought I would share a brief overview.

If you are practicing scratching at home any headphones will do and it comes down to personal preference.

The main two options are:

• In ear = more lightweight.
• Over ear = more comfortable and noise isolating.

If you are playing out in clubs then you will need some decent headphones that are loud enough or noise isolating to cut through the noise of the monitor speakers.

I don’t have enough knowledge about headphones so I will leave it there and simply share with you what I use and why.

A great resource on headphone comparisons is here.
OVERVIEW

I still remember my first proper gig in a club with a decent loud sound system. I couldn’t hear what I was doing in my midrange Sony headphones over the monitor speaker. Another DJ lent me these for the night and I was so impressed that I went out and bought a set the very next day. I haven’t looked back, and they have travelled all over the world with me. Comfortable, loud and block out external noise to a large level. The individual components such as the cables and ear pads are replaceable which is great. Here is the official write up:
“Due to their low weight and the option of one-ear listening, the HD 25-II headphones are indispensable for mobile monitoring. The closed-back HD 25-IIs are purpose-designed, professional monitoring headphones offering high attenuation of background noise.

Capable of handling very high sound pressure levels and of extremely robust construction, these headphones perform exceptionally well in loud environments, e.g. ENG, sound reinforcement, studio monitoring and audio equipment testing. Ideal monitoring headphones for cameramen and DJs, these are a pair of true sound professionals’ working headphones.”

I also use the standard apple iPhone / iPod headphones that came with my iPhone as these are lightweight for the days I don’t want my ears completely covered.

WHERE TO BUY

Click here to view buying information
AMP + SPEAKERS / POWERED SPEAKERS

OVERVIEW

If you don’t want to use headphones, then you need an amp and speakers or powered speakers.

This is too vast a topic to cover here and the choices are endless.

Use what you have already.

For reference I use Genelec 6010a.

Amazing sound. Quality, Finnish design and build.
A WORD ON CONTROLLERS

I have recently been getting many questions from people wanting to scratch with midi controllers such as the Traktor Kontrol s2 / s4 and Vestax VCI 400.

I have brief experience of using CDJs and the VCI 400 but not enough time to give you a conclusive breakdown other than to say it is a completely different feel and way of scratching that feels nothing like vinyl.

For now I will just say that it is totally possible, maybe a bit more difficult and not as forgiving as vinyl when you are starting out, but anything is possible. I have seen some footage that shows what is possible here. In general, you don’t normally see professional scratch DJs and turntablists using controllers seriously.

I would like to try out the Traktor s2 / s4 to see what it’s like.

What is your experience? Why not email me and let me know?

Recommended Resources and further exploration:

DJ HAPPEE INTERVIEW

• Can I Scratch with Traktor Kontrol S4? Part 1
• DJ Happee Interview – Scratching with Traktor Kontrol s2 / s4 – Part 2
• Scratching with Traktor Kontrol s2
SUMMARY

So, we are nearing the end of the Scratch DJ Equipment Guide!

I hope it has given you a good insight and better understanding of what is available and the considerations you need to take into account when buying a scratch DJ setup.

In the next section I list out the options available from everything we have covered and put together some example packages to guide your buying decisions.

I also cover buying used / second hand equipment, should you decide to go that route.
EQUIPMENT LIST - BUYING CHOICES CHEAT SHEET

Here is a list of the main scratch DJ equipment components to choose from. I have left off the smaller considerations such as samples and instrumentals so you can focus on the most important pieces of equipment.

**TURNTABLES**

- Technics 1200 / 1210 mk II or mk 5 *(Used)*
- Vestax PDX 3000
- Vestax QFO
- Numark TTX
- Audio-Technica AT-LP1240-USB
- Stanton ST.150 / STR8.150
- Reloop RP-6000
- Reloop RP-7000
- Reloop RP-8000

**MIXERS**

- DJ Tech DIF-1S
- Rane TTM 56s
- Rane TTM 57sl - includes DVS
- Rane Sixty One - includes DVS
- Rane Sixty Two - includes DVS
- Traktor Kontrol Z2 - includes DVS
- Pioneer DJM T1 - includes DVS
- Vestax 05 Pro IV
- Ecler Hak 360 / 380
- Rodec Scratchbox
• **Used:** Vestax 05,06,07,08, Rane TTM57sl, Rane TTM56

**CROSSFADERS (STANDALONE)**

• Innofader
• Pro X Fade

**NEEDLES**

• Shure m447
• Ortofon Qbert

**SLIPMATS**

• ButterRugs
• D-Styles Tablecloths

**DVS INTERFACE & SOFTWARE**

• Rane SL2 / SL3 / SL4 for use with Serato Scratch Live / Serato DJ Software.
• Traktor Scratch A6 / A10 for use with Traktor Pro 2 Software.

**WHERE TO BUY**

[Click here to view buying information](#)
PACKAGES

Here are 3 suggested rough guideline packages for the different kinds of DJ budget and experience, but you can mix and match however you like.

BEGINNER

Around $1000

Mixer (No DVS): DJ Tech DIF-1S or you could put an Innofader in your existing mixer, if it is compatible, but the DIF-1S is almost the same price and you get the whole mixer.
Needles: Shure m447.
Slipmats: ButterRugs or D-Styles Tablecloths.
DVS: Traktor Scratch A6.

INTERMEDIATE

Under $1500

Turntable: Stanton ST/STR8.150, Reloop 6000, Reloop 7000, Used Technics 1200 / 1210.
Mixer (No DVS): Used Rane TTM 56, Rane TTM 56s, Ecler Hak 360 / 380, Vestax 05 Pro IV.
Mixer (Integrated DVS): used Rane TTM 57sl, Traktor Kontrol Z2, Pioneer DJM T1.
Needles: Shure m447.
Slipmats: ButterRugs or D-Styles Tablecloths.
**DVS:** Traktor Scratch A6 or Rane SL2.

**PRO**

*Over $1500*

**Turntable:** Vestax PDX 3000, Reloop 8000 / Used Technics 1200 / 1210.

**Mixer (No DVS):** Rodec Scratchbox.

**Mixer (Integrated DVS):** Rane Sixty One, Rane Sixty Two.

**Needles:** Shure m447 or Ortofon Q.Bert.

**Slipmats:** ButterRugs or D-Styles Tablecloths.

**DVS:** Traktor Scratch A6 / A10 or Rane SL2, SL3, SL4.

**WHERE TO BUY**

[Click here to view buying information](#)
BUYING USED / SECOND HAND EQUIPMENT

Don’t be afraid to consider buying used / second hand equipment. Buying second hand deserves a mention.

OVERVIEW

Pros

• You can get much better equipment for your money than you would if you bought new equipment.
• Some people sell nearly new equipment that has hardly been used for a discounted price.
• Top brands hold their quality.

Cons

• Second hand equipment may be out of warranty which means that if anything goes wrong soon after purchase, you may have to pay to get it fixed.
• You don’t know the exact history of the equipment or how it’s been treated and so careful research and discernment is needed.

Trust is the keyword when buying second hand equipment. Trust between you and the seller that the equipment you are buying is in good condition and can be expected to last and give you value for money.

WHERE TO BUY USED EQUIPMENT

• eBay - offers buyers more protection in the event of any issues that other sites.
• **Ask fellow DJs and friends** to see if they personally know of anyone trustworthy that is selling gear.

• **Ask around online communities** and look in the gear section of turntablist forums.

• **Social media sites** including Facebook and Facebook Groups.

• **Google search** for “Used DJ equipment”.

• **GumTree**.

• **Guitar Center** has a [used equipment section](#).

**GENERAL USED / SECOND HAND BUYING TIPS**

• **Top tip:** check out the completed listings on ebay advanced search to get an idea of average and fair prices you should expect to pay for used equipment.

• Do your research before buying and make sure as far as possible that the equipment you are getting is in good condition.

• Talk to the seller and get a history of the equipment and even arrange try it out and see it working if they are local.

• Check the cosmetic condition and for obvious signs of wear or damage.

• Check whether there is any warranty or guarantee remaining on the product.

• Ask to see a copy of the original purchase receipt if at all possible. (I also recommend you keeping all receipts and warranty information for any gear that you buy new, should you wish to sell it, it builds trust.)

• Honest, trustworthy sellers have nothing to hide and should welcome you to try out the equipment and give it the once over to make sure everything is in order. For example, whenever I have sold computers in the past I do collection only and have the equipment set up to show its working when the buyer arrives.

• Ask the seller questions if you are not sure about anything. Trust your gut, if in doubt, or something seems off, be wary!
EBAY SPECIFIC TIPS

All of the above points apply, plus the following:

• Take time to carefully read the product’s description. It should contain a detailed account of the item's condition, the extent to which it has been used, and clearly explain any issues, whether cosmetic or functional.
• Make sure that everything is included and working e.g power supplies and cables.
• Make certain that the pictures posted are not stock photographs but pictures of the item itself.
• If you have questions for the seller, you can contact them through eBay.
• Buy used DJ equipment only from a reliable seller. Check their feedback rating and read through comments left by previous customers. Top-rated sellers have a strong record of providing the highest level of customer service.
• Research the seller by reviewing feedback from previous buyers. Feedback includes responses from the previous 12 months and gives a general idea of how well the seller has satisfied customers in the past.
• DJ equipment be heavy and bulky - specify your location to find sellers that are located in your area. If the seller and buyer agree, a pick-up may be arranged instead of having the items shipped. This reduces the price of postage and also allows you to see the equipment working.

Please note that I cannot be held responsible for your used / second hand DJ equipment purchases or buying decisions.
SCRATCH DJ EQUIPMENT THE PROS USE

It can be useful to get an insight into what pro DJs use as it must be good if they are using it! Who better to look at than world famous scratch DJ; Grandmaster DJ Qbert.

See this article which contains a video of DJ Qbert talking about the DJ equipment he uses:

http://www.studioscratch.com/the-dj-equipment-qbert-uses/

Summary of Qbert’s Main Setup

- Traktor Kontrol Z2 mixer
- Stanton STR8.150 Turntables
- Thud Rumble Ortofon Needles

Other turntables and mixers Q uses in his studio

- Technics 1200 (Silver – the turntables I use)
- Technics 1210 (Black)
- Vestax 05-06-07-08 pros
- QFO
- Pioneer DJM T1
- Rane 62
- DJ Tech DIF-1S

So there you have it - as you can see it aligns with pretty much everything we have covered in this guide.
EQUIPMENT MOST SCRATCH DJS USE

I recently asked everyone that follows the Studio Scratches facebook page:

“What equipment do you use?”

Here is a link to the full post with lots of answers so you can see what other Scratch DJs are using. I think you will see some patterns and backs up the information in this guide:

https://www.facebook.com/studioscratches/posts/10153241811680171

Interestingly, the majority of people have Technics 1200 mk II’s!

I also asked them what they would recommend to people starting out:

https://www.facebook.com/studioscratches/posts/10153799852875171

Interesting hey?!
WHAT WOULD I BUY IF I WAS STARTING OUT?

I get asked this all the time. Every piece of the equipment I have covered in this guide will serve you very well for scratching, so it comes down to personal choice. I have used various setups and have my own preferences, but I will list out what I would do if I was starting out together with my reasons, so you can see my thinking. Remember these are my choices and I recommend that you take your time and do your research to choose what’s right for you.

TURNTABLES

I would buy a second hand Technics 1200 mk 2 or 5. I have tried other tables like the Vestax PDX 2000 and Super OEMs, but nothing comes close to the quality feel, build and well deserved reputation.

Even though newer turntables technically have a better spec with greater torque and more features, I just prefer Technics because of how great they feel to use. It is a hard thing to explain and if you can have a go on one, I would recommend it. Only if my options for Technics became exhausted, or if I wanted to scratch with ultrapitch would I consider an alternative, Vestax or Super OEM.

MIXER

I can honestly say that the DJ Tech DIF-1S mixer offers great value for the beginner DJ and performs very well without all the bells and whistles. I would go for this for my first ever scratch mixer. If I was going to save for the long term I would get a Rane 56s or at a stretch one of the new Rane sixty series with built in Serato, based on my positive experience of using them.
DVS

If I wanted to get a DVS for digital scratching, although I am experienced with Serato and love the quality and support, I would definitely consider Traktor as it has a lower price and is a high quality solution. For the price of a DJ Tech DIF-1S mixer and Traktor A6 interface however, you are almost at the cost of the Traktor Kontrol Z2 which has everything you need to control Traktor in one package, but with more features such as hot cue triggering.

Those are the main 3 equipment considerations.

I would top it off with Shure m447 needles, Butter Rugs / D-Styles Tablecloths and a copy of Super Seal because that’s all you really need to get going. It doesn’t have to be complicated! Find an instrumental to scratch to and off you go!
CONCLUSION

I hope this guide has been useful to you.

Whatever equipment you buy, remember to have FUN!

Buy the best you can (even if thats one table) and get going. Keep it simple.

*Please do not be put off by gear. The worst case scenario is that you have invested in some gear that if you don’t like, you can probably recoup up to 80% back on eBay or similar.*

On keeping up with technology, I was speaking to my good friend GoldVoltron and I was explaining how I find it very overwhelming to keep up with all the technology. He said “Meh I don’t keep up. Just use what I need.” This was reassuring to me as I also just use what I need and keep it simple to maximise the fun. Crossfader on and off is all I really need!

**The simplicity of scratching:**
Turntable, mixer, sample vinyl, beat.
Keep it simple and remember to have fun scratching today!

As always, please do your own research and make your own decisions.

Please understand that I cannot be held responsible for your equipment purchasing decisions.

If you have any further questions or feedback about this guide, please contact me.
DEDICATED EQUIPMENT REVIEW SITES

I have already expressed that I am more interested in the art of scratching rather than the tech side of things. If you wish to dig a little deeper into equipment, there are specific sites dedicated to this huge area of interest. Here are the top sites:

DJ Worx (Also visit the DJ Worx predecessor site Scratchworx for older reviews)
DJ Booth
DJ TechTools

A word of warning though, I recommend that you keep it simple and not over analyse equipment or get overwhelmed by technology. The most important thing to progressing with the art of scratching is to get a decent setup and start practicing.
NEXT STEPS

So, you have a setup, what next?

Sign up to my mailing list at StudioScratches.com if you haven’t already to receive fresh articles, helpful resources and tips on how to scratch.
STUDIO SCRATCHES RESOURCES & TOOLS

ULTIMATE BEATS FOR SCRATCH PRACTICE

Presenting every single Studio Scratches beat pack in one deluxe download package for immediate use. My Best Value beats package:

STUDIO SCRATCHES BEAT STORE

If you need **beats and samples for scratch practice** please visit the Studio Scratches beat store which has a wide selection of individual beat packs:

http://studioscratches.bandcamp.com
THE SIMPLE GUIDE TO SCRATCHING EBOOK

You have seen my free YouTube tutorials, you are getting started OK, but wouldn’t it be nice for the gaps to be filled in and your questions answered? My upcoming Simple Guide to Scratching eBook takes you through everything you need to about scratch DJing including:

• All major scratch techniques and how best to learn them.
• How to create scratch combos.
• How to approach practice.
• What to do when you get stuck.
• Ideas for progressing further.

To receive a FREE sample chapter and to be notified of the launch, you can sign up here:

http://www.studioscratches.com/scratch-tutorials/
SHORT-E’S SCHOOL OF SCRATCH

A dedicated online space where I teach you how to scratch.

**Featuring:**

- Equipment Overview Videos
- Scratch Tutorials Videos
- Scratch Combos Course
- QnA Training Videos
- Forum & Live Chat

Click here to sign up to be notified of the launch
This page contains links to purchase all the equipment that I have talked about and is updated as I discover new things.

I recommend bookmarking it for easy reference. Keep your eye on this page!

http://www.studioscratches.com/scratch-dj-equipment/
OUTRO & THANKS

Much hard work went into making this guide. Thanks for taking the time to read it and for your support.

If you would like a friend to read this guide, please send them to:

http://www.studioscratches.com/scratch-dj-equipment-guide so they can get their own copy and I can inform them of any future updates to this guide.

I appreciate the input of all the DJs I have spoken with and that have given me advice and shared their personal DJ equipment stories and recommendations.

If you have any questions after reading this guide, please feel free to get in touch and I will get back to you. Your questions help me develop more resources to help you.

If you see anything that needs adding, any mistakes, things I have overlooked or even if you disagree with something, please do let me know!

I envision this guide being revised over time and appreciate any feedback and input you may have.

You can contact me here: http://www.studioscratches.com/contact

As always, remember to PRACTICE and have FUN!

Happy Scratching! :D
- Short-E
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I’m not a fan of third person bios as it's me writing it so here goes:

My name is Emma Holmes but you probably know me as DJ Short-E / Emma Short-E.

I have been scratching since September 2000 when I fell in love with hip hop and all things scratch related.

I currently live in Bridgwater, UK. Scratching has taken me to many places in the world including the UK, NYC, Rome and Finland and I have met some amazing people.

It is my desire to pass on all that I can to help you become awesome at scratching.

When I am not on the decks or making beats I love to create artwork, surf and travel.
LET’S CONNECT - SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

Here are all the places you can find Studio Scratches and Short-E online:

StudioScratches.com
YouTube
Instagram
Facebook Page
Facebook Group
Twitter
**APPENDIX**

Finally, this section contains comments about equipment buying experiences from other Scratch DJs. If you want to add anything, please send me your experience via the [contact page](#).

**Mätthi Marxx**

"My 2 cents are: There is no "beginner-equipment"! If you buy crappy turntables/needles/mixers, you end up doing crappy stuff or no stuff at all. With my old Reloop RP1020 - I still payed around 250 each for used ones back in the days - you reached the technical limit even in babyscratching. Missing torque, jumping needles, moving turntables, deadzones so big you can stick pencils in, etc.

 Whenever s.o. asks me, I answer: "Go buy some used Technics, buy some Shure M44-7 Systems and a Serato-Box." Luckily there is a very affordable choice when it's about mixers: The DIF-1S. Love it!

 *If you buy crappy stuff, you get stuck in technical limitations soon and even these things are expensive. And because it’s crap, you won’t find anybody to sell it to, if you don’t like it. Buy the right stuff, quality, have the feeling that it’s just about you, not about the equipment. And if you don’t like it at all, sell it for the same price you bought it, if you choosed to buy used ones.

 You get what you pay for.”
Sunny Tash / Suckertash

“Basically, I started with a rotten Numark belt drive and this utterly horrible knock off of a side-brand of a nearly unusable mixer..

And eventually got to the point where I realized I was being held back by my gear.

So I went back to the dealer and asked about slowly working my way up to the next level, thinking at the time of the Geminis, which were the only competitor to the Technics that were reasonably priced at the time.

So he says "Look, I can keep upgrading you through this semi-crappy gear, or you can just jump to the good stuff. Frankly, you’ll save yourself money in the end by buying the better thing now, knowing you’re probably going to want to upgrade again and again.

I thought great advice. Got my techs, got the first generation of Rane competing with the Vestax PMCs with a TTM 54.”