

Blue Horizon Proburn Cable Burn-In and Conditioning Machine

Dan Worth



£695



The theory goes that the material touching the conductor, the dielectric, has an effect on the performance of a cable and this has been noted from very soon after the introduction of radio and the widespread use of conducting cables. In the past there was much speculation as to why this should be the case, but the work of Nickola Tesla in the latter part of the 19th century provided the answer when he passed very high voltages and frequencies (around 2000Hz) through a human with no ill effects. This phenomena is known as the 'skin' effect and is essentially the signal passing over the skin and not through the person.

It is said that cable can act in a similar fashion and that high frequencies will be passed along the surface of the wire and will avoid the inner parts of the wire. This means that in a cable used in your hifi system, it is not only the purity of the conductor that has an effect but also the wrapping/dielctric that is used. The Blue Horizon website states "However, the manufacturing process creates tension, stress and static charges between the conductor and dielectric, and the resulting deleterious effects remain permanent unless properly dealt with". It is widely

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Reviews

accepted (and I've certainly experienced the effect) that sound, be it the music you listen to on a daily basis or carefully generated frequencies played through your rig (such as from a burn in CD), will improve a cable's performance over time. Blue Horizon claim that this method of burn-in is fundamentally flawed given the lack of high-frequency content being fed through the cable .

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Time is of course a major issue for a person such as myself who may have any number of cables in for review at one time and so I'd been on the look-out for a product or doodad that could:

1. Speed up the time it takes for a cable to "burn in"
2. Improve on the results achieved by playing music/burn in CDs alone

Both these are claims made by Blue Horizon for the £695 Proburn.

The Proburn in use.

What did I think of the performance after use?

Since having the Proburn here I have used it to burn in many cables that have come in for review, shaving weeks or even months off what a cable can potentially take to fully settle in and sound at its peak performance. How do I know this?

After using Proburn on XLR, RCA and Speaker Cables the most obvious experiment for me to undertake was to place each set of conditioned cables into my system again and then to leave them in with music playing as much as possible for a further week to see if their character improved further.

Placing the cables in fresh from burn in showed usual improvements which one would expect to hear after a good amount of time of usage. Bass was more fleshed out and had better extension, mids became

fuller and vocals gained presence. Top end clarity was less grainy, more airy and controlled.

Now I hear you say - How can you be so distinctive about a cable which you have only know for a very short period?

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As mentioned before, I left each of the pairs of cables in my system for a week after burning and I honestly didn't notice any further improvements, I actually just moved on to completing the reviews for the said cables after a few days as the sound seemed so consistent.

I'm just an Audiophile, so what can Proburn do for me?

Moving on to what I believe is the stronger point of usage for the general consumer and enthusiast - System Enhancing.

My everyday interconnects are the Oriton Orange Symphony and the TQ Black Diamond. The Orange Symphony have been in my system for around a year and the TQ's a couple months. The Oritons have just been used in my system from new and the TQ's had a week on their own cable burning in machine before I received them.

So, I popped the Oriton interconnects onto the Proburn for a period of 24 hours. Plugging them back into the system I wasn't that optimistic to be honest and thought that if there was a couple percent improvement in performance then I would be extremely happy - a couple of percent in this game can cost a considerable amount!

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improved. The weight of bass notes was the first aspect which struck me. Bottom end notes were much of more expressively extended and fleshed out the midrange in a way that didn't ever tip towards overbearing in any way, just lend their hand to a new found confidence to the overall sound.

Midrange clarity stood firm and pronounced against this new found body and also seemed as if it had a step forward in performance. Treble articulation and sparkle raised an eyebrow or two also. Top end extension seemed to grow and dictated a command to the sound from the peak of the mountain right down to its depths of the valley floor.

All these aspects in culmination increased dynamic shifts, exposure to micro details and smaller nuances as well as conveying a hint more of emotional palpability during some of my very favourite performances.

The TQ black Diamonds were up next. I gave them the same 24 hour burn in time as I did the Oritons. Plugged them back into the system and, er... they sounded the same as before. Geoff Merrigan had left

them on his own cable burning machine just 7-8 weeks earlier for a week.

Would I have liked to get an improvement from the process? Of course, we always want better for our systems but I guess the experiment confirms that burning in cables on a dedicated machine makes bigger improvements in performance than general can.

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I'm not going to score the Proburn but I am going to highly recommend it. In my experience, any cable that the Blue Horizon Proburn can accommodate will no doubt benefit from its extensively wide bandwidths of signal frequencies to bring them up to their full potential.

Note:

It's been recommended by Blue Horizon to repeat a 24 hour conditioning period every 6 months or so along with cleaning cable plugs and sockets for positive effects.

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