

CD Restoration by Ryan B

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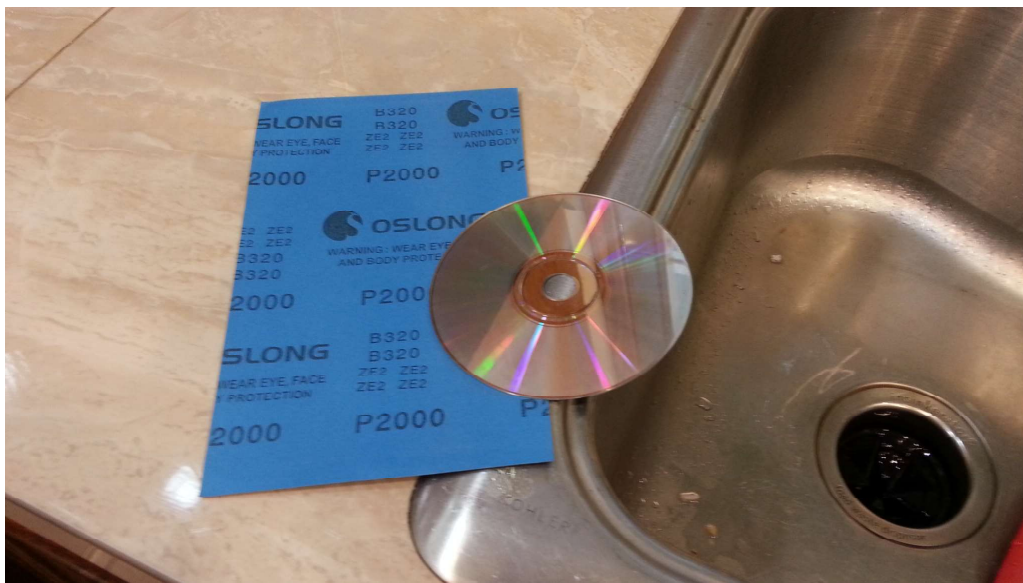
** I have had excellent results so far with this method, but do this at your own risk. Best to try this on a “lost cause” CD until you are comfortable with the process and results **



My test CD was in pretty bad shape, having spent most of its life out of its case, in the accessory pocket of my mother-in-law's 1995 Honda with a stack of other CDs. It was semi-playable, but had noticeable distortion and noise. Notice the ring around the outside from spending some time in a CD wallet.



I purchased an assortment of fine grade wet/dry sandpaper on ebay for \$6. 2000, 2500, 3000, and 5000 grit.



We'll start with the 2,000 grit.



Fold the sandpaper in half, and wet-sand the CD under running water. Use a small circular pattern, and slowly work your way around the CD's surface to remove any deep scratches. Use the palm of your hand to keep the CD from bending too much, and to help get all the way to the outside edge.



After the 2000 grit, the surface should be dull and evenly “scratched”. If you see any deep scratches that stand out, keep sanding! Notice how the light/rainbows don't reflect very well anymore.



Repeat the process with the 2500, 3000, and 5000 grit paper. The CD should start to become more reflective.



Next, use an automotive glazing compound like Meguiar's machine glaze. I'm sure many products would work for this, it just needs to be a fine polishing compound. I have tried starting with a heavier compound and working down, but the improvement was marginal.



Lay the CD flat on a cloth, and use the same small circular motion and work your way around the CD. Don't be afraid to use a lot of pressure. In this picture, the right half is polished, and the left half is still 5,000 grit sanded. After polishing the whole CD, finish with clear plastic polish.



CD after polishing with glazing compound and clear plastic polish. While some fine circular scratches will still be visible in direct light, they don't seem to affect the playback in any way. This CD played perfectly and the noise was gone!