I have one word for you — vinyl. Also known as Long-Playing records. Remember those black frisbees you grew up spinning non-stop on some beat-up turntable, ever mindful of accumulating dust, scratches and the quality of the needle.

In today's Napster world, vinyl is an afterthought. Most kids under 20 look askance when they hear the word "album." Why buy something that occupies so much space and is more delicate than John Daly's temperament?

I'll tell them why: The sound produced by the grooves on a vinyl album is still richer, fuller, warmer and more intricate than the compressed coldness of compact discs. Sure, there's nostalgia that comes from owning a working turntable. But grooving to a record is an incomparable listening treat.

You may be shocked to know that you can still buy a new record player and that there is treasure trove of cheap, classic albums available online and in dusty shops across the country — places like my hometown shop, Love Garden Sounds, in sleepy Lawrence, Kan.

While there are many wonderful things about being reintroduced to records, the first thing you'll notice is that you actually listen to the recordings, rather than merely having music on in the background. But whether you jam to jazz, roll to rock or chime to classical, it is possible to build an impressive collection of vinyl for one-half to one-third the cost of a $17.98 CD.

It will take some digging, haunting in the shops cool enough to still stock albums and online search skills, but the reward for the hunt is worth it.

So let's spend some of your money. At J&R Music World, one of the best online electronic spots (www.janadr.com), you can buy an AIWA PXE860 Turntable for $119. It comes with a cartridge and is fitted to use in the auxiliary port of most integrated bookshelf systems. Now you need some outstanding starter records. These five could get you started:

- Frank Sinatra & Antonio Carlos Jobim — The Chairman goes Bossa Nova. Indispensable. $11.46 at (www.musicstack.com).
- John Coltrane — Blue Train. His first record on Blue Note. $6.99 at (www.gatefoldrecords.com).
- Led Zeppelin — Houses of the Holy. Give no quarter to this hallmark rock recording. $8 at (www.platterpus.com).

For so around $170, you are totally set up and ready to spin. Listening to records again is infectious. Once you make the jump, you'll find yourself stopping by garage sales, combing flea markets and tickling the keyboard for hidden LP gold.

And the first time the needle drops — making that unmistakable pop and slide — you'll find yourself transported back in time but forward in your appreciation of great music.

Happy spinning.

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