

Adventures in Cabling

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Furutech Nanoflux-18US Power Cables

While I have come to expect sonic differences from speaker cables—they are long and carry an analog signal—I was a bit skeptical about 'hearing' a meaningful difference with passive power cables. I have previously had the pleasure of using the Blue Circle Audio BC30X1 Powerline Conditioner. The BC30X1 made a big difference in my system, but the engineer side of me understood how cleaning up a noisy supply voltage could affect the sound of an audio system. The Furutech Nanoflux-I8US 1.8m Power Cables are passive—no active components, no transformers to isolate and decouple the wall-side supply voltage from the voltage going into the components. So while these power cables look and feel like high-end cables, could they really make a difference in sound?



Furutech Nanoflux Power Cable vs a standard power cable

The Furutech Nanoflux Power Cable is no lightweight. The power cable that came with the Parasound Halo Integrated Amp was a similar length and weighed about 3 ounces. The Furutech Nanoflux Power Cable weighs in at close to 3 pounds 5 ounces! That is over 17 times heavier! This 18.8mm thick cable has an attractive braided blue nylon jacket with a silver diamond pattern in the weave, beefy polished connectors at each end and

what appears to be an external filter along the body. Furutech combines their Alpha-OCC copper conductor with their Nano Liquid signal transmission enhancer to create their Alpha Nano-Au-Ag OCC cables. Furutech claims their Nano Liquid process improves conductivity and the careful ratio gold and silver particles is tuned for the best possible sound quality. The downside to these high quality power cables is their weight. The cables did not stay firmly seated in my wall outlet—the weight of the cable slightly pulls the top of the plug away from the socket (see picture below). This was not a problem, but I'm not a fan of being able to see the 110V bare conductor. For long term use I would look into a stiffer outlet connection for these cables. As expected, the bend radius of these beefy power cables is much larger than a standard power cable, and the axial rotation is much stiffer. This was not a problem in my system, but it was noticeable when connecting the cables.

Furutech Nanoflux Power Cables are hefty, tending to pull away from a standard wall socket.

The way audio components handle input power is one of the things that can separate the 'men from the boys', and impacts cost, size, and weight of an audio component. Interestingly, just about all the audio components I have reviewed ship with the same type of low cost power cable, though some audio components have external power supplies to deal with input power and conversion noise, keeping it away from the audio signal. All this to say that your mileage may vary when it comes to how much of a difference high quality power cables will make in your system.

Now the real question—do the Furutech Nanoflux 1.8m Power Cables make a difference in the sound? Initially the position of my equipment was further than 1.8m from my wall outlet, so I used a typical surge protector power strip to bridge the gap. I went back and forth from the Furutech Nanoflux Power Cables and the standard power cables that came with my components, using the power strip. There was a subtle improvement in the sound clarity with the Nanoflux power cables—not an 'in your face' improvement, but one you could recognize going back and forth between power cables, like one sonic veil being removed. Looking at the power cabling raised an obvious question—why connect expensive, high technology power cables to a low cost surge protector with an additional eight feet of low cost cable to the wall outlet? Did that surge protector also play a factor in the sound? I moved my components closer to the wall outlet so I could see if removing the power strip from the equation made a difference, and it made a surprising difference! Plugging the Nanoflux Power Cables directly into the wall outlets opened the soundstage, making it wider and deeper. There was also noticeably more 'height' to the music and another veil had been removed in the overall clarity. Vocals with the Furutech power cables were more forward, in a very pleasing way—not too forward, just not veiled. The soundstage was more precise, and each instrument had more detail. The Furutech Nanoflux power cables provide an affect similar to active power filtering, but in a passive cable. I suspect the noise floor is both lower and smoother using the Furutech power cables vs standard cables, resulting in the more precise soundstage and clarity of instruments and vocals that I hear. Buying such a power cable for each component, and needing to plug such a short and heavy cable directly to a wall outlet, has its own drawbacks, but it does its job! While the effect may depend on the quality of the incoming power, in my system the Furutech power cable made my Oppo BDP-105 player and the Parasound Halo Integrated Amp more musical—it is like taking the next step up in the quality of a component.

I can't say whether the Nanoflux power cables provided some level of filtering, prevented EMI, or some other mojo, but they provided a discernible sonic improvement in my system. Speaking of my system, the Magnepan 3.7i speakers are high current and very revealing speakers, so they may be sensitive to changes in supply power. Try adding/removing a surge protector and using high quality power cables such as the Furutech Nanoflux Power Cables to hear the difference in your system. As an audiophile, I always want the best possible sound

from my system—the most involving sound; sound that I don't just hear, but experience; sound that is fulfilling, relaxing, interesting, engaging, not fatiguing, and the Furutech Nanoflux Power Cables (plugged directly to the wall) take me one step closer to that sound. Now I'm wondering what effect the house wiring has on my sound.

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