

REVIEW ESSENTIAL AUDIO TOOLS: EVERYTHING FOR YOUR POWER SUPPLY



MORE FROM THIS BRAND

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RESUME

Essential Audio Tools shows that years of steady and thorough work with a limited range of products pays off, making the sum of the parts greater than a simple addition. Strengthening each other through synergy, attractive prices, high quality, these are the key words and core tasks of these affordable Dutch products.



PROS

- ➕ Solid material
- ➕ Flexible power cords
- ➕ Beautiful finish
- ➕ Does what is promised
- ➕ Correct phase indication
- ➕ Mains Multiplier can be used with external ground
- ➕ Power cords available in many lengths
- ➕ Products reinforce each other's positive properties
- ➕ Attractively priced
- ➕ Manual in the box

CONS

- ➖ Device plugs could be of higher quality
- ➖ Manual is written in English

Music starts with electricity. Not entirely true of course, an acoustic instrument does not need any electricity at all to make music. But playing records, cassettes, CDs, DVDs or streaming music is not possible without electricity. It is the foundation for every device whether it is your phone with a pair of earphones, or an audio system of 100k or more. There is little you can do about your battery, but at home where you want to enjoy your audio system you can certainly take the quality of your power supply to a higher level.



On the mains there is distortion, direct currents and high frequency junk. All of this goes into your equipment and manifests itself in restlessness in the playback, in loud high tones, in noise or hum. Now you can largely solve this with very expensive mains supply products, but for many this is a step too far and an affordable solution is sought that may not be 100 percent sufficient, but does help to improve the sound reproduction. A supplier for these products is the Dutch company Essential Audio Tools, which produces power cords, power strips and accessories in-house to improve your musical life. Very smart stuff, very affordable and, if used correctly, also very effective.

Essential Audio Tools: roots and mission

Essential Audio Tools' roots go back to 1928. H. Stoet's Radio in The Hague worked on both radios and for the PTT, which provided radio distribution and telephony. Many years later, Stoet's grandson opened a shop in The Hague for tube amplifiers and speakers. The development of amplifiers led to the realization that external factors partly determine how well or how poorly music can be reproduced.

The Stoetkit and Heart amplifiers were at an early stage equipped with transformers that also worked as a mains filter. But there was more; cables (especially power cords) picked up interferences which caused distortion in the equipment. The power strip turned out to be a bottleneck. If no mains filter was available, such as a Stoet transformer in the power supply, then an external filter had to be developed.

Almost a century later, Essential Audio Tools is an independent section within the group of companies. Leon Spanjersberg and Tom Feenstra work in their own business premises where the critical parts are made with a CNC machine. Where development, production and assembly take place. Not the place to listen, you can do that in the listening rooms available in stores.

The history of this brand goes back to 2005 and the range is still growing. It starts with an idea, which is developed into a prototype, listened to, measured and tuned until it is finally ready for production and the CNC machine receives its programming and material. Just in the Netherlands, why not, resources and knowledge are available.

Components are purchased such as cable and connectors, other parts such as housing and parts of plugs are made from the materials Delrin and POM-C. High-quality synthetic material that can be processed in CNC machines and on lathes. A production process in which energy is used efficiently, materials are saved, metal is recycled later and liquids do not enter the sewer. The final products are then assembled, tested, packaged and shipped to retailers and distributors.



A box full of boxes

For the review we received a number of Current Conductor L cables, six with a 10 Ampere IEC C13 device plug and one with a 16 Ampere C19 IEC plug to connect the distribution block. Neatly to the requested size, which made connecting almost a pleasure. The Essential Audio Tools box also contained a Mains Multiplier 6+ power strip and a Noise Eater mains filter. Essential Audio Tools is one of the few companies that puts manuals in the boxes. Although it is written in English, it still saves a lot of searching on the internet.



Current Conductor L

Each Current Conductor cable is double shielded. The shield visible through the outer jacket consists of braided OFC copper with a thin layer of tin to prevent oxidation. There is an aluminium foil underneath to prevent high-frequency radiation from entering the cable. OFC (Oxygen Free Copper) stranded conductors provide ground, phase and neutral. The screen is connected to earth on the mains plug side, but not on the device side. The used connectors ensure optimal conduction from cable to device because of high contact pressure and excellent contact surface.

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On the wall socket side, Essential Audio Tools makes the cover of the plug itself from POM-C. Each cable is marked for proper phase connection. Basically any length is available, the price is the same for lengths of 0.5/0.75/1/1.5m. Slight surcharges apply for longer lengths. The wide choice of standard lengths prevents a tangle of power cables behind the equipment.

The Current Conductor cables are not only shielded from the outside in, but also the other way around; no field is measurable when current flows through the conductors. So the Current Conductor cables do not radiate into interconnect- and speaker cables that run nearby. Types L and HC have 3x2.5mm² conductors, type S has 3x0.75mm² conductors and there is also a cable that ends in a C7 figure 8 connector.

Mains Multiplier 6+

We received the Mains Multiplier 6+ power strip from Essential Audio Tools. When you open the power strip, you will see star-wiring so that each outlet can deliver maximum performance. Four outlets are not filtered, to which amplifiers, active speakers and subwoofers can be connected. Two outlets have Common Mode and Differential Mode filters, particularly for digital equipment such as CD players, streamers and DACs or for devices that require 'little power' (max. 6A).



A Pulse Protector is active on all six outlets, which is an overvoltage protection against, among other things, the consequences of lightning strikes. The power strip is connected with a 16 Ampere C20 connector at the top side. The Mains Multiplier 6+, like its brothers, is made of POM-C. A high quality synthetic material with damping properties and very good electrical insulation. Mechanical vibrations are absorbed with damping feet. The power strip weighs 1.5 kilos and measures 424 x 70 x 51 mm (LxWxH).

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Two very clever features make Essential Audio Tools stand out from many competitors. One of those features is a phase indication with two LEDs, they indicate that the phase is connected correctly and indicate that the earth connection is present. The LEDs are small and, when connected correctly, emit a very soft green light, absolutely not disturbing in home cinema rooms where it should be dark.

There are three banana sockets in the power strip for ground connection. With a special jumper, the ground can be selected as offered by the mains. By moving the jumper, an external earth can be connected via the green socket. Consider your own earth pin in the ground, reserved for audio. That's a lot more charming than a screw on the side that's always in danger of coming loose.

Noise Eater

Finally, we found an Essential Audio Tools Noise Eater in the box, a parallel mains filter that can be plugged into a Mains Multiplier or into the wall socket where your equipment is located. Because it is a parallel filter, with multiple filter sections in the POM-C housing, the filter has no influence on the current supplied and therefore dynamics. The filter, as it were, absorbs distortion, thus preventing high-frequency components of the mains current from entering the equipment.



With six Current Conductors L, one HC, a Mains Multiplier 6+ and a Noise Eater, the total comes to 2,847 euros (individual prices at the bottom of the article). Less than 10 percent of the price of all devices and other cabling present for the review. With that I'm done and I can connect everything I want.

In my case, on the two filtered outlets an Auralic streamer and a Metrum Acoustics DAC. On the unfiltered outlets a power supply for a Melco Ethernet switch, a Naim headphone amplifier, a high-quality Acelec transistor power amplifier and an EAR/Yoshino tube amplifier. The Essential Audio Tools setup temporarily replaces a mix of as many power cords, including AudioQuest, Inakustik and Ricable. Which normally serve to connect the mains and equipment to an AudioQuest Niagara 3000 mains filter.

On the right path

I love synergy. I love the use of one philosophy contained in products from one manufacturer. A manufacturer with vision and who consistently implements his ideas in all products. This immediately gives Essential Audio Tools an advantage over solutions where a mix of items is used or where a supplier chooses from existing components without worrying about whether it works together. The intended synergy always manifests itself in an accumulation of improvements, without sidetracking, which normally results in two steps forward, one step back. Because of the expected cooperation between the Essential Audio tools power cords and the power strip, not too much has been experimented with other cords or a different power strip/filter.

The synergy has paid off, in the setup with the Mains Multiplier 6+ and Current Conductors I got peace of mind in the entire system from front to back. Regardless of whether I listened with headphones, a transistor amplifier on LS3/5A speakers or my tube amplifier. The background of the sound was quiet, very quiet.



Even with the headphones there was no restlessness, no noise and no hum. Through the speakers, my real reference in all cases, I was treated to a spacious stereo image that was loosely located in the space in front of me. In which both the low tones were controlled, the midrange opened wide and the high tones presented themselves without harshness. With a cheap power strip, think of the usual hardware store types, the sound is hard and sometimes even metallic. With a heavy mains filter it is a little more quiet, depending on what the mains supply offers. The sound reproduction achieved with Essential Audio Tools is balanced and pleasant. It allows hours of listening without getting tired. Not even with headphones on, for which a three hour listening session is not unusual. I can't observe any strange things with the Essential Audio Tools products and the way the components work together is exemplary. The fact that the Current Conductors are also reasonably flexible makes them easy to conceal behind the set. The power strip could simply be placed on the floor. The different lengths prevented a mess and kept the cable routing clear.

Eating noise

The heavy mains filter that is normally in use has the capability to remove the last bit of junk from the mains supply. Regardless of what the distortion consists of. A Mains Multiplier 6+ can't do that, although the Common and Differential Mode filters do their job for my digital devices. Then I realized where I could still improve. My Furutech NCF Clear Line Power plug was replaced by the Essential Audio Tools Noise Eater.

The Noise Eater made a significant contribution when it came to improving the sound. Plugging it next to the Current Conductor L with which the Mains Multiplier 6+ is connected to the wall socket gave the greatest improvement. Bigger than me pulling out an unused amplifier and using this outlet on the power strip for the Noise Eater. What I managed to improve with the Noise Eater is easy to recognize: the stereo image immediately becomes larger and further separates itself from the speakers, both with tube and transistor amplifiers. Rest increases a fraction, but I consider that secondary to the better overall picture.

I still cannot explain how a parallel net filter can achieve something like this, but the fact is that it does happen and can be observed very quickly if you know a system inside and out. As I noted earlier, with the right synergy, for which the manufacturer has taken a clear path, improvement piles on improvement without sidetracking. Because a Furutech simply does not do in this setup what a Noise Eater does achieve. It should be noted that a Furutech NCF Clear Line works more subtle, does not really filter the mains but 'process' the electricity and environment. The Noise Eater clearly manifests itself as the name suggests.

Buy Dutch

Made in Holland, nothing wrong with that, right? Essential Audio Tools shows this with its Current Conductor power cords, Mains Multiplier power strips and Noise Eater parallel filter. The makers chose to supply type L power cords with a 6+ power strip. The products were mainly used as a set, so everything is connected with the same Current Conductor cables to the Mains Multiplier 6+ and the Noise Eater in the wall socket. The result is a clear improvement on everything that comes standard in the box of a device and on cheap power strips (with or without filters).



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An improvement that becomes audible as cleaner and more quiet, freed from harsh sounds if they are not in the music. The listening pleasure increases and you can listen for a much longer period than without good mains supply components between the mains and equipment.

No, the Mains Multiplier 6+ and a Noise Eater do not replace an expensive mains filter that costs about four times more than this Essential Audio Tools set together, but this combination may be more than enough in your situation. It depends greatly on what is supplied from the mains and what pollution you add to your home.



In my case with my setup I was able to enjoy music both on headphones and on speakers and never got the feeling that I could really go much better. Not in the price range of Essential Audio Tools, except when you spend multiples in price for power cords and filter. Where you are always searching for the right path, with pitfalls such as two steps forward, one step back.

Essential Audio Tools shows that years of steady and thorough work with a limited range of products pays off, making the sum of the parts greater than a simple addition. Strengthening each other through synergy, attractive prices, high quality, these are the key words and core tasks of these affordable Dutch products.

Essential Audio Tools

Current Conductor L: 185 euros 0.5m/0.75m/1m/1.5m

Current Conductor L + HC IEC: 219 euros

0.5m/0.75m/1m/1.5m

Mains Multiplier 6+: 1,299 euros

Noise Eater: 219 euros

www.essentialaudiotools.com

www.audioplus.nl | Audio Plus |

Rating

Current Conductor L: 4.5 / 5

Mains Multiplier 6+: 4.5 / 5

Noise Eater: 5 / 5

