

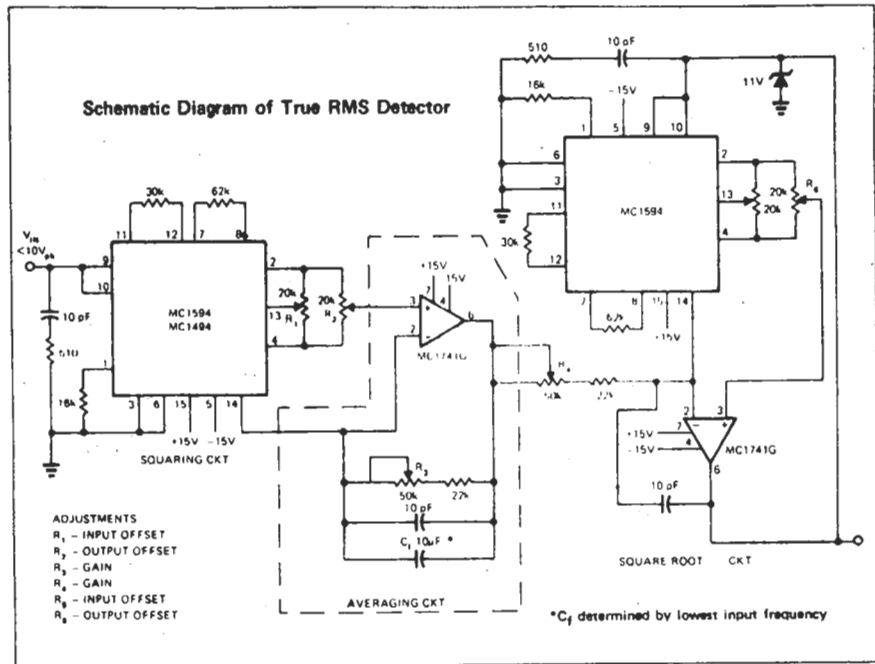
MULTIPLIER/OP AMP CIRCUIT DETECTS TRUE RMS

To get an RMS value when you can't afford the time it takes to heat an element, try this technique. It may not be feasible for a multimeter but how about a sampling voltmeter good up to 600 kHz?

Mathematically, the RMS value of a function is obtained by squaring the function, averaging it over a time period T and then taking the square root:

$$V_{RMS} = \sqrt{\frac{1}{T} \int_0^T V^2 dt}$$

In a practical sense this same technique can also be used to find the RMS value of a waveform. Using two multipliers and a pair of op amps, an RMS detector can be constructed. The first multiplier is used to square the input waveform. Since the output of the multiplier is a current, an op amp is customarily used to convert this output to a voltage. The same op amp may also be used to perform the averaging function by placing a capacitor in the feedback path. The



second op amp is used with a multiplier as the feedback element to produce the square root configuration.

This method eliminates the thermal-response time that is prevalent in most RMS measuring circuits.

The input-voltage range for this circuit is from 2 to 10 Vpk. For other ranges, input scaling can be used. Since the input is dc coupled, the output voltage includes the dc components of the input waveform.