

Floating Pickup Installation Manual (Preview page only : the complete 3 page version of these instructions is supplied free with all orders for pickups or wiring kits.)

Installing a floating pickup on a new or vintage archtop guitar can be a delicate operation. If you have any question about your ability to install the parts without damaging the instrument, we recommend that you give the materials and these instructions to an experienced repair technician. A professional installation is well worth the peace of mind in getting it done right the first time. However, if you are in a locality without a skilled luthier, or have the requisite experience, tools, and skills yourself, you may wish to follow the instructions below to complete the installation on your own. The procedures outlined below are for informational purposes only, and archtop.com assumes no liability of any kind pursuant to their execution.

If your instrument has an original vintage pickguard that has never been drilled or routed for a pickup or controls, we strongly recommend you store it in the case, and acquire or fabricate an additional pickguard specifically dedicated to your pickup installation. Vintage pickguards are virtually impossible to replace, and you or some future owner may wish to restore the instrument to its original configuration sometime in the future. Archtop.com can supply beveled, bound or unbound pickguards from correct vintage templates, or fabricated to your tracing. If you wish to use an original guard that is not predrilled, we strongly recommend using the stealth thumbwheel controls described below, as they are installed without modification of the guard, and are removable. If your pickguard has already been drilled or routed for a pickup and controls, try to use the existing holes for your new installation wherever possible.

- 1) Begin by reading the following instructions completely, to make sure you have of all required tools at hand. Pad workbench with towels or other soft cloth to avoid abrasion to guitar finish. Place pickup onto guitar top in desired installation location. To install pickup without cutting an indent into the edge of the guard, begin by placing pickup flush against the edge of the pickguard. Loosen pickguard mounting screws and re-position guard so that pickup pole pieces are properly centered. Small variations in string position relative to individual pole pieces are normal, and are compensated by pole piece adjustment; what's important is the overall centering of the pickup in relation the high and low "E" strings.

For pickups without polepieces, position pickguard so that the body of the pickup is centered under the strings as a whole. Check string clearance by pressing strings down at uppermost fret and checking to see that strings do not come into contact with pickup body or pole pieces. Position pickup so that all strings ring freely at highest fret. You may find that the pickup needs to be moved slightly away from the end of the fingerboard, toward the bridge, in order to assure proper clearance. This will not compromise the performance of the pickup, and some builders prefer the pickup to be positioned slightly away from the end of the fingerboard at the string node corresponding to the 24th fret. Once you have determined your optimum position, mark outline of pickup location on edge of pickguard with pencil.

- 2) Slacken strings, and remove pickguard and tailpiece, keeping screws and small parts in jar lid, or similar container. This is a good time to oil the fingerboard with lemon oil, lubricate the tuning machines and bridge wheels with teflon lubricant (Tri-Flo) or light machine oil, and give the guitar a good hand polishing. Devote some careful consideration to the location of the volume and/or tone controls on pickguard. Mock up knob placement with double-stick tape, to ensure knob location will not interfere with your picking movement, and that knobs or thumbwheels are optimally placed for quick, accurate access while playing. Be sure to allow adequate space between knobs for easy access, at least 1 1/2" to centers. Mark knob position by circumscribing with pencil. Gently drill mounting holes with a small drill bit, and enlarging the hole to size with a small reamer. Drill slowly and carefully, as it is possible to shatter some pickguard materials with careless drilling.
- 3) For attaching the pickup to the pickguard, securing the pickup with a small, flat-head machine screw is the most positive and durable method of installation. As clearances can be tight, we recommend tapping threads directly into the mounting tab of the pickup, so it can be attached without a nut. Drill the mounting hole in the pickguard with a countersink bit, to set the screw head flush to the surface of the guard. **IMPORTANT: on all epoxy-body pickups, make sure that any mounting holes are drilled toward the corners of the mounting tab, well away from the wiring lugs. For the same reason, do not file the mounting tabs, as this can also rupture the hair-thin lead wires that are embedded in the epoxy. Drilling or filing through these lead wires will damage the pickup beyond repair, and we cannot be responsible for damage due to faulty installation.** Your final adjustment for pickup height and angle will be made by bending the pickguard mounting bracket as required to the proper angle, per step 12 below.

On vintage pickguards where no screw holes are desired, epoxy-bodied pickups may be attached with glue as follows. Gently roughen gluing areas on pickup mounting tab and pickguard with sandpaper, and clean thoroughly, making sure gluing surfaces are free of oil, dust or moisture. Glue pickup to pickguard using mini- "C" clamp, whose jaws have been padded with felt or leather to avoid scratching pickguard surface. Use fresh acrylic (Duco) cement like model airplane glue, or better still, a plastic superglue like Plasti-Zap. Do not use ordinary superglues, as bonds will brittle and break over time. Allow acrylic glue joint to set overnight, superglues for several hours at least. When adjusting the pole pieces on all glue-on pickups, always grip the pickup firmly with fingers, to minimize stress on the glue joint. Any items glued to the back of the pickguard with acrylic or super glues may be removed with gentle prying, to restore the guard to its original appearance. To glue metal pickups to pickguards, first screw the pickup to a thin plastic mounting block that has been notched to accommodate the tab, then glue the block to the underside of the guard as above.

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