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## Nut Height Check and Adjustment

by Brian Calvert

Before adjusting anything make sure your guitar is strung up correctly and that your neck is straight and not bowed or warped. If your neck is bowed you first need to adjust the truss rod. If your neck is warped it will require a more extensive repair.

Fret each string individually starting with the High E between the second and third fret and pull out your feeler gauge out to check the amount of space between the bottom of the string and the first fret. You should have approximately .005" of space between each one with the string barely touching the second fret. If this measurement is close or dead on then move on to the next string right up to the Low E string. You may want to jot down the gap on a scrap piece of paper as you move across the fret board to see the nut slot's height in relation to the fret board as you do so.

Now that you have determined if the nut is in it's proper position you should be able to adjust the height by using the following directions depending on the particular style of nut you have as pictured below.



Standard nut



Locking nut

Working with a standard style nut if you have determined that any of the slot's in the nut are too low (usually due to extensive wear and age) you may want to consider replacing the nut at this point since it will interfere with your setup as long as it is in that condition.

If any of the slot's are too high causing excessive distance in the measurement between the bottom of the string and the first fret you can remove the string and file down the slot to the proper height. If you choose to do so be very careful since you can always take more off but adding back on is not possible. You can purchase special nut slotting file's for doing this type of repair at many fine luthier supply shops. Your goal is to have the space as close as possible all the way across the board.

Working with a Locking style nut your choice's are more limited since filing down the slot really is not an option you must determine if you need to either remove or add a shim under the nut itself. There are many different styles and thickness of nut shim's available on the market today. Most are available in either half length (only placed under one side of the nut) or full length versions and all are available in different thickness'. If necessary you can even combine 2 or more to achieve the desired height across the fret board. If you would like to read up a little more about nut and neck shim's [click here!](#)

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