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# Adjusting Pickup Height

by Brian Calvert

**Before adjusting anything make sure your guitar is strung up correctly and tuned to proper pitch!**  
**In this particular tutorial measurements are used as a guideline and not a solid fact, you may want to change or adjust these measurements for your own personal playing comfort.**

Because of the large number of electric guitar pickups available on the market and also because of the different playing styles this particular adjustment should be made to your own personal equipment and adjusted to your own personal playing style.

It is important to understand that the magnetic fields generated by the pole pieces on an overdriven pick up such as a DiMarzio X2N are far greater in strength than a Standard PAF pickup, therefore you may notice quite a space difference between the pickups and strings when this adjustment is over.

Before plugging your guitar in and firing up your amp start out by making the easiest of adjustments. Fret your strings one at a time on the last fret and look to make sure the pole pieces of the pickups are about 3/16" to 1/4" of an inch away from the bottom of each string. If your a power shredder that constantly attacks the strings with plenty of force you may want them a little further away. This will help avoid those bad moments when your playing and constantly banging into the pickups with your guitar pick. You will also notice at this point that you can adjust one side of the pickup higher than the other which comes in handy since the magnetic field around the High E will effect that string differently than the field generated under the Low E string.

Now that you have given yourself a base to work from, plug in and power up just like you normally would play with your Volume and Tone knobs adjusted on the guitar about half way but your amp settings where you normally would have them. Switch over to your neck pickup and start striking note's the way you normally play and from the distance you would normally position yourself away from your amp. It is important to do everything in a position you would normally play in. Focus your attention to the sound and tone coming out of your speaker or cab.

Now strike a note and turn the height adjustment screws raising the pickup closer to the strings and listen to the change in sound (of course you might have to strike the note several times while doing this but you get the idea, just be consistent). The closer the pole piece's are to the strings the different the tone will become, if you get to close you will notice what is commonly called wolf tone which is a muddy overdriven sound. If that occurs back the pickup down till you find the sweet spot. Once you have found it set down your screw driver and play for a little while before switching over to the next pickup (just to be sure this is the sound and tone you want from this position). Then switch to your middle pickup if you have one and repeat the process. If your guitar is only equipped with 2 pickups switch to the other one skipping the middle position on your switch.

Once your done making all of these adjustments wipe your guitar down with a clean soft cloth and have a nice day!

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On to Step 2: [Truss Rod and Neck Bow adjustment](#)

On to Step 3: [Nut Height check and adjustment](#)

On to Step 4: [String Height and Bridge adjustment](#)

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