



# How to Adjust the Action and Intonation of a Guitar

Consider adjusting the action and intonation of...

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## INTRODUCTION

Consider adjusting the action and intonation of a guitar or bass if you experience difficulty with fine tuning or string resistance. This guide can help if pressing guitar or bass strings is difficult, or if your instrument's tone seems off despite being in tune. Adjusting the guitar neck and string action can make playing easier while enriching the instrument's tone!

Before beginning this guide, detune your guitar strings, leaving room for the strings to be manipulated without snapping.

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### TOOLS:

- [Phillips #0 Screwdriver](#) (1)

*Size of screwdriver depends on the size of the screws on your guitar bridge, but generally you'll need a phillips head screwdriver.*

- [Allen Wrench](#) (1)

*Once again, variable. Different instruments come with different sized truss rods, which means different sized Allen wrenches. Try experimenting with different sizes or look up the size of your truss rod!*

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## Step 1 — How to Adjust the Action and Intonation of a Guitar



- Locate the truss rod, found either on the headstock, under a plate in the headstock, or on the body towards the base of the neck.

## Step 2



- ☑ As you adjust the truss rod, listen for fret buzz or dead spots. These usually create a sound that rings out less than it should. Keep adjusting until the guitar reaches its best tone.
- For humped necks, loosen the truss rod by turning the Allen wrench counterclockwise. For bowed necks, tighten the truss rod by turning the Allen wrench clockwise.
- Use an Allen wrench that can adjust the truss rod.
- ⓘ **TAKE THIS STEP SLOWLY.** To make small adjustments, turn the allen wrench a quarter of a turn at a time, checking the neck regularly.

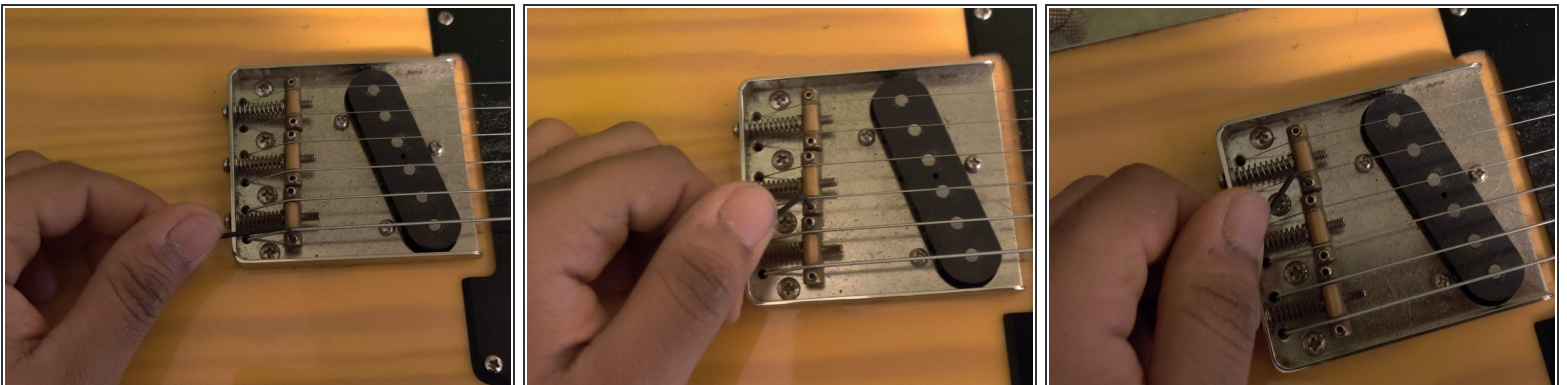


### Step 3



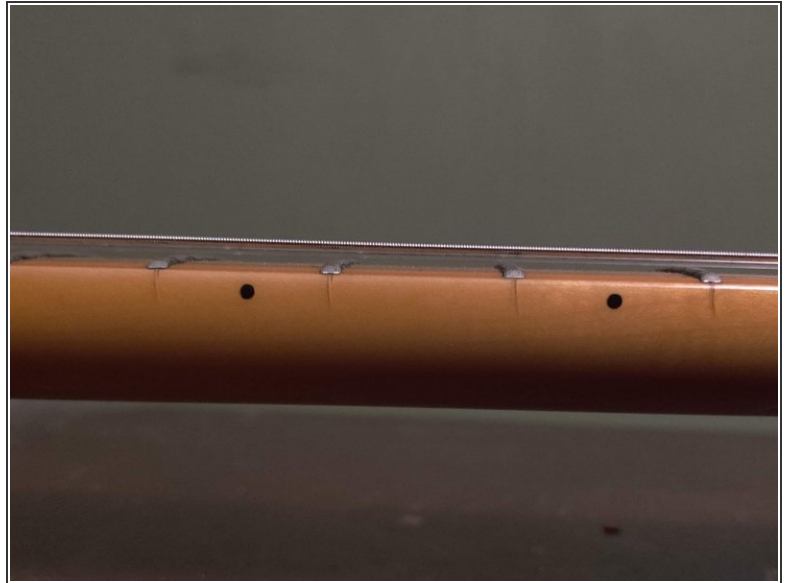
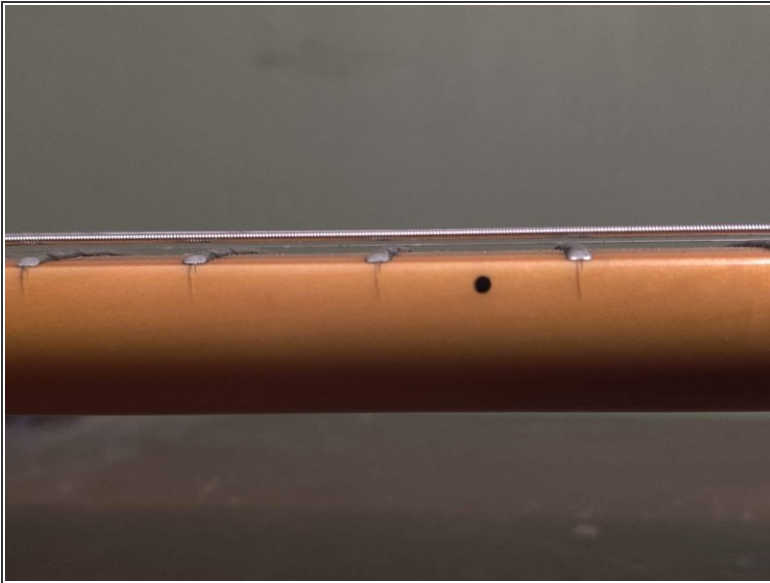
- On the bridge, locate the saddles by finding the spot strings rest on. Raise the action of the saddles by turning the Allen wrench clockwise. Lower the action of the saddles by turning the Allen wrench counterclockwise.
- ⓘ The height of the action is up to player preference. Listen continuously while adjusting.

### Step 4



- Repeat this process for all strings, adjusting the sides of each saddle evenly so the string won't rest unevenly.

## Step 5



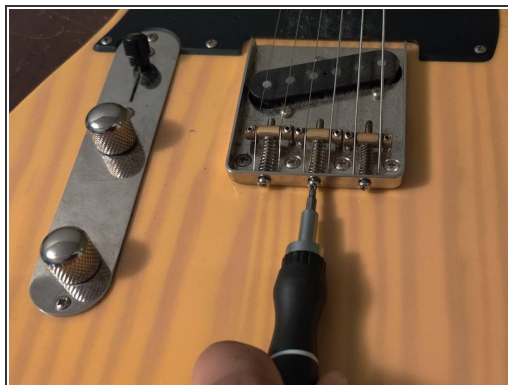
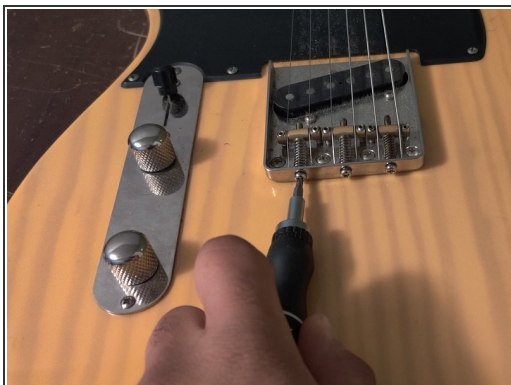
- Play a few notes between each adjustment to prevent fret buzz and dead spots.

## Step 6



- Check guitar intonation by listening to the twelfth fret notes and the twelfth fret harmonic of each string.
- With a screwdriver, turn the screws below the saddles clockwise if the fretted note sounds higher pitched than the harmonic; turn them counterclockwise if the fretted notes is lower pitched than the harmonic.

## Step 7



- Repeat for all six strings.

Now enjoy your guitar!

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