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Step 3: De-tune the strings until slack. Release the string locks on the bridge saddles and remove the strings. Be careful not to misplace any loose parts, floating bridges, nuts, or other hardware.



After the strings have been removed is a perfect opportunity to clean and polish your guitar (see pages 68–81).

Step 3: “Lock” the string by bringing the loose end over the capstan toward the center of the headstock and looping it under the captured string between the nut and the capstan.

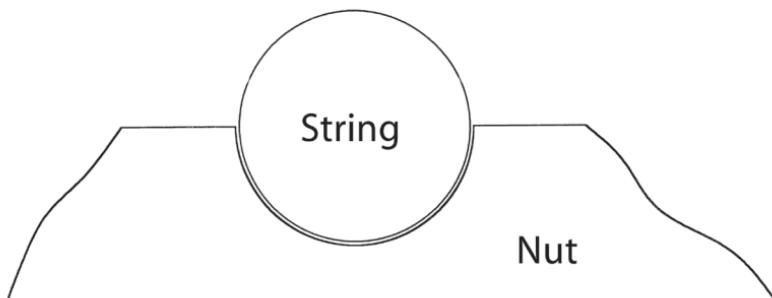


Step 4: Next, bend the string up and back toward the middle of the neck.



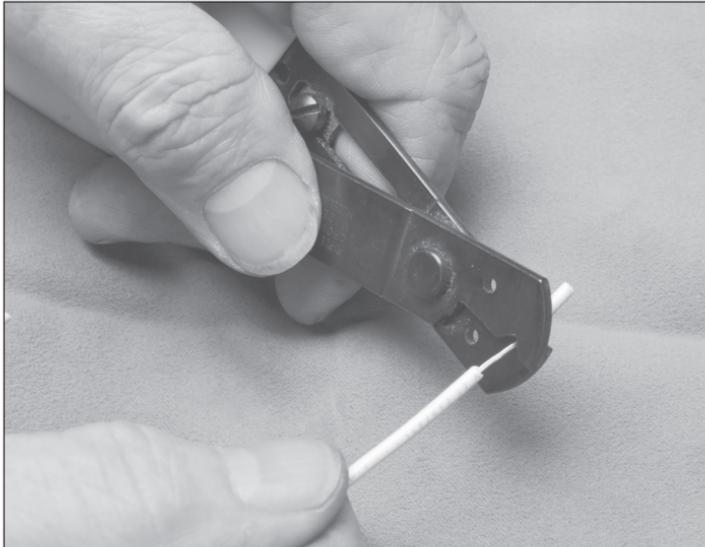


Cut the groove deeper for the bass strings with a nut file.

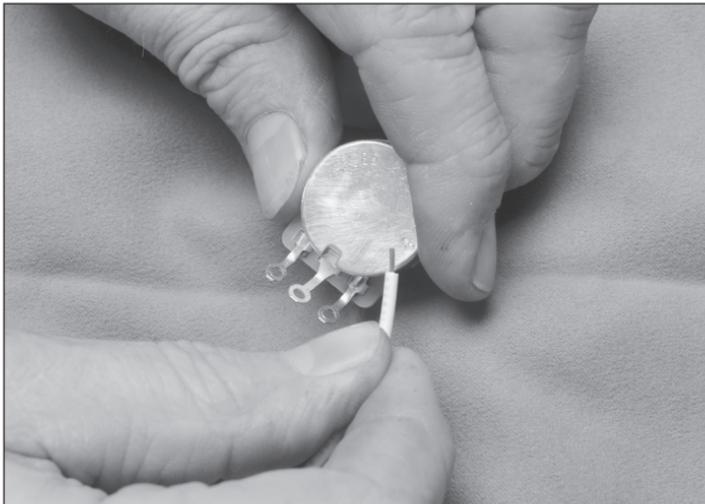


The fit should be exact.

2. Insulation on the wire must be stripped back with wire strippers.



3. The pieces to be soldered must be held in close proximity to each other.

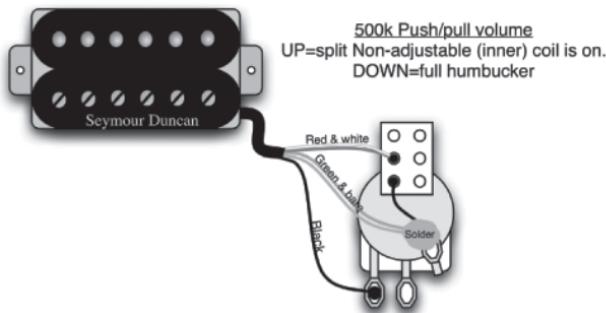


Coil Tapping and Splitting

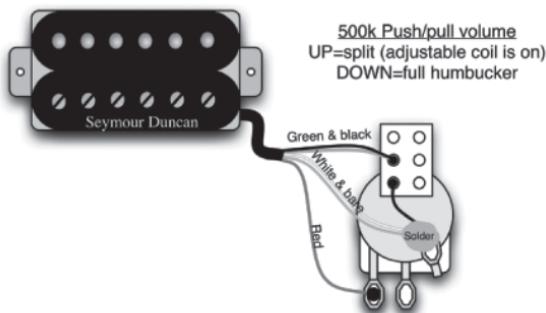
Coil splitting is often mistakenly referred to as coil tapping. Coil splitting disengages one of the two pickups inside a humbucker so that it sounds like a single coil. It is often activated by a push-pull potentiometer (that is doubling as the volume or tone knob) or via a simple mini toggle switch. This is a common modification that will come stock on many guitars. As Strat players load their guitars with humbuckers and add kill switches to make them more versatile, Les Paul players will add coil splitting to get closer to the clean Strat tones.

Diagram courtesy of Seymour Duncan

To have the SLUG (inner) coil turned on in split mode



To have the ADJUSTABLE (outer) coil turned on in split mode



Seymour Duncan coil splitting diagram.

Noise

If there's one thing electric guitarists actually agree on, it's that noise is bad and the less of it in your guitar sound the better.

Let's first learn about the terms used to describe noise. There is always a small amount of noise inherent in most audio signals. This is called the *noise floor*. Think of when you plug a guitar with a single-coil pickup into a loud amp and don't play anything but still hear some noise. That is the noise floor. Now if you strum a chord, chances are you won't notice the noise while the chord is ringing, because the chord is so much louder than the noise. The chord is called the *signal*. The difference between the volume of the chord and the volume of the noise is called *signal-to-noise ratio*. As the chord fades, the noise becomes more apparent and there will be a point where the chord becomes lower in volume than the noise. This is the *threshold*. Most of us simply turn the volume knob down on our guitar when a note or chord fades away. This silences the noise at the threshold point. There is a device that does this automatically, and it is called a *noise gate*. A noise gate is the most popular way to deal with noise, and it usually functions best when placed first in the signal chain. That way, it works just like turning the volume knob down on your guitar.

- *Sensitivity (sens)* sets the threshold at which the gate closes.
- *Decay* controls the speed of the gate closing.



Photo by Tobias Hunwitz

Boss Noise Gate NF-1 pedal.