



How to Adjust the Truss Rod on an Acoustic Guitar

Adjust the truss rod in the neck of your guitar to restore the sound of the instrument.

Written By: Taryn Wilson



INTRODUCTION

If your guitar isn't playing properly and the sound isn't coming out as desired, it is likely that you need to adjust your truss rod. The truss rod is usually made out of steel, and it runs inside the neck. It is responsible for stabilizing the wooden neck of your guitar. The wooden neck will warp naturally due to a variety of factors, including atmospheric changes such as humidity and temperature, changes in the gauge of your strings, and tuning changes over time.

If your truss rod is too tight, your neck will bow outward and toward the strings, causing a buzzing sound. If your truss rod is too loose, the neck will bow inward and away from the strings, interfering with tuning and playability of strings in the middle of the neck.

Adjusting the truss rod will reshape the neck of your guitar, making it even and allowing the strings to rest at the desired distance from the neck. Ultimately, your neck will be relatively straight with some relief, or a light, natural curve. This will restore the sound of the guitar.



TOOLS:

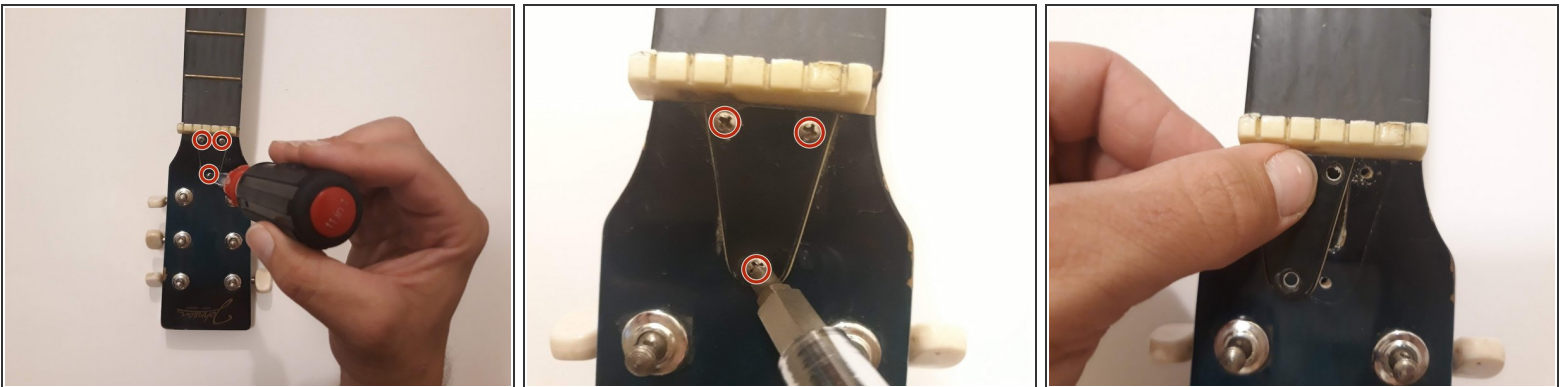
- [Allen Wrench 7/32"](#) (1)
 - [iFixit 6 Inch Metal Ruler](#) (1)
 - [Phillips #0 Screwdriver](#) (1)
 - [Guitar Tuner](#) (1)
-

Step 1 — How to Adjust the Truss Rod on an Acoustic Guitar



- Unwind and remove the strings
- Turn the tuning pegs to release tension in the strings, and then pull the strings away, detaching them from the headstock

Step 2



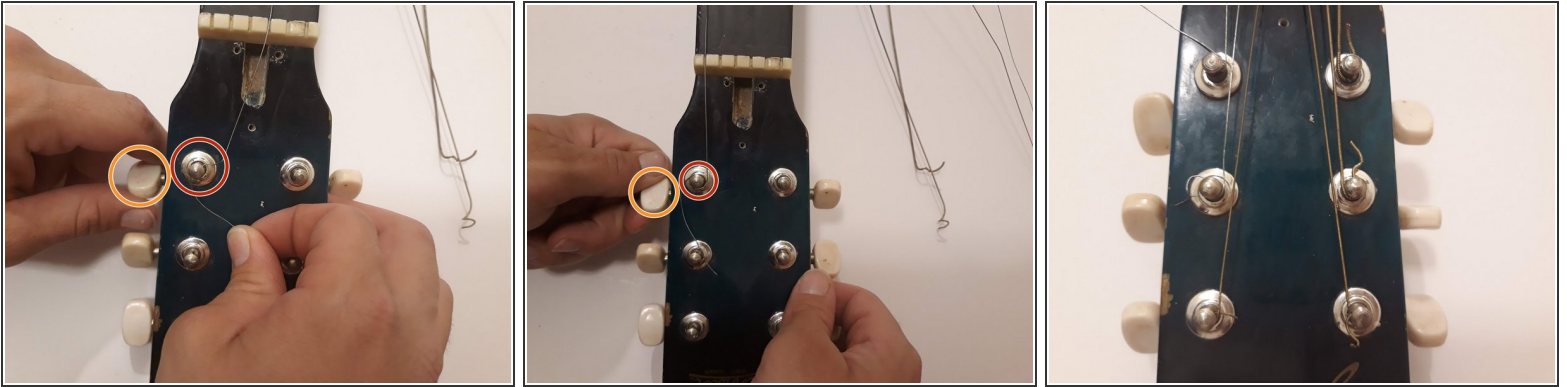
- Remove the truss rod cover with the necessary tool (depending on your guitar).
- A Phillips 0 screwdriver is used here to unscrew the 2 x 1/4" Small Phillips guitar screws from the truss rod cover.
- There are three screws holding the truss rod cover in place.

Step 3



- Use the Allen Wrench to adjust the truss rod according to the warp of the neck.
- For a forward or “U-shaped” bow, turn the truss rod counterclockwise. For a backward bow adjustment, adjust the truss rod clockwise.
- ⓘ A “U-shaped” bow is too tight; it has extra space toward the center of the neck, and bows outward and toward the strings. A backward bow is too loose; it arches inward and away from the strings.

Step 4



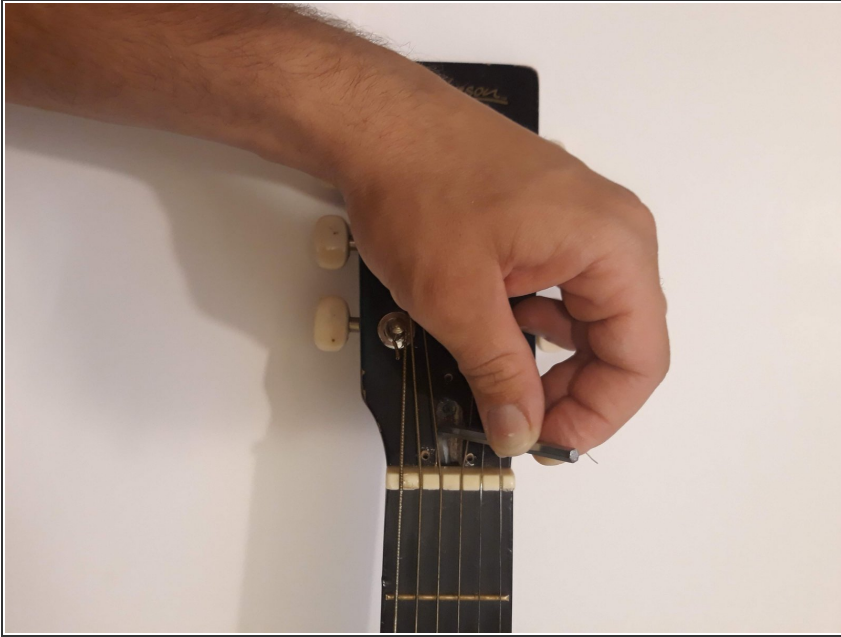
- Re-string the guitar by reattaching them to the headstock.
- Turn the tuning pegs to bring the strings back to tension.
- At the same time, adjust the bridge evenly with the neck (if it is not already glued into the saddle) by moving it with your hand.

Step 5



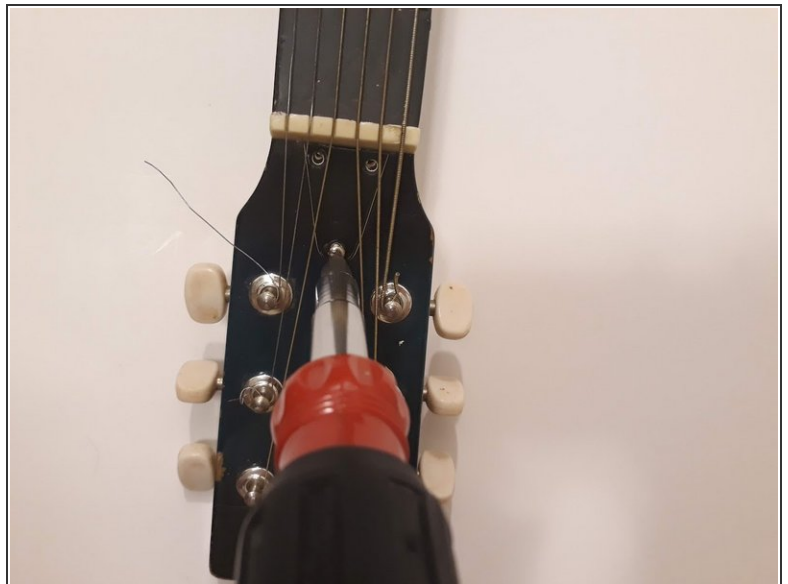
- Using your eyes or a metal ruler, check the distance from the strings to the frets on the neck.
- You can use a metal ruler to measure out approximately 2.5 mm for an acoustic guitar, depending on your preference.

Step 6



- Using the Allen Wrench, make any final adjustments to the truss while the strings are at tension.
- You may use a tuner to help adjust the strings to the desired tension

Step 7



- Replace the truss rod cover.
- Re-tune the guitar.

Reattach the truss rod cover to the headstock of your guitar using the 2 x 1/4 " Phillips screws and Phillips 0 screwdriver.