

The perfect Stratocaster basic setup



My P90 Strat used for this document.

NOTE: I am not responsible for any damage.

- **String change**

Please change strings to what ever kind of strings you want to use and please for the sake of intonation hold on to those strings ;-) I use D'addario XT 10-46 strings and they never failed me.

For those who want to know how to change strings correctly please go to our friend google and maybe skip this document...



One tip i can give you is this:

Keep a distance of 2 tuning heads to use for rewind. Or else you will have lots of string or not enough if you cut it longer or shorter on you tuning heads.

This can give you tuning instability.

When using this distance for a basic rule you'll be fine. Rewind the string underneath the cut end(see picture below)

After changing it will look like this:



When you have changed your strings please let the guitar sit for a while for the best result.. overnight will be fine. This is just to make sure the strings are stretched properly and the neck relief is stable.

● Neck relief

Please do not adjust the truss-rod if you don't know what you're doing! I'm assuming when you read this you know how it works.. left-right, tight-loose.

Put a capo on the first fret and your finger on the first fret where the body begins. See photo:



Now you have to use a feeler gauge. For a normal and good setup like this you should use 0.25mm/.010 and measure the distance between the 8th fret and the string (measure the High E and Low e string). The gap should be the same thickness as the feeler gauge.



Result: exactly 0.25mm/.010 gap.



● Bridge tension/height

Now you have the truss-rod adjusted it's time to get the bridge floating and the tension set up correctly. This setup may take a little while if you are not familiar with this.

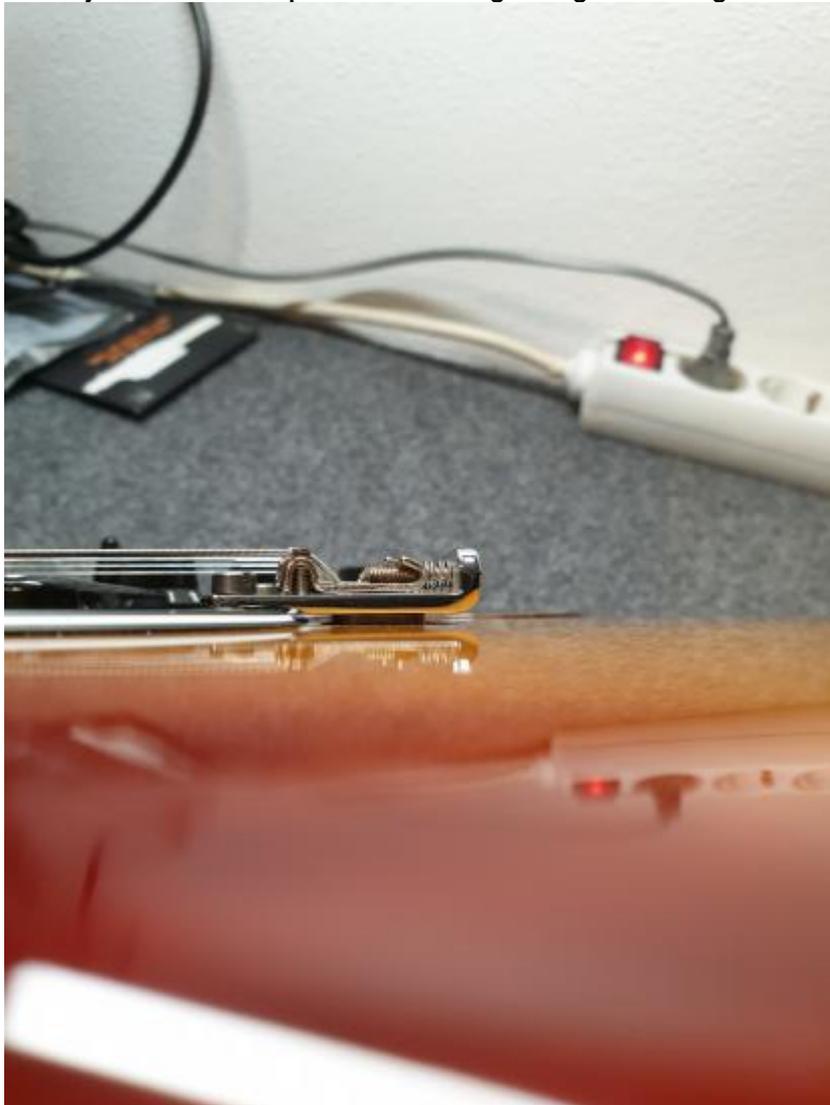
First off.. raise the front of the bridge(closest to the pickguard) with the screws so the bottom base plate of the bridge is not touching the body. Now tune the guitar and check if the bridge base plate is level with the body(likely not). The floating distance i recommend is **2/32nds**. *make sure this measurement is the same on the bass and treble side and on the front and back. It has to be level/straight floating with the body!* See picture and read on to get this right:



When you adjusted the front bridge height retune the guitar a couple of times until it's in a good stable tune. Now you will see the bridge is moving forward or backwards. This means you will have to adjust the tension of the bridge springs on the back of the guitar.

When your guitar is in tune and your bridge is bending backwards you will have to loosen the springs a bit, when it's bending forwards tighten the strings. Retune every time after you adjust the springs because when you retune the floating bridge position is moving again. Keep adjusting the springs and retune every time until the bridge is floating evenly level with the body !

Here you can see a perfect floating bridge with a guitar 100% in tune. :-)



● Nut height

Check the nut height. Press each string ON the 3rd fret and see how big the gap is between the first fret and the bottom of the string. It has to be the size of a.. lets say a business card(that's fine). if it's touching the frets you'll have to replace the nut. Of it's much higher you will have to adjust it. (you can find how-to's on the www. Do not adjust this your self if you have two left hands.

See here how it should be:



● String height/Action

Now it's time to adjust the string height/action. These measurements/specs are what i use but if you want lower or higher action that's fine. It's all personal taste.

I have set the full string height with the radius of the fretboard. So in this case it's a radius of 9.5.

Measure the distance between the 16/17th fret and the bottom of the string and use the bridge saddles to get the strings higher or lower. without depressing a string use these measurements with a ruler.

e: 4.6/64ths

B: 4.7/64ths

G: 4.8/64ths

D: 5/64ths

A: 5/64ths

E: 5/64ths

See photo's below to get a clearer image.





Now that you have set your string height retune and check again. Then check if you have fretbuzz. If you have.. raising strings will help. If it doesn't help you will have an other problem. Contact me so i can help you.

● Intonation

Please set your pickups low(not too low!) and set the switch over to the neck/middle position(position 2). if you have set your pickups too high you may have problems with intonation.

First you need a good tuner that you can trust 110%
If you have this you can plug it in.

When adjusting intonation please do this only in playing position! Not with the guitar on the bench or else where.

Tune your guitar so it's 100% in tune.

Press the first string you want to intonate and press the string on the 12th fret(well.. not literately ON the fret though).

Now watch your tuner.. if the cursor goes to the right you will have to move the bridge saddle backwards. If it goes to the left you have to move the saddle forward. Retune and check again on the 12th fret. You have to do this until the cursor is in the middle of your tuner and 100% in tune. So the string without pressing a fret has to be 100% in tune and also pressed on the 12th fret has to be 100% in tune.

Intonation is just adjusting the length of the string between the bridge saddle and the nut.

● Pickup height

When you have set the intonation 100% we'll move on to the pickups. Pickup adjustment is really a personal taste. So i can't really give measurements. But you can start with Fender's recommendations.

Left measurements are bass side and on the right is treble side.

Texas Specials	8/64" (3.2 mm)	6/64" (2.4 mm)
Vintage style	6/64" (2.4 mm)	5/64" (2 mm)
Noiseless™ Series	8/64" (3.2 mm)	6/64" (2.4 mm)
Standard Single-Coil	5/64" (2 mm)	4/64" (1.6 mm)
Humbuckers	4/64" (1.6 mm)	4/64" (1.6 mm)

Treble side on a stratocaster is in most cases always higher then the bass side.

Just experiment and listen to what you like.

Always after adjusting pickups press the string at the 15th fret and listen if you hear some string vibration.. if you do the pickup is too high.

Also check the intonation again after adjusting the pickups! It is possible that the magnetic field of the pickup is pulling the string and causes problems with the intonation.

Experiment and keep checking ! :-)

Good luck and if you have any questions please contact me.

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