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Guide On How To Set Up Your Intonation

We do stress that you should always have any work on your guitar done by a professional guitar repair person - often called a Luthier.

Lining up guitar saddles primarily refers to setting the action and intonation, not just visual alignment. While some people may want saddles visually aligned, the true goal is to achieve proper string height and intonation for a good playing experience. Properly adjusting the saddles ensures the strings have the correct height off the frets (action) and that the guitar's pitch is accurate when fretted at the 12th fret.



To adjust the intonation on a Fender Stratocaster style guitar, you need to ensure the notes played at the 12th fret (fretted) match the open string's pitch. If the fretted note is flat, shorten the string by moving the saddle forward (toward the nut). If the fretted note is sharp, lengthen the string by moving the saddle back (away from the nut). This process should be repeated for each string.

Detailed Steps:

Tune the guitar: Ensure the open strings are tuned accurately.

Check the 12th fret: Play the open string and then fret the same string at the 12th fret.

Compare pitches: Determine if the fretted note is flat or sharp compared to the open string.

Adjust the saddle:

If flat: Move the saddle forward (towards the nut).

If sharp: Move the saddle back (away from the nut).

Retune and repeat: Retune the string and repeat steps 2-4 for all strings.

Check for consistency: Once all strings are intonated, play a few chords to ensure they sound in tune across the fretboard.

Extra Tips for Intonation:

Use a tuner: A precise tuner will help you identify if a string is flat or sharp.

Adjust in small increments: Make small adjustments to the saddles and re-tune after each adjustment.

Be patient: Intonation can take time and practice to get right.

Consider the tremolo: If you have a tremolo system, ensure it's properly adjusted as well.