

# Truss Rod Adjustment for Hill Master Series Guitars

I put a truss rod in all of my Masters series guitars. Although this is not traditional in classical guitars, I find it a most useful remedy when a guitar neck changes due to climate changes or age. I like for a guitar to play very well, and even subtle adjustments in the neck can make a big difference in how easily a guitar plays.

This truss rod works both forward and backward, which means it can adjust for both a back bow or a forward bow. It is accessed through the sound hole.

Here's how to do it:

It's easiest to do with the strings loosened, although I personally do it with the strings up to pitch so I can look at the neck under tension. If you do it up to pitch, just lift up the 2nd and 3rd string at the nut and move them over to the 1st string nut slot. Do the same thing with the 4th and 5th string, moving them into the 6th string nut slot. Then you can reach into the sound hole between the 3rd and 4th strings. The strings hurt the forearm a bit, but it's manageable.

Set the guitar on a workbench with the neck pointing to the left, tilt the body toward you so the sound hole is facing your belly. Then reach in with the 9/64 inch Allen wrench and put it into the Allen nut, which appears through the very upper cross brace of the soundboard, right by the end of the neck. Although it will offer a certain resistance to turning, it doesn't take much movement to cause a change. Turn counter clockwise (imagine looking at the Allen nut) to add relief or correct a back bow. Turn clockwise to reduce the relief or correct too much forward bow.

It's easiest to remove the wrench by lifting the guitar up on it's bottom end and just let the wrench drop into your hand.

Sounds easy, huh? It usually works very well. The hardest part is getting the wrench into the allen nut, since you can't see it. But with a little practice it's easy.

Don't forget that a neck is not supposed to be straight—it's supposed to have a little forward bend, called relief. I measure it with a straight edge and a feeler gauge at the 6th or 7th fret, or I just sight down the edge of the finger board. I like between .003" and .008" relief on the bass side, and a bit less on the treble side. I don't consider it a repair problem until the forward bow gets above .011". If a neck is perfectly straight I'll usually not worry about it, but any back bow at all makes it impossible to get a low action without buzzing. Just leaving the guitar strung to pitch will often pull a back bow out, but if not, something needs to be done. (And that's another story.)

I hope this helps. Call me if you have questions.

Kenny Hill

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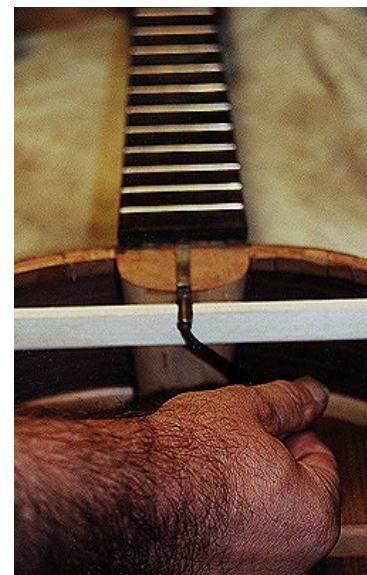
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Finding the Allen nut is a little challenging the first time because the cross brace just above the sound hole is in the way; you have to maneuver around it to get to the Allen nut.



9/64 allen wrench for truss rod adjustment



Turn counter clockwise (imagine looking at the Allen nut) to add relief or correct a back bow. It turns clockwise to reduce the relief or correct too much forward bow.