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 **How to do a Relic Guitar: Photo Tutorial 56k dont even try it..**

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Luthier's Corner Discussion on instrument building, repair, and materials.



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#21

 03-03-2007, 11:47 AM

[contakt321](#) 

Registered User

Join Date: Jul 2006

I want more!!!

 **quote**

#22

 03-03-2007, 05:21 PM

[spudmaster34](#) 

Registered User

Join Date: Nov 2005
Location: north of chicago



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yamaha club member #1

Quote:

Originally Posted by **MammaryVest**

what's this about a twelve step program!!! I always though for bass it would be a twelve Half-Step program.

just in case ctbass&birdsong is reading this, HAPPY EASTER



#23

03-03-2007, 08:01 PM

[ibanezcollector](#)

Registered User

Join Date: Feb 2007

Location: Cleveland OH Armpit of the USA



Ok folks, just got home at dinner and were going to tackle one of the hardest things to reproduce and thats the coveted Bakelite parts found on the earliest Fender guitars from the 50s. Nothing is going to be 100% but its worth the effort to get 75% of the look.

I would like to thank <http://www.provide.net/~cfh/fender.html> for the pictures and I want to give them respect for being a true resource for the Fender collector/enthusiast.

Here is a photo of a real 54' Fender Strat notice on the pickup cover how it is worn completely thru, again these techniques can be used not only on guitars but any relic. These knobs were also of a different height and shape and were replaced with normal knobs we see today



Left: The two pickup covers on the outside are ABS plastic. The three covers on the insides are "bakelite" (actually polystyrene, but collectors refer to it incorrectly as "bakelite"). Note how the "bakelite" covers are whiter, and the edges have rounded. When new, the "bakelite" cover edges were as shape as the ABS covers. But with time, the edges round only on the polystyrene covers. They can even wear to show the black pickup itself underneath.

Right: The top row of knobs are ABS, the bottom row are "bakelite" (polystyrene). Notice again how the edges of the "bakelite" knobs wear (especially on the volume knob), and the ABS edges don't. Also the "bakelite" knobs are whiter.





Everyday things change but basically remain the same.

Last edited by ibanezcollector : 03-03-2007 at 10:20 PM.



#24

03-03-2007, 09:29 PM

[ibanezcollector](#)

Registered User

Join Date: Feb 2007
Location: Cleveland OH Armpit of the USA



Ok folks here we go, this is a labor intensive part if you choose to go with this style of covers and knobs.

List of things your going to need:

Fine Toothed Rasp or File
Sandpaper 100 and 220 grit
Steelwool 0000ga
Paper Clip
Hobby Knife

And lots of patience this will make your hands cramp.. I will have to go more into detail then the pics show to explain it.. Its something pics cant show the best.

The hardest part to replicate and your never going to truly get one perfect is the switch tip.. I try my best to remove the seam line on the tip and to take some of the beef of the lower part of the tip off.

To do this I take a screw and just turn it till it grabs, dont go drilling this thing into the switch tip just enough to make a holder for it like so.



I then take it and wrap it in the 100 grit paper and spin it around about a billion times.. This step alone will make your hand cramp LOL. Try to maintain pressure on that seam line and the bulk of the tip more than anything. You want to make the tip narrower than stock.



Thats it on the tip, at this point it should look like this. No more seam line and alot closer to the vintage shape. This like I said is extremely hard to duplicate with todays parts. If someone has a better way then please feel free to show it.



Everyday things change but basically remain the same.

 quote

#25

 03-03-2007, 09:42 PM

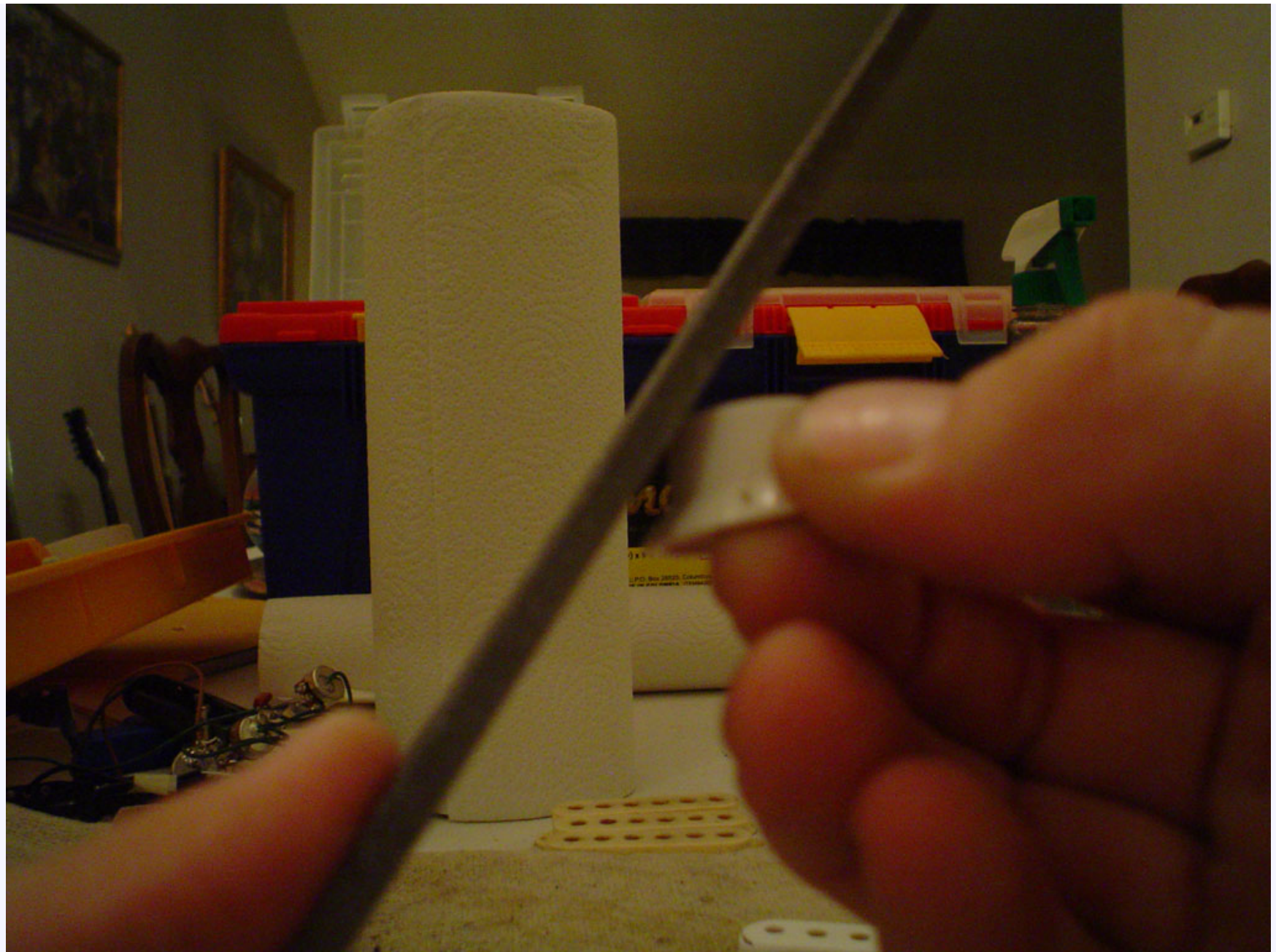


on to the knobs. This is a ton of work but the results are awesome. Especially if your doing a 50s style relic.

Here is the stock knob with its square edged shape not to vintage looking.



Take the fine tooth rasp and begin to scrape it upwards at about this angle



It should look like this, at this point.. You can see were taking a good chunk of the plastic off.



Take your fingernail and scrape off the debris, your part should now look like this..



Really rough looking and im sure some are going to say wow this looks like crap.. read on 😊



Take your 100 grit paper and spin the knob, rub it back and forth, dont just do it flat do it at angles as well.. Rinse and repeat with the 220 grit paper



Then take the 100 grit and wrap it around the knob like so, and twist the knob. This is going to smooth the edges. This part is a pain in the ass im not going to lie. My hands just lock up when doing this. Switch to the 220 grit paper and do the same thing.



Next step we got to get rid of some of that gold coloring in the knobs letters. For this I use a paper clip



Just scrape it carefully, try not to gouge the plastic you dont need a heavy scrape just multiple smooth and even scrapes. Finally take your 0000ga steel wool and rub the whole knob down till it is smooth. Take it to the sink and rinse it off.



In these pics I did not do the lower numbers yet I wanted to save some time and get this in the tutorial before I went to bed. But here is the final product. As you can see it has a beautiful rounded over feel pretty close to the originals. Again due to todays plastics its almost impossible to get the height of the originals. Remember you also want to keep these bright and white.





Everyday things change but basically remain the same.

 quote

#26

03-03-2007, 09:57 PM



ok on to the pickup covers..

Here is a pic of the fine tooth rasp I use, I bought a pack of these for \$4 at a Big Lots here in Cleveland.



Our stock pickup cover with its square edges again not to vintage looking

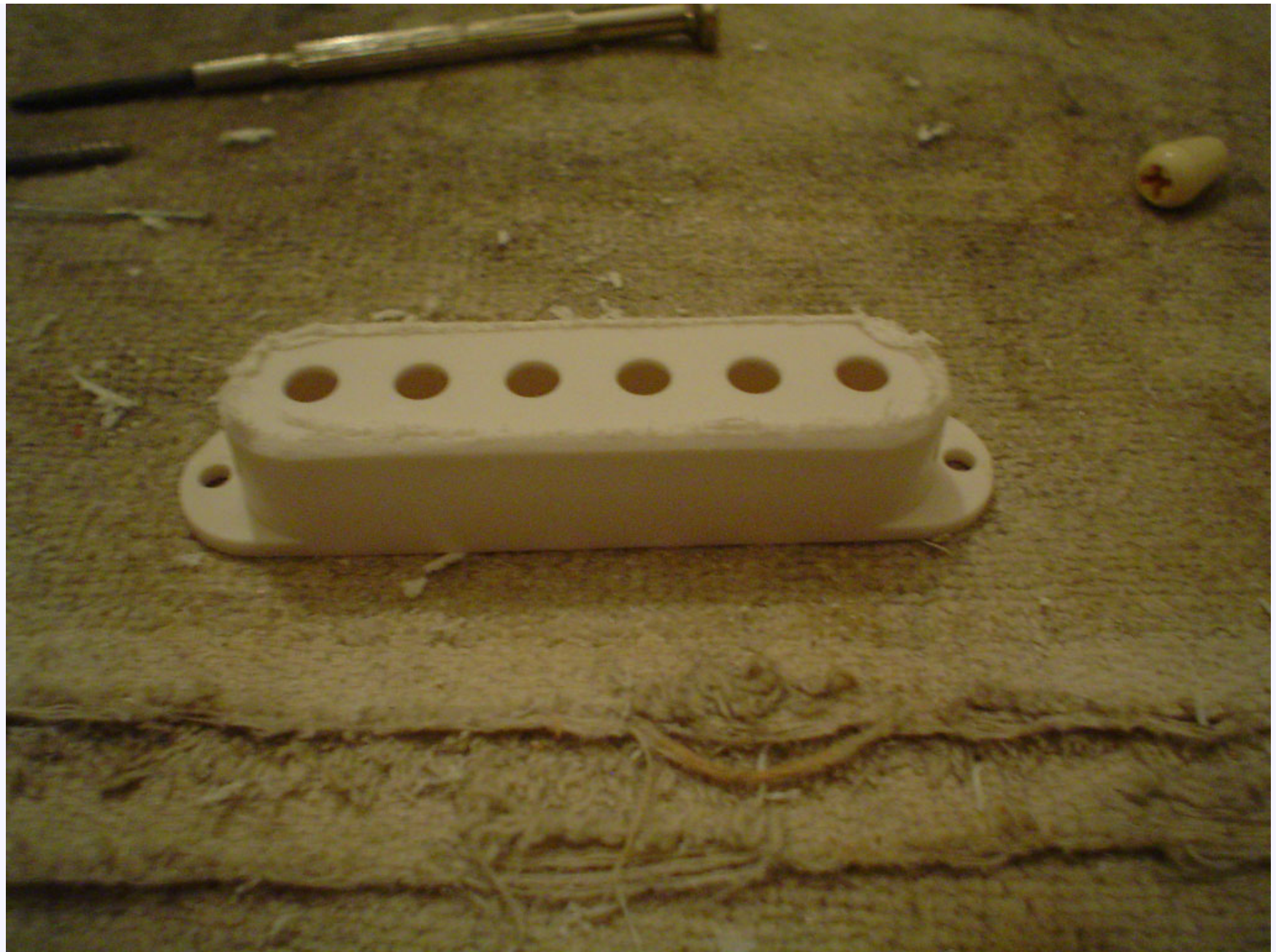


Take your rasp and again begin to scrape in a upwards motion like pictured.





Again you will have a bunch of plastic still sticking to the pickup cover. Just remove it with your fingernail like you did with the knobs



Take the cover and repeat the sanding and smoothing of the tops with 100 grit first and then with the 220 grit. Remember to move it at angles too you dont want to just rub it flat. We are trying to round over the sides and to blend them with the rest of the pickup cover. You can also at this point do some sanding with your hand just smoothing over that edge we just created. Take your time here and just sand it till its smooth and rounded. You cant rush this stage we dont want it to look like you just took a rasp to it.



When your done with the sanding at this point it should look like this. You can see the sides are rounded over now and not square edged. Now were getting somewhere. If you happened to sand thru the pickup cover dont fear thats actually ok. Remember above in the original 54' strat how it was worn like that?



In this pick I am basically just removing a little of the bottom of the cover to make the new found split look a little more pronounced. like in the original.. BE CAREFUL WITH THESE HOBBY KNIFES THOSE THINGS ARE SHARP.. Pickup covers can be replaced fingers cant.



Next step is optional strings corrode so obviously there will be some dirty marks on the covers where the knobs wouldnt, this is a detail. Take your pencil and draw some random jibberish on the pickup cover. You dont need alot, a little goes a long way.



Take your finger and rub it in till its blended and you can no longer see the drawing just a slight mark where it was



And there you have it a set of simulated bakelite covers, nicely rounded over and ready to go on the project.





And finally here is our full set of bakelite replica parts.



ENJOY
Brett

STAY TUNED... The fun is just beginning.

Everyday things change but basically remain the same.

Last edited by ibanezcollector : 03-03-2007 at 10:02 PM.

#27

03-03-2007, 11:59 PM

[jumbosilverette](#)

Keep your corner clean

Join Date: Oct 2005
Location: L.A.

★ Supporting Member

Wow! You are an artist. Thanks.

Start of my day: Visine, Caffeine, Nicotine, Answering Machine
MIM Club Member #34
Cort Club Member #8
www.myspace.com/jumpinfleacircus
www.jumpingflea.tumblr.com/

quote

#28

03-04-2007, 01:20 AM

[thedonutman](#)

Registered User

Join Date: Feb 2005
Location: Sheffield, UK

I never realised that there was so much to it.

Great thread *bookmarked*

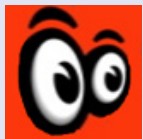
Fender MIM jazz with Series/parallel switching
Custom Thunderbird

Fender MIM Club member #27

quote

#29

03-04-2007, 01:38 AM

[Vandelay](#)

The Mingler

Join Date: Aug 2006
Location: Kansas City, MO

★ Supporting Member

Subscribed, thanks 😊

Lefty Union Member #11

quote

10

03-04-2007, 05:35 AM

[sedan_dad](#) 

Registered User

Join Date: Feb 2006
Location: Columbus, Ohio

One of the more interesting posts I've seen.

The fewer notes you play ,the more you make per note.
Give yourself a raise.

Fender + Ampeg = Bass

 quote

11

03-04-2007, 08:12 AM

[ibanezcollector](#) 

Registered User

Join Date: Feb 2007
Location: Cleveland OH Armpit of the USA



thanks for all the kind words guys/gals.

Most dont know whats involved till they see it for themselves its not just hitting it with things and throwing it LOL..

Today I have the day off so were going to tackle the metals and start the neck. I got all day to do it so...

Stay tuned...

Everyday things change but basically remain the same.

 quote

12

03-04-2007, 09:30 AM

[ibanezcollector](#) 

Registered User

Join Date: Feb 2007
Location: Cleveland OH Armpit of the USA



ok the moment im sure some are waiting for the neck.. How do you create realistic neck wear? Well you can either relic it or play it for 20 years.

Things needed:

150,220 and 320 grit sandpaper

good masking tape, dont dare try this with cheapo masking tape I use 3M its a bit thicker and it will hold up to what were about to do.

Miniwax Special Walnut stain

Toilet Paper(again we need a plain toilet paper no dimples or prints)

Ok here we have a picture of the stock neck.. Surprising this squier has some nice flame in it, always a nice thing. There is one real thick flame band pretty cool adds character.



What I do next is take a piece of tape and tear a random design in it.. If your really interested you can mark out your design of what you want the wear to end like but I feel a random tear gives better results.



Do the same thing for both sides and then mask off a good part of the area behind it. Now you really want to make sure that this tape is pushed down and sealed. What were going to do next if you used cheap tape you will find out that its not going to work.



The back of most guitar necks have a very thin layer of satin poly, we are going to remove this by sanding it. DO NOT try using heavier grit papers to make the work faster, you will get scratches. I know this step is going to take a while but just work at it.. First with 150, then the 220, and finally the 320. When your done the neck will be smooth as butter. And notice the tape didnt lift at all.. Still where it was put 😊



Ok next step now that your neck is sanded back to the wood, is give it a good wipe down to take the sanding dust off it.. If you have access to a air compressor give it a good shot to blow the dust off. I do not have that luxury so I just wipe it down good and blow it off the old fashioned way..

Now grab your toilet paper and the Miniwax Special Walnut stain and get a good amount on the paper, the newly sanded back neck is going to absorb that stain quick..



Here is the neck with 1 coat of the stain on.. Starting to get that look.. I used 4 coats of the Miniwax stain, with about 5-10 mins inbetween coats to let it absorb in.



After the 4 coats were on I waited about 20 mins then I carefully removed the tape. As you can see we have a obvious stain line from the stock neck to the newly finished neck



never fear that is normal we did create it, but its a easy fix very lightly and carefully take your finger and just pull the stain back about a 1/8"-1/16" were just trying to blend in that seam with the rest of the neck. Dont take your big nubby fingers and jab it just lightly rub it back almost not touching it at all. **AND MAKE SURE NOT TO TOUCH THE REST OF THE NEWLY FINISHED NECK**



And there you have it, realistic neck wear.. Now put the neck somewhere safe for a couple days, we are not done with her yet, she will get some more treatment to make it blend in smoother we just need to wait a while before moving on.. *The flash picture makes it look darker than it is, the non flash shot is truer to the actual outcome*





Stay tuned more coming today..

Everyday things change but basically remain the same.

Last edited by ibanezcollector : 03-04-2007 at 09:37 AM.

#13

03-04-2007, 10:23 AM



[Mark Wilson](#)

The Talkbass Panhandler

Join Date: Jan 2005
Location: Toronto/Niagara Falls, Ontario



Supporting Member

This is great!

Let's say you don't want your neck to be THAT vintage.

That means you should section off the ENTIRE neck in tape, and sand down that one area, and proceed, correct?

Fender MIM Member #20

Cantaloupe Club Member #001

Quote:

Originally Posted by [Skel](#)

Hey Jeff, just so you know.. girls underwear is SOOO uncomfortable too. It fits so bad. I struggled with that decision, that morning.

quote

#14

03-04-2007, 10:25 AM



[vindy500](#)

globe trotter

Join Date: Mar 2005
Location: horsens, denmark

Send a message via
Skype™ to vindy500



Supporting Member

i would assume you just use a lighter stain/less coats

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

Domo-kun tribe shuhan

Cort club #2

quote

#15

03-04-2007, 10:28 AM



[Mark Wilson](#)

The Talkbass Panhandler

Join Date: Jan 2005
Location: Toronto/Niagara Falls, Ontario



Supporting Member

Well, yea. But I mean say you don't usually play in 1st position, or near the 12 fret. so there would be a lot of wear from frets 5-10 lets say.

Fender MIM Member #20
Cantaloupe Club Member #001

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Skel** 

Hey Jeff, just so you know.. girls underwear is SOOO uncomfortable too. It fits so bad. I struggled with that decision, that morning.

 quote

16

 03-04-2007, 10:28 AM

[!Rob!](#) 

Registered User

Join Date: Mar 2007

Wow, this truly is fantastic, I officially retract my belt-sander comment (I was kidding anyways).

Great work bud, you truly understand the entire process, keep it coming!

 quote

17

 03-04-2007, 10:38 AM

[ibanezcollector](#) 

Registered User

Join Date: Feb 2007

Location: Cleveland OH Armpit of the USA



Mark if you only wanted wear in a certain area correct you would just section off the area where you would want the wear.

Just make sure you tape off more past the area to reduce risk of accidently sanding something you dont want sanded.

Thanks for the kind words again and im hoping some find this useful, maybe it will turn some of the haters to at least respect it. there is alot more work that is done than most believe.

I am by no means a master at relic work but I believe I have great results with what I learned. I have done and learned the majority of this myself so there have been a few disasters along the way LOL.

I just want to bring a option out for others, I may be doing it all wrong for all I know, but at least there is a option to paying \$500 + for relic work on a existing guitar.

Everyday things change but basically remain the same.

 quote

18

 03-04-2007, 12:03 PM

[spudmaster34](#) 

Registered User

Join Date: Nov 2005
Location: north of chicago

nice work

yamaha club member #1

Quote:

Originally Posted by **MammaryVest**
what's this about a twelve step program!!! I always though for bass it would be a twelve Half-Step program.

just in case ctbass&birdsong is reading this, HAPPY EASTER

 quote

19

03-04-2007, 12:38 PM



[Mark Wilson](#) 

The Talkbass Panhandler

Join Date: Jan 2005
Location: Toronto/Niagara Falls, Ontario



★ Supporting Member

Another Question,

What will the "worn down" neck feel like?
Will it feel like a well loved, vintage neck?

Fender MIM Member #20
Cantaloupe Club Member #001

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Skel** 
Hey Jeff, just so you know.. girls underwear is SOOO uncomfortable too. It fits so bad. I struggled with that decision, that morning.

 quote

10

03-04-2007, 01:01 PM

[ibanezcollector](#) 

Registered User

Join Date: Feb 2007
Location: Cleveland OH Armpit of the USA



Ok here we go the metal relicing.

Now first of there is a few ways to do this, I will explain three with the most dangerous and caustic first.

Beware these steps are extremely dangerous and I do not use these methods due to said danger.

I have read and seen people who have used Muratic Acid fumes to wear there metal parts. I choose my lungs, skin and safety over this method. But basically it works like this you need two containers one small enough to fit into the other. You will pour some Muratic Acid into the bigger container and then put your parts in the smaller one, Then put the smaller container into the bigger container so ONLY the fumes come in contact with the metal not the actual Acid. I never used this method and dont suggest it.

The second method is to use Circuitboard Etchant Solution sold at Radio Shack, this method is the quickest but can also be dangerous and can ruin your parts in a matter of seconds turning them black.. I dont even know how it works or why. Again I prefer the non-caustic way which I will explain below.

For my method I prefer something that takes a little more time, but its safe to me and everyone around me.

Things you will need:

Metal pan for boiling(this is something you dont want to keep so make sure its a junk pan and not your moms best pan LOL

Mortons Iodized Salt

White Vinegar

Water

Time, Time, Time, this is not for the impatient.

Ok first step get your salt and vinegar.. If your hungry get some chips too. 😊





One pan full of water.. Start that stove and let the fun begin





Add a decent amount of salt to the water, I would say a cup of salt if this was a recipe.. What we are going to make is a Salt water brine.



Now some agree with this some dont.. I have had excellent results with this method. We are going to add some Vinegar to the mix, vinegar is usually between 3-5% acidity. So in the process of the salt water brine were going to add some of that acidity to the mix which will help in the aging process. Now dont over do it I used about a 1/2 a cup of vinegar.



Get a nice sized container and throw all your metal parts in there.. Obviously dont throw your electrical parts like pots, switches, and pickups, etc etc in there. LOL



As you can see the salt has no become one with the water.. This is what were after. You dont need to boil it for hours just until the water and salt have mixed.



After about 10-15 mins of boiling I now have a *safe* acidic salt water brine..



Take the water and carefully pour it into the container with the parts.. Now its a waiting game.



When doing the saltwater brine method I will let the parts sit for 2 days in the water, then I will take them out and let them air dry(again I will repeat air dry do not dry them with a rag etc. just let them dry naturally), and then back in the water for 2 days, and then out, etc etc until the parts age the way I want them too.

Screws and Nuts etc, will age alot faster than there Chrome counterparts bridges, tuners. So its just a matter of examining the parts on the days there taken out to air dry. If you feel they need more time in the brine so be it, put them back in, if not put them aside to wait till the others have aged..

This method is safe, and effective, there is more control this way..

Stay tuned...

Everyday things change but basically remain the same.

Last edited by ibanezcollector : 03-04-2007 at 01:05 PM.

quote

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