

HOW TO INSTALL JACKS, POTS AND SWITCHES IN HOLLOW GUITARS

Most hollow-body electric guitars are a pain when it comes to wiring and pickups. This is because they do not generally have a backplate or pickguard that can be removed to access the electrics.

Nope, usually we end up having to pull the original wiring out through the f-hole* before doing any wiring or soldering required. Then comes the annoying part — getting all the pots and wiring back in through the f-hole.

It is a job that usually involves a little swearing and a lot of 'fishing'.

*Some instruments will have been wired through a pickup cavity instead of an f-hole. The information here is just as valid in that case.

INSTALLING AN OUTPUT JACK IN A SEMI-HOLLOW GUITAR

The jack socket is often one of the hardest parts because it's usually the furthest from the f-hole so access is tricky.

And that's why people who do this regularly will try to find ways to make it easier.

Ways like the Jack-On-A-hook.



JACK-ON-A -HOOK

The 'jack-on-a-hook' for fishing output jacks through hollow-body instruments

For longer reach, I have a jack epoxied to an un-bent coat hanger.

For shorter jobs, I use a jack epoxied to a dowel. This one is handy for installing endpin outputs in acoustic guitars.

FISHING OUTPUT JACKS THROUGH SEMI-HOLLOW GUITARS

When I'm rewiring semi-hollow or archtop style guitars, I can thread the jack-on-a-hook through the jack hole, from the outside, and work it up and out the f-hole.

Then, I just hook it into the output jack socket and I can guide that through the body to where it lives.

That saves a LOT of messing around.

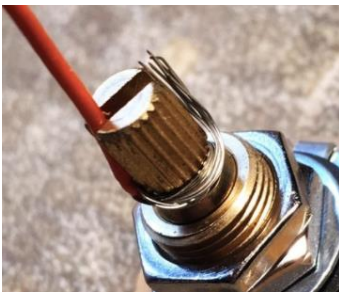
INSTALLING VOLUME AND TONE POTS IN HOLLOW GUITARS

Fishing some thin wires through the jack holes from outside can work. I use stranded wire and strip the insulation from the end. I'll divide the strands and wrap them around the pot shaft. It's a delicate balance — you want enough 'wrapping' to grip the pot for pulling, but not enough to get in the way of getting the pot shaft through the mounting hole.

I like to split stranded wires and use them to help fish pots through f-holes



The pot can be threaded back through the f-hole to its mount



INSTALLING SWITCHES IN HOLLOW AND ARCHTOP GUITARS

This is easier. Sacrifice an old switch tip. Drill a hole in the end, thread through a line or wire and make a stop knot on it.

You can then thread the tethered switch tip through, screw it onto the switch and pull it back through.

Installing a switch in a hollow-body electric guitar is easier if you do this



THE BOTTOM LINE

Hollow and semi-hollow instruments, with only f-hole access to the wiring, continue to be a pain in the butt. The tricks above can make working on them just a little bit less hassle, though.