

Installation Tips and Troubleshooting a Hum in the Jones-Hatfield Banjo Pickup

Be sure the inductor strip is as close to the coil housing as possible but not touching it. Use two business cards or a credit card as a spacer, keeping the housing parallel to the head, then tighten the wing nut and remove the spacer. It will be obvious if the housing is touching the inductor strip - a loud crackling noise will occur. The best way to ensure the pickup is as close to the inductor strip as possible: Press on the head very hard so the housing actually makes contact with the inductor strip and makes it crackle. Then release the pressure to be sure the crackling disappears when playing the banjo normally. As your head ages it may sag and eventually the crackling will return...it is time to either tighten the head or re-space the housing.

Instead of placing the inductor strip under the bridge it is more effective to tape it to the underside of the head. The other advantage to this: it can be moved anywhere along the co-ordinator rods for tone change. The closer to the middle of the banjo head, the more bass response. The closer to the tailpiece, the more treble response.

If there is no sound whatsoever when installed correctly and cables are tested to be good...no hum or crackle or musical sound, and the amp/PA tests OK, the pickup is likely defective.

If your amp or PA has a polarity switch, flip it to reverse the polarity.

If the positioning/setup is correct, the next most common problem is a bad cable. Switch out all cables between the pickup and the amp or PA one at a time. Two combo .35mm/1/4 inch cables are provided with the pickup, a 6-inch cable and a two-foot cable. It is highly unlikely both of these are bad, so test one at a time.

Start with as simple a system as possible: just the pickup connected directly to the amp or PA system with one cable. Add components such as pre-amps, volume pedals, effects units, etc. until the hum appears. Whichever component you added last (or the cable added to connect it) is likely the source of the problem. If you are running a "line out" cable from the amp to a PA, test the pickup with JUST the amp, then see if it still hums when a line is run to the PA. If so, the cable between the amp and PA may be bad or the volume on the amp may be too high.

House wiring can be positive ground or negative ground. Negative ground is by far the most common, but some older structures may use a positive ground. Flip the polarity switch if there is one, then test it in a different building.

How high is the volume? If it is over 6 or so and you do not have adequate volume without hum, a pre-amp is needed. This is a passive pickup. Unlike an "active" pickup (with a battery) it needs a pre-amp to be effective at higher volumes - in large concert rooms and with bands including drums and electric instruments.

Set the volume on the amp low, just loud enough to use as a stage monitor, and get most of the gain for the house (audience) from the PA. Same for using a pre-amp - set the pre-amp as low as possible and get most of the gain for the house (audience) from the main amp or PA. *The amp closest to the pickup should be set low as possible and most of the power should come from the amp (PA) furthest away from the pickup.*

If it is plugged in the same circuit as a neon or fluorescent light, it will produce a 60-cycle hum. Many bars and restaurants have neon signs near the stage... Beer signs, etc. Try turning them off. Any establishment that has entertainment on a regular basis should have corrected this problem...isolated a circuit that has no lights on it for the band to use. However, new venues or ones that just started having entertainment may not have figured this out yet. You will have to educate them.

The pickup is designed with the plastic mounting plate to be insulated...NOT grounded to the banjo. Sometimes grounding it actually eliminates a hum. Simply run a wire from under the nut that holds the jack in the mounting plate to under any bracket nut and tighten the nut over the wire to secure it. Sometimes it works better grounded and sometimes it works better not grounded. This may have to do with whether your amp and/or house wiring has a positive ground or a negative ground as mentioned earlier. Try another location - a different building.

If all these remedies fail, return it for a full refund or exchange or store credit. However, you *must* call or email first to authorize the return.

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