

Telecaster

4-Way Pickup Selector Switch

Telecaster players have long debated the merits of having their pickups wired in parallel vs. series. In the traditional parallel wiring configuration, pickup output is relatively consistent across all three positions. A Telecaster with its pickups wired in series differs in that when both pickups are on at the same time, the combination produces fatter tone and higher output. A 4-position Tele switch allows players to have both wiring options at once. The resulting pickup combinations are:

Position 1: Bridge Pickup (standard Tele)

Position 2: Bridge & Neck Pickups in Parallel (standard Tele)

Position 3: Neck Pickup (standard Tele)

Position 4: Bridge & Neck Pickups in Series (fatter tone than position 2 & more output than positions 1, 2, or 3)

Players with reverse-wound, reverse-polarity pickups receive the additional benefit of hum-cancellation in switch positions 2 and 4.

If your neck pickup has a cover, the ground must be lifted from it and an additional ground wire added to maintain its shielding capability. The exceptions to this are the Fender Texas Special neck pickup (which already has a separate [yellow] ground wire), and pickups that are bought from Acme Guitar Works as part of a prewired assembly (we'll lift the ground for you and add a yellow wire to the cover).

Assuming you need to lift the ground yourself, here's how: Look at the bottom of the neck pickup and you'll see that there are three tabs for the cover. Two are bent around the front edge of the pickup's base, and one comes through the base near the solder connections for the black and white wires. You should see that there is a short jumper wire, 1/4" or so in length, that connects this third tab to the black wire. The reason for this is that it's assumed the black wire will be connected to ground (thereby connecting the cover to ground), but this isn't the case with the 4-way switch, as you can see below.

If your pickup has this jumper, you need to sever it so the cover is no longer connected to the black wire. Then solder a 10"-12" length of wire to the cover's tab, run it into the control cavity, and solder it to the back of the volume pot. This will add a permanent connection between the cover and ground.

