

Pickups vs. Pickups

What are pickups? Well they are a device that acts as a transducer that converts the energy produced by the vibrating guitar strings into AC (alternating current) electrical pulses which are fed to an amplifier. What...Did you get all that technical talk?

More simply put, electric guitars are generally fitted with magnetic pickups (a magnet) wrapped with a coil of a few thousand turns of enameled copper wire. Since magnetic pickups only functions if they are close to the guitar stings, they are mounted on the body directly beneath the strings. The vibration of the nearby strings induces an alternating current through the coil of wire. The signal is then carried to the guitar amplifier via a cable. A little simpler...Maybe?



ESP Vintage Plus (S-S-S)

Humbucker vs. Single Coil

As we talked about before, single coil pickups have an overall cleaner (clear) sound, more chimey or jangly. Humbucker pickups have a higher output and are great for distortion/heavier styles of music; which they are also quieter.

Let's take a closer look.

Single Coil Design: Again, a single coil pickup is a type of magnetic transducer for the electric guitar. It electromagnetically converts the vibrations of the strings to an electrical signal. So what does it sound like? Well, we described it earlier as "Clean, Chimey or Jangly."

Here are some Single Coil Designs:

- Stratocaster design - as on an Ibanez GSA60, a ESP Vintage Plus or an Ibanez RG350.
- Split Coil - As on a Yamaha RBX170.



Yamaha Pacifica 112 (H-S-S)



LTD EC1000 (H-H)

Humbucking Design ("It Bucks the Hum"): So you see now how it got its name. First patented by Seth Lover in 1955 know as the P.A.F. (Patent Applied For). Humbuckers are also known as dual-coil, double coil or hum-canceling pickups. They have two coils instead of one which have opposite polarity or opposite windings and are connected in series which basically make them a lot quieter. Again, humbuckers get their name from canceling out interference (buck the hum), have higher output and have a warmer/thicker sound than single coil pickups.

Here are some Humbucker Guitar Examples:

- LTD EC1000
- Ibanez RG350M
- Yamaha PAC112



Ibanez RG350 (H-S-H)

Common Pickup Configurations:

- S-S-S (Single-Single-Single) - such as an ESP Vintage Plus
- H-S-S (Humbucker-Single-Single) - such as a Yamaha Pacifica 112
- H-H (Humbucker-Humbucker) - such as a LTD EC1000
- H-S-H (Humbucker-Single-Humbucker) - such as a Ibanez RG350M

Whatever type of pickup you choose, single coil or humbucker, the staff at Mozingo Music will be glad to help you with any questions you might have. Come on in and try out a few!