

The Les Paul Forum

Dedicated to the Discussion of the Gibson Les Paul



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[Aging Pickups\(?\) WTF...](#)

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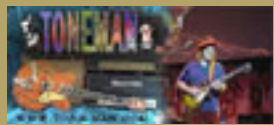
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01-16-06, 10:33 AM

#1

[TM1](#)

Les Paul Forum Member



Join Date: Jun 2003
Location: on the middle & bridge pickup of my R-7 Custom
Posts: 612

[Pickups Aging Pickups\(?\) WTF...](#)

We all know that you can cosmetically age pickups. What about aging them so they sound like they've been played for a few years? The reason I bring this up is because I have a CD that is basically an audio "Break-in" CD for amps. It's a 74 minute program that if you run it five times is the equal to the amp having been played for 100 hours. It works amazingly well for that. But.. what if you plugged out of an amp into a guitar feeding this program?

I tried this yesterday going out of the CD player into a little Vox Brian May amp (10 watts) into the input jack of one of my Les Pauls. I ran it one time for each pickup. I stopped in between to see what the level and tone was like between the neck pickup and bridge pickup. I was very surprised to find that the pickup that had been acting as a load or speaker sounded warmer and louder than it had before. After I did the other pickup it was really quiet apparent that it did increase the volume level, harmonics and warmth of the pickups.

Am I barmy or is this something that's a real change? I don't see how running a few volts into a pickup can harm the pickup but it did seem to alter the sound of the pickup in a very good way.. Anyone want to chime in on this...



[Quote](#)

01-16-06, 03:53 PM

#2

[Gtrplyr1](#)

Les Paul Forum Member



Join Date: Jul 2002
Posts: 356

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

My Guess, I could be totally wrong, is that if you are using the pickup as a load and heating it up, then the resistance is increasing as it gets "hot". It will change the tone of the pickup as if it was wound hotter. If you solder pickup covers onto a pickup, I believe that you will also get a false reading with a meter until the pickup cools down.

Same deal with putting headers on a corvette, because the header tube runs so close to the starter that you need to shield the starter from the heat, otherwise after the armature gets too hot the car is hard to turn over because the starter motor resistance is higher.

I am sure others will chime in here and give a more correct answer if I'm having a mental meltdown.



01-16-06, 04:04 PM

#3

[Gold Tone](#)

All Access/Backstage Pass

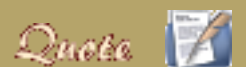


Join Date: Apr 2002
Location: Vancouver - come home Pamela...I've got a Kokanee for you
Posts: 2,790

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Very (VERY) simply....to create an electrical current you need a magnet around a wire.....to create a magnet you need a wire with current wrapped around an iron bar.

What you've probabaly done is increased the strength of the magnet in the pickup.....probably.



01-16-06, 10:03 PM

#4

[LPStandard0488](#)

Les Paul Forum Member



Join Date: Sep 2005
Posts: 131

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Or. He's come across a new maketing idea! PATENT THAT SUCKER!!! hehe.



01-17-06, 12:33 AM

#5

[59Vampire](#)

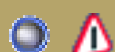
All Access/Backstage Pass



Join Date: Feb 2005
Posts: 1,151

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Where can i get that cd? i have a new amp that i would like to try it with. thanks



TT100

Formerly Tele-Tubby



Join Date: Jul 2002
 Location: Memphis TN
 Posts: 3,861

**Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...**

So, you're downloading tone into your pickup?

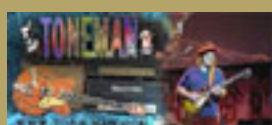
Sounds wacky to me.

TT

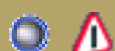
Quote

TM1

Les Paul Forum Member



Join Date: Jun 2003
 Location: on the middle &
 bridge pickup of my R-7
 Custom
 Posts: 612

**Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...**

Well, the pickup certainly did not get hot. By the time you take the resistance of the pickup and divide that by the voltage coming from the output of the amp, you don't get a lot of voltage into the pickup. Every amp's output is measured in A.C. voltage. Here's simple equation to figure wattage: for a 15 watt amp is like this: 11 volts A.C. measured at the output jack @ 8 ohms. You take 11 times 11 which equals 121. Then divide that by the ohmage of the speaker which we'll use 8 ohms equals 15 watts. Now take that and divide it by 8K from the pickup and you get .015 watts or less than a quarter of a watt. So, not a lot of voltage going into the pickup and doubtful if it even gets warm from this process. but having played the guitar again yesterday and today, there is a difference in what the pickups sound like now.

The audio break-in CD is something that my friends asked me not to make copies of or share. They use this CD on every amp that make before it gets shipped out. A hint.. my friend Peter Stroud is one of the partners.

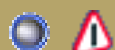
Quote

pepejara

All Access/Backstage Pass



Join Date: Sep 2003
 Location: Murcia, Spain
 Posts: 1,105

**Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...**

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Gold Tone**

Very (VERY) simply....to create an electrical current you need a magnet around a wire.....to create a magnet you need a wire with current wrapped around an iron bar.

What you've probabaly done is increased the strength of the magnet in the pickup.....probably.

That makes all sense... So, in the end, it would be the opposite effect as desire, that was to "age" the pickup"...

Regards 😊

Quote

TT100

Formerly Tele-Tubby



Join Date: Jul 2002
Location: Memphis TN
Posts: 3,861

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Gold Tone**
Very (VERY) simply....to create an electrical current you need a magnet around a wire.....to create a magnet you need a wire with current wrapped around an iron bar.

What you've proabaly done is increased the strength of the magnet in the pickup.....probably.

Well, I'd think maybe. With direct current, possibly. With an alternating signal? Not so sure.

TT



Quote

01-17-06, 12:01 PM

#10

Big Dan

Les Paul Forum Member



Join Date: Jul 2003
Location: Mount Herdaily
Posts: 337

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Tele-Tubby**
So, you're downloading tone into your pickup?

TT



Quote

01-17-06, 12:13 PM

#11

Gold Tone

All Access/Backstage Pass



Join Date: Apr 2002
Location: Vancouver - come home Pamela...I've got a Kokanee for you
Posts: 2,790

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

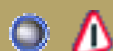
Quote:

Originally Posted by **Tele-Tubby**
Well, I'd think maybe. With direct current, possibly. With an alternating signal? Not so sure.

TT

Good point...hadn't considered that. Do we know this is an AC current? From the wall yes....but that is converted to DC in the amp so the amp would put out a DC current no?

BTW - I am NOT an expert....just guessing here.



Quote

01-17-06, 01:36 PM

#12

TT100

Formerly Tele-Tubby



Join Date: Jul 2002
Location: Memphis TN
Posts: 3,861

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

If its DC it's not an amp, it's a power supply. DC on an amp's output would hold a speaker's voice coil in a fixed position. Unless of course it was present in a sufficient amount to burn it out or or send the VC across the room.

Sound is an alternating signal. Not necessarily symmetrical, but alternating.

I'm not saying that "burning in" a pickup by using it as a load somehow affects it's output long term but it's still a stretch imo.

"Seasoning" an amp by burning it in with some sort of program material seems a bit of a "booteek" stretch but hey, who am I to argue with Peter Stroud. Is he the same cat that backs up Sheryl Crow?

TT



Quote

01-17-06, 01:44 PM

#13

Gold Tone

All Access/Backstage Pass



Join Date: Apr 2002
Location: Vancouver - come home Pamela...I've got a Kokanee for you
Posts: 2,790

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Quote:

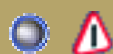
Originally Posted by **Tele-Tubby**
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Sound is an alternating signal. Not necessarily symmetrical, but alternating. TT

Sorry to hijack but can I ask for a quick lesson TT, you know more than I do for sure. I thought an amp converts current to DC at some point, no?

Cheers,

GT



Quote

01-17-06, 02:02 PM

#14

DonP

Les Paul Forum Member

Join Date: Feb 2003
Location: Cincinnati
Posts: 1,875

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Gold Tone**
Sorry to hijack but can I ask for a quick lesson TT, you know more than I do for sure. I thought an amp converts current to DC at some point, no?

Cheers,

GT

An amp takes wall AC, converts it to DC, then modulates the DC to move the speaker cone.

You control the modulation of the DC that moves the speaker cone with the input to the amp - a pickup, mic, or CD.



[Quote](#)

01-17-06, 02:20 PM

#15

[Gold Tone](#)

All Access/Backstage Pass



Join Date: Apr 2002
Location: Vancouver - come home Pamela...I've got a Kokanee for you
Posts: 2,790



[Quote](#)

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Got it.

So would it be steady enough to create a current flow smooth enough to strengthen the pickups magnet?

01-17-06, 02:21 PM

#16

[Gold Tone](#)

All Access/Backstage Pass



Join Date: Apr 2002
Location: Vancouver - come home Pamela...I've got a Kokanee for you
Posts: 2,790



[Quote](#)

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Sorry....hicup.

01-18-06, 11:38 AM

#17

[Spencer Mumford](#)

Les Paul Forum Member

Join Date: Jun 2004
Posts: 1



[Quote](#)

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

I suspect this cannot be the case. Perhaps having worn in 100 hours into your amp, it's the amp that sounds bigger, not the pickups. Not dismissing the idea but I have a working knowledge of pickups and this isn't something that can be achieved in the same manner as breaking in a valve.

01-18-06, 12:23 PM

#18

[UfoPilot](#)

Registered User



Join Date: Mar 2002
Location: Kansas
Posts: 440



[Quote](#)

Pickups Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Gold Tone**
Got it.

So would it be steady enough to create a current flow smooth enough to strengthen the pickups magnet?

Any magnetic field caused by this would be EXTREMELY WEAK. The magnets in pickups are not that sensitive. To change the strength of a pickup magnet requires a STRONG magnetic field.



01-18-06, 02:05 PM

#19

Gold Tone

All Access/Backstage Pass



Join Date: Apr 2002
Location: Vancouver - come home Pamela...I've got a Kokanee for you
Posts: 2,790



Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Thanks Pilot.

01-19-06, 06:35 PM

#20

benbo

Les Paul Forum Member

Join Date: Jan 2006
Posts: 8

Pickups Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Spencer Mumford**
I suspect this cannot be the case. Perhaps having worn in 100 hours into your amp, it's the amp that sounds bigger, not the pickups. Not dismissing the idea but I have a working knowledge of pickups and this isn't something that can be achieved in the same manner as breaking in a valve.

Hey Spence, whats up? Glad to see you here. I think you are right on this one. Without physicaly altering the windings or magnets IE: stronger or weaker mags I dont think much about the pickup is going to change, I have a working knowledge about pickups also. It is possible the amp changed or maybe you wanted it to work so much on the pickup that you are thinking you hear a difference. I'm not trying to be funny with that last comment. Just not sure what is happening???

Ben



01-21-06, 06:38 AM

#21

chris195

Les Paul Forum Member



Join Date: Oct 2004
Location: UK.
Posts: 32

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

I have been wondering about wiring my pickups up to the mains electricity supply. I think this might somehow produce an 'ageing' effect which could dramatically improve the tone. Anyone have any experience of doing this?

On the subject of breaking in amps, I usually plug a small portable CD player in the front end. I insert a special Kylie Minouge CD, which I keep especially for this purpose. I then whap the amp up to 11, and go on a drinking binge for a week until the process is complete. My amps sound much better as a result of doing this.



[natew73](#)

Les Paul Forum Member



Join Date: Nov 2004
 Location: The Deep South
 Posts: 844

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Quote:

Originally Posted by **chris195**

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Kylie Minouge huh? Are you sure you haven't already been hittin' the sauce? 🍷



Quote

[enrv](#)

Les Paul Forum Member



Join Date: Sep 2003
 Location: Kent, England
 Posts: 91

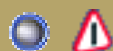
Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Hi Chris!

"...I insert a special Kylie Minouge CD..."

I always understood that speaker break-in benefitted from lots of bottom end... ah, now I see why you chose Kylie! 👍

Ian



Quote

[natew73](#)

Les Paul Forum Member



Join Date: Nov 2004
 Location: The Deep South
 Posts: 844

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Quote:

Originally Posted by **enrv**

Hi Chris!

"...I insert a special Kylie Minouge CD..."

I always understood that speaker break-in benefitted from lots of bottom end... ah, now I see why you chose Kylie! 👍

Ian

Must be a UK thing.

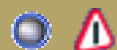


Quote

[slowjoe](#)

Les Paul Forum Member

Join Date: Jan 2005
Posts: 145



Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

probably would melt your pickups



01-21-06, 06:10 PM

#26

[slowjoe](#)

Les Paul Forum Member

Join Date: Jan 2005
Posts: 145



Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Quote:

Originally Posted by **chris195**

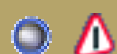
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probably would melt your pickups



01-23-06, 07:44 AM

#27

[benbo](#)

Les Paul Forum Member

Join Date: Jan 2006
Posts: 8



Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

This is all too funny!!!!!!!  



01-23-06, 08:50 AM

#28

[TT100](#)

Formerly Tele-Tubby



Join Date: Jul 2002
Location: Memphis TN
Posts: 3,861

Re: Aging Pickups(?) WTF...

Quote:

Originally Posted by **chris195**

I have been wondering about wiring my pickups up to the mains electricity supply.

I think this might somehow produce an 'ageing' effect which could dramatically improve the tone.

Anyone have any experience of doing this?



About 20 years ago, fed up with keeping an aging audio console alive, as a gag, I made up and packaged a tool I called "Module ReNu."

It consisted of a male Switchcraft XLR connector with a short, dummy AC cord and three prong plug shoved, but not wired, into the

end.

On the package the copy read "End hiss, crackle, hum and sizzle with just one application!"

Btw, which coffee is preferred for aging p90 covers? Colombian? French Roast?



TT



Quote



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