

MAINTENANCE

From time to time you will need to change the strings and batteries on your Lapstick. Here's how it's done:

Changing strings

Changing strings on the Lapstick will already be familiar to players who use a locking tremolo or similar headless instrument. If this is not the case, don't panic, it's very easy.

Start by saving your old guitar strings! The bridge on your Lapstick is a new design. Strings are clamped in the string holder at the bridge in a similar fashion to a locking tremolo such as Kahler or Floyd Rose. On the first series of bridges the ball end was placed in the string holder. This was quite an easy system to change strings but the problem was that the string wrappings went over the saddle. This had a negative effect on the sound and intonation. The new system is slightly more difficult to change strings, but the intonation and sound are much improved, and you can now use broken or old guitar strings from your electric guitar, (mostly the wear and breakage is at the bridge). They work fine. Also many brands of new strings are long enough to be used twice. You will need a string clipper to cut strings to length.

First lay the Lapstick down on a table or desk on a soft surface, towel or similar. I advise changing one string at a time until you get used to the system. The clamping screws are small and can get lost so make sure you will not be disturbed. Also try and avoid loosening the saddles, (tightening screw on the side of the bridge 1.5 mm key). If you do loosen them they can always be pushed back and retightened, but your Lapstick has been carefully set up, and that would need redoing.

Start with the first string, turn the tuning knob so that the string is as loose as possible but don't unscrew the tuning knob. Remove the clamping screw from the string holder with the 2 mm allen key. The old string will fall out. It is best to completely remove the clamping screw so you can check that you are putting the new string all the way into the string holder. When you have the new string all the way into the hole then replace the clamping screw. Tighten with reasonable force, overtightening is not necessary. Important, the string must be in the middle of the hole otherwise the clamping screw may not make good contact and the string will slip. This is especially true of the first and second strings, the others are thick enough that they always clamp.

Now remove the clamping screw at the nut end with the 2.5mm key. Pull the old string out of the slot. Place the new string in the slot. Replace the clamping screw but do not tighten. Now pull the string so that there is no slack and tighten the clamping screw. Don't cut the string to length yet. Try tuning the string. If it tunes without slipping then you are OK. Some stretching is normal but if it slips very quickly then it is loose at the bridge end. In this case loosen the string and reclamp at the bridge. If it slips quite slowly then it is loose at the nut. In this case loosen the string, pull it so there is no slack and reclamp it. Now try tuning up to normal pitch.

When the string tunes up to pitch and is playable then you can either cut it very short or fold it back into the slot to hide the sharp end. This is how the strings were attached when you received your Lapstick. To fold the string back first loosen the string with the tuning knob, then remove the string clamp at the nut with the 2.5mm key. Pull the string so there is no slack and bend it back into the slot with the 1.5mm key against the string behind the nut. This will make a small loop around the allen key. Reclamp the string lightly and cut the string off very close to the clamping screw. Slide the small allen key out of the loop. Now reclamp the string more firmly, this will bring the sharp end into the slot. Retune the string. You should now have a small loop and no sharp end

This process is repeated for each string.

For maintenance of your Lapstick in addition to the Allen keys supplied a pair of string clippers is necessary. I recommend clippers with pliers so you can also pull strings tight. A small Philips screwdriver (#1 point) is handy for just about everything else. If you lose any of the keys or the screws themselves you should find it no problem to get replacements. They are all standard metric components available at good hardware stores.

Replacing the battery

Removing the headphones automatically disconnects the battery. This prevents unnecessary drainage and ensures maximum battery life. Playing through an amplifier or in any other way without the use of the headphones output will not engage the battery at all. Although you will get weeks or months playing out of each battery, using the headphones output means that sooner or later the battery will need replacing.

1. To replace the 9 volt battery first place your Lapstick on a flat surface. Remove the preamp by loosening the retaining hex screw. Use the same 2.5mm key.
2. The preamp will slide out. If it sticks insert a guitar chord to help you pull it out. Open the battery compartment on the bottom of the preamp and replace the battery.
3. Push the preamp back into the Lapstick making sure that the wires do not get stuck. Tighten the retaining screw.
4. Don't forget the environment, use rechargeable batteries

LAPSTICK
Handcrafted by Phil Neal