

How to Install Binding on a Set Neck

By SG Lou, 6-15-10, www.reranch.com/reranch
(Photos courtesy SG Lou and www.mylespaul.com)

In regards to Crox's Post:

<http://www.reranch.com/reranch/viewtopic.php?t=37049>

Here is a step by step How-To. I hope it's not too confusing! 😊

How-To: Neck Binding

Yes, a fixed neck can be bound although it's not as easy as doing it with the neck off. I'll skip the part about pulling the frets as that's a no brainer. Just be careful when pulling them as chip-out can occur. I found that heating the fret wire with a Soldering Iron greatly reduces chip-out.

Once all of the frets are removed a "shelf" has to be cut on both sides of the neck that's the same or slightly narrower than the thickness of the binding.

I have used many times a tool that was sold years ago by StewMac. It's an aluminum Guide Bushing that screws onto the tip of your Dremel and it has an off set guide to use depending on the thickness of the binding. They sold it as a 2 piece set so you have 4 thickness options to choose from. If neither one of them would work you could always use tape as a bushing to build out the guide. What I do is usually do a test cut on scrap and check the channel to the thickness of the binding to make sure I'm not cutting too deep.

StewMac no longer sells the 2 piece aluminum Guides, but instead they have a newer design.

http://www.stewmac.com/shop/Tools/Special_tools_for:_Routing/Precision_Router_Edge_Guide.html

Here is what I have:



What I did was set the Dremel cutting bit so it only cut as deep as the thickness of the edge of the fingerboard and with the guitar in a vise and the neck parallel to the bench I carefully held the Dremel so it sat straight to the side of the neck and routed the ledge for the binding. Just be careful of your cut, making sure you don't get any tear from the bit and when you near the headstock you may want to stop and do the rest of the ledge by hand.



Now you ask, "how did you cut the ledge on the fingerboard that overhangs the body? I used an X-acto razor saw and undercut the fingerboard at the FB/ neck glue joint until the depth of the cut was the same as the depth of the ledge. I used the same saw and following the new edge of the ledge along the top of the FB and cut that until the remaining portion of FB was free. Now if you want to you can also saw off a piece the FB on the end of the neck that's the same thickness of the binding.

After you have both ledges cut you go about fretting the neck. Once all of the frets are in, take a smooth Mill File and bring the fret ends down until they are smooth and flush with the FB.



Now comes the fun part.....Binding the neck.

The glue StewMac sells is great so you can either use that, use CA Glue or make your own "glue".

http://www.stewmac.com/shop/Glues_adhesives/Weld-On_binding_adhesive.html

To make your own glue all you need is about 6 to 8 inches of the binding material you're going to use, some Acetone and a small glass jar with a lid.

Cut up the binding into small pieces no more than 1/8" to 1/4" wide, place the cut up pieces into a jar and cover it with Acetone. In about a day or two the Acetone will have dissolved the binding and you got a great adhesive for your binding. The great thing about this is, it holds just as well as commercial glues and once dry it matches your binding and it will fill any voids. This process is also great for gluing binding to a body.

I used the glue from StewMac and smeared some the binding glue down the side of the ledge and pressed the binding into the channel. Use just enough glue so you have a small amount of squeeze out and tape it in place.



Let it dry for a day and you can remove the tape. It will probably look like a huge mess but trust me, all of that binding glue can be scraped off very easily.

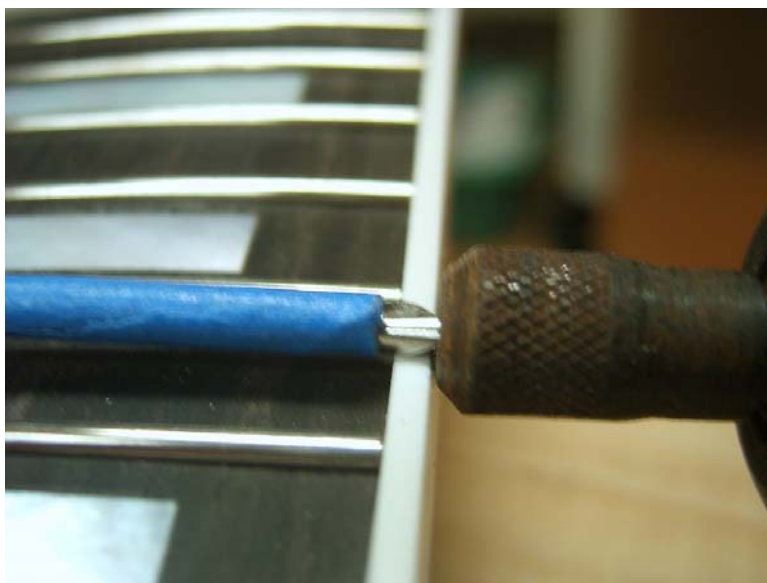
Removing the excess binding and forming the Nibs:

Here's the technique I use to cut down the binding and create the nibs.

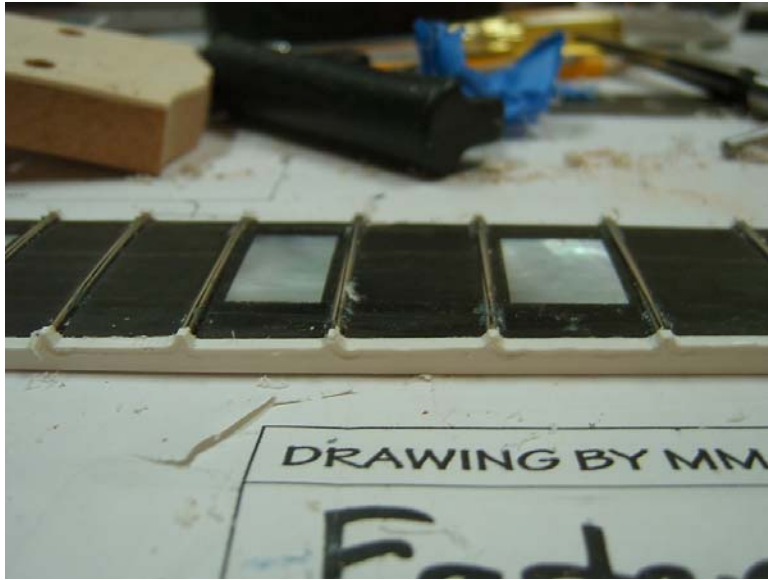
First I stick a Dremel bit in backwards into the Dremel...



Then I wrap the end of the exposed bit with tape to protect the fretboard. Leave just about 1/8" of the bit exposed...



Run the Dremel down the side of the binding with the bit with the taped end resting on the FB and let the exposed portion of the bit remove the bulk of the binding until you got something that looks like this.

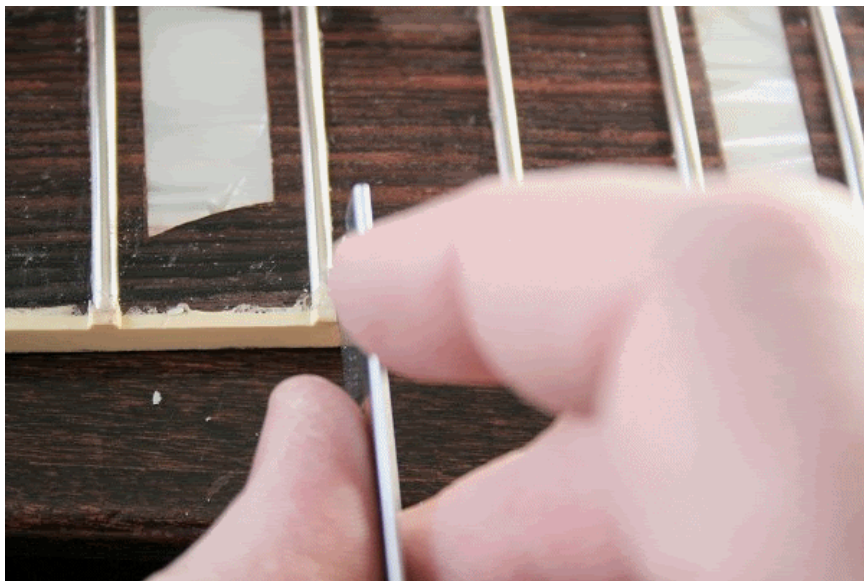


Here are a couple of Videos that a guy over at My Les Paul did on this technique

YouTube - Leveling Neck Binding (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2iss1SrC5I>)

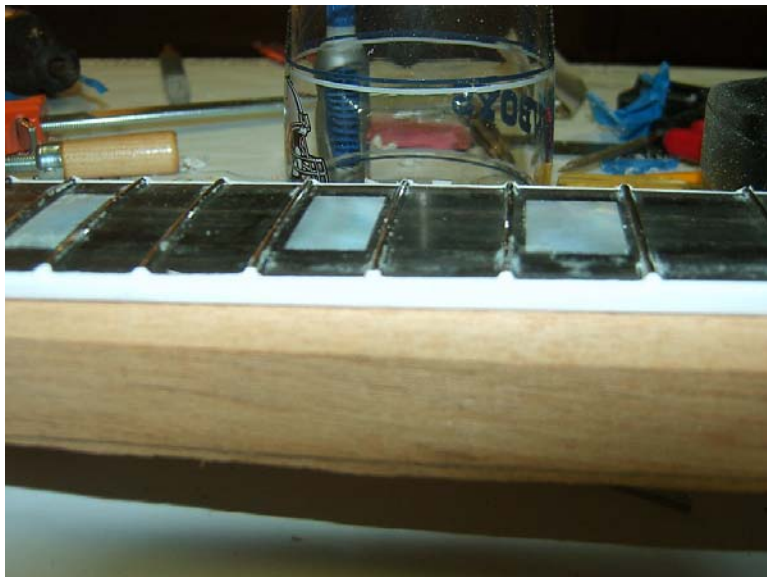
YouTube - Scraping a Neck Binding (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcleR-drQDI>)

After you have the bulk of the binding removed you continue bringing down the binding until it's flush with the FB. I use a single edge razor blade and use a side to side scraping motion until the binding is flush.



You will also use the same razor scraping technique to bring the sides of the binding down until it's flush with the side of the neck.

Once the leveling is done then you proceed to shape the nibs with a razor blade, and a file so that the nib matches the width of the fret wire. I also like to use a fret crowning file to bring the top of the nib down so it's even with the fret end.



The last thing to do is put an angle on the nibs. I purchased a tool off of Ebay for this that has a smooth file set into a block of wood at 33 degrees. You run the angled portion of the block down on top of the frets and the file takes the nibs down to the right angle.

http://cgi.ebay.com/35-90-DUAL-PURPOSE-OAK-FRET-BEVEL-FILE-LUTHIER-TOOL-/290443805306?cmd=ViewItem&pt=Guitar_Accessories&hash=item439fcc27a

This tool serves a dual purpose. Not only can you use it to bevel the fret ends but by running the flat portion of the tool on the top of the frets will give you a nice clean 90 degree cut along the edge of the FB binding. I also use this tool for smoothing and beveling frets without binding. It's a MUST HAVE!

Then it's a matter of cleaning everything up with some 320 grit sandpaper and drilling hole for you position markers.



I hope this helps and if you guys got any other questions feel free to ask!

SIDE NOTE: I didn't have pictures of all of the steps so I "Borrowed" some from fellow members over at mylespaul.com

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