

Magnetic Truss Rod Covers

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I use truss rods that are adjustable at the peghead, which requires a cover for the exposed truss rod nut and groove. I usually make the covers out of rosewood, and have for some time been securing them with several small brass screws. One thing users frequently do when they get one of my guitars, especially when they live in a different region of the country with different humidity, is to remove the cover and adjust the truss rod to get the relief and action to their liking. However, to my extreme vexation, they almost never put the truss rod cover back on after adjusting! I've seen photos and videos of several of my guitars being played, and almost always there's a gaping hole (to my vision) at the end of the neck with the truss rod showing. It finally dawned on me that those little screws were just enough of a PIA for the owners that they decided to bag the covers. And in truth, I found them a bit irritating myself.

So I started thinking of ways to affix the covers without using screws. I considered some sort of compression clip or spring that would squeeze into the truss rod slot, but never came up with anything that seemed likely to work, until... I saw some little niobium magnets at the local hobby shop.



1/4" diameter by 1/8" thick neodymium magnets

My current approach is to inlay three 1/4" diameter by 1/8" long cylindrical magnets into the peghead, and put a layer of self-adhesive magnetic material on the bottom of the cover plate. The magnets are super powerful on steel, but they hold onto the magnetic sheet with a relatively mild force - enough to hold the cover plate on, but allow it to be slid off easily for truss rod adjustments. And as a bonus, there are no screw holes to drill in the covers or ugly screw heads to look at.



Magnets inlaid into peghead



Cover plate with self-adhesive magnetic material on the back

The only slight caveat is to make sure the 1/4" holes drilled for the magnets are deep enough (I use about .130" for the .125" thick magnets) - you want them flush with the peghead surface so the plate sits flat. I don't bother gluing in the magnets - friction holds them plenty tight enough.



Magnetically-attached cover plate

I'm sure this technique could be used for all sorts of other cover plates, say on electric guitars. If you wanted a more secure attachment, all you'd need to do would be to use a steel sheet rather than the self-adhesive magnetic material (carbon steel, not stainless, which isn't magnetic), or even just inlay some steel washers into the cover plate at the positions corresponding to the magnets. But you'd definitely want to experiment to make sure the cover isn't too difficult to remove - these little magnets have a ton of pull on steel.