

# VINTAGE YAMAHA FG NECK REMOVAL NOTES

1. **CUT THRU THE LACQUER RADIUS** at the sides of the heel **BEFORE** doing anything else. Separating the fretboard could cause the corner lacquer to crack, especially the late 70's and later models. Check the fretboard extension to the top also, although a lacquer radius there is rare.
2. If there is a **HEEL CAP** it **NEEDS TO BE REMOVED OR SEPARATED FROM THE BINDING BEFORE** removing the neck. If the steam doesn't separate the heel cap from the binding (like it does the thin black perfling), forcing the neck off will wreck the binding. The heel cap will probably pop off while sanding the heel, unless you carefully file it down to the line before pull sanding. But taking it off opens the possibility of damaging the end of the heel.
3. **LOOSENING THE FRETBOARD EXTENSION FROM THE TOP.**
  - a. **Put tape on the top all around the neck, the sound hole, and over the bridge.**
  - b. **Work the spatula from the sound hole end**, and slightly from the top side (opposite the pickguard).
  - c. **NEVER push the spatula all the way thru from the top side!!** It can dig into the top and cause lots of damage!!
  - d. **Take extra time to heat the fretboard extension** to soften the glue before forcing the spatula under, but not enough to loosen neck block!! The amount of time will vary depending on the amount of glue used.
4. **REMOVE THE 15TH FRET.**
  - a. **Spray water on the fret**, wiping it around to fully cover both sides of the fret.
  - b. **Use the Stew Mac fret pullers to get under the first 1/16" of the treble side of the fret.** If it nips the fret only try 1 more time before trying the bass side of the fret. You want to do as little damage as possible to the fret since you'd like to put it back in later.
  - c. **Once you've gotten under the fret you want to slowly advance towards the other end, only 1/8" max at a time.** You don't want to go too fast and distort the shape of the fret.
  - d. You could use the Stew Mac Chip Stopper, but I haven't had much chipping with this method.
5. **DRILL THE STEAM HOLES.**
  - a. **Measure 3/4" from both sides of the fretboard centerline.**
  - b. **Start the 3/32" hole straight in**, then angle it towards the heel about 10 degrees.
  - c. **Drill until you feel it break into the neck pocket.** Don't go any further.
  - d. **VERIFY your steam tip fits into the hole** before turning on the steam!
6. **PUT STEAM IN THE NECK.**
  - a. **Heat up your steam generator until it mostly stops spitting water.**
  - b. **Turn it down until there's about half or less the full flow of steam.** You want to inject heat and moisture into the joint, not lots of water.
  - c. **After inserting the tip into the hole, be sure there is steam coming out of the other hole.** Alternate holes every minute.
7. **REMOVE THE NECK.**
  - a. **After 2 minutes start wiggling the neck**, looking for movement. Don't force it. Try again every 30 seconds.
  - b. **Tighten the neck jig every minute.** *You ARE using a neck jig???*
  - c. **If the neck doesn't come off after 6 minutes turn off the steam and re-evaluate.**
8. **BROKEN HEEL REMOVAL.** Broken heel Yamaha FG's necks are extremely hard to remove. The neck needs to be wiggled to help release it. If the heel is broken it won't wiggle. Additional steam and neck jig pressure will be required to HOPEFULLY get it out. The heel will CERTAINLY be distorted from the steam softening it. If the neck completely separates from the neck you can drill additional steam holes into the top of the heel to get the steam into the areas you can't normally reach. This will probably get real ugly. **You NEED to use a neck jig!**