

Passive Pickups



Active Pickups

Output



Lower output due to the lack of preamplification compared to active pickups, but, by far, the more common choice that's immediately recognized

Lower impedance that can travel longer distance in a cable and allow you to plug directly into your favorite studio console with more headroom

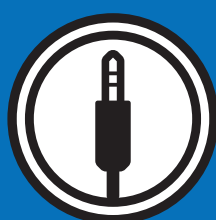
Noise Level



Susceptible to noise interference, especially single-coil pickups with regard to 60-cycle hum

Little interference and very quiet since the weaker signal is amplified through the preamp circuit within the pickup

Components



Require no preamp circuitry and can make upgrading or replacing switches, pots, or even pickups relatively easy with a bit of soldering experience

Active systems not only offer a lot of clarity in your tone but also allow you to adjust your volume without losing frequencies and muddying your tone like some passive pickups

Dynamics & Compression



Allows a greater dynamic range and are more responsive to the nuances of the player

More sustain, but that is often a result of a more compressed signal that some players consider to be sterile or lifeless

Functionality



Passive pickups are generally less expensive than their active counterparts. Additionally, if you're hoping to emulate your favorite guitarist, odds are, they're playing passive pickups due to their popularity.

Although the battery life for most active systems can be 6–12 months, there is still a need to change them. For some guitars, it will require routing for a battery box if the control cavity doesn't offer enough space.