

How to Achieve Maximum 'Clean Headroom' From Your BluesBaby 22 or 45 Amplifier

This is a topic which guitarists tend to worry about a lot and seem to have inaccurate understanding of. But it's not really that complicated if you can learn a few basic rules.

To achieve good clean headroom from your amp, on a stage in a band situation, **with no pedals connected**, you need to remember a few things:

- Use a guitar with 'standard' output pickups. Like a 60's spec Strat or Les Paul for example. But do not raise the pickups too close to the strings!
- Using high output pickups is like turning up the gain on your amp... it will go into distortion quicker!
- Use an amp with a respectable power output of at least forty Watts or more, and fitted with efficient speakers with a 'Sound Pressure Level' (SPL) of 100dB or more.

If you cannot find a good amount of clean headroom with those, then you are probably playing beyond the power rating of the amp or 'overdriving' the input stage of the preamp with 'loud' pickups! A very common cause!

To be fair, it is unreasonable to blame your amp for low clean headroom if your guitar is equipped with high output pickups or the amp's power is very low.

Most good amps will produce undistorted sound right up to its rated output power.

It's also worth mentioning that certain rock music orientated amps are almost incapable of creating an entirely clean sound! Yes, they do have a 'so called' clean channel, but it's designer has not really given enough consideration for the fact that many rock players do actually want a really clean sound on occasions at high volumes. Sadly, there's not much anyone can do about it in this case!

The reason a Fender 'Twin Reverb' has so much clean headroom is because it can produce 100 Watts of sound into two very efficient 12" speakers before distortion really sets in big time.

Two 12" speakers will produce more acoustic output than the same power into one 12" speaker! Two speakers will NOT add as much 'cone compression' like a single 12" speaker being pushed to the limits of its mechanical travel! Four 12" speakers even better, but not much more improvement after four.

12" speakers are, generally, 3dB louder than many 10" or 15" speakers. So, for the most clean headroom, use 12" speakers of 100dB SPL or more.

Absolutely Essential Tips For BluesBaby's CLEANEST Tones

Both BB22 and BB45 will provide clean headroom up to their rated power under the mentioned conditions. BB45 is loud and will satisfy most players... it's also small and very lightweight - 10.6kg.

- Plug in your guitar directly into the amp input and turn the guitar's volume to maximum... ALL the way up!
- When we play at a low volume, we strike the strings much harder than we would if the volume was very loud. This will cause early distortion to occur! So, try to set the amp's volume to a level that you will be using live, **FROM THE OUTSET.**
- Therefore, in order to get the loudest and cleanest tone possible, it is essential that you set the **MASTER** volume control to '**12**'... **NOT 7 to 11!**
- Now use the **GAIN** control to set the amplifier's volume to the level you require.
- A 1960s valve 'Blackface' style amp with no MASTER volume, is preset internally as if the MASTER volume was set to FULLY UP - MAXIMUM!
- Using a 'Standard' Strat, Telecaster or Les Paul Standard, with normal output pickups, it is perfectly possible to get a clean sound using this method.
- If this does not help either, then you may have pickups that are far too hot or adjusted much too close to the strings. You may need to visit a guitar tech to have your instrument set up properly.
- You could need the 'HH' version of BluesBaby!
- **ANY amplifier** will sound much quieter when it is being played totally clean! You may even think the amp is not producing its rated power... when it is! To get **REALLY** loud clean tones, you could well need 100W of clean power!
- If you can't manage to achieve a very clean tone after all this, then you're doing something wrong or your pickups are just too loud! But it's **NOT** your BluesBaby™ amp!

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