Converting a Rock-It Guitar Stand to an Alphorn Stand

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The suggested steps to convert a guitar or saxophone stand to an alphorn stand are listed and discussed here. The cost of materials in July, 2024, is typically about $15.

Purpose of the Alphorn Stand

The alphorn stand is intended to keep an alphorn off the ground by supporting it when it's not being played and so it can be more easily picked up.

There are two modes of support. The first as shown below in Figure 1 uses the u-shaped padded neck support of a guitar stand that has been rotated vertically. The receiver section of an alphorn rests in the u-shaped upper piece.

Figure 1: Modified guitar stand

The stand can be adjusted from knee to waist level where it can be easily picked up. The adjustment mechanism consists of a knob shown in Figure 2 that can be screwed out to allow adjustment of the height, then screwed so the support remains at the desired height.

Figure 2: Height adjustment Screw

The other mode is with the alphorn close to the ground, resting on one of the legs as a support as shown in Figure 3. This mode is especially useful while assembling and disassembling the alphorn as a place to rest the upper portion of the bell section as shown in Figure 4. The leg was modified as discussed later with a garden hose washer as a barrier to keep the alphorn from sliding off the leg, held in place by shrink tubing which also reduces slippage and prevents scratching the leg and alphorn.

Figure 3: Alphorn resting on leg.

Figure 4: Bell section resting on a leg

Materials for Modifying the Stand

A guitar or saxophone stand can be converted as long as it is stable, has one long leg that is about the same diameter as a hose washer, and a padded u-shaped piece that can be removed by grinding and rewelded upright.

An example of a fairly robust guitar stand is shown below and is a 'Rok-It Standard Stand for Acoustic, Electric, or Bass Guitars; (RI-GTRSTD-1), matte black.' As of July 2024, it was offered at Amazon for about $13. I have made most of the stands I've given to alphornists from it because it is robust. It has two long legs, offering the possibility to place the alphorn on either side of the stand. Its vertical support also has a protruding tube to support the bottom of a guitar that I have had ground off to make it more compact and easier to carry.

Another more compact and lighter weight stand which I intended to be more portable is the 'GLEAM CG-4 guitar stand – adjustable for Electric, Acoustic Guitars and Bass' from Amazon for about $14. The u-shaped head folds completely down on to the stand.

Preparations – Materials

Before modifying, gather all of the needed materials including a can of DeRusto flat black spray paint is used to repair paint that has been burned by welding and cane tips for the ends of the 3 support tubes.

Replace the rubber tips on the legs with more durable rubber cane trips. Three are needed per stand. In Figure 5, the original tips shown to the left of the legs have been replaced by cane tips.

Figure 5: Original Rubber Leg Tips and Replacement Cane Tips

Modifying the R1-GRRSTD-1 Rock-It Standard Guitar Stand

The steps to modify a R1-GRRSTD-1 Rock-It standard guitar stand, shown below in Figure 6, are outlined below.

Figure 6: Stock RI-GTRSTD-1 Guitar Stand (note protrusion from the vertical support for supporting the lower end of a guitar)

The steps are how my mechanic friend has modified all of my stands. He has charged me $20 for each conversion. He's not interested in going into production so it will be up to you to convert stands. You have my permission to use the techniques listed here and my ideas if you want to modify stands and offer them to North American alphornists. I have offered the design to Franz Schussele in Germany to make for Europe. I'm not asking for any money for my ideas because I want the stands to be as inexpensive as possible for good of our alphorn community.

My mechanic removes the tubes of padding that cover the u-shaped piece that was intended to support the guitar's neck. He grinds welds to remove u-shaped piece, reorients it from horizontal to vertical and welds it in place. He also removes any other projections such as tubing that helps support the bottom of a guitar. Finally, he sprays the stand with black matt paint and returns he padded pieces to the u-shaped piece. I add the hose washer and shrink tubing and use a heat gun to shrink the tubing as shown below.

Repositioning the upper U-portion from horizontal to vertical requires skill in grinding and welding thin metal. First, remove the rubber cushions and rubber closure piece (if equipped). Cut the weld, reposition the u-piece approximately vertical and reweld it to the supporting portion of the stand. A weld is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Weld

Repaint as required. Reinstall the rubber cushions.

Second, remove the protrusion on the lower vertical portion of the stand whose purpose is to support the guitar's body with a large u-shaped, rubber-covered metal piece. Save the rubber pads to eventually replace the upper u-shaped piece's padding. Cut the welds and discard the small piece and the large u-shaped piece, smooth the remaining vertical tubing and spray paint as required.

Finally, replace the rubber tips that came with the stand with much more durable cane tips. This completes the minimum modification of the stand.

The modified stand, including the leg, is shown below in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Modified Guitar Stand

Modifying one of the Longer Legs to Support Alphorn and Bell Section

The second mode of using the alphorn stand is to keep the bell section off the ground, including concrete and other rough surfaces and dirt while assembling or disassembling the alphorn or in a high wind that could tip over the stand and alphorn. I hate putting my beautiful alphorn on concrete, dirt or even wet grass and decided to modify one of the longer legs so I could put the alphorn on it. I use it when I'm assembling and disassembling my alphorn.

First, choose whether one or both of the longer legs will be modified. I am right-handed so the I added the washer and tubing to the left leg. I can then pick up the alphorn with my right hand.

Next, obtain the materials. I use one 7" length of 1" shrink tubing, preferably black to match the stand, and one garden hose washer of any color. The materials are shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Obtain material (7" of 1" diameter black shrink tubing and a hose washer).

Remove the rubber cane tip so the washer and shrink tubing can be easily slid over the tubing as shown in Figure 10. Place the cane tip where it can be found again.

Figure 10: Remove the cane tip from the end of the tubular leg.

Slide the washer about 2 ½ " up the end of the tubing. The exact distance doesn't matter as long as the shrink tubing covers it and the cane tip can be replaced. See Figure 11.

Figure 11: Slide the washer onto the tube and up the leg approximately 2 ½ “.

Slide the shrink tubing over the washer and up the leg, leaving approximately 1” so the washer can be covered on both sides. See Figure 12.

Figure 12: Slide the shrink tubing over the washer and up the leg.

Use a clean heat source such as a heat gun to heat the shrink tubing and cause it to contract. Take care in using the heat gun since its metal parts will become very hot and can be a significant burn hazard. It might also be possible to use a very hot hair dryer although it will take much longer. If you don’t mind cleaning the tubing after it has been heated, you could use a clean flame from propane.

Begin at the washer and rotate the run around the leg and towards the open end of the leg, then from the washer towards the stand. Begin at the washer and allow the gun to heat the shrink tubing to shrink the tubing and remove all air bubbles. The shrink tubing should become flat, without wrinkles or bubbles although bubbles and wrinkles will not affect the operation of the leg. See Figures 13 through 16.

Figure 13: Use a heat gun to heat the shrink tubing, beginning at the hose washer and proceeding towards each end as shown above.
(Caution – the metal portion of heat guns will be very hot!)

Figure 14: Continue heating the shrink tubing towards the stand, taking care to not trap air bubbles.

Figure 15: Continue heating until the heat shrink tubing is smooth.

Figure 16: The finished leg should appear as shown above.

Finally, the washer and shrink tubing should keep bell section or alphorn on the shaft side of the washer as shown in Figures 17 and 18.

Figures 17 & 18: Bell section and Alphorn should not slide off after being carefully and gently placed against the hose washer.