

A/DA PEDAL PREAMP APP-1 USER'S MANUAL



APP-1 Users' Manual

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A/DA's new APP-1 Pedal Preamp is built around our new patent-pending "D-TORSION CORE" technology, which is very responsive, reacting to the signal level of the strings to deliver more volume dynamics, timbre, faster transients and richer harmonics than any amplifier available today. The APP-1 allows the guitarist to express, through his or her fingers, dynamics and tone like never before – go from clean to overdrive to distortion without turning a single knob on any amp, stomp box or guitar.

FOR OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE, DO NOT PLUG THE OUTPUT OF THE APP-1 INTO THE FRONT PANEL INPUT OF A COMBO AMP OR HEAD. USE THE INPUT TO THE POWER AMP OR THE EFFECTS RETURN INPUT. MOST COMBOS AND HEADS DO NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT HEADROOM FOR THE "BLOOM" AND DYNAMICS OF THE APP-1, AND WILL DISTORT (IN A BAD WAY) AND CRUSH THE SIGNAL DYNAMICS FROM THE APP-1.

Always check the A/DA website www.adaamps.com for updates and current information about the APP-1. Designed and manufactured in California.

Quick Setup

The APP-1 is a preamp and needs a power amp and speaker to be heard live. It can also connect to a sound system or a mixing console, but we recommend that you insert a cabinet emulator like the A/DA MicroCab to balance out the signal and to sound like a guitar amp and cabinet.

1. Set all **knobs** to **11 o'clock**, as shown in **FIGURE 1** below.
2. Set all **switches** to the **far left position**, except set the TRUE BYPASS switch to its center position so the APP-1 is in BYPASS mode.
3. Plug in the provided AC Adapter, ADA part number 240005, (or use the power from you pedal board power supply: 12 to 18 volts DC at 75mA or greater with a 2.1mm plug with center Negative).
4. Make sure the BOOST blue LED is off. Press the right hand footswitch to turn if off, if on.
5. Press the left footswitch to light the red LED for Channel 1.
6. Connect your guitar using a shielded ¼ inch phone cable to the INPUT jack on the back panel.
7. Turn all the knobs on your guitar to maximum and select the bridge pickup.
8. Using a shielded ¼ inch phone cable, connect the OUTPUT of the APP-1 to your guitar amplifier. Use your amp's "power amp" input for the best results. If your amp does

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not have that input, use the Effects Loop Return jack to connect the APP-1. If your combo or head does not have either jacks on the back panel, then try the use the lowest gain input on a clean channel. **DO NOT USE ANY HIGH-GAIN or CRUNCH CHANNEL input for the APP-1, it will not sound good. To use a the clean channel input, set it to "flat" with the Gain (or Drive) set low and Master Gain set high, and typically for a 3-band tone stack, the BASS and Treble at 7 to 8 o'clock, and the MID set to 5 o'clock.** Detailed procedures are found in this manual under "Setting up your Combo, Head or Power Amp."

9. After setting the controls properly, turn on your amplifier. (TRUE BYPASS, top far right switch, set in the middle position.) You will be in the BYPASS mode so you can set the playing levels of your amplifier before engaging the APP-1.
10. Move the TRUE BYPASS switch to the far left position to engage the APP-1 PREAMP.
11. Adjust the CHANNEL MASTER control to match the level you set with your amp when it was in BYPASS mode.



FIGURE 1

Start with this setup!

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Power Supply

Plug in the included 12VDC to 18VDC AC adapter (A/DA part number 240005) or a 12V to 18V (75ma) source from your pedal board power supply to the rear panel power jack.

Note that the connector is a 2.1mm with the center pin negative, the most common configuration for effects pedals. There is no 9V battery in the APP-1, and the **APP-1 will not work with a 9VDC power supply.**

⊕ — ⊖ = NEGATIVE

Use A/DA AC Adapter 240005 or 12 to 18VDC at 75mA, center pin negative. 2.1mm x 5.5mm plug.

Setting up your Combo, Head or Power Amp

3 ways to connect your APP-1 to your Combo, Head or Power Amp

1. To the power amp input or insert
2. Through the effects loop return jack
3. Through the clean (normal) channel input

Do not use the high-gain channel input, it will ruin the dynamics of the APP-1.

The APP-1 brings more tone and versatility to your amp, so if you plug it into your combo input channel, first set the combo channel to as clean and flat in frequency response as possible. This will allow you to get your tone from the APP-1. It is not recommended that you dial in your APP-1 distortion and send it to the head or combo when they are already dialed-in for distortion. You can try that later, if you want, but for now let's get a good set of tones from the APP-1.

If you plug the APP-1 into a combo amp or head, you may have a choice of which jack you use on the amp. The best jack is the one that bypasses the combo's preamps and goes straight to the power amp section of the combo amp. This is usually located on at the rear of the amp. If that jack is not available to the power amp, the combo or head may have an effects loop with a return jack that will work also as an insert point for the APP-1. Finally, you can connect the

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APP-1 to the input of your combo's normal or non-high gain channel's input jack. Be sure to set the tone controls as flat as possible and, most importantly for master gain combos, set the drive level low and the master level up so your combo will not distort and compete with the APP-1's distortion. In the Advanced Section of this Manual, we will show you how to use the APP-1's BOOST to get combo amp distortion independent of the APP-1's distortion to add a "third channel" of amplification.

Many combo amps and heads use a tone stacks that can be set fairly flat, but with seemingly strange settings. We have provided a chart of EQ and tone stack settings of some popular amps in a chart at the back of this Manual to help you find the "flat" EQ settings.

When using the APP-1 for the first time with any new rig, start with all the knobs set to 9 o'clock and all the switches set to the left position, except the switch on the top right, the 3-position BYPASS switch, which is set to the middle position. This will establish your BYPASS playing volume, which should be matched with the APP-1 when it is engaged.

Modes of Operation

1. PREAMP + BOOST with the dual buffered FX LOOP
2. PREAMP + BOOST
3. BOOST with the dual buffered FX LOOP
4. BOOST only
5. TUNER MUTE - this silences everything except the signal to your tuner, which is plugged into the back panel of the APP-1
6. TRUE BYPASS (Hardwire bypass) This also disconnects the TUNER from your guitar's signal. The guitar's signal is buffered and then sent to the TUNER jack is only connected in the IN mode and TUNER MUTE mode.

By switching the FX LOOP in and out, the user can adjust any gain loss from the effects in the signal chain with the FX LOOP RTN LEVEL pot. Also when the FX RETURN jack is unplugged, the signal path is normalized, meaning the FX LOOP RTN LEVEL pot is out of the path and the path gain is equal to 1.

The BOOST circuit is post MASTER, so the level of the MASTER is always boosted proportionally up to +16dB of additional gain.

Optimizing Signal Levels

Today's pedal boards are heavily populated with all kinds of effects by players seeking to sculpt their special, often unique tone, and

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typically a chain of a half dozen to a dozen stomp boxes. Having so many pedals usually results in a loss of signal level and integrity, and most often a signal path far from optimized. The A/DA APP-1's effects loop has a low impedance buffer driving the effects loop and a high impedance buffer to recover any losses in the effects chain. The recovery buffer won't color your signal and has an adjustable level to return the same signal level that drives the effects chain. Using the FX LOOP IN/OUT switch, you can "A-B" your effects individually or in a chain to check their signal levels and, using the APP-1's FX LOOP RTN LVL (Return Level) trimpot, balance and optimize the signal coming from your effects pedals. This will increase headroom, lower noise and provide seamless switching of your individual effects without jumps in signal levels. [A step-by-step procedure is available online under APP-1 Tips and Settings.](#)

Dialing in the D-Torsion Core

A/DA's unique "D-TORSION CORE" restores and puts dynamics into your playing and can be set to your playing style to get an organic, natural breakup or overdrive to occur when you pick the strings harder. When set to the proper level, the DYNAMICS interacts with the DRIVE to select the level that the overdrive kicks in and the intensity and harmonics of the distortion when it does. Another use of the DYNAMICS control is to set it high so that the guitar's signal level is emphasized very much like an all-tube combo does when it "blooms." These dynamics are what it is all about when it comes to expressive playing, but with the APP-1, you get much more bloom and expression than ever before. Blues players can pick the notes and chords they want to emphasize by simply striking the strings harder so they "grind" or "bite" a little more.

If you want to use the D-TORSION for dynamics, set the control at least the 12 o'clock or higher. **DO NOT SEND THE OUTPUT OF THE APP-1 TO A HEAD OR COMBO DIALLED IN FOR DISTORTION – THIS WILL DEFEAT OR "SQUASH" THE DYNAMICS OF THE APP-1.**

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Voicing

Like the APP-1's tone stacks, the VOICING switches are independently selectable for each channel. The VOICING feature allows you to contour or shape your guitar signal by equalizing it before it goes into the overdrive and distortion circuitry of the D-TORSION CORE. The widest bandwidth is the CLEAN position and the narrowest and most bass cut is in the DISTORTION (DIST) position. In the middle position, the contour is much like the popular mods done to the Black Face Fender amps.

True Bypass

The APP-1 has a TRUE BYPASS switch which hard-wires the signal from your guitar to the OUTPUT jack of the APP-1. In the TRUE BYPASS mode, nothing is connected to your guitar's signal. The reason that this function is not activated by a foot switch is simply because the APP-1 is a preamp and not an effects processor and for the same reason that you would never want to bypass your amplifier when playing.

Boost

The foot-switchable BOOST function adds adjustable gain to the MASTER output of the APP-1 and does so without effecting any tone or dynamics of the APP-1. It can be used to increase the sound level for soloing or to overdrive the amplifier that is connected to the APP-

1's OUTPUT jack. If you want to just drive the amplifier, you can do so by switching the PREAMP + BOOST switch to the right and the FX LOOP switch to the right, so the only function of the APP-1 is the BOOST. If you want BOOST and the FX LOOP engaged, set the FX LOOP switch to the left and the PREAMP + BOOST switch to the right position.

Effects Loop (FX LOOP) Setup

The effects loop is a dual-buffered loop so the signal from the APP-1 is low impedance capable of driving many effects boxes without any change in signal integrity. The return signal from your effects chain is also buffered with a high impedance buffer that has a gain control so you can balance or bring back any signal loss from your effects chain.

To help setup the FX LOOP properly, the APP-1 has switch labeled "FX LOOP" to switch in or bypass the signal through your effects. This is used to trim the level with the "FX LOOP RTN LVL" control in order to optimize your signal path and to balance the levels of the preamp and your effects boxes.

Tuner Out and Tuning

The TUNER jack on the rear panel of the APP-1 allows you to connect your Tuner through an isolation buffer so that it never colors or loads down your guitar signal. It also allows you to tune at any time, and

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by switching the TRUE BYPASS switch to the far right, you can tune while your stage and house sound is muted.

Combo and Head Amp Flat and Clean Settings

Fender Combo Amps with 3-knob tone stacks

Most Fender combos with 3-knob tone stacks are flat when the MID is at maximum (full clockwise), the TREBLE is set to minimum (full counter-clockwise) and the BASS is set to about 8 o'clock.

Older Marshall Heads

Pre 1965 Marshall heads can be set “flat” when the BASS is at 4.5 (9 o'clock), the MID is at maximum (full clockwise) and the TREBLE is at 3.5 (8 o'clock). Later Marshall heads have slightly different “flat” settings.

Vox 2-Knob Tone Control Combos

Vox AC30 can be made close to flat by setting the BASS to 0.5 (8 o'clock) and the TREBLE to 1.0 (8:30 o'clock).

Technical Support

1. **What are some quick tests to troubleshoot my unit?**

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Sometimes a few quick tests at home can be the difference between thinking your unit is broken and getting it working properly. Here is a list of quick trouble-shooting steps to test your gear and unit. As basic as these sound please run all the tests.

1. **Check simple signal chain:** Plug your cable from your guitar into your amp. If you have a direct connect tone go to step 2. If not you have a bad cable, guitar or amp.
2. **Check 2nd cable:** Take your #2 cable and switch it with the first cable. If you have sound, we now know both cables, your guitar and amp, work.
3. **Check power:** Plug your amp into the same outlet that you're using to power your A/DA product. If the amp turns on, then the outlet works. If not try another outlet to power your unit.
4. **Check native A/DA Signal Chain:** Plug the #1 cable from your guitar into your A/DA product (input). Plug the #2 cable between your A/DA product (output) and into your amp. Make sure the A/DA is plugged into a working power source. DO NOT insert it in a pedal chain, i.e., do not introduce any other pedals into the signal chain. If your A/DA product works, your pedal chain most likely has a problem. If you hear nothing, then there may be a problem with your individual unit. Please see the FAQ on how to get an RA number.

2. **What do I do if my product is not working?**

If your product is not working we STRONGLY suggest that you run a series of quick tests to troubleshoot the unit (see above). They may sound very basic, but it can save you time in getting your unit working and you back to playing. If you are an international (non-USA) customer, you must contact your local dealer and/or your national distributor for repair. If you are in the USA and the unit truly does not work, email support@adaamps.com to get a Return Authorization (RA) number from us.

3. What do I do after receiving my RA number?

You will need to box your unit, write your Return Authorization (RA) number on the outside of the shipping box in a large bold lettering, and send it to the address supplied with the RA you received from us. You are responsible for shipping to and from A/DA, so please track and insure your parcels. A/DA cannot be held responsible for parcels that are lost or damaged in the shipping process. A/DA cannot accept your shipment if there is no RA number written on the outside of the box.

SERVICE

If your unit requires service, please go to our website's SERVICE page for information to help you find a solution to the problem you are having with your APP-1. We have provided you with a step-by-step troubleshooting procedure to get you back up and running if you are experiencing a simple problem.

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RETURNING UNITS FOR SERVICE

If you still need to send in your ADA product for service, YOU MUST FIRST GET A RETURN AUTHORIZATION NUMBER (RA) BEFORE YOU SHIP TO OUR SERVICE CENTER. Items shipped to us without an RA, will not be accepted by our Service Center and will be returned to you by the shipper. You can get an RA number by first contacting us online at: www.adaamps.com/service. **DO NOT SHIP YOUR APP-1 TO OUR SERVICE CENTER BEFORE GETTING AN RA (Return Authorization Number) FROM US.**

Ship to:

A/DA Amplification
1543 Third Avenue
Walnut Creek, CA 94597

WARRANTY

Your A/DA APP-1 is warranted against defects in material and workmanship for a period of three-hundred and sixty five (365) days from date of purchase. This warranty is to the original owner and is non-transferable. During the warranty period, A/DA or its agent will, at its sole option, repair or replace defective parts and make necessary repairs to the product which is defective at no charge. If the failure is the result of misuse, abuse, accident or misapplication, A/DA has no obligation to repair or replace the failed product. A/DA retains the right to make such determination on the basis of factory inspection. A/DA will not be responsible for any speaker or device damaged by the APP-1. This warranty remains valid only if repairs are performed by A/DA or its agent and provided that the serial number on the unit has not been defaced or removed. This warranty is expressly in lieu of all other warranties either expressed or implied. This warranty gives you specific rights. You may have other rights that vary from state to state in the U.S.

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