

Nord Lead A1 Keybed Upgrade

Fatar TP/7 → TP/9s

by Moped2000

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The modded Lead A1

[I assume no liability for damages! Use this guide at your own risk!](#)

The Nord Lead A1 is a great and versatile synth that I immediately learned to love. The central shortcoming, however, is the built-in keyboard. The velocity is so difficult to control that accentuated playing is almost impossible. Regardless of this, it feels clattery and loud (I still don't understand how clavia can fail so badly at this point). But there is a solution - the exchange of the installed TP/7 into a TP/9s, which has a far better dynamic. The conversion is not very complicated, if you have a little craftsmanship - the central activity is to drill correctly placed new holes in the bottom plate and to bend the sheet metal of the control panel a bit, so that the keyboard gets more space. Since the TP/9s has slightly different dimensions, the keys will also protrude about 0.5 cm further forward. The connection is fully compatible.



the length of the keys in comparison

The following steps are necessary:

1. Unplug the synth and open the case

- Unscrew the 5 screws at the top on the back, the 5 at the top on the side parts and from the bottom the 2 larger screws.
- Then you can lift off the red control panel (be careful - don't put too much tension on the data cable).
- Disconnect the cable and then put the control panel aside.

2. Remove the old keyboard

- Loosen the 10 small screws on the bottom, holding the keyboard in place with your other hand.
- Then remove the keyboard and carefully disconnect the two data cables (note or mark the cables so that you can reattach them correctly later).

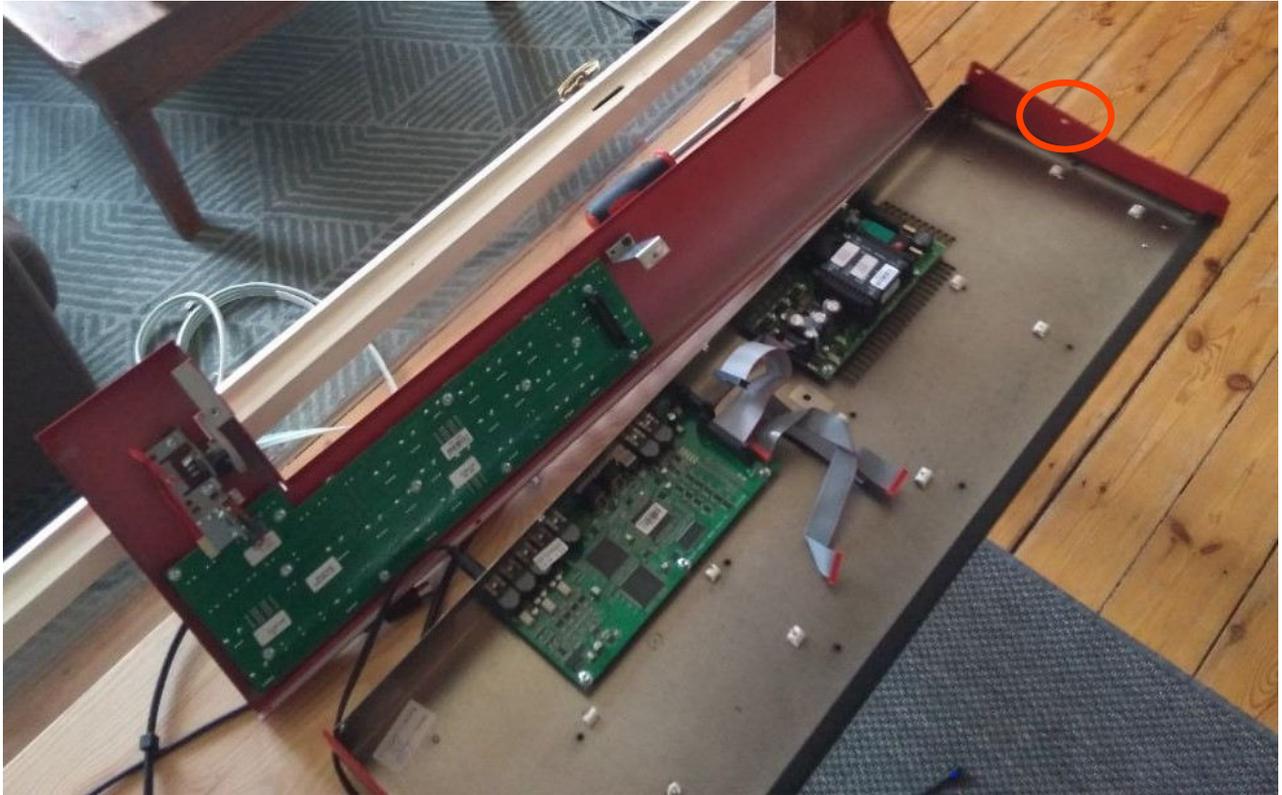
3. Bend the lip of the red control panel slightly upwards

- Take a cloth and a pair of tongs.
- Use the cloth to protect the keyboard from scratches by placing it between the tongs and the metal sheet. Then carefully bend the lip upwards by approx 2-3 mm. You can check if it is sufficient by putting the keyboard into the case and test-fitting the control panel.
- Alternatively, you can also grind off the feet of the keyboard by approx 2-3 mm (but be careful not to remove too much so that the keys do not touch the base plate while playing).

4. Find the correct places for the new mounting holes

- Put the new keyboard into the case and mount the control panel. To prevent the keys from protruding too far, try to push the keyboard as far back as possible. The mainboard and the metal support in the middle of the control panel limit this.
- When you have found the rearmost position (also check the gap right and left), pull the keyboard forward again a little bit, so that no contact with the control panel can take place while playing.
- Play all keys and listen, if you hear any contact noises!

- Then remove the control panel again and do not move the keyboard!
- *If the middle screw on the right side part of the housing is limiting your desired keybed position (marked red in the following picture) you could also use a shorter screw or use a screw nut.*
- Mark the position of the feet as best you can with a long thin pencil. The feet you cannot mark, you can construct with a ruler and a set square (measure the keyboard as a template).



here you can see the new holes in white - i glued white foam pieces on them to reduce the resonance in the case (doesn't help much :)

5. Drill the new holes

- The bottom plate is easy to drill through.
- Take a 4mm metal drill bit and drill the holes precisely.

6. Ready to assemble!

- Reconnect the keyboard to the mainboard and put it in its new place.
- Screw it in from below - you may need thicker screws for the TP/9s if you notice that the old ones don't grip properly.
- Connect the control panel to the mainboard and screw it down again

7. Enjoy the fantastic action of the TP/9s!