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# **Prusa MK2/2.5/S**

## **Silent Driver Upgrade Board**

### **REV: V1.1**

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## **1 Introduction**

Thank you for purchasing this upgrade board. In this short guide I will go through the main steps of how to install the board, so lets begin!

## **2 Disclaimer**

The following information is provided "as is" and without warranty of any kind, express or implied. I, will not be liable for any damages of any kind arising from the installation or use of this upgrade product for your Prusa printer, including, but not limited to, direct, indirect, incidental, punitive, and consequential damages. The user assumes all responsibility and risk for the installation and use of this upgrade product.

## **3 Prerequisites**

Please note that the assembly of the upgrade board requires proficiency in soldering. If you are not familiar with this skill, I strongly recommend seeking assistance from someone who is knowledgeable in this area.

In addition, the following tools are necessary for the installation process: hex drivers in various sizes, a Phillips screwdriver, a soldering iron, multimeter, tweezers, and pliers. These tools will aid you in assembling the upgrade board and completing the installation process.

You also need to make sure that you have printed the holder for the upgrade board (can be downloaded at Printables) and that you have the following items that are included with the upgrade board:

- Upgrade board
- 14 pin data cable
- 2 Pin power cable
- 2x M3 14mm
- 6x self tapping screw

Please note that the upgrade board does not come with stepper drivers, and you will need to purchase your own to complete the installation. The board is only intended to work with TMC2208 or TMC2209 standalone! However, I would strongly suggest TMC2209's!

### 3.1 Light bar (optional)

If you ordered the optional light bar, then you in addition to the previously mentioned supplies should have printed the holder and its accessories that can be downloaded on Printables. Make sure you received the following items with the LED light:

- LED light with cable glued in aluminium frame
- 3x self tapping screws
- 1x M3 16mm

## 4 Power supply

Prior to beginning the assembly process, it is important to ensure that the Z-axis on your Prusa printer is raised to a sufficient height, allowing you easy access to the two front screws of the PSU, as shown in Figure 1. Additionally, you must unplug the printer from the mains outlet before beginning the disassembly process.

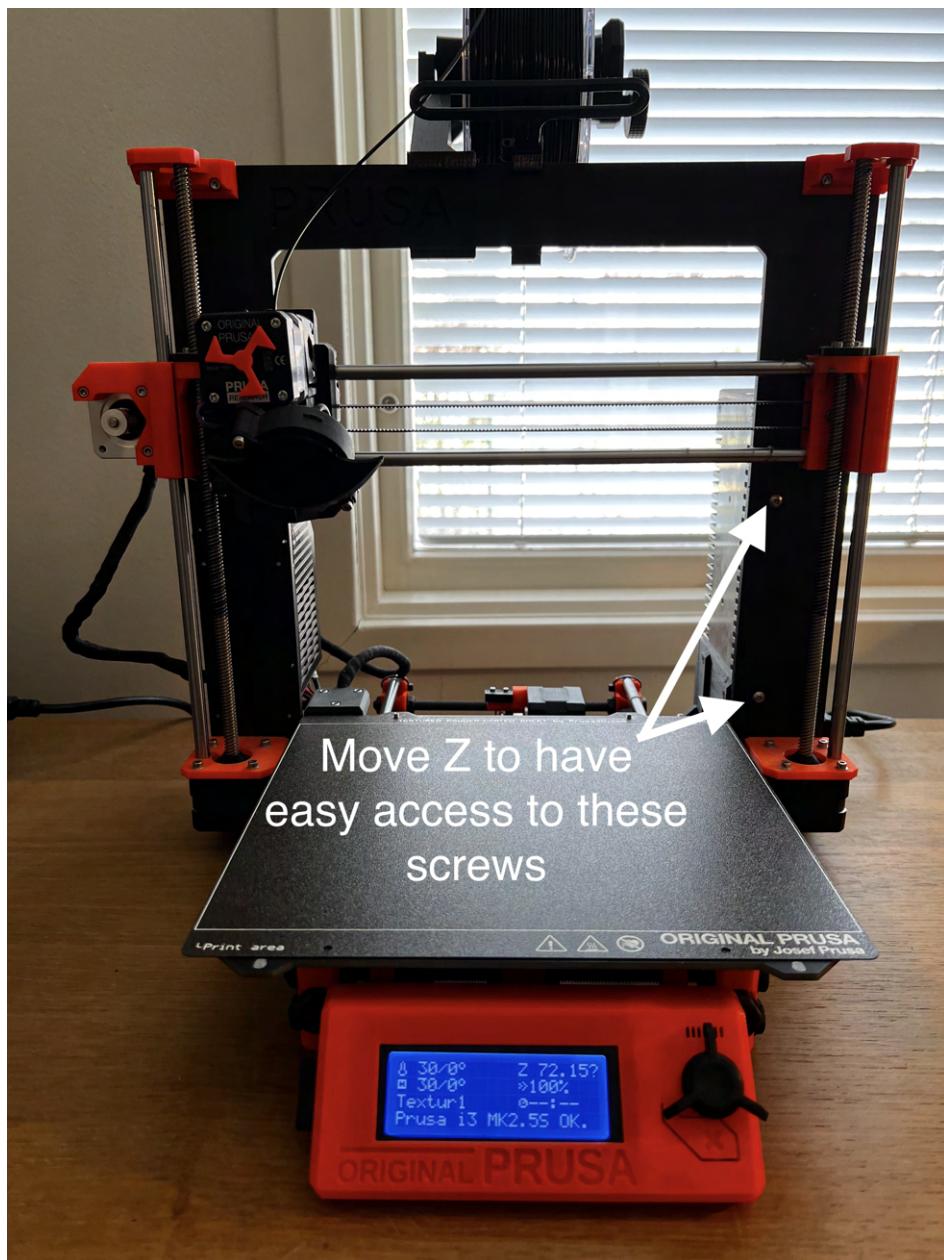


Figure 1: Recommended Z position.

To install the new power cables for the upgrade board, you will need to access the PSU's terminal. To do this, unscrew the screws marked in Figure 2. Next, lift up the PSU and position it as shown in Figure 3. Please note that depending on how tightly the cabling was done, you may need to unzip a few cable ties and/or unscrew the PSU holder from the printer to gain easy access. In some cases, it may be necessary to do both. Please note that your experience may vary based on who assembled your printer.

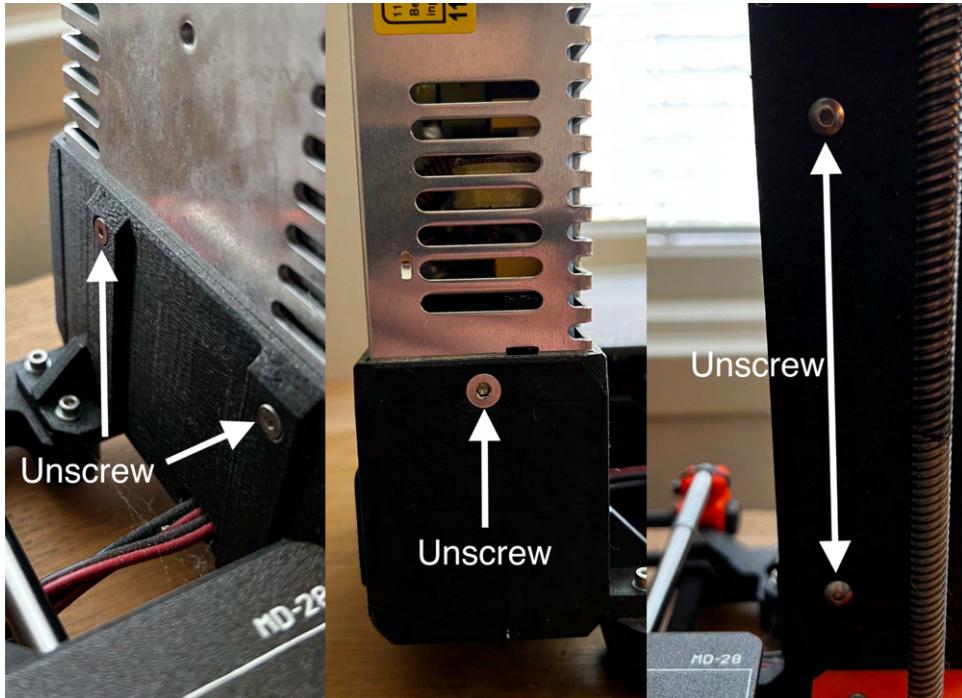


Figure 2: PSU mounting screws.



Figure 3: Recommended position for PSU.

Once you have gained access to the PSU terminal, take the provided pre-tinned wire and pull it through the opening in the PSU cover. Connect the red wire to the empty V+ terminal and the black wire to the empty V- terminal, as shown in Figure 4. Ensure that the cables are tightly secured to prevent any accidental disconnections. Then reassemble the PSU and its cover.

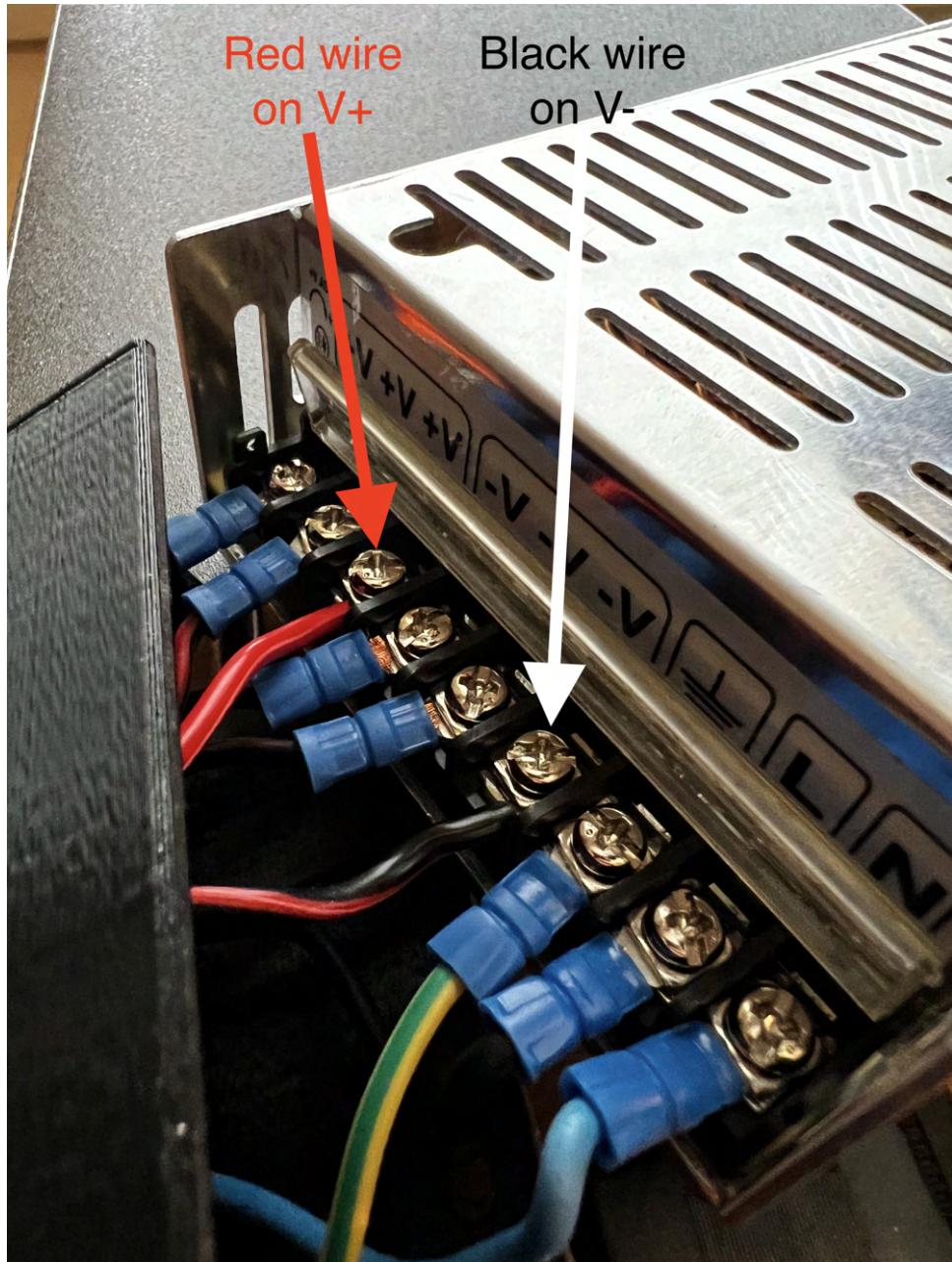


Figure 4: PSU terminal.

## 5 Rambo board

Moving on to the main board, I suggest that you only unscrew the board from the Rambo base while leaving all the wires connected. While you are free to approach this step as you see fit, I have found that this method makes soldering the data pins easiest. Begin by unscrewing the screw on the Rambo cover and opening it. Unscrew the screws marked in Figure 5, and move the Rambo board to the position shown in Figure 6. This will provide easy access to the pads that need to be soldered to the data pins on the ribbon cable.

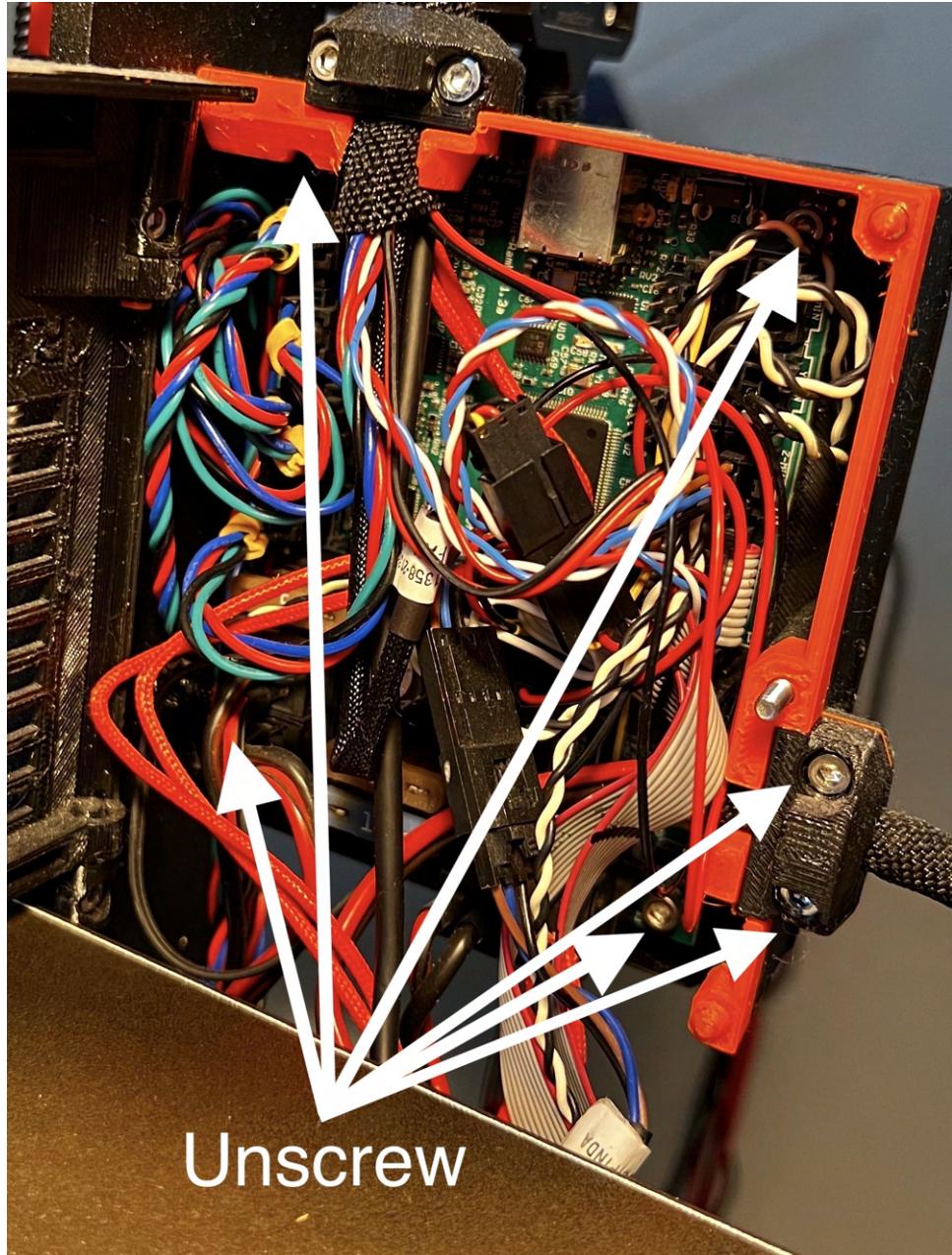


Figure 5: Front side Rambo control board.

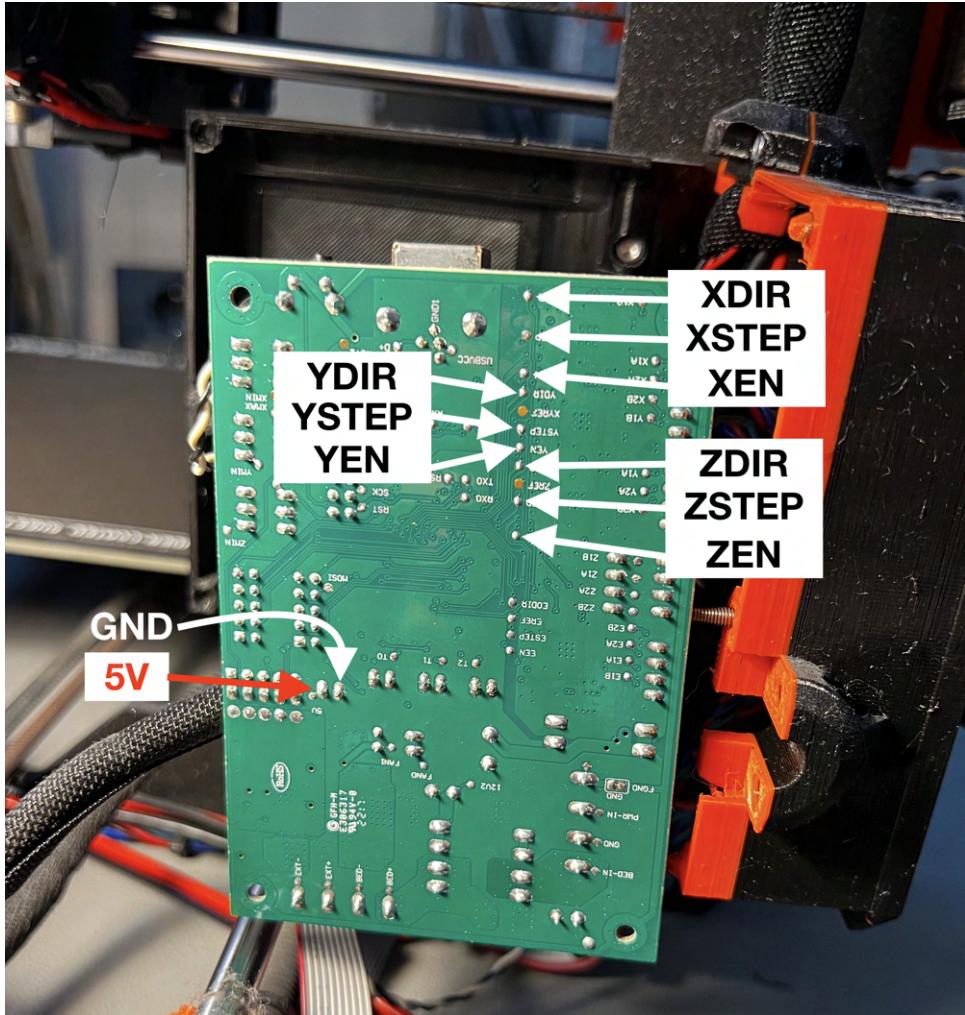


Figure 6: Recommended position for Rambo control board to solder data pins.

**IMPORTANT:** Before beginning with the soldering, it's important to note that the pads' names are marked on the Rambo board, as shown in Figure 6. It's crucial to watch out for the REF pins located close to the other pins and make sure you don't accidentally solder a data pin to one of those. Additionally, the data cable's orientation should be such that the red cable is located towards the right, ensuring the correct orientation of the connector to the upgrade board, as shown in Figure 7.

It is essential to solder the ribbon cable's data pins to the correct pads. The cable is ordered from the red cable, which is pin 1. The order in which the cables should be soldered is as follows:

Cable Nr	Pad	Cable Nr	Pad
1	5V	8	YEN
2	GND	9	ZDIR
3	XDIR	10	ZSTEP
4	XSTEP	11	ZEN
5	XEN	12	GND or Floating
6	YDIR	13	GND or Floating
7	YSTEP	14	GND or Floating

Note that you don't need to solder all pins; for example, if you don't plan to use an external driver for the Z-axis, you can skip soldering cables 9-11. However, I recommend soldering all cables in case you change your mind. It's easier to solder a few extra cables now than having to take out the board again.

After you have finished soldering to data pins the result should look like Figure 7. You can use some silicone or similar to glue the cables in place.

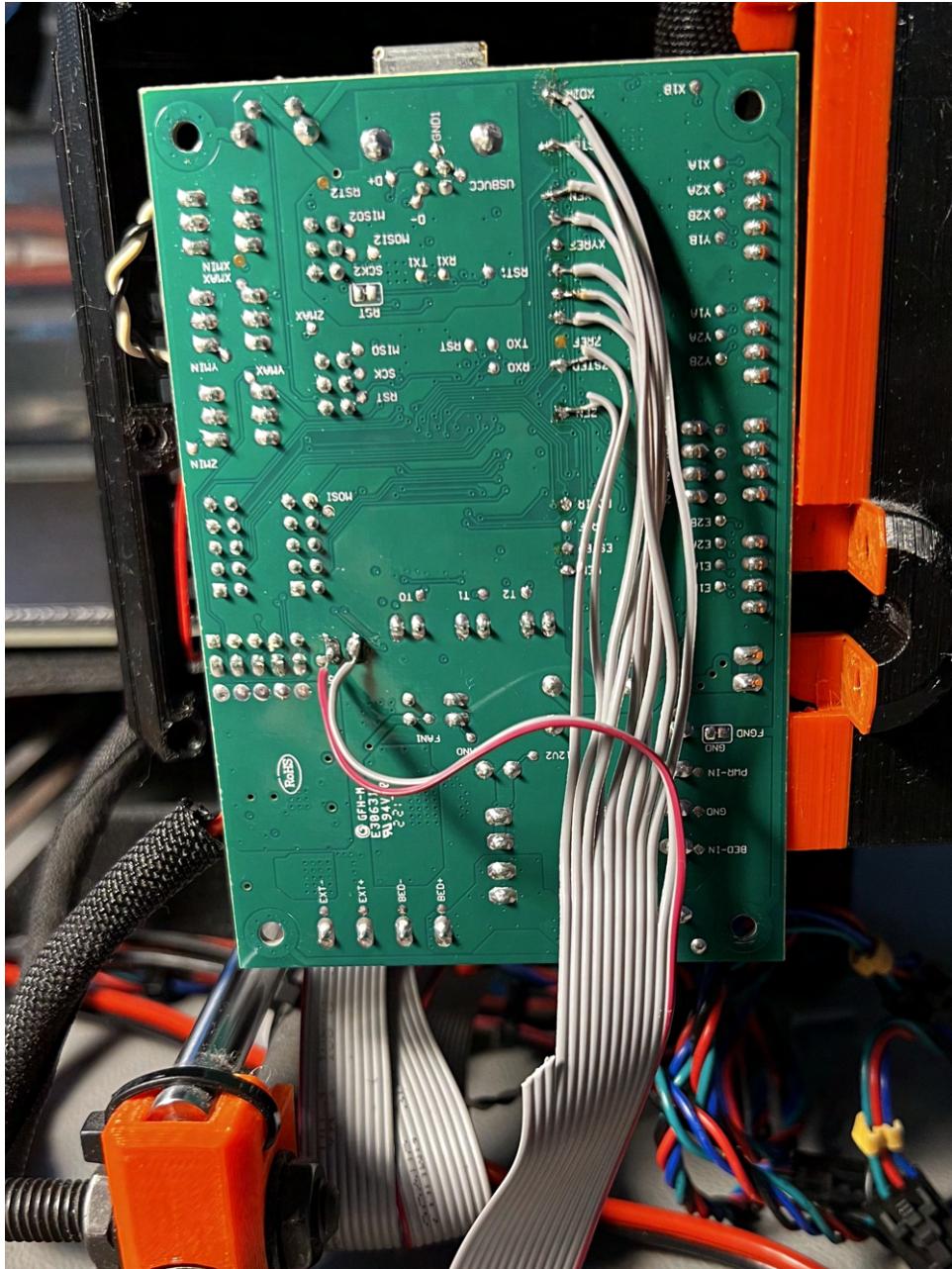


Figure 7: Data pins soldered to Rambo, pins 12, 13 and 14 left floating in this installation.

With the data pins soldered and cables secured, you can proceed to reinstall the Rambo board in the base. Before doing so, remove the nuts marked in Figure 8 and place them in the printed holder, as shown in the same Figure. You'll also need to use the longer M3 screws included in the upgrade kit. It's important to note that if you want to use the X-axis motor with the new board, you'll need to unsleeve the X-axis motor cable slightly and have it on the same side as the upgrade board.

You can now mount the upgrade board with 4 of the included threaded screws. You can then install the power cable in the correct orientation, motor cables, data cable, X-axis strain relief and stepper drivers. I suggest installing the drivers without heat-sink as it will be easier to adjust the vref later. The result at this stage should look like Figure 9 except for the heat sinks.

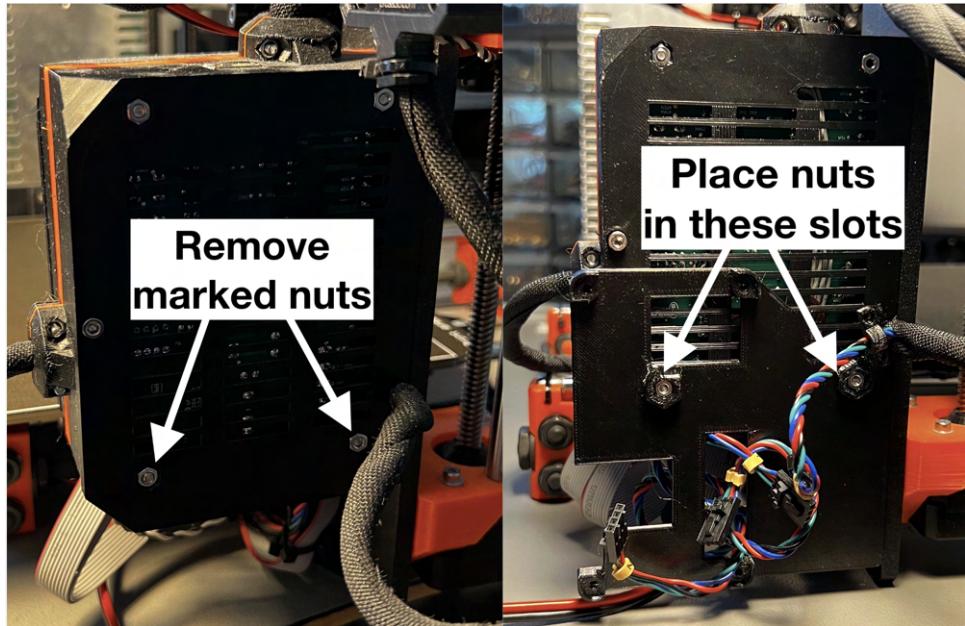


Figure 8: Rambo base, without and with the upgrade board holder-

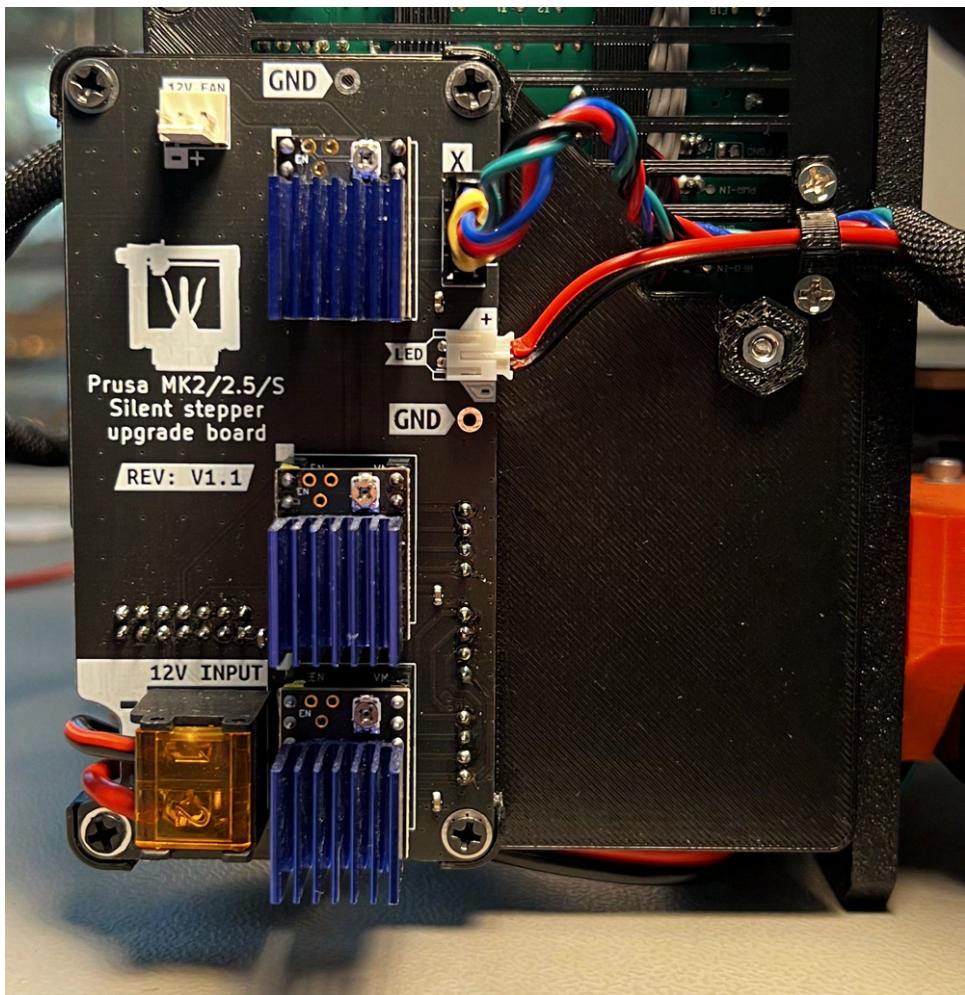


Figure 9: View of front of upgrade board for X, Y and Z installation, with the optional X-axis LED light.

## 5.1 X-axis LED light (Optional)

If you have purchased the optional light for the X-axis, now is the perfect time to install it. Here's a short step-by-step guide:

1. Start by sliding the wiring through the slot provided. Next, insert the LED light into the 3D printed holder, as illustrated in Figure 10. Slide it all the way in until it is flush with the end.
2. Proceed to install the end cap using one of the self-threading screws. Ensure that the ON/OFF switch remains easily accessible through the slot, similar to Figure 11.
3. Now it's time to install the strain relief for the wiring. Utilize the printed strain relief and two self-threading screws to mount it, just like demonstrated in Figure 12.
4. You are now ready to mount the light onto the printer. Simply take the M3 screw and attach it to the hole on the X-axis motor, as shown in Figure 13.
5. Lastly, add the cable to the cable sleeve and connect it to the LED port located next to the X-axis motor connector, as depicted in Figure 9. Please note that you should use the larger strain relief holder on the upgrade board and double check that the red wire is towards the + sign on the board.

By following these steps, you will successfully install the optional light for the X-axis.

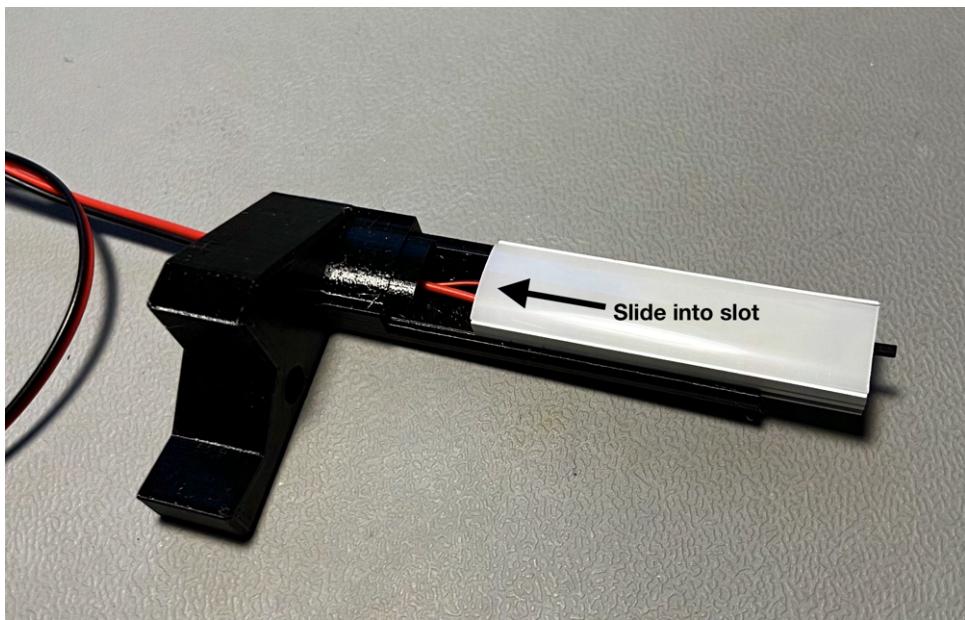


Figure 10: How to slide in the LED light into the 3D printed holder.

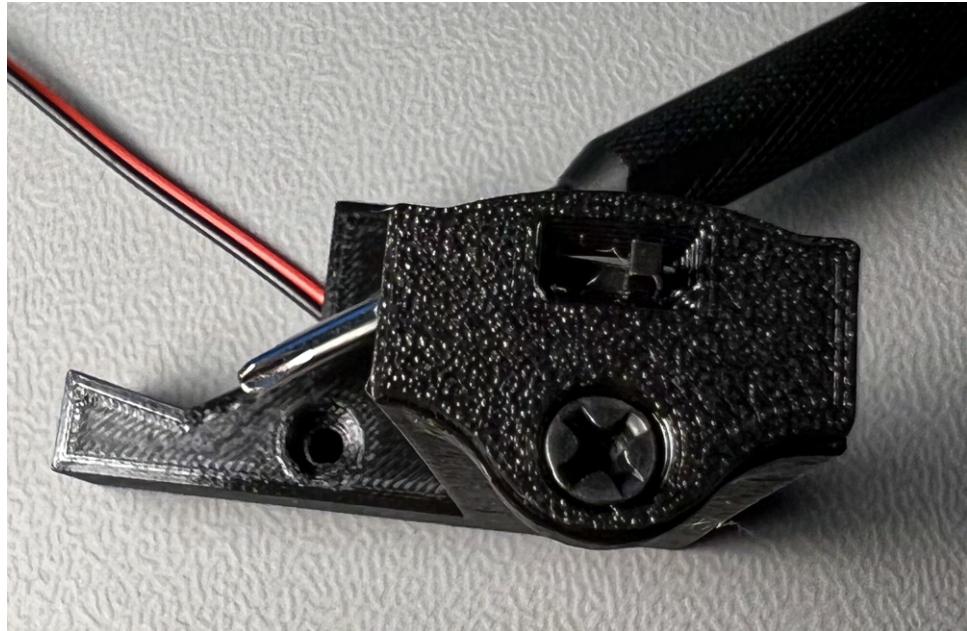


Figure 11: How to slide in the LED light into the 3D printed holder.

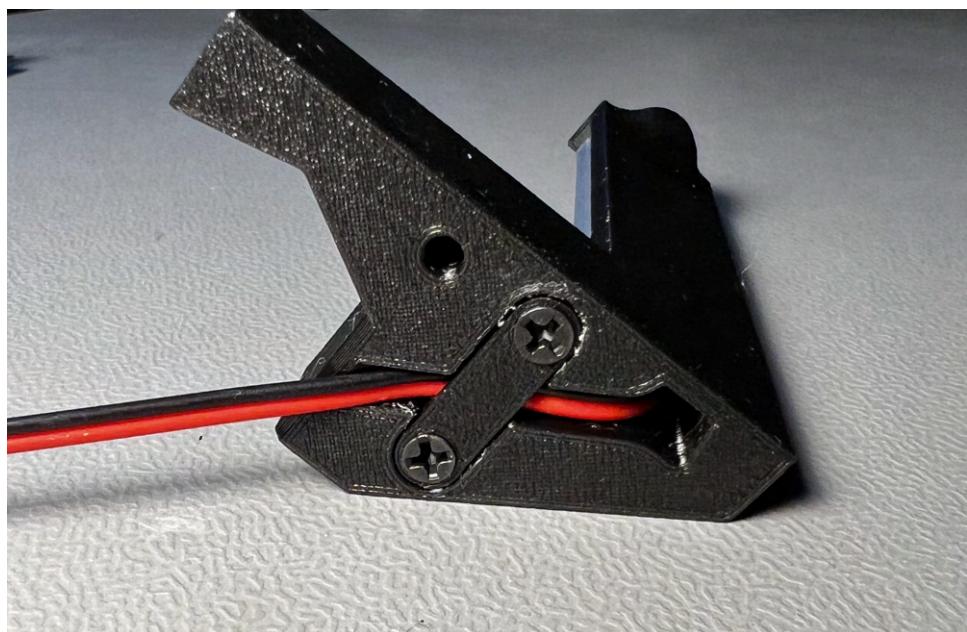


Figure 12: Strain relief installed on light holder.

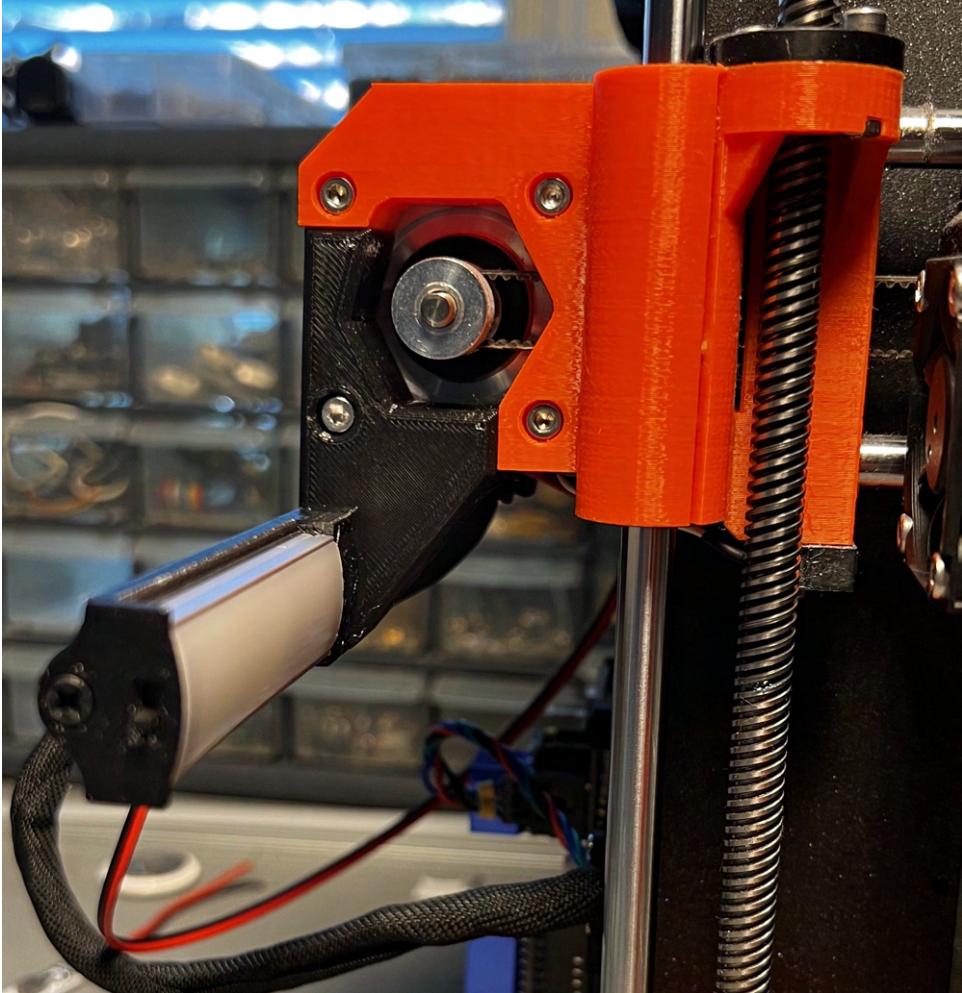


Figure 13: LED light installed on X-axis motor.

## 6 Voltage reference

Before plugging in the printer, it's crucial to double-check all polarities and connections to avoid any potential issues. Once you're sure that everything is in order, go ahead and turn on the printer. The next step is to adjust the voltage reference (Vref) to the stepper motors. It's best to use a plastic screwdriver to prevent any accidental short circuits. A good starting point for the Vref is around 0.8V, which typically works well for stock machines. However, if your printer has different rods or other custom components on the axis's, you may need to fine-tune the Vref accordingly.

The Vref is adjusted by turning the highlighted potentiometer in Figure 14, the voltage is measured with a multimeter with the red positive wire on the Vref voltage pin and the black negative wire on GND. On the PCB I have created easy to use GND points for multimeter probes and are highlighted by the GND arrows.

Using a vref of 0.8V, the temperature from the driver is notably cool. For instance, a thermal image captured during a 4-hour print with PETG, as shown in Figure 15, only shows a heatsink temperature of 40°C after 2 hours, when the room temperature is 22°C. As such, there's no need for active cooling, at least not under these conditions. In addition, the temperature of the X motor, also depicted in the figure, has remained well below the maximum recommended temperature of around 80°C – 100°C, reaching only 60°C.

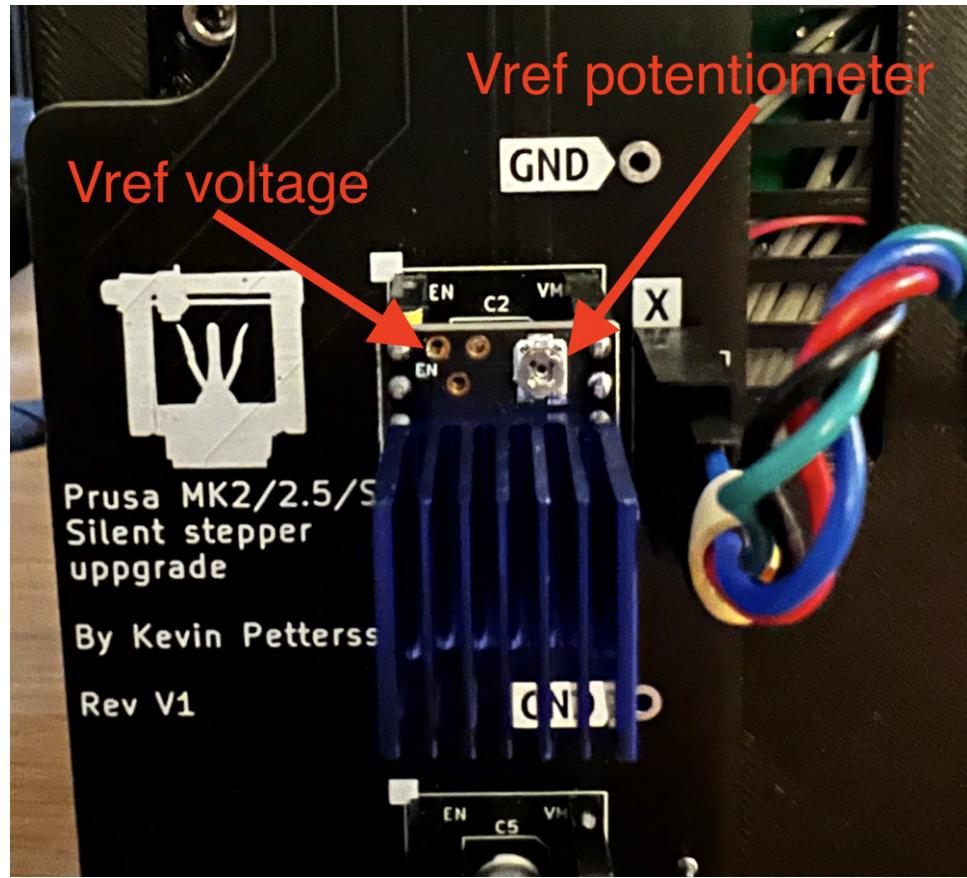


Figure 14: Vref potentiometer and measuring point illustrated on a TMC2209.

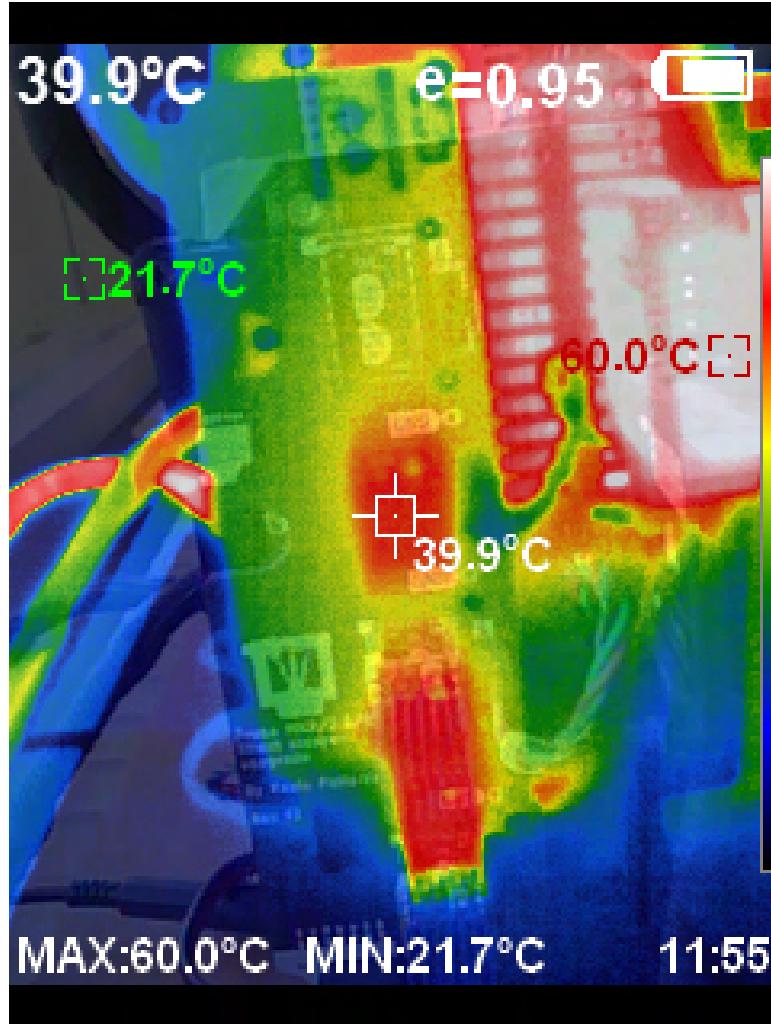


Figure 15: Thermal image of TMC2209's and X axis stepper motor 2 hours into a 4 hour PETG print.

## 7 Verification

Now the only thing left is to verify that everything is working correctly.

- Try moving the axis's one by one manually in the Settings → Move axis menu.
- Next try the Disable steppers.

If both of these checks work correctly, the only thing left is to install the heatsinks on the drivers and complete a test print, but before doing that please read through the Software sections first. However, if something is not working correctly, please refer to the Troubleshooting section first.

## 8 Software

You are now done with the installation, so a congratulations is in order. However, before doing the test print I would suggest making a few small changes in your slicer first. The first thing is to reduce the acceleration to around  $1000mm/s^2$  or slower, this will ensure that you don't experience any rubbing sound. I would also suggest reducing the print speed to a maximum of 100mm/s or slower to ensure that you get the most quiet printing experience possible.

## 9 Performance

To hear the difference in noise check out my video. I have been running this upgrade (as of writing) now for over 4 months on both machines and it has been working flawlessly, without any layer shifts or other problems.

## 10 Troubleshooting

- A rubbing or weird sound emitting from the printer
  - Check Software section and reduce acceleration and or speed until sound is gone.
- One or more motors are not moving
  - Check if 12V is supplied to the upgrade board on the terminal, if not recheck power cables at PSU.
  - Double check the data pin connections to the Rambo board and check that 5V is supplied to the upgrade board.
  - If none of the above points solved the problem then the driver is most likely faulty.
- Disable steppers not working
  - Check the EN pins on the Rambo board.
- Layer shifts
  - Increase Vref to stepper drivers that are causing the layer shifts slowly (for example by steps of 0.05v) until problem disappears.
  - If the problem still persists it could be that the drivers are overheating, check heatsink connection and worst case scenario install a fan for the drivers (there is a connector on the PCB for a 12V DC fan).