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How To Get Your Guitar To Sound The Way You Want.

By Brad Finley

No matter how well your guitar plays when you first bring it home, you will come to find it doesn't play exactly the same way after a time (sometimes even a small period of time). In some cases the instrument's action and feel is pretty much to your liking, but you still want to make adjustments to fit your particular playing needs. Whichever the case, you will want a guitar set-up to make the guitar play the way you want it to.

Guitar set-ups are something you can do yourself (if you have the time and tools) or a good tech can accomplish this in about an hour. In some cases you might be well versed in acoustics but you don't know how to setup an electric guitar and you want your first one to sound and play as good as the acoustics you own. In other cases, you might be a died-in-the-wool blues player who has just bought a great hollow-body and you are looking for a basic jazz guitar set-up. Don't be discouraged, most guitars need a set-up sometime during their lifespan (often times more than once) and sometimes these guitar set-ups require mechanical skills you do not have.

Every tech would agree that the most basic part of guitar set-ups is adjusting the truss rod. This is done for setting-up strings for the right height and play, or 'action' (according to your particular tastes, of course) and adjusting string intonation for accuracy. What you ultimately want is just the right amount of movement in the middle of the fret-board so your strings can vibrate freely when plucked, but not be too loose. Whether it is a classical guitar set-up or the completely opposite end of the spectrum and you're getting your jazz guitar set-up, how much play or action you want is really up to how you play, and how you want to play. And if you change the gauge of your strings, you might want another guitar set-up to accommodate.

All of the above is achieved by adjusting the truss rod in the guitar's neck. This would be for a basic electric guitar set-up or acoustic.

In a basic electric guitar set-up, you will also be checking your pick-ups. If they are not close enough to the strings (or too close) or they are corrupted in anyway this should all be dealt with during guitar set-ups. If you own an acoustic guitar with a pick-up, say built into the bridge, all the electronics, battery check, dial controls can also be checked during a basic guitar set-up.

Frets are another story entirely; from classical guitar set-ups to electric guitars, to every type in

between, your frets need to be smooth and tight. A set-up is the perfect time to get those frets filed so they are smooth or re-glue any loose ones. Be warned though, this is where you could rack-up the cost in guitar set-ups, as fretwork can get costly.

Irregardless if it is a basic electric guitar setup, acoustic or a jazz guitar setup, professionals should be charging around \$35.00 for guitar set-ups. As mentioned before, fret leveling and re-gluing will increase the price. But set-ups are well worth it if you want to really get your guitar playing sounding the way you want.

Brad Finley is senior editor of MyGuitarWorkshop.com - Free Guitar Lessons. Website provides guitar lessons, instructions and music theory for all level guitar players. Please visit <http://www.MyGuitarWorkshop.com> for more information on guitar and music theory.

Preparing For Your First Guitar Lesson

By Gabriel Adams

So. You've decided that you'd like to learn how to play the guitar, huh? Great decision! In this article, I'll cover the basic things you'll need to get before you're ready to start taking guitar lessons.

The first thing you'll need is pretty obvious: a guitar! You should really give some serious consideration to what you want in a guitar before you buy one, though.

There are three major classifications of guitars: acoustic, classical, and electric. Acoustic is pretty much the most versatile, but it may not be what you want.

An acoustic guitar is a steel stringed guitar with a hollow wooden body. As it's name suggests, it can be played acoustically, meaning that you don't need an amp to play it. You can use an amp with an acoustic guitar, though. Some come with pickups already installed inside the guitar - you just plug in a ¼" sound cord and go. These are called acoustic-electric guitars. If you choose a guitar without this feature, you can buy a soundhole pickup for your guitar for about \$60, which allows you to plug your acoustic guitar into an amp.

A Classical guitar is similar to an acoustic guitar, except it has nylon strings and is designed somewhat differently. As it's name suggests, a classical guitar is ideal for playing classical guitar. You might also want a classical guitar for finger-picking or Spanish music.

An electrical guitar is usually a plastic solid body guitar with thin steel strings. It requires an amp to play it. Electrical guitars have a unique sound, and are often used with effects pedals to distort or change the sound of the guitar. Electric guitars are central to rock music, as well as being integral to many other types of modern music.

Once you get your guitar, you'll still need a few other items. If you're playing an acoustic or electric guitar, you'll want some picks. I'd suggest you start with Medium picks for most music. You should also buy a capo, which is used for changing the key of your guitar. Be sure that it fits your guitar properly before you buy it though.

With these items, you should be ready for your first guitar lesson.

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