

Learn the Guitar

Beginners Guide to Playing the Guitar

Chapter 1 – Unleashing the Guitar Hero in You!

There is probably not one person who has not heard of the video game “Guitar Hero”. You could not walk through any electronics store or Best Buy without seeing customer’s young and old, standing in front of monitors with a plastic guitar strapped around them strumming to Pat Benatar’s “Hit Me with Your Best Shot.” I should know, I was one of those customers! The overwhelming popularity of this fun game is a testament to not only the fantasy we have about being the next great rock star but the popularity of the guitar.

The guitar is among the most popular musical instruments around. Because of how versatile the guitar is, it is a popular instrument to learn how to play. The guitar can play any kind of music that suits your interest whether it is rock, country or jazz or any other style of music. You may be interested in playing your favorite songs or maybe you are a budding songwriter and you would like to write your own songs. Either way, the guitar would be the perfect instrument to learn in these cases. Like all musical instruments, if you want to learn to play the guitar you will need plenty of practice, perseverance and patience. Learning to play the guitar will be a very rewarding experience if you stick with it and the guitar can give you many hours of enjoyment.

Before you start on your journey to become the next guitar hero, you will need a six string guitar and a guitar pick. You will also need to have patience and overall a desire to learn and a love of music. You will need a chair without arms as well.

You should also remember a few other tips before you begin learning to play the guitar. First, trim your fingernails so they are short. You will need to do this on a regular basis if you are learning how to play the guitar. Short fingernails will allow you to produce good sound and they assist you in holding down notes much easier.

Next, realize that your finger will hurt as you are learning to play the instrument. This is normal and your fingertips will eventually develop calluses as you practice and the pain will soon cease.

Finally, pause between each lesson and be sure that you have mastered that section of the lesson. Each lesson should be practiced a few minutes, and then you should move on to the next lesson.

Ready? Alright! Let’s get you started on your way to becoming the next real guitar hero.

Chapter 2 – Guitar Basics

The guitar is an instrument with ancient roots and is used in several different musical genres. Guitars usually have six strings but you can find guitars with seven, ten or even twelve strings. Guitars are typically the main instrument in music such as rock, blues, country, and forms of pop. Guitars may also be used as a solo instrument. Traditional guitars are made of wood and steel or nylon strings.

Guitars may be played either acoustically or may need to rely on an amplifier. There are various types of guitars. First there is the acoustic guitar. In an acoustic guitar, the sound is created by vibrating strings that are echoed in the hollow body of the guitar. It does not depend on anything external to produce its sound. It depends on a wooden piece that is mounted on the front of the guitar. The acoustic guitar is typically quieter than the instruments you would find in an orchestra or band so it is usually externally amplified. There are a lot of acoustic guitars that have different pickups so the player can modify and amplify the sound of the instrument.

There are different types of acoustic guitars. They are steel string guitars, twelve string guitars, arch top guitars, flamenco, and classical guitars. There is also the acoustic bass guitar.

The invention of the electric guitar has influenced much of the music of the twentieth century and popular culture. An electric guitar relies on an amplifier that helps to manipulate the tone of the instrument electronically. An electric guitar uses what you call pickups to change the vibration of the strings into an electrical current, which is then amplified. The electrical signal that emits from the guitar may be altered electronically before it passes into the amplifier. This makes the final sound. Some electric guitars have the ability to sound like an acoustic guitar with the flip of a switch.

Unlike the acoustic guitar, an electric guitar usually does not have a hollow body and the guitar makes very little sound when you pluck the strings. When the strings are plucked an electric current is generated. This current is then sent through a wire to an amplifier. The current produced varies depending on how dense the string is and how much movement occurs (how you are strumming the guitar).

The electric guitar was initially used in jazz music and is now used in many other genres of music such as rock and roll, blues, country, new-age and modern classical music.

Some hybrids of electric and acoustic guitars are currently available. There are some very exotic guitars available as well. There are guitars with two three or even four necks.

Guitar Structure

The top of the guitar consists of a slim neck and the “headstock”. The headstock’s main function is to hold the guitar strings. The headstock is placed at the end of the guitar and is furthest from your body.

The headstock consists of tuners that allow you to change the pitch of your guitar strings. At the bottom of the headstock is the “nut”. A nut is a piece of material where there are grooves carved out. These grooves guide the strings to the tuners.

The nut is usually made of plastic, bone, brass, stainless steel, graphite or other material. The nut is found where the fret board meets the headstock. A fret board or fingerboard is wood that is embedded with the metal “frets” that make up the top of the neck.

The guitar neck will be the focal point as you begin to learn how to play the instrument. The neck joint or “heel” is where the neck is glued or bolted to the guitar body. The majority of acoustic guitars have necks that are glued while the majority of electric guitars have glued and bolted necks. Your fingers will be placed on different parts of the neck and this will create various notes. Solid body electric guitars have a neck through body construction. These types of necks are built so the head down through the bridge is on the same piece of wood.



Next there is the body of the guitar. The body of a guitar will be different depending on what type of guitar you use. In an acoustic guitar the body of the instrument determines the quality of the sound. The vibration of the strings is passed through the bridge and saddle through a sound board. A sound board is usually made of spruce or cedar and is about 3mm thick.

There is a sound hole in the body of the acoustic guitar. The sound hole is designed to project the sound of the instrument. The sound hole is typically a round hole on the front of the guitar, under the strings. The sound of the guitar is projected through the sound hole. The air inside the body of the guitar vibrates as the guitar body and top is vibrated by the instrument’s strings.

The bodies of most electric guitars are of wood. It is rare to find a piece of wood wide enough to create the entire guitar so it is a guitar made of one piece of wood. Most created with two pieces of wood and have a down the center of the body. Maple, ash, basswood, alder, and poplar wood are used to create the body of an electric guitar. bodies consist of cheap wood such as ash or a wood such as maple. Guitars that are made called “flame tops”. Some electric guitars such materials as carbon composites, aluminum alloys, or a plastic material such as polycarbonate.



typically made hardwood that is hard to find guitars are seam going mahogany, commonly Many guitar glued on top of in this way are are made of

The majority of electric guitars have bodies that are solid and do not have a sound hole. Electric guitars instead have “pickups”. Pick-ups are basically small microphones that capture the sound of the strings and then the sound is amplified.

Guitar strings go from the pegs on the headstock and over the nut. They then go down the neck and over the body and then over the sound hole or pickups. The strings are then anchored to a



“bridge”. A normal guitar has six strings. These strings are all different sizes and represent different notes. The bottom string is usually the skinniest and has the highest sound. It is an E note. The bottom string is also known as the first string. The second string is a little thicker than the first string and is the B note. The third string is B, the fourth string is D, the fifth string is A, and the final, sixth string is an E, just like the first string. This sixth string is the thickest string of the set. It has the lowest sound and is the one that is closest to you. If the guitar is tuned correctly, the first string and the sixth string should give you the same note but in different pitches. If you want to memorize the string position and values you can use a mnemonic devise such

as Eat All Day Get Big Easy.

Frets are strips of metal that cut the guitar in sections from top to bottom. The combination of strings and frets form a grid. This grid covers the guitar neck. If you put your finger in between two frets, this allows you to play a note. The higher you place your finger on the fret, the notes will have a higher sound.

Chapter 3 – Guitar Positioning and Tuning

Now that you have learned a little bit about the guitar, you are now about to learn about how to position a guitar and tune it.

First you will learn about positioning a guitar. Begin by finding an armless chair that has good support for your back. You should sit comfortably with your back against the chair. Slouching is not good because you will develop bad guitar habits and a sore back. When sitting in an armless chair, be sure that there is a lot of room on both sides of you so you can hold your guitar properly and move your arms.

Once you are seated in the chair, you should place the guitar on your lap and have the rear of the guitar facing your chest. The guitar body should be on the leg that is farthest from the headstock. If you are right handed, the guitar should lay on your right leg. The majority of acoustic guitars will have curved indentations that are great for playing the guitar on your leg. If you are holding the guitar properly then the sixth string should be close to your chest and the first string should be close to your feet.

Your fret hand will have to be placed on the left if you are right handed and on the right if you are left handed. You should grip the neck of the guitar gently with your fretting hand. Your thumb should be placed behind the guitar's neck. The other fingers should be floating on top of the strings, slightly curled. It is very important to curl the fingers at the knuckles unless an instructor tells you not to.

Next we are going to discuss picking. When beginning to play the guitar, you should purchase a set of guitar picks. A guitar pick is a small flat tool that you used to strum the guitar. You should purchase a minimum of ten guitar picks and they are relatively cheap. There are different types of guitar picks but it is best to start with one that is not too hard or too flimsy. Picks are made of rubber, wood, stone, plastic, tortoiseshell, and metal. They are usually in the shape of a triangle but other shapes are available from manufacturers.

Once you have a guitar pick and are seated in the proper position, you can begin strumming the guitar. Your picking hand will be nearest the bridge of your guitar. You should open up the hand you will be picking or "strumming" the guitar with. The palm should face you. Then make sure the thumb is next to the index finger. Make sure that you rotate the hand so the knuckle of the thumb is facing toward you. With your free hand you should slide in the guitar pick between your index finger and thumb. That way, the pick is secure. The pick should end up behind the thumb's knuckle.

You should hold the pick firmly and the pointed portion of the pick should be pointing away from your fist and should be sticking out about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. The hand you are strumming with should be over the sound hole if you are using an acoustic guitar or over the guitar body if you are using an electric guitar. Your strumming hand should be placed above the strings.

Your picking hand should not sit on the body or strings of the guitar. Using your wrist, not your arm, strum the lowest string downward. If the string rattles too much, do not use a lot of the pick surface or strum softer. Then pick the lowest string upwards. Try this a few times. Try to lower the motion of your picking hand by doing a short pick downwards and a short pick upwards. Now repeat the process with the rest of the strings.

Remember that holding the pick will feel strange at first. You will have to concentrate on your picking hand when you begin practicing the guitar. Your downstrokes and your upstrokes should sound the same. Also remember you will sound bad at first but this will change with practice. It takes time to become the next guitar hero!

Tuning Your Guitar

It is very important to tune your guitar. You need to tune your guitar on a regular basis if you want it to sound good and make practice enjoyable. At first tuning a guitar will be difficult but this will change over time. It is advisable that if you know someone that is a guitar player, you can have them tune your guitar for you. You can also simply learn to do it yourself. It just takes practice and patience.

There are different methods of tuning a guitar. All of the different methods are appropriate but some are more convenient than others. This is especially important if you are just beginning to learn the guitar.

Tuning a guitar involves adjusting the strings so that they play the right note. You loosen or tighten the strings by using the tuning pegs. If you tighten the pegs on the headstock, this will make the pitch of the string higher, while making the pegs loose will make the pitch lower.

Beginning guitar players may want to purchase an inexpensive electric “guitar tuner”. This is a great choice for beginning guitar players. Electronic tuners can pick up the sound of a string and let you know through a display that the note is either too low (flat) or too high (sharp). Beginning guitar players have difficulty telling when a string is not in tune by just listening so buying an electric tuner can assist in making tuning faster and more precise.

A starting guitarist who is practicing by themselves, easy and convenient tuning methods are best. However, as you become pickier or begin playing with other people, utilizing alternative tuning methods will become increasingly important.

If you cannot afford or do not want to buy an electric tuner, there are a variety of ways to manually tune your instrument. These ways are relative tuning, tuning with a piano, pitch pipes, keyboards, tuning forks, intervals and harmonics. We will go into these types of tuning in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 – Ways to Tune Your Guitar

The easiest way to tune your guitar is by relative tuning. Relative tuning is comparing the sound and pitch of adjacent strings. The string with the higher pitch is tuned to match the sound of the lower string. In this method, there is the assumption that the lower string is tuned properly. If you use this method, you will have to tune the sixth string with a tuning fork or piano. More details on this will be provided later.

The process starts with the tuning of the sixth string. When the sixth string has been tuned, you need to press the sixth string at the fifth fret and pick the string. Next, tune the fifth string so that it matches that sound. The sound of the fifth string should match the sixth string's, fifth fret. If you find that the sound does not match, turn the tuning peg for that fifth string and change the pitch. Don't do anything to the sixth string.

If the sound of the string is too low, tighten the string. If the sound of the string is too high, loosen the string. Be sure that the fifth string is tuned in comparison to the sixth string because the fifth string has to be properly tuned in order to tune the fourth string. After that, the fourth string needs to be in tune in order to tune the third string and it continues from there. If there is a tuning mistake on any of the strings, the sound of the whole instrument will be thrown off.

If you have a piano at your disposal and you are familiar with the notes, you can tune your instrument by matching the sound of the strings with the matching notes on the piano.

To begin, find the E note of the piano and then play the sixth string or E note on your guitar. Turn the tuning peg so that the sixth string on your guitar sounds like the E on the keyboard. Do this with all the strings on the guitar.

An electronic keyboard can help tune your guitar as well. Keyboards give you clear, precise, and loud pitch that makes it easy to tune your instrument. This method of tuning is a great choice for beginning guitarists who have access to a keyboard or for guitar players who will be working with someone who plays the keyboard.

You can also tune your guitar by using pitch pipes. You should be able to find these at your local music store. These pitch pipes will give you the pitches of all strings. All you need to do is match the sound of each string to the proper pipe. Pitch pipes do not cost a lot and even very young guitar players can use them. They are small and easy to carry.

Some more advanced guitar players would not be satisfied with pitch pipes because they do not have a clear pitch like an electronic tuner, tuning fork or piano.

Using a tuning fork is a popular way to tune a guitar and other instruments. A tuning fork is a two prong device that has a stem and is shaped like a U. They are usually made of steel. The tuning fork gives off a certain pitch when it is struck against a surface, causing it to vibrate. The sound that comes from the tuning fork depends on the length the two prongs are.

The standard tuning fork used has the pitch of an A note. Tuning forks that emit this sound can be found easily. Tuning forks with the sound of the E note can be found easily as well and they are very useful for guitars. Tuning forks are cheap and easy to bring along with you.

When using a tuning fork, hold the fork by the stem so that the prongs can vibrate freely. Strike the prongs hard enough so that they begin to vibrate. Be sure not to strike them on anything that will dent. It is best to strike the fork against your knee. Not too hard of course! After that and without touching the prongs, place the stem lightly on the guitar body. Now tune the string to match the sound that comes from the guitar.

In order to use a tuning fork properly you will need to practice. It may be hard for a young player and a guitar player with experience will not want to carry around different tuning forks.

The preferred method of tuning a guitar is intervals. The advantage of tuning this way is that the guitar ends up having a pleasant sound that is in tune. Intervals involve tuning strings in conjunction to other strings. This is very easy when you have practiced this method for a little while.

To tune by interval, begin with the sixth string and have something such as a tuning fork or pitch pipe handy. To find the A note, press down the sixth string at the fifth fret, then tune the A string. Next tune the D or fourth string to the D and the fifth string at the fifth fret. Repeat this process with the G, B, and E strings. To check your tuning, play the E and B chords and listen carefully. Make any adjustments you need to.

Next we have harmonics. Advanced guitarists prefer using harmonics when it comes to tuning their instrument. Harmonics can be hard to learn, but the result is a very accurate tuning.

Instead of holding a string down, below the fret, you touch the string very lightly at the fret. This is harmonics. This is not the best tuning method for beginners but it is mentioned here to give you a complete overview of guitar tuning.

There are many other ways to tune a guitar. Slack key tuning is tuning some strings lower than other types of tuning. The result is a major chord when all strings are played. A tuning method used in rock and classical guitar is D tuning. This involves tuning the D string instead of the E string. No matter what type of tuning you use, it is best to tune your guitar frequently. Strings get out of tune over time especially if you play your guitar a lot and practice a lot.

Chapter 5 – Playing Notes and Chords

Now for the fun part, actually playing the guitar! It is essential to practice playing the guitar. It is not that difficult to make sounds on the guitar but if you want to make these sounds pleasing to the ear, you have to practice.

Begin by plucking the sixth string. Do not use your fretting hand. You will hear an E note. If you play a string without using the fret, you are playing the note “open”.

The next thing to do is to move downward and play the strings “open”. You will hear the A, D, G, B, and E notes, in that order. Each note will sound higher than the one preceding it.

After you have done this, return to the sixth string and take your index finger and place it on the first fret. The first fret is the space between the nut and the first fret. You should be using the index finger on your fretting hand. Now press down the note with the tip of your index finger instead of the joint. As you hold the index finger down on the initial fret, use the hand with the pick in it and pluck the sixth string. If you have done this right, the sound that you hear should be a little higher than when you first plucked the string without holding down the fret.

Next move the index finger up to the second fret. This is the space between the second and first frets. Pluck the sixth string once more. You should hear a higher sound than the previous one.

Repeat these steps with every string. Play the string open, place your finger on the first fret, and then place your finger on the next fret. If you hear notes that are bad, muffled or off-key, make sure that you are firmly pressing down on the note and that your finger is on the center of the fret. Continue to practice until you are comfortable making each note.

After you have practiced playing notes, you can move on to playing chords. A chord is two notes that are played at the same time. Chords create a richer sound than what you would hear if you played each note by itself. Most chords are three notes that are played together. Some chords include more than three notes. Chords involved playing multiple strings together. This is “strumming”.

The most common chords are “Major” chords and these are the chords that beginning guitarists usually learn first. The major chords are C Major, A Major, G Major, E Major, and D Major. These chords are a combination of different sets of notes. When these notes are played together they create a sound that is unique. Many of your all-time favorite songs are played by using three or more chords. Let’s discuss fingering positions, exact notes and patterns of strumming that are used in “Major” chords.

To play a C Major chord, place your ring finger on the third fret and fifth string. Then place your middle finger on the second fret and fourth string. Last, place your index finger on the first fret, second string. Now, starting on the fifth string, strum the 3 string quickly. Don’t play the sixth string.



The C Major chord should look like a staircase. The index finger forms the lowest step. It will feel odd when you begin to work on chords in this way but the more you practice chords and as your fingers become stronger, you will not have a problem forming chord structures with your hands.

Don't worry if when you begin practicing chords that sound horrible and the notes sound strange. As they say "practice makes perfect."

To play the A Major chord:

- Put the index finger on the second fret and fourth string.
- Put the middle finger on the second fret and third string.
- Put the ring finger on the second fret and second string.
- Now, beginning with the fifth string, strum the strings quickly. Don't play the sixth string.



The A Major chord is harder to play than the C Major chord because three fingers are crunched together on the second fret. Play the chord a couple of times so you can see how it sounds and feels. If you continue to have problems or your fingers are big and cannot fit together on the second fret, you may want to

try other fingerings. One solution is to use the middle finger instead of the ring finger to press down the second and third strings together.

To play the G Major Chord:

- Put the middle finger on the third fret, sixth string
- Put the index finger on the second fret, and fifth string
- Put the finger on the third fret and first string.
- Now strum the strings quickly.



To play the G Major chord you can use a number of different fingerings, though the one described above is simplest for beginning guitar players.

To play the C Major chord:

- Put the third finger on the fifth string and the third fret.
- Put the second finger on the fourth string and the second fret.
- Put the first finger on the second string and first fret. Make sure you do NOT strum the sixth string and strum the bottom.

To play the E Major Chord:

- Put the middle finger on the second fret and fifth string
- Put the ring finger on the second fret and fourth string
- Put the index finger on the first fret and third string.
- Now strum the string quickly.



E Major is the best known of the chords because it is found in the most memorable rock and blues songs. Remember not to worry if the notes don't sound right or if they sound muffled. If you practice, you will be able to press down the right notes on the

right strings.

To play the D Major chord:

- Put the index finger on the second fret and third string
- Put the ring finger on third fret and second string.
- Put the middle finger on the second fret and first string.
- Begin with the fourth string and play the notes quickly. You will not play the fifth of sixth strings.

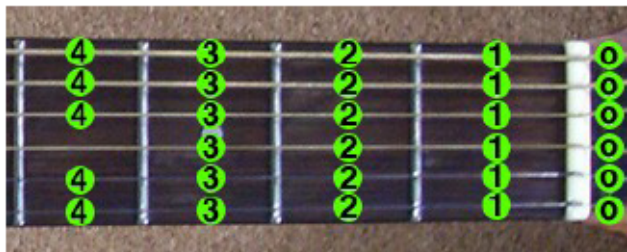


The D chord is the hardest for beginning guitarists. This chord is that hardest one to make sound correctly. But again, with practice you should not have any problems.

Chapter 6 –Scales and Playing Your First Song

If you happen to know anything about playing the piano, you know that a “scale” is a group of notes that are played in succession in ascending or descending order. There are a number of different scales. Each scale has unique characteristics, musical qualities, and note patterns. We will talk a little bit about scales and how to use them to improve your guitar playing. Practicing and playing scales can be unexciting and tiresome but you can do it. Scales can help make your fingers stronger, improve your ability to learn advanced techniques such as guitar solos and improve hand-eye coordination.

The most basic scale is the chromatic scale.



To begin playing the chromatic scale:

- Start by playing the sixth string “open”
- Take your index finger on the hand you will fret with and press down the first fret on the number six string. Pluck it again.
- Using the middle finger, press down the sixth string at the second fret and play the sixth string again.
- Utilize the ring finger to press down the third fret and play the sixth string.
- Utilize the pinkie finger to press down the fourth fret and play the sixth string again.
- Continue with these steps with the rest of the strings.

You have now played your first scale. Of course this may not be the most fascinating experience in your life but with this you are on your way.

Other scales are the Major Scale and the Minor Pentatonic Scale. You will learn these scales as you continue practicing the guitar.

After you have learned notes, scales and chords, you are now ready to play songs. Many people have their personal favorites whether it is their favorite songs, favorite bands, or favorite pieces of music. Most everyone knows their favorite songs by heart and they are anxious to play

them. This is great. However, it is best to slow down and learn a few basic songs that can assist you in getting the feel for the structure of songs and the feel for timing. You will also get your first opportunity to sing along with your instrument.

There are a few songs that are good for beginners

- *Blowin' in the Wind* by Bob Dylan
- *Leaving On A Jet Plane* by John Denver
- *For What It's Worth* by Buffalo Springfield

These songs can assist you in practicing chords:

- *The Gambler* by Kenny Rogers
- *Brown Eyed Girl* by Van Morrison.

There are resources on the internet where you can find easy beginning guitar. Three of these are, [GuitarNoise.com](#): *Easy Songs for Beginners*, [About.com](#): *Easy Song Tabs*, and [Gitarrrero-Beginner](#): *Easy Guitar Song Collection*.

Chapter 7 – Practice

Since you now know the basics on how to play the guitar, it is now your job to get better at everything you have learned. To perfect your skills you should practice regularly. Practicing the guitar can be aggravating and tiresome but if you get better at playing the instrument then you will end up having more fun. You will begin enjoying practice more and more.

To improve your guitar playing, you will have to set aside time to practice. It is important to set aside time every day to practice. Spend at least fifteen minutes a day practicing what you have learned. This will help you a great deal. In the beginning you will have sore fingers but if you play every day, your fingers will get tougher and after a time they will not hurt anymore.

There are a few things that you can do to get into the habit of practicing your guitar. Be sure to put aside between fifteen and twenty minutes a day to practice. Practice in an environment that is quiet and you can put your complete concentration on practicing your guitar. Be sure to stretch your arms hands and fingers before you begin to play. If you are playing an electric guitar remember to turn off the distortion so that you can clearly hear your mistakes. Know what you are going to practice ahead of time because this makes your practice a whole lot easier.

Be sure your guitar is in tune. Be sure that you are sitting properly, holding the guitar properly and using the pick in the right way. Then play the chromatic scales a couple of times. After that, play the chords you have learned. Be sure that every note is correct. If the sound is not correct discover why and try to fix the problem.

Practice your chords and try to switch chords. If you have a picture in your mind of how your fingers are to be placed, this will assist you in switching chords fast.

Remember to be patient. Playing the guitar is difficult in the beginning and you may feel like you want to give up and that there is no way you can learn to play. This couldn't be further from the truth. Everyone has problems when they learn an instrument for the first time. Just put in daily practice and don't concern yourself with how you did until you have another practice session. Be sure to remember that playing the guitar should be enjoyable.

Websites that can help you with your practice are: GuitarNoise.com: *The Art of Practice*, ehow.com: *How to Practice Guitar*, ezFolk.com: *How to Practice*, PlayJazzGuitar.com: *Guitar Practicing or Guitar Playing?*, and AccessRock.com: *Practice Guitar Rules*

Chapter 8 – Before You Buy Your First Guitar

When you are just beginning to learn the guitar you may wonder which is a better learning guitar, an acoustic guitar or an electric guitar. It is best to consider a variety of things when making your decision.

Maybe one of the most important things to consider when picking a guitar is the type of music you want to play on it. If you like rock music and want to play like the great rock guitar heroes, you should obviously pick an electric guitar. However, if you enjoy acoustic music you should choose an acoustic guitar. It is important to consider these things because if you purchase a guitar that is not right for you, then you will not be motivated to play it on a regular basis.

Your personality may be a factor in choosing what guitar to start with or it might not matter at all. There are some people who want to see results right away but if they don't they get frustrated; lose interest and stop playing the guitar. If you think you are this type of person, consider an electric guitar. These are smaller than acoustic guitars and have smaller necks. It is much easier to press the strings so you will have the ability to play your guitar basics faster and easier. Even so, there are some buttons on an electric guitar that may make playing music more complicated.

Be sure to consider your budget when purchasing your first guitar. Of course you do not want to pay a lot of money on your very first guitar. It is also unwise to pay a lot if you don't think you will continue to play it over time. Because of the expense, acoustic guitars are the preferred first instrument. An electric guitar is more expensive because you need to buy an amplifier and a guitar cable along with the guitar. If you still feel like you want to buy an electric guitar, check your local music store to see if they offer start-up guitar and amplifier packages at a price you can handle.

Something else to consider is purchasing a guitar stand. This is a wise investment because if you have your guitar on the stand at all times, you will probably find yourself practicing and playing on it a lot more. There are various guitars that are recommended for the beginning guitarist. If you have an electric guitar you may want to keep it plugged into the amplifier, that way when it's time to practice all you need to do is turn the amplifier on and get started.

If you want to sing along with your guitar and have the patience, you may want to purchase an acoustic guitar. There are a few acoustic guitars that are great for beginners.



The *Seagull S6* is an instrument made in Canada and is highly recommended by guitarists. The Seagull produces beautiful sound and has a lot of value. This guitar has a cedar top and mahogany on the sides and on the back. The price of the Seagull is about \$350. This may be a little more than what you want to spend on a first guitar but it is a good investment. It is not easy to find the Seagull S6 but if you call around or search the internet you may be able to find one.



The *Yamaha F310* is not as highly regarded as the Seagull but it is still a good instrument for a beginning guitarist. These guitars normally cost \$250 or you can

find them even cheaper if you look online. There are other Yamaha acoustic guitars available but they may cost a little more.

The *Takamine G-340* is a beginner model that has a spruce top that is laminated. In general, it is not as good as some of the higher end models of the Takamine but you still get good value for your money.

The *Fender CD110E* is cheaper than other models of the fender. The CD110E has a nato back, sides and neck along with a spruce top. The cheaper model may not always have the best workmanship but the price makes it attractive to beginner guitarists.

The *Epiphone DR-100* is a good starter guitar. The DR-100 has mahogany sides and back and a spruce top. You can buy this guitar cheaply. Most individuals consider this an instrument for beginners only so you may quickly want to buy a better guitar.

There are a number of good guitars available if you want to start with an electric guitar.



The *Squier Fat Stratocaster* is one of many Squier models available at a good and low price. You may need to be wary of the hardware and pickups but this really depends on how the guitar is made. This is a great beginner guitar. The appearance is appealing.



The *Epiphone G-312 SG* is not expensive and a decent choice for beginners. The G-312 SG is built with cheaper hardware and pickups of low quality. The body of the instrument is alder. The neck is mahogany and the fingerboard is rosewood. It is a good value according to experts.

The *Yamaha Pacifica 112* has a rosewood fret board, maple neck and alder body along with two coil pick-ups. The guitar is well made and the craftsmanship is high. It is a great value and those who want to become serious guitarists may want to upgrade the electronics of this guitar.

The *Danelectro 56-U2* is a low cost and cheap instrument but guitarists like its distinct look and sound. It is a guitar with a hollow body and feature dual stacked volume controls and lipstick pickups.

The *Epiphone Les Paul Special II* is modeled after one of the most famous guitars known, the Les Paul. This low cost guitar has a mahogany neck, rosewood fingerboard, and a laminated alder/maple body. The guitar is marketed toward those that are just beginning to learn the guitar.

Chapter 9 – Purchasing Your First Guitar

Now that you have an idea about what types of guitars are available to you. You are ready to go into the music store and buy your first guitar. It is exciting to be purchasing your first guitar but keep a few things in mind before heading out to the local music store.

First, be patient. You do not have to purchase the guitar immediately. Make a minimum of two visits to the music store. Also, don't let the salesman intimidate you. You are the customer and you are the one in charge. You should also do some research before you buy your first guitar. The internet offers a wealth of information about guitars. If you are armed with knowledge, you can use that knowledge to your advantage. Also, remember to recruit help if you need it. If you have a friend or family member that plays the guitar, take them with you to the music store and it can help you choose the guitar that is right for you. If you don't have anyone to come with you, ask the employees at the store questions. Don't be shy. You can get a decent deal on a guitar if you have enough discipline.

If you are a new guitarist, trying out a guitar in the music store may be intimidating. There may very well be other guitarists in the store who think they need to show off their skills. They have a need to impress others with their great guitar licks and chords. This can be intimidating; of course you'd like to be able to show off like this as well. However, stay focused. Your goal is to find the best instrument for you for the least amount of money.

When you enter the store, look around until you find an instrument to your liking. The store employees should give you a sturdy stool. They should also give you a pick but it is probably best to bring one of your own. If you are trying out an electric guitar, it should be plugged into an amplifier that is similar to the one you are going to use.

To hear the sound quality of a guitar, don't be afraid to strum the strings hard. Listen to the guitar's sustain and listen for problems such as buzzing strings. If you cannot hear the guitar well, ask to be put in another room or to be moved to a part of the store that is quieter. If you come up against music store owners that frown on you tuning up the guitar or vigorously strumming, politely hand the guitar back to the owner and take your business elsewhere. It is important to know how a guitar sounds before spending your hard earned money on it.

You should also keep in mind that when trying out a guitar you don't need to play something complicated. Play something you are used to playing. Concentrate on how the guitar sounds and feels. Do not pay attention to the people who may be listening to you. Play every fret on the neck of the guitar and be sure that you don't hear any buzzing. Be sure that if you are playing an electric guitar try various pick-ups and listen for any pick up noise you don't want.

Try out many different guitars in the music store. Ask a lot of questions and take notes on each guitar you try out. You should jot down the make, model and price of the guitar. Find out what kind of wood the guitar is made from. Make a note of anything you like or dislike about each guitar you try. After trying out a few guitars head home and consider what you discovered that day.

After you have played a number of guitars and found some that suit your taste. Research the companies who make the guitar you are considering purchasing. There are websites available that can help you familiarize yourself with the companies and their instruments. The majority of

guitar company websites provide specifications for each of their guitars. You may also find additional information on the guitar you want to buy. Check the guitar company website for warranty information as well. The websites will most likely have contact information so you can e-mail or call them with any other questions.

Of course it goes without saying that a guitar company website will be biased so you will need to discover what other guitarists think of various guitars. The web has many, many sites that have user reviews of guitars. When looking at these reviews take note of the amount others have paid for their instruments and seriously look at any criticisms. You should be careful of those who give their own guitar a perfect ten. A lot of reviewers will not offer constructive criticism.

Look in your yellow pages to find music stores near you. Think about visiting each store and trying the guitars they have for sale. Call the music stores and inquire to see if they carry the type of guitar you are looking for. If they do have it in stock, have the store quote you a price. Sometimes you may run into a store employee who does not want to give you a quote over the phone. If you say that you are about to purchase a guitar somewhere else, they will most likely change their mind. Note any differences in prices when calling music stores.

If after your initial research you are still not sure of what guitar is right for you, go to *FretBoard*, an online bulletin board that helps guitarists. Someone should be able to assist you.

After you have acquired enough knowledge about the guitar you want to buy, make another trip to the music store. Wait until the next day because your head will be clearer and you will have a better perspective.

Once you return to the music store and know what guitar you want to purchase, you will want to get the guitar at a good price. Many individuals assume that if a guitar costs \$600, they will have to buy it for that amount. This is not true. Those who own music stores make a profit on what they sell in their store so they are able to drop the price of the item. You just have to get them to do that.

You will have to be savvy if you want a bargain. The music store employees want you to spend your money and you want to hold on to as much of your money as possible. As mentioned earlier, you are the one that is in control. Since the music store wants your business there is nothing wrong with making them earn it.

Keep a few things in mind when you go back to the music store. Like in any sales transaction, do not let the salesperson know just how much you want the product their selling. Do not let the sales person know just how badly you want a particular guitar. If they approach you and want to assist you, just tell them that you have noticed some nice guitars as you have been shopping around.

Before you get down to bargaining for the guitar you should ask if a guitar case is included. Ask if the guitar case is softshell or hardshell. A softshell guitar case costs less than a hardshell guitar case.

Try a few guitars when you return to the music store. If you feel like it, pretend you want to buy a cheaper guitar than the one you are really interested in. If a salesperson sells you a cheap guitar, they will get a small commission. Because of this, they will be more eager to give you a bargain on a guitar that is more expensive.

Don't make it seem that you are in a rush. Take your time and think about whether the guitar you researched is really the guitar you want.

Remember to never pay the list price for the guitar you want. In general, list prices are inflated. A lot of people find it difficult to bargain with a salesperson for a discount. It is not as difficult as it may seem. You can start by asking for the entire price, including the guitar, tax and the case. When they tell you, think for a moment and ask them what they can do to make the price a little cheaper. Have in mind, a price that you want to pay. It may be a good idea to try and get a 15 percent discount. If you know of a store where you know they are offering a lower price on the same guitar you want, let the salesperson know this. You may have to apply pressure to get your bargain but you can get used to doing this.

If the guitar you want is on sale or if it is already a low priced instrument, it will be hard to convince the salesperson to drop the price even more. If this is the case, you might want to ask if they could throw in some guitar accessories at no charge or at a steep discount. This may include items such as guitar strings, guitar polish, picks, or string winders. This may not be the discount that you want but it will be good to know you bargained successfully.

Chapter 10 –Buying a Guitar Online

Of course I would be absolutely remiss if I didn't mention buying a guitar online. A number of years ago, purchasing a guitar online site unseen was unheard of. However, the internet has changed the way we do many things, including how guitars are bought. You can look at the *E-bay guitar auctions* to see just how many guitars are being bought and sold every day.

Even so, guitarists should not dive in recklessly. We all know that there are possible consequences if you buy online. There are a lot of hazards attached to buying a guitar online from someone that you do not know. If you want to buy a guitar online be sure to check *Dealer Reviews* archive. This site lets guitarists submit ratings and descriptions of certain instrument retailers. You will find reviews of retailers such as *Musician's Friend* and others. The most current reviews of vendors are found on *Eopinions.com*. On this site you can enter the name of the vendor you are thinking about buying from and do some research.

Shipping instruments can be a hassle as well. Those who handle your instrument will not always use care and sometimes instruments arrive damaged. The damage could have been caused by incorrect packaging or rough handling. You may want to get your instrument packed professionally using a store like *Mailbox Etc.* if you are getting it shipped. When you use a service like *Mailbox Etc.*, the buyer can contact the store before the guitar is shipped and get a confirmation of the contents.

The most intimidating part of buying an instrument on the internet is that you will not get a chance to play the guitar before you purchase it. Many people who have played guitars in music stores know that quality varies a great deal from guitar to guitar. Any product made from wood will have different degrees of quality. Because of this, you may get a guitar that does not have the quality you want. In this case, most retailers online offer a return policy that will allow you to send back a guitar you don't want. You can return the guitar between 24 and 48 hours. However, what retailers will not tell you is that by law, they are required to give you a 30 day return policy.

Once you have weighed your options, and you still want to take a chance and buy your guitar online, you will have to search for that perfect guitar. There are a number of sites that can help you find certain guitars.

The *Guitar Base Mall* lets individuals search for certain guitars and provides contact information for the person or store that is selling the instrument. On this site, there are many guitars being sold by singular owners so you may find more problems than if you purchase the guitar from a major retailer online.

There are numerous guitar retailers online. There are a lot that operate mainly as a music store in a certain location and may take mail orders through the web. There are also those music stores that are online only. A lot of these retailers are more experienced in selling and buying on the internet so the purchasing process should go smoothly.

Three online websites you can look into are *1-800-Instruments*, *8th Street Music*, and *Costello's Music*. *1-800-Instruments* combine a store and an e-zine that features review. It is based in Australia but has international shipping. *8th Street Music* offers keyboards, pro-audio gear and other items for sale. This site features used and vintage guitars. The selection is limited though.

Costello's Music doesn't carry a lot of guitars but they offer such items as keyboards and drums. They ship only in the within the United States.

Guitar Trader Online, *Musician's Friend*, *Music123.com*, and *Zzounds* are other good sites to buy a guitar. *Guitar Trader Online* offers a big selection of guitars and other equipment and shipping is instantly calculated when you place an order.

Musician's Friend has an extremely large collection of guitars and guitar equipment. This site is one of the most popular music retailers on the internet. The site features internet deals and weekly articles. *Music123.com* is a large online music retailer and sells different instruments. There are many guitar brands for sale on the site at good prices. *Zzounds* is another site with a large selection of guitar brands. This site has contests and free giveaways. They don't offer international shipping.

Learning something is always difficult at first so do your best not to get frustrated if your fingers hurt, the guitar goes out of tune, if your neighbors begin complaining or if you don't sound great right away. All guitar heroes had to begin where you are right now.

The difference between those that try and give up and good guitar players is that the one who becomes the great guitar player keeps trying no matter what and fights through the rough patches. Just remember that playing the guitar should be fun. Don't give up, keep practicing and enjoy yourself. Before you know it you will be the next guitar hero!