

## About Guitar and Bass Accessories

### Guitar Strings

Guitar Strings will last longer if they're given good care. Strings that have been in use for a while will become corroded with skin oils and humid air, so it's important to wipe down the strings with a clean cotton cloth after you've finished playing. Changing all of the strings when one string needs to be replaced is a good idea because a new string will have a much brighter tone than the other, older strings.

There are many types of strings available for guitars today. The type of guitar - electric or acoustic - the player's skill level and the style of music he or she plays should all play a part in deciding which strings to buy.

**Gauge:** One of the first things to consider when buying strings is what gauge to choose. The heavier the gauge, the louder and fuller the sound will be - but heavy gauge strings will also be more difficult to press down.

**Acoustic Guitar:** A beginning player on an acoustic steel string guitar may want to use extra light gauge strings. The highest pitched string is normally .010 of an inch in diameter - referred to as a "ten gauge," and ends with a .047 for the lowest pitched string.

The standard light gauge set of strings for an acoustic steel string guitar is .012 to .052 - commonly called a "set of twelves."

**Classical Guitar:** For a beginning classical guitar player, a low-tension set of nylon strings is preferred. Many professionals choose an extra-hard tension set because it produces more volume.

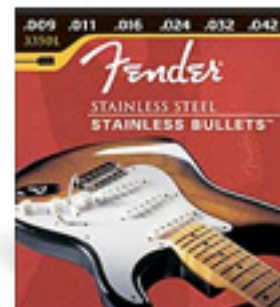
**Electric Guitar:** Most electric guitarists start with a light gauge set of strings ranging from .009 to .042 - usually called a "set of nines." Note that what is called a light gauge set for an acoustic guitar is much heavier than a light gauge set for an electric.



*Electric and Acoustic  
Guitar Strings*



*Nylon Guitar Strings for  
Classical Acoustic Guitars*



*Electric Guitar Strings*



**Schmitt  
Music**

## String Wraps

The three most common string wraps are Round Wound, Flat Wound, and Silk and Steel.

**Round Wound:** The most popular type of string wrap in the world today, round wound strings are found on virtually every new acoustic, electric, and bass guitar. They are designed with a round wire wrap over a round or hexagonal core. The sound is characterized by a bright tone with great sonic projection and sustain.

**Flat Wound (or ribbon wound):** Before the invention of round wound strings, the flat wound string was the "king" of the guitar world. Instead of a round wrap over the core it uses a flat or ribbon-like wrap. This creates a very smooth playing surface which is easy on the fingers. The trade-off, however, is that the tone is less bright and there is not as much sustain. These qualities make flat wound strings very popular with fast-picking jazz guitarists and walking bassists who want to produce an "upright bass" tone.

**Silk and Steel:** This string is great for steel string acoustic professionals who want a lighter touch and a more subdued tone - without having to purchase a nylon string guitar. The steel core of the string is wrapped with silk fibers covered with another wrap of silver-plated wire. This creates a string with less tension than traditional steel strings. These features make silk and steel strings ideal for the beginner who owns a folk guitar but has difficulty pressing down the steel strings.

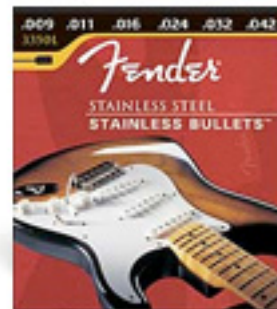
String Composition is the final consideration when selecting a string for your guitar.

## STRINGS FOR ACOUSTIC GUITAR

**Bronze** is the most common acoustic "steel" string material and creates a bright, focused, clear tone.

**Phosphor Bronze** has a richer tone with slightly less brilliance - and tends to last longer due to the non-corrosive nature of the added phosphor.

**80/20 Bronze** creates the brightest tone of all "steel" strings and provides great tonal projection.



*Electric Guitar Strings*



*Flat Wound Strings for Electric Bass Guitar*



*Phosphor Bronze Strings for Acoustic Guitar*



*80/20 Bronze Strings for Acoustic Guitar*

## STRINGS FOR CLASSICAL GUITAR

**Nylon** strings come in a set with three unwrapped or mono-filament treble strings and three wrapped bass strings made of a multi-filament nylon core with silver-plated copper wire wrapped over it. They are traditionally tied to the guitar, although some manufacturers make strings with "ball-ends" to facilitate string changing. Nylon is the only type of string which should be used on a classical guitar as "steel" strings can damage the overall structure of the guitar. (See section on nylon string classical guitars for more details.)



*Nylon Guitar Strings for Classical Acoustic Guitars*

## STRINGS FOR ELECTRIC GUITAR & BASS

**Nickel Plated Steel** strings are by far the most popular for electric guitars today. Steel is a highly magnetic material that produces a bright sound, and the nickel plating provides a smooth string surface.

**Stainless Steel** strings provide the most power in volume and sustain due to their high magnetic qualities. Their stainless steel construction makes them resistant to humidity and skin oils giving them the longest playing life of any type of string.

**Pure Nickel** strings are not as magnetic in quality as steel or nickel plated steel strings. Jazz guitarists often choose nickel strings because they produce a "darker" sound.



*Pure Nickel Strings for Bass Guitar*

## Other Guitar Accessories

**Acoustic Pick-up:** A device used to amplify the sound of an acoustic guitar - usually placed in the sound-hole. It has a standard plug which is used to connect the guitar to the amplifier.



*Acoustic guitar pick-up*

Other types of pick-ups fit under the bridge section of the guitar. The two basic types are "thin-line" and "piezo." The thin-line transmits the electrical signal by using the pressure of the string to create the connection. The Piezo is made up of tiny crystals which transmit the vibration of the string to the amplifier. Both of these pick-ups usually require some drilling into the guitar itself during installation and are not recommended unless the guitar is manufactured as an "Acoustic-Electric Guitar."



*Guitar capos*

**Capos:** Capos are used to transpose the notes played on a guitar allowing the guitarist to easily play in a variety of keys. Essentially a bar tied to the guitar neck, it holds down all of the

guitar strings at a chosen fret. For instance, in standard guitar tuning the open strings are tuned to E-A-D-G-B-E. When a capo is placed on the first fret, the sound of the strings is transposed up a step to play as F-Bb-Eb-Ab-C-F.

**Cases:** An essential for anyone who wants to preserve the quality of his or her instrument. The three most popular types of cases are Hard-shell, Gigbag, and Chipboard.

Hard-shell cases are very durable and form fitted to a particular guitar shape. They are recommended for higher priced guitars and solid topped acoustics. Many manufacturers will not honor a guitar's warranty if it is not sold with a hardshell case.

Gigbags are also form-fitted and heavily padded offering a great deal of protection from climactic changes. They also come with a shoulder strap and pouch designed for carrying music and accessories.

Chipboard cases are the least expensive style of case. They are not form-fitted and do not provide as much protection from climactic changes or damage to the instrument from bumping or dropping it. Chipboard cases are usually recommended for less expensive laminated top guitars.

**Dampits and Humidifiers:** Because solid top instruments are susceptible to climactic changes, humidifiers have been designed to maintain the guitar in the accepted 35-55% range when stored in their hardshell case or gigbag during the dry winter months.

**Electronic Tuners:** Tuners provide a way of tuning a guitar to the desired pitch. Two of the most common types are the Guitar Tuner and the Chromatic Tuner.

A Guitar Tuner is useful for beginners because it only allows the player to tune a guitar to the six standard notes - E-A-D-G-B-E.

The Chromatic Tuner is more versatile because it can be used to tune any instrument. It is generally used by more advanced players and can be used for alternate (non-standard) tunings.

**Guitar Stands:** Although not recommended as a storage method, guitar stands provide a safe, convenient place to place a guitar during a gig or during practice without fear of it falling over and becoming damaged.



*Hard-shell guitar case*



*Gigbags*



*Dampit*



*Chromatic Tuner*

**Instrument Cables:** Cables are used to connect an electric instrument to its amplifier. They come in a variety of lengths with a standard plug on both ends. The cable is shielded to prevent unwanted electrical disturbances from interfering with the instrument's signal. Because the shielding causes electrical resistance (measured in Ohms), instrument cables cannot be used as speaker cables (cables that connect an amplifier to a speaker cabinet).

Instrument cables come in a variety of lengths from 6" to 25'. Guitarists use 6" to 1' cables for effects, 3' to 6' for practice and recording sessions, and 10' to 25' for use on a stage. In general, the longer the cable the more likely that outside interference will be picked up over its length.

**Peg Winder:** The peg winder is a useful tool to have when you need to restring a guitar. It allows you to quickly wind the excess string onto the guitar peg.

**Picks:** Also called plectrums, picks are used by guitarists to strike the strings (strumming the strings) instead of playing the guitar with thumb and fingers (finger picking). Normally made of plastic or nylon, picks provide a harder surface to use when striking the string - creating a louder tone.

**Pitch Pipes:** Like electronic tuners, pitch pipes come in both guitar and chromatic styles. The user blows into the pipe, then tunes the string to match the pipe's pitch.

**Slides:** Slides are used to create a unique guitar sound often heard in Blues, Country and Hawaiian playing styles. Slides are placed on the player's ring finger above the second knuckle and held down over the strings (but not held down too hard) so that the player can enjoy the sliding effect of a fretless instrument and create the distinctive "slide guitar" sound. Slides come in all lengths, shapes, and sizes and are normally made brass or glass.

**Tuning forks:** Tuning forks are the most basic form of tuning aide. The user strikes the edge of the tuning fork against the palm of the hand or knee - but never against a hard surface like a table, as it can permanently affect the accuracy of the tuning fork. The user matches the pitch of the fork to a particular string on the guitar and tunes that string to pitch. Using the tuned string as a reference point, the remaining strings on the guitar can then be tuned. The two most common tuning fork pitches are E and A-440, a standard concert pitch. (Technically it is an "A" that vibrates at the frequency of 440 hertz, the same pitch as the A above middle C on a piano.)



Guitar Stand



Instrument Cable



Peg Winders



Guitar Picks

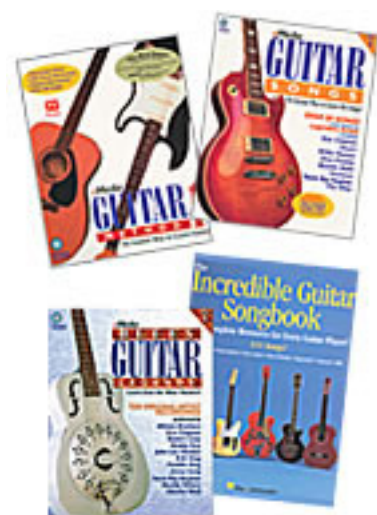


Glass and Metal Guitar Slides

**Learning To Play:** No matter what your age, interest or skill level, Schmitt Music has instruction books and method books, chord and scale charts, popular guitar sheet music and books, instructional video tapes, play-along CDs and computer software to help make your guitar playing more fun!

Schmitt Music offers private one-on-one lessons for beginners through highly advanced, as well as group or class lessons for all ages and abilities.

Check out the **PRINT & MEDIA** and **LESSONS** sections of [www.schmittmusic.com](http://www.schmittmusic.com) for How-To-Play books, CDs and DVDs as well as information on guitar lessons – or visit the Schmitt Music store nearest you!



*Songbooks and CDs  
For Guitar*