

Looking After Your Guitar

The guitar is a very versatile and fun instrument to play. This book and teaching method covers a very wide range of musical styles. It is a good learning experience to listen to, perform and create your own music in as wide a range of styles as you can. You will find in this book and teaching method Music of Other Cultures, Blues, Country Style, Rock, Classical and Baroque music. The experience of music across such a range of cultures and genres increases understanding and tolerance of people and cultures other than your own.

Whether you are learning guitar as an individual student or in a large class in a school, it is worthwhile to look after your instrument. If you are an individual student, you want to ensure that you enjoy many years of good service from your guitar. If you are learning guitar in your music class at school, then you need to look after the guitar out of respect for other students and your teacher. Always treat the guitar as if it were your own.

1. Never try to tune the guitar or adjust the tuning pegs until your teacher has shown you how and instructed you to do so.
2. Do not hold or carry the guitar by the neck. When carrying the guitar, hold it firmly under your right arm (or left arm if you are left handed) so it can't be dropped.
3. When tuning the guitar ALWAYS pluck the string that you are adjusting and keep plucking that string and listening as you turn the tuning peg - this will help you to hear if you are turning it the right way and also when it is in tune.
4. NEVER over-tighten the strings.
5. Try to keep the guitar clean with a dry cloth if necessary and do not allow it to become moist or damp. In tropical climates such as Far North Queensland, it is a good idea to keep some packets of silica gel in the case.
6. Be careful how you store the guitar. It is best not to lean the guitar against a wall or leave it lying on the floor. If you have a case, then it is best to put it away when you are not playing it. If you have a number of guitars in a classroom, then your teacher might have some hooks installed on the wall to hang the guitars. You can also purchase a guitar stand from a music store if you want to keep it safe but handy to play when you feel like it.
7. Replacing Strings - many schools have nylon string classical guitars in their classroom sets. Some people make the mistake of replacing the 3 lowest, thickest strings with steel strings on these guitars. Although they look like steel strings, they are in fact nylon but wound with steel. When you buy strings, a smart salesperson in the music store might ask you if your guitar has nylon or steel strings. If you say that the top 3 or skinniest strings are clear plastic but the bottom 3 strings are steel, then the salesperson will most likely tell you that you need nylon - steel wound strings. They are correct. If you put steel strings on a nylon string or classical guitar, it will put extra strain on the neck and possibly even bend or break the neck.