

# Start playing The Guitar

## With Clarity on Where and How to Begin

### Which music = which guitar

#### 1. Why did you get interested in guitar or music?

What do you want to finally be able to play on the guitar? What was the initial motive? What attracted you to the guitar (and music in general)? Take some to remember when you first had the thought, the wish. What situation do you remember that most attracts towards guitar.

#### 2. Which guitar and Styles of music?

Which guitar you would like to play depends on what you want to play, which style of guitar music you are interested in.

1. Acoustic steel string guitar – general purpose hollow body acoustic guitar. Good for rhythm acoustic solo.
2. Acoustic nylon string guitar – primarily used for playing western classical guitar – finger picking style where you use the fingers/nails of your right hand to play chord melody kind of music
3. Electric guitar – rock, metal etc uses electric guitar. Electric guitar is plugged into amplifying devices. Playing the electric guitar involves knowledge of adjusting tone with knobs (simplest), working with effect pedals, knowledge of effects etc

#### Acoustic steel string

**When starting out, a steel string acoustic guitar is the best choice.** Steel string guitar is more 'general purpose' than any other. Learn the basics with a steel string and move on to your specialization slowly. Steel string guitars can be used to play chords, play rhythms, scales and leads.

#### Electric guitar vs acoustic steel string

Starting to learn with a steel string acoustic guitar can be better because :

4. Cheap beginner level acoustic steel string guitars usually have a better quality than cheap electric guitars.

5. Electric guitars have more parts to worry about. You have to check and buy even more carefully than a basic acoustic guitar.
6. To play the electric guitar as loud as the acoustic guitar, you have to get an amplifier.

Buying a good electric guitar and amp in the beginning can have problems :

7. You will have to spend a reasonable amount of money (check online for prices of guitars)
8. You have to check the parts before you buy a guitar, especially so when it is not cheap
9. You may want to try out on the acoustic guitar and see actually how much time you can spend for this now instead of spending much money on something which you may not use as much.

You **can start with an acoustic steel string guitar and move on to the electric guitar with time.** When you are sure about it, spend more money, inspect well, and buy a good electric guitar and gadgets.

Playing electric guitar involves learning skills specific to it. E.g. knowing how to mute strings while playing, to avoid noise from the ringing.

### **Nylon string vs steel string acoustic**

If you are interested in western classical playing only, start with a nylon string guitar. Otherwise start with a general purpose acoustic steel string guitar.

Playing rhythm guitar on the nylon string will sound muted when compared to the steel string, since the nylon strings won't ring as much as the steel strings.

## **3. Playing Indian music on guitar**

You can play Indian classical music leads on acoustic guitar or electric guitar.

You can start with an acoustic guitar, though playing slides, hammer and pull offs on the acoustic guitar takes more practice. You may want to try both electric and acoustic guitar as you go on. The choice depends on the final sound you want.

[Thillana in Dhanshri – Indian Classical Acoustic Guitar Lead Video](#)

## **4. Playing Rhythm guitar**

Guitar can play the harmony and the rhythm. Playing involved rhythm on the guitar is fun. It is about right hand coordinating with the left hand.

The acoustic steel string and electric guitar are usually used to play rhythm. You can start with the acoustic steel string guitar. Playing electric guitar rhythm needs practice especially with muting the strings.

Nylon strings won't ring as much as the steel string, but if you like that sound, go for it.

[Some involved rhythm guitar videos](#)

## What to look for when buying a guitar?

### Fret buzz

Play each string on each fret and listen to any kind of buzz.

Start from the first fret, play the 6<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> strings while holding down the first fret of the corresponding string. Do it with each of the fret.

If you take one second to play one note, 6 strings on one fret will take you 6 seconds. To cover 24 frets of a guitar will take  $24 \times 6 = 144$  seconds, less than 3 minutes.

Well that 3 minutes is well spend even if you are buying a economical 3000 rupees guitar.

Especially check for the first few frets on the left most of the guitar. The more the vibrating length of the string, more frets are there in between to touch and cause buzz.

### String height

Height of the string from the fretboard, if too high, need to be checked. Can it be adjusted? Is the fretboard bent?

Look at the string height on the frets near to the body of the guitar, towards the 12<sup>th</sup> fret. If the height there is not comfortable, ask for another guitar or to adjust it and then check for buzz.

### Dents, breaks, pegs

Dents on the frets, on the wood of the fretboard. Are there any breaks on the fretboard? Are the pegs too loose, too tight?

### The tone

This is a subjective one. Do you personally like the tone of the guitar. Play what you will be eventually playing with that guitar and check if you like what you hear and feel.

## How to start playing the guitar

[How to play the guitar – Hand and finger best practices when playing the guitar](#) – this article gives you a clear starting point on how to hold the guitar and gives suggestions on best ways to place your fingers, arm, body, mind when playing the guitar.

### 9 more articles on playing the guitar

Read the first article, download the material given there (or follow instructions to get material yourself). Try playing the exercises in the lesson. Then go to the second article and so forth...

1. [Playing the guitar - learning what matters - C major scale and melody](#)
2. [Guitar 101 - Standard tuning, chromatic scales, sequence of notes, fretboard](#)
3. [Playing chords on guitar 01 - Basic Chord Progression](#)
4. [Notes notes everywhere, where to play the C Major scale notes on guitar - string, fret and modes](#)
5. [Guitar Tab, Learning Tips - Carnatic Geetham Lambodara Raga Malahari](#)
6. [Mapping indian raga on guitar fretboard - Mayamalavagowla](#)
7. [The 'root' case : a major, his relative, a sharp object and a minor](#)
8. [Raaga Hamsadhwani - Chords and progressions for one small phrase](#)
9. [A Tool to help you Play Indian Ragas on the Guitar - The Raga on Guitar app](#)

### Learn to play the guitar, playing what matters

If you would like to join a complete guitar course starting from the very basics, with detailed content and exercises to take you step by step through learning to play guitar, here is [90 days to play guitar that matters](#).

More music making help at [www.musicianself.com](http://www.musicianself.com)