

Restringing Your Acoustic Guitar

Does your guitar sound lifeless? Has it lost that sparkle in the sound that it once had? Do your strings feel “gunked” up? If so, then it’s time to change your strings! Changing your strings is the quickest and most inexpensive way to make an immediate improvement in your tone. Plus, it is one of the most basic items of care for your acoustic guitar that every guitarist should know how to do.

This lesson shows the proper way to change the strings on an acoustic guitar.

Tools You Need

Here are a few basic tools you should have when changing your strings.

Wire Cutters



String Winder



How to Change Your Strings

1) Using the string winder, lower the tension on the string and pull the string from the peg head. Once the tension is off the string should slip right out. If the string is stuck at the peg head then you may need to cut the string in the middle with the wire cutters and push it through the hole in the peg head. Repeat process for each string.

2) Use the notch in the peg winder to gently but firmly pull up each bridge pin from the bridge and remove each string. Often a bridge pin may be stuck in the bridge. If this happens, reach inside the guitar through the sound hole and gently push the bridge pin upwards while pulling from the top with the peg winder. Don’t apply too much pressure. Avoid using pliers on the bridge pin unless absolutely necessary because pliers may damage plastic bridge pins.

3) Throw old strings away. Wrapping your old strings, as shown in the video, helps avoid getting accidentally stuck by sharp ends and having them uncoil.

4) Polish your guitar while the strings are off. A good time to clean your guitar is when the strings are off. Dust off the instrument. Use fret board conditioner on the fret board and polish the body of the guitar. Avoid guitar polishes with wax because they will leave a film behind.

- 5) Put a slight bend on the ball end of the new string.** This bend helps the string set inside the bridge easily and connect to the bridge pin securely.
- 6) Put new string in bridge pin hole along with the bridge pin and push firmly.** The string should contact the bridge pin in the ridge if the bridge pin has a ridge.
- 7) Thread other end of the new string through the hole in the peg head and tighten to pitch.** Make sure to thread the proper peg head and that the string is in the correct groove of the nut. Leave a little bit of slack in the string as shown in the video. Once the string is through the peg head bend it in the opposite direction to lock it in place. Repeat for all strings.
- 8) Cut excess wire off with wire cutter.** Leave one quarter of an inch of string on peg head.
- 9) Once on, give all strings a slight tug to lock them in place.** A tug near the bridge and peg head helps new strings stay in pitch and hold their tuning better.
- 10) Tune guitar up to pitch.** New strings go out of tune slightly as they are breaking in so check your tuning again after playing for a while.

Playing Tip

Change your strings at least every six months to keep your guitar sounding it's best.

For step-by-step quality guitar instruction check out the award winning Gibson's Learn & Master Guitar course at www.LearnAndMaster.com and the lessons section at www.gibson.com for all the help you need to become the player you want to be!



Steve Krenz

As an educator, Steve is best known for the top-selling guitar instruction course, Gibson's Learn & Master Guitar that received the 2011 Acoustic Guitar Magazine Player's Choice Award for Best Instructional Material. As a professional guitarist in Nashville, Steve's broad playing experience includes playing guitar with a symphony orchestra, to jazz big bands, to performing with numerous Grammy-winning artists like Donna Summer, Michael W. Smith, Bryan White, The Fifth Dimension, Israel Houghton, and Tommy Sims.

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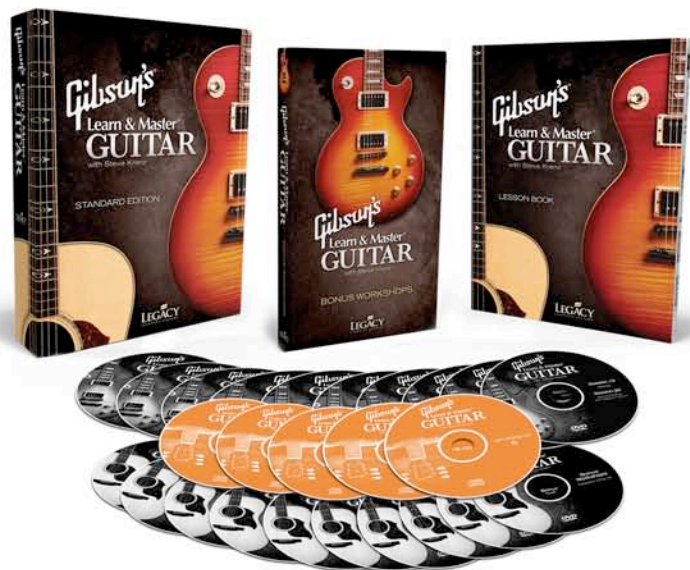
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