

“Student Worthy” Guitar Fixes

Some Fixes for the Difficult Guitar - Ways To Make A Guitar Easier To Play

The best way to go is to buy or rent a guitar that works right, is adjusted properly and is the right size. If you already have an guitar here are some possibilities:

Sore fingers with an Acoustic (Metal String) Guitar? Change strings.

Put very light strings on the guitar, or put a hybrid string called “Silk And Steele”. They feel and sound somewhere between a metal string and a nylon string. Much easier on the fingers, but not that great sounding. You can always change the strings back again when you have been playing for awhile.

Tuning Keys (Machine Heads) Sticking or Broken

Actually this may not be that difficult to repair. It can be fairly inexpensive to purchase new Tuning Keys and put them on yourself. It might be wise to bring the guitar to a music store and ask them to recommend the right keys for that guitar. There are some older guitars and odd brands that do not take the standard Tuning Keys. In that case it will be a job for a guitar technician.

Guitar Out Of Tune? Learn To Tune.

I strongly recommend purchasing a guitar tuner and learning to tune early in your guitar adventure. Watch the video titled “Tuning Your Guitar” in this module.

Guitar Won’t Stay In Tune? Possible Dead Strings.

This could be caused by dead strings or strings that are worn down in several places. When guitar strings get old they often do not stay in tune for long. It pays to learn how to change your own guitar strings and change them often. The guitar will sound better, tune more easily and be more fun to play. Plan on purchasing a String Winder, String Cutters and new strings.

Another possibility is that a Tuning Key is slipping. That is usually the case if one string goes way out of tune. If you suspect this is what’s happening but your not sure, you might want to take the guitar to a music store or repair person for advise.

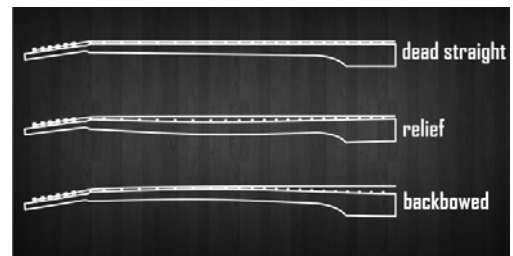
Your Guitar Is Dirty

Polish that baby! A good time to do this is when you have the strings off. Use Guitar Polish (not furniture polish) and a lint free rag. Make sure and get in all the nooks and crannies while your there. Go easy on the fret board. Wipe it off completely before putting the strings back on. If the Guitar Polish gets on the strings it can gum them up quickly.

Strings Too High Off the Fretboard? Adjust the Action.

The action is the height of the strings above the fret board of the guitar. High action makes it difficult to press the strings causing fatigue and sore fingers. It also can make the guitar go out of tune when you have to push the strings down too far.

My first choice is to have the action adjusted by a professional repair person. This can be expensive and may even cost more than the price of an in-



expensive guitar depending on how bad the problem is and what needs to be done.

It is possible for an untrained person to do some adjustments, but it can be a little risky. I won't be able to cover in-depth repair procedures here (that's an entire book), but I can direct you to the areas to look at.

1. On an acoustic and electric guitar there is a truss rod that can be tightened or loosened. This causes the neck to bend more or less.
2. The nut on the guitar can be lowered
3. The bridge on the guitar can be lowered - on an electric it is adjusted and on the acoustic it is usually shaved down little by little.
4. Filing frets that stick up higher than the others.

A competent Guitar Technician would look at all of these areas and make necessary adjustments being careful not to over compensate, especially with something that cannot be undone.

There are many videos on making these adjustments on YouTube if your up to the challenge.



Caution! For any alterations you perform, make them small! Adjust truss rods by no more than a quarter turn, shave saddles or nuts carefully, and always exercise caution.

The Classical guitar does not have a truss rod. The only way to adjust the bow of the neck is to use a special device that heats up the neck and allow some bending of the wood itself.

Too Expensive To Fix the Guitar? Rent One.

Not a bad option. That way you can start on a guitar that plays properly and get more experience to decide what guitar you would prefer to purchase in the future. You could even try a few guitars this way.

Save Money By Buying A Used One

Not as great an option as it was when I was a young dude. First, if you don't know what to look for it can be difficult to avoid guitars with problems. But most importantly there are so many new guitars at reasonable prices it's difficult to justify buying a used one and taking unnecessary risks. Over the years the price of entry level guitar (read "inexpensive") have gotten better and better. With a new guitar you would also usually have recourse if there was something wrong.