

GETTING STARTED GUITARS



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■ Choosing your first guitar can be a daunting affair, and that's why it's always best to find a music store with a knowledgeable sales staff that is willing to patiently initiate the beginner into the fun and rewarding world of picking, strumming, tapping, and shredding. The type of music you wish to play might dictate which guitar you buy: acoustic, electric, or classical. There are also "in-between" variations such as acoustic-electric, semi-acoustic, dobro (resonator guitars), and even digital guitars.

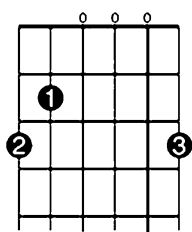
An acoustic-electric may be the right choice for a beginner. They look, feel, and sound like a fully acoustic guitars, but they are fitted with a pickup that can be hooked to an amplifier or PA system. The sound and quality of an acoustic or acoustic-electric guitar is affected by everything from the kind of wood used for its top, fretboard, and sides to its size and shape. It's important to find the right size and shape of guitar for you. Acoustic guitar shapes and sizes are given names such as "parlor" (small), dreadnought (fairly large), and the self-explanatory "jumbo." "Cutaway" guitars have space cut into the body to allow fingering very high up the fretboard.

Electric guitars differ fundamentally from acoustic guitars in that the sound is generated via an electromagnetic "pickup" amplifier, and speaker. Semi-acoustic guitars have a large, hollow body as well as pickups (giving a rich sound), but fully electric guitars are smaller and solid-bodied.

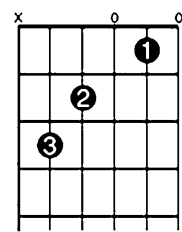
Guitars can be constructed for both left and right-handed players. Usually the dominant hand (right) is used for plucking or strumming the strings. Left-handed players sometimes choose an opposite handed (mirror) instrument, but more frequently learn to play in a standard handed style. Lefties may also play a standard guitar reversed, or even play a standard guitar strung in reverse as Jimi Hendrix did.

TRY THIS: THREE CHORD ROCK

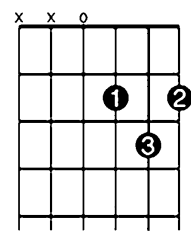
G Major Chord



C Major Chord



D Major Chord

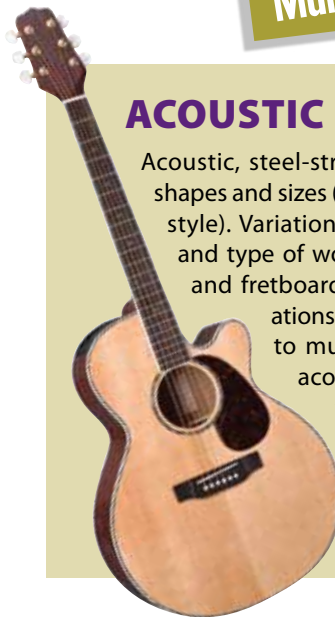


The "I, IV, V" chord progression is the foundation of blues and rock. If you start in the chord G major, then the fourth (IV) and fifth (V) chords in the alphabetical pattern will be C major and D major. Play that basic progression in a 12-bar pattern—4 x I; 2 x IV; 2 x I; 2 x V; 2 x I—and you're in blues heaven!

Visit MakingMusicMag.com for more instrument resources.

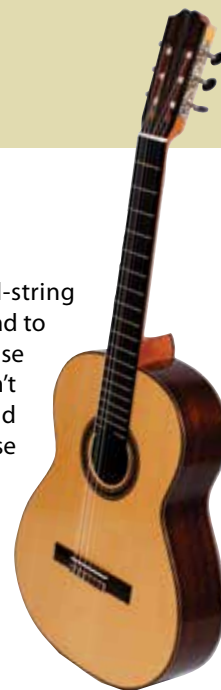
ACOUSTIC

Acoustic, steel-string guitars come in many shapes and sizes (to fit your body and playing style). Variations in construction methods and type of wood used for the top, sides, and fretboard, are among the considerations for beginners. Other choices to mull include 6- or 12-strings; acoustic only or acoustic-electric; and sound hole shape.



CLASSICAL

Classical guitars look like steel-string acoustics, but the differences lead to a unique sound. Classical guitars use nylon strings; they typically won't have a steel rod in the neck; and their fingerboards are flatter. These are guitars not just for lovers of classical music but for Flamenco fans as well. Most classical guitar music is plucked but in Flamenco, a unique strumming style also is used.



ELECTRIC

There are so many types of electric guitar on the market, the beginner should first inquire about what combination of shape, pickups, and accessories (amplifiers and pedals) is right for the music they want to play. Of course, a tried and trusted method of choosing the right electric is play what your hero plays.

