



Caring For Your Electric Guitar

A guitar player should maintain his instrument with two things in mind: first, to preserve the beauty that is inherent in a well-crafted guitar that was built from quality woods and then to keep the instrument in the best possible playing condition.

Suggestions for caring for your guitar:

- Clean and polish the top, sides and back of your guitar regularly. You can use a top-of-the line furniture polish to apply to your guitar, or you can buy any number of polishes offered by guitar companies specifically for guitar application. If you establish a regular clean and polish regime, your guitar will always look good.
- Wipe down the neck with a dry cloth after every use to protect your fretboard and to prolong string life. Sweat, oils, dirt and grime can accumulate very quickly. You will also prolong string life by removing some of the elements that cause strings to deteriorate.
- Never expose your instrument to excessive heat or cold for prolonged periods of time. Heat and sunlight can cause premature finish checking, and can make the finely crafted woods in your guitar look old and faded almost overnight. Cold weather might not affect the finish so much, but it can cause damage to binding, inlays and the neck, often requiring unnecessary work with the truss rod. Guitars need a cool, dry environment, so try to keep your guitar in that type of setting.
- Protect your guitar when it's stored in the case. We're talking about humidity here, and it can be one of the most insidious enemies to the health of your guitar. You can buy a capsule from your local guitar store that will stabilize the humidity in the case; just put it in your case and it will provide the protection that you need.
- Regularly check and tighten all screws, strap-pins and tuning machines. This just makes good sense, because you don't want any unneeded rattling or jingling when you're playing your instrument, either at a gig or at home for your own pleasure.
- Avoid things that can cause scratches, dings and other scars on your instrument. Don't wear a belt with a buckle when you have your guitar strapped on. Also, buy a stand! Never leave your guitar propped up against the wall or your amplifier. Irreparable damage can be done to quality instruments because they fall after being propped up. Spend the money and buy a stand-- consider it an investment.
- Once a year, take your instrument to your local guitar technician for a complete look-over. No matter how well you take care of your instrument, the truss rod will need adjusting regularly, and the intonation screws on the pickups will need to be adjusted to ensure that you're getting the balanced sound that you want from your guitar. Your guitar may need bridge adjustments also, so it's always good to take it in annually to let the expert make the fine adjustments that will give you the maximum in playability.
- **PLAY YOUR GUITAR!!!** There is no better way to keep your guitar in tip-top shape than to play it every day.