



HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT GUITAR FOR YOU!

With the wide variety of name brands, models, features and countries of origin, it can be very confusing to find the right instrument for you.

At Music Go Round, we are all about “The right gear for the right customer.” In an effort to further support our philosophies, we have created an easy to follow, but detailed document on how to find the right guitar for your needs.

Of course, Music Go Round loves used gear, but this document will benefit you if you are looking at new or used products.

Here are some FAQ's our sales associates hear every day!

Q: I am a beginner and I am left-handed. Should I play a left-handed guitar?

A: Not necessarily! There are two reasons we suggest that beginners start on a right-handed guitar:

- When learning to play guitar, your fret hand (if you're right handed it is your left hand) is typically the more challenged hand as it requires the fingers to move independently of each other. When playing a guitar right-handed, your fret hand is your left, which will be advantageous to the left-handed individual
- There are a very limited number of Guitars made in left-handed versions. Left-handed versions also cost up to 15% more than a right-handed model. Your selection will be very limited and the guitar will cost more.

Of course, the final decision is always with the player, but our recommendation would be to try to play right-handed. If that is not comfortable for you a left handed guitar would be the way to go.

Q: What type of guitar is the best for my student to start out on?

A: Guitars are available in three different types, electric, acoustic and folk (or nylon-string). Between the three types we always suggest starting the student on the type of guitar that will motivate them the most to play and practice. Here are some of the advantages to each type:

- **Electric** – Electric guitar has the “cool” factor going for it. It sounds good, looks good and plays easy. It does require additional products such as cables and an amp for basic operation, though.
- **Acoustic** – Affordable and easy to transport. Plus, you can play it anywhere, at any time. It is also versatile in that the acoustic guitar can be found in all styles of popular music. Most students start on this type of guitar
- **Folk or Nylon-String** – Because the size of the body is smaller, younger beginners will start on this type of guitar. The nylon strings are easier on small or weaker fingers, and it is easier to “fret” a note and get positive results. This guitar is also very affordable and does not require any additional products to play.

Music Go Round always has a wide variety of these three types of guitars and will get you the right product based upon your specific gear needs!

Q: Why are some guitars \$100 and some are over a \$1000? Are they not all made of wood and metal?

A: As with most products in the world, all guitars are not created equally!

There are many factors that go into the value of a guitar; some are tangible and some are intangible.

Some of the **tangible** values of a guitar are:

- **Where the product is manufactured.** This has a tremendous impact on the value or cost of an instrument. Generally, the most expensive instruments are made in the USA, Canada, Mexico and Japan. Korean and Chinese instruments follow along with other Asian countries such as Indonesia, Vietnam and India coming in towards the bottom. Yes, the labor costs to build instruments have some impact on the overall cost, but what you will always find is that an American made instrument is made of the highest quality woods and products, with the best workmanship, quality and consistency. Asian made instruments, while very good products, are more “mass produced” and use lesser quality woods and finishes.
- **What types of woods are used.** The rarer the tone woods used, the more expensive the instrument will be. Several entry-level acoustic and electric guitars are made with laminated wood, which is a nice name for plywood! Obviously, a guitar made with laminated wood is intended to last a long time, but the sound quality will not compare to an instrument made of solid wood construction.
- **Type of construction.** With electric guitars, it is much more affordable to manufacture a “bolt-on neck” model than a “set-neck” or “neck-through” construction.
 - A **bolt-on neck** is just that - the neck of the guitar is held to the body in a recessed cavity and screwed into place. You can see the screw heads when you flip the guitar over. The Fender Stratocaster® and Telecaster® are perfect examples of this

type of construction. This is not a lesser quality instrument, just a more affordable way of manufacturing one.

- A **set-neck** model is a guitar that has the neck glued into a recessed cavity. The Gibson Les Paul® is a perfect example of this type of construction. It is theorized that this type of guitar “sustains” notes better/longer because the guitar is connected with no gaps or areas where vibration can be lost.
 - Most Acoustic guitars, regardless of their country of origin, are made in this manner.
- A **neck-through** model is a guitar in which the neck and center part of the body are one piece of wood. The American made Jackson Soloist® is a great example of this type of construction. Following along with the set-neck theory, this construction type is considered to have the best sustain characteristics, as the entire spine of the instrument is one piece of wood. You can see that this type of construction would require a considerable amount of workmanship and quality, hence the higher cost of the product.

- Here are a few examples of **Intangible** values added to a guitar:

- **Name Brand.** Yes, you can and will pay more for a popular name brand compared to a similar model with a lesser-known brand (Fender or Gibson vs. Cort or Stagg). The funny part is that when looking at a guitar made in most Asian countries, many of the guitars are made in the same factories, with the same parts, finishes and by the same people. They just have a different label put on them when the guitar is finished.
 - Don't be fooled by a logo or name brand. Many secondary brand guitars are “as good or better” than their Asian made counterparts. Play the guitar, test the instrument and let your fingers and ears decide!
- **Popular models played by popular musical artists** Certain body shapes are synonymous with a specific artist, for example Eric Clapton plays a Fender Stratocaster®, and Slash plays a Gibson Les Paul®. These specific models may cost more based purely on supply vs. demand economics. This is also the reason that many secondary name brands have models that look almost identical to the products listed above. Some are so close that from ten feet away, it is very hard to tell one from the other.
- **History of a specific model or year.** Like fine wines, guitars have “Vintage” years that are sought after by collectors and guitarists alike. Many of the specific years/models have something to do with an event in the history of that company or name brand. As an example, Fender guitars made before 1965 have additional value as these are considered “pre-CBS” instruments (very early in 1965, Leo Fender sold the Fender company to CBS, hence the moniker of Pre-CBS).

With any vintage instrument, there are many factors that will go into the valuation of that specific guitar. We always suggest getting an

appraisal on any vintage guitar/amp that you are considering so you can be sure you are getting what you are paying for.

Q: Why are there so many shapes and colors? Does the body shape effect the sound of the instrument?

A: Simply put, the guitar can be considered a piece of art, or an extension of one's inner creativity. This is essentially the reason for all of the different shapes and colors. The finish of a guitar has very little effect on the overall tone, although some would argue this point. The shape of the guitar has a similar effect on the tone of the instrument: Little to none! Choose the shape and color that best fits your needs and your personality. If it inspires you to play, you will get better and want to play more! Pretty cool, huh?

Q: My beginner is young or of small size. Is there a smaller size guitar that would fit them better?

A: Yes, but be careful when looking at purchasing a ½ or ¾ sized guitar. Many of these instruments are more of a toy than an instrument and can be difficult to play and keep in tune. It can be very discouraging for a beginner to play an instrument that cannot or will not play correctly.

Music Go Round does carry smaller size guitars, but we choose specific models based on their quality and ability to be an instrument. These will cost more than the small size guitars you see in the "Big Box" retailers, but again, we sell instruments, not toys.

Q: What are some key factors I should look for that will tell me if a guitar is a quality instrument?

A: Music Go Round buys and sells 1000's of guitars every month, so we have a vast knowledge when it comes to indentifying a quality instrument!

Here are a few things we look for when purchasing an instrument:

- **Physical condition.** Is the body and finish clean and free of major dings, dents or cracks? Is the neck pocket a tight fit? Is the neck straight without twist or warping? Are there any small stress fractures between the tuning machines? Are the frets sharp on your hands as you slide your hand up and down the neck? Does the instrument/case smell funky? Was it potentially exposed to water or other elements (which would greatly effect the longevity of the instrument and electronics)?
- **Electronics.** Are the electronics in perfect working condition? Are the pots clean and free moving? Are the switches and jacks operating correctly?
- **Adjustability.** Is the action (height of the strings off the fret board) of the guitar set up correctly? Is the truss rod free and moveable? Are there any loose parts or adjustments on the instrument?
- **Tone.** When we play the guitar, does is sound right? Is there an issue with the bracing (acoustic) or tone (electric)? Does the instrument make odd noises or buzzes when played?

Q: Which guitar strings are right for me?

A: Guitar strings come in a variety of thicknesses or gauges typically defined by a size moniker of Extra-light, Light, Medium, Medium-Heavy or Heavy.

The lighter the gauge of the string, the thinner the string is and hence, the easier to bend them while playing. Conversely, a heavier gauge string may be harder to bend and harder on your fingers, but will sustain longer and supply more “tone” (a subjective term used to define how good an instrument sounds).

Most guitars will come from the factory with light gauge strings on them. Music Go Round typically re-strings our used guitars with light gauge strings as well.

While the gauge is subjective to the player, most players play Light or Medium gauged strings. Music Go Round carries a wide variety of brands and gauges in our stores.

Q: What accessories will I need to complete my instrument purchase?

A: We have a complete list of products and accessories to make sure you get started on the right foot!

Q: Should I take lessons?

A: YES...YES...did I say YES? We always suggest taking lessons from a qualified educator (like the one's you'll find at Music Go Round). Their input and instruction will ensure good habits and rapidly improve your learning curve, which will make you want to play more and more!

Q: So which guitar is right for me?

A: This is a very subjective question and there are a lot of factors that will influence your purchase:

- **How much can you afford?** Keep in mind that there may be additional products you will need to complete your instrument purchase. You may need an amp, case, cables and many other accessories. Music Go Round is extremely “value-focused” and can surely find a quality instrument package to fit your budget
- **What features do you want your instrument to have?** Pickups, locking bridges, pickup selectors, tuning machines, fret board materials, woods and finishes all have an influence on the playability or tone of an instrument. Make sure you know what features you want on your instrument to narrow your decisions! Don't worry, our gear experts can help identify specific instruments that have what you need.
- **Go with your gut!** If it looks good to you, feels good to you and sounds good to you, then you may have already answered your own question. The best guitar for you is the one you think is best, and we will help you find it!