

## GETTING STARTED WITH GUITAR

by Christopher Lepp



### Taking Your First Steps Toward Becoming a Successful Guitarist

#### How Do You Learn To Play The Guitar?

People always tell me that they wish they could play the guitar. I smile and tell them it is a great experience and you'll probably play for the rest of your life. You will play at Christmas, around the campfire, or when you get together to jam with friends. Some of the best experiences in my life have been with a guitar in my hands.

In my experience, the best way to start learning is with private lessons. Private lessons will accelerate the learning process. There is no substitute for a good guitar teacher. A teacher can help guide you with feedback and tips on how to quickly become a better player. YouTube tutorials are fun but new players will benefit greatly from an experienced teacher.

#### Selecting Your First Guitar

My first guitar was a canary yellow Fender Stratocaster copy that came with a small practice amp. I was

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inspired by Brian May of Queen and could not wait to plug in and rock out.

Your first guitar might be an electric or an acoustic. It really depends on what kind of music you are interested in playing. Do you like screaming guitar solos or want to sing and play? When you come into the store, we will ask you some questions about the style of music you like and what you want to play. It is about finding the right guitar for you.

## Guitar Size and Comfort

Having a guitar that's comfortable to play is important when selecting your first guitar. You want to find a guitar that is the right size for you and has a lower action. The action is the height of the strings above the neck of the guitar. If you are just starting out, we can help you find a guitar that will feel good to play and fit your style. For children, a 1/2 or 3/4 sized guitar can be a great option.

## Choosing Between a New or Used Guitar

I recommend the purchase of a new guitar for a beginning player. You can get a solid guitar for \$300 to \$400. We look at every guitar that goes out on the floor. It will be set up and ready to play. This way, you know you are getting a quality instrument. You need a guitar that feels good and that you are excited to play. As a new player, you might miss something on a used instrument and end up with a guitar that is hard to play. A good guitar helps you stick with it and accomplish your goals.

## Recommended Guitar Models

When you are ready to buy your first guitar, it is time to try out a few different models. Come in and talk to our staff and ask plenty of questions. White House of Music is a unique buying experience. I enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and it's a great place to really hear the instrument you are buying. Like I mentioned earlier, \$300 to \$400 is a good starting point. However, we have some lower-priced guitars that sound good as well.

There are many types of guitars out there and some are built with a genre of music in mind. An acoustic with steel string lends itself to folk and rock n' roll. An acoustic with nylon strings works well with classical and flamenco styles.

Starter packs are also a good choice for the beginner. They include the guitar and all accessories needed to get up and running. Many of the items that you will find in a starter pack include:

- The Guitar: the most important item.

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- Guitar Practice Amp: a must for an electric guitar.
- Guitar Strap
- Extra Strings: you will break a lot of strings in the beginning.
- Some Basic Lessons, CD/DVD, or online access.
- Picks

### **Entry Level Guitar: \$150-\$400**

A good beginner guitar falls into this category. Some quality models include the Fender Squier and the Yamaha Pacifica. These electric guitar models come in a variety of styles, colors, and configurations.

The Cordoba C5 is an excellent starter guitar for those interested in classical guitar. For \$300-\$400, you can get an instrument that really sings. The C5 is a great guitar at a fantastic price.

### **Mid-Level: \$500-\$1,000**

In this category, you will find a more finely-crafted guitar. This means a better feel to the instrument. A higher-end finish and a higher grade of wood can give you a cleaner, more refined sound. Electric guitars will tend to have higher-end electronics as well. In my opinion, these guitars produce a more “alive” sound.

### **Professional Grade: \$1,000+**

Acoustic guitars in this category will feature all-wood construction. Solid wood tops, backs, and sides are a staple in this range. An all-wood guitar will sound better as you play it and can even sound sweeter over time.

Electric guitars use high-quality wood and component selection to bring your guitar sound to life. Pick-ups (a pick-up picks up the sound of your guitar so it can be amplified) in these guitars are high-quality and can produce a better overall sound.

## **Lessons and Practice For The Beginning Guitarist**

After purchasing your first guitar, the next step is to find a guitar teacher. Our lesson coordinators at White House of Music will pair you with a teacher that fits your style and lesson goals.

Initial lessons will vary depending on what type of guitar and style you prefer. Learning to read music is important if you plan on studying classical guitar. Practicing basic chords and proper hand positioning are some of the first things you’ll tackle as a beginning guitarist. Once you have mastered the basics, lessons will gradually place emphasis on mental progression, including music theory, technique, and improving

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listening skills.

I recommend students practice a minimum of 20-minutes every day. Short but frequent practice sessions will be much more effective than long sessions once a week.

## Have Any Questions? Stop By Your Local White House of Music Store!

If you have any questions regarding guitar selection, play style, or lesson opportunities, stop by and see us at the White House of Music. With 4 locations in [Waukesha](#), [Brookfield](#), [Watertown](#), and [West Bend](#), we are always more than happy to provide any resources you might need to Make Music For Life!

## REQUEST LESSONS

Fill out this form to be paired with a teacher that fits your instrument and scheduling needs!

[Request Lessons Now](#)

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