

# Buying Your First Guitar



For the beginner or novice, the question of “What style of guitar should I buy” is a common one. There’s no easy answer, but probably the question you should ask is “what sort of music do I want to play?”

Although the **steel strung acoustic guitar** is commonly associated with folk music or softer style of contemporary music, you can also hear them in rock, blues, country and even metal. This style of guitar is extremely versatile, comes in a variety of shapes and sizes and is probably the most common starter instrument. Steel strings can be hard on the fingers for a beginner so a good set-up is important so that the playability is good.

The **nylon strung classical guitar** at first sight may look similar to the steel strung acoustic but has some distinct differences. Firstly it’s much quieter mainly due to the lower tension nylon strings and it has a flat wider fretboard. Ideally suited to classical music it can also be heard in jazz, folk and pop. It’s a common starter guitar and can be bought in  $\frac{3}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  size for smaller players. Nylon strings are easier on the fingers for a beginner though the wider fretboard can be awkward for smaller hands. Less versatile than steel strung guitar it is still a common first purchase.

Both steel strung and nylon string acoustics can be purchased in “**electro-acoustic**” form fitted with an undersaddle pickup and some form of EQ (tone control). This enables you to plug into a standard guitar amplifier for more volume and also enables the use of effects pedals. There is also a good range of “thinline” electro models which can be easier to handle than full depth bodies. If possible purchase a solid top model for better tone, sustain and volume.

Most **electric guitars** are solid bodied and so have very limited volume without an amplifier. In general they are easier to play - having greater adjustment of string height and intonation, generally using light gauge strings and giving you a range of sounds to choose from when used with an amp. You will hear electric guitar played in lots of styles and types of music and it’s suited to both rhythm and lead guitar styles.

Think about the music you like and want to play and choose an appropriate instrument. If you like rock, metal or indie choose an electric. If you like singer songwriter or folk choose a steel strung acoustic. If your interest is more classical inclined then choose a nylon strung classical. We think the electric guitar is easiest for the beginner - it’s smaller, easier to hold strings down, has a thinner neck, but is generally more expensive and needs an amplifier. Acoustics will take a bit more persistence to master initially.



Don't necessarily go for the cheapest instrument. There are some poor quality instruments out there which are pretty much unplayable and could prevent you from ever learning guitar. In our opinion something in the region of £70-£100 should give you a reasonable instrument and until you are sure that you are going to become a committed player don't spend fortunes. We reckon only 1 in 3 beginners make it past the first 3 months of playing!

**Don't be afraid to ask for help and advice.** Guitarists are generally a friendly bunch and usually interested in talking with other guitarists no matter what level of player you are. And don't forget - we're here to offer good advice on your purchase. Just phone us on 01630 685187.

We also offer a no quibble 7 day returns policy. Simply return your purchase in 'as new' condition and we will issue a full refund of the purchase price.

