

# Lesson #1

# ABOUT THIS COURSE

## Classical Guitar Pro

with Brandon Acker

**Welcome to Classical Guitar Pro!** If I have one goal, it is to get you to fall in love with the classical guitar as I have. We're going to accomplish that goal with 12 easy-to-follow modules. Each module consists of a series of videos on a similar topic. You'll go through each video in order and only watch the next video if you have a firm grasp of the content in the videos up to that point. Think of it as a video game: You have to beat level one to advance to level two.

Along the way, you'll learn many famous classical guitar standards and some of my favorite exercises. We'll also discuss how to read music in standard notation, learn music theory, and how to practice. By the end of the course (about six hours), you'll have received an education equivalent to roughly 6 months to a year of private lessons.

We will then celebrate your new skill in a simulated recital! I will guide you through your first concert in a beautiful recital hall and will offer my personal strategy on preparing for concerts and how to conquer stage fright.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

- Watch each video in order even if you think you understand the material taught in that video.
- Use the gear icon in the bottom right to speed up or slow down videos to match your pace.
- After watching a video, you will complete a quiz on the topics discussed in the videos (located just below each video).
- Some videos will have a downloadable PDF containing music, lesson summaries, and extra exercises. Please complete these before proceeding to the next video.
- Do not progress to the next video unless you feel confident that you have a firm grasp on the material covered in the video you've just watched. As the course progresses, you'll find you'll need more and more time between each video. This is normal and is to be expected. If you find a particular piece or exercise difficult, I recommend taking a few hours to practice that material before moving on. If you cannot successfully play the music in Lesson #4, it will be impossible for you to play the music in Lesson #12. Please go at your own pace and use the gear icon to slow things down as needed.
- Some videos contain downloadable MP3s. In these MP3s, I play the pieces at different speeds and I recommend you play along with these tracks to aid your practice.

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED FOR THIS COURSE:

\*Links are attached to purchase my recommended items. These are affiliate links and if you use them, at no cost to you, I will make a small percentage for referring you to the products.\*

### A Guitar

This is a **classical guitar** course and therefore the most appropriate instrument to use is a nylon-strung classical guitar. This is a six-string acoustic instrument.

**My recommendation for a starter guitar:** <https://amzn.to/3hkbs06>

**A cheaper option:** <https://amzn.to/3HpIPAG>



A **flamenco guitar** is almost identical and is a fine substitute because it has a similar sound and uses nylon strings.



If you only have access to a **steel-string acoustic guitar**, this will also work but it is not the ideal sound for classical guitar. The steel strings create a brighter, more metallic sound while nylon strings give a warmer, more harp-like sound. Please do not put nylon strings on a steel-string guitar or vice versa. This will harm the instrument.



If you only have access to an **electric guitar**, you can still take this course, learn the pieces, how to read music, and play the recital. However, you will be missing out on the right feel and touch of an acoustic nylon-strung guitar. Please do still take the course and learn from it and then, if possible, upgrade to a classical guitar when possible.



## Choosing the right guitar

There has never been an easier time to play classical guitar since it is now possible to easily order well-made instruments online. While I understand that you must purchase what you can afford, in my experience classical guitars below \$250 USD are generally not great guitars and they can have problems that could inhibit your progress. I'd recommend a solid top classical guitar with nylon strings. It doesn't matter whether the wood on the top is spruce or cedar as long as it is solid. Which wood you choose depends on which sound you prefer. I prefer spruce and others prefer cedar. Spruce makes a brighter sound and cedar makes a darker sound.

Some brands are now making classical guitars in factories for very affordable prices that are easy to play and have a nice sound. I'd recommend Cordoba guitars. The higher the model, the better the guitar. In my experience, you can get a decent guitar if you spend over \$500 USD. Remember you can always upgrade later if you aren't ready to make a big purchase. Professional level classical guitars start around \$2,000 USD and can go up to \$10,000 USD.

It is very important that the guitar you are playing has a good action. The action is the height of the strings above the fretboard. If the strings are too high, the guitar is impossible to play. The strings should be 2-4mm above the frets at the 12th fret. If they are lower, the strings might buzz and if they are higher, the guitar will be too difficult to play. For under \$100, you can take your guitar to a repair shop and have the strings lowered. This is called a setup and I highly recommend you get one if you suspect you might have a problem with your action.

It is also important that you choose the right-sized guitar for you. If you are buying a guitar for a 6-year-old, a full-sized guitar (650mm scale) is not appropriate. Today, it is easy to find 1/4, 1/2, and 3/4 sized guitars. Find a guitar that fits the person and get a new guitar when they outgrow that guitar. For slightly shorter adults, a 7/8ths sized guitar is often a good idea.

**My recommended affordable 7/8ths guitar:** <https://amzn.to/3HnSrM7>



## Time to practice

It is essential that you set aside time between videos to complete the quizzes, PDF exercises, and practice. If you take the whole course in six hours, I can guarantee that the simulated recital will be too difficult and you won't enjoy it. Remember that as the course progresses, you'll need more and more time between each video to incorporate the new information into your playing.

While this course is roughly six hours long, to complete the course well, the fastest completion time should be around a week (about an hour a day). For others, the course might take you several weeks or months. There is no right or wrong pace since we all learn at different speeds and those with some musical background will progress faster than those with none. The goal here is to love the guitar and develop a new enjoyable skill, not to speed through the course to say you did it.

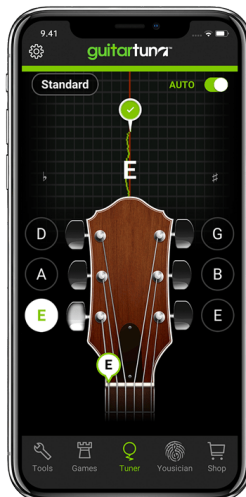
Remember that you have the course for a lifetime. My goal here was to pack in as much information as you might normally learn in six months to a year of weekly private lessons. While it is great to have all of the information compressed into six hours, your body and mind need time to absorb that information and encode it into your muscle memory. To do that, you need practice!

**The previous items (a guitar and time to practice) are necessary to take this course while the following items, while strongly recommended, are optional.**

## A Tuning App

As I'll explain later in Lesson #1, beginners should tune using a digital tuner or app. This ensures you can easily get in tune and start playing. Unless you have a strong musical background, tuning using your ear is a step I'd recommend saving for the intermediate level.

"Guitar Tuna" is a free and easy-to-use app that is available for Android and iPhone.



## A Metronome

As we'll learn in this course, any good musician must use a metronome to practice. Metronomes can be downloaded for free on a smartphone. My preferred app is Pro Metronome (image below). You can also purchase a digital tuner or a mechanical metronome if you prefer.



Digital metronome



Mechanical metronome: <https://amzn.to/3vue8Yy>

## Guitar Support

As we'll learn in our video lesson on holding the guitar here in Lesson #1, there are various support devices one can use to hold the classical guitar. The new two most popular options are a footstool or a support device like the ErgoPlay.

**My recommendation is to get the ErgoPlay:** <https://amzn.to/33WxZV3>

**Footstool:** <https://amzn.to/3HCXbhn>



Footstool



Ergoplay troster model

## Nail file

In lesson #3, we'll discuss shaping the right-hand nails. To do this we must use a file. In that lesson, we'll go into great detail about different types of files. For now, I'd recommend thinking about whether you are able to grow your nails long. If so, please do not cut the nails on your plucking hand for the next several weeks. The best nail files are glass nail files like the one in the picture below.

**The file I use:** <https://amzn.to/3K2IHKq>



## Music Stand

It is best to print out the PDFs of sheet music in this course. This way you can write on the music and circle problem spots. To hold your music, I'd recommend purchasing a music stand. These are often quite cheap. For classical guitar, I prefer low wire stands as they don't block the instrument when performing.

**An affordable music stand:** <https://amzn.to/3lqzwl>

**The music stand I use:** <https://amzn.to/3M62ppi>

