

Lesson #1

GETTING TO KNOW THE CLASSICAL GUITAR

Classical Guitar Pro
with Brandon Acker

The classical guitar is an instrument that was incredibly popular in 19th century Europe but today is largely in the shadow of more mainstream styles of guitar playing. For me as a modern electric guitar player in a rock/metal band, I didn't even know it existed and I'll never forget the moment I heard a John Williams CD of Spanish music. The first track I heard was *Recuerdos de la Alhambra* by Francisco Tárrega and I was emotionally moved and technically so interested in classical guitar from that point on. To my delight, I discovered the classical guitar had a rich tradition of music from 19th century Europe and well as a large body of new works written in the last century in countries around the world.

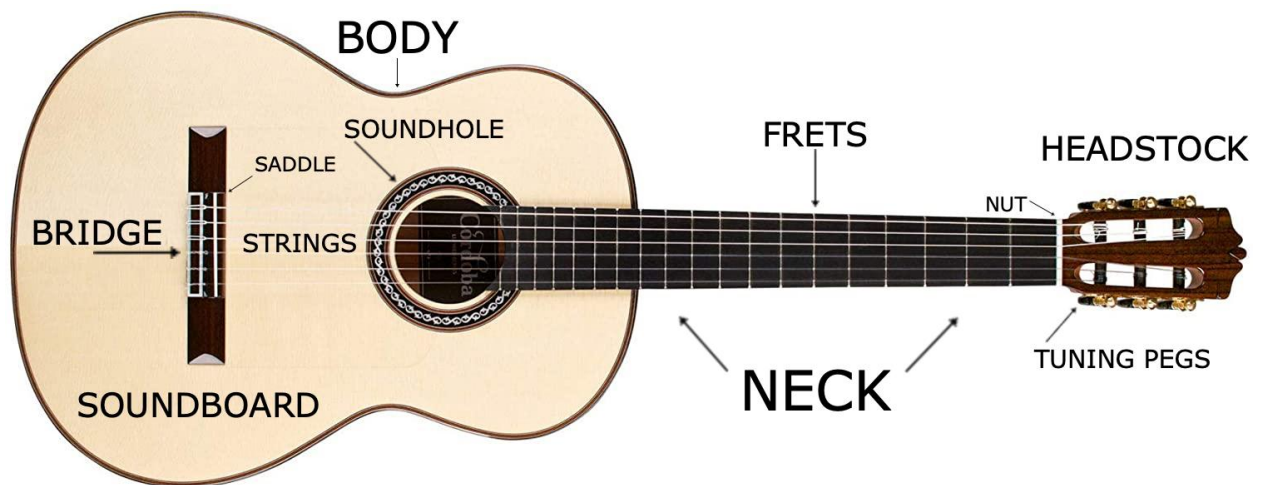
WHAT IS A CLASSICAL GUITAR?

The classical guitar as we know it today, an hourglass-shaped six single-string acoustic instrument that is plucked, came into existence around 1800 in Europe. However, it wasn't invented out of thin air. Rather it comes from a long line of guitar-like instruments dating back to at least the 15th century. Before that, the origins are difficult to trace. Plucked instruments which are similar to the guitar date back as far as 3,500 B.C.E in Mesopotamia. The traceable origins of the guitar are as follows: The Renaissance guitar turned into the Baroque guitar, which turns into the early 19th century Classical guitar, and then during the Romantic period, around 1850, a guitar maker named Torres codified the modern guitar which has changed very little since. This is the instrument we call the "Classical guitar" today. Of course, the guitar kept evolving and today we have guitars in all shapes and sizes, electric and acoustic.

Images of each point of evolution towards the modern Classical guitar:



PARTS OF THE GUITAR



HUMIDIFICATION

It is very important to protect your instrument by humidifying or dehumidifying to prevent cracking or mold. I highly recommend watching my full video about humidifying your guitar for more details: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rDzUDWWGnl>



An in-case humidification kit I use by D'addario: <https://amzn.to/3lpNcNt>

STRINGS

Classical guitar strings are relatively affordable (10-16 USD). You should change your strings when the bass strings (the strings wound with metal) become rusty, discolored, or sound dull. The treble strings (the three strings closest to the ground which are normally made of nylon) can stay on for over a year unless they start to go false. Going false means they cannot tune properly.

Strings come in a variety of “tensions.” Normal tension is a safe way to start playing guitar since it isn't extreme either way. I prefer light tension whereas most guitarists I know like high tension. Tension refers to how taught or loose the string is. This simply comes down to preference in the end. There is no such thing as “the best” tension.

The strings I'm using now: <https://amzn.to/3ta7Jix>