The Beginner's Guide to Restringing Your Guitar

What you need:

1. Classical or Acoustic Guitar Strings
2. Electronic Tuner
3. Wire cutters or Guitar Tool

Recommended:

1. Peg Winder
2. Cleaning Cloth
3. Guitar Cleaner/Polish
4. Fretboard Conditioner
5. Pencil (for lubrication at nut)
6. Guitar Headstand
7. towel or other cloth (to protect the guitar)

ACOUSTIC GUITAR RESTRINGING

Preparing the Guitar

To begin, setup on a nice flat surface such as a table or counter. Put down a towel or other cloth, to prevent scratches, and center your guitar's body on this. If you have a headstand, set it up under the guitars neck for added stability. You are now ready to start.

Start by removing the strings from your guitar. Loosen each string using you peg winder or by hand, and remove the bridge pin. Many peg winders incorporate a bridge pin puller on the handle. Slip the notch of the pin puller over the pin and pull upward to remove the pin. Alternatively you can use a pair of wire cutters. Gently place the wire cutters, blade side down, with the bridge pin between. Gently squeeze to grip below the head of the bridge pin and carefully pull upward making sure to not to let the clippers touch the wood of the bridge to prevent scratches. On the head simply unwind the string. Be careful as the end of theses strings are sharp and can pierce the skin. If there is a knot when unraveling simply take the long end of the string and apply pressure feeding it into the knot.

Now it is your chance to deep clean your instrument. Pull out your guitar polish and polish any finished wood. Make sure to not get

polish on the fretboard or bridge of the guitar, that is what your  Conditioner is for.

Apply a dab of Conditioner between each fret on the fretboard and use your rag to spread it into the wood. For the bridge, simply wipe it down with your now oiled rag. If the saddle comes out somewhere in the process, do not worry. Take a close look at it and find the thinker end. This side sits with the wound strings. It is not held in place so simply orient it and slip it back into the slot.

> *"There are many products on the market. Many people use Lemon oil for this job, but you have to apply it carefully with this because it can damage the finish on some guitars. The two products I prefer are Music Nomad MN105 F-ONE Fretboard Oil Cleaner and Conditioner (my first choice because it's made without petroleum products) and Planet Waves Hydrate Fingerboard Conditioner (equally effective)."*
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> ~ Tomas

Finally apply a little graphite to the nut. Take your pencil and run it through each string groove a few times to apply a light dusting. This helps the string slip when tuning.

Getting The Strings Back On



Let's start with the low E string. Open your pack of strings and locate it. It is the thickest wound string. Gently unwrap it, trying not to bend or

kink the string in the process. Standing at the bottom of your guitar and facing the head, insert the ball end of the string in the furthest left hole on the bridge. Take a bridge pin, and gently press it into the hole tugging gently on the string to make sure it is seated not on the bottom of the pin but between the pin and the guitar, under the bridge.

If, during any of the following steps, the pin starts coming out simply use your thumb to press it back in. If the problem persists it could mean the ball is stuck at the end of the pin and requires reseating or there is something off about your guitar and you should bring it into a guitar shop.

Do not force the bridge pins in!

Your thumb applies plenty of force and it is possible to crack the bridge or otherwise damage your guitar if extra force is used.

Now For The Other End

Rotate the first tuning peg, on that side, so it is in line with the neck of the guitar and feed the string through it so it pulls tight. Next grab the string at the bridge and pull it back one and a half frets to generate some slack to

work with. Take hold of the string near the nut. Wrap it around the outside of the tuning peg and around to the inside. Press it down against the headstock and bend the other trailing end sharply up over the loop you just made. Now, tighten the string while holding it down to force the wrap to wind down the tuning peg towards the guitar. This will help the string hold against itself and prevent slipping. Make sure the tail end is bent straight up and clip if off.

The A, D, and G strings are almost the same. When putting on the unwound strings, however, there is a new twist… quite literally in this case. Feed the string through the peg but this time, when adding slack, pull it back to the second fret. Now, wrap it over the tuner from the outside just like before but wrap it around a second time before winding it down the peg. These strings are more prone to slipping and the second wrap helps prevent this. Again, wind the string tight, bend the tail sharply up, and clip it off.

Finishing Up

Now it is time to get these strings in tune. Let us start with a word of caution though. Steel strings are under a lot of tension and the bridge pins can come out or the string may snap. This can lead to the string coming

loose with a lot of force. Make sure to position your body to the side of the guitar to prevent injury. Keeping this in mind, bring your guitar up to tune.

Do note that acoustic strings do stretch and that your guitar will require more tuning for the next few days while the strings settle in.

Now, just put all your tools away and dispose of your old strings according to your local waste management guidelines.

And, of course, enjoy bright sound of these new strings.

CLASSICAL GUITAR RESTRINGING

Restringing a nylon string guitar is simple but has its own set of challenges.

This simple guide should help make restringing easy.

Preparing the Guitar

Start by finding yourself a flat surface and lay down your guitar. Make sure to place a towel or other cloth under the body of your guitar to prevent scratches. Then, setup your headstand if you have one and place under the neck of your guitar. Now, you are ready to start.

To begin, loosen all the strings using your peg winder, or failing that, by hand. Then snip the strings somewhere in the middle with your wire cutter. Remove the remainder from the bridge by bringing the cut end towards the bottom of the guitar and pulling on the revealed loop just above the bridge. Simply unwrap the strings from the guitar's head, untieing any knots from the last restring. Adjust the tuners so the holes are facing up to make things easier later.

Now it is your chance to deep clean your instrument. Pull out your guitar polish and polish any finished wood. Make sure to not get polish on the fretboard or bridge of the guitar... that is what your Conditioner is for.

Next apply a dab of Fretboard Conditioner between each fret on the fretboard and use your rag to spread it into the wood. For the bridge simply wipe it down with your now oiled rag. If the Saddle comes out somewhere in the process do not worry. Take a close look at it and find the thicker end. This side sits with the wound strings. It is not held in place so simply orient it and slip it back into the slot.

Finally, it helps to apply a little graphite (from a pencil) to the nut. Take your pencil and run it through each string groove a few times to apply a light dusting. This helps the string slip when tuning.

The New Guitar Strings

Open your pack of new classical guitar strings and select the high E string. It is the thinnest unwound string and is transparent. Orientating from the bottom of the guitar, feed the string backward, towards you, through the furthest right hole in the bridge. Feed through enough string to have about 3 inches of string sticking out of the bottom of the bridge.

Take the bottom end and wrap it under the the rest of the string from the right to the left side. Feed the end through the resulting loop three times and, while holding onto the remainder below the bridge, pull the upper end tight. This should create a nice wrap. Make sure that the remainder turns to the right and that the last wrap rests below the bottom edge of the bridge.

Up at the head, feed the string through the bottom tuner hole on the right. Bring the end back over the top of that tuner and wrap it under the string. This creates a small loop on the tuner. Place your hand under the string on the fretboard and use it to create a hand's width of slack. Now put that top end through the loop on the tuner and pull tight creating a simple knot. Use your peg winder to tighten down the string making sure the string winds towards the outside of the head. Congratulations you have done the hardest string.

For the following two strings the process is much the same. For the B and then the G string feed them through the bridge making sure it goes under the remainder from the previous string(s). This will cause the remainder of each string to be incorporated into each new knot. Repeat the process of tying a knot with 3 loops under making sure the remainder is headed towards the left. On the head continue to tie knots and make sure

when winding to wrap the second string in the middle of its peg and the third towards the left of its tuner. This prevents the strings from touching each other and creating a buzzing noise when you play.

The remaining strings are the wound strings. For these we're only going to use two wraps on the bridge while still making sure to get the last rap below the bottom of the bridge. Include the remainders from each string into these knots. On the head make sure when winding to avoid crossing strings by winding them away from each other.

The Wrap Up

Now that you have all the strings attached it is time to stretch them. Nylon strings stretch a good deal. Start by tightening each string enough that it's no longer loose. Next take each string individually and pull it away from the head to stretch out the winding. Then slip your fingers under the string and place your thumb on the top side of the string above your hand. Press down with your thumb while pulling up with your fingers to stretch the string. Repeat a few times up and down each string.

Next pull all the string ends on the head to make sure they are tight and clip off the remainder. Also clip the bottom ends on the left side of the bridge. This prevents the ends from buzzing while playing.

Now It's Time to Tune

Pull out your tuner and get each string roughly in tune. You will probably notice the strings stretching so don't try to get it perfect. Simply add enough tension to encourage the strings to stretch. I recommend letting the strings stretch like this for 24 hours or so before retuning and and playing, but if you are willing to re-tune often feel free to play.

Congratulations you are finished.

Recommended Resources:

10 Things You Should Know About Choosing the Best Guitar Strings

What is the best guitar tuner for Acoustic Guitar?

"This article is written by Stefan Warmuth and edited by Tomas Michaud

Guitar Restring Videos by Gary Brawer world renowned guitar expert from San Francisco, CA."