



Beginning Guitar Guide

Choosing Your First Guitar

It is important to choose a guitar that is the appropriate size for a beginning guitarist. Learning with the correct size instrument will make learning easier because the guitar will be more comfortable to both hold and play. As you begin to search for the right fit, it is also important to first consider the style of guitar.

What style?

- Classical (or nylon-string guitar)
 - Generally the best option for children and most beginners as the nylon strings are much more gentle on the fingers compared to the steel strings of a traditional acoustic or electric guitar. These are great for classical, folk, and flamenco styles. Also, because these are almost identical to an acoustic guitar, they do not require amplification. Lastly, these also have the most options in sizes making it easy and affordable when needing to buy a guitar in a smaller size.
- Acoustic
 - Acoustic guitars are another popular option and are great for their versatility. They can be played anywhere without needing amplification and are great for making music with friends. These are perfect for those interested in rock, folk, and blues. They do come in smaller sizes however options are generally limited to full or 3/4 size.
- Electric
 - Electric guitars have a lot of appeal, especially when many students have been inspired to play from listening to their favorite rock band or even dreamed of playing in one themselves. These are perfect for students interested in rock, blues, metal, and jazz. These tend to be rather quiet unless amplified (which also means additional investment) and can sometimes be difficult to hold. Finding smaller sizes of good quality will be quite a challenge and, because of that, these should generally be limited to adults and children age 10 & up.

What size?

- 1/4 size guitar (ages 5-7)
- 1/2 size guitar (ages 6-8)
- 3/4 size guitar (ages 9-11)
- 4/4 or full size (ages 10 & up)

Beginning Guitar Guide (cont.)

These guidelines are merely recommendations. Adults and children alike come in various sizes. Some adults might find a 3/4 size guitar perfect for them, just like a full size guitar may fit a 9 year old. If you believe that you or your child are small for their age, perhaps a smaller guitar than what is recommended above would be better; alternatively, a larger student may need a bigger guitar. It is easiest to go to a local music store and ask the store's staff to help fit you for a guitar. Otherwise, try a few different sizes to see what's most comfortable. If a child already has a guitar that is currently too big for them, it is sometimes possible to work around it if absolutely necessary by adjusting how they hold the guitar and/or using a tool called a capo to temporarily shorten the length. A guitar that is too small should be avoided.

Guitar Recommendations

As you prepare to buy a guitar, it is important to be practical over convenient. While in today's world it can be very easy to order a guitar online through websites like Amazon, it is generally a safer choice to buy it from a local music store in case the guitar needs to be returned and/or replaced. This could happen if you discover you need a different size than what you expected or in case there is a defect in the manufacturing. It can be a hassle for some to return an item through an online retailer as opposed to driving to the local store. Otherwise, it is also easiest to go to the store to help determine the best size.