

Buying A Guitar.

I'm often asked about what to look for and what to avoid when buying a guitar, so I thought I'd write a short guide to help out. Basically you have three types of guitar to choose from; classical, acoustic and electric.

Classical.

Classical guitars have smaller bodies than acoustics, (generally speaking, there are some exceptions.) they also have a wider neck and are fitted with nylon strings. The wider neck makes fingering easier because you have a little bit more room, and the nylon strings sound more mellow and are easier on the finger tips. Don't try putting steel strings on a nylon string guitar, the added tension from the steel strings will damage the guitar's neck.



Acoustic

Acoustic guitars are usually bigger than classical, they have a narrower neck and are fitted with steel strings. Steel strings have the advantage of holding their tune better than nylon strings, but the disadvantage for a new guitarist is they are a little harder on your finger tips so it takes longer to get used to playing. Steel strings give a big bright tone.



Electric

Electric guitars are fitted with steel strings that are thinner than an acoustic guitar's strings, they are also fitted with pickups that "pick-up" the strings vibration and send the sound down a cable which is plugged into an amplifier. Electrics don't sound very loud when they're not amplified so you really do need to buy an amplifier when you buy an electric guitar. There are all sorts of different shapes and sizes of electric guitars, so ask around and do your research to see which type is going to suit you the best before you buy one.



What are my recommendations?

Classical guitars make great first guitars because it's easier on the fingers to start off with nylon strings, also they usually cost a little less than most acoustics and electrics.

Size is an important factor when picking out your guitar, too big or too small and you'll have more trouble playing. Most music shops carry 1/2 and 3/4 sized guitars, it's always best to go into the shop and ask for assistance in choosing the right size for you.

There are a few different makes of guitar for sale at the moment, but I still usually recommend Ashton as a good first guitar, they play well, are built tough to take the knocks and are reasonably priced. I also recommend getting a guitar tuner, learning how to tune your guitar really does make a difference.

As your budget increases so do your options, don't be afraid to ask questions and ask to try things out at the music shops.

Try to avoid TradeMe, there are many horrible guitars that are being sold to beginners that are unplayable.

In the end if all you want to play is electric or acoustic guitar then there's no reason not to start with an electric or acoustic, yes it will be a little bit more tricky than starting with a classical, but if you're playing the guitar you really like you're more likely to spend time practicing and improving in your playing.