



Cleaning

The polyester finish is best cleaned with a soft, damp cloth. Naphtha can also be used if needed to remove heavy grime but please use sparingly around the bridge and neck joint. I recommend Dr. Duck's Ax Wax or similar for biannual fingerboard and bridge application. I also heartily recommend the wonderful guitar polish and fingerboard oil sold online by luthier Bruce Petros. The Petros fingerboard oil can be used in place of Dr. Duck's Ax Wax for the fingerboard and bridge.

Humidity Control

By far, the most important thing you can do for your instrument is to keep it properly humidified. Both low and high relative humidity (RH) can completely destroy your instrument within a very short time. My guitars should be maintained within a RH range of 40% to 50%. Here is an important list of RH ranges that you should remember:

< 30%	-----	Very Bad -- Permanent Damage.
30% to 35%	-----	Bad -- The woods are shrinking and prolonged exposure can often cause damage.
35% to 40%	-----	Okay -- The lower end of this range might affect the guitar's playability.
40% to 50%	-----	Ideal
50% to 65%	-----	Okay -- The upper end of this range will begin to affect the action and playability.
65% to 80%	-----	Not good -- The action is too high and the woods are swelling.
> 80%	-----	Very Bad -- Permanent Damage.

Please Note: Most digital hygrometers on the market are within acceptable accuracy ranges but it is still important to make sure they are calibrated correctly. For example, it is not uncommon to find new hygrometers that read 8% or more outside the correct reading. The Caliber III hygrometer included with your guitar was carefully checked against my own hygrometers, which I calibrate twice per year. I have noticed that the readings of most digital hygrometers tend to drift over time. For this reason, I recommend that you send me your hygrometer once every year or two in order to verify its accuracy.

Miscellaneous Information

- I recommend light gauge strings in standard tuning and medium gauge strings for dropped tunings. However, I string my guitars with a light-medium gauge set from John Pearse called 710 New Mediums. These strings feature medium gauge strings for the E, b, and e while all the other strings are light gauge. This still keeps the overall string tension relatively low in standard tuning but provides the needed tension for most dropped tunings.
- I use unslotted bridge pins and a slotted bridge. This is done to prevent unnecessary wear on the bridge plate. When installing the strings, I like to position the ball end so that it rests upon the bridge plate in its widest orientation -- and then slightly pre-bend the string right before the location of the saddle. This pre-bend allows you to position the string in its slot and easily maintain the desired ball end orientation while you tighten the string. Following this tip is not necessary but over many decades can make a difference in the condition of the bridge plate.
- I carefully fit each bridge pin to each individual hole. If the pins get mixed up, you can easily reestablish the correct order with trial and error fitting -- this is quite easy to do and shouldn't take more than a minute. The bridge pins should fit snugly with light pressure. When restringing the instrument, just ensure a snug bridge pin fit. There is no need to push the pins in with much force or they will become difficult to remove. If you can't remove a tight-fitting pin, you can push and twist the pin up from inside the guitar but be very careful not to let the pin shoot into the air and land on the top. You can also purchase a bridge pin removing tool that will remove stuck pins without damaging the guitar.