

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 severely damage 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	<i>Permanent Damage</i>
30% to 35%	---	BAD	<i>The woods are shrinking and prolonged exposure may cause damage</i>
35% to 40%	---	OKAY	<i>The lower end of this range affects the action and playability</i>
40% to 50%	---	IDEAL	
50% to 60%	---	OKAY	<i>The upper end of this range affects the action and playability</i>
60% to 70%	---	BAD	<i>The woods are swelling and prolonged exposure may cause damage</i>
> 70%	---	VERY BAD	<i>Permanent Damage</i>

Please Note: Most digital hygrometers on the market are accurate enough when new but drift over time and should be replaced every 3 years unless you are able to recalibrate them. I have detailed hygrometer calibration instructions on my website. Please contact me if you have any questions at all about humidity control or hygrometers.

Cleaning & Maintenance

The high-gloss urethane finish is best cleaned with a dry or damp microfiber cloth. I recommend naphtha on a soft cotton cloth for the occasional fretboard cleaning and removal of heavy dirt/grime. Never apply a wax or protectant to the finish as most of the products available are not suitable for guitar use. For very light scratch removal and polishing, I recommend Meguiar's *M9 Mirror Glaze Swirl Remover 2.0* as it is gentle enough to be used on a yearly basis. Be careful to not apply polish right near the neck or bridge joint as it can get trapped at the joint line and look unsightly. For the fretboard and bridge, I recommend a high quality *boiled linseed oil* or StewMac's *Fretboard Finishing Oil* for annual or biennial application. Please note that I go to great lengths to apply an extremely thin finish on my guitars, especially on the soundboard. The use of aggressive polishes for scratch removal can ruin the finish if used improperly or too often. Please contact me before attempting anything beyond the basic cleaning and polishing of your guitar.

Miscellaneous Information

- ■ I recommend light gauge strings in standard tuning and medium gauge strings for dropped tunings. My guitars ship with a light-medium gauge string set which feature medium gauge strings for the E, b, and e. This keeps the overall string tension relatively low in standard tuning but provides the needed tension for most dropped tunings. I do not build my instruments to accept a full medium gauge string set in standard tuning. The instrument will certainly not implode but years of the added string tension will likely cause undesired amounts of soundboard deformation.
- ■ I use unslotted bridge pins and a slotted bridge. In order to protect the bridge plate from unnecessary wear, orient the guitar strings so that the hole in the metal ball end points towards the headstock.
- ■ Each bridge pin hole is carefully sized to fit a specific bridge pin. The bottom of each pin is color coded with D'Addario's color/gauge scheme — Gold (E), Red (A), Black (D), Green (G), Purple (B), Silver (e). When restringing the instrument, push the bridge pins in with very light finger pressure -- there is no need to push the pins in with much force or they will become difficult to remove.