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# Fret City Music

## Guitar / Bass Owners Manual

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## Introduction

Thanks for purchasing your new instrument from Fret City Music !

Your Instrument is a quality product, and like any instrument made from solid wood, it will be affected by changes in the environment such as temperature and humidity. As Seasons change, you may notice subtle differences in the neck adjustment of your guitar or Bass. Small variations during seasonal changes are normal and your instrument is fully adjustable to compensate for these changes. Your new guitar or bass will last you a lifetime with reasonable care and minimal maintenance. Inside this owner's manual, you will learn care and maintenance tips. We recommend you sit down and read this manual from cover to cover.

## Care and Maintenance

### Bodies

Your guitar or Bass Body is constructed from solid wood materials, and most are finished in gloss finish. Gloss finishes are easy to maintain and very durable. You can maintain the finish in a number of ways :

Periodically wipe down your instrument with a soft dry cloth to remove smudges. A soft polishing cloth or an old T-Shirt is great for this. You can buy special Guitar or Bass polish, but a good silicone free "Carnauba" Automobile Wax also works great on glossy Guitar finishes. In fact, most early electric guitars were actually finished using Automotive paints ! But please don't apply Car or Guitar wax to the Fretboard !

Note : The above does not apply to Basses and Guitars with Natural finishes such as Oiled Mahogany. Natural finishes can be cleaned and refreshed by applying Lemon Oil, Linseed Oil or Teak Oil. You can find Lemon Oil in your local supermarket. Teak

and Linseed oil can be found in your local Hardware Store.

Keep your instrument in it's case or gig-bag when not in use, this will prevent damage and pre-mature aging from temperature and humidity extremes and UV rays.

### Important : Humidity

Providing a proper environment for your instrument is an important part of guitar care and is your responsibility. Humidity levels of between 45% to 50% are required to prevent warping and cracking. When humidity levels fall below 40%, you will begin to notice various symptoms including warping, cracking, bumps, sight shrinkage of the Fretboard, and you will begin to feel fret-ends sticking out. Extreme low humidity levels can cause damage that is not covered by the warranty. This is NOT the fault of the guitar. Especially during the Winter months, make sure you monitor humidity and if required, use a room humidifier, or even an instrument humidifier (aka damp-it) available at your local music stores. Acoustic Guitars will be particularly affected by humidity changes because their wood is very thin. If you notice these symptoms please contact us. Some adjustments may be required to your Guitar using a truss rod tool (you can usually make these yourself), and thankfully many symptoms are usually temporary once you restore humidity to normal levels.

### Fretboards

If your Fretboard is made of Rosewood or a similar dark wood, your fretboard should be cleaned and oiled with a light application of Lemon Oil about once every six months. Lemon oil cleans the grime off your fretboard. If your Fretboard is "glossy" Maple, then wipe down the Fretboard with a soft damp cloth, Glass cleaner, or non-gumming polish.

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## Hardware

Every few months, make sure you check the hardware (screws, nuts, jack plates etc) on your guitar to make sure they are tight. A common thing that gets loose from time to time are the strap buttons on Electric Guitars and Basses. Make sure you tighten these regularly. This will prevent unnecessary damage to your Guitar or Bass should it come loose.

Here's an old Musician's Trick : If you find the strap button screw has become worn and loose, simply remove the screw and insert a toothpick and some white glue, then snap off the end of the toothpick. Screw the strap button back on – as good as new !! Don't let your strap button get loose or you risk both instrument and ego damage if your strap suddenly disconnects in the middle of a solo.

## Necks

Wipe the back of the neck regularly to remove grime and maintain the same as you would the body. The finish on the back of the neck may eventually get worn down through the years, and some players even remove the gloss finish with a fine sandpaper or steel wool to add to comfort and improve playability. This obviously voids the finish warranty however it is a matter of personal preference.

The headstock on some "Set-neck" Guitars and Basses is angled at a 20 degree angle, and under a lot of string tension. Be careful bumping the Headstock into walls, your Drummer, etc while you are playing. Your Guitar is robustly built, but a sufficient impact can damage or even crack a Headstock of your instrument. Again, keep in mind this is characteristic of all Set-Neck instruments costing thousands of dollars and yours is no exception to this rule. Treat your instrument with respect, you don't need to baby it, play it hard ... but don't do anything stupid. A good investment is a "Strap-Lock" kit for your instrument.

## Controls

Your Guitar or Bass has several controls depending on the type and model of instrument.

### Volume Control

This controls the volume of the output from your pickups to your Amplifier. Some Guitars / Basses have one or more volume controls.

### Tone Control

Removes "treble" frequencies from the sound going to your Amplifier. Believe it or not, this can be a very effective effect.

### Selector Switches

Switches allow you to select (or un-select) the pickup you want to hear. Another great effect tool !

### Active Controls

Some active instruments (ie those with a battery and built-in pre-amp) allow you to boost or cut frequencies. If you have a Bass with active electronics (you can tell this if you have a battery compartment on your Bass) then make sure you unplug your Bass after you are finished playing it. This deactivates the power and saves battery life.

### Action / Pickup Height Adjustments

Many factors will affect the action and intonation of your Guitar or Bass. Action refers to the overall string height of your instrument relative to the fretboard. Some players like a low action. Other players like the strings higher off the fretboard. There is

no "right" or "wrong" adjustment. It really depends on your own playing preferences.

### Measuring Action Height

Measure action height by measuring the distance between the bottom of the string and the top of the 12th fret. A great tool for this measurement is a 6 inch ruler, which is available from most hardware store and has 1/32 and 1/64 increments.

### Measuring Pickup Height

Pickup height is the distance between the top (highest point) on the pickup and the string (with the string depressed at the last Fret).

### Action Height Table

Guitar Model	Height Side Bass	Action Height Treble Side
J D Electric Guitars	5/64 "	4/64 "
J D Electric Basses	7/64 "	5/64 "

### Pickup Height Table (Gibson Style Guitars)

Guitar Model	Pickup Height Bridge Pickup	Pickup Height Neck Pickup
J D Deluxe Custom Series	1/16 "	3/32 "

### Pickup Height Table (Fender Style Guitars)

Guitar Model	Pickup Height Bass Side	Pickup Height Treble Side
J D Start-o-Tel Series	6/64	5/64 "
JD JungleMaster Series	6/64	5/64 "

Remember the measurements shown are starting points, you may want higher or lower action depending on your personal preferences. The string height can be easily adjusted by turning the adjusting screw on the top of each string saddle. Some saddles require small Allen keys for this adjustment. Allen Keys are cheaply available in most Dollar Stores. Pickup height can be adjusted using a small screwdriver.

### Intonation

Intonation is simply the adjustment of the string length (using the intonation adjustment screws on the bridge of your guitar). Intonation will usually stay the same provided you don't change string gauges. If you do change from the factory equipped strings, the intonation can be checked and adjusted as follows :

1. With an Electronic Guitar tuner, play an open "harmonic" string at the 12th fret and tune the string to its note.
2. With an Electronic Guitar tuner, play the same note at the 12th fret, however FRET the note – observe any difference +/- in the tuning meter.
3. If the note when fretted is sharp (+) then it means the distance between the bridge and the nut is too short. Solution : Move the string saddle back (in small increments) until the fretted note and the open note register about the same on your tuning meter.
4. If the note when fretted is flat (-) then it means the distance between the bridge and the nut is too long. Solution : Move the string saddle forward (in small increments) until the fretted note and the open note register about the same on your tuning meter.

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## Tuning Gears

Your Guitar / Bass is equipped with die-cast tuning gears. They are designed to provide accurate tuning. They do not require any maintenance or lubrication. Putting oil on the tuners or tuner gears is NOT recommended as unwanted oil may seep into the wood through the tuning post holes.

## Strings

Your new guitar / Bass is equipped with quality name brand strings from the factory. The J&D series is equipped with quality (Made in USA) Strings. Strings should be replaced periodically when they begin to sound dull or become corroded. String life depends on a number of factors which include 1) Quality of Strings 2) Perspiration 3) Climate 4) Aggressive Playing. You can extend the life of your strings by wiping them down with a clean cloth or paper towel after each session. Strings should be removed by loosening the string first (de-tuning). NEVER cut strings under tension! Doing so may cause injury and is stressful to your Guitar or Bass!

Always use quality replacement strings and when installing them, make sure you leave at least 3 full winds around the tuning post when tuned up to pitch. You can cut excess off to avoid "string-in-the-eye" syndrome (or giving your lead singer string-in-the-eye).

Fret City recommends S.I.T. Brand replacement strings available through Fret City Music [www.FretCity.com](http://www.FretCity.com).

### Removing and Inserting Acoustic Guitar Bridge Pins

Acoustic strings are held in place at the bridge by Bridge Pins. Each string fits into a small notch at the front of each bridge pin. To remove them, it is best to use a string

winder (the winder has a rounded end to cup under the Bridge Pin to pull it up) When installing the bridge pin, it's important the pin slot faces straight forward so the string is properly aligned on the bridge saddle. Make sure that the ball end of the string is pulled up tightly against the inside of the top before inserting the bridge pin. DO NOT hammer in the bridge pin hard. It may become wedged and split the bridge. After inserting the string and pin, push it in with your thumb snugly.

## Truss Rod

Sometimes your Guitar or Bass may require adjustment from seasonal changes, humidity or even changing string gauges. To compensate, every guitar or bass has an adjustable truss rod installed at the factory. The rod is adjusted using a Truss Rod Key. Your Fret City Guitar or Bass ships with a Truss Rod Key. For your instrument to play correctly, the neck should have a slight curve to allow the strings to vibrate without buzzing. It should NOT be perfectly flat.

To check the truss rod setting :

1. Tune the Guitar to pitch , then (with the help of a Capo or a friend) depress the first fret and last fret of the E string (the farthest 2 points on the E String.)
2. At the 8th fret, measure the distance between the bottom of the string and the top of the 8th fret.
3. The string clearance should be between .010 to .015 inch. Ideally, you should use a Mechanics Feeler Gauge for this measurement. If you don't own a Feeler Gauge then use a standard Fender "thin" guitar pick for the measurement. If the clearance is substantially higher (or lower) you will want to adjust the truss rod.
4. If the neck is too concave (ie dips in the middle), then insert your Allen Wrench into the Truss Rod socket and turn (while facing into to socket hole) clockwise. Turn only

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about 1/4 a turn and then check your neck adjustment. This will pull the neck straighter.

5. If the neck is too convex or flat (flat / humps up in the middle), then insert your Allen Wrench into the Truss Rod socket and turn (while facing into to socket hole) counter-clockwise. Turn only about 1/4 a turn and then check your neck adjustment. This will loosen the rod, and pull the neck straighter and into relief. Do not loosen the rod too much, leave at least one or 2 turns tension on the Truss Rod.

## Troubleshooting

This section is designed to help you resolve typical problems :

Problem : No sound from Guitar

1. Is the cable plugged in ?
2. Is the volume control turned up ?
3. Is the amp on?
4. Is the guitar cable defective ? (try another cable)
5. Is the input jack on the Guitar loose ? If so could be a shorted or broken wire on input Jack.

Problem : Humming

1. Some Hum is normal for single coil pickups - try selector switch to select humbucking mode to reduce hum.
2. On a Jazz style Bass, turn both volume controls to full.
3. Check Guitar cable – “cheap” guitar cables may hum and using a quality-shielded cable will reduce hum.
4. Check ground wiring on Guitar.
5. Check ground on amp (some amps have a ground / polarity switch).
6. Check to make sure there are no florescent lights nearby.

Problem : String Buzz

1. Adjust strings by raising bridge / string saddles. (see Action Adjustments)
2. Loosen Truss Rod to add relief to neck (see Truss Rod section).

3. Humidity / Dryness – see Guitar Care and Maintenance section.

Problem : Guitar won't stay in tune

1. Are the strings new ? New strings will take several tuning cycles to settle and stay in tune.
2. Is whammy bar being used?? Use of whammy bar will cause tuning difficulties when playing aggressively.
3. Are tuners slipping? Some tuners have tension adjusters on the tuning peg – Tighten tension adjuster.
4. Bad strings – replace strings.
5. Check to make sure strings are correctly wound on tuning posts at least 3 turns.
6. Check to make sure strings “ball-end” are secured and seated in bridge.
7. String “catching / hanging” on nut slot – try rubbing a lead pencil in the nut slot of the string for lubrication.
8. Are Bridge tailpiece posts seated in body? (LP and SG style Guitars) Check to make sure the bridge tailpiece posts are fully seated in the body. If required, remove strings, dab some wood glue on posts and re-install.
9. Are the Bridge Pins inserted securely? (on acoustic Guitars)

## Disclaimer

Routine Guitar and Bass maintenance is easy and every Musician should make an effort to at least understand the basic adjustments. If you are not comfortable with any of these adjustments or find something just isn't working (truss rod not adjusting etc) please take your Guitar or Bass to a knowledgeable friend, or to a Guitar Repair shop to assist you. There are also many web resources available to you to help explain some of these procedures in further detail.