

#2 “GETTING STARTED”

(Notes to accompany video lesson)

How To Hold The Guitar:

One of the most important aspects of playing the guitar is to be relaxed and free of tension at all times.

The shape of the body of the guitar allows it to sit comfortably over either of your legs when sat down. For right-handed players the most common playing position is for the guitar body to sit over your right leg. If you are learning classical guitar it's more common to sit over your left leg, though I'd recommend trying both to see which is more comfortable.

Keep the guitar neck at least parallel with the floor, ideally pointing slightly upwards towards the ceiling. Avoid pointing the headstock towards the floor.

Try to keep an upright and relaxed posture at all times, avoid slouching over the body of the guitar and tensing shoulders. Allow the wrist of your fretting hand to hang down below the neck of the guitar, without having any uncomfortable angles or tension here as this can cause injury. Try to avoid resting your fretting wrist/ arm on your leg, and keep your elbow nice and relaxed by the side of your body to allow smooth and full range of movement.

Left Hand Positioning when fretting:

Your thumb should be placed around the centre/ upper half of the neck pointing upwards. Avoid pointing it towards the headstock, and make sure the palm of your left hand does not touch the underside of the neck.

Keep your wrist relaxed and free of tension, allowing it to hang down beneath the neck of the guitar.

In order to fret a note you must be on your fingertips (nails need to be cut short!), with your finger as close to the fret wire as possible without being on top of the fret itself. This position provides the best tone for the least amount of effort.

Labelling Your Fingers:

Left (fretting) hand:

Thumb = Thumb

Index = 1

Middle = 2

Ring = 3

Little (pinky) = 4

Right (strumming) hand:

Thumb = p

Index = i

Middle = m

Ring = a

Little (pinky) = c

How To Hold A Pick:

With your left hand place the pick against your right hand thumbprint. Make sure the tip of the pick is pointing towards downwards. Curl up your index finger on your right hand so the nail is pointing towards your thumb joint. Do not hold the pick too tightly; just apply enough tension to enable you to easily adjust the amount of pick shown to the strings without dropping it!

Experiment with the positioning of your other fingers, some players like to have them bunched in a fist, others prefer them spread out (my personal preference). Whichever technique you choose make sure there is minimal tension and you are relaxed.