



## How To Hold The Guitar

By Christopher Schlegel

Holding the guitar properly is absolutely essential.

It is very important to work towards making any and all motions you make while playing guitar as smooth, efficient as possible. In order to do this, we start by focusing on proper body mechanics. Start with good posture! Sit up straight and do not slouch. Next, from your shoulder, to elbow, to wrist, hand and fingers, keep your body light and loose. Do not tense up! Maintain all your tendons and muscles at a minimal level of tension. You only need enough pressure to hold you arm and hands in place.

The strap is an invaluable tool in assisting in this process. The strap should keep the guitar hanging comfortably on your torso. You should absolutely not be holding the guitar up with your hands and, or arms, while you are trying to play it! That is the function of the strap to hold your guitar in place. You arms and hands should be completely free to focus on playing the guitar.

Make sure to get a strap that is adjustable. Then, experiment with different strap lengths until you find the exact length that is optimal for you. You want to find a place on your torso that is comfortable. The guitar should not be digging into you body uncomfortably. The guitar should hang in the optimal place for your arms and hands to feel as if they are naturally "attached" to the guitar.

An excellent principle to follow is that the strap should allow you to have the guitar hanging on your torso in exactly the same way if you are sitting as well as standing. This will aid you in the long run, since you will not have to readjust your playing if you change positions.

Next, find a comfortable place for your forearm to rest on the guitar. You can also place the side of your hand (or palm) on the guitar, bridge saddles or strings. I encourage you to experiment with all of them. The idea here is to find a good place for your arm to rest and from which your picking hand can pivot.

Tilt the guitar neck up and slight "out" or "away" from your body. This will allow yout fretting arm and hand the most access to reach completely around the neck to the strings. Keep your thumb behind the neck, your fingers curved around to the strings, and your palm off the neck!

Remember to keep the other parts of your body in proper, comfortable posture and ease as well. Keep your head and neck in a good position. Do not crane around too much to look at the strings. Move your head, neck and the guitar neck to meet each other comfortably. Do not use unnecessary effort to bend your hips, legs or feet. Keep them all comfortably light and loose. Keep your feet flat on the floor. Remember, do not tense up!

It can take a long time to become completely familiar with the proper body mechanics involved in playing guitar. So, it is very important to take your time, practice properly and carefully. Be patient with yourself and try to enjoy the process!

Happy playing!