

Taylor Guitars

Customer Service

Bronze Level Questions

1. What kind of strings does Taylor install on its guitars?

Strings are very important - they can alter the feel (action) and the sound (tone) of your guitar. Since June 1, 1999, we've been installing Elixir strings on all Taylor guitars, and we currently use Elixir's ultra-thin NANOWEB design. If you want your guitar to perform to Taylor factory specs - to sound, feel, and play as it was designed - use light gauge string sets on Babys and Big Babys, Grand Concerts, Grand Auditoriums, and 12-strings (except for the Leo Kottke Signature Model) and use medium gauge string sets on the Dreadnoughts, Grand Symphonies, and Jumbos.

Generally, if you were to put light-gauge strings on a Dreadnought, Grand Symphony or Jumbo six-string, the reduced string tension probably would result in the neck back-bowing. That would give you lower action, but could lead to string-buzzing. To prevent or correct that, you'd have to make an adjustment to the neck with the truss rod. And, after all that, you might find that the Dreadnought, Grand Symphony or Jumbo produces a "thinner" tone than you'd prefer from such an instrument.

Conversely, putting medium-gauge strings on a Grand Concert or Grand Auditorium might work well for you, but the added string tension will raise the action. Even after having the neck adjusted, the action might remain a little higher than "normal." Some people who use mediums on the smaller bodies also notice a slight "bellying" behind the bridge due to the extra pull of the higher-gauge strings. It's important to address the mistaken assumption that putting heavier strings on a small-body guitar will increase its volume. Our Grand concert and Grand Auditorium guitars are built and braced with light gauge strings in mind for optimum performance in a smaller framework. Accordingly, light-gauge strings enable the top to move enough to produce plenty of volume and projection. Medium-gauge strings exhibit higher string tension which can actually bind the top, holding it too taut to allow for the kind of movement that results in projection and "loudness." In other words, medium-gauge strings probably won't give you more volume, and they might give you less tone.

2. Do you have any tips for traveling with my guitar?

The airline companies are becoming more and more strict about carrying your guitar onboard the plane, which leaves you with limited options. Some try to help by offering various services, and others want you to purchase an extra seat for your guitar if you want to carry it on the plane. If you travel a lot, then that's the best reason we can site for your second option - to ship the guitar to your final destination, in which case you can also insure the instrument through the carrier for a minimal charge. Another option would be to invest in travel case, which can be checked as baggage but still might be broken.

Many players and repair persons believe it's best to de-tune a guitar for long-distance flights. We don't recommend doing so, because if you de-tune a guitar for any length of time you also have to loosen the truss rod. Otherwise, the neck may develop a back bow and it could prove difficult to completely correct that. In other words, you actually could do long-term damage to the instrument by loosening the strings and not loosening the truss rod at the same time. On a Taylor guitar, it's best to simply leave it as is, even on relatively long flights. Air is pressurized in the luggage hold on airplanes and has no effect on the instrument.

Also, don't leave your guitar sitting in a car for any length of time, because not only can it be stolen, but the extreme temperatures in the interior and the trunk can cause serious damage resulting in costly repairs.

3. How should I clean/polish my guitar?

We recommend and use Turtle Wax Express Shine to clean and detail the entire body and the back of the neck on all models of Taylor Guitars. Express Shine works well on both glossy and satin finishes. Do not use furniture polishes or products like Murphy's Oil Soap on any of our guitars at any time as it will likely damage the finish. You may also simply use a clean, damp cloth to wipe down the surfaces and follow quickly with a clean, dry cloth. To clean the fingerboard we use and recommend 0000 extra-fine steel wool. Simply rub the steel wool up and down the length of the fingerboard right over the tops of the frets. This will remove any grime from the fingerboard without damaging the wood and will also remove any oxidation from the frets and give them a nice shine.

Check our website for Care and Feeding videos: <http://www.taylorguitars.com/see-hear/default.aspx?id=1004>

4. There are light streaks on my ebony fingerboard/bridge/headstock. Is this discoloration a flaw in the wood, or a badly done dye-job?

That light marbling you occasionally see in the ebony is not a "flaw" but the wood's natural pigmentation. When you see large quantities of ebony (as we do), you know that such marbling is fairly common. Some manufacturers choose to dye their ebony for cosmetic purposes, but we don't. We believe that ebony is best left in its natural state. Marbling has nothing at all to do with the quality of the ebony. In fact, many of us actually prefer marbled ebony.

5. Can I put a different width neck on my Taylor? The one that came on my guitar is too wide/narrow for my playing style.

All 6-string Taylors in the 300 Series and above come standard with a 1-3/4 inch neck width. However, new guitars can be ordered with a 1-11/16 inch neck width or a 1-7/8 inch neck width for a retail up charge. All of our 12-string and Nylon string models have a 1-7/8 inch neck width. There are no neck width options on 12 string and Nylon string models. All of our Baby, Big Baby, 100 and 200 Series guitars have 1-11/16 inch neck width. There are no neck-width options on Baby, Big Baby, 100 or 200 Series Taylors.

Once a Taylor guitar has been built there is no option to change the neck width.

6. Why didn't I get a truss rod adjustment tool with my new Taylor guitar?

We stopped including truss rod adjustment tools with our guitars as of January 1, 2007. We believe it is best to have the neck adjusted by an experienced guitar tech familiar with the process. Customers comfortable with adjusting their own necks can purchase a truss rod wrench thru TaylorWare.

7. Do I have to use a balanced cable with my guitar?

The Expression System provides both a balanced and unbalanced output. The cable you use and the device you're plugging in to will determine the best way to plug in. When plugging in to a balanced input, such as a mixer or snake, you can plug directly in using a TRS to XLR cable. This gives you a balanced signal from the guitar. No need to use a direct box! If you're plugging into a 1/4" mono input such as a guitar amp or effects pedal, use a standard 1/4" mono cable. Although the overall tone doesn't change between balanced and unbalanced, a balanced signal is cleaner and 6db hotter than an unbalanced signal.

8. Can I get a hard case for my Baby Taylor or Big Baby Taylor?

The SKB Company still manufactures a hard case that fits the Baby Taylor. The part number from SKB is SKB-300.

For the Big Baby Taylor we recommend the TKL brand Grand Concert cases. TKL has several series of cases from their economy series to a deluxe series, covering different price points and appointments.

9. I found a small piece of paper wrapped around the AA batteries in the power supply of my 2006 or earlier ES equipped Taylor guitar. What is that and why is it there?

We wrapped the AA batteries with a single Post-It note (a 3" x 3" piece of paper basically) in our 2006 and earlier ES equipped guitars to help prevent the batteries from rattling in the power supply while the guitar is being played.

The diameter of AA batteries can vary significantly. If a pair of batteries is slightly under-sized they could produce a slight rattle when the strings are strummed or picked, and this slight rattle will then be amplified by the guitar's body making an unpleasant sound.

10. The back of my Baby/Big Baby/GS Mini/100/200 Taylor guitar has a bubble-like arch. Is that normal?

Yes! All of these models have laminated backs and sides. We form the laminate over an arch-shaped mold under heat and pressure. This arch provides the structural strength necessary for the back of the instrument and renders traditional back-bracing unnecessary.

11. Can I get a Taylor with a shorter scale length?

Yes, you may order any Taylor acoustic or acoustic/electric model in the 300 Series and above with a short scale length (24 7/8") for a retail up charge.

As of January 1, 2006, all Grand Concert model Taylor guitars are built with a short scale length (24 7/8".) Any Grand Concert model can be ordered with a standard scale length (25 1/2") for a retail up charge.

12. Can you install the Expression System into my older Taylor?

We can install the ES into any Taylor acoustic that's a 300 series or higher. Guitars built in 2001 or later will have our NT neck joint. That means the neck is bolted to the body, set in a pocket that's routed out. This enables us to easily access the area under the fretboard extension without breaking any glue joints, and hide the magnetic string sensor pickup just under the surface of the fretboard. Older Taylors have the fretboard extension glued to the top. For these guitars we have a sound hole mounted pickup. It's the same pickup mounted in an ebony housing. For guitars with the Fishman control panel on the side, we offer a panel to cover that hole, and the 3 knobs of the ES would be located there instead of up by the neck heel.

13. The Taylor tuners on my guitar are gold with black buttons. One of them is cracked or stripped and spinning without tuning the string. Can I get a replacement button?

We used to install gold Taylor tuners with ebonoid buttons on a few models. These buttons were faux ebony made from a resin poured into molds. They look very much like real ebony buttons. There was an issue with some of the buttons being too brittle, and eventually cracking. It didn't happen on all of them, but it was enough of an issue for us to discontinue using them in 2007.

The solution is an easy one. Replace the tuners with the Taylor all gold tuners with the gold metal buttons. We offer replacement tuners at no charge for guitars under warranty. Owners without warranty can purchase replacement tuners. By the way, the tuners are a direct replacement, no modifications necessary.

Taylor does not sell or provide tuner buttons separately.

14. How long does the 9v battery last on the guitars with electronics?

The 9v ES and the EST systems get approximately 40 hours of plugged in time with a fresh new 9v alkaline battery. As soon as you insert a cable into the guitar, the battery is draining. For extended breaks while performing, unplug the guitar to extend the battery life.