

# Recognizing Humidity Symptoms Part 2

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## **Alternative Humidifiers** **(Humidipak)**

The sponge-style humidifier, used correctly according to the 24-hour rule, will help you to keep your guitar in good condition. Now, let's look at two other humidity-control products that we like, the Humidipak and Oasis brands.

The Humidipak is a reverse-osmosis device, the only one of its kind on the market. It is completely user-friendly: you basically put it in the guitar case and forget about it. Open the outer cellophane wrapper carefully so you don't damage the white packets inside. Put the packets into the black mesh holding pouches, and put all 3 pouches into the guitar case. That is all there is to it.

Do not at any time cut or tear the white packets. They contain a special gel material that either absorbs or releases moisture through the packet itself, automatically maintaining the correct RH level inside the guitar case.

The Humidipak comes in two different humidity levels: 48% for everyday use to maintain instruments at the correct RH; and 72%, used by service technicians to re-humidify instruments that have dried out.

To get the most out of the Humidipak system, make sure the instrument and case are properly humidified before installing the Humidipaks. The normal 48% packets are not intended to rehumidify a dried-out instrument; they will eventually do so, but the packets will dry out quickly and have to be replaced frequently. If re-humidification is needed, always use the 72% packets or a water-based humidifier.



## **Alternative Humidifiers**

### **(Oasis)**

The Oasis brand is also an effective system, but you must watch it closely as it can release too much vapor and over-humidify the instrument. If you choose this system, be sure to pay very close attention to prevent damage to the guitar.

The Oasis system works on the same principle as sponge humidifiers, but has a larger capacity for holding water vapor.

As always, it is the responsibility of customers, store owners, and distributors to establish and maintain a proper level of RH for their instruments.



### **(Room Humidifiers)**

you have need for the guitars to be out on display or easily accessible, you will need a room humidifier.

Humidifiers come with an array of options. The better versions have a sensor for the humidity reading which turns the unit on automatically when the RH level drops. There are also models that can do the job without that feature, but must be maintained by the person or persons using the device.

Room size needs to be taken into account when choosing a humidifier. The capacity of the humidifier must be adequate for the number of cubic feet of air space in the room. A very small humidifier will not be able to maintain the correct RH level in a large room. You have the best chance of keeping your guitars in good condition if the humidifier's capacity exceeds the size of the room, not the other way around.

### **Positioning the Humidifier**

The humidifier should never be placed underneath the instruments or too close to them. This can over-humidify the area immediately around the guitars. It's best to place the humidifier in a corner or central spot on the wall, away from where the instruments are hanging.



## Hygrometers

Use at least one hygrometer to understand what is happening in the room you are trying to humidify. Hygrometers come in a range of prices and sizes; most will be effective in providing the information you need to keep the room correct for the instruments.

A nice digital hygrometer will give you best results. Digital hygrometers range in price from \$30.00 to \$200.00.

Inexpensive analog hygrometers are not recommended by Taylor Guitars. In our experience, they fluctuate too much in their range to be accurate, and the needle can stick and give you a false reading. You would have to buy a very expensive analog hygrometer to match the accuracy of a less-expensive digital version.

### Positioning the Hygrometer

The hygrometer should be located across the room from the humidifier, so that you can be assured the entire room is being humidified. Depending on the size of the room, you might need two hygrometers in order to get an accurate reading of the RH in the room as a whole. Even if the humidifier has a sensor for reading the humidity, you should still have a second sensor across the room to get a true reading.



### **The Guitar Case**

If you do not have a room that can be humidified, we do not recommend leaving the instrument out on a stand or on display. Heating and air conditioning are huge factors in damaging guitars.

The best place for the instrument when it is not being played is in the case!

The case can be humidified very easily, which in turn will keep the guitar humidified, but only if the instrument is stored in the case. Taylor cases are designed to hold humidity, provided that the correct level of humidity is introduced into the case. By using the products listed earlier in this document, the guitar and case can both be set to the proper RH levels. These products essentially create a humidified room inside the guitar case.



### **Displaying Guitars**

In any store location, instruments are on display for the customers to view and play. That is a great thing as it leads to the sales of the instruments. However it can also lead to instrument damage.

Most of the damage will come from low humidity levels in the display room. By maintaining the room's humidity, you will help to insure the stability of the instruments on display.

High ceilings can be another culprit. Heat rises, so the air will be warmer and drier closer to the ceiling. Hanging guitars up high means they have more of a chance to dry out.

### **Displaying Guitars continued...**

Many stores hang the more expensive instruments up high to minimize damage from handling, but doing so may subject them to damage over time from heat and low humidity. The solution to this is to make sure that temperature and humidity in the room are effectively controlled.

A properly-maintained room is always the best way to keep the instruments in top shape.



### **Lighting**

Lighting itself will not damage instruments. A hot spot-light shining right onto a guitar will damage the instrument. It will burn up the humidity and bake the guitar. Cracks can appear in the fretboard and body. Finish and wood discoloration can happen from lights that shine too close to one area of the guitar. The display may look great but the result may be serious damage to the guitar.

Soft lights with low heat are best. If you need bright lights to display the guitars, use LED lights. They give off little to no heat, so the potential for damage is eliminated. When using halogen or incandescent bulbs, keep them at a safe distance and install a dimmer switch so you can turn them down.

