How to Change Your Guitar Strings
In Less than 7 Minutes
And other Hot Guitar Tips
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Chapter 1. Problems with guitar strings.

Guitar playing can be a lot of fun. ...Until you break a string. However, strings are obviously an important part of the guitar. The string is what vibrates and produces the sound waves.

There are a couple of annoying things about guitar strings and that is why I wrote this report – to address those problems. First of all, changing strings is time-consuming, and we tend to put it off or proscratinate it...- the result is poor tone - it's not as sweet sounding as with a new set of strings. This occurs over time, so if you don't change the strings often, you might not even notice...until you put on a new set of strings and really hear the difference! As the tone starts to significantly deteriorate, the intonation also starts to suffer. (The intonation is how well a string stays in tune with itself. Your guitar is perfectly intonated when the 12th fret note, 12th fret harmonic, and open string are all the exact same pitch, except for the difference in octave.) With bad intonation, your guitar will sound like crap.

Plus, strings slip out of tune when you put on new strings. This is because strings naturally stretch and expand, until they reach a state of maximum “stretch”. All good and well for the strings, but meanwhile, you have to keep retuning!

Not too mention string breakage...often occurring with older strings.
Chapter 2. How to Change Your Strings in Less than 7 Minutes

Ok, let's get down to the heart of the matter. Changing your strings fast! It can be done. In fact, it's quite simple. There are just a few simple tricks you need to know. Changing strings involves several small steps, and they are repeated 6 times (once for each string). Make each step fast, and you'll get your strings changed fast.

One important point to make clear right away: Even though it may seem less efficient, it's a good idea to change your strings one at a time, especially if you don't have a fixed bridge guitar. This is because the guitar is designed to be in a state of tension from the strings. If you take off all the strings, the guitar won't like it and you can even damage your guitar. For example, you can wreak havoc on the angle of many tremolo systems by taking off all the strings at once. Also, many guitars have a truss rod that compensates for the string tension. If you take away all that tension, then the truss rod is putting a lot of pressure on the neck. So unless you check with a professional, definitely change your strings one at a time.

You want to remove the old strings and replace them with new ones. Taking one string at a time, start with the lowest heaviest string (Low E) and work your way up to high E. If you do it right, each string should take a minute or less to change. (30 seconds to remove the old string and 30 seconds to put on the new string) Thus, you can change your strings in 6 minutes or less with an extra minute to get the new strings out of the package and ready to go. The entire process might take you a little longer the first few times until you get used to it.

Before you start changing strings, you want to have plenty of room, and you want to have your strings ready. This is the first secret. Most people waste a lot of time unpacking the strings. Before you even touch your guitar, take all 6 strings out of the package and unfurl them so they are totally ready to go. I use D'Addario strings because the balls of the strings are color-coded for easy reference. It takes me less than a minute to unpack and unfurl the strings. If you use strings without color-coded balls, simply put the high E and G on one side of you, and the high B strings on the other side of you. You certainly won't confuse the E with the G (I hope), or the B with any other string. However you do it, take a minute to quickly unpack the strings and have a simple way to tell the difference between strings so you aren't wasting time.

Second secret: Most people take way too long to remove the old strings. You need the right tool. This seems obvious, but many people don't do this. Get a string cutter that is designed for cutting guitar strings or anything that can cut guitar strings like a knife through hot butter. Your typical wire snips won't work because the string just ends up getting bent. You want to have a tool that cuts the strings in a single snap every time. I personally use a pair of 4” Diagonal Hobby Pliers by ACE. They even have spring-loaded handles so I don't have to open and shut them. They are fantastic.
I used to unwind my strings before snipping them so that there was not an abrupt change of tension, but I think this is unnecessary unless you have a really expensive guitar or you're using really heavy strings (12 gage). For most guitars, simply snip the old string and continue. You want to snip the string halfway up the neck so you aren't dealing with short pieces of string on either side. Otherwise, it's hard to deal with.

Remove the string from the head by quickly unwinding the string from the peg. Put the piece of string over to the side. You'll want to put all the string scraps together so you can just throw them all away when you're done. Remove the string from the bridge. Depending on the kind of guitar, this might mean passing the string through the back, loosening the string with an Allen wrench, or pulling out a peg from an acoustic guitar. Again, having the right tool makes all the difference. For an acoustic guitar, you can remove the peg with a pair of pliers if necessary. But be careful not to squeeze the peg so much that you damage it. You should be able to remove the string in 30 seconds or less.

Next, grab the string (already unfurled) and attach it at the bridge of your guitar. Assuming you have standard tuners, feed it through and wind it around the peg at least twice before passing the string through the hole. If you only wrap it around the peg once, your guitar can slip out of tune. Now here is where having the right tools can really save you time. Use a peg-winder and a pitch pipe. The peg-winder lets you quickly get the string wound to the right tension and the pitch pipe lets you hear when
the guitar is at the right pitch. Just put the pitch pipe in your mouth and blow and keep comparing the pitch to the string as you wind it up with the peg tuner. You can get both of these from your local music store (or online).

That's it! Snipping the string, removing it from the head and bridge, attaching the new string to the bridge, and winding it up can take as little as 60 seconds. Then move onto the next string. You can actually make two snips. One to trim the string at the peg after it's wound, and the other to snip the next string. Just make sure to do them together to save time.

One more point. If you have a guitar with a locking nut, remove (or loosen) the pieces prior to starting so they don't slow down the process.
Chapter 3. How to Prevent Your Strings From Going Out of Tune

So how do you prevent your strings from slipping out of tune? Strings can slip out of tune for a few reasons. One is that you didn't wind the string around the peg enough times before passing it through the hole in the peg. Solution: Simply make sure to wind it two or three times.

Another reason is that the strings are new and need time to stretch out. This always bothered me because I didn't like constantly retuning and I also didn't want to lose that “new string” sound when I put on new strings before a gig.

Here's the story of how I accidentally discovered the secret to having my strings pre-stretched out before I put them on. I am a lazy guy and I always leave things in my car. Well, I had left my guitar strings in the car for a couple of days, and it was one of those hot weeks in July. When I finally got the strings out of the car and put them on my guitar, I noticed they didn't need much time at all to stretch out. Apparently the heat had expanded the metal! I tested this theory by taking strings and putting them under a hot lamp (be careful of fire hazards; you try this at your own risk). I put my strings on the tiled floor of the bathroom and put the lamp on top of them for a few hours. Same effect! The strings hardly needed any time to stretch out. I heard a story that Eddie Van Halen used to boil his strings in water. Fact or Fiction? I don't know.

Even when you use the hot lamp technique, you'll still need to stretch the strings a bit. When you do stretch them, you can simply pull them around, but don't pull too hard on the bridge side, because that can weaken the string and cause it to break early. To prevent this, hold the string tightly with one hand a few inches from the bridge, and bend the string around the middle of the neck with the other hand. This way, you stretch out the string, but aren't putting pressure on it at the bridge.

(Tip: Stretch the heavier strings more, because they require more stretching.)

Another time strings can go out of tune is when they are passed their prime! Change your strings on a regular basis for optimum tone, stability, and enjoyment.
Chapter 4: Keeping Your Strings Sounding New.
Saving even more time and money.

The best way to extend the life of your strings is to wipe them off after you play. I just use a bit of toilet paper to wipe down each string. You'd be amazed how much dirt and crud build up, especially on the high strings. The oils in our skin cause the string to lose its tone faster. I always wipe down the strings if I have a gig coming up.

Another thing you can do is to buy strings with protective coating, such as Elixir brand strings. I use these on my acoustic guitars. The only problem is that the protective coating is only on the wound strings; plus these strings are more expensive. For electric, I just use regular strings.

To save additional time changing your strings, you can multitask. This is actually the best way because it takes zero time if you're getting it done while doing something else that you'd be doing anyway. For example, watching TV or talking on the phone. The only problem is that you won't be able to give your full attention to either activity.

To save even more time in your life, buy a bunch of strings at once so you don't have to run to the music store every week (or every other week). And buying your strings online can be the best for many people, because its even quicker and less expensive.

A final tip: If you practice a lot of guitar, consider having a “practice” guitar aside from your favorite guitar. This guitar will be the one you do most of your practicing on. It should be a good guitar, but fairly inexpensive. This doesn't really have to do with guitar strings, but it can save you money by not wearing out the frets on your favorite guitar over the years.

In conclusion, this report shows you how to change your strings fast and have them stay in tune. I hope you enjoyed reading it and will benefit from the information. Please continue to the bonus chapter for a few of my favorite hot licks.
Bonus: Hot Guitar Licks – 10 tricks and tips

Lick #1

Listen to the audio. I play lick one, then a pause, then lick two and a pause, and then I improvise some riffs using the same theme.

Lick A classic blues riff in E with a triplet feel. Repeat the first riff three times then follow it up with a hammer-on and pull-off down to the E.

Lick #2

Another Texas Blues Riff. I learned this one from a book by Stefan Grossman. It's killer! The direction of picking is important here as indicated by the arrows.
Lick #3

Jazz Master Jimmy Bruno taught me this lick. It's basically a C major 7 arpeggio with some chromatic embellishment. There is no audio for this...

Lick #4

Another trick I learn from Jimmy – going up the arpeggio and (partially) down the scale. This example uses a B minor arpeggio (the IIm) in A and resolves to the root. (No audio)
Lick # 5

I came up with this riff and it reminds me of something Eddie Van Halen might play. I don't have the rhythm notated here, so listen to the clip! Use a crunchy rhythm sound and try some of these chord structures...

Lick #6 - #8

These are all bluesy riffs I created. #6 is one of the simplest ways to combine major and major pentatonic, (here in A). #7 combines a few different elements. #8 features the “blue note” - the flatted fifth. In the audio, I play licks 6, 7, and 8...
Lick #9

One of the coolest techniques is taking a chord you already know (in this case E major) and playing it in different places, but letting the open strings ring out. Check the sound clip.
Lick #10

This last lick features the harmonic minor scale. Listen to the audio...