

Your First Electric Guitar Pack

When you imagine yourself as a guitar player you probably think of the electric guitar. It looks really cool posing with one and they make great sounds. But is it so cool you want to spend days investigating which is the best guitar for a beginner, where to get the best price, what amp to start with, what ancillary stuff you need? Or is it better to get that over with so you can concentrate on serious posing and maybe do a little playing? So let's embark on a journey that will take us flying over the desert of dreary comparison shopping so we can graze in the lush meadows of power chords and adoring chicks.

So let's begin putting together a pack of necessities for the beginner electric guitar player. Your local guitar mart is packed with snazzy looking axes that may or may not love you back when you start caressing their strings, all at varying price ranges. How can a novice figure out which brands are best for which price? Okay, grab an electric guitar and look at how it's made. It is, after all a piece of electronic equipment and should be built to give good service. A well built electric guitar will have the body, neck and fret board made of wood, not laminate or plastic.

For most novice electric guitar players, the vibrato, or "floating" bridge is the one to get. The other type is the fixed bridge which does not allow you to "bend" notes using the tremolo arm or "whammy-bar". While we are on the subject, you should be warned that using the whammy bar on a cheap guitar often leads to broken strings, so if you end up with one of these you might want to remove the whammy bar altogether. And another thing: an electric guitar has twenty-two frets, but some beginner's models are smaller. Don't get this unless you're about ten years old. Stick to the ones with twenty-two frets.

Now we come to the pickups which are little microphones sitting underneath the guitar strings. Pickups close to the bridge give a sharp "twangy" tone, while the pickups closer to the fret board give a deeper sound. It's quite easy to get a guitar with three pickups and a switch that lets you choose which pickups are being used.

As for price, are the guitars at the lower end of the price range inferior to the more expensive ones? Heck no! You'll get years of musical enjoyment with one of the less expensive models.

Now let's turn our attention to amplifiers. The way your new guitar sounds will depend largely on the way your amplifier is put together. The power of a guitar amplifier is measured in watts. The higher the wattage, the more volume. Start thinking in the five watt vicinity to start with. That's about the size of your average practice amp. As for most electronics applications electric guitars' tubes were replaced by transistors many years ago but most guitar players use electric guitars with tube amplifiers because they have a better sound quality. You may be able to get your hands on a practice amp with the option of using a vacuum tube, but if you can't, don't worry you should apply your time and energy to learning your instrument right now.

As for the question of which effects to get, most people begin with trying to sound like their favorite lead guitarist, but you should try to get some kind of idea of what's available. There is no "pure" electric guitar sound. It is all altered to some degree. The different ways the guitar sound can be changed is called "effects". Effects like distortion, reverberation, and equalization give the guitarist more creative control over the sound. Some amplifiers have distortion built in because it is the most popular electric guitar effect. Generally speaking the more effects that are built into the amplifier, the better but if you're not to into a whole lot of effects just stick to what you really need.

Okay, that's a brief rundown on what you need to begin a career as an electric guitar player, and if you see loads of practice lying around in the guitar store, pick up as much as you can afford.

About the Author

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