

Proper Care of your JSO Guitar



Don't let this happen to your baby!

Humidity, Temperature and Storage

Your guitar is made of thin wood that is easily affected by temperature and humidity. This combination is the most important single part of your guitar's surroundings. JSO guitars are built at a constant 45-55 percent humidity and 72-77 degrees Fahrenheit. If either humidity or temperature is far away from these conditions, your guitar is in danger. A rapid change in temperature or exposure to cold can cause small cracks in the finish (lacquer checks). The use of a hygrometer/thermometer is recommended to measure relative humidity and temperature surrounding your guitar.

As humidity increases, moisture content of wood goes up rapidly, causing it to expand and swell. A gradual increase in humidity won't generally do permanent damage to your instrument. When very high humidity is combined with high temperature, glue joints could possibly become weakened and may even open slightly. If your guitar is exposed to high temperature or humidity for any length of time, the glue under the bridge could weaken causing the bridge to pull off.

Rapid changes in local humidity are what you want to guard against. If, for instance, you place your guitar near a source of dry heat, the humidity around it will drop much faster than it would naturally, although a sudden dry spell can have the

same effect. If the moisture content of wood is forced down in a hurry, portions of it shrink faster than others, causing cracks and open joints. Don't set your instrument next to a source of heat or hang it on a wall where it will dry out. Avoid hanging your guitar on an outside wall during winter months. The wall will be cooler than the inside air. The result is a conflict between the temperature of the top and back, with potential damage as a result.

If the guitar be exposed to freezing temperatures, let it warm to room temperature while still in its case. This allows the guitar to acclimate to room temperature more slowly, decreasing the possibility of wood and finish cracks.

Caution should be taken if you choose to use a humidifier to combat low humidity. Moisture in direct contact with the guitar could cause damage, as can the rubber or vinyl parts of a humidifier.

We recommend storing your guitar in its case when not in use. Humidity is easier to control in a smaller space. Don't bother loosening the strings when putting the guitar away unless it won't be used for several months. Constantly tightening and loosening strings quickly ruins their sound.

The hard case supports the neck and body of the guitar as evenly as possible. It is important that you don't let anything lie under the headstock as this could damage the neck and body.

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Cleanliness is next to . . .

Cleaning the Finish

The best way to clean your guitar is with a warm, damp cloth. This will remove harmful chemicals. Your guitar is coated with a high-grade finish that is durable. It can, however, be mared by solvents, especially those found in plastic, vinyl and leather straps. Alcohol, citric acid, aftershave lotion, insect repellent and a number of related substances can be problematic. Perspiration can also damage your guitar's finish so keep it dry. To polish it use a mild non-silicone based polish with a soft clean cloth. We recommend wiping down your instrument and strings with a soft dry cloth before storing to remove harmful skin oils.

Strings

Strings don't last forever. As you play your guitar, you will notice its sound will gradually lose brilliance. It will begin to sound slightly muffled because the strings have begun to wear out. Human skin moisture causes strings to become dirty and corrode, and this layer of corrosion eventually deadens the sound of the strings. At this point, the entire set should be replaced. Replacing only one string causes an unbalanced sound.

Guitar Care while Traveling

The guitar probably travels more than any other musical instrument in the world, and it will only be a matter of time before you take yours on its first trip. If you are going to take your guitar on the road with you, remember, it's not just another piece of baggage. You have to make an effort to protect it.

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Traveling by Car

Avoid transporting your guitar in the trunk of the car. It is much safer in the back seat because most car trunks are neither heated nor ventilated, so the temperatures can fluctuate wildly. Freezing or overheating your guitar is an invitation for a crack or warp to occur. Your guitar is assembled with glues that can be affected by heat causing breakdown and loosening of glue adhesion. Most commonly affected is the bridge.



Air Travel

Airlines don't set out to damage guitars intentionally, but a conveyor system can't tell a guitar from other baggage. Airlines may consider a guitar to be too fragile for their handling and may require that a waiver be signed which limits or removes their liability. Don't sign such a document if you can avoid it. Even a hard case can't always protect a guitar from damage from mishandling by individuals or commercial carriers.



Occasionally you can bypass the usual baggage handling system by asking to take your guitar to the boarding area where it can be tagged and hand carried to the airplane. Upon arrival, notify the flight attendant or customer service representative and try to retrieve it at the gate. Not all airlines give you this option.

There are size restrictions on carry-on luggage. It must fit in the overhead bin or under the seat ahead of you. Some flight attendants may allow you to try the overhead bin, but if it doesn't fit; it may have to be checked as baggage. Loosening the strings and using a soft cotton packing material to keep the guitar tight in its case will decrease the possibility of damage while a guitar is in the baggage compartment. The hard case will help, but a good case is not a cure-all for careless handling or accidents.

A Cautionary Word about Guitar Straps

Your instrument is coated with multiple thin layers of high-grade finish. It can be adversely affected by interaction with certain synthetic straps and can also be affected by leather straps.

Vinyl and synthetic leathers contain solvents that keep the material soft and supple. These solvents will transfer to the instrument's finish and cause damage over time. Do not allow such straps to stay in continued contact with the finish. The best procedure is to always remove your strap from your guitar after use and store separately. Vinyl sofas, chairs, etc. should also be avoided.