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Guitar Strings – Part 1

By Michael Tafoya

Getting in tune and staying in tune, are what the job requires, for sure. I've been in so many

situation's where string breakage and not staying in tune just creates havoc on the band, Audience, and music. I've had situations in my youth and now a days to be sure, where I've neglected to either change my strings, and a couple of times I like a dumb kid just didn't bother to properly tune my guitar.

I used to work for the Gibson Guitar String and Accessories Division (now called GIBSON GEAR) as a shipping and receiving clerk then moved up to Regional Sales Manager in Elgin, IL. In those capacities I was able to see the Gibson String line from start to finish, as well as learning what alloys the strings were made of. I got to understand how those alloys affected their overall tone feel and playability.

Mind you, I've been playing now for over forty years and I've used just about every brand of string manufactured. Obviously I haven't tried every string brand sold out there, just most of them. I tend to play very hard when I'm rocking and I'm used to certain brands of guitar strings giving out. I don't pretend to know what the ins and outs to manufacturing strings. I do know what works for me.

I've used The Gibson Brand string for decades before I worked there and after I got the job in shipping (working for minimum wage); I'd buy the strings and turn them on to my guitarist friends. I'd also give them to some friends who weren't guitarist, just guitar players. My point was to hip my buddy's to these strings that seemed to tune well, not break from a good workout. Besides, I'd get them on discount.

I know when I was trying to sell these strings to music dealers that I'd hear "all strings are the same man"! It would seem to make sense, it's not true! There are very good strings, good strings and there are poorly made strings. Yes, it's a subjective call and I am a `Gibson' man. That saying doesn't hold water to me at all. Since I stopped working for Gibson I've used and abused all types and brands of guitar strings. I know from experience that for the hard core "smack down" bruise and bloody your fingers guitarist. Gibson is one of the best.

What I do know and can tell you about these strings is the wound strings are smooth, feel tight, bend like a Mo-Fo and don't break after a long set of banging and rocking your balls off!

Give these strings a shot and see what I know works for me.

Next time I'll give you my take on what and how the different alloys do to the playability and tonal character of your performance.

Mike uses Gibson Guitars, Gibson Strings, Epiphone, Marshall, and Crate amplifiers, and Dunlop guitar Picks.

<http://www.tafoyaslostboyzz.com/Articles/Articles.htm>

How Do Different Types Of Guitar Strings Effect Your Sound?

By Chris Thomas

There are so many different brands of guitar strings out there, and within the brands there are many different gauges and types. This can be overwhelming for beginners, so I want to briefly discuss different types of strings and associated sizes and why you want to carefully consider the types of strings you would want to use.

First of all let's briefly discuss nylon strings. These strings are used on classical guitars and are conducive for fingerpicking. If you own a classical guitar or are considering purchasing one, these are the strings you will use.

Now if you're playing a standard electric or acoustic 6–string guitar, you're going to want steel strings. Some of the more popular brands are D'Addario, Dean Markley, Ernie Ball, Elixer, GHS, and Fender. Try the same size of each brand and you will begin to notice differences. I remember trying D'Addario, Dean Markley, and Ernie Ball .009s and I was partial to D'Addarios because it seemed like my pick would get caught on the strings to o easily. So definately experiment with different strings to find out which you prefer.

As for the different sizes, they come in sizes ranging anywhere from sets of .008's to .013's. Now, you may wonder what this means. Well the .008–.013 range describes the thickness in inches of the high E string. So when someone says 8's, 9's 10's, they're typically referring to a set of guitar strings with the high E string of that thickness. The remaining strings are also thicker or thinner depending on the thickness of the high E string, although you can buy individual strings to suit your personal tastes.

What thickness should you choose? I prefer D'Arddario 9s for my electric and Elixer 10s for my acoustic. For me, anything thicker then 10s give my fingers a tough time. But also know that the thicker strings will have a much better tone. As a beginner, I wouldn't recommend set thicker then 9s for starters until you build up some left hand strength. I don't recommend 8s at all as they tend to break too easily.

If you're going to be playing dropped tunings, then you should consider thick strings in the .012–.013 range (Ernie Ball Not Even Slinky Strings are great). This will allow you to tune down and still have tight strings that don't flap around. The thinner strings will usually be too slack when you're tuned

down.

Chris Thomas writes articles and does reviews of the top online guitar lessons for

<http://www.guitarlessoncomparisons.com>



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