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I get asked this question a lot: â€œHow do I know if I should change my guitar strings yet?â€•

Well, if youâ€™re thinking about itâ€¦itâ€™s probably time

Guitar strings are cheap. Go ahead and take the plunge, it will only cost you $7-$15 depending on what strings you get.

Ok, now seriouslyâ€¦There are a few telltale signs that guitar strings will show when theyâ€™re ready to be changed.

If they look dirty, they need to go.

If youâ€™re having a hard time tuning them, cut them loose.

If you havenâ€™t changed them in a few months (and you play regularly), treat yourself to some fresh strings

Dirt and oil from your hands end up on your guitar strings. This causes the strings to corrode over time. The guitar will begin sounding dull or even lifeless. It will start to play out of tune, no matter how much you try tune it, and will be nearly impossible to tune. We all know an out of tune guitar is no fun!

The life of your strings will vary depending on how you treat them. A guitar played 2 hours a week will keep itâ€™s strings longer than a guitar played 2 hours a day. Dirty hands will kill strings quickly, so itâ€™s always a good idea to wash your hands before you pick up your guitar. Sweaty hands will shorten your stringsâ€™ life, too, but this can be unavoidable. Heavy hands will wear strings out quicker than light ones. Humidity can cause metal strings to corrode at a quicker rate.

As your strings age, it can be common (especially for beginners) to wonder whatâ€™s wrong with your guitar. The guitar will feel like it has less energy than it did, and moving up and down the fretboard will not feel as smooth. All these things can make playing a lot less fun, so go ahead and change those strings! Itâ€™s the single most effective and inexpensive way to put some new life into your guitar.

Also, if youâ€™ve bought a new guitar, especially from a larger guitar shop, you may want to replace the strings. Just think of how many grimy hands demoed that guitar before you bought it!

If youâ€™ve never changed your strings before, YouTube has some great instructional videos so check them out. Even if you use a pro for all of your other maintenance, itâ€™s important to be able to restring your guitar.

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