



Care & Feeding of Your Folk Instrument

Congratulations on acquiring your new Ron Cook Studios folk instrument. Your musical instrument is constructed of new and recycled woods that need protection from the elements to keep it in the top playing and cosmetic conditions. Please note the following on how to care for your instrument:

1. Warnings
 - a. Your instrument is constructed from solid wood that was carefully dried and seasoned. Solid wood soaks up moisture in wet climates and gives off moisture in dry climates. If you live in a desert, high mountain, or cold winter region, you will occasionally experience dry weather that might crack your instrument. If not properly taken care of, your instrument will crack. The damage is serious, but can be prevented by storing your instrument in a case and using an instrument humidifier (available from most musical instrument stores and on the internet). For instruments hung on display, the room or house should have a humidifier. Around 50% relative humidity is optimal.
 - b. Keep out of direct sunlight
 - c. Do not store or display next to heaters
 - d. Do not leave your instrument in a hot car
2. Care
 - a. Dust with soft bristle brush and/or soft dust cloth (Do not use spray-on dusting helpers or "sticky" tack cloths.)
 - b. Glossy finished instruments: use a non-abrasive wax or brand-name furniture polish to preserve the high-gloss finish. Music stores often carry cleaners and/or waxes for guitars. These are good for glossy finished instruments.
 - c. Satin finished instruments: **Do not use any type of wax or polish on a satin finished instrument.** Dust only.
3. Strings
 - a. String breakage occurs through age and use and is not covered by warranty.
 - b. String sets and single strings are available through Ron Cook Studios, local music stores, or on the internet.
 - c. If a string breaks, be sure to replace it with the same gauge and type (e.g., nylon, steel, brass). Most Ron Cook Studios instruments come with a string chart and tuning guide. Many music stores sell single strings in all available gauges (except for brass). If you are unsure of the gauge size, take the broken string to the store for comparison. Replacement brass strings are available through Ron Cook Studios.
4. Tuning Your Instrument
 - a. No two types of folk instruments are tuned the same. The tuning arrangement and playing style of some ancient and medieval instruments have been lost to history (e.g., rotes, hog-nose psalteries). These can be tuned to fit the player's preference.
 - b. Aeolian harp strings, no matter what gauge, length, or thickness, are tuned to the same note. Tune the bass strings (thickest strings) up until they are tight enough to make a sound when plucked, then tune all other strings to the same note. (The different gauge strings will all create unique harmonic tones when the wind is directed across them.)
 - c. Note that early instruments (ancient and medieval) were tuned lower than modern instruments. Today's pitch is based on A=440 Hz. The medieval pitch varied, depending on type of instrument and/or string type used. Today's standard for medieval pitch is A=415Hz. Ron Cook Studios medieval-style folk instruments are based on historic originals created before the 15th century and can be tuned at A=415 Hz (preferable for gut strings) but are designed to be tuned at modern pitch (A=440 Hz) using nylon or steel strings.
 - d. Information on tuning early American instruments (banjos, mandolins) and some medieval instruments (medieval fiddles, rebecs, harps) can be found in music stores, specialty book stores, in the library, and on the internet.