

## Spring Cleaning For Your Guitar

These steps were taught to me by a combination of people over my years of experience with the classical guitar. I perform these steps at regular intervals on both my Alvarez Yairi and my Ramirez 1a. I find that the care I will outline in this handout makes my guitars ‘happy and well-adjusted’. –That being said; please use your own discretion when using these methods. I would not recommend performing step 3 (cleaning the body) on a guitar with a *French Polish* finish, or any guitar that has a cracks in the existing finish.

DISCLAIMER—Aaron D. Powell/PowellGuitar Studios LLC does not accept any responsibility in the event of any damage to your guitar by using the steps outlined in this handout. –Aaron

### Step One: Remove the strings

- If using a string winder, *let the tool do the work*. It is easy to damage the tuning assembly on any guitar.
- I strongly advise not to cut the strings until they are rattling. A sudden decrease in tension on the guitar could cause harm
- Tip: Old guitar strings make wonderful picture hanging wire.

### Step Two: Clean and Oil Fingerboard (not for use on a Maple fingerboards)

- Place your guitar on the bath towel, this process can get messy
- With steady even pressure, use 0000 Steel Wool in a circular pattern to massage the fingerboard and frets. This will remove any grime/gunk that has accumulated on your guitar since the last time this process was done. I have been told that this process extends the life of your frets (which is more of an issue on steel stringed instruments)
- Make sure to be consistent from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> fret, and be aware of how much pressure you are applying to the neck and guitar while doing this process.
- Be careful at this point in rubbing the filings off of your guitar body near the soundhole; as this can really scratch the finish. Blowing the filings off with air is probably the best method to getting rid of the filings
- Tip: This is a great time to use a vacuum with a hose to go inside of the guitar and get rid of any dust/gunk that has accumulated inside of the guitar (you might be surprised at what you find)
- Add a healthy amount of Old English Lemon Oil to fingerboard, for the best results, let it ‘soak in’ as long as possible before wiping away excess.

### Step Three: Clean the Body of the Guitar

- This is for a STANDARD LACQUER FINISH ONLY—if you have a French Polish Guitar, do not perform this step on your instrument.
- Using Novus Plastic Polish (Blue Container, purchased at the Harley-Davidson Store) and a Micro-Fiber Towel spray a liberal amount of product on the towel and polish your instrument using small circles (as you would when waxing a car)
- Follow the directions on the bottle, be aware of how much pressure you are applying on the guitar’s body
- Don’t forget to do the headstock and the back of the neck also (it is easy to forget those items and then realize so after replacing the strings.

### Step Four: New Strings/Kling-On Products

- I am an advocate for the use of many of the products put out by Kling-On, most notably the *Guitar Top Protector* (CL-3P-C), [www.kling-on.com](http://www.kling-on.com) **Again**—these products are for the standard lacquer finish only. When applied correctly, they are almost invisible and offer a layer of protection that is invaluable in my opinion. The protective film is non-adhesive, and I think makes my instruments look years younger than they are. You can put the Kling-On products on and remove them with ease at any time you wish.
- Put a small dab of silicon lubricant on the gears of the tuning machines
- Install a new set of your favorite strings as you normally would and *voila*, your guitar is clean and ready to go for 3-6 months of playing.