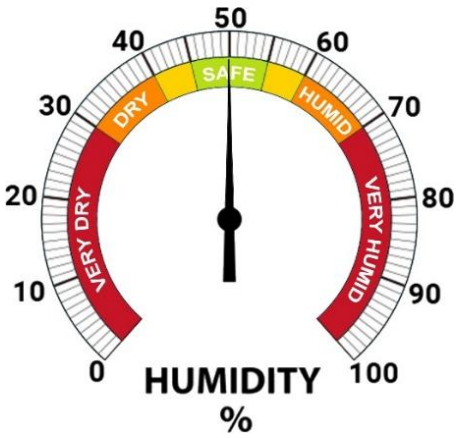
Bromo Acoustic Guitar Care & Maintenance

Protecting Your Investment Through Proper Care

A well-maintained guitar not only lasts longer, but it also plays and sounds better. When it comes to guitar care, there are several important factors that require special attention, but the foremost concern is climate-related risks. These can be a matter of life or death for your delicate instrument, yet they're often something most people don't think about. An even lesser-known fact is that high-end guitars are more susceptible to climate changes. Let's dive into that first.

Shielding Your Instrument from Climate Hazards



Your instrument is made from delicate, thin wood that is highly sensitive to fluctuations in temperature and humidity. Bromo Guitars suggests keeping the relative humidity between 45-55% and the temperature between 22 – 26°C (72-79°F) to maintain optimal conditions. Using a hygrometer or thermometer is recommended to help monitor these factors.

Humidity	Symptoms
Below 30%	Extreme changes to the top, back and sides, leading to a high risk of cracking and splitting. There could also be serious neck bending, severe fret sprouting, and a high risk of bridge lifting or other glue-related failures.
30-40%	Sharp fret ends begin to appear. The neck starts bowing or warping. Body shrinkage at the top, back and sides becomes noticeable, mostly sinking inward, causing string buzz, and occasionally outward, leading to high action. There is a fair chance of cracking and splitting. Glue joints may become loose at the bridge, neck joint, and
40-45%	A couple of days of exposure is usually okay. Extended exposure may require resetting.
45-55%	Safe zone.
55-60%	A couple of days of exposure is usually okay. Extended exposure may require resetting.
60-70%	Hardware parts, including strings, frets and machine heads, become prone to corrosion, especially in coastal areas with more corrosive air than inland. Top or body can swell slightly, mostly outward, causing high action, and occasionally inward, leading to buzzing issues.
Above 70%	Excessive humidity could lead to significant top or body swelling, neck warping, changes in action, fretboard expansion, bridge lifting, finish damage, mold and mildew growth, and loss of tone and projection.

***Caution: High-end guitars are more susceptible to climate changes.**

1. Avoid Sudden Changes in Temperature – Rapid changes in temperature or exposure to cold can cause small cracks to appear in the finish.

2. Avoid High Humidity – As humidity increases, the wood absorbs moisture, causing it to swell and expand. Extended exposure to high humidity could lead to significant top or body swelling, neck warping, changes in action, fretboard expansion, weakened glue joints, finish damage, mold and mildew growth, and loss of tone and projection.

3. Avoid Sudden Changes in Humidity – The most significant risk comes from sudden shifts in humidity. For example, placing your instrument near a heat source can cause the surrounding air to dry out quickly, which has a similar effect to a sudden dry spell. When the moisture content of the wood drops too rapidly, it can lead to uneven shrinkage, causing cracks and open joints. To avoid this, never place your instrument near heat sources or hang it in areas where it might dry out.

During the winter months, it's crucial to avoid hanging your instrument on an exterior wall. These walls are usually colder than the surrounding air, which can create a temperature imbalance between the top and back of the instrument, potentially causing damage. If your instrument has been exposed to freezing temperatures, let it warm up gradually to room temperature while still in its case. This helps the instrument adjust slowly to the temperature change, reducing the risk of cracks in the wood or finish.

4. Store in a Humidity Controlled Room or Quality Case – Store your guitar in a humidity-controlled room or at least in a quality hardshell case when not in use. In a hardshell case, you can use a humidifier to help maintain a stable environment, shielding it from fluctuating indoor conditions.

5. Use Humidifiers with Caution - If you're using a humidifier to counteract low humidity, proceed with caution. Direct moisture contact with your instrument can cause harm, and the rubber or vinyl components of some humidifiers can also cause damage. We recommend keeping your instrument in its case when not in use, as it makes it easier to control humidity in a smaller, enclosed space. If you plan on not playing your instrument for an extended period, Bromo Guitars suggests loosening the strings slightly before storing it.

Protect Your Guitar from Sweat and Dust

As a dedicated guitarist, you know the importance of keeping your instrument in top condition. Sweat, dust, and oils from your hands can slowly degrade both the finish and functionality of your guitar if not properly managed. To ensure your guitar stays sounding and looking great, regular cleaning is essential, particularly on the body, fretboard, and strings.

1. Proper Cleaning Tools for Your Guitar - To maintain your guitar's integrity, always use a soft, lint-free cloth like a microfiber towel. This will safely lift away dirt and oils without scratching or damaging the surface.

When cleaning, avoid applying products directly to the guitar. Instead, apply any cleaning solution to the cloth first. This prevents excess residue and minimizes the risk of spills that could potentially damage your instrument.

2. Choosing the Right Cleaning Products - Only use guitar-specific cleaning products. These are formulated to be gentle on your instrument, with less abrasiveness than household cleaners. Many also contain essential oils that nourish the wood and protect the finish.

Be cautious about using general-purpose cleaners, which may contain harsh chemicals that can harm the finish or fretboard. Stick to products designed for guitars, and use them sparingly.

3. What to Avoid - Some substances are particularly harmful to your guitar's finish, including:

- **Harsh solvents** found in plastic, vinyl, and leather straps
- **Alcohol**, **citric acid**, **aftershave**, **insect repellent**, and similar products
- **Silicone-based products**, which can degrade the finish over time

These can damage the delicate surface of your guitar, leading to unsightly wear or permanent stains.

4. Sweat: A Hidden Enemy - Sweat can be especially damaging to your guitar, as it leaves oils and moisture behind that can tarnish the strings and affect the finish. To minimize the impact of perspiration:

- Always try to keep your guitar dry while playing.
- After each session, wipe down the body and strings with a dry, soft cloth to remove oils and moisture from your hands.
- If your guitar features a glossy finish, you can use a guitar polish with a clean polishing cloth to restore its shine.

5. Gloss vs. Satin Finishes - If you have a guitar with a **gloss finish**, applying guitar polish can give it a beautiful, shiny appearance. However, avoid using polish on **satin finishes**, as it can create an uneven gloss. Also, make sure never to use products that contain silicone, as they can cause long-term damage to your guitar's finish.

6. Routine Care - In addition to wiping down your guitar after each playing session, make it a habit to give it a thorough clean before storing it for an extended period. This helps ensure that dust, sweat, and oils don't accumulate and cause damage while the instrument is not in use.

By following these simple steps, you can protect your guitar from the effects of sweat, dust, and oils, preserving its sound quality and appearance for years to come.

The Importance of String Maintenance for Guitarists

Every guitarist, at some point, will need to learn how to change their strings. While it might seem like a simple task, mastering it can greatly improve the longevity and sound quality of your guitar. New strings can give your instrument a fresh lease on life, boosting both playability and tone. But how often should you change them?

1. How Often Should You Change Your Guitar Strings? - The frequency of string changes depends on several factors, such as how frequently you play and the environment in which you play. Some guitarists change their strings before every gig, while others find that regular cleaning and proper care extend the life of their strings.

Regardless of how often you change your strings, the type of string you choose and its gauge will also affect how your guitar feels and sounds. Lighter gauges are often preferred for ease of play, while heavier strings provide a richer tone. Make sure to explore different options to discover what works best for your style.

2. Why Strings Wear Out and When to Replace Them? - All guitar strings, no matter the material, will eventually wear out. As you play and expose them to environmental factors, strings lose their brightness and tonal quality. When this happens, it's time for a replacement.

Instead of just replacing one or two worn-out strings, it's recommended to replace the entire set. Mixing old and new strings can create an imbalanced sound, so swapping them all at once ensures a consistent, vibrant tone.

3. Understanding Your Guitar's String Gauge - Bromo guitars are designed to work with no heavier than medium gauge strings (.013 to .056) for their 6-string models. For 12-string guitars, lighter gauges should be used. It's important to stick to the recommended string gauges to avoid potential damage to your instrument. Using heavier strings than those specified could result in unnecessary strain on the guitar, and Bromo cannot be held responsible for any issues caused by improper string choices.

4. Experimenting with Different Strings - While the strings that come pre-installed on your guitar are typically suitable for most players, different playing styles may call for different string types. Don't hesitate to experiment with various string sets to find the one that best suits your unique sound and playing technique.

Changing your guitar strings is more than just a maintenance task; it's an opportunity to enhance your instrument's sound and performance. Whether you're a frequent performer or

a casual player, understanding when and how to replace your strings, as well as choosing the right type and gauge, will keep your guitar in top condition for years to come.

Properly Inserting Bridge Pins

The bridge pins are an essential part of securing your guitar strings at the bridge. Each pin features a small notch at the front to hold the string in place. It's crucial to ensure that the notch of the bridge pin aligns directly with the string's path, so it rests correctly on the saddle.

Before you insert the bridge pin, make sure the ball end of the string is pulled snugly against the interior of the guitar's top, ensuring the string is fully seated.

One of the most common mistakes is using excessive force to insert the bridge pins. This can cause the pins to get stuck or, in more extreme cases, split the bridge. Once the string is positioned correctly and the pin is in place, a firm but gentle push with your thumb should be more than enough to secure it.

Understanding Guitar Action and the Importance of Adjustments

The action of your instrument, or how easily it plays, is determined by the distance between the top of the fret and the bottom of the string. Over time, this action can change due to factors like string tension or environmental shifts. If the action is too high, it can make playing more difficult, while too low can lead to buzzing, requiring adjustments to keep your instrument comfortable to play.

1. When Adjustments Are Needed - To maintain optimal action, adjustments may be necessary from time to time. These can be made by modifying the truss rod, adjusting the saddle height, or altering the nut. However, such adjustments are delicate and should be handled with care.

2. Truss Rod Adjustments – Adjusting the truss rod helps adjust the string action by changing the amount of neck relief. To start, tune your guitar to pitch and check neck relief. Press down the first and 4th frets of the low E string to create a straight line and measure the gap at the 7th fret. If the neck has too much relief (curvature), tighten the truss rod (clockwise) to straighten it. If the neck is too straight or back-bowed, loosen the truss rod (counterclockwise). Make small adjustments, no more than a quarter turn at a time, and check frequently. Always re-tune and re-check relief after each adjustment. Be cautious not to over-tighten, as this could damage the truss rod.

Neck relief is somewhat subjective. Many guitarists prefer a small amount of neck relief, as it provides a bit more forgiveness for playing, reducing the risk of fret buzz and allowing more aggressive strumming or playing. Some players, particularly those who play with a lighter touch or prefer very low action, like a neck that is as straight as possible. A completely flat neck (or slight back bow) may result in extremely low action, but it can also lead to fret buzz if not properly adjusted.

3. Caution - Bromo Guitars strongly recommends that action adjustments be performed by an experienced technician. Attempting unauthorized repairs or adjustments can lead to damage that may affect the instrument's performance. Any issues resulting from improper repairs will not be covered under warranty, and Bromo Guitars cannot be held responsible for such damages.

Understanding Neck and Top Adjustments

The concept of neck bow can be confusing, but it's crucial for maintaining your guitar's playability. Neck bow refers to the curvature of the neck, and it can be adjusted using the truss rod to ensure the neck remains straight with the right amount of relief. However, adjusting the truss rod is not something most guitarists should do themselves—it's best handled by a professional at an Authorized Service Center.

1. What Causes Neck Bow and How to Identify It - Occasionally, when you look down the neck, it might appear that the guitar has a neck bow, even if everything is within normal specifications. This can happen when the top of the instrument shifts due to changes in environmental factors like temperature and humidity. When the top swells, it can cause the fingerboard to lift at the end because it is attached to the top rather than the neck. If this lift becomes significant, it might need to be addressed by a technician.

2. The Role of the Top in Your Guitar's Structure - A certain amount of warping or "bellying" in the top is perfectly normal. The top of the guitar is intentionally built with a slight arch, which can become more pronounced over time. This can happen due to string tension or exposure to high humidity, both of which can cause the top to shift. To avoid exacerbating this issue, it's important not to use heavy-gauge strings, as they place more strain on the top.

3. Dealing with Excessive Bellying - If the bellying in the top becomes too pronounced, it can affect the guitar's playability. In such cases, it may be necessary to lower the saddle and bridge to restore proper action and comfort. Regular monitoring of the instrument's top and neck, particularly in changing climates, will help ensure your guitar stays in good shape.

Neck bow and top bellying are natural occurrences in a guitar's life, but they must be carefully managed. For adjustments involving the neck or top, always seek professional

help to avoid damage. By keeping your guitar within the right conditions and avoiding extreme string tensions, you can ensure your instrument performs at its best.

Caring for Your Guitar's Machine Heads

Machine heads, or tuning pegs, are vital for maintaining tuning stability, and thankfully, they don't require a lot of maintenance. The most important task is periodic lubrication, which ensures smooth operation and helps prevent wear. While sealed machine heads come pre-lubricated, open-style machine heads need to be oiled once or twice a year.

1. Lubricating Open-Style Machine Heads - For open-style machine heads, lubrication is key. To do this, use a small amount of petroleum jelly on the tip of a toothpick and carefully apply it to the gears. Be cautious not to over-apply, as excess lubricant can attract dust and dirt, which can cause damage over time. Regular lubrication will ensure that your machine heads continue to function smoothly.

2. Fine-Tuning Tuning Resistance - Some machine heads have the option to adjust the resistance to make tuning easier. For open-style machine heads, you can increase the resistance by tightening the screw in the center of the gear. It's a good idea to check this screw whenever you change your strings, as it can loosen with use.

Sealed machine heads typically feature an adjustment screw at the end of the tuning knob. Tightening this screw can make the tuning feel stiffer, but be cautious—only a small amount of tension is needed. Over-tightening can lead to damage, so always err on the side of caution.

Proper maintenance of your machine heads, including lubrication and occasional adjustments, will keep them in optimal working condition. With minimal care, your tuning pegs will provide consistent and smooth tuning for years to come. Always remember to check for loose screws and ensure your machine heads are operating at their best whenever you change your strings.

Important Repair Advice

It's always wiser to take precautions upfront rather than dealing with the fallout later. However, if something does go wrong, repairs should always be handled by an experienced technician, as it requires specialized knowledge, the right tools, and proper techniques. Professional luthiers ensure repairs are done correctly, preserving your guitar's sound, feel, and value, while preventing further damage down the line.