

FRETLESS GUITAR FOR ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

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1.INTRO

Hi!

There is not much info on the internet about fretless guitar.

Cause fretless guitar is a very new and unexplored thing

There is only one book that I know of and it's written by a great fretless player

Tim Donahue. This book is great but for beginners it can be bit hard ...

You need to know musical notation to understand the book...

And many players can't read music....

So I decided to write something for absolute beginners...

Something simple and easy to understand..

In this book you'll find some tabbed examples, exercises , and some info....

And I hope I'm going to help you to make your fretted to fretless transformation

Lot easier....

And when you discover fretless there are no limits....

I'm not responsible if you destroy your guitar in every process described in this text!

Regards

2. MAKING FRETLESS GUITAR

So you decided to make fretless guitar. It's a very easy process and you don't need to much knowledge or tools. Best way to start is by defretting a classical guitar. It's great for practice and it has a great tone... So let's start:

Removing the frets – Is the all about fretless guitar. You can remove frets with fret pullers or screwdriver (I defretted all my guitars with screwdriver).

You need to heat up the frets so they can come out easily....

Use a soldering iron to heat every fret. Then place a screwdriver under a fret a then pull it up. This will make marks on fret board but don't worry after a sanding process it wont be visible... **But best thing is to use fret pullers is you can find them..**

Filling the slots- After the frets are out fill all the fret «holes» with a epoxy...

And let it dry... Best thing is to let epoxy dry for one day....

Use a thin tool like needle or tooth pick to put epoxy in to the holes.....

Sanding- After epoxy is dry use a sandpaper to make your neck smooth all the way...Remove the nut! Place sandpaper on a peace of wooden board so your sanding can be more strait.... Start with hard and finish with very fine sand paper...

Nut- You need to sand down your nut... I depends on your guitar but it needs to Be very low....

After you are finished put the strings back on and it's finished.

Now it's time to adjust your guitar....

3. SETUP AND TUNING

When your fretless is finally finished it's time to do adjustments on the guitar....

First thing you'll see is that your strings are very high from the fret board....

Don't worry that's O.K. Cause when you remove the frets the distance

Is normally much higher... As you can see below. ..



It's very important to reduce that distance more you can...

The sustain is one of the main problems with fretless guitar...so to achieve more sustain strings need to be very low ... (from 1 mm to 4 mm and 12. mark)

Now it's time to reduce that distance....

So if you have electric fretless you need to make low bridge action....

Every electric guitar has different way to do this....

But what to do with classical guitar....?

As you can see classical guitars have a wooden or plastic saddle which holds the strings...

So you need to remove that saddle and sand it down on desired height....

Also you can make or buy a new saddle....

Now while the saddle is still on the bridge make mark with a pen so you know the height... So while sanding you'll have good picture how much have you sanded...

Some classical guitars have a truss rod....

That is very good thing cause its much easier to make adjustments....

And be careful: Don't sand saddle to much...because only thing you'll have is buzzing....

Now when the saddle is lower its time to tune your guitar....

There are lots of discussions on how to tune fretless...
Well you can tune it any way you want ...it's really your choice....
You can use any kind of tuning... (Try to experiment with opened tunings)
But in this text I will be using standard tuning but dropped for one step....

D-----
A-----
F-----
C-----
G-----
D-----

Some people say that is better because there are no frets...so after a while
Neck could bend under a hard string tension....
But I use this tuning because the sound with nylon string this way is awesome...

So how to tune fretless?

Well for a start you can use tuner...lol... :D

The other way is to tune it with an opened string.....
Try to learn how two opened string sound when they are plucked
And do it this way:

DG , GC, CF, FA, AD....

Also you can use harmonics....
For example harmonic on the 5. mark of D2 string needs to sound exactly as
A harmonic on the 7. mark of the A string.....

To achieve harmonic just simply put your finger on a 7. mark... Don't press the
string just touch it gently... And when you pluck that string remove your finger
From the fret mark....and ta-da... you have a harmonic...

4. BASIC CHORDS

The second problem on a fretless guitar is chords!

Some chords that work perfect on a fretted guitar on fretless they don't work at all..

Try to keep your chords your chords at 4 tone maximum....

You need to forget «bare» chords because they sound awfully out of tune....

But there is a little trick you can do!

To achieve chord you need 3 tones minimum and try to use opened strings with Your chords.

For example G major.

To achieve that chords you need these 3 tones G, D, B...

So try to find those tones on the whole fret board and make your own chords:

Some examples of G major:

```

D-----0-----12-----x-----|
A-----5-----10-----x-----|
F-----6-----9-----s2-----|
C-----3s7-----x-----s2-----|
G-----0-----0-----0-----|
D-----x-----x-----x-----|
  
```

It's very important that you learn all the tones on the fret board and your And be innovative...

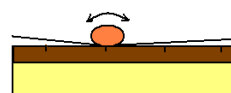
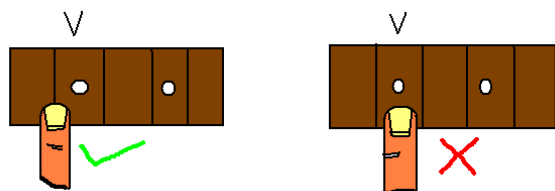
Here I'm going to explain only major, minor and seventh chords...:

Remember:

Your are fretless now!

Frets made intonation for you before!

Now you are in charge of intonation...so you need to put your fingers on the marks where frets used to be....



Also try to give some life to notes with vibrato...

4. 1 Major Chords

Here are some examples of major chords:

G-major from example above:

```
D-----0-----12-----x-----|
A-----5-----10-----x-----|
F-----6-----9-----s2-----|
C-----3s7-----x-----s2-----|
G-----0-----0-----0-----|
D-----x-----x-----x-----|
```

F major:

```
D-----x-----10
A-----3-----12
F-----4-----0
C-----5-----0
G-----x-----x
D-----x-----x
```

D# major:

```
D-----x----
A-----1----
F-----2----
C-----3----
G-----1s3-
D-----x----
```

D major:

```
D-----0-----12-----0---
A-----5-----12-----0---
F-----4-----13-----1---
C-----x-----x-----2---
G-----x-----x-----x---
D-----0-----0-----0---
```

4.2 Minor Chords

C minor:

D-----5---
A-----6---
F-----7---
C-----0---
G-----x---
D-----x---

D minor:

D-----0-----9s12---
A-----0-----9s12---
F-----0-----9s12---
C-----4s9----x-----
G-----2s7----x-----
D-----0-----0-----

E minor:

D-----5---
A-----7---
F-----6---
C-----x---
G-----x---
D-----x---

A minor:

D-----7---
A-----7---
F-----7---
C----s9-----
G-----x---
D-----x---

4.3 Seventh chords

D7 :

D-----0-----
A-----0-----
F-----7-----
C-----6-----
G-----5s7-----
D-----0-----

G7:

D-----0-----
A-----8-----
F-----6-----
C-----2s7--
G-----0-----
D-----

F7:

D-----s10---
A-----s9-----
F-----s9-----
C-----s9-----
G-----x-----
D-----x-----

B7:

D-----x-----
A-----10---
F-----8-----
C-----9-----
G-----x-----
D-----x-----

5. BASIC TECHNIQUES

Same thing with chords is with techniques ... some things work and some don't
But good thing you can do more techniques on a fretless guitar...

One thing you need to avoid is bending strings...

Bending damages your fret board and you don't need bends.

Instead bends you will use slides

Fretless guitar has some techniques that can't be played on a fretted guitar.

So I'm going to explain some of those:

Slides, Slide hammer-on, slide pull -of, crossing, Cross tapping.

Now I'm going to explain the marks that are going to be used:

/s – slide

2s7 – slide from 2nd to 7th mark

t - Tap

h – Hammer on

p – Pull of

~ - vibrato

x – Muted string

5. 1. Slides

Fretless guitar is a perfect instrument for sliding..

You don't need to use bends...Imagine that you can make bend on a fretted Guitar from 1st to 12th fret... you can't but fretless makes it easy...

How to make slide?

Place your finger on a 1st fret mark and pluck the string.

While the string is still ringing slide up to 12th mark and that's it.

D---1s12--|

Here are some of slide licks.

Sliding up:

D-----2s3----s7~-----
A-----3s5-----
F---2s4-----
C-----
G-----
D-0-----

Sliding down:

D---12s10-----
A-----10s8-----
F-----9s7-----
C-----7s5-----
G-----7~-----
D-----

Slide tone slide:

D-----
A-----
F-----
C-----7--8--9---s2---
G-----4s7-----
D--0---5s7-----

Chord sliding..

Also on fretless guitar you can slide the chords

```
D-----x-----0-----  
A-----3s5----5s7--8--7s5--0-----  
F-----4s6-----s5-----  
C-----5s7-----s7-----  
G-----x-----0-----  
D-----x-----x-----
```

Sliding scales:

Here is A# major scale....

```
D-----5---7s8-----  
A-----5s6----s7-----  
F-----5s7-----  
C-----  
G-----  
D-----
```

Try always to practice scales using slides and vibrato....

For example you can use this scale from above and give it a try

All over the neck...

5. 2. Slide hammer-on

One of advantages of a fretless guitar is that you are able to play a hammer on while sliding up and down then neck....

Here are few licks:

D---2h3s5h7-s12-----
A-----
F-----
C-----
G-----
D-----

D-----
A-----
F-----
C---2—s4h5s7h9—s14~-----
G-----
D---0-----

D-----3h5s12h15—s17~-----
A-----
F-----
C-----
G---0-----
D-----

D-----5h7---s7h9--s9h12-----
A-----5-----s7-----s9-----
F-----5-----s7-----s9-----
C-----
G-----
D-----

5. 3. Slide pull of

Here are few licks:

D-----12p10s7---7p5s3-----
A-----
F-----
C-----
G-----
D-----

D-----
A-----12p10s8-----
F-----9p7-----
C-----9p7s5-----
G-----
D-----

D-----
A-----8p7s5---5p3s17~-----
F-----
C-----
G-----
D-----

D-----
A-----
F-----11p9-----
C-----11p9s7-----
G-----9s7-----
D-----3s5--

5. 4. Crossing

Crossing is a technique and you tap two notes and then you slide one note up
And second note down

D-----
A-----
F-----
C-----t9s14-----
G-----t7s2-----
D-----

D-----
A-----t5s3-----
F-----
C-----
G-----t7s10-----
D-----

D-----
A-----
F-----
C-----t7s12-----
G-----
D-----t5s1-----

D-----
A-----t8-s10-----
F-----t7-----s5-----
C-----t6-----s4-----
G-----t7-----s5-----
D-----

6. TONE EXERCISES

Main thing you need to practice on fretless guitar is your intonation.
 Like I said before you are in charge so you need to make your notes sound
 More in tune.....

So here are few licks that I use to practice my intonation.

D-----0-
 A-----0---s5---
 F-----s7---2s4-----
 C-----s7---0-----
 G---s7-0-----
 D-0-----

D-----
 A-----
 F-----
 C----- Practice this on every string!
 G-----
 D---0s12s5---s17-----

D-----s8765---
 A-----s5678-----
 F-----s8765-----
 C-----s5678-----
 G-----s8765-----
 D-s5687-----

D-----s5678 ---s8765 -----
 A-----s5678-----s8765-----
 F-----s5678-----s8765-----
 C-----s5678-----s8765-----
 G-----s5678-----s8765-----
 D---s5678-----s8765

7. LINKS

If you need any info on fretless guitar, from making to playing go to.



<http://www.unfretted.com>