**GUITAR PURCHASE – Some guidelines**

* Should look appealing, not scratched, dented, with dirty/greasy frets, look for scratches on back from clothing eg zips & belts.
* Don’t be afraid to de-tune guitar & to see how tuning keys work, should operate smoothly. If they click or sqeak means uneven tension/friction at gearwheel or nut, as you play strings can go out of tune quickly.
* Neck – should be smooth, clean, no back-bow (convex curve) or pronounced fore-bow (concave curve). Most guitars have a small fore-bow so strings don’t buzz on frets. Test the evenness of frets with 12inch ruler.
* Action – This is the distance between the neck/frets & strings @ 12th fret which should be no more than *4-5mm/3/16ths inch*, any more & action will be too high & take more pressure to depress strings (sore & painful fingers). Measuring Method - put a Capo on the 1st fret & measure the distance between the strings & the 12th fret with a steel ruler, bearing in mind thicker strings (6th, 5th & 4th) will have less distance than thinner top 3 strings.
* Lowering the action is easy & can be done by loosening the strings, removing the saddle at the bridge & filing it down by a few mms – fine sand paper will do it.

Guitar should be:

1. Comfortable to hold;
2. Suit your body shape, arms & reach;
3. Neck shape – C, D or V shape? – length of fingers, too chunky = difficult playing
4. Width of neck – Spanish/Classical & 12 string acoustics have wider necks, more room for fingers/fleshy parts…BUT narrower neck is easier to grip – aspects need to be balanced for personal attributes! My battered Spanish is 2 1/16th or 54 mm wide @ nut, my 12 string is 48mm @ nut, my Telecaster Electric is 43mm @ nut.
5. Advice – take a small ruler with you & measure the width @ nut & look at the shape of the neck (C, D or V shape), also place the ruler on the frets & slide it along where it should not catch on any fret, especially above the 7th fret upwards. This means frets are uneven & when playing, especially if action is low you may get strings buzzing.
6. Even if you only know one chord, play the same chord on different guitars.

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U3A Strummers Guitar – Group Leader – October 2017