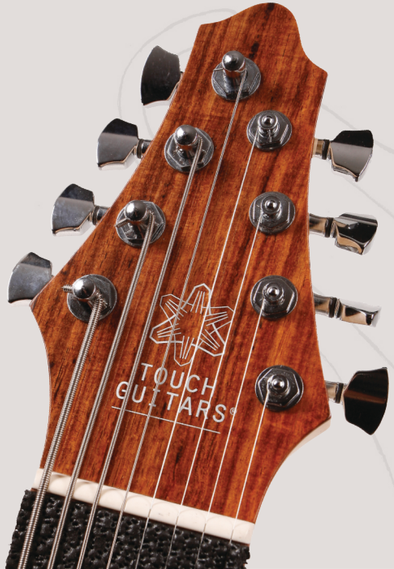
TOUCH GUITARS®

# Owner's Manual
# U8 Deluxe




## Congratulations on buying your new TOUCH GUITAR

The instrument which you now own has been designed for versatility, extreme playability, body-friendly lightweight construction, first-class manufacturing and a classic look and finish. We hope that you will be very happy with it.

You are now also a part of the Touch Guitar family. As a company, our aim is not solely to provide instruments. We also aim to encourage musicians (whether they are beginners or skilled players) to become better musicians and more contented people, improving their playing

Our aim is to provide instruments which will not only help individuals develop their playing techniques, but will also encourage new players into the fold.

Thank you for starting the journey.

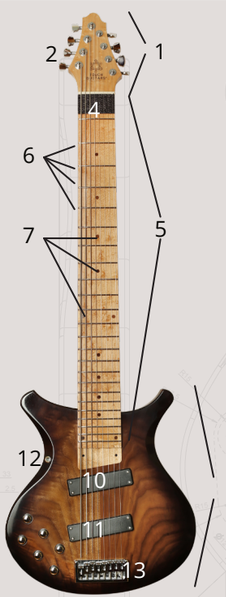
When designing these instruments we put a focus on playability, versatility, lightweight, first

You are now part of the Touch Guitar family. Enjoy the hospitality.

Thank you

Markus Reuter - Founder & Designer






## Parts of the Guitar

1. Headstock
2. Locking Tuners
3. Saddle
4. Damper
5. Neck
6. Frets
7. Fret Markers
8. Body
9. 5-piece Neck Joint
10. Neck Pickup
11. Bridge Pickup
12. Straplocks
13. Bridge
14. Electronics Compartment
15. String Retainer
16. Battery Compartment
17. Led Battery Indicator

## Knobs and Electronics

The U8 Deluxe uses active electronics to produce a more brilliant, dynamically controllable tone. These are accessed by a hatch on the back of the instrument. The electronics are powered by a standard 9V battery housed in the back of the instrument (accessed by a second hatch) and are activated automatically when you plug your cable into the jackplug on the front of the instrument.

There are six volume and tone control knobs on the front of the instrument, attached to internal potentiometers.

### Volume (push/pull)

This is a two-function control. As a turnable knob, it sets the overall volume of the instrument, but it is also used to toggle between active and passive electronics settings. (To switch from active electronics to a passive setting, pull the volume knob out until it clicks; to switch back to active mode, push it in until it clicks again. The push-pull switching action is robust so that you don't easily switch between electronics settings while adjusting the volume). Note also that in order to ensure that your instrument's tone remains consistent at all volume levels, a resistor has been built into the potentiometer to prevent uncontrolled tone changes at low volumes.

### Bass/Mids/Treble

These control the basic EQ settings for the instrument regardless of pickup selections. Use them to choose and set the basic tone of your instrument on any particular playing session.

### Mid-Sweep

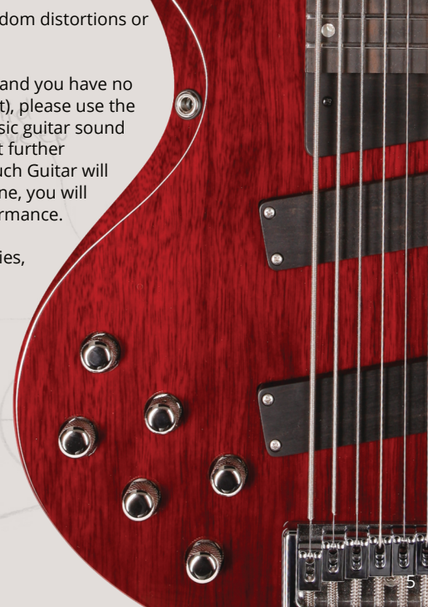
This sets the initial sound frequency range which is controlled by the "mids" knob. Most of the subtler, warmer tones of the guitar are included within this frequency range. If the mid-range is set to a narrow band, the sound will emphasise the high and low notes of the guitar. If the mid-range is set to a wide band, the sound will be less differentiated but softer and warmer to the ear. To wider the mid-range band, turn the knob clockwise; to narrow it, turn counter-clockwise.


### Blend

This control changes the balance between the two pickups on the guitar – the neck pickup (for a deeper, warmer sound) and the bridge pickup (for a sharper, more immediately distinct sound). To select more neck pickup sound, turn the knob clockwise; to select more bridge pickup sound, turn counter-clockwise.

⚠ Please note that the default electronic setting of your U8 Deluxe Touch Guitar is "active", and that this can drain the onboard battery. To avoid problems with this, follow these simple steps.

- Always unplug your cable from the instrument when you are not playing. This deactivates the active electronics.
- Pay attention to signs that your battery is low indicated by the battery indicator led on the back of the instrument (situated on the electronics housing) lights up red. The other is when certain noises come out of your amplifier (slight random distortions or a background "swoosh").
- If the battery fails mid-concert (and you have no time or opportunity to change it), please use the action above to stabilise the basic guitar sound and to continue playing without further malfunction. Although your Touch Guitar will revert to passive settings for tone, you will be able to complete your performance.
- Do not use rechargeable batteries, since this can damage the electronics. We recommend standard alkaline batteries.



## Care, Maintenance and Setup

Your Touch Guitar has been built using top-quality craftsmanship and has been constructed from premium materials. It was set up for perfect playing action when it left our workshop and has been designed to be sturdy. However, it is necessary to consistently care for and maintain the instrument for best playing results, functionality, appearance and long life. It is also sometimes necessary to adjust for temporary changes in the Touch Guitar due to travel or environmental conditions (or to make adjustments for personal preference).

### Basic Care:

- As with all instruments, do not store your Touch Guitar in extremely hot or cold environments; and avoid subjecting it to abrupt temperature changes (such as moving it rapidly between a cold outdoor environment and a warm room while unprotected).

- Provide yourself with the following tools and care aids: one 15mm and one 5mm hex key/Allen wrench/Allen key, plus one set of universal pliers (all available from any hardware store): one soft cloth suitable for fine wood polishing; linseed oil (or special fretboard oil available from musical instrument stores); any electronic chromatic tuner.

- We recommend buying an adjustable strap. Strap locks are included as standard with every Touch Guitar and can be attached or detached by the player using universal pliers. Although the strap locks are sturdy and stable, they can be loose when incorrectly attached, resulting in a small risk of the instrument falling loose from the strap. Check them regularly (with a gentle tug on each strap lock) and ensure that they are fully tight.

- A prime indicator of instrument condition is string action (the distance between string and fret, which in turn affects playability). Improperly adjusted strings will vibrate unevenly and provide imperfect, uneven tones across the guitar, and will also buzz against the frets rather than sound notes cleanly. See the longer sections on Neck and Bridge Adjustments for information on how to adjust string action and about situations which relate to it.

- Intonation is another indicator of instrument condition, although this relates more to fine-tuning. On a Touch Guitar (as with all fretted instruments), correct intonation is achieved by consistently ensuring that there is enough “give” from the bridge to stop a string going out of tune when fretted. Intonation adjustment is covered in the longer Bridge Adjustment section.

### Regarding finish care:

- clean any lacquered finish with the dry cloth.

- If your fingerboard is unlacquered, regularly oil it with linseed oil or other fretboard oil).

- Over time there may be small changes in the look of the finish. This is not a sign of decay: it is due to the natural ageing process of the lacquer itself. These small changes are an inevitable part of owning a lacquered object. They will not affect either your instrument’s tone or the integrity of the finish. (As such, they are not covered as defects under the Touch Guitar warranty - although, if desired, replacement finishes can be ordered from us at an agreed cost between customer and company.)

**All wood we use is FSC certified**

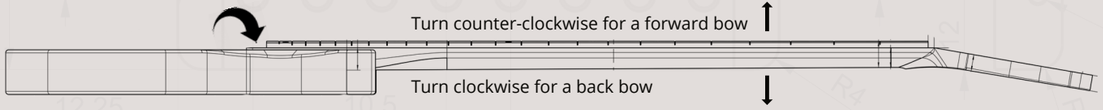
FSC

## Neck Adjustment

As with other instruments in the guitar and lute families, adjusting the neck of your Touch Guitar is necessary when temperature/environment changes/string stress cause temporary expansions or contractions in the wood and cause it to bend. To check whether neck adjustment is necessary, first check the string action. Press down a string at the first or twelfth frets, then examine the string at the seventh fret. If there is only a small space there between string and fret then the guitar neck is well adjusted. If there is a larger or smaller distance between string and fret at the seventh fret position, then the neck is not properly straight. The optimum string action is between one and two milimeter measured at the 7th fret. (Players who previously played a standard guitar or bass guitar should note that standard Touch Guitar string action is very low in comparison).

In order to adjust the neck, you will need to access the truss rod and either tighten or loosen it. Please note that if you over-tighten the truss rod it will break and need to be replaced. For the first time that you make this adjustment, we recommend that you ask for help from a luthier or experienced guitar technician.

Remove the two screws of the truss rod cover at the bottom of the fretboard and then remove the cover. This will reveal the end of the metal truss rod which runs through the neck to reinforce it and to control its degree of bending. Use your 5mm hex key to gently adjust the rod. Turning the rod clockwise will tighten the rod (straightening the neck), while turning it counter-clockwise will loosen the rod (allowing the neck to bend). Use either direction to bring the string action to the optimum setting which is as plain as possible.






## Bridge Adjustment:

Often when string action is too high or too low, you need to readjust the string saddles on the bridge. Before doing this, use the Neck Adjustment process to ensure that the neck is properly aligned. If the neck is at optimum adjustment but the strings are still buzzing or exhibiting uneven action, then you will need to adjust the string height manually.

Each string sits on a saddle mounted on a pair of vertical rider screws going downwards into the bridge. Each of these rider screws can be adjusted using the 1.5mm hex key. Ensure that both screws are set to the same height and that they are also engaged with the ground plate of the bridge (not floating free, which will make the saddle and string unstable and put extra strain on any engaged screws).

Eight horizontal screws are set into the far end of the bridge (running underneath and parallel to each string) and are used to fine-tune string intonation by adjusting the string saddle tension. Use the 1.5mm hex wrench to adjust these screws. Turning a screw clockwise makes the notes on the string above it sound slightly higher; turning it counter-clockwise will make the notes sound lower. Test the intonation by playing the open string and then playing the note on the 12th fret above (which should be exactly one octave higher), adjusting the bridge screws if the two notes are not in relation. (We recommend using a digital chromatic tuner to ensure accuracy).


## Tuning

The standard eight string Touch Guitar tuning is :
(lowest string to highest, with all specified notes using standard octave notation):

**Bb F C G D A C D**

This is designed around the greatest pitch range available on a 34" scale length instrument without sacrificing tonal quality. We have found that the ideal range is one which starts at the low Bb on a bass guitar ($Bb_0$) and ends at the D found on the 22nd fret of a regular guitar ($D_5$). The tuning is also optimal for playing with all eight fingers on the fretboard since it allows you to easily cover a whole octave with both hands in a single position without stretching.

If you initially find this tuning too difficult or not to your taste, we would urge you to persevere with it. It is by far the best tuning option for the instrument to play with both hands in an integrated fashion. It allows you to play your Touch Guitar to its full potential, and (once mastered) opens up new options for ease of playing and effective music making in any genre. Teaching within this tuning is also supported by the Touch Guitar Circle.

However, if you wish to start, continue or experiment with more familiar guitar tunings, this is also easy to do. The Touch Guitar is more than capable of coping different tunings without sacrificing any playability.



## Technique

If you are coming to Touch Guitar having already played guitar and/or bass guitar (or indeed any member of the guitar or lute family), you will find that all the techniques which you already know can be immediately applied to this instrument. Plucking, plectrum picking, fingerpicking, tapping, double-thumbing, slapping, slide... all of these and more can be directly transferred to Touch Guitar with the minimum of fuss. (However, you will need to adjust to the larger number of strings and the lower string action. You may also need to adapt to the tuning arrangements - see the Tuning section on page 10).

The same applies if you are currently choosing to learn guitar playing from a book or online video: most of what you're learning from these can be easily adapted to Touch Guitar. With these skills and approaches, you will be able to play satisfactory music on a Touch Guitar.

However, we should stress that in order to get the full benefit of a Touch Guitar, you should learn to play it using the playing system it was designed to use; and (if at all possible) using the organisation set up to teach and share information on this method.

The Touch Guitar is designed to use a holistic playing system called "The Family". This includes direct playing technique but also expands to include posture, habits, practical meditation and many other factors. Whenever you buy a new Touch Guitar, you get a free first lesson (in person or online) with Touch Guitars founder Markus Reuter; and the Family approach is supported by further online lesson options and face-to-face encounters/seminars via the Touch Guitar Circle.

For the immediate basics, however, see next page.

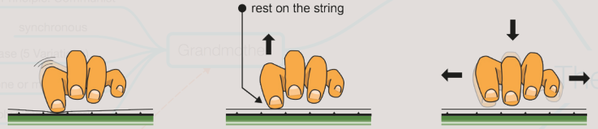





## Fingerboard technique:

The initial Family technique is the Touch Release Move (TRM), which is the basic way to play a clean note on your instrument.
See the diagrams by TGC member Mike Rohde, that show two ways to play a single note. When you are starting, focus on the “release”.

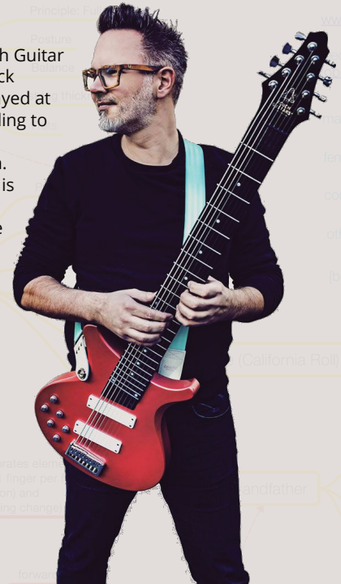
### Release




### Full Release


## Playing position:

The balance design for the Touch Guitar (in coordination with its strap lock system) means that it can be played at any angle and any height according to player taste while remaining constantly stable and in position. However, the optimum position is standing straight with the instrument slightly angled to the front. The picture of Markus Reuter shows the perfect position in which to play the instrument.





TOUCH GUITARS®

## CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY

# TOUCH GUITARS®

| | |
|---|---|
| Date | |
| Model | Touch Guitars U8 Deluxe |
| Serial # | |

This instrument has been custom built by Touch Guitars® in Europe.

**Touch Guitars®**

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