



Guitar Hero 5 Guide

They're the ones who sing and scream at the top of their lungs, who shred their guitars like they were born with one in their hands. They're the unstoppable drummers who pound out ferocious beats, and the bassists who provide the thumping backdrop of the entire collaboration. They're the bands of rock stars, and in Guitar Hero, it's your chance to take their place.

And due to this turn of events, you—like them—must prove to the crowds that you know what you're doing, or you'll get thrown off stage. We're going to help you get started by teaching you how to play the drums, guitar and bass, and then we'll help you prepare yourself for singing. From there, we'll give you a few tips on the art of perfecting Guitar Hero, and send you on your way to stardom!

In this Guitar Hero 5 strategy guide, you'll find:

- **GLOSSARY** // A consummate collection of Guitar Hero lingo so you can talk like a pro (and understand what we're on about).
- **DRUMS** // Extensive tips and strategy for bangin' the drums.
- **GUITAR** // Strumming tips and master explanations of hammer- and pull-offs.
- **VOCALS** // Avoid public embarrassment with these easy vocal tips.
- **STAR POWER** // Suggestions for building (and using) your precious star power.
- **ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES** // Even more drum and guitar tips!

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Guitar Hero 5 Glossary

Body

The widest area (the bottom) of the guitar.

Combo

When you're hitting many notes in a row without any misses, you have a "combo" going. There's a meter beneath the multiplier which keeps track of how many sequential notes you've hit.

Foot Pedal (AKA Kick Pedal)

This is the pedal situated near the bottom of the drum kit, and it's used to hit the long, orange notes on a drummer's highway.

Frets

In the Guitar Hero language, "frets" are the five colored buttons at the top of the guitar's neck.

Gem

An official term for the round, colored notes you see on the highway.

Hammer-On (HO)

Whenever a note is followed by a higher, brightly-colored note (going from left to right), you'll only have to strum the first, and then tap the second. This is called a "hammer-on" (AKA "HO"). It's covered in the guitar section, too.

Headstock

The very top of the guitar (where you would tune it, if it were real).

Highway

On your screen, you'll see a fret board in the very center, and the colored gems will scroll down along it. That fret board is the "highway."

Multiplier

If you have a combo going, you'll see a number appear in a circle on the left side of the highway. This is your "multiplier," and each time you hit a note, your score will be multiplied accordingly (e.g., a x4 multiplier means you'll receive four times the normal amount of points per note struck).

Neck

This is the long, slender area of the guitar where the fret buttons are located.

Notes

In Guitar Hero's case, these will often refer to the round, colored buttons (AKA "gems") that you'll be strumming to.

Pad (AKA Drumhead)

This refers to the color-ringed pads and cymbals of your drum kit, which you'll strike to play notes.

Pull-Off (PO)

Whenever a note is followed by a lower, brightly-colored note (going from right to left), you'll only have to strum the first, and then tap the second. This is a "pull-off" (AKA "PO").

Rock Meter

In the upper left corner of the screen, you'll see your "Rock Meter." This tells you whether you're doing well, so-so, or terribly, and the crowd's commotion will change accordingly. If it's turning red and they're booing at you, time to pick up the pace, or you'll fail the song!

Star Power (SP)

Once you've hit star-shaped notes on the on-screen highway, you'll brighten some light bulbs which represent your "Star Power," AKA SP. Using your SP will double the points you get per note hit, and rebuild your crowd approval.

Sustain

Any long pair of notes (appearing as a colored circle followed by a line) which must be sustained.

Tapping

On a real guitar, "tapping" essentially refers to tapping and/or sliding the tips of your fingers off the strings. In Guitar Hero, it's conceptually similar, and involves tapping the fret buttons (often with both hands).

Whammy

In the lower right area of the body, you'll see a slender bar that you can depress. This is your "whammy bar."

Guitar Hero 5 Drums

«	Positioning	Pads & Pedals	»
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With the most physically demanding instrument, the drums of World Tour call for stamina and coordination. As you excel and reach the Hard and Expert difficulties, you'll need to last through repeat drumming on the pads and frequent use of the pedal. There are various means of preparing yourself, and these include:

HYDRATION

World Tour is a perfect party game, but if you don't want to feel like trash when your friends go home, don't drink booze alone. If you're going to be drumming away for a half hour or more, have some water handy. Juices, carbonated beverages, and most energy drinks—which usually aren't any better than soda—won't help you last. Go ahead and enjoy them, but have water around to dilute their effects and keep your muscles happy.

STRETCHING

You can either go all out and prep like you're an Olympiad, or you can play it cool by keeping things simple. At the very least, you should treat your arms and legs to a good, five-seconds-or-less stretch a piece. Bending your arms over your head is a start, while some basic runner's stretches will work for your legs. Remember to release from your positions slowly, or you risk shocking your muscles and causing cramps.

Next is positioning, which is one of the most important considerations in your preparing to rock.

Positioning

SEATING

Relaxing on the couch might be fine for most party games, but that doesn't work for a drummer. You're held to an entirely different set of standards, and they require good back support. Because of this, armchairs, sofas, beanbags and their cushy ilk are all out of the question. Instead, you should use something solid with a flat seat, like a chair from a dining set.

You also don't want a chair that's too short nor too tall, and to determine if it's of the right height, you'll use your leg as a guideline. If it's bent at a near 90-degree angle and you're able to comfortably operate the pedal, you're set. On the other hand, if your knee is about level with the bottom of your rib cage—or you otherwise have to make awkward movements to use the pedal—then you should probably get a different chair.

The most ideal seating arrangement includes a drum throne, which appears to be a miniature bar stool. The nicest ones have actual support, though. Unless you already own a real drum set, chances are you're not going to invest in acquiring one of these. If you do, however, you couldn't really ask for anything better.

STICKS

The usual method of holding the sticks is as follows: hold the stick in your fist, make sure there's a few inches of slack beneath your pinkie, then loosely support the top half with your thumb pressed against it. Your fist shouldn't be too tight, and your lower three fingers should be curled around it, as you want to benefit from the rebound the pads provide without sending the sticks flying out of your hands. Your elbows should be casually hanging by your sides, and you should stay loose; don't tighten up your shoulders or wrists.

If you're getting tired or that style isn't working for you, you can hold the sticks like you're playing a snare in a marching band. Have your elbows hanging roughly half a foot away from your side, and remember: stay loose, don't tense up. Instead of holding the sticks vertically, they'll be roughly horizontal, and you'll be striking the pads with the sides of the tips. This style may work best for you on drum rolls, to note.

There are other ways of holding the sticks too, which include using the vertical style for your right hand and the horizontal angle for your left. Experiment and research proper positions to find out what works best for you, and whatever you do, **never force yourself to play in a way that hurts your wrists.**

DISTANCE

Because you're going to be regularly using a kick pedal, and shouldn't be stretching your arms out nor holding them back, it's important to keep the drum set relatively close to you. Once again,

having your leg at a 90-degree angle is your best guideline. If you have to stretch your leg out to reach the pedal, pull the kit closer. Likewise, if you've set the pedal out in front of the kit and the drums are really close to your torso, push them away. Half a foot to a foot away from your knee is usually where the support bars will wind up, depending on your size.

POSTURE

With a proper chair in place, you're ready to sit yourself down, and keep your back upright. Slouching forward or leaning backward is going to prematurely tire out your lower back and pedal leg. Your back should be straight, with your elbows comfortably at your sides, and the drum sticks held in front of you. As mentioned in the Seating section, your leg should be at a near 90-degree angle with your foot resting on the kick pedal.

Aside from easing your lower back's load, an upright posture means you'll always be able to see both the spread of the drums and the screen. You'll also have less of a chance of hitting yourself. Nobody likes hitting themselves.

HEIGHT

You've stretched, you're seated, you're holding your sticks and your foot's ready to work the pedal. The last thing you'll have to adjust is the height of the pads. If you remember, you were instructed to have your elbows casually hanging at your sides. Your arms—like your pedal leg—should be at a relaxed 90-degree angle, but you shouldn't rigidly abide by that guideline. Having your hands slightly above or below your elbows is fine.

If you need to lift your arms up or you're practically drumming between your legs, the set isn't at a proper height. When you strike the drum pads, the tip of your stick should be hitting near their center. If you're hitting the pads with more than the tip, you probably need to do more adjustments.

«	Positioning	Pads & Pedals	»
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Playing: Pads & Pedals

You're in position, and now you're ready to play. As mentioned in the previous section, when you're actually drumming, the stick tips should be striking near the pad's middle. Don't worry about hitting them dead center, as you'll wind up banging your sticks together on drum rolls if you're too strict about that.

First, you should get used to where the pads are positioned. Try playing in this simple pattern, striking the colors with the mentioned hand:

1	RIGHT HAND	Green
2	LEFT HAND	Blue
3	RIGHT HAND	Blue
4	LEFT HAND	Red

Repeat this until you're comfortable with moving your hands back and forth across the drums. Then speed it up, and continue doing it until you have a smooth flow going. Afterward, try playing a new pattern with the left cymbal in it:

1	RIGHT HAND	Green
2	LEFT HAND	Yellow
3	RIGHT HAND	Blue
4	LEFT HAND	Yellow

Likewise, try this with the right cymbal:

1	LEFT HAND	Red
2	RIGHT HAND	Orange
3	LEFT HAND	Blue
4	RIGHT HAND	Orange

You aren't going to be playing these patterns in-game, but they'll help you get used to using your hands on all three pads and the two cymbals.

Those aside, you should now start the in-game tutorials, if you haven't already. From the main menu, select "Quickplay," then "Training," and finally, "Tutorials." These will touch on some of the topics we've covered here, and will include some new things, like using the kick pedal. Although you'll be instructed to only use your ankle for tapping your foot against the pedal, some people like to move their leg up and down ever so slightly. Pick a method to use primarily, but teach yourself the other, too. That way, you can start using your whole leg if your ankle gets tired, and vice versa.

Guitar Hero 5 Guitar

«	Strumming	HO-POs & Frets	»
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With those new-fangled drums out of the way, we're going to move on to the pretty plastic guitar you finished unpacking. It comes with a shoulder strap, and its use is recommended, especially while you're trying to find out a comfortable way to hold on. Different people play different ways, and here's a few you can try out.

Pretending you're playing a real guitar while seated is one method, and you should have a stool or armless chair to try it out on. When you sit down, make sure you're comfortably upright. Your good hand (e.g., if you're right-handed, it's your right) should be in the area of the strum bar, while your other hand is supporting the neck (where the fret buttons are located). As you're holding your instrument, you'll notice that there's a curved indentation on both sides, and you want to rest this curve on your leg. Real guitarists normally rest their axe on the leg closest to their strumming arm, but this is a miniature plastic imitation, so you should put it on whatever leg you're most comfortable with.

If you want to stay seated but would rather go Ukulele style, you should take off the guitar and tighten up the

Strumming Methods

Now that you've got the frets down, we'll focus on the strum bar, which is near the center of the guitar's body. Every time you hit a note, you'll need to strum that bar like a real guitar's strings, and there's more than one way to do it.

A lot of people rest their thumb against the top of the strum bar and press down whenever they need to strike a chord, and some get away with doing this forever. On Easy and Medium, it's rather forgiving, but it requires endurance and a lightning-quick yet feather-light touch on higher difficulties. This lets you rest your palm against the body, and enables using the Select button for Star Power activation (which we'll get to later).

Holding onto the slim area of the strum bar like a guitar pick is another and more advanced method, and this is an excellent one to learn. It's also more challenging, but it pays off in the long run. Specifically, you'll be holding the thin plastic area of the bar in-between your pointer and thumb fingers, and strumming down then up (or up then down, if that's your thing) to hit the gems. This is called "alt-strumming," which stands for "alternating strumming."

shoulder strap a bit. Your ultimate goal is to have the guitar hanging from your neck, and resting either right under or against the top of your chest. This might sound painful, and it can be if you pull down on the guitar while holding the neck, but some people love it. Your strumming hand will usually be pressed against the body for additional support (and neck relief), and you'll get to pretend you're shredding Hawaiian style.

Of course, real rockers do it standing up, and you'll have to let out the shoulder strap all over again for this one. In fact, it's good to let the strap out all the way, and then adjust it as necessary. In the end, you'll want the guitar to be hanging around your stomach (or lower), with your fret hand supporting its weight. Your strumming hand will be hovering around near the body of the guitar, but usually not pressing too hard against it. Some people will point the neck outward while having the body pressing against their stomach, while others let it dangle. Play around and see what works best for you.

There are countless variations and little changes you're bound to make in how you hold that guitar, and don't be afraid to do so. There is no "right way" to play a guitar, particularly a plastic one, so you should do what's most comfortable for you.

This is as close to real-life guitaring as hitting that bar is going to get, and will carry you through every difficulty in the game. You won't need to alt-strum on every single note, but it's useful for very repetitive sections.

No matter which way you hit that bar, there are various ways you can pour power into it. Relying entirely on your fingers is natural, but can quickly lead to cramping and fatigue. The moral of this story: don't forget to rely on the other parts of your arm, too. If it helps, watch someone play a real guitar and notice how their lower arm and wrist moves, and come up with your own style of mimicry.

«	Strumming	HO-POs & Frets	»
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Hammer-Ons and Pull-Offs

Another method of fret-pushing is using hammer-ons and pull-offs, which are also referred to as HOs and POs. Their use is detailed in one of the in-game tutorials, and it's recommended that you run through it before starting to play. Though this isn't exactly an advanced player's method, you won't really see this in Easy mode, so beginners may want to return to this section later on. Nonetheless, don't forget to try that tutorial!

Basically, hammer-ons refer to a low-to-high series of note gems that are played from the left to the right, and only require one strum at the beginning. Pull-offs are the opposite, for they require strumming once on a low note and then tapping the subsequent, higher notes.

You can recognize both HOs and POs by looking at a sequence of gems on your screen.

To start a hammer-on, you should hold down the fret button for the very first, incoming note, and strum once that note reaches the bottom. This is ordinary, but what follows isn't. You won't strum for the subsequent, halo-endowed gems, but you'll tap their respective fret buttons instead. As in real life, hammer-ons only require the guitarist to strum one time for the sequence. Once the solid, non-highlighted notes reappear, you'll have to resume strumming.

Meanwhile, the pull-off is the hammer-on's opposite. You'll hold down and strum the first high note, and then simply tap the brighter, lower notes that follow. Optionally, you can hold down every fret leading to the first PO gem, and then peel away (or "pull off") your fingers for the subsequent ones. That's how things worked in the first Guitar Hero, but it's too slow for the toughest songs. Still, it's fun to do.

Fingering the Frets

The very top of your instrument is called the "headstock," and the area right beneath it is where you'll be tapping those colored fret buttons on its neck. A good habit to get into is resting the butt of your palm against the back of the fret area, and having your fingers curl around underneath and to the front for pressing the buttons. To paint a clearer mental picture, this is akin to grabbing the neck from the underside and trying to make a loose fist around it.

Many players start out with their index finger on the top-most green fret, but this is strongly discouraged. You'll establish a habit that you'll have to break when you get into Medium, Hard, and Expert mode, so you should do things right from the start. Settle your pointing finger on the red, your middle on the yellow, your ring on the blue and your pinkie on the orange. That's right, you're going to get your pinkie into this whether you like it or not. Don't worry though, as you won't really be using it that much till Medium at least. Just be prepared.

This might leave you wondering how you'll hit the green, and that's simple. You'll slide your hand up the fret board to move your pointer from the red to the green. Once you've hit it, you'll move right back down again to red. Practice this as much as you have to in order to get used to it, and don't let yourself keep your hand at the top all of the time.



Note on the Open Strum

There's an additional type of note which only bassists face, and it's called the "Open Strum." Whenever you're to hit one of these, you'll see a solid line descending the highway. To play it, you'll strum without holding down any fret buttons at all.

Guitar Hero 5 Vocals

If you're not careful, singing will seem even harder than drumming. It's important to breathe correctly, train your throat, and hydrate properly, too. That might sound like too much trouble for a living room rock session, but it's easier than you think. We'll help you out, don't worry.

HYDRATION

More so than any other band mate, the singer must watch what they use to hydrate themselves. If you don't, you could wind up with a sore throat that lasts for hours, and at worst, you'll wake up feeling sick the next morning. Your best choice is always water. A lot of "energy drinks" contain things that do more harm than good, like sugars, syrups, and diuretics. Most inexpensive juices aren't any better. If you're hanging out with friends and enjoying some beer—or other form of alcohol—at least make sure you're drinking water at the same time. You'll be able to sing longer and thus have more fun.

WARM-UP

To prepare your throat, you should try singing in different tones and pitches. You might feel silly doing this at a party, but if you can't do weird things, what kind of a party are you at?! You've probably heard the ol' "do, re, me, fa, so, la, ti, do," and that's an easy way of hitting the octaves and warming up. If you get to pick the first song or two, choose ones that you know well and can harmonize with. This should help you get settled into the right singing range, and from then on, you can just drop octaves whenever necessary.

RANGE

And while we're on the subject, you shouldn't try to sing in a way that's far outside your natural range. If you have a deep, bass-tone voice, then you shouldn't be struggling to belt out high-pitch singing like you're Freddie Mercury. There is but one key to success here, and it's harmony. You don't have to sing in the same exact range as the original singer, you just need to harmonize with them. The game will recognize this as a valid performance, and you'll spare your poor throat unnecessary pain.

BREATHING

Of course, all that talk about how to sing is useless if you don't know how to breathe. If at all possible, you should be performing diaphragmatic breathing. That means you'll be using your belly—not your upper body and shoulders—when you're taking air in and pushing it out. This also helps you powerfully propel air through your body, which you should always be doing when you want to sing forcefully. Instead of tightening up your throat, push that air out of your gut and through your vocal chords for maximum effect. And when it comes to endurance, proper breathing plays a role there, too. Try to suck in a quick breath before every line of lyrics, then let it out and take in another before the next part starts. It's essential that you learn to do this, as a lack of air will leave you with a struggle and a sore throat.

You may feel like that's a lot to remember, but here's a summary of it: keep water at your side, warm up your vocal cords beforehand, stay in your range and breathe with your belly. That makes things simpler, doesn't it? Keep those four things in mind, and you'll be set to sing the night away.

Guitar Hero 5 Star Power

If you've ever played Guitar Hero before, you're familiar with "Star Power" (AKA "SP"). Once you've hit enough star-shaped gems, you'll be notified that your Star Power's ready. Activate it and you'll increase your score multiplier, plus your Rock Meter will get a boost. The latter bonus can be especially useful if you're about to fail out of a song, since it'll please the crowd and save your butt.

Outside of tapping those rows of stars (which are in "Star Phrases"), **guitarists can increase the amount of Star Power you earn in another way**: whammying chords. When you see a SP gem followed by a long line, that's a SP chord. Repeatedly tap the whammy bar while sustaining that note to sap out extra power.

When it comes to using this coveted ability, guitarists have two options: tilting the guitar's neck skyward, or pressing the Select button. Using the tilt method is fun, but it can be a little finicky sometimes. Although tapping Select is considered an advanced method, you should try to get used to that, too. Try to come up with a style that lets you use your pinkie or ring finger to slide onto that button. This is a great thing to grow accustomed to, and you'll be glad you can use it when you're playing more difficult songs.

As for the drummers, you'll need to strike both cymbals at the same time. You'll need to pick a good time to do this, else you risk dropping out of your combo.

Guitar Hero 5 Additional Strategies

You're prepared to play every position, and now you're looking for more info on the game. Whether you're playing with friends or by yourself, here are some tactics that should help you win more often than not.

Tips on the Drums

Always let your hits rebound! New drummers may occasionally hit the pads too stiffly to get a nice rebound, or they may leave the stick head pressed against the drum. The former will hurt you eventually, and the latter will work in the beginning, but not later on. In fact, when you're playing the roughest Expert songs, you might want to take advantage of another method: **hitting the drum pad twice with one swing of the arm.** That might sound impossible, but it's not, although it's definitely an advanced method that'll take time to learn. Specifically, it works like this: you'll hit the pad once and the stick will rebound, but your hand will still be heading downward, resulting in a second collision. When you feel like you've learned all there is to know, challenge yourself anew by trying to master this!

Practice with songs that use the blue and green pads! The vast majority of tracks in World Tour will have you striking the red pad and yellow cymbal. If you get too used to this—and just this—you may start sitting and holding the sticks in a way that doesn't work for more dynamic songs. Use numbers like "La Bamba" and "Go Your Own Way" to warm up to those oft-neglected notes.

Don't rely on one hand for four out of five pads! If you're right-handed, you might grow accustomed to using your left hand for only one thing: the red pad. Don't do this. It will prematurely tire out your good arm, and limit your ability to do rolls and travel across the pads. If you didn't perform the simple exercises written about in the Drums section, you may want to revisit them and try them out. Additionally, you should use your off hand on the center pad and both cymbals whenever possible. It pays to be versatile.

Tips on the Guitar

Cradle the neck with your palm! If you don't want your fretting hand to cramp up, remember that you should be supporting that part of the guitar with your palm. Pressing against it with your thumb or gripping it with your fingers isn't going to work forever, and will do more harm than good.

Don't apply too much pressure when you slide! Performing the green to red slide is considered a necessity, but if you rub your pointer along these frets too hard, it'll start to burn. After only a half hour or so of play, your finger will feel raw, and if you perpetually perform that way, you may develop a soreness that lasts long after the parties end. Support the guitar's neck properly and only apply as much pressure as necessary.

Use the whammy often on Star Power chords! Because the SP you've accumulated can be used by all your bandmates, it pays to be a team player. Take advantage of your unique ability to squeeze extra juice out of those SP chords. As a direct result of it, your performances will last longer and be more fun for everyone.

General Advice

World Tour intends to deliver a fun-filled experience, but it does require more physical involvement than the usual game. Prepare accordingly! Much of this guide tells you how to ready yourself for a night of rockin'. Although you shouldn't ignore its advice, you must also remember that we aren't doctors. Just make sure to use common sense when you're deciding which instrument you want to play. For example, if you're not supposed to engage in demanding physical activity, don't play the drums. Likewise, if you just got over a cold, don't be the singer. If you have sensitive wrists, reinforce them with braces, and so on, so forth. Play smarter, not harder.

Every song is just a series of notes. You can find a way to break them down! If you're struggling to master a certain track, take a break, forget your frustration, and try to approach it with a fresh set of eyes. All of the songs within World Tour can be boiled down to basics. First, familiarize yourself with the tempo. Afterward, try to count how many notes you see in a measure. Is there a pattern that repeats every ten notes or so? Does the entire song consist of passages that travel from low to high notes, and then go back again? Are you going to be on the blue fret or pad for every vocal segment? There are many ways to decipher a track, and you should be able to devise one that works for you.

Take a break every now and then, even if it's a short one! Professional musicians normally take breaks between songs, whether during live performances or studio recordings. You should take a page out of their book and do the same. Get up every now and then, walk around a bit, and let yourself cool down. However, if you take a rather long break—such as an hour or more—you should prepare yourself all over again when you come back. Remember, it's better to be safe than sorry.

Keep these precautions in mind, do a little research of your own, then jump into the Guitar Hero experience and have fun!