

Douglas Niedt's GUITAR TECHNIQUE TIP OF THE MONTH

Yes, it's "Doug's Dirty Little Secrets"



(Doug subtitled his Tech Tip as "Doug's Dirty Little Secrets" after reading someone's posted message on a guitar web forum. The writer asserted that professional virtuoso guitarists all had secrets they kept to themselves and wouldn't tell anyone else, so no one would play as well as them!)



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of Dirty Little Secrets.

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Guitar Technique Tips of the Month

Put An End to Your Guitar's Lap Dance Now!

By Douglas Niedt

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A bothersome problem when playing the guitar is the "lap dance" it does when you wear certain pants, slacks, or dresses. The guitar slides around in your lap diverting your attention. It can be especially annoying in a performance. The more stable the guitar is held, the more stable and confident your playing will be. Here's how to end your guitar's "lap dance" for good.

Some guitarists set a piece of non-slip cloth on their leg when they play. The problem is that every time they get up out of the chair they have to deal with the cloth. In a performance it's distracting to the performer and audience and not particularly elegant. There are guitar specific commercial versions of non-slip products available, but none work as well as what I describe here. This is a much better way. I've been doing this for years and it works great. You will need double-sided (sticky on both sides) carpet tape available at hardware stores or Walmart for less than \$3 (I use the Manco brand and it measures 1.41 inches x 42 feet), suede cloth, scissors, and maybe a measuring tape.

The suede is available from the Tandy Leather Factory Company. You can order from their website, <http://www.tandyleatherfactory.com/>, or call/visit one of their many store locations throughout the United States and Canada.

They have suede pieces in beige, medium brown, and other colors. Prices range from \$3.60-\$4.50 per square foot.

U.S. Phone: 1-800-433-3201

International Phone: 1-817-496-4874

Canada Phone: 1-800-450-3062

Hours: Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.,

Saturday 9 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. CST

Mailing address

Tandy Leather Factory, Inc.

Attn: Sales

3847 East Loop 820 South

Fort Worth , TX 76119

In a nutshell, using the carpet tape, you are going to attach one piece of suede to the guitar on the area where the guitar rests on your left leg and one piece of suede to the area where the guitar rests against your right thigh. If you do a good job, it will not be noticeable by the audience, will stay on for months and months, and you will be absolutely amazed at how secure and stable the guitar is in your lap and how much additional confidence it will impart to your playing! **It is not a subtle thing--it is a major improvement.**

THERE IS ONE THING YOU MUST DO BEFORE PROCEEDING. **You must test your guitar's finish to be certain the carpet tape will not damage it.** Cut a small piece of tape about a half inch long, peel off the backing strip and stick it on your guitar where the guitar rests on your left leg. Then peel it off the guitar slowly and carefully. If any finish or color pulls off with the tape do not proceed. If you don't see any damage, to be safe, do a longer test. Cut another piece and leave it on the guitar overnight and check the next day for damage. I play a Ramirez and the tape doesn't affect the finish one iota.

Sit in your chair with your guitar. Take note of the exact location where the guitar rests on your left leg. The carpet tape is 1 1/2" wide. You will stick two pieces side by side on your guitar to which you will attach the suede. Cut two lengths of the carpet tape, each piece 8 inches long (you can probably get away with half that but I do 8 inches). Peel off the backing strip of one of the pieces and stick it on your guitar at the spot where the guitar rests on your left leg. Peel off the backing strip of the other piece of carpet tape and stick it on your guitar alongside the first strip, but for now don't peel off the *top* backing strips of either piece. See next photo:

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Now take your piece of suede and cut one piece to stick in place onto the carpet tape. Cut it slightly longer (maybe 8 1/2 inches) and wider (3 1/2 inches) so it covers the carpet tape entirely. Now peel off the backing strips of your two lengths of carpet tape that are already stuck on the guitar and carefully stick your piece of suede in place so that no carpet tape shows. The good news is that if you mess up, you can carefully peel the suede off and reset it. Or if you find you messed up on the placement of the carpet tape, it also can be carefully and easily peeled off with no damage to the guitar's finish, and you can start over. See next two photos:

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Next, you will use the same procedure to attach another piece of suede to the spot on the guitar that contacts your right leg. However, I find the guitar is held better and more stable if you attach the piece of suede so that it wraps around the back of the guitar a couple inches. See next two photos:

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Eventually the suede will collect dirt and oils and begin to slightly lose its "grip" on your legs. You could replace the suede (and probably the carpet tape) at that point. But to save a few bucks and time, try this. Take a piece of rough sandpaper (#100 grit works well) and simply sand the pieces of suede right on the guitar. Just be REALLY CAREFUL. Don't let the sandpaper come in contact with the actual guitar. I do this about once a month to maintain the maximum grip of the suede. It only takes about one or two minutes to do it.

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Your guitar's lap dancing days are over. Enjoy your newfound stability and security.

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