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strong, solid and can withstand hard playing. We need to make sure there are any acoustic guitar we recommend is sturdy and reliable, and won't let you down. How good does it all fit together? How good is the hardware? Is the level of finish up to scratch? These are all questions we seek the answers to. Quality control - We then check the setup, and the level of finish of the guitar. We look at the action (the vertical distance between the strings and the fingerboard), and also the fretwork - to make sure there are no dead spots or sharp fret ends. This is all done through the lens of the infamously cheap - we wouldn't expect the same level of quality for an instrument that costs \$200 versus one that costs \$2,000.3. Playability - We check how comfortable the neck and body are, how the neck profile feels in our hand and how the fingerboard radius feels when playing. We'll put the instrument through various playing techniques including open chords, fingerstyle, hybrid picking and anything else we feel a particular guitar warrants. We'll also play sat down and stood up to see if there's any neck dive.4. Sound - We've also got to test the sound of the guitar. For this, we play a variety of different styles including country-style chicken-pickin', strumming with a plectrum and everything in between. We play throughout the whole dynamic range of the guitar, and listen to the tone and projection to make a judgement on its overall sound.Read more about how we test music making gear and services at MusicRadar.Why you can trust us [Image credit: Future]More than9,500 reviewson-siteOver 17 yearsof product testing 2.9 million monthly users globallyWith more than 17 years of experience, MusicRadar is the premier music-making website in the world. Run by musicians for musicians, we offer expertly written gear round-ups and high-quality, authoritative reviews by an extensive team of highly experienced industry professionals.We also interview world-renowned musicians and stars about their creative processes and the nuts and bolts of their gear and technique. This gives fans an insight into the actual craft of music-making that no other music website can.But that's not all. We also provide excellent tuition, from bite-sized tips to advanced techniques and guidance from recognised musicians.As well as delivering high quality written reviews and features, we also produce a wealth of video content on YouTube. MusicRadarTV is where you'll find all of our access-all-areas interviews, hot gear demos and exclusive video lessons.MusicRadar's got your backOur team of expert musicians and producers spends hours testing products to help you choose the best music-making gear for you. Find out more about how we test.Electricity? Overrated! Real guitarists know that a guitar's genuine excitement is best earned via the more personal connection of the player plus the resonant wooden body of an acoustic. Decades before solid bodies and electretickery redefined the sound of the guitar, it was the wholesome sound of six simple, singing strings that propelled songs forwards with nimble picking and stirring strumming driving both melody and rhythm simultaneously.And if you wanted to play louder Then you just hit it harder.You may like And with no amp or additional faff required, acoustic guitars were, and always will be, the perfect gateway for new music makers looking for instant, easily won props via a wealth of much-loved music that is (whisper it) probably easier to play than its creators would like to let on.So if you're a new player looking for ammo or simply a lover of music in its purest form, join us for a deep dive into the 40 best acoustic songs of all time.Some are included by virtue of putting the acoustic to the fore. Others feature the acoustic sound more subtly but feature its vibe and rhythm as vital components to their success. Some are easy to play And some not so much But all are great to listen to and learn from.So dig deep, and have fun.Want all the hottest music and gear news, reviews, deals, features and more, direct to your inbox? Sign up here. 40. Queen - Love Of My LifeA testament to what can be achieved with nothing more than a voice and a guitar, Love Of My Life is Queen at their most intimate.Freddies performance here is vulnerable, hurt and hopeful all at once - and then theres the guitar work. Brian Mays playing is nothing short of majestic, the perfect accompaniment to a perfect vocal.39. The Smiths - Please, Please, Please Let Me Get What I WantThe Smiths - Please, Please, Please, Let Me Get What I Want (Official Audio) - YouTubeWatch On Oh Steven, you poor thing. Is this the very saddest of all Smiths songs? Yes, we rather think it is.Morrisseys vocal positively aches, and Johnny Marrs arrangement barely lifts its head to peek up at a no-doubt drizzly Manchester sky. Short, bittersweet and beguiling, this is miserablism done right.38. John Lennon - Working Class HeroWorking Class Hero (Remastered 2010) - YouTubeWatch On Sweary John, angry John, Dylan-channeling, three-chords and an acoustic John, is the best version of Lennon post-Beatles, if you ask us (which you didnt, but there you have it).A scathing dismantling of the class system with a biting vocal, theres something incredibly pure about Working Class Hero. And John drops the F-bomb, which is always exciting.37. Queen Crazy Little Thing Called LoveAnother acoustic classic thats easy to miss, mostly by virtue of the bands memorable leather-clad performance in the video, with Brian May opting to play the entire song on an entirely inaudible, oh-so-rock n roll black Fender Telecaster that actually only crops up in the songs solo.The rest of the track? Pure rock n roll acoustic strumalong that, while feeding from and fanning the flames of seventies sex appeal, and marking a bold line in the sand for bands pop intentions at the start of the 80s is, at its heart, a straight-up homage to Elvis Presleys Jailhouse Rock from 23 long years earlier.36. George Ezra ShotgunGeorge Ezra - Shotgun (Official Video) - YouTubeWatch On Time for one of those really? additions to our all-acoustic 40 that well we just couldnt resist.While Ezra himself subtly picks and strums his way through a track featuring muted electric, thumping bass and gulp trumpets, the tracks origins stem from its unmistakable strummed acoustic drive that, for all the fun added in post production, is the key to its singalong success.And with the acoustic element so obvious (but barely present in the finished mix) its an ideal easy-pick for any acoustic player looking to impress.35. Nick Drake - Pink MoonIts impossible to untangle the enigma of Nick Drakes life from the music of the man, but Pink Moon bears its mythic resonances lightly.It showcases Drakes gift for ear-catching chord progressions, his unique tunings, and his uncanny way with a melodic line that nagged at you for days. A huge talent that was taken too soon.34. Fleetwood Mac - LandslideFleetwood Mac - Landslide (Official Music Video) [HD] - YouTubeWatch On One of the big Mac's most frequently performed songs, Landslide charts Stevie Nicks' notoriously on-off relationship - both professional and personal - with Lindsey Buckingham, while the man in question delivers dense layers of delicate fingerpicked passages beneath.Billy Corgan and his Smashing Pumpkins pals later delivered a faithful rendition of their own, but none can match the emotionally charged atmosphere of the original.33. Alice In Chains - Down In A Hole (Unplugged)Alice In Chains - Down In A Hole (MTV Unplugged - HD Video) - YouTubeWatch On Recorded as part of their 1996 MTV Unplugged session, this stripped-down version of Dirt's Down In A Hole sees Alice In Chains at their most personal and emotive.Its finger-picked minor chords and intertwining, gravely vocal lines are a flawless example of the power of more delicate and tender ends of 90s grunge.32. Erasure Victim Of LoveHold up Erasure? Acoustic? Bear with us here. Yes, it requires a little lateral thinking and a keen ear, but at its heart you'll never find a heartier, full-bodied acoustic strum-along than Erasures prime-time 1987 pop hit. (Except perhaps their own A Little Respect the following year.)While reconstructed with synths to maintain Erasures familiar crisp electro pop sound, the song was written entirely as an acoustic jangle with keyboard legend Vince Clarke ditching the laborious man-vs-machine programming of his synths to increasingly lean on the chords and rhythms that the acoustic serves up so readily.The result is a track that in its final mix features its spirited strumming only in a subtle, rhythm-driving role, but which is a blast to play as a 100% acoustic number.31. Mr Big To Be With YouMr. Big - To Be With You 4K Video - YouTubeWatch On Hold on. Well give you a minute Remember this one? Sorry. We had to go there.OK. So while its probably possible to count the members of the Mr Big fan club on a horses foot, and this much derided classic represents one-hit-wonderishp at its most genre-defining and bafflingly wonderful, it remains the perfect pick-up and play campfire classic.Very much the oddity in Mr Bigs hair metal arsenal, it nonetheless provided the band with a surprise number one in 11 countries circa 1991 that, once they plugged back in, gave them short shrift forever afterwards. (See also Extremes, More Than Words at number 15 on our list, for a similar betrayal.)Its perhaps most remarkable for its blistering acoustic solo, played with all the pomp and presence of an Eddie Van Halen eruption, while actually merely being the melody of the chorus again, but picked really hard.30. Don McLean - American PieForget Madonna's ill-advised cover (in fact, we apologise for reminding you of it) - Don McLean's original take on his acoustic opus will stand for all time as the definitive recording of it.American Pie's lyrics have been analysed in all manner of quarters, but predictably, the best explanation of the song's meaning came from McLean himself. It means I don't ever have to work again if I don't want to, he's said to have quipped.29. Bob Dylan - The Times They Are A-Changin'(Bob Dylan - The Times They Are A-Changin' (Official Audio) - YouTubeWatch On Is this the most timeless protest song that ever was? Yes, it probably is, and aside from its prose-worthy lyrics, Bob's Celtic-rooted strumathon is notable for a chord progression that we'd be quite happy to hear looped round until the end of time.The times may be changin', but it appears our love for the Nobel Prize-winner's social anthem is going nowhere.28. America A Horse With No NameAmerica - A Horse With No Name (Official Audio) - YouTubeWatch On With a rhythm that literally sounds like a horse picking their way across the desert and a plaintive and timeless vocal, its hard to imagine a more honest and earnest acoustic track. Originally released as Desert Song, it would become the defining hit for the band who, despite their name, actually penned it in Dorset, UK while attending recording sessions in London.Now, perhaps best known as that song from Rockstars Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas AND Red Dead Redemption its the soundtrack to countless hours of lazy wandering, all fuelled by that off-kilter rhythm thats recognisable in seconds.27. Stevie Ray Vaughan - Life By The DropA rare acoustic cut from the Strat icon, Life By The Drop sees SRV don a 12-string for a shimmering blues shuffle.Although the tune was written by Doyle Bramhall and Barbara Logan, Stevie's heartfelt vocals and soulful embellishments make this ode to a life spent in the shadow of the bottle very much his own.26. The Rolling Stones - Wild HorsesIf you've ever tried to play this song and found that it doesn't sound quite like the original, it may be because Mick Taylor used Nashville tuning on his acoustic when he recorded it. Either that or you're not a very good guitarist - it's probably one of the two.Apparently, sometime Stones ivory tinkler Ian Stewart refused to record the piano part because of his dislike of minor chords. It's a good job he wasn't in The xx.25. Foo Fighters - Everlong (acoustic)Although written on an acoustic, Everlong first appeared as a pummeling, unbinged full-band electric track on the Foo Fighters 1997 album, The Colour And The Shape. And thats where its legacy might have stayed had Dave Grohl not performed an impromptu solo acoustic version of the song that same year on Howard Sterns radio show.A their 1996 MTV Unplugged session, this stripped-down version of Dirt's Down In A Hole sees Alice In Chains at their most personal and emotive.Its finger-picked minor chords and intertwining, gravely vocal lines are a flawless example of the power of more delicate and tender ends of 90s grunge.32. Erasure Victim Of LoveHold up Erasure? Acoustic? chords that make up Wonderwall, little did he know that every beginner acoustic guitarist for the rest of time would start out strumming his song.Probably the defining Oasis single, its the sound of Britpop unplugged and amazingly, despite its ubiquity, only managed to reach number 2 in the UK singles chart (kept off the top spot by I Believe / Up On The Roof by singing Soldier, Soldier blokes Robson & Jerome. Yep. That happened).23. John Martyn - May You NeverMay You Never is the sound of a tough man with a bruised heart, which is about as complete a description of John Martyn as we can summon.A complex individual and phenomenal talent capable of infinite emotional depth, Martyn was uniquely qualified to deliver May You Never, a beautifully played piece of world-weary advice from a man who knew a thing or two about making mistakes.22. Kansas - Dust In The WindKansas - Dust in the Wind (Official Video) - YouTubeWatch On Rumour has it that Dust In The Wind started out as a fingerpicking exercise for guitarist Kerry Livgren, before he brought it to the rest of the band and turned it into a prog-folk masterpiece.Although the recording may sound like a 12-string, its chorus-y tones actually come from Kerry and fellow guitarist Rich Williams playing standard- and Nashville-tuned acoustics at once.21. Eric Clapton - Layla (Unplugged)Recorded after a period of personal tragedy, Clapton's Unplugged album ended up being one of the most successful of his career.This stripped-down, rearranged version of Layla is one of the LP's highlights, though it's ironic to recall that it was this laidback performance that beat Nirvana's Smells Like Teen Spirit to the Best Rock Song Grammy in 1992.Radiohead - Fake Plastic Trees - YouTubeWatch On Ah, Thom Yorke, with your concerns about capitalism and your emotive singing, you really are a wonderful human being.Now, Fake Plastic Trees builds into something altogether not acoustic, but that doesnt stop it being one of those songs thats endlessly pleasurable to play solo. And top marks to anyone who can hit those high notes, for you are a better singer than MusicRadar.19. Led Zeppelin - Going To CaliforniaLed Zeppelin - Going To California (Live at Earls Court 1975) (Official Video) - YouTubeWatch On Tell you what, that Led Zeppelin, they werent bad were they? Going To California is a lovely wistful little jaunt, Jimmy Page merrily plucking his little heart out all the while.Theres open tunings, mandolins, more twang than you can shake a wangy stick at, and that rarest of things: a restrained Robert Plant vocal. Good work, lads - we think youll go far.18. James Taylor - Fire And RainJames Taylor - Fire And Rain (BBC In Concert, 11/16/1970) - YouTubeWatch On One of the great acoustic storytellers, Taylor uses Fire And Rain as a cathartic ode to the suicide of his childhood friend, as well as his own brushes with drug addiction and fame.The story: the great Carole King played piano on the track, and ended up writing You've Got A Friend in response to Taylor's line Ive seen lonely times when I could not find a friend.17. The Mamas and The Papas California DreaminCalifornia Dreamin' - YouTubeWatch On This dawn-of-stereo classic plays rather fast and lose with a yet-to-be-written rulebook (bass hard right is something of an acquired taste, with the all-important guitar work high and dry to the left) but theres no denying that the call and response left/right interplay of the lead and backing vocals totally make this classic.Likewise the acoustic strumming that, for all the interesting electric bass, piano, flute and mandolin-picking elsewhere, bely the songs entire reason for being. Its a song that for all its wall-of-sound, ambient complexity would sound just as good on a single, joyously strummed acoustic.16. Neil Young - Heart Of GoldNeil Young chalks up his biggest hit to the result of a back injury. Unable to stand for long periods of time and finding his electric guitars too heavy, Young found it easier to play acoustics while seated - Heart Of Gold is one of several gentle acoustic songs he wrote in 1971.While the gentle folk-rock song, which featured three wheezy harmonica breaks, scored with audiences, hitting number 1 on Billboards Hot 100, it failed to impress Bob Dylan, who said, I used to hate it when it came on the radio. I always liked Neil Young, but it bothered me every time I listened to Heart Of Gold. I think it was up at number one for a long time, and I'd say, Shit, that's me. If it sounds like me, it should as well be me.15. Extreme - More Than WordsExtreme - More Than Words (Official Music Video) - YouTubeWatch On Go on, admit it, youve played this at a party. Its okay, everybody has.Sickly sweet, almost annoyingly simple and yet somehow impossible to resist, its a mark of just how ridiculous Extreme actually were that More Than Words came from an album subtitled A Funked Up Fairytale, but we forgive them.More Than Words guarantee them immortality and we can't help but like it, even after all the times we've heard it brutalised.14. Simon And Garfunkel - The BoxerSimon & Garfunkel - The Boxer (Audio) - YouTubeWatch On Although its glistening, cascading guitar lines seem to float by as gently as a bubbling canyon stream, the recording of The Boxer was anything but smooth. Over 100 hours of studio time in multiple facilities and cities were required to capture the intricate fingerpicked guitar parts played by Paul Simon and session man Fred Carter Jr.Featured on Simon & Garfunkels swan song, Bridge Over Troubled Water, The Boxer begins as a lilting folk poem and builds to a shattering, thunderous conclusion.When it first appeared, it was widely assumed that the lyrics concerning a poor boy who arrives in New York City were about Bob Dylan. While Simon has gone on record as saying that the song is largely autobiographical, Dylan seemed to prefer the first explanation, as he covered The Boxer on his 1970 album, Self-Portrait.13. R.E.M Losing My ReligionR.E.M. - Losing My Religion (Official HD Music Video) - YouTubeWatch On Yes, we know its a mandolin. Thanks. But pernickety instrument choices aside its hard to think of a brighter, more open and whole-hearted strumalong than this 1991 seemingly shiny-happy crossover from a band better known for their darker side.And while its mandolin origins drive the songs chords, melody, and reason for being, all the rhythm and life comes from the blustery swept-in acoustic work providing a brilliant rhythmic counterpoint to the precise picking elsewhere.Add long lustrous single downward swipes and gentle string section underpinnings and youve a delicate entirely acoustic buffet to enjoy.12. Bob Marley - Redemption SongAn uncharacteristic ballad amongst the reggae icon's catalogue, Redemption Song is also something of an anomaly amongst Bob Marley songs as it features no musicians other than Bob himself on guitar and vocals.Lyrically, the track is at once powerfully political - referencing a speech by Jamaican political leader Marcus Garvey - as well intensely personal, touching on Marley's own mortality as he faced the cancer that would ultimately kill him a year later.11. Neil Young - Needle And The Damage DoneNeil Young - Needle And The Damage Done [Unplugged] - YouTubeWatch On Needle And The Damage Done can be counted as a major cornerstone in the great lineage of touching acoustic songs written about the perils of heroin abuse. In this case, Young composed the song after witnessing the drug addiction of his Crazy Horse bandmate Danny Whitten.The recorded version of the song itself, which appeared first on Young's classic '72 album Harvest, comes from a live performance at UCLA's Royce Hall.10. Johnny Cash - HurtJohnny Cash - Hurt (Official Video) - YouTubeWatch On There havent been many artists that could put their stamp on a song like Johnny Cash could, and by god when he covered Nine Inch Nails Hurt it stayed stamped.By 2002, the familiar rumbling Cash bass-bartitone wasnt the beast it had been, but its the fragility and faded strength in the vocal that gives Hurt its power.Throw in a positively biblical Rick Rubin arrangement and youre looking at a career-defining performance from a then 70-year-old Cash. A fitting epitaph to a mighty career.9. The Who Pinball WizardThe Who - Pinball Wizard (Lyric Video) - YouTubeWatch On Behind the bluster, behind the strident electric work, and alongside the exemplary drum and bass work, theres one hell of an acoustic guitar track here. Pete Townsend effectively plays for his life, struggling with his simple, human-powered other-half as he attempts to keep pace and battle for equal importance with the easily-won, electrically fuelled storm that threatens to over power itBut strike up that rapid strumming any time, and within seconds youre yanking at the reins of a certified crowd-pleaser.8. Eric Clapton - Tears In HeavenConsidering the tragic circumstances surrounding this song, its hard to understand how Eric ever played it to anybody at all, never mind recorded and toured it.Instantly iconic upon release and endlessly mangled at open mic nights, Tears In Heaven is rightfully in the top tier of Clapton classics.Arguably, the studio recording is trumped by the Unplugged version, but either way its one of old Slowhands best.7. Ed Sheeran The A TeamEd Sheeran - The A Team (Official Music Video) - YouTubeWatch On Start as you mean to go on. This remarkable-at-the-time debut single from the yet-to-be-minted global phenomenon was a standout back in 2011, but which now, after a wealth of equally successful hits and him again? ubiquity, doesnt perhaps get the lasting acclaim that it deserves.And the small matter of it NOT being the theme tune to Hannibal, Murdoch, The Face and BAs adventures has perhaps only muddied its waters. However, with his acoustic being his trademark weapon of choice, breaking into his maximum security song stockade to find, and hire The A Team for our list just felt right.We hope that in 2025, should a similar newsworm uncork such an arresting classic, that they too get the future chance for greatness that they deserve.6. The Eagles - Hotel California (Unplugged)The Eagles - Hotel California Acoustic (MTV Unplugged, 1994) - YouTubeWatch On Its incredibly long, but lets face it there is some mightily impressive guitar going on in this unplugged version of Eagles classic Hotel California.From the Spanish-style intro through to the tasteful solos, the only thing wrong with this is, arguably, the bongos. But we can get past that when the guitar playing is this good.5. The Beatles - BlackbirdBlackbird (Remastered 2009) - YouTubeWatch On A solo acoustic-folk performance by Paul McCartney, with the Beatle gently plucking a moveable, two-finger pattern on a Martin D-28 that was inspired by Bouree In E Minor by Bach. The only other sounds on the track are McCartney keeping time by tapping his feet, and some soothing bird chirps that came courtesy of a sound effects collection.Lyrically, McCartney wrote Blackbird as a response to the growing civil rights tensions in the United States. You were only waiting for this moment to arise was about, you know, the black people's struggle in the southern states, and I was using the symbolism of a blackbird, McCartney said.4. The Beatles - Here Comes The SunThe Beatles - Here Comes The Sun (2019 Mix) - YouTubeWatch On On 1968s the White Album, George Harrison, penning such beauts as While My Guitar Gently Weeps, Piggies and Savoy Truffle, was giving John Lennon and Paul McCartney a serious run for their money. A year later, on Abbey Road, he damn near left them in the dust with gems like Something and the eternal ode to warm-weather optimism, Here Comes The Sun.Harrison wrote the song in his friend Eric Claptons garden while playing hooky from attending Apple meetings. Breezy, sweet but not saccharine, and loaded with melodies, the track features multiple time signatures (4/4, 7/8 and 11/8) and several different acoustic applications by Harrison, including one capoed at the 7th fret (resulting in the key of A major).3. Led Zeppelin Stairway To HeavenLed Zeppelin - Stairway To Heaven (Official Audio) - YouTubeWatch On While perhaps the ultimate Did I mention that Im learning the guitar? cliché, one still cant help but be knocked sideways by this timeless rock call-to-arms despite the blanket roll-out of the still enforced no stairway rule in music shops and practice rooms globally.And while there are easy electric wins to be had, while picking out the track's famous, distinctive arpeggio, the original source is 100% acoustic, perfectly setting the scene for the electric bluster to follow.Sure the flutes and pipes are perhaps a little too pious and medieval for modern musical tastes but when the track finally drops its smock at 5:32 its like the sun coming out, and an absolute joy for any acoustic lover to play along with.2. The Beatles - YesterdayYesterday (With Spoken Word Intro / Live From Studio 50, New York City / 1965) - YouTubeWatch On In early 1965, Paul McCartney woke up one morning with a melody in his head and the words scrambled eggs on his lips. It was just there, a complete thing, he has said about Yesterday, the bleak, aching take of regret that now ranks as one of the most-covered compositions in history (over 2,500 versions and counting).At first, The Beatles tried recording the song as a band (one version had Lennon playing the organ), but nothing sounded right. Finally, producer George Martin suggested that McCartney perform the song solo on an Epiphone Texan steel-string acoustic. Afterwards, Martin convinced a reluctant McCartney to allow him to add a string quartet as backing.The success of Yesterday had a profound musical impact on The Beatles, who would soon begin experimenting with different sounds, instruments and varying configurations of the band.1. Pink Floyd - Wish You Were HereA powerful lament for poor old Syd Barrett, Wish You Were Here showcases Pink Floyd in all their post-Dark Side Of The Moon pomp. It's a towering tribute to a fallen comrade, and one that deservedly sits atop of this particular poll.

Easiest song to play on acoustic guitar. Top acoustic guitar songs to play.