



String Winding Defined.

ROUND WOUND



**HALF ROUNDS
FLAT TOPS**



**CHROMES
FLAT WOUND**



You know how important strings are—try playing without them! But finding the right string for your bass and style of music is a potentially expensive process. Guitarists have it easy, strings usually cost less than \$4.00 a set—compare that to an average of \$22.00 a set for bass strings, and you begin to understand why bass players tend to find one set and stick with them. The question is: Are those strings really the best for your application, or are you just settling because you can't afford to take a chance? There are so many choices out there, it's hard to be sure which string to try, but with a little knowledge of bass string construction, you can eliminate many of the options and zero-in on a type of string that will best suit your needs. Luckily, D'Addario makes such a wide range of strings, you're sure to find the right one in our catalog.

THE CORE OF THE MATTER

To determine which set is best for you, let's look at a few basics of string construction and see how they affect tone and feel. All D'Addario strings start with a hexagonally shaped high-carbon-steel core wire. The six "edges" of the core wire bite into the softer wrap wire and better secure it all along its length. This tight bond between the core and wrap wire is crucial in producing a consistent, long-lasting tone with precise intonation.

ROUND WOUNDS

Round wound strings wrap steel round wire around the hex core. They are known for a bright, piano-like sound, great sustain, clear articulation, punchy lows and mids, and snappy high-end. Round wounds are ideal for slapping, rock, or any style where you want the bass to cut through the mix. D'Addario XL™ Nickel Round Wounds, and ProSteels™ come in a wide variety of gauges—we'll talk more about how that affects the feel and tone, as well as the differences between stainless steel and nickel wrap materials in just a moment.

FLAT WOUNDS

Flat wound strings are also wound around a hex core, but have a polished, flat, ribbon-like wire finish, which gives a darker, mellower sound and a smooth feel that many players prefer. If you like the "old-school" bass tone of the '50s and '60s, this is the string for you. They are terrific for country, blues, reggae, R&B, and jazz. But don't think they can't rock too—Jane's Addiction bassist Chris Chaney plays D'Addario Chromes™ flat wound strings, and his tone has plenty of edge when he needs it. Chromes™ have an exceptional, warm, rounded tone, but still give enough high-end to get you heard through a wash of guitars and drums. They have balanced string tension, great intonation, and have a punchy fundamental tone that fills out the bottom.

HALF ROUND™

In between round and flat wounds, there is a string category known as "half-rounds." D'Addario XL Half Round™ Heat-Treated Nickel strings are made by first wrapping round wire around a hex core. The string is then precision ground, leaving a somewhat smooth outer surface that feels similar to a flat wound string. They retain some of the bright edge associated with round wound strings, but also offer some of the benefits of a flat wound: less string noise when shifting, no "scraping" noise when using a pick, and a slightly mellower tone.

COATED

A new category of string has appeared in recent years—the coated string. D'Addario bonds an ultra-fine layer of EXP coating to the outer nickelplated steel wrap wire of EXP™ Coated Nickel Round Wounds *before* winding it around the hex core, providing a barrier against corrosion and wear—which keeps your strings sounding fresh and bright much longer than non-coated strings. Since the EXP coating is applied to the wrap wire prior to winding, the strings can still vibrate freely. The natural vibration of the string is not damped or choked as it is with other strings that are coated after they are wound. While results may vary, EXP™ strings typically last 3 to 4 times longer than traditional strings. Got a steady outdoor gig at a seaside resort? EXPs™ are just what you need!

WRAP MATERIAL

The wrap wire material plays a significant role in the tone of the string. Our ProSteels™ wire is a naturally bright-sounding metal, and due to its corrosion resistant properties, strings made with this wrap wire can sound fresh longer than nickel-wound strings. D'Addario ProSteels™ bass strings use a proprietary, highly magnetic steel alloy that delivers super-bright highs and deep, focused lows for a distinctive "piano tone."

Nickel-wound strings are not as bright as steel, and because they do slowly oxidize, they will warm up over a period of time. They retain the clear articulation and edge of a round wound string with a darker tone. Many players prefer the "broken in" sound of nickel strings after they've been on the bass for a little while. The wrap wire used in D'Addario XL™ nickel-wound strings is 8% nickel-plated on steel, ideally suited for magnetic pickups, providing great overall tone and sound.

GAUGE

Gauge is another important factor that determines the tone and feel of a string. The general rule is: The lower the pitch, the fatter the string. But for example, D'Addario makes E strings gauged .110, .105, .100, and .95—which one do you use? First, take a look at how you play; if you're an aggressive pick-style player that tunes down from standard pitch, you'll want a heavier gauge to retain optimal string tension and keep your strings from "flapping in the breeze." If you have a light touch and play with lots of dynamics, a lighter gauge set will respond well to your approach.

D'Addario makes so many different gauges, you're sure to find the right set—for example, if you play four-string bass and like stainless steel strings, there are seven different gauge sets of ProSteels™ to choose from! If that seems overwhelming, you can get an idea of the relative string tensions by checking out our [String Tension Guide](#) – the higher the number, the heavier the tension.

TAPERED VS. NON-TAPERED B STRING

Another element in string construction that factors in to your choice is tapering. If you play 5-, 6-, 7-, or even a low-strung 4-string bass, you'll be using one of our B strings. D'Addario offers B strings in ProSteels™, XL™ Nickelplated Steel, Heat-Treated Nickel Half Round™, EXP™ Coated Nickelplated Steel, and Chromes™ sets. Available gauges are .125, .130, and .135 for round wound sets and .132 for our Chromes™ flat wounds.

Once you've decided on your preferred string type and gauge, the next choice is tapered vs. non-tapered. All D'Addario 5- and 6-string sets ship with a non-tapered B string, as this has proven to be the most popular option. A non-tapered B string has the full thickness of the string going over the bridge. While these sound great, some players prefer a tapered B string. The taper happens on the first inch or so after the ball end—this puts a thinner-gauge section of string across the bridge. Why is this done? The thinner string makes it easier to get accurate intonation, and gives a stronger fundamental. You will have to raise the B string's saddle a little higher than the other strings as it sits lower in the groove going over the bridge—but once it's set up that way, you can leave it alone. Tapered B strings are available individually through your D'Addario dealer. Check out D'Addario's Bass Station System, which allows you to customize your fifth and sixth strings to your ideal needs.

WRAPPING IT UP

As you can see, D'Addario makes many different bass string sets. Hopefully, you now have a better idea of which string is right for you, but you can rest assured that whichever set you buy—they will have the consistently superior quality that makes D'Addario The Player's Choice™.

