

Ted Greene String Gauges

As Ted Greene modded numerous guitars with different setups, circuits, and pickups, he also experimented through his life with various string gauges for intended styles, instruments, and tunings. Below is a list of gauges found and (to the best of my knowledge) their reasonings for their use. And as he said it best “Every thousandth of an inch counts!”

1977: *Solo Guitar*

- ½ Step Tuning on Tele ‘53: 13-16(or 15)-22p(or 24)-32(or 34)-42(or 44)-54(or 56)
 - Used on ‘They Can’t Take That Away From Me’, ‘Send In the Clowns’, ‘Watch What Happens’, ‘A Certain Smile’, ‘Danny Boy’*
 - *Danny Boy tuned Db-Ab-Db-Gb-Bb-Eb
- Tuned down a minor 3rd on ‘51, ‘66, and ‘67 Teles: 14-17-24p(or 26)-36-46-58
 - Used on ‘Summertime/It Ain’t...’, Ol’ Man on the River, Just Friends
 - Low E was sometimes a 60 single wrap

1980s: Ted Greene’s Custom DZ Strings

- Old Tele Blues: 11-13-17p-28-38-50
 - Attempt to replace the use of 9s as they have no richness nor balance in tone. The set was to help the strings be able to cut through while maintaining flexibility and richness.
 - This set was also light enough for the guitar have a low action
 - While the writing expresses that the set was nice on his older Teles, he most likely was thinking about his ‘52 stock Tele
- Jazz Tele: 12-15-20p-30-40-54
 - Can be set with low action on solid state or a hollowbody
 - Aimed to be balanced in tone (warm)
 - Jazzbox sound for a Tele
- Deep Tele ‘Solo Guitar’: 14-17-20p-34-44-58
 - “Orchestral” sound
 - Good for solo guitar or (most likely vocal) accompaniment playing
 - Able for detuning a ½ or whole step down
 - You may have to adjust your amp on whole step detuning

Student Insights

- Student Lesson 1977: 15-18-26p-36-46-58
 - For tuning down a minor 3rd
 - Used 60 on low E string for low C tuning (not common)
- Students Index Card from Lesson:
 - Jazz: 12-13-17p-28-40-54
 - Blues: 11-13-17p-28-38-50
- Ted’s ‘Experimenting Phase’ (possibly in the late 80s early 90s): 10-13-17p-30-42-52

- AKA Ernie Ball 'Skinny Top, Heavy Bottom'
- '97 Archived Lesson: "I just wanted a set of 11's for my Tele."
 - Attempt to go lighter on his hands as they were hurting more as he got older.
 - Power Slinky: 11-14-18p-28-38-48
 - D'addario: 11-14-21w?-28-38-49
 - He may have been a wound 3rd, but remember he just wanted sets of 11s. He, in the video, didn't seem to mind about the specific gauges with each one. His goal was to simply go lighter on the Tele. He also may have just replaced the 3rd string to get a plain 3rd.

'04 Seminar

- Ted's discussed his use of nickel wound 13s (sometimes 14s) to 58s with a plain (he said flatwound) 3rd string.
 - Possibly the gauges used were 13(or 14)-17-22p-34-46-58
 - Able to tune lower
 - Makes acknowledgement of having to use thinner pickups on heavier gauge strings.