

## **The Glider Capo: A Review**

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The glider capo is a new type of capo developed by well-known guitar designer Greg Bennett. It has been widely promoted in magazines, and the product has its own web site, [www.glidercapo.com](http://www.glidercapo.com). The advertisements are impressive and the short video of Bennett using it is compelling.

My preference for capos is the trigger lock capo, but I had been concerned with the amount of pressure a trigger capo (in fact any capo for that matter) places on the back of the neck. I was impressed with what I saw of the glider capo so I bought it. Suffice it to say that it has not lived up to expectations.

The device is basically a rubber rod attached to a rubber roller by two springs. The roller touches the back of the guitar neck at two small tips, thereby applying only very gentle pressure to two very tiny points on the back of the neck. Perhaps the capo's most notable feature is that it is easy to roll. You can slide it up and down the neck very quickly and easily. Another attractive feature is that the capo can be kept on the guitar by sliding it over or just past the nut. The suggested retail price on the product's site is \$29.95.

The attractive features of the capo are, however, not without disadvantages.

First, you cannot easily put the capo on the guitar using only one hand. You can do this with a trigger capo. The glider capo requires either both hands or very adept action with one hand. Admittedly this is a minor point but it might matter to some, especially if you're trying to hold the guitar body in place on your knee with one hand and put the capo on with the other.

Second, the capo does not always work properly, a problem related to its ability to easily slide up and down the neck. You have to position the capo precisely on the neck. Then when you slide it up and down the neck, it is extremely important to slide it carefully and uniformly. It is very easy for it to shift slightly out of position. In that case, it may not make uniform contact with each string. In a few cases, it can even lose complete contact with a string, especially the #1 (high E) string. If any of these things happen, you probably won't know it until you play. And your guitar will make the same sound it made the first time you tried to play a barre chord. In fact, that's exactly what's happening. A barre chord is just a manual capo. Unfortunately, the only way to really be sure that contact is complete is to do an up-close visual or to pluck each string and see what it sounds like. But if you're performing, you really don't want to have to do any of these things. In contrast, a trigger capo (and most other capos) can be easily positioned with confidence that proper contact is being made.

Another of the capo's features is that it can be stored on or just past the nut. It can, but let's clarify what that means. Do not keep it there when you're not using the guitar. Just keep it there when you're playing a song that doesn't need the capo. And even though

the capo would not affect the sound in that position, do not tune your guitar with the capo on. You can try it but I wouldn't. And as for storing it on or just past the nut, I really see few advantages. You can clip a trigger capo on the nut or on the head just as easily.

Bennett claims that in any position this capo is more out the way than other capos, giving your hand a little more room. But I found that this is not really true. For instance, try to play the following notes simultaneously: open D and B strings, a G# on the G string, and F on the #1 E string (a pleasant little chord known as G7flat9/D, though you can't play the G note). You have to position your hand well to the left of the capoed fret.

Unfortunately, I find that the glider capo is much more in the way of your left hand than the trigger capo. I can finger this chord easily with the trigger capo on any fret or on the nut, but it's almost impossible to quickly and comfortably do so with the glider capo.

Bennett also claims that the glider capo doesn't need to be in any specific position, just as long as it's behind the fret. But you can do this with a trigger capo. It doesn't have to be a millimeter behind the fret.

He also shows how you can roll it by quickly sliding your hand over the front of the capo or pushing your thumb against the back of the capo or just nudging it with your hand. Neither of these maneuvers is easy to do and both will cause the capo to get out of position and apply uneven pressure on the strings, as described above. I suppose with practice you might get this sliding thing down pat, but frankly, I'd rather spend my practice time working on other things.

Bennett also claims that the glider capo will make the guitar stay in tune up and down the neck better than other capos, but I disagree. Besides the aforementioned problems of uneven sliding, a trigger capo does that just as well. I have never seen a trigger capo that didn't make perfect contact all up and down the neck, providing precise tuning.

At \$29.95 the glider capo is a little pricey, but that didn't deter me. I drove to two music stores around town and didn't find it, even though one was among the dealers listed on the glider capo web site. Maybe they were just out of stock. Then I found it at another store (which was not listed on the product web site as a dealer) for \$39.95. Talk about pricey. I agonized for 15 minutes about whether it was worth the extra ten bucks just to get it and get it over with. But I was tired of shopping and eager to start sliding that bad boy up and down the neck so I sprung for it. Looking back, it definitely wasn't worth \$39.95. (If you're the unnamed Baton Rouge music store with the gall to mark that thing up ten bucks, just figure this: it's the only \$39.95 you'll ever get from me!) I did find it for \$19.95 in the catalog of musiciansfriend.com. I personally wouldn't pay more than that. Wait! I already have paid more than that. Ugh!

I had kept the glider capo on my main guitar and my old trigger capo on my secondary guitar. It was a real toss-up as to whether I liked it more than the trigger capo. Frankly, I think the only reason it was a toss-up was that I didn't want to feel like a total idiot for spending \$39.95 on this thing. At \$19.95, it's a better value but even then, the trigger capo is a better product. The real advantages of the glider capo are that it puts less

pressure on the neck, and that could be worth a lot, and assuming you play songs with key changes often (though I doubt that's true), you can do the key change more easily. But without extra care and playing each note to check, you can't be absolutely sure it's making full contact. Frankly, you can move a trigger capo pretty fast too and then you can be almost certain it's making full contact.

So all things considered, I finally gave up on the glider capo. It's now the capo for my secondary guitar. The trigger capo is back on the Martin.

But do remember, as Dennis Miller says, "That's just my opinion, I could be wrong."