



From Zero To Guitar Hero

**7 Simple Tips To Dramatically Improve
Your Guitar Playing In One Year Or Less**

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There are frequent links throughout the book. Please assume that when you click a link in this book and buy an item or take an action such as provide an email address, that I will receive a commission.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all of my students. Without you this book would not have been possible. All of the concepts in this book have come from students applying and enjoying my ideas. These ideas are what are at the core of the `7 Simple Tips`.

Thanks also to guitarists such as Misha Mansoor, John Frusciante and Mike Einziger for the ideas that I have picked up from you over the years. And thanks as well to the other musicians in my own band, Mark Vincent, Daniel Sefton and Martin Barnes.

Preface

Learning and mastering guitar is a very strange phenomenon. Some take to it like a duck to water: seamlessly playing classic songs in no time, while others struggle and struggle on for months or even years without making any real progress.

Why?

Is it natural talent? Is it intelligence? Or...is it luck?

It's none of those things. In my experience of teaching and learning this instrument for many years, the reason a person gets the success they aim for is simply that they are doing the **right things at the right time** – also known as being **focused**.

Focus together with **desire** is a potent combination. Read and apply all the advice in this book and you will start learning in the proper way, being efficient and effective, and not spending a second wasting your time on the things that do not matter.

My aim in this book and future books is to completely demystify the wonderful instrument that is guitar and get you on the road to learning and mastering the instrument. Here is the first in a series of books that will get you achieving your guitar playing dreams in a fun and productive way.

Follow the seven simple tips in this book and you'll be well on your way to being the guitarist you dream of being, and in less than a year. Just remember you get out of it what you put in.

Let's begin.

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Chapter 1: Master the basics – with a little help from your friends

If you're brand new to guitar, you will learn so much quicker having someone more experienced than you helping out. This doesn't have to be a private teacher. It can be a friend who has played for a while. Private lessons aren't particularly cheap but they are worth it. It really is so important to have someone better than you show you the ropes – whoever it is.

If you don't know where to look for private lessons, try searching the [Registry of Guitar Tutors](#) in the UK, [Find a Guitar Teacher](#) in the US or [MusicTeacher.com.au](#) in Australia.

Alternatively, ask your guitar playing friends if they know anyone, or post a question on Facebook seeing if anyone can recommend a quality teacher.

If they can't, Google is also a great way of finding a teacher, especially with the Google Local Business feature allowing you to see reviews of potential teachers in your area.

If you can't afford lessons ask a friend to give you a bit of help. Even if you have a teacher, having a bit of extra tuition from a friend will be very useful to you. This is what worked for me when starting out. A good friend from school (and now the bass player in my band) showed me some simple riffs to begin with (Metallica's `Enter Sandman` and Silverchair's `Pure Massacre`); that helped me enormously.

If I didn't have that sort of help, I would possibly of given up back then. That's how important having a bit of guidance is. Before I had any help, all I had was this crusty old book with these old songs which I didn't know such as `Jesu, joy of man`s desiring`. The book had no CD so I had no idea how it was supposed to sound and to make matters worse it had no tab, so I had to learn how to read music just to play these songs I didn't recognise! I'm not even joking.

This was before the time of the internet don't forget. I was actually listening to Nirvana, Metallica and Silverchair at the time. Those were the bands I wanted to emulate! Not Bach or Django Reinhardt (although since my appreciation for those two has skyrocketed). These days we have endless amounts of choices from hundreds of good and not so good YouTube channels to guitar sites such as [Jamorama](#). You simply can't beat one to one tuition in my opinion.

Having my friend who was a much better player showing me how to play the songs I wanted to play, was a huge moment for me.

If I would have had weekly lessons, I would have got to where I am now - far quicker I suspect. It's just a shame we couldn't afford them back then.

Another thing that is very useful is to spend some time at various guitar shops. Try out different instruments, talk to the guys there, and pick up some tips. If you're friendly and genuine, the guys there will often pass on lots of knowledge and you may meet other guitarist to jam with too.

I've not been to a guitar shop and met a salesperson who wasn't:

A) A very good guitarist

Or

B) Willing to help in any way.

If you have a spare Saturday afternoon get down to some different shops, it will open your eyes. Just by being around other guitarists, watching watch they do, asking a few questions, and not being shy in asking for a bit of help, you will get to where you want to be so much quicker.

Honestly, this is such an important part of learning guitar - especially if you're brand new to the instrument.

Most guitarists are nice people, who enjoy helping others. **Don't try to learn this mind boggling instrument all on your own.**

Jam with other musicians. Music is a wonderful thing. Even if you can only play three chords, you can still play music! There's so many guitarists out there, that love to play on their own, and literally wait to they have played for years before they have the confidence to play with others.

I cannot stress this enough, go and play with other musicians.

You will thank me in a year's time!

Essential Action plan

- Go and book a lesson with an expert tutor
- Try out some different tutors until you find the right one. You can always go back to the first one if he/she was the best.
- Ask at school about lessons (They`re usually a much cheaper rate)
- Jam with your friends – at least once a week, jam with a friend, even if it`s just you two guitarists
- Jam with a band
- Attend open-mic nights/jam nights
- Join a musicians group. Where I live, the ukulele is a hugely popular instrument and there are loads of groups where they regularly meet and play together. These also exist for guitar but are not quite as common. If you can`t find one, set one up.

Chapter 2: Practice, practice, practice – and practice properly!

If you don't sit down and practice properly and efficiently you may achieve your guitar playing goals but you won't be doing so very effectively. Time is of the essence, you don't want to waste it. Sitting in front of the TV with your guitar in your lap, strumming a few chords whilst watching that rerun of Spinal Tap won't be the best use of your time.

Two key points to remember when it comes to practicing. You need to be:

- Practicing regularly
- Practicing properly

Practicing regularly

You ideally want to practice daily: somewhere between 10 and 30 minutes of focused practice will be hugely beneficial. A lot of new guitarists think that if they practice for four hours on a Saturday they will have got through their hours of practice for the week. Unfortunately, it doesn't work like that.

It's far better to spend a focused half an hour each day practicing than it is to spend an hour noodling about every other day. We, as humans learn far better in bite size chunks. A lot of learning comes from trying things out, and then having a break. It's during this break that your sub-conscious mind processes the information you have learned and allows you to be better at it the next time you try.

Have you ever tried for ages to learn something, only to give it a break and then nail it pretty much first time the next time you have tried?

If so, it's this principle in action. Don't underestimate what short bursts of practicing can do for your abilities.

Practicing properly

Practicing properly means being focused and having a routine. Time is so precious for most people. If you only have 20 minutes per day to practice, make the most of it.

Get a stop watch, and set the timer as soon as you pick up the guitar, and time yourself doing the various parts of your practice routine.

When you are sitting in front of the TV, noodling about with your guitar in hand, watching Hendrix`s live set from Woodstock, you are not really practicing. Don`t get me wrong, watching Hendrix play is awe-inspiring! BUT your practice is *your* time, make the most of it.

Have a routine.

So, what should you practice? In the early stages, I wouldn`t worry too much about having a complex routine down, like the Steve Vai `Ten Hour Guitar Workout`.

Let's say, you only have 20 minutes to practice each day. This is what a useful routine would look like.

Ideally, you want to run through some **warm-ups for two minutes**. Warm-ups are often maligned in the guitar playing world. They are incredibly useful though. You'll be improving your technique each time you do so, you'll be loosening up those joints and muscles you use, and it's a great way to get focused and make sure you are not wasting time.

For warm-ups, I suggest learning **The Ultimate Warm-Up Exercise** ([See bonus chapter 2](#)).

Next, for three minutes, **practice your scales**. Go through a scale you know for a few minutes per day (start with minor pentatonic, then blues, then, minor, and learn these all in different positions).

Next, **strum through all the chords you know** for a further three minutes. This keeps them fresh and helps build up the muscle memory in your fingers. If you only know a couple of chords, add a new one in to your routine regularly and don`t learn anymore until you can comfortably change between this new chord and all the existing chords in your memory bank.

Spend the next six minutes reciting a couple of riffs or songs you know. You need to regularly go over the songs, riffs and solos you already know. Especially when starting out. This will allow you to play them on the spot rather than fumbling about trying to remember them. This is very useful when you`re in a band situation. More on playing with other musicians later.

Spend the last six minutes of your practice routine learning something new or practicing something you are not able to play fully yet. Make sure it is something that **YOU** want to learn.

Choose a song that you love and learn it. When beginning, use whatever resources you need to learn songs. Be it tab, video tutorials or someone showing it to you. You could sit there all day learning chords and scales but if you don't put it into the context of something you love, it's a bit counterproductive.

Try to learn a new piece weekly and don't fret if it takes a while to learn. I would much rather you play five pieces perfectly, than 50 pieces half heartedly.

Break the song down; learn the intro riff one day, the verse the next, the chorus the next and so on until you've learned all parts of the song.

Start with something simple, I wouldn't recommend starting out learning Dream Theater songs or trying to play Slash solos. Keep it simple for now and check out [this list of recommended beginner riffs](#).

If you spend your time focused like this, you'll quickly build up a repertoire of songs in no time. And believe me; you'll get quicker at learning as you improve.

PRACTICE ROUTINES

Let`s create you a practice routine. What level of guitar are you currently at?

Beginner? Intermediate? Expert?

Beginner Routine

20 minutes per day

- **2 minutes – The Ultimate Warm-Up Exercise**

[\(See bonus chapter 2\)](#)

- **3 minutes – Scale Practice.**

Practice one scale per day. Take it steady and try to memorise it and play it without using tab or sheet music.

- **3 minutes – Chord Practice.**

Run through all the chords you know. Learn the `Five Essential Chords` G, C, D, Am, Em and focus on these in the beginning. You can play 10,000`s of songs with just these 5 chords. How ace is that!

- **6 minutes – Play songs you already know.**

Run through a couple of songs in your repertoire. If you run out of time, continue where you left off tomorrow.

- **6 minutes – Start learning something new!**

Finish off your practice by picking one of your favourite songs and start learning it. If you are having fun, and have time, you can always run over the allotted 6 minutes!

That`s the beauty of putting this part at the end of your workout.

Intermediate Routine

40 minutes per day

The intermediate routine consists of the four principles of learning and practicing guitar. They are: **F.R.A.T - Fundamentals, Repertoire, Aural, Technique**. These four principles are essential for building up and developing ALL areas of your guitar playing. I want you to be the best guitarist possible.

Stick with these four principles and you will be well on your way.

Fundamentals

- **4 minutes – The Ultimate Warm-Up Exercise**

[\(See bonus chapter 2\)](#)

- **3 minutes – Scale Practice.** Practice one scale per day. Take it steady and try to memorise it and play without using tab or sheet music.
- **3 minutes – Chord Practice.** Run through all the chords you know and add a new chord every couple of days. Get comfortable changing from existing chords to new chords.

Repertoire

- **5 minutes – Play songs you already know.**

Run through a couple of songs in your repertoire that are written by others. If you run out of time, continue where you left off the next day.

5 minutes – Run through a song of your own.

If you don't have any yet, then what!?! Spend this time writing some. Writing music is one of the great things about being able to play an instrument!

Aural

- **10 minutes - Learn something new!**

Learn it by ear. When you are at the intermediate level, it really is time to put away the tab, get off YouTube, and not have a peek at Ultimate Guitar.

This is the point you want to start learning songs all by yourself. It's such an essential skills, and one that is rarely put into to practice. [See Chapter 4](#) for more on this.

Technique

- **5 minutes – New skills**

Practice new techniques that are new to you and you find challenging. Techniques such as legato, tapping, finger picking, embellishing chords, sweep picking, etc. are difficult at first.

Use this time to focus on that specific technique before moving on to the next one.

- **5 minutes – Improvisation**

Get yourself a series of backing tracks. Ideally 7 of them and improvise over one per day. Try and incorporate new techniques you have learnt in the new skills section and most importantly **have fun with this!**

Expert Routine

It would be really easy for me to lay down a specific routine for expert players, but to be honest, when you get to the point where you are so good at guitar, you will really need a tailor made routine.

What I would suggest if you don't want to create a routine or don't have a teacher to create one for you is that you take the intermediate routine, and perform it exactly as it is, AND **add 20 minutes** on at the end of it to focus on any specialist areas you really want to improve on.

If you are particularly eager to improve, you can of course double the time spent on each section, and you will gain yet even bigger results.

This sort of routine for experts will help you develop any weaker areas of your playing whilst maintaining the areas you are comfortable with.

Essential Action plan

Time is essential. We all know how important time management is in life, and most people are pretty good at it, but when it comes to learning an instrument, that often all goes out the window, BUT if you **practice as stated above then in one year's time, you will be an awesome guitarist.**

No doubt about it. Having a practice routine with guitar is like one an athlete or fitness enthusiast has with the gym. Have a bit of discipline and push yourself to practice these set routines.

Your future self will thank you for it.

Chapter 3: Learn how to play in time

Believe me you want to learn how to play in time. Have you ever seen a band that can all play but are out of time? It sounds awful. Playing in time is a skill, and unless you have great rhythm skills, (for instance if you are good dancer) it will take time to get there.

You can use backing tracks for the songs you are learning, [drum machines](#), a real drummer, or a metronome. Whatever you do, get into the habit of playing with someone or something to help you keep in time.

Two rules for time keeping I use are:

- **When playing a song use a backing track**
- **When practicing your techniques use a metronome or a drum beat**

Learning other peoples` songs may be difficult depending on the song, of course, so break it down into small chunks. Learn the notes and rhythm of the section, then play it a slow tempo, and when you are comfortable playing the song, listen to the track and try to play along with it.

If you can't play along, then something is wrong, you just may not be able to play up to speed. Don't worry, practice it on your own, and then try playing along with the song again.

If you're finding it difficult to play along, **use your metronome**. Don't try and play with the backing track this time. Just play the song with the click on at a slow tempo, increasing it gradually until you can `get it` at the correct tempo.

Try it with anything you're struggling with, getting it down at half tempo, then when you're feeling comfortable, increasing the tempo until you're at full speed.

Metronomes are often frowned upon: "metronomes and clicks are for that boring piano teacher round the corner who makes all her students play `Fur Elise` a thousand times at every tempo before moving on." This is often what people think when it comes to metronomes.

I hear you, but playing with a metronome will massively IMPROVE YOUR PLAYING.

Pretty much any metronome will be hugely beneficial. This little beauty from [Korg](#) is the one I use with my students.

A `click` is fundamental to being a tight player. I would go as far as to say, learning to play in time is probably the most single important thing for any musician. Without it, everything else sucks. What`s the point of being able to play the Lydian mode in G if you can`t apply it in time with the band?

How to practice your techniques with a metronome?

Practice your scales at a *slow tempo* (60bpm) playing quarter notes (one note per beat/click) going up and down the scale for **three minutes each day**. You should play each note at exactly the same time as you hear a beep or click.

Once you are comfortable doing this, start increasing the tempo by five beats per minutes each day.

If you struggle to play in time or are unsure, slow it back down. This is an essential skill, so **don`t rush it**.

Once you are able to play a series of scales comfortably over *quarter notes* (one note per beat/click) then you want to start playing *eighth notes* (two notes per beat).

If you increase your speed gradually, eventually you`ll be playing 16th note triplets in no time, ala John Petrucci! Your sense of rhythm will sky rocket and you`ll get a natural feel for writing great riffs and leads pretty quickly.

A metronome cleans up your chops and helps you learn things do much better. Buy a decent metronome. They don't cost much, and **apart from your guitar it will be one of the best investments you will ever make**.

Some people prefer drum machines, or pre programmed beats played through a software sequencer but a metronome is better in the long run as a beat will influence what you play; whereas a metronome gives you far more scope for you to feel your own groove. Take it slow with the metronome when starting out, as they can be initially very frustrating.

You`ll be banging out great leads, riffs and songs in no time. **Start off slow!**

Essential Action plan

- **Download or buy a metronome**

Keep the metronome near to your guitar and get a metronome on your smart phone if you have one. There are plenty of free and cheap ones out there to download and buying a real metronome isn't expensive at all.

- **Buy the songs you learn**

You want to jam along with the songs you have learnt to play. It's great fun and very useful indeed. It's tempting to play along with them on YouTube, but due to YouTube's Copyright rules, users often have to slightly change the pitch of a song to get it on YouTube.

Therefore, when you play along, you will often be slightly out of tune with the song, and it will sound awful.

It's not your fault, and it's not down to your playing, but avoid this problem altogether, and either purchase the songs you want to play or get a Spotify account.

Whichever option you use, you create a playlist with all the tracks you have learnt, and create one with all the tracks you want to learn.

You will then have those songs all in one place.

- **Download these [drum beats](#)**

Some people prefer to play along to drum beats rather than metronomes. There's a ton of good beats on the net that you can find for free with a bit of hunting around.

Here are some simple beats at various tempos to get you started. They don't contain a

huge amount of expressive drumming. This allows you create the groove without too much influence from the beat.

- **Practice The Ultimate Warm-Up every day**

[See here](#)

Chapter 4: Learn the songs you love by 'ear'

Never underestimate how important learning by ear is for a guitarist. Learning songs by ear is simply essential. Once mastered, this skill will help your playing improve in so many ways and you will be surprised by just how good you have become.

You'll be able to learn any song, quickly, saving you a lot of time to play other stuff, your ear will be fine tuned and focused, enabling you to know when something is right or wrong - especially in a band situation, and perhaps most importantly, **you'll be able to play the ideas in your head with ease.**

The sense of achievement you will gain too is great. It will motivate you and keep you going during those tough times.

I always encourage my students NOT to use YouTube videos or tab where they can and I've never taught or met a player who frequently works things out by ear, who is nothing short of an excellent guitarist.

All the best players do it. Whereas, I've met quite a few who frequently use tab and videos, who are nowhere near the standard of the first group.

Coincidence? I don't think so.

Just imagine when a friend puts on a new record, and you work out how to play it right there in front of him or her, within minutes; the first time I did this, my mate's jaw dropped. He put on Deftones – 'My Own Summer' and I worked it out pretty quickly.

It's a great feeling, knowing that anything you listen to, you can work out. Also, if you're like me, you may listen to a lot of non mainstream rock, so there simply won't be the tab and videos to show you how to play them.

If there are, they may take a while to find and guess what? You could have been playing guitar that whole time.

If you are a complete beginner and don't have access to a teacher or fellow guitarist friend, I recommend using whatever resources are available to you for working things out, but once you know a few tunes by your favourite band, try and work out some songs yourself.

Don't forget, most popular bands tend to write a lot of things in a similar style, using similar

chords, changes, and patterns. This is a big part of what gives them their signature sound.

No doubt, you'll get a bit stuck especially when trying to work things out that are outside of your comfort zone, so this is a good time to use the net, videos magazines etc, but only once you have got really stuck. Don't be lazy and give up after an attempt or two. Have a look at this [post](#) for some easy beginner guitar songs to learn.

Learning songs by ear is simply one of the most important skills you can develop in your guitar playing. So, get cranking the tunes up, and turn off the internet.

You'll be delighted with the results.

Aural Association Method

Ok, so here's the easiest and simplest way to work out a song. To do this, I have developed what I call the `**Aural Association Method**`. The method teaches you how to associate the notes you hear in music with the notes of the fretboard. You will then have the tools to work out any song you like, any time. So, here is the method.

1) Pick a song

Make sure it's a tune you REALLY love (it will help motivate you to see it through)

2) Figure out what type of guitar part you are playing

The four types of guitar parts you will be working out are:

- 1. Single String**
- 2. Power Chords**
- 3. Strummed Chords**
- 4. Chord Picking**

Ideally, when starting out working out how to play songs, you want to pick a song with either **single string or power chords** as this can make it much easier to work out compared to the

full sound of full minor, major or more complex chords.

Full **strummed chord** songs (e.g. Minor, Major, 7th chords, Maj 6th, etc) are harder to work out in the beginning, and **chord picking** songs where you are playing chord shapes with your left hand, and picking out notes with your right are even harder to work out.

You will find out why thinking about this is an important part of the process in step 6.

3) Pick a small part of the song i.e. 1 bar

It makes sense to learn the song in a linear fashion from beginning to end and to learn it in very small chunks. So pick your segment. It's wise to start at the beginning and start very small.

4) Get the guitar part stuck in your head

Now listen to nothing but the opening riff as many times as it takes to get it stuck in your head, and make sure you break that riff down further. Say, for instance, it's a two bar riff, pick the **first segment of the first bar**. Don't try and work out the whole part or whole bar at a time.

Take it note by note, and get it in your head and sing it or hum it out loud.

5) Find the root note

Once you can hum or sing the first note out loud, pick up your guitar, making sure you are in tune (extra important here!) and try to **play the first note**.

The first note you hear, and the first note that is stuck in your head is the one you want to try and find. Keep moving your fretting finger up and down, one fret at a time until it sounds right.

Now, I know what you are thinking, many songs use chords and if you're only playing one note, you can't possibly be playing it correctly. What we are after is the **'root'** note.

The `root` note is the main note, the one the chord is named after, and the note the bass is likely to be playing. For example, if the chord is a Bm, the root is B, and the bass is most

likely to be playing a B.

Are you there? If not go one fret higher, then ask is that further away? If so, go lower. Keep going one fret higher or lower until you find that note.

6) Find the chord or the next note

This where step 2 comes in handy. If the guitar part is chord based, your next step is to find the rest of the chord. If it is riff based, your next step is to find the next note.

If it is a **single string** riff, the notes will probably vary and change quite a bit, (think Black Dog by Led Zeppelin).

If your riff is a **power chord** riff, you'll probably be moving your left hand about a bit less, as it is obviously harder to move between power chords as quick as single notes.

If it's a **strummed chord** guitar song, you will probably be changing chords once every 1 bar, 2 bars, or 2 beats.

To work out these type of riffs, find the root then ask yourself does it sound happy, (major) mournful (minor) or tense (7th, Sus, or Aug)?

Once you get the feel for the type of chord used, try out what type you think it is if it's not right, experiment and use that dusty old chord book for a bit of help. If you get really stuck, you may know the chord at all, so it makes sense to look up the tab for help. Only look for the tab when you are really stuck though!

Strumming patterns can very difficult to work out. The key really is to listen and try to tap the rhythm out before trying to strum it.

To work out **Chord Picking** songs, we need to listen to the chord and find out what chord we want to play. You will probably change chords as often as with strummed chords. It's what your right hand does that makes the difference here.

7) Once you have completed step 6, keep on going.

If it is riff based, keep working out the next note, and if it is chord based, keep working out

each individual chord.

Once you have the one chord down, listen for the change, and taking it one chord at a time until you get the whole progression down.

There are also guitar solos that you can work out, but they are often hard to work out especially at first - they are often played faster and there are a lot more notes to pick out. So, stick with working out the types of rhythm guitar discussed first.

Once you are comfortable working out rhythm parts, try working a guitar solo out for yourself!

Note: When working out the root notes of the chords or riffs, it can be easier to stay on the same string, and just keep on going up and down this string. Once, you work it out, there will often be an easier way to play it by switching strings as hopefully you know by now about the [`Five Fret Rule`](#)

Song examples

Here are 11 song examples for each of the different type of guitar parts mentioned in step 2 of the Aural Association Method. Most students find it easier to work out songs from the **Single string riffs/melodies and Power chord** section of songs first and then build up to strummed songs and chord picking songs as their aural skills develop.

Single String Riffs/Melodies

- Muse - Plug In Baby
- Deftones - My Own Summer
- Rage Against the Machine - Bombtrack
- The Beatles – Daytripper
- Judas Priest – Breaking the Law
- Cream – Sunshine Of Your Love
- Arctic Monkeys – Do I Wanna Know?
- Aerosmith – Walk This Way
- Michael Jackson – Beat It
- Roy Orbison – Oh, Pretty Woman
- Tool – Schism

Power Chord Songs

- Nirvana - Smells Like Teen Spirit
- Blink 182 – All The Small Things
- A Perfect Circle - Judith
- Linkin Park - Forgotten
- Foo Fighters – All My Life
- The Undertones – Teenage Kicks
- Sex Pistols - Pretty Vacant
- Metallica – For Whom the Bell Tolls
- Marilyn Manson - The Fight Song
- Survivor – Eye of the Tiger
- Black Sabbath – Iron Man

Strummed Songs

- The Who – Pinball Wizard
- Oasis – Wonderwall
- Incubus – Drive
- Radiohead – High and Dry
- Pearl Jam - Daughter
- Led Zeppelin - Ramble On
- The Rolling Stones – Rocks Off
- Blur – Coffee and T.V.
- Alice In Chains - Nutshell

- Van Morrison – Brown Eyed Girl
- Ed Sheeran – The A Team

Chord Picking Songs

- Soundgarden - Black Hole Sun
- Red Hot Chilli Peppers - Under the Bridge
- A Perfect Circle - 3 Libras
- James Taylor – Fire and Rain
- Foo Fighters – Walk
- The Beatles – Blackbird
- Led Zeppelin – Stairway to Heaven
- Simon and Garfunkel – Scarborough Fair
- R.E.M. - Everybody Hurts
- Radiohead - Street Spirit
- Metallica - Nothing Else Matters

If you listen to the above songs, you'll see how they sound very different because of the style of chords/ riffs/ melodies they use. I recommend checking those songs out if you're not familiar with them, they're all classics anyway.

Download this list of songs as an easy to access PDF [here](#).

Essential Action plan

Follow the steps from the Aural Association Method and you'll be working out songs regularly by ear, and soon with ease.

Apply the above steps and choose a song you want to learn and work it out. If you are stuck for songs to choose from try one out from the above list.

You won't have to bother with tabs, YouTube tutorials or books and you'll be a much better and much more liberated guitarist for it.

Try to work out how to play a new piece daily, even just a riff or simple melody every day. Try it.

You'll be amazed by just how much difference it makes.

Chapter 5: Record your playing

Regularly recording your guitar playing is an absolutely crucial skill if you want to improve quickly. Just by putting a camera in front of you or placing a microphone in front of your amp, hitting record and routinely listening back to your practice sessions you will learn so much more about your playing than you would otherwise.

The reason why it so important is that when you are playing you are often in the moment thinking and concentrating so hard, you can easily forget the final purpose of your playing – **to make great music to LISTEN to.**

Having access to a recording of yourself playing is like having a second set of ears, and objective ones at that. You can simply listen to yourself just like someone else would when listening to you play.

Recording and listening back to yourself will open up a new world for you to evaluate your playing. You can hear what sounds tight and what sounds sloppy, you will hear all sorts of string noise at first you didn't know existed. You will hear what ideas you like and what ideas you don't like and you will hear how your tone sounds from a more neutral viewpoint.

All these little things make you a good or not so good guitarist, and being aware of them is the first step to *correcting them*. So often a guitarist plays and concentrates so hard, they are not really listening to him or herself actually play the instrument.

Do not record your whole practice session as that would take too much time. Simply:

- **Record three minutes of your playing every couple of days**
- **Listen back to it later on in the day after a break from playing**
- **Make a note on what pleases you and what you don't like about your playing.**
- **Next time, get working on fixing these errors.**

A student of mine had NEVER recorded himself and he had been playing for a couple of years.

When he came to his first lesson, he was a decent guitarist but had issues with being a sloppy player. So, I recorded him and played it back there and then, and he was surprised to hear his sloppiness.

We then got cracking on fixing these issues and bad habits he had built up and within a month or two he was a far tighter player.

This kind of recorded feedback is **CRUCIAL** for you to hear how you really sound.

You don't need to have a fancy setup. Unless you are recording your guitar parts for a professional recording or demo I would simply buy a cheap recorder or use your smart phone. Even with all the fancy technology about these days, I just use the [voice memo recorder](#) on my Android phone. If you want something a little more accomplished, there are a lot of options. I personally rate the [Zoom recorders](#). They are superb.

Every time inspiration strikes, I pick up my phone and place it in front of my amp and get recording in about two seconds. It's very handy and that way I don't have to mess about waiting for my computer to load up to get my sequencer running, then get everything plugged in, misc positioned, etc.

Technology is great, but it can get in the way of creativity. Don't let that happen. There's not a lot as a guitarist that's more frustrating than having a great idea only to forget it an hour later.

So record yourself every time you play for BOTH technical feedback and musical feedback. You will hear things you won't be aware of when playing. You can hear what sounds good and you won't be swayed by what feels good.

Many times, I've come up with a riff, thought it sounded great, recorded it, played it back only to hear a complex piece that doesn't sound as good as I had hoped. Whereas what I thought was simple sounds great played back. **Remember all that really matters is how good something sounds.**

Learning how to record for professional reasons is a great skill to acquire too if you want to be a successful guitarist in the long term. If you want to make music professionally, eventually you will probably want to head into a music studio and lay down your guitar professionally. Having a background in recording, amp settings, mic placement, mic choice, etc will stand you in good stead for the future.

Don't forget, all great guitarists will have recorded themselves at some point.

Essential Action plan

Start recording your guitar playing today. Every time you practice, you should record a small segment. There are two ways I recommend recording yourself playing.

TECHNICAL FEEDBACK - using video recordings

Try recording video if you can. Most people have smart phones with good quality cameras and decent microphones (the microphones will do the job for this sort of feedback).

Simply get a cheap phone tripod such as [this](#) tripod and stick your phone in, point it at yourself while playing something challenging and hit record. It doesn't need to be Hollywood movie quality to get the benefits from it.

If you haven't got access to video recording, then you can use a cheap recorder. Even a dictaphone that costs next to nothing provides great feedback. Of course, you won't get the visual feedback which is very useful, so try to use video recordings for this type of feedback.

CREATIVE FEEDBACK - using `proper` gear

The other type of recording I recommend you do is recording your original material and doing it regularly. This is when you will learn how to master the art of recording, which is a great skill for every musician, (let alone guitarist) should acquire.

All you need to do is get an **audio interface** such as the Alesis IO2 (which I myself own), a **computer**, a **microphone or a multi FX pedal** which allows you to record directly such as the DigiTech RP1000 (which I also own) and lots of **patience**.

Simply install Reaper (or GarageBand/Cubase/Audacity, etc) and set up a track for recording,

set up your guitar tone, plug your mic into your audio interface, point your mic at your amp if playing electric, or at the sound hole if playing acoustic and hit record.

It's far more complex than doing just that if you are after top quality recordings, but that's the basics of it. Try and program some drum beats and bass guitar (if you don't have the capabilities to record these) and record along to these.

It takes many professionals years of trial and error before they really get this skill down but have a try. The best tips are to make sure you are playing a **high quality guitar, with the best tone setup from the amp, quality noise free cables and a good microphone.**

It's very worthwhile experimenting with the tone for the amp and the mic placement. **These two simple things make a HUGE difference.**

Learning to record your guitar parts well has many benefits. You can really hear how your guitar sounds when recorded, you acquire a fine-tuned `ear` after months of trial and error and really listening for the best sound, you will become more employable in the music industry (you never know you may become a recording engineer.

You will also gain valuable feedback on the quality of your playing, you will hear how your musical ideas sound in the context of a band mix, and you may even record your band's first album.

NOTE: If I'm looking to simply record a guitar part I have created so that I don't forget it, I will use the `Voice Recorder` app on my Android phone. If I like the guitar part, I'll send it over to the rest of my band, and get their input on it. If it's something we like, it will get a much better demo recording using the steps described above.

Chapter 6: Mimic your idols

When you want your own sound, the best tip I ever got was from a singing coach called Roger Love. He simply stated, `Mimic 5 of your favourite singers of all time, and learn to sing just like them. `

Do this with guitar and eventually you will find a sound that is a unique a combination of them all but with your soul in there too. Nobody will say you sound like one of those original 5.

They will say *you* sound like **YOU**.

All you need to do is to **mimic the guitar players you are most passionate about**.

Learn lots and lots of songs by one artist you admire hugely, to the point you know that sound, style, favourite chords, techniques, tempos, key, and all the other things that makes him or her so special to you as a guitarist.

Nail their sound *inside out*.

Almost to the point that you are imagining joining a tribute band for the guitarist you are mimicking. Not only will it make you a much better guitarist, it will push you out of your comfort zone and get you learning things you find challenging as well as things you find simple.

Once you have one guitarist `s sound down, repeat the process with another guitarist. Then choose another, do the same, and do it again till you can master the sounds of your five favourite players.

This may take some time, and if the guitarist has a big back catalogue, e.g. Dave Grohl or Keith Richards, it may take A LONG time, so limit yourself to learning 10 songs inside out by your favourite guitarists.

Ten – no more, no less.

I want you to learn the whole song, not just the cool intro riff. Learn the verses, choruses, and all the other sections too. This will help you understand the subtleties and complexities of song writing and will help you when it comes to writing you own songs and you will

REALLY have to listen to the little things. This will help with fine tuning your `ear` as described in [chapter 4](#). (Hopefully now you are starting to see how all the 7 tips work together so well).

It may take you some time to learn all the parts of the songs, from five different artists. That`s 50 songs you will need to learn inside out, if you learn two a week, that will take six months, but by the time you are done, you will be a far, far better guitarist.

I guarantee it.

You will have your own sound and it will be a sound that you absolutely love.

When starting out, I chose to mimic:

- **Tom Morello (Rage Against the Machine, Audioslave)**
- **Matt Bellamy (Muse)**
- **Kurt Cobain (Nirvana)**
- **James Hetfield (Metallica)**
- **Billy Howerdel (A Perfect Circle, Ashes Divide)**

My inspirations have developed since then, and I`m into more varied bands these days such as Periphery, Tesseract, Oceansize and Karnivool. I still love those bands and guitarists I mimicked. Those guitar players made up the core of my early sound.

Keep in mind, some players may take longer to mimic than others. John Petrucci (Dream Theater) will take longer to learn than Dave Grohl (Foo Fighters) but you can get there.

Just emulate them as much as possible, try to really nail their tone, use the same effects. You can even pose like them if it helps!

Who`s **your** absolute favourite guitarist of all time?

Essential Action plan

Make a list of your five favourite guitarists ever here.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Start learning their songs today. Then make a list of ten of their songs and learn them all. That will get you 50 different songs to learn, and you will learn so much about what makes these players such great guitarists in your eyes.

Playing other peoples songs is fun, so remember to let yourself go, and enjoy yourself!

Chapter 7: Play with a band

This is where all your hard spent hours toiling away learning the instrument start to come to fruition. Jamming with others is a great way to develop your skills, show off and have a LOT of fun.

Any kind of jamming is good practice (along as it is jamming you do, not sitting around drinking like rock stars. I've been there and done that!)

Jam with a full band, another guitarist, a keyboard player, or even of a trumpet player. Anything will do as long your both/ all are having fun and being productive.

You know when you've just had a good jam when you feel the buzz afterwards.

It's `that` moment when you and the drummer clicked from that 4/4 breakdown into that smashing 7/8 riff or something similar. Although jamming with any musicians is great, I recommended trying to jam with a drummer - one who is of a higher skill level than you.

You'll find you learn better this way, and it really us infuriating trying to play to a drummer who just can't play.

In my first band, when I was 17, our drummer who is a great friend of mine, just couldn't get the beat for `Freak` by Silverchair. It was annoying, and we just kept playing it and playing it, and he still kept playing at what seemed like double speed. I'm not sure he listened to the song itself. It really stopped the band in its tracks and frustrated us all.

So, make sure you're drummer is a good one.

If not, jam with someone else. You don't want to mess about with this part. You don't need to play with a drummer like John Bonham or Danny Carey or anything, you just need to play with someone who can hold a beat and play some interesting, inspiring beats.

Drummers are hard to find, and good drummers are even harder to find. So, when you get a good one, treat him well, and laugh at his jokes. You will want to keep hold of him.

It's a great idea to jam with a variety musicians. It will open your eyes. After my first experience of playing with a weak drummer, I kind of assumed all unsigned drummers sucked.

Until that is, a few months later I jammed with another guy who was far better. That felt amazing. Having someone putting beats, and real good beats to the riffs I wrote was an incredible feeling. He was quite an accomplished musician too so he gave us all a few tips on what we could improve on.

Where to find people to jam with?

Once you are on your way to completing step 6, you will have a really big repertoire of songs to choose from. Pick one or two of those artists, (hopefully you are already learning their songs), then put up an ad telling the world you are looking for musicians in the style of those artists.

In the UK, [Join My Band](#) is an excellent site, and in fact where [my band](#) found our drummer and singer. If you are in the US, [Craigslist](#) is the place to look, and in Australia, have a look on [Gumtree](#).

Alternatively, if you're in college or school, or university have a look about. Ask some friends. Ask in music section. You'll always find musicians and most musicians enjoy jamming and playing. If you're at work, try there.

People love to play. Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites are all great tools for finding likewise musicians. Everywhere you go, there are musicians all wanting to play, and there will be somebody out there who wants to play the kind of music you want to play.

Essential Action plan

Find a band – Finding a band isn't easy. There a lot of musicians out there but unfortunately (from past experience I know this) a lot of them are time wasters. They show interest for a bit and then you never hear from them again. It` s very annoying, there are ways around this such as:

- 1. Use your social media accounts to `advertise` yourself as a musician and to find other musicians.**
- 2. Ask your drummer, bassist, singer, keyboardist friends to jam with you. You never know it may go somewhere**
- 3. Search Craigslist; Join my band, Gumtree and other online ad sites.** There are a huge amount and they differ from region to region as well as from country to country.
- 4. Ask at school/college/work. There are musicians everywhere.**
- 5. Hang around drum/bass and guitar shops and ASK about.**
- 6. Attend Open Mic Nights**
- 7. Set up jam sessions**

Even using the above tips, it can still be a bit of a struggle to get a good quality, committed band together. I'll tell you the way I did it.

Me and our bass player, simply set up a Soundcloud page and using the tips above in the recording section, we recorded 4 or 5 tracks of our material that we writing at the time.

Every time we communicated with potential singers and drummers we simply pointed them in the direction of our Soundcloud page. That way the potential band member knew straight away whether we were the kind of band they were looking for or not, and because the tracks

were high quality and the recordings good, we impressed a lot of people and had lot of interest from drummers and singers.

Before we had the recordings, it was hard to even get someone to come down to practice. Just another benefit of recording your guitar parts.

It can be hugely frustrating to get a band together, so focus on these tips and you will find you will definitely get the right musicians sooner rather later. Having a band together of like minded musicians is brilliant for every guitarist.

So get out there and get jamming.

Bonus Chapter 1: Use embellishments to wow your audience

Every now and then you probably see a guitarist who does something just that little bit special. He or she stands up there on the stage playing what appears to be a standard chord, yet he plays these extra little notes by adding, moving or taking a finger off the fretboard. He makes it look effortless, but when you have tried, you couldn't get anything like the awesome cool sound he got.

This is a technique called embellishing. Jimi Hendrix, John Frusciante (Red Hot Chili Peppers) and many more are famed for using them. They can be played with any chords from open position chords such as C, D, G, etc, to more difficult barre chords.

It doesn't matter what the chord is, embellishments are a tool that every guitarist should know. They sound great, as you are essentially playing rhythm and lead guitar in one. Now, that's impressive.

It's not actually that hard a concept. You will need to be confident of playing chords and using your all four fingers to add notes by hammering on, pulling off or sliding. If you can't yet hammer-on, pull off and slide comfortably with each finger you may struggle with this technique so spend time practicing these specific techniques.

Likewise, if you struggle to play in time with basic strumming patterns you may not be able to lock in to the groove to create the interesting rhythmic flow that usually happens during the most interesting embellishments.

Hendrix was an absolute master of embellishments and frequently varied each chord embellishment each time the passage came back around. This is because his rhythm skills were second to none. To be great at this technique you will also need superb rhythm skills. Don't worry, they can be developed. (Look up [chapter 2](#) and [chapter 3](#)).

If you are not comfortable with advanced rhythm, hammering on, pulling off and sliding, then practice these techniques individually alongside these embellishments pieces. Add this technique to your playing; and your listeners will be very impressed.

Here we have 4 examples in the style of some legendary artists.

Ex 1. John Frusciante style embellishment:

Moderate ♩ = 82

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of Moderate (♩ = 82). It consists of two systems. The first system is in treble clef and features a repeat sign. The second system is in bass clef and also features a repeat sign. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and ornaments. The bass line includes fret numbers and techniques like hammer-ons and pull-offs.

Click [here](#) to listen.

Download the [PDF](#)

The Red Hot Chili Pepper`s guitarist is synonymous with using embellishment techniques to spice up his chord playing. This is another piece that I wrote a while back which is inspired by John`s sublime playing.

If you imagine the funky verses to the band`s huge hit `Under the Bridge` but played in a minor key, it might sound a little bit like this. There are hammer-ons, pull-offs and slides in here, so you will get playing a wide variety of chord embellishments with this piece.

I also added some muted hits in there to give it some extra funk-like groove but you do not need to add these in. I wrote this piece originally for a solo acoustic performance so I wanted to fill in for the snare. Hitting muted strings on the beat where the snare would usually go is a great way to this.

Ex 2. Jimi Hendrix style embellishment:

Slowly ♩ = 72

T
A
B

Click [here](#) to listen.

Download the [PDF](#)

Take it steady with this embellishment. The first two beats in each bar use the same consistent rhythm but the last two beats vary. There are a few different rhythms going on in the second half of each bar.

Get the feel for the first two beats down separately, and then get working on the last half – which is the cool part and really makes it stand out from a simple and rather boring chord progression. Imagine, if the embellishments weren't there, this would be a very simple piece to play.

It wouldn't sound bad, but it also wouldn't be particularly exciting. That's what Hendrix used to think too. He would frequently take a simple chord progression, and spice up it with a variety of exciting, and rhythmic embellishments.

Ex 3. Radiohead style embellishment:

Moderately Fast ♩ = 117

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) is in 4/4 time. The second system (measures 5-8) starts with a 7/8 time signature, then changes to 4/4. The third system (measures 9-10) is in 5/4 time. The tablature includes various techniques such as triplets and slurs.

Click [here](#) to listen.

Download the [PDF](#)

Radiohead's guitarists Jonny Greenwood, Ed `O` Brien and Thom Yorke are all well known as original, inspiring and unique guitarists that create brilliant other worldly soundscapes as well as take something that has been done before and put a completely new spin on it. Whether, you're a fan of the band or not, most guitarists striving for originality can look to this band and it's guitarists for inspiration.

This example uses a few different techniques the band have written with over the years, such as taking a major chord and turning it minor. This is actually an old technique that was used as far back as Bing Crosby's `White Christmas` and used to great effect on their breakthrough track, `Creep`.

The track actually starts off as a `sus4`, it then goes major, and then it goes minor. The `sus4` is a great, flexible chord that can be used to substitute for both minor and major chords. Here it does both.

Another prominent Radiohead technique used here is the use of odd time signatures. Inspired by the track, `Pyramid Song` as well as others, our example, plays about with 4/4, 7/8 and 5/4 time signatures to create a different groove than the listener expects.

Take your time with it as it's an intricate piece and really try to lock into the groove. Once you do, it all becomes a lot easier to play.

selected to the bridge or the bridge and middle combined and don't be afraid to be aggressive with it. This track is begging for you to play it hard and fast.

Have fun with these embellishments and then have a go at writing your own.

You can download all the tracks from this chapter [here](#).

Bonus Chapter 2: The Ultimate Warm-Up Exercise

This is such a brilliant warm up exercise, which I adapted from one of the best modern day guitarists out there – Periphery`s Misha Mansoor. Whether or not you are into his style (Periphery are a rather heavy modern progressive metal or djent band), nobody can deny Misha`s talent.

He is heavily influenced by a range of styles from jazz to extreme metal, so no matter what style you play, you will find huge benefit in practicing this exercise every day.

I have adapted the exercise quite a bit to get the maximum amount out of it. It`s a very simple exercise but it will improve so many areas of you playing. Your timing between hands, your timing with a drum beat, your precision, your accuracy, your muscle memory and much more will benefit from practicing this daily.

If that isn`t enough, check out [The Ultimate Warm-Up Challenge](#) to make it even more exciting!

How to play The Ultimate Warm-Up

The exercise is based on two parts that repeat. Both Parts 1 and 2 are **4 bars long**. You start off playing part 1 and then you play part 2, and then go back to part 1 but this time playing it on the next string up.

This is what the full exercise looks like going up in pitch...

The image displays a guitar exercise in 4/4 time, G major, consisting of six systems of music and guitar tablature. Each system contains four measures of music and a corresponding line of tablature. The music is written on a single treble clef staff. The tablature is written on a six-line staff with fret numbers 5-12. The exercise is a single melodic line that ascends in pitch across the systems.

System 1: Measures 1-4. Tablature: 5-7-8-5-7-8-7-5 | 7-9-10-7-9-10-9-7 | 9-11-12-9-11-12-11-9 | 7-9-10-7-9-10-9-7

System 5: Measures 5-8. Tablature: 5-6-8-5-6-8-6-5 | 7-8-10-7-8-10-8-7 | 9-10-12-9-10-12-10-9 | 7-8-10-7-8-10-8-7

System 9: Measures 9-12. Tablature: 5-7-8-5-7-8-7-5 | 7-9-10-7-9-10-9-7 | 9-11-12-9-11-12-11-9 | 7-9-10-7-9-10-9-7

System 13: Measures 13-16. Tablature: 5-6-8-5-6-8-6-5 | 7-8-10-7-8-10-8-7 | 9-10-12-9-10-12-10-9 | 7-8-10-7-8-10-8-7

System 17: Measures 17-20. Tablature: 5-7-8-5-7-8-7-5 | 7-9-10-7-9-10-9-7 | 9-11-12-9-11-12-11-9 | 7-9-10-7-9-10-9-7

System 21: Measures 21-24. Tablature: 5-6-8-5-6-8-6-5 | 7-8-10-7-8-10-8-7 | 9-10-12-9-10-12-10-9 | 7-8-10-7-8-10-8-7

And this is what it looks like going down...

Musical notation for measures 25-28. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are quarter notes, and the rhythm is consistent across all measures. The notes are: 25: F#, G, A, B, C, D, E, F#; 26: G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, G; 27: A, B, C, D, E, F#, G, A; 28: B, C, D, E, F#, G, A, B.

5-7-8-5-7-8-7-5 | 7-9-10-7-9-10-9-7 | 9-11-12-9-11-12-11-9 | 7-9-10-7-9-10-9-7

Musical notation for measures 29-32. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are quarter notes, and the rhythm is consistent across all measures. The notes are: 29: C, D, E, F#, G, A, B, C; 30: B, A, G, F#, E, D, C, B; 31: A, G, F#, E, D, C, B, A; 32: G, F#, E, D, C, B, A, G.

5-6-8-5-6-8-6-5 | 7-8-10-7-8-10-8-7 | 9-10-12-9-10-12-10-9 | 7-8-10-7-8-10-8-7

Musical notation for measures 33-36. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are quarter notes, and the rhythm is consistent across all measures. The notes are: 33: F#, G, A, B, C, D, E, F#; 34: G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, G; 35: A, B, C, D, E, F#, G, A; 36: B, C, D, E, F#, G, A, B.

5-7-8-5-7-8-7-5 | 7-9-10-7-9-10-9-7 | 9-11-12-9-11-12-11-9 | 7-9-10-7-9-10-9-7

Musical notation for measures 37-40. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are quarter notes, and the rhythm is consistent across all measures. The notes are: 37: C, D, E, F#, G, A, B, C; 38: B, A, G, F#, E, D, C, B; 39: A, G, F#, E, D, C, B, A; 40: G, F#, E, D, C, B, A, G.

5-6-8-5-6-8-6-5 | 7-8-10-7-8-10-8-7 | 9-10-12-9-10-12-10-9 | 7-8-10-7-8-10-8-7

Musical notation for measures 41-44. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are quarter notes, and the rhythm is consistent across all measures. The notes are: 41: F#, G, A, B, C, D, E, F#; 42: G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, G; 43: A, B, C, D, E, F#, G, A; 44: B, C, D, E, F#, G, A, B.

5-7-8-5-7-8-7-5 | 7-9-10-7-9-10-9-7 | 9-11-12-9-11-12-11-9 | 7-9-10-7-9-10-9-7 | 5

It's that simple. Make sure you play it to a backing track. I have created some drum beats for you to play the exercise with.

Download the PDF for the The Ultimate Warm-Up [here](#).

Download the drum beats for The Ultimate Warm-Up [here](#)

You can play the exercise using QUARTER, EIGHTH, and SIXTEENTH notes.

There are three skill levels of which you can choose to play the exercise with. They are:

Easy – Focus on playing the exercise with the following beats playing all **quarter** notes. Listen here.

Medium – Focus on playing the exercise with the following beats playing all **8th** notes. Listen here.

Hard – Focus on playing the exercise with the following beats playing all **16th** notes. Listen here.

Remember it's exactly the same pattern for each skill level, you are simply **doubling the speed** you play the pattern when going from beginner to intermediate, and likewise from intermediate to expert.

There are five different tempos for each skill level.

Even if you are an experienced guitarist, you may find it a bit tricky at first to keep time, so start off with the easy beats, and get comfortable playing it with all 5 tempos before moving on to the intermediate beats. When comfortable with the intermediate, try the expert beats. It gets very difficult, very fast though.

Don't just stick to playing the The Ulitmate Warm-Up with just one skill level. Try it out with all three.

Slot this exercise into your practice routine as shown above in the chapter [here](#).

Once you are comfortable playing the easy and intermediate levels, I recommend alternating the exercise like so:

Day 1 – Easy - Quarter notes

Day 2 – Medium – Eighth notes

Day 3 – Hard –Sixteenth notes

...and then repeating the cycle from day 4 onwards.

Play this exercise through just **ONCE per day – no more, no less.** and your playing will massively improve.

You will be a hell of a lot better guitarist if you do this every day for a year.

The Ultimate Warm-Up Challenge

The first person to email me with a video of themselves playing the **The Ultimate Warm-Up** at the **MAXIMUM** speed (140Bbpm) of the level of **HARD** (sixteenth notes) will be featured on my blog and will win a **£20/\$33 Amazon gift voucher**.

The performance must have no mistakes and each note must be clear. I will have the final say on this.

As long as you play it accurately and in time, and in full, and you are the first person to email me the video, the prize is yours. Visit [this page](#) to find out if anyone has yet won.

The competition will be ongoing until we get a winner.

Good Luck!

Summary

Well, that`s it.

Follow all 7 steps, and it will be hard not to be a fantastic guitarist by this time next year.

Tip 1: Master the basics – with a little help from your friends

Tip 2: Practice, practice, practice – and practice properly!

Tip 3: Learn how to play in time

Tip 4: Learn the songs you love by ‘ear’

Tip 5: Record your playing

Tip 6: Mimic your idols

Tip 7: Play with a band

Remember all 7 tips work together. If you apply just one of those tips, you will be a better guitarist this time next year, but if you apply all seven you be infinitely better.

Look out for more in the future on my site at [Rockstar Guitar Tuition](#). Feel free to send me over some of your playing or parts that have been inspired by this book. I listen to them all and will feature my favourite ones on my blog.

Good luck and keep having fun with your playing! You can and will be an awesome guitarist!

Most of all I would like to say a massive THANK YOU for reading this book and thanks to my all students who have inspired and applied these concepts to great effect.

Dan Thorpe

My website: <http://guitardomination.net/>