

## TEN BEST PRACTICES FOR LEARNING THE BASICS OF GUITAR.

#1: Get a good guitar that will not impede your playing/learning ability. I have seen many instances where the guitar is the problem, not the student. Make sure the “*action and playability*” [distance of the string to the neck] of the guitar are good and that it correctly *intonated* [the bridge adjusted so the strings are the correct length] or you will have tuning and playing problems that are not your fault. Also learning on *light gauge* strings is advised to stop finger strain. It is worth paying a few extra dollars to have the guitar ‘*set up*’ before you start to play.

#2: Get a good *teacher* or at least a good DVD that explains the methods of learning in a simple and easy manner and will ensure you are playing ‘songs’ or at least ‘riffs’ within the first lesson. Avoid learning boring scales and exercises that will demotivate you. These can be done later. Try to learn *individually* [one on one] rather than in a group situation.

#3: *Practice* every day for at least 10 minutes, and always practice what *you cant* play rather than what you *can* otherwise you will not progress. Try to learn simple versions of songs you know so you can sing along [even if its just in your mind] with the song.

#4: Learn a mixture of *chords, single notes, scales and riffs* even at the first stages of learning. This is important to develop your technique and strength in the finger and wrist.

#5: Have the guitar, if possible, on a *stand* where it is easily accessible, so you will want to pick it up often. If it’s in a case under the bed you will forget about it. If it’s next to the TV you will pick it up more often.

#6: Know how to *tune* your guitar and always have a *tuner* or at least a *pitch pipe* to ensure you are in tune otherwise you will sound horrible.

#7: Use a *metronome* or even a basic *drum machine* so you can stay in time and develop a *sense of rhythm*. This is one of the most neglected areas of learning and often the biggest cause of bad habits later on in a student’s progress.

#8: Try to learn songs you enjoy and in a style you like. It is no use playing metallica songs if you like Bob Dylan. However its not a bad idea to learn new styles but stick to what you know and like at least at the beginning.

#9: With any sort of recording device [MP-3, I pod etc ], *record yourself* and listen back to it. No matter how awful it may sound it will improve both your desire and your ability to play better. Also if you want to *play* lead guitar, play over a recorded rhythm part so you have a musical backing to play to. This will improve your solo ability dramatically.

#10: Set a *stopwatch or timer for 3 minutes* and continue to play without stopping.. sounds easy??? you try it!! It is a lot more difficult than you think. Most students play on average for about 30 seconds before stopping and starting again. !!