

# PLAY IT LOUD



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## ***Introduction***

*“The vision is really about empowering workers, giving them all the information about what’s going on so they can do a lot more than they’ve done in the past.” –*

*Bill Gates*

So why the guitar? Before we go any further ask yourself what you hope to get out of learning your chords and scales and other nonsense? Is there a friend who looks cool while shredding a Hendrix or Van Halen lick? Can you possibly relate to your favorite musical artist so much that you’d like to play their music when the iPod batteries run out? You’re an avid Guitar Hero player? Maybe it’s just to catch a cute girl’s eye.

Whatever the reason is I thank you for coming to me to help you out. Maybe you might like to hear why I started? Two of my best friends played guitar and they always thought I had huge potential so after one too many scrapes and falls from my Razor scooter (long story) I decided I had less of a chance of cracking my head open with the guitar.

Some of the bands I really liked at the time were AC/DC, Led Zeppelin, Metallica, and Van Halen. Great bands to have when you’re first starting to play! I was lucky in that my school was very relaxed academically for my senior year so any homework I finished was done before I got home so that I could start learning stuff like “TNT” or “You Really Got Me”. My little brother had a sunburst epiphone les paul that he never attempted to play, but I had no amp for the first few months so I played as loud as possible with just that.

I realized that with every new riff or concept that I learned an addiction was growing within me. Learning an art form is about so much more than notes on a page, but rather getting in touch with everything you love. There's no greater thrill than being in such direct contact with the artists that you look up to so much! By the end of my first year of playing I had bought two guitars, a 100-watt Marshall combo amp, a few effects, and the first of many guitar books as I went off to college. 7 years later I'm sitting here writing this book for you!

I'm determined to show you that anyone can play with the right amount of determination and passion. Ignore any talk you've heard about the difficulty of learning the instrument. Remember how the other classmates used to scare each other about the big test and how hard it was? Think of it like that. There's no reason to judge yourself by how much natural talent you might have or how smart you are. It's nonsense because, again, all it takes is determination and passion. I personally believe that's how I got here.

The main reason I'm writing this intro is so that I might help you overcome many of the frustrations I encountered at first. I soon found out how many people are willing to "bring you back to reality" and tell you there's no chance of becoming a Hendrix or (insert your favorite guitar hero). My first strong word of advice is to AVOID THESE EMOTIONAL LEECHES AT ALL COST! These are the sorts of people who thrive on negative emotions, and their reality is that they never got past strumming their basic chords. Reality is never

absolute. We control what is written whether we write it ourselves or let someone else do it.

Remain optimistic as you learn how to play the instrument. The only reality is that with a certain amount of determination and technique you can learn how to play anything. It will be frustrating at times when there's one lousy note you might keep missing but that only means that you're learning. In fact a recurring theme in this book will be me encouraging you to never become complacent in your quest to play the songs you love. Anyone reading this right now has the ability to go anywhere they want with the instrument. Just look at Django Reinhardt who only had two fingers to use after an accident that left his hand partly handicapped. Not only did he overcome these limits, but they drove him to make music that inspired nearly every guitarist who came after him.

To educate used to mean to draw out from within, and learning was to change behavior, not to understand intellectually. In music the only test is how well you play and that's a test I'm sure we all want to pass. Playing guitar will force us out of our comfort zones and help you learn while I educate. Don't think of me as an almighty teacher throwing breadcrumbs of knowledge. I'm not a teacher but a student. It's easier to learn and grow within a student's mindset since most teachers I've met already knew everything. Never cease to be a student because the day you become satisfied with yourself is the day the challenges and personal growth cease to exist.

So the choice is yours. There's no pressure to become a virtuoso. It's perfectly fine to just learn to read tablature and play a few chords. All the Beatles had little more than this skill. This book is only a launching point for your own individual needs. Don't accept anything less than your best effort. Mastering the guitar is a lot like mastering the internal struggles within us. The more practice and effort we accumulate, the easier it becomes. And have fun most of all!!!!

### ***Mistakes, Visualization, and the Learning Process***

*"It is a mistake to think that the practice of my art has come easy to me." –  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*

The best athletes and players in the world visualize their success before they actually accomplish it. They will literally imagine themselves rushing into the in-zone or knocking a homer out of the park. Set a specific goal for your studies and keep your mind conscious of it at all times.

Now there's no reason to meditate 15 minutes a day or write a pledge saying you won't accept second best. Simply imagine yourself playing your favorite song and how it might make you feel to do so. With practice, this image will become reality.

Learn from mistakes and don't take it as a sign that you weren't meant to play guitar. Everybody has bad days. You can find accounts of nearly every great guitar player, even Hendrix, doubting their own abilities. Self-doubt and insecurity are feelings everyone struggles with. Knowing that several other players have felt this way will make

you realize that it's perfectly normal and can be mastered through perseverance. Avoiding mistakes entirely is unrealistic.

When you're repeating a chord or riff just keep playing it till it starts to sound right. You'll want to stop and correct your mistakes but that's okay. Eventually you will learn to let go.

I also want you to know beforehand that it will take many repetitions before a lot of this knowledge becomes second nature. You will most likely have to come back here a lot and reread my passages several times before they click. Use any frustrations you have as motivation to help you become a better player. Don't stop until it clicks.

This is the natural way to learn. Don't just read my book once and leave it alone. Take a few concepts or songs at a time and get a firm grasp of each one before moving on. Any playing ability you want will not come straight away but will come quickly with this knowledge and attitude. An attitude based in reality will motivate you a lot more than an unrealistic one where less work and more dreaming is done.

Be aware of this learning process as you go through each chapter of this book. It will be very hard to use the knowledge I give you without understanding it first so please make your understanding of the material a priority along with furthering your playing. After you understand the material, strive to repeat it until you feel you've completely internalized it. Please don't expect to get everything right away. If you can keep this attitude you will learn a lot.



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I can guarantee that no one who gets this book illegally will learn to play the guitar. Why? Because if you're frustrated about paying \$50 for a lousy book you DEFINITELY don't have the determination to learn the concepts and habits that I teach.

I highly recommend that you turn back now if you got this book illegally.

Trust me.

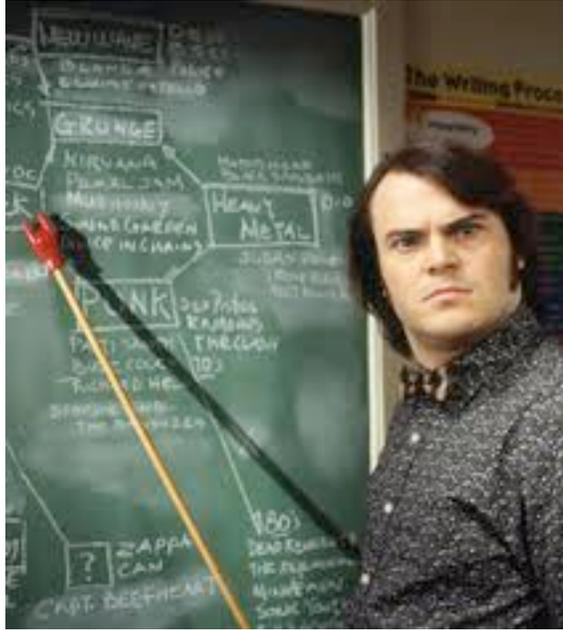
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***Getting Started***



*“My first guitar lessons lasted two weeks and it was Jingle Bells. It didn’t make any sense at all. I wanted to know how to play like Hendrix...” –Joe Satriani*

Your first task is very simple. Pick a few artists whose music inspired you to learn guitar in the first place. Some examples include AC/DC, Jack Johnson, Metallica, The Beatles, and Taylor Swift (I’m serious). Those are a couple that I would recommend for the absolute beginner but obviously that will not meet with everyone’s approval. Here are two factors to consider:

1. That you have a desire to play this artist’s music. The reasons for this are obvious.
2. That it has guitar in it. It’s possible to play music for another instrument on the guitar as a beginner, but you could have issues with reading music and having to buy music books since it won’t be available on tablature websites.

I'm going to recommend specific music books throughout but I really want to stress their value right here. There are more books about guitar than you can imagine. They range from breakdowns of playing styles, emphasis on guitar techniques, and novel length textbooks talking about nothing but music scales. They are a great resource for developing our individual music personalities, and I will make sure to recommend the best ones I've learned from.

Now I want to give a word of caution about some of these books. I've sifted through so many that take advantage of a beginner's lack of knowledge by teaching little or nothing at all, literally. One of the reasons I wrote this book was to fight against all the bad advice in those books and give a no-nonsense guide for playing the guitar the way YOU want to.

Did you really pick up the guitar to play "Three Blind Mice" and Stephen Foster? (Ignore that if you did). Most likely it's because you want to learn the more modern music of today whether it's hard rock or acoustic, right? There's oddly no book out there telling you how to pick up Hendrix songs and strum with the Beatles in a beginner's book. That needs to be included in the same book!

They'll then go into reading music, basic theory, and showing only the absolute beginner chords and scales. I honestly couldn't tell the difference between these method books save for whether they were spiral bound or had glossy covers. I don't want you learning from those books because they don't care whether you learn how to play after leaving the bookstore.

These are the only books I recommend for absolute beginners other than the one you're reading now:

1. Hal Leonard's Guitar Method: Books 1,2, and 3. I used this book myself but only found it helpful towards those wanting to stop at playing chords. It has many of the problems I've described, but I want to recommend it so that you can see for yourself.
2. Ernie Ball's How to Play Guitar Phase 1: A great guide with pictures of playing positions and easy to read instructions of how to do things like hold a pick, but I feel it's outdated.
3. The Guitarist's Scale Book and The Guitarist's Chord Book by Peter Vogl: I recommend these two books for those who might have prior music knowledge and want to apply it to guitar, or for those who want more information on these two fundamental music concepts at the start of their learning. Both of these books can be bought for \$20 and they'll probably be more than enough for most students. It is also one of the few theory books out there specifically for guitar players that's straight and to the point.

Some people may ask why I don't recommend the Fret Logic books? I've never used these books and they seem to be theory heavy so it may not be of much help to an absolute beginner at this point. I am willing to recommend them however based on their stellar reputation and customer feedback.

## ***Choosing a Guitar and Amp***

It's possible that you may have to go through the steps possible to acquire an instrument if there isn't one available to you to play or borrow, and I want to give a brief overview here. This is just a general guide to get you started, not to help you chose the exact instrument that might be right for you. Trust your own judgment!

***Musician's Friend*** is a great online music store offering nearly everything you'll ever need from guitars, amps, and strings to live gear, DJ equipment, and recording software. They list products from lowest to highest price as well as the most popular. Request one of their free catalogs to get a look at everything they have.

Now ask yourself if you'd like to play acoustic or electric? The world of guitar is shared pretty much equally between these two. The obvious thing to think about is what your desires are as a player.

Acoustic is perfect for those wanting to play pop, country, singer-songwriter, or blues. These guitars easily stay in tune and require little maintenance, but their downfall is that they are harder to play due to the heavier strings. However you won't need an amp to play these guitars.

I recommend spending about 200 to 300 dollars on a low-end guitar from Fender, Ibanez, Epiphone, Washburn, or Ovation. The reason I recommend this is that really cheap (below 200) guitars are less dependable and will be no use to you after you've gotten to a higher level of playing. If you'd like a higher end guitar I suggest

checking out Gibson, Martin, or, my favorite, Taylor. Just know that the best models can run a couple grand.

Electric is for the other end of the guitarist's spectrum. This is for those interested in harder styles of music like classic rock, metal, funk, and electric blues. The downfalls are pretty much opposite of the acoustic in that you'll have to eventually get an amp and tuning the guitar is necessary at least every other day. So that makes the amount of money to spend a little bit higher than an acoustic.

This is everything you'll need to play Electric: an amp, guitar cables, and a tuner at first. All of this will cost around 400-600 dollars, but you don't have to get everything at once. I don't recommend buying one of the combo packs with everything included for the same reasons that you shouldn't buy a cheap acoustic.

So what's the upside? Well if you're into this side of the guitar you'll feel an incredible rush the first time you play through distortion! And as you get better there's no better feeling for those that enjoy this type of music.

Oddly enough, playing music on electric is much easier than acoustic.

There are endless possibilities for every guitarist's taste so I recommend that you browse Musician's Friend until you find a model that appeals to you. Check out ***Appendix C*** for some specific models of amps and guitars to check out.

I HIGHLY recommend getting an electric tuner. I'm going to teach you how to tune by ear as it's an essential skill for every budding guitarist, but for right now it'll save you lots of time having something tell you exactly what the note is sounding out. Using one is very simple too.

Playing with an amp is necessary but you may not ever need a Marshall half-stack. One practice amp that I'm very keen to is the Roland Cube, which runs for about 130 dollars on Musician's Friend. It runs on nine-volt batteries, is very compact, and actually has effects and different distortion types to play on. Marshall, Peavey, and Vox make similar types of amps as well.

The selection of guitars and amps is a subject worthy of it's own book. These are only suggestions for you to take to find something that suits yourself. **Ebay** is also a wonderful place to find deals on guitars.

**Harmony-Central** is the leader in online gear reviews from guitars, amps, keyboards, effects units, and nearly everything else involving contemporary musical instruments. If there are no reviews for the item you're looking for it doesn't exist.

As you may have noticed, playing the guitar is an expensive hobby. No matter how much money you have you will eventually reach a limit to how far you're willing to invest in your sound. Please check out the websites and specific gear that I recommend, as I personally know the good and the bad. Let me help you make the best use of your hard earned cash through my own experience.

One more thing I want you to keep in mind is to be aware of those who take advantage of a novice's lack of knowledge. I've had ugly episodes where greedy salesman were more interested in pushing a product that didn't suit my needs instead of genuinely wanting to help me find a quality instrument. I have no ties to the industry and no desire to personally endorse any product for none other than its superior quality.

What I suggest is filtering out the good and bad salesman by a simple test. See if they ask the standard "Can I help you?" This is a bad salesman as their only interest is to keep up appearances for the manager and get back to shooting the bull with their fellow employees.

A good salesman will ask better questions like "Is this your first time shopping for a guitar? Are you looking for anything in particular? What's your name?" Salesmen who take a genuine interest in your shopping experience are the ones you want help from, and this approach cannot be faked. Take my advice and don't end up with an item you didn't want or a sour experience that makes you take less interest in developing your technique.

***How to Use This E-Book***

- It's important that you read the section of this book I've broken down into chapters at least twice all the way through. The rest of this book consists of more riffs to play, recommended gear, random tips, and other useful reference material that'll help you utilize the techniques and concepts in these chapters.
- Always pay attention to terms that are in **bold** because they'll be key musical terms I want you to learn or songs to check out.
- The choice of songs here will be centered mostly on guitar heavy music styles like Rock and Metal. If you're not interested in playing these songs that's fine, but please read my run through of the riffs so that you can understand the different types that you'll encounter as these are common to all styles of music. Check out the "185 Riffs" section and Appendix D for other songs to learn that aren't in the first half of the book.
- The tabs in here will be incomplete to save room, and because most songs will consist of one main riff or two. If you're interested in learning more of a song that I'm discussing go to the tab sites to learn the rest, or buy a book that contains some songs you're interested. There's a book for almost everything out there.
- The goal of this book is not to help you learn a certain discipline like I or any other player may have, but to build your own repertoire of songs and techniques that you're interested in learning. Every discussion will be just

enough to get you started and avoid bad habits. Almost every topic I discuss can be expanded into it's own book so remember that I just get you to the point where you can go on your own.

- Whether you play acoustic or electric, I want you to try to play every riff I recommend on the instrument that you're playing.
- Always come back for reference and review. There's no need to learn everything at once since some techniques like sweep picking require lots of practice, and some songs will require you to know several techniques in order to play them. **DON'T LET THIS STRESS YOU OUT!** Take your time, choose a few songs to work on, and use this book as an introduction to the guitar and **THEN** a reference. I've designed this book so that it will be a place you can keep coming back to for information. So please look at it like that: a guide and not a rigorous one-way instruction manual.
- Although I've littered this book with loads of tips for just about everything, I want to save the suspense and tell you there's no trick or hidden gem of info to make you a guitar hero. The "secret" is the system of techniques and concepts I'm about to unveil.

## ***Chapter 1***

*“If you don’t make mistakes, you’re not working on hard enough problems. And that’s a big mistake.” –Frank Wilczek, 2004 Nobel Prize winner in physics*

The first thing I’d like to teach are the biggest errors beginners make that lead to them giving up the instrument. The reason I’m putting this first is so that you’ll know what to avoid as we go along.

1. **Letting Self-Doubt Build**: I really hope that you’ve read my intro and understand this a little already. Lots of players get down after the first month because they can’t play Eruption or get a record contract. They’re almost always doing better than they think. Visualize (remember?) your success and it will be inevitable.
2. **Not Making Time to Practice**: I admit that, as you progress there will be further demands to maintain your technique. The good news is that at a certain point it will take very little time to keep your skills up, as it will become second nature. (That is unless you desire to become a virtuoso, and then you will need specific practice routines). At this level, taking an hour or 30 minutes a day to review and learn is plenty.
3. **Playing Music You Don’t Like**: Your time is too precious to waste it playing music that bores you to tears. If it’s not playable right now try to look forward to the time when you will play it. I will suggest tunes later that are within a beginner’s range, but even if it’s music I suggest, don’t play if it doesn’t excite you.
4. **Reading Tablature and Chord Diagrams Incorrectly**: This one is easy to avoid yet dire if we make it. Pay

close attention to the instructions I provide on both these topics.

5. **Not Knowing How to Learn**: This is a very important mistake that even the best players still make. All I ask is that you keep an open mind to all playing approaches, and do your best to overcome frustration later. Remember that if we don't encounter difficulties occasionally we never will progress, and overcoming them is necessary to learn. Expect to fall back in your learning several times before making solid progress.
6. **Failing to Take Care of Your Instrument**: Change your strings regularly, keep your guitar in tune, be careful where you place your guitar, and try to take it to a qualified guitar tech about once a year to make sure all the technical issues are okay. Remember that no matter how well you play it won't matter if the guitar is garbage.

Even though I hope that by making you conscious of these problems you might avoid them, they will not disappear entirely. Don't feel bad if you make these mistakes but strive to correct them.

*Once special tip I want to give you about taking care of your guitar is how to take care of it if you chose to let it lean against a wall or a bed or whatever. Always have the fretboard side of the guitar lean against the wall and have the back facing away from what it's leaning against. This is so that you can any risk of bowing the guitar neck, which has never happened since I've done this. Still, it's not a bad idea to practice this habit.*

## ***The Parts of the Guitar***

You only need to know a couple of terms to keep up with the discussions in this book. A picture illustrating these terms is below this list for your reference. They will be really obvious, but here they are:

**Headstock:** This is the part of the area that has the tuning pegs and the ends of the strings.

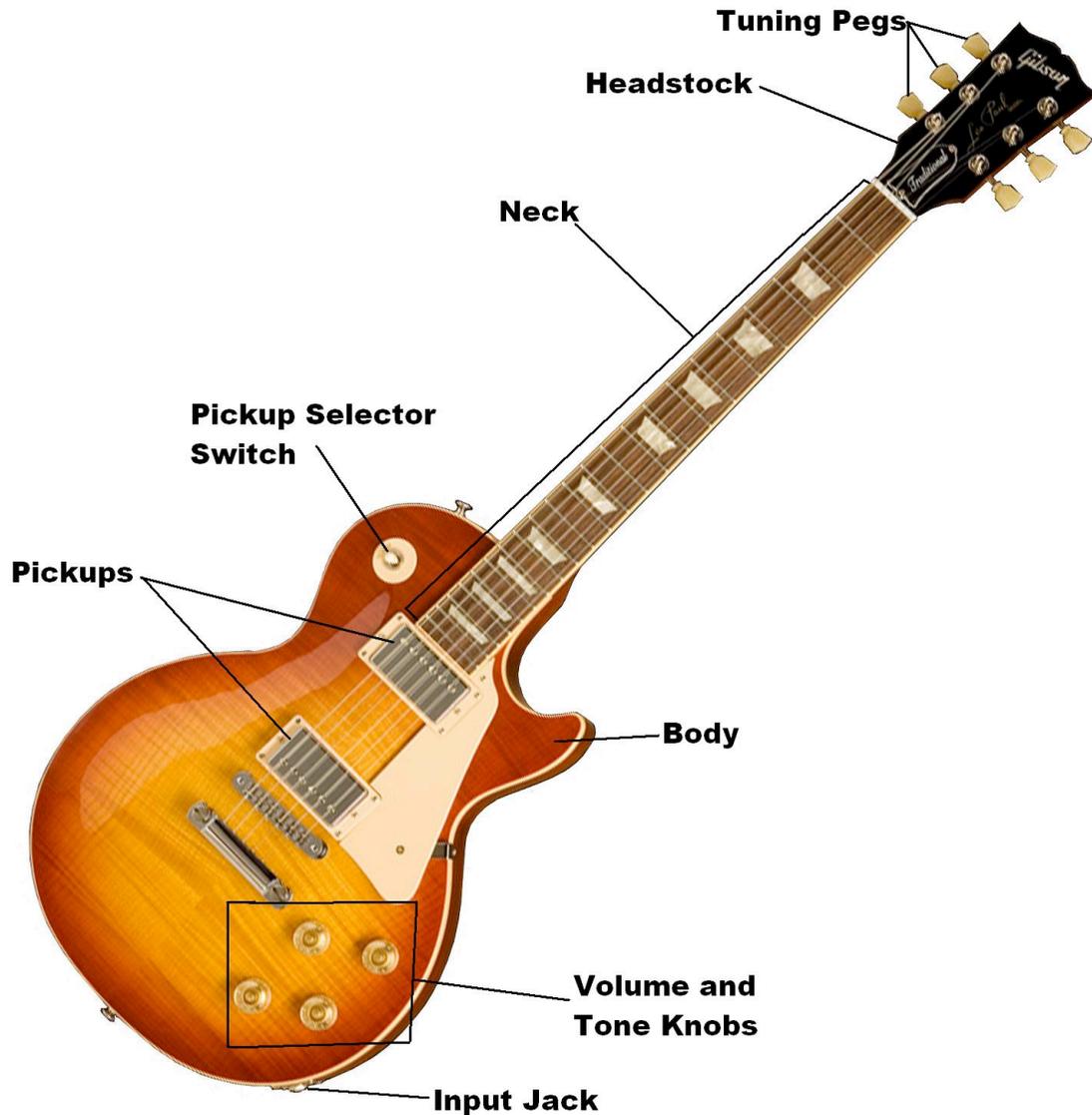
**Tuning Pegs:** The knobs on the headstock that make the guitar go up or down in pitch depending on the direction.

**Fretboard:** I hope this one's self-explanatory. Take note of the dots or other fret markers on the guitar and use them to navigate your way around.

**Sound hole:** Again, self-explanatory but this will refer to acoustics only.

**Bridge:** This is the area of the actual body of the guitar where the other ends of the strings will be connected

**Neck and Bridge Pickups:** The neck pickup will always be the one furthest away from the bridge, while the bridge pickup will be closer to it. Some guitars will have a middle pickup.



## ***Using a Tuner***

I hope you took my suggestion and bought a tuner. If not check out **Appendix C** for a few specific models to look into before moving on, or skip to the relative tuning section.

Every musical instrument uses what's called **A440** as their guide to tuning to the correct notes. All that means is some really

smart guys agreed what the note A sounds like at a certain pitch, and thought that it was a good idea to make it the universal standard.

So grab your tuner and plug it in or clamp it on depending on what you got. The thickest string is called the low E, the 6<sup>th</sup> string.

It's essential to memorize the note names and which string is which:

**High E = 1<sup>st</sup> String      B = 2<sup>nd</sup> String      G=3<sup>rd</sup> String**  
**D = 4<sup>th</sup> String      A = 5<sup>th</sup> String      Low E = 6<sup>th</sup> string**

The 1-3<sup>rd</sup> strings will be referred to as the treble strings while the 6-4<sup>th</sup> strings will be referred to as the bass strings throughout the book. Make sure that every string is at the correct pitch. Usually that will be when there's a green light or a needle at the midpoint again depending on what model you're using.

Here's the ***chromatic scale*** so that you know when you're getting close to the pitch needed (# = sharp, b = flat):

**C -C#(Db)-D-D#(Eb)-E-F-F#(Gb)-G-G#(Ab)-A-A#(Bb)-B**

Notice there's no Cb, B#, E#, or Fb. There are only 12 possible notes within a scale.

I mention that here not to give a theory lesson but so that you can better understand how to tune your instrument.

**Flat-Sharp** - A music theory term to describe a musical note quality relative to another pitch. This system is ideal for breaking down notes within certain musical key signatures. These are concepts not to be of concern to a beginner at this time.

You will rarely get every pitch exactly on target so aim to get every string as close as possible, check the pitches one more time to make sure they stayed in tune, and then leave it alone.

It will drive you crazy if you're always making sure the guitar is perfectly in tune. This process will take some getting used to but will come naturally with practice.

## ***Relative Tuning***

There's a learning curve to this method of tuning, but I'm including it here for those not wanting to use a tuner. You'll have to skip ahead and read the sections about how to fret notes and read tablature to learn this method.

Start on either the high or low E string (1<sup>st</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>). I'm going to start with the 6<sup>th</sup> string. Assume that string is already in tune.

The reason you want to assume this is strictly for making sure all the strings are in tune "relative" to each other. This means that it may not be at E to begin with. Using this method might make the guitar sound a little higher (tuned relative to F) or lower (to Eb) to the Standard Tuning commonly used for the guitar.

**Standard Tuning** - the most frequently used tuning for the guitar. Some tunings like "Half-Step Down Tuning" are always used in relation to the EADGBE standard.

Play these notes until they sound the same:

E--0-----

```

B--5-----0-----
G-----4-----0-----
D-----5-----0-----
A-----5-----0-----
E-----5-----

```

What you're doing when you play these notes together is you're playing the same note in two different places so that you can hear them together.

The best way to know you're close to being in tune is actually trying to find where, together, these notes sound the worst. Keep going just a little further past this point until they sound as one, and the widely vibrating oscillations you hear stop.

It's very counterintuitive but going for the spot where they just sound god awful together will tell you that you're not far away.

Now you're in tune! This process is hard to illustrate in words, but I promise those are the easiest steps for tuning the guitar in this method. Repeat the process with every combination of strings I give above.

The reasons for tuning are quite obvious after playing an out-of-tune instrument. Not being in tune only adds to our frustrations of learning if chords aren't harmonious, and nasty intervals sneak into our riffs.

***Riff*** - This is basically a short phrase of music for the guitar. Technically everything you'll play can be broken down into riffs.

## ***Reading Guitar Tablature***

You saw your first tablature (**Tab** for short) in the previous section and perhaps made some connections to how to use it. Tabs

are to be viewed the way a player holds the guitar with the 6<sup>th</sup> string at the bottom of the tab.

That's very important. Avoid confusing which E string is which!

Learning to play a riff from a piece of paper will be a little awkward so I suggest browsing around the sites I'll recommend later. I'll use the "Jaws Theme" to illustrate.

```
E -----0-----1-----0-----1----- (Jaws Theme)
```

The notes you play will always be on the corresponding line representing the guitar string. If it's like this, like many chords will be, play the notes together.

```
A-----0-----1-----  
E-----0-----1-----
```

**Open Note** - *Simply strike the intended string without fretting a note in any place on the fretboard.*

One symbol to take note of is the **repeat sign**, which will look like a colon but big enough to take up the entire tab. Some tabs will be very exact about where to start over but others won't so always use the actual song as a guide.

See? Learning the instrument's really not that bad! Now I'm going to list the most common technique's symbols and mention briefly how to perform each.

**Hammer-On** = E----0h1----- While 0 is ringing put your finger on the 1<sup>st</sup> fret

**Pull-Off** = E---1p0----- play fret 1 and let go to ring out

Both Hammer-ons and pull-offs can be denoted with a curved line connecting the two notes. Pay attention to the direction of the numbers (1 to 0 denoting a pull-off for instance) to know whether you must hammer-on or pull-off.

An example of this technique that I can visualize for you right here is the beginning of AC/DC's "Thunderstruck." That riff is made up of quick hammer-ons and pull-offs. Listen to that riff until you make a reference in your mind to this sound.

**Bend** = E-----1b3-----; literally bend the string up (not down) to the corresponding pitch, which in this case is to fret 3. Bends can go in higher or lower places. Ex. ½ bend, ¼ bend, 1 ½ bend, 2 bend. This denotes how high, in whole steps and half steps (see definition below), to raise the note.

You will usually use your 3<sup>rd</sup> finger with your 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> fingers supporting that finger's bend. This will help even out some of the strength needed to do the tougher bends.

Bends can also be varied in lots of different ways like the following:

**Bend and Release**: E-----1b3r1-----

Simply let the note come back down to pitch after bending to fret 3's pitch.

**Pre Bend**: E----- (3) r1-----

Bend the string to fret 3's pitch but don't fret the note until you got it in place. Once you got it there let go. This technique gives a

very vocal quality to your bends. Listen to Eric Clapton's "**Wonderful Tonight**" to get a great bending sound in your mind. That's the sound you want to go for.

When Bending on the 6<sup>th</sup> string it's only possible to bend down, while on the 1st string you can only bend up due to the possibility of pulling the string off the fretboard and getting a sound you won't want. Try bending both up and down to hear the differences in sound, but I strongly recommend bending only upwards where possible.

**Slide**: E---1/3---- or E----3/1----- Hold down fret 1 and move your finger to fret 3 and back. Always take notice of the direction to avoid confusion over symbols. Slide guitarists like Duane Allman are a great example of this technique in an exaggerated sense.

**Vibrato**: E----3v----- You will want to bend the string up and down in a wide, uniform motion with the same wrist muscles you use for bends. This is actually a difficult technique to make musical so practice it a lot. Listen to BB King do a vibrato and you'll have a great sound to emulate.

**Whole Step, Half Step** - Essential theory terms to describe the relative distances between notes. 0 to 1, on any string, is a half step, 0 to 2 is a whole step, 0 to 3 is 1 ½, and so on.

**Octave** – Theory term for a common musical interval. To say you're playing an octave above a certain note means that you're playing the same note at a higher pitch. A single example is these two notes E ---0--12--.

There are many more symbols and techniques to learn, but for now this will cover the basics. For the ambitious, feel free to skip ahead and learn what you want.

Also notice that most tab books and websites have guides to reading them.

***I always encourage skipping ahead for those who want to as some learn quicker than others. Plus most of the material in this book will require initiative from you, the reader.***

The only downfall of tablature is that writing the exact rhythms is different in some ways to sheet music. This makes it necessary to listen to the song while reading the tab and watch how they match up. Some will be simpler to match like the Jaws theme, and others will be tougher. The amount of notes to play will be the same as the song you're playing. Always use the actual music as a guide to playing the songs you're working on.

Knowing how to read rhythms is a skill I don't expect those reading here to need although it's very useful.

I don't encourage sheet music at this stage of learning because notes on the guitar can be played in different spots on different strings. For most other instruments the note is exact and not left to interpretation. I stress this solely to help a beginner dive into guitar playing the easiest way.

Some tabs you encounter will simply have the chords and lyrics. In these tabs the way you play the chords is open to your own interpretation, as the actual song will have a loose strumming pattern.

Guitar magazines will have an exact strumming pattern denoted by rhythm slashes indicating measured musical notes. These are easy to interpret when analyzed while playing the actual song on your stereo or whatever.

Again, it's not necessary to learn how to read rhythms.

### ***Fretting Notes***

The key is to place the part of your fingertip right before the nail begins right behind the silver metal.

As your playing starts to develop it will seem tedious to always keep this in mind so focus on simply holding the fret at any place within, and make sure it rings out.

When you get to chords you will have to do this in several different frets with several fingers, so try to strive for correct fretting eventually instead of right away.

When you first learn riffs you will have to use the dots and count each fret several times before feeling like you know your way around the board.

There's no way to learn it except to dive right in and do it. Trust me though; the markers will be a great help to you so use them.

### ***Fingerings***

Practice playing this riff on each string, starting with the low E, to build the muscles in your fingers to fret the notes, and gain an awareness of finger positions:

E--1--2--3--4-- 1=Index 2=Middle 3=Ring 4=Pinky

Also try E--1h2h3h4-- to practice hammer-ons and then pull-offs with E--4h3h2h1-- .

The point of this exercise is to develop muscle memory for each of your fret hand fingers as well as start to see how to adapt fingerings to riffs you'll learn later. You will be using finger muscles that you didn't know you even had when playing your first riffs. It will feel awkward and you will go really slow, but that's normal. The fingers have got to catch up and go to the gym for a while before playing the big game.

A basic point to take from this exercise is that lots of riffs can be played with the fret hand staying in one position, in this case being the position at fret 1.

Always try to place your hand and fingers where they are easily within reach of the musical notes in the riff.

For example, if the notes all revolve around the 5<sup>th</sup> fret your left hand shouldn't move from there. If you always try to find a place where your fret hand can stay in one place, it will help you learn a lot quicker and avoid having to constantly shift your hand to play each note.

Some tabs include fingerings and others do not as they are left to the player to determine. Always be ready for the time when you will have to figure out some fingerings for yourself, and commit the legend for fingerings shown above to memory as it's very necessary when learning chords.

I will constantly refer to these fingerings in the rest of the book:



### ***Playing With a Strap and/or While Sitting Down***

You'll be sitting down a lot at first learning songs but eventually you'll want to stand up for whatever reason. You'll find that my suggestions will be to try everything.

Play with a strap enough to get used to playing as easily as if you were sitting down.

I've heard stories of some guys holding their guitar while walking around the house or cooking breakfast! Do what you must do....

Now the trend is to let the strap hang as low as possible. This is merely a fashion trend amongst rock players, and it's actually a detriment to playing as it limits fret access towards the upper neck. Players like Zakk Wylde and Slash often prop their guitars on their knees during solos to make up for this.

Not everybody does this though. Jason Becker and the Beatles are a few who defied this practice.

## ***Tablature Websites***

**Ultimate Guitar** is THE site for free tabs. Most everything that can be broken down for guitar is there. Start browsing artists you like and view tabs for songs you're interested in to practice what you've learned so far.

The amount of tabs has grown to become quite large since I started playing so you'll probably find plenty of material. Look for tabs that have the most five-star reviews, and check the difference between straight tab pages and chord-lyric sheets.

Start printing out the tabs you want to learn so that you won't have to go to the computer constantly. Also check the top 100 tabs in case you need ideas for songs.

Browse Ultimate Guitar or **Mxtabs.net** and start finding songs you'd really like to learn and print them out, but be conscious of their playing difficulty.

There are lots of bad tabs out there that you must be aware of. Some will give chords that won't sound right for the song, leave out a

few notes, and even give just one riff from a song with several. Never completely rely on the tabs that you get and be relentless in your pursuit of high-quality tabs.

Thankfully there are lots of five-star tabs for the most popular songs out there so there shouldn't be too much of this to worry about.

## ***Exercises***

It'll be a real pain to put a lot of the exercises I use here in tab form because for one I took them from other people, and there are many that I do in a variety of ways. So I want you to do a couple of things to get your own exercises and find the ones that I use:

- Go to Ultimate Guitar and look up **Steve Vai's 10 Hour Guitar Workout**. Lots of people use variations of his linear and angular exercises as their own. Memorize them and start using it.
- YouTube has a video of Joe Satriani going through stretching exercises that he did for Guitar One Magazine that's really great. Just search for "**Joe Satriani Guitar Tips.**"
- That fingering exercise you did is something I vary in lots of my own ways. I'll make up stuff like E--1--4--3--2 or E--3--4--1--2-- and do that on every string to get all my fingers warmed up. Try making up a few of your own since just about any variation of that exercise will warm up those finger muscles.

- When you get to the lead section and learn about scales and modes, use those to warm up as well. There are countless days where I did nothing but rip through scales, but that was also because I liked lead guitar a lot at the time.
- The main rule with these exercises is that they're useless without correct fingerings so read and apply them very carefully.

***At the end of every lesson review the material at least once before moving to the next lesson.***

## ***Chapter 2***

*“One needs only to study a certain positioning of the hand in relation to the keys to obtain with ease the most beautiful sounds, to know how to play long notes and short notes and to [attain] certain unlimited dexterity... A well formed*

*technique, it seems to me, [is one] that can control and vary a beautiful sound quality.” – Frederic Chopin*

Before starting make sure your guitar is in tune and you have the tabs you'd like to learn at your side. They are both necessary for our first chords.

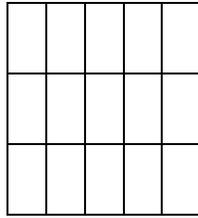
I know that many students are “visual” learners, but I think this really means that you like to do the tasks yourself (i.e. play a chord shown in a picture). My philosophy is that it's better to avoid many visual aids, except tab, since they will be of little use to you once you gain an awareness of the fingering system. Trust me when I say this is the easiest way to learn on your own.

I'll be putting up a few pictures of how to hold a pick and play the basic chords to get you started. The key to becoming an accomplished self-taught player is to learn to rely on your own brilliant mind to overcome any challenges on the way. The more you do this the more you'll crave real challenges that will give you a better standard of playing.

I want to mention ***Peter Vogl's Chord Book*** one more time since it has more chords than you'll ever really need arranged by key and tonal quality with pictures of each one. It's the best on the market in my opinion. Get it only if you feel you cannot learn a chord without a visual aid.



## ***Reading Chord***



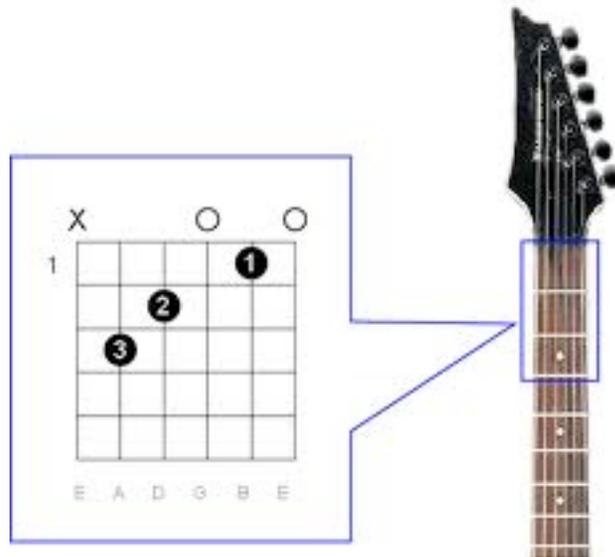
## ***Diagrams***

This is an example of a chord diagram, with six lines representing the guitar strings from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> (EADGBE) from left to right, and five lines intersecting them that represent the fret board (frets 1-5). Unless a fret marker (like a 5 denoting the 5<sup>th</sup> fret) is beside the fret lines, the chord's in open position.

**Open Position** – Remember the open E note? This term represents the area encompassing the first 3 frets

An “X” by a string line means not to play it or mute the strings (that’s also the same in tablature). A “0” means to play the string open. Most chord diagrams use the 1-2-3-4 fingering system. All you have to do is match the corresponding fingers to the right frets and strings. “T” means to fret with your thumb, which will be covered in the Hendrix chapter.

The diagrams above isn’t as pretty as the one you’ll find in a chord book so I’m going to use a different system in the rest of the book. Here’s an example of one that you’ll find on Google:



A G chord can be denoted as 320033 (2 1 3 4) while a D chord can be represented as XX0232 (1 3 2). This represents the strings and frets to play for each chord with the appropriate fingerings in the parentheses. This is what you'll actually encounter when learning chords from online tabs.

I will only put the fingerings in parentheses besides the chord if necessary. Remember that the strings will go from lowest to highest and you'll avoid any confusion.

### ***Am and Em Chords***

These are the best chords to learn first as they are the easiest for beginners to finger and switch between.

Am: X02210 (2 3 1) Play this chord starting with the 5<sup>th</sup> A string.



Em: 022000 (1 2)



**Strum** – This simply means to hit all the necessary strings at once to sound out a chord.

**Arpeggiate** – This means to pick each note of a chord individually.

Play these chords with a single strum and arpeggiated. Make sure that you're holding the notes down hard enough.

When these chords start to feel comfortable start going from one to the other. It will take several tries to land the fingerings smoothly, but eventually you'll want to lock into them without thinking.

A key to switching smoothly between many chords is to try to fret the first note that you'll strum before hitting the rest.

For example, if you're going from Em to Am, try to get to the (22) part first before hitting fret 1 on the B string. This will help with more complicated changes later on.

Now here are your first two riffs to learn that use these chords. Go look up The Beatles' **"Can't Buy Me Love"** and Metallica's **"Nothing Else Matters."**

	Em		Am
E	0-----	0-----	0-----
B	0-----	0-----	0-----
G	0-----	0-----	0-----
D	2-----	2-----	2-----
A	2-----	2-----	0-----
E	0-----	0-----	0-----

E	-----	0-----	-----	0-----	-----	0-----	-----
B	-----	0-----	-----	0-----	-----	0-----	-----
G	-----	0-----	-----	0-----	-----	0-----	-----
D	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
A	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
E	0-----	-----	0-----	-----	0-----	-----	0-----

These two riffs are great practice for strumming and arpeggiating chords, and if you know these songs already you'll be able to think what these chords sound like after playing them and hearing them on the stereo. Many riffs based on chords will rely on these two techniques for creating musical phrases.

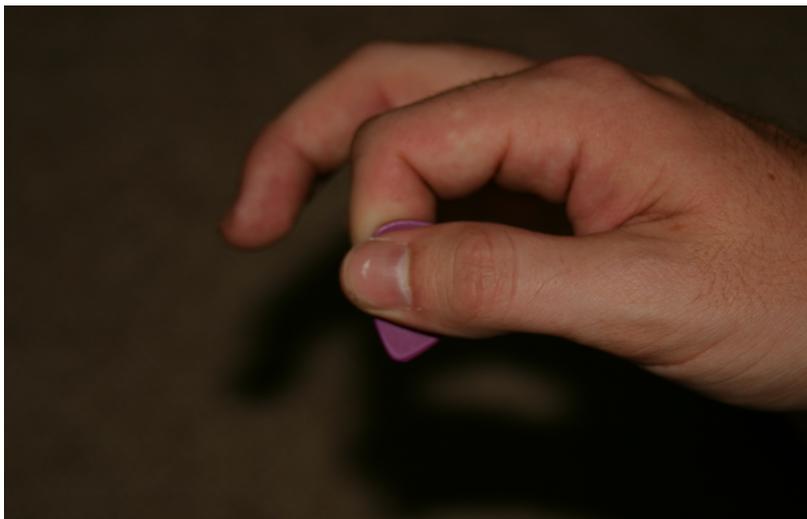
Both riffs have a very simple rhythm that will need to be played slowly until you can feel it out. Always visualize the chord shape even if you're not fretting it, like in Nothing Else Matters.

For right now concentrate on trying to play the riffs as close to the original sound as possible. The easiest way is to use your thumb to pluck or strum each string.

### ***Using A Pick***

1. Grab the pick with the right hand thumb and index finger.
2. Make sure the pick is pointing towards you.
3. Place the tip of your thumb on the fat end of the pick and hold it against the left side of your index finger.
4. Take these directions slowly because holding a pick this way will feel funny.
5. Both fingers together holding the pick will make a circle when this is done correctly.

Here's a picture of what it will look like:



Practice strumming the Am and Em chords and picking the individual notes.

Picks come in sizes from thinnest (0.38) to thickest (2.0mm and higher). I suggest getting a variety of sizes and brands to try. Thin picks will be useful for strumming while thicker picks around 0.7mm will be needed for individual notes to sound brighter. The purple 1.18mm **Dunlop** have always been my favorite. You'll quickly find there are a wide variety of picks for every style.

***\*Those who want to play solely through fingerpicking are welcome to skip ahead to the fingerpicking lesson.***

Now there are only two directions to pick: up and down. Guess what I'm going to suggest to practice? Both! My first year of playing was dominated by picking everything downwards from strumming patterns to guitar solos. It made my Metallica riffs sound great to pick everything down, but everything else was garbage.

In tabs and music books the direction to pick will usually be an arrow pointing up or down. It will drive you crazy to always try to adopt these patterns to your playing so use them as loose guides at first.

The need for this ***alternate picking*** is quite simple really. Going down then picking up saves energy and is essential for playing more difficult riffs later on. This is another technique that I loosely recommend at first, but will be of great use if practiced earlier.

One big mistake many beginners make is not using their wrist muscles to pick. To get what I'm talking about, twist your wrist clockwise and counterclockwise as if you were turning a knob. Feel that? That's the muscular energy you want to apply to picking.

**DON'T PLAY FROM THE ELBOW!**

**Cyberfret.com** is a great site that covers the same absolute beginner material represented here. It was of great help to me and I'd like you to go here for another perspective.

It's also essential to clip your fingernails, as it will affect your ability to hold frets down. This is important for the left hand, but can actually help the right hand, as long fingernails are useful for some playing styles like Country and Classical.

## ***Left-handed Guitar Players***

I'm going to be blunt in recommending not playing left-handed. The reason is that left-handed guitars and learning materials are rare, but there are ways around it if you look hard enough.

Jimi Hendrix, Kurt Cobain, and Tony Iommi played left-handed but they all had to search a while for a left-handed guitar, or they had to play a right-handed guitar upside down to keep the strings in normal positions.

Plus learning left-handed will always require the need to translate fingerings and concepts from the right-handed perspective to the left-handed one.

## ***Practicing***

There's really no great secret to practicing music except one obvious thing. Always strive to learn new material. What I mean is seek out new music and concepts to apply after mastering another.

An hour a day is what I would recommend, but it depends on what you want to learn. If you're more casual about it not even an hour might be necessary, but if you want to go through this entire book and go really far it will take more time.

You don't have to schedule this practice time in rigidly set blocks of time every day. When I started I played five minutes here, thirty minutes there, and so on. Work with your own schedule and take advantage of the free time and amount of energy you can put in at certain moments to learn a little.

Playing actual songs is the greatest education anyone can have for developing technique and utilizing musical devices like legato (hammer-ons, pull-offs, etc. which will be covered later).

All the exercises in the world can't make up for playing real music. If you'd like to see an overhauled guitar practice method involving legato, sweep-picking, and alternate picking check out the Steve Vai 30-hour Guitar Workout.

**Legato** – *This is a common musical theory term to denote smooth phrasing between notes. In the guitarist's case this includes hammer-ons, pull-offs, and slides.*

I want you to get on YouTube and watch how the greats perform their songs. Pay attention to how loose and natural they play.

I watched countless videos to learn from them, and YouTube is a priceless resource. If you don't have some groups or players in mind, check these guys out on Wikipedia to get some of their stories. Almost every one of them had their own struggles to deal with in playing and they were a great source of inspiration to me.

Wes Montgomery	Django Reinhardt	Chet Atkins
Dave Matthews	John Mayer	SRV
Jimi Hendrix	Slash	Jimmy Page
Pete Townsend	Eric Clapton	Albert King
David Gilmour	Yngwie Malmsteen	Marty Friedman
Jason Becker	Steve Vai	Tom Morello
Steve Morse	Paul Gilbert	Jeff Beck
Al di Meola	John McLaughlin	Merle Travis
James Burton	Brent Mason	Johnny Hiland
Joe Satriani	Kirk Hammett	Randy Rhoads
Angus Young	Neal Schon	B.B. King
Brian Setzer	Jerry Reed	Eddie Van Halen

### ***Play Under Control***

Playing under control is something I want you to do every day you pick up the instrument. Always build up to speed by playing slow at first.

You've got a few riffs to play now and it's okay to play fast, but make sure you're playing well. The simplest way to make sure you're doing this is to compare yourself to the original recording.

It's okay not to get it right away. Every one of the greats listed above had to play slow first. That's why I made a point to go see

some of their YouTube videos and watch how relaxed they are. Speed might impress but control and feeling will dazzle the audience.

### ***Got to the Hook Point***

The hook point is that time when you finally got the itch to learn more riffs. You might not like the riffs I've given so far and there's a chance you're getting bored with the nit-picky side of learning. Trust me, we're almost out.

Right now I'm going to encourage you to play whatever you've found for yourself to learn. No matter the difficulty you'll be able to play the first couple of notes or chords. Try to recognize the sounds coming out of the guitar as that music that inspired you to pick up the instrument.

And know that you're really not far from playing the most difficult material if you have the desire.

**Guitar Pro** – *This is a great program that allows you to see the notes on tablature played before you. Although it is not necessary to buy a license for this program to learn to play, some of the most reliable and professionally made tabs can only be played on Guitar Pro.*

## ***Chapter 3***

*“It's just rock and roll. A lot of times we get criticized for it. A lot of music papers come out with: 'When are they going to stop playing these three chords?' If you believe you shouldn't play just three chords it's pretty silly on their part. To us, the simpler a song is, the better, 'cause it's more in line with what the person on the street is.” –Angus Young*

Let's talk about the guitar knobs. On all guitars, even some acoustics, there will be a volume, tone, and pickup switch. Here's a brief rundown:

1. *Volume*: Self-explanatory. Some guitars might have more than one for separate pickups to allow more tonal variations.
2. *Tone*: This knob allows the player to add more or less treble output from the guitar. This is important for getting different sounds. More for Rock/Metal and less for Jazz/Country/Clean.
3. *Pick-up*: It will vary by guitar but this is essential as well for manipulating tones. For example a Telecaster has a five-way switch that has the following possibilities for three pickups: bridge only, mid/bridge, mid only, mid/neck, neck only.

**Tones** – *Guitar term for sounds often identified with certain players or genres.*

***Acoustic players can ignore most of this info.***

## ***Distortion***

Some readers may have already experimented with this effect on their sound. It's very exciting and you will most likely want to play it all the time if you're into hard rock and metal. The varieties of

distortion are endless and there are plenty of great pedals I've played (Tube Screamer, Metal Zone, etc.)

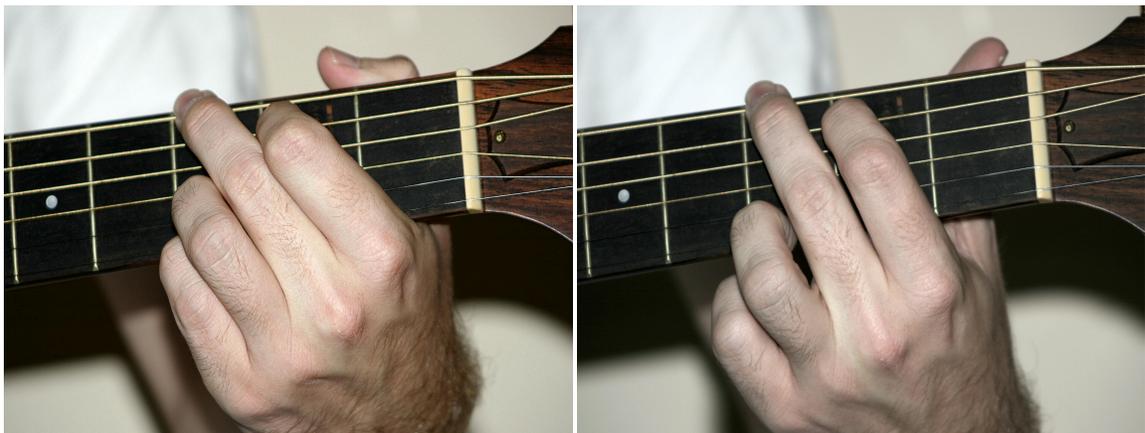
A word of caution however: there is rarely a need for lots of distortion with high amounts of gain and treble (most likely you've started playing with both switches). An excess of these qualities in your sound is one of the greatest signs of a novice player.

By all means indulge and have fun, but avoid excessive distortion as it will ruin the natural warmth of your electric guitar and encourage bad playing habits due to the difficulty to recognize your mistakes. So have fun but play smart!

### ***G, C, and D Chords***

The next three chords are among the most popular in all music and the most useful for creating music, hence their saturated appearance throughout many guitar tabs. Check out the song "**Take It Easy**" by the Eagles.

G = 320033 (2 1 3 4) and 320003 (2 1 3)



C = 32010 (3 2 1)



D = 0232 (1 3 2)



This tab is a good example of where just the lyrics and chords will be shown. Listen to the song and you'll notice that it's a very basic strumming pattern.

```
      G
Well, I'm a runnin' down the road, tryin to loosen my load,
                                D C
I've got seven women on my mind.
      G                D
Four that wanna own me, two that wanna stone me,
      C                G
one says she's a friend of mine.
```

Match the sound of these chords to the actual song and you'll be able to go back and think what a G, D, or C chord sounds like. Try

to apply the same techniques I taught for the Am and Em chords, like trying to hit the first note in a chord to give yourself time to switch fingerings. The great thing about this riff is that it sounds great slow so take your time. Try to arpeggiate the riff too.

Now I have a couple of notes about strumming. You must keep your right hand wrist and fingers loose enough to graze the strings as one. You can clench them tighter for heavier strumming but for this song the dynamics won't require it.

Use a thinner pick at first to make strumming a little bit easier, but be careful with those because they break real easily.

Practice locking into the fingerings many, many times until you're tired of it! It's not necessary to practice for hours but just till you know the fingerings well enough. C and D aren't as bad as G.

G will be uncomfortable to play at first, but don't give up! The chord will come naturally. Try both of the G's in the pictures above and notice the difference: 320033 and 320003. Many tabs will vary this chord between the two ways to play, but don't worry about it much since the chord will sound the same. Be aware of this type of ambiguity as you learn other chords and different playing positions.

Switching between chords will be the greatest challenge at first for several reasons. It's important to hold down the corresponding notes so that they won't sound muted or weak, but this is difficult since you're focusing on several notes at first. You will need to gain an awareness of what strings to play while developing right hand control.

## ***Strummers vs. Pickers***

Believe it or not there are really not that many chords to learn for the guitar. The basic chords are common shapes or patterns of chords that appear all across the fret board. This is a little more advanced concept but basically you're not far from knowing a majority of the chords you'll need.

This means that many guitar players will learn these basic chords and never progress further. There is absolutely nothing wrong with this. An overwhelming majority of songs can be played with knowledge of only the basic chords. Many of my favorite artists, like the Beatles, only had this knowledge.

But I want to challenge you to learn a little bit of every guitar style as it will make playing guitar more fulfilling as a hobby, and it will be essential if you're aspiring to become a technically accomplished player. So please don't stop at strumming chords.

## ***It's Important to Learn Parts of Songs, at First***

Most songs have no more than two or three riffs in them anyway. It's easy to get overwhelmed at all the notes and riffs some songs contain like some of the epic Metallica songs.

Learning little riffs that take up most of the song will help you avoid wasting time learning entire songs, and in the end help your technique develop quicker.

Now here's one more riff that has you using Em7 with C, G, and D. Notice that Em7 (022030) is the same chord as Em except for the D note (3) at the 2<sup>nd</sup> string. Check out **"If I Were a Boy"** by Beyonce.

```

          Em7      C      G      D      Em7      C      G
E-----2-----
B-----3-----1-----3-----3-----1-----3-----
G-----0-0-----0-0-----0-0-----2-----0-0-----0-0-----0-0-----
D-----0-----
A-----3-----
E-----0-----3-----0-----3-----

          D      Em7      C      G      D
E-----2-----2-----
B-----3-----3-----1-----3-----3-----
G-----2-----0-0-----0-0-----0-0-----2-----
D-----0-----0-----
A-----3-----
E-----0-----3-----

```

If you don't want to learn this song, **"House Of The Rising Sun"** by the Animals has a very similar pattern.

```

          Am      C
E-----0-----0-----
B-----1-----1-----1-----1-----
G-----2-----2-----0-----0-----
D-----2-----2-----
A-----0-----3-----
E-----

          D      F
E-----2-2-----1-1-----
B-----3-3-----1-----1-----
G-----2-----2-----2-----2-----
D-----0-----3-----
A-----
E-----

          Am      E
E-----0-----0-----
B-----1-----1-----0-----
G-----2-----2-----1-----1-----
D-----2-----2-----2-----2-----
A-----0-----2-----
E-----0-----

```

```

          Am      E
E-----0-----0-----
B-----1-----1-----0-----
G-----2-----2-----1-----1-----
D-----2-----2-----2-----2-----
A-----0-----2-----
E-----0-----

```

I would actually like you to strum the chords before trying to do the picking pattern even though it's really simple. There's several ways to play these two riffs: with alternate picking, with your fingers, and with down picking. I suggest you try all of them even though we haven't gotten to finger picking yet.

For fingerpicking just use your thumb and if you'd like to learn the proper way to do it you can go to the section that discusses it.

The pattern is very simple as it goes down each successive string and the bass notes signify the changes. Pay attention to the bass notes because they must ring in with the rest of the chord. When playing this riff always prepare yourself for the next chord shape.

Once you've mastered the riffs given so far you will have a great foundation for playing guitar riffs making use of chords and arpeggiation.

### ***Beginner's Song List***

It's possible that I've been suggesting material that you're not interested in or that's too difficult. And yes, I'm sure many people are raising their eyebrows since I suggested learning "If I Were A Boy". So I want to go ahead and include a list of songs to check out that might appeal to a certain genre or artist I won't be able to cover right here.

If these are not suitable and you can't find a UG tab or Amazon book that you want to play from, it might be wise to choose another

instrument to learn. My choices have been oriented towards classic rock as they are considered standards for the guitar, but I enjoy listening to and playing other genres as well.

Unfortunately some pieces can't be played on guitar so make choices accordingly. You can find the list and tips to play them in **Appendix D**.

## ***Chapter 4***

*"If people knew how hard I had to work to gain my mastery, it would not seem so wonderful at all." –Michelangelo*

There are two types of serious guitarists out there. The first are concentrated on the intricacies of making and playing music, while the second group is focused on the technical side of the instrument that involves maintaining amps, fixing up guitars, and collecting effects units.

I identify with the first kind of player even though I know enough of the other side to get by. I bring this subject up only to emphasize that this book will be concerned with the goals of the first type of player.

The techies are definitely needed as their knowledge is essential to getting a great sound, but I'm not qualified to give this knowledge. I believe there's actually more information out there for becoming a guitar tech than a musician and songwriter.

Because of this there's an idea that having this knowledge rationalizes the lack of focus on the actual musical notes. If you find yourself able to, study both disciplines but don't let your growth as a player get left behind. I personally find the study of music more satisfying and it's a better use of my time to leave instrument maintenance to the professionals.

Now here are some of the subjects that a guitar tech is an expert at doing:

1. Reducing fret buzz for a cleaner sound
2. Replacing amp tubes
3. Proper use of guitar effects for signal strength
4. Working with intonation and fret action for ease of playing

The list goes on...

**Action** – *The height between the fretboard and strings. On electrics you want it as low as possible without buzzing. It's higher on most acoustics, which, with heavier strings, makes them harder to play.*

However, you MUST know how to change strings and work with Bass-Mid-Treble settings. There are amp settings for you to play around with in **Appendix C** but you'll have to go to a friend or YouTube to learn how to change guitar strings. I'm not telling you how to do it here because I want you to really learn this yourself, and because I've never read a great written description of how to do it.

If you'd like to check out a book that goes into guitar maintenance a little further, I suggest Dan Erlewine's "**How to Make Your Electric Guitar Play Great!**" which you can find at Amazon.

If you want to get into Eddie Van Halen and Steve Vai 's tricks I recommend getting a guitar installed with a Floyd Rose tremolo system. They help the guitar stay in tune no matter how you bend the whammy bar, which was always a problem with the Fender Stratocaster's Tremolo and the Bigsby Tremolo. The only thing is they are hard to work with, particularly with replacing strings and dealing with the action.

Should you decide to invest in one of these I recommend you always let a qualified guitar tech work with it, unless you have the time to learn.

The goal of the rest of this book is to not delve into this subject anymore and leave it right here. Most music stores have a tech on staff willing to deal with those issues.

It's literally a subject as detailed and complex as the most intricate music theory, but I wanted you to have the resources to teach yourself.

## ***Building Calluses and Avoiding Hand Injuries***

At first you will only be able to play short periods of time due to the need for your fret hand to develop calluses. There's no way around it and it's necessary so that your fingers will have greater endurance in the future. The fingertips will start to splinter and become rough but this is normal.

However, if the tips start to bleed or hurt for longer periods of time do not play until they're fully healed. I learned this the hard way and had to seek help from a dermatologist. Don't make this mistake!

I highly recommend getting some ***Fast Fret*** fretboard cleaner. Not only does it keep gross stuff from building up on the guitar (and your nails) it also helps the fret hand move across the strings easier. Not to mention it will help your strings live a little longer.

Avoiding hand injuries is very easy to do. Think of it like stretching before physical exercise. Play a few riffs that you know well or spend a couple of minutes playing the finger exercises discussed earlier. The key is to play slowly until the wrist and finger muscles become loose. This is very important to start doing if you're interested

in lead guitar playing. Over time the need to stretch will lessen as your fret hand strength grows.

If you're starting to accumulate lots of paper and books, I recommend getting a music stand that can keep the pages held down. You can get a decent one for about twenty dollars and I assure you that it will be an asset if you start buying lots of music books.

I know I'm recommending a lot of stuff to buy, but it's all to give you as many options as possible and plenty of advice to choose to from. Always take these suggestions according to your individual needs. If you want to view tabs solely on the computer, disregard the music stand.

### ***Dm, A, and F (Barre Chord)***

I want to give one more arpeggiated chord riff and teach a few new chords like D minor = 0231 (2 3 1).

This chord will help tighten up your ability to pick notes across the string, switch chords, and skip strings. Check out Guns n' Roses "Don't Cry."

```
      2      Am      Dm      G      3      2
E-----0-----1-----3-----
B-----1-----3-----3-----
G-----2-----2-----2-----0-----0-----0-----
D-----2-----0-0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----
A-----0-----0-----0-----2-----0-3-----2-----3-2-
E--3-----3-----
```

The chord shapes in play here are Am – Dm – G then a descending bassline with open notes ringing together. This example

is merely to get you throwing in a new chord shape with what you've learned so far. This riff must be played in an even rhythm with emphasis on the bass notes just like the last couple of riffs. What I mean by an even rhythm is to focus on playing each note as smoothly as possible. Don't forget to visualize each chord change as well.

I must mention that arpeggiations are much easier with just the fingers even though they're certainly possible with alternate picking. To pick this riff you will have to pay close attention to your right hand to make sure it won't mute these ringing notes.

This is a nuance that might actually take a long time to get so simply make sure you're picking the right notes for now.

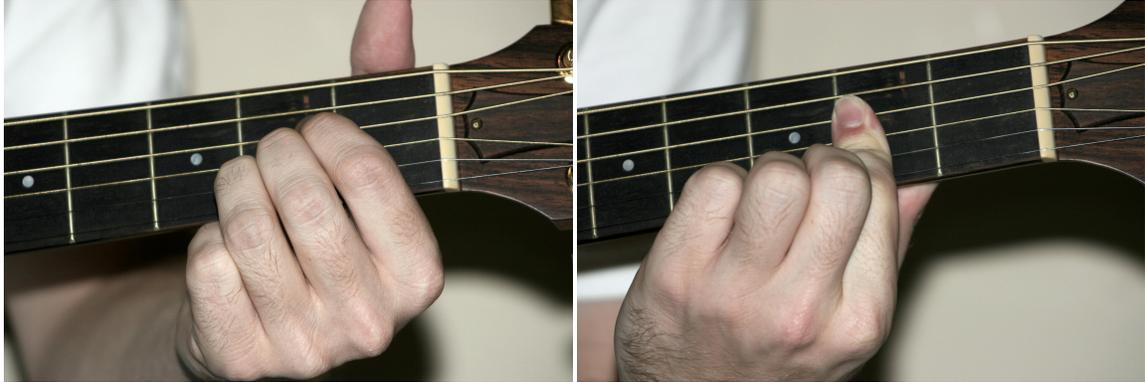
However, this is why I encourage knowing how to do fingers and picks, and sometimes use them together, later in the fingerpicking section. Now I want you to check out **“You Really Got Me”** by the Kinks or Van Halen (whichever is your preference).

```

-----
-----x-x-----x-x-----
----2--2----2-----2--2----2-----2-----x-x-----
----2--2----2-----x-x-----2--2----2-----x-x-----
----0--0----0-----x-x-----0--0----0-----x-x-----
--3-----3-----3-----3-----3-----3-----3-----

```

This riff represents many blues and hard rock riffs with the **A major barre chord** and that G (3) on the 6th string. There are two ways to play this chord: 02220 (213) or 02220 (111), which you can see in the pictures below. It's obviously easier to play the second fingering and hit the G with the 2<sup>nd</sup> finger. Make sure you're not hitting the 1<sup>st</sup> string and play the rhythm slowly before going faster.



This riff will sound better when you downpick all the notes but try alternate picking to see the difference in sound.

The second fingering involves using your first finger to fret all the notes. Applying your finger across the strings will be essential when learning chord shapes that aren't in open positions. All the chord riffs should be practiced strummed as well.

Don't worry about making mistakes like fretting the wrong notes or playing strings not part of the riff. These are only natural to commit.

The other most common version of the barre chord can be seen with the F chord in the next riff.



Check out Heart's **“Crazy On You.”**

```

Am                                     F
--0-----0-0-0--0-0-0--0-0-0--1-----1-1-1-1--1-1-1--1-1-1--1-1--
--1-----1-1-1--1-1-1--1-1-1--1-----1-1-1-1--1-1-1--1-1-1--1-1--

```

```

--2-----2-2-2--2-2-2--2-2-2--2-----2-2-2-2--2-2-2--2-2-2--2-2--
--2-----2-2-2--2-2-2--2-2-2--3-----3-3-3-3--3-3-3--3-3-3--3-3--
--0-----0-0-0--0-0-0--0-0-0--3-----3-3-3-3--3-3-3--3-3-3--3-3--
-----1-----1-1-1-1--1-1-1--1-1-1--1-1--

```

All this riff consists of is an Am chord and the F major chord 133211 (134211). To get that barre chord shape sounding full you will want to use the lower part of your first finger (the part that connects to your palm) to get the high notes held down while using the tip to hit the bass note. Try to remember this when trying this shape across the neck.

The strumming pattern is very cool and easily imitated once you play it slow a couple of times. Hum the riff in your head first as you play the rhythm, and use up/down strumming to get a similar sound.

Another technique that's essential for playing this riff is to quickly mute the strings after each pause with your fret hand, which the technical name for is **Hemiola**. Keep the chord held down and then lift your hand, while holding the chord shape, just enough so that there's no sound. Don't lift your hand off the fretboard, as you must be able to lock your hand into the chord quick enough.

It will take practice and careful listening to do this, but it will be an essential tool for your rhythm playing. Try to spot this technique in the songs you hear in order to know how to use it yourself.

I want you to make sure you're playing the barre chord correctly as it will help you learn more chords in the future if done right. Make sure that 1<sup>st</sup> finger is pressed down evenly across the strings. While pressing it down use your remaining fingers to play the remaining

notes. Keeping that 1<sup>st</sup> finger held down will be the hardest part. All you can do is play that chord several times until it comes easily.

Make sure you listen to these songs and repeat them in your head enough times to get their sounds to stick in your mind. That way you'll be able to easily remember the sound of any chord you've learned so far.

### ***Resting Your Hand on the Bridge***

Are you doing this with either your right pinky or side of the hand that runs alongside it? If so, you must stop. This habit will limit how much freedom you have in your right hand to cross strings and strum more aggressively. The best way to acquire muscle memory in your right hand and avoid this is to allow that hand to hang freely and hit some wrong notes. Remember, control will come with time.

### ***Memorizing the Fretboard***

You will want to do this for the following reasons:

1. To play chords in more than one spot.
2. Become a smarter lead guitar player.
3. Memorize and learn more songs solely by where they're located on the fretboard, and later by what key they're in.

**Key Signature** – Music theory term that refers to closely related chords and music notes that can be linked to a certain root note, ex. Key of C. In rock music, this is more commonly used to say what scale they're using, like an F# minor pentatonic scale would be called the key of F# minor (you'll learn about scales later).

Many players will choose not to learn the notes of the fretboard, as it's admittedly more useful to lead guitar players and those with more involved interest in learning music. Just know that if you decide to study music books or study my other materials it's absolutely necessary to know in order to keep up.

All you have to do to start memorizing the fretboard is Google "guitar fretboard", click on the image search, and print an illustration that you find that's to your liking.

Learn all the frets one at a time or at your own quicker pace. For instance learn all the notes at fret 3 on every string, then 5, then 7, and so on. What I did to make it easier was that I would memorize all the notes without sharps or flats. This way I knew that D# simply goes between any place that D and E are.

When learning the notes on the fretboard it won't help to memorize them and forget it. Make yourself use this knowledge when learning a new riff or music concept.

### ***Review Questions of Lessons 1-4***

Am I playing the music I enjoy, and am I enjoying learning the instrument? (Remember the Hook Point?)

How am I approaching mistakes and frustration?

Am I familiar with tuning the guitar?

Is my guitar suitable for my individual needs?

Do I understand how to read tablature and chord diagrams?

Have I checked to see if I'm making the mistakes listed earlier?  
Am I holding the pick correctly? Should I use alternate picking?  
What songs should I practice more?  
Are there any other books I should check out?  
Should I schedule a visit to my local music store and/or see a guitar tech?  
Have I browsed the songs in the beginner's list?  
Am I playing under control and avoiding bad habits?  
How do my fingers feel?  
Am I playing the chords learned so far correctly and practicing making smooth changes?

*Okay it's game day, how's your attitude? Are you kicking yourself for not getting a riff and considering giving up? Believe me when I say that it will never just click without practice. These chords and riffs are going to feel weird to everybody at first. They did to countless great players so don't beat yourself up. If you tell yourself that this is just what it takes to learn to play you will be playing whatever you want in no time.*

*The difference between those who learn and those who don't are the ones who lack the strength to keep trying. Everyone reading this right now has this strength.*

*Every true success story has started with a person asking themselves not whether they already had the talent to pursue their desires, but what work they must do to have that talent. What do you have to start doing in order to start really playing the guitar? If you*

*can answer that question you'll do it. Stay hungry and determined and the music will start flowing out of you like a flood.*

*So far you've learned just basic chords and fingerings. You must know these concepts inside out before moving on to material that will test you further. This is just natural. Without a steady pick hand and developed technique you will not be able to get far. If you're familiar with a G chord and how to adapt your own fingering, for example, you'll be able to learn to play any riff where these two techniques are necessary.*

*Here's a list of what you should be able to do at this point:*

- Tune your guitar, change your strings, read guitar tabs, fret notes properly, and hold a guitar pick*
- Have an awareness of the beginner mistakes to avoid*
- Play the G, C, D, Dm, Am, A, E, Em, and F chords.*
- Use alternate picking, Hemiola, strumming, and arpeggiation effectively enough to resemble the songs you've played so far*
- Interpret chord diagrams, fingerings, tab symbols, flats and sharps, and key signatures as to how you might need them in a song that you are attempting*

*Judge your own abilities thoroughly and honestly before going further. It is perfectly fine to keep going but you will risk making bad habits that will take time to correct, which will impede your progress.*

## ***Chapter 5***

*“People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing.” –Dale Carnegie*

I hope you are making progress and feel like you have a solid foundation to go further. I know that it's difficult to push yourself constantly to improve each time that you play. The guitar must be fun and we shouldn't feel like counting the number of times to play a riff. And it's tedious and soul crushing to turn a new hobby into a chore.

So always have fun! Play something goofy like the Jeopardy theme! Make strange noises with the whammy bar (or any effect you might have)! Turn the amp up loud and allow yourself to butcher a song! Skip ahead to the tapping section! Trust me, I drove my friends crazy playing riffs halfway. Do whatever you must do to make playing the guitar enjoyable.

I really don't want this process to become difficult. My goal is to tell you what needs to be learned. Think of this as the awkward phase of a relationship. You know you were meant for each other but you don't feel comfortable doing lots of things together yet. The relationship takes a little work in learning to be around each other so much, but eventually you can't stand not to be around each other.

Just remember, no one's come out of the womb playing 20 notes per minute, yet....but that would be weird.

## ***Seventh Chords and Learning Chord Shapes***

We're almost done learning the basic chords with the **maj7**, **min7**, and regular **7** chords being the last to learn. These chords are used across practically every genre. If you started looking for songs to strum and sing to you've most likely seen a few.

I'm not going to suggest any riffs to learn, but I ask that you learn these shapes by heart. A couple of specific artists who use these chords are Jack Johnson, Pink Floyd, and the Beatles.

**E7** = 020100 (2 1) or 022130 (2 3 1 4)

**A7** = X02020 (1 2) or X02223 (1112)

**Em7** = 022030 (1 2 3) or 020000 (1)

**D7** = XX0212 (2 1 3)

**Cmaj7** = X32000 (2 1) or X35453 (1 3 2 4 1)

**C7** = X32310 (3 2 4 1)

**G7** = 3X0001

**Am7** = X02010 (2 1)

There are several more shapes you can learn but these chords close out the basics. It's a bit involved to explain the theory behind the chord's differences, but try to see that it's only one note of difference when rooted to the same pitch (like A7 and Am7).

I also want to emphasize that this is more than just chords but shapes that you're learning. Learning the shapes first will help you make a much better visual map of the fretboard. Compare the following chords and notice their similarities.

**E** = 022100 (2 3 1)      **G** = 355433 (1 3 4 2 1 1)

**A** = X02220              **B** = X24442 (13331)

(E and G, A and B have the same barre chord shape)

**E7** = 020100    **G7** = 353433 (You see it?)

**Cmaj7** = X32000    **C** = X32010 (Look at the 1)

**Am7** = X02010    **Bm7** = X24232 (Same shape, different root)

**C** = 010    **D** = 232    **E** = 454    **G** = 787 (same shapes!!!)

Practice looking for similarities in different chords when you're learning new songs so that you don't have to do the work of memorizing something you might not see again. There are tons of them. The better you get at this the better you'll be able to navigate the fretboard.

A couple of shapes that will be necessary to know if you want to play styles like reggae, funk, ska, or jazz will be **chord inversions**. This is basically a chord played in a different spot of the fretboard than normal. If you can memorize the shapes and notes of the fretboard you will have a much better command of your rhythm playing. Check out these examples:

**D** = 232     **D** = 775     **D** = 11 10 10  
**A** = 220     **A** = 655     **A** = 9 10 9

Can you see how they're part of the chord shapes you already learned? It's the exact same shapes played higher up the fretboard. Try playing these in some of Bob Marley's songs instead of the open chord shapes I taught you, and you'll see how useful they are.

If you keep the idea that every chord is based off these basic shapes you'll be ready to learn even the most complex chords in an instant. Compare these two shapes:

**G** = 355433     **G13 b9** = 3X3565  
**E** = 76454     **E7 b9#5** = 76768

These two complex chords with lots of numbers beside them are based off the shapes to the left. Don't let it intimidate you.

Here's something you'll see in songs like "**Time Of Your Life**" by Green Day, "**Every Rose Has It's Thorn**" by Poison, and "**More Than Words**" by Extreme:

**G** (320033) to **C9** (X32033)

The 3-2 part of the shape moved to the 5<sup>th</sup> string. That's the only change! Little changes like this are what to really look for instead

of feeling you must learn new chords. Another one can be seen with this common progression:

**C** (32010) to **G/B** (X20003) to **Am** (X02210)

This example gives another example of a progression that uses an alternate chord symbol. Compare the G/B to just G. Can you see it? There's no difference except that note on the 6<sup>th</sup> string won't be played. G/B is an example of a **slash chord**. It's a chord with an alternate note in the bass besides the root or tonic note, in this case being B instead of G. This is just a special term for a chord inversion used for talking about the guitar.

**Tonic** – This is a theory term for the very first note in a key, scale, or chord. For instance, in a C chord, C is the tonic or root to the other notes in the chord, E and G.

You will find lots of chords in tablature with alternate names than simply C or G. Look at the chord diagram carefully to compare it to the original shape, and you'll start learning new songs in no time. This is all for the sake of simplicity.

## **Single-Note Riffs**

Although chords take a heavy part of guitar playing, lots of riffs consist of single notes. It's pretty easy to understand as it boils down to just about anything that doesn't consist of two or more notes being played together. These riffs mostly reside on the bass strings but they can be found nearly anywhere.

Now I want you to look up **“Come As You Are”** by Nirvana. Down pick all the notes first and then try alternate picking. With this riff you’ll have to be careful crossing strings at first and letting the right notes ring out. The trickiest part will be figuring out how to go between the open notes then back down to open E. Be sure to mute any noise that might occur when descending back down after hitting the open A string. Here’s what the tab should look like:

```

          1 2                2
-----
-----
-----
-----
-----0---0-----2-----2-----
--0---0-1-2-----2---2-2-1-0---0-0-----

```

When alternate picking, at first you’ll have to consciously think about the up and down strokes. There’s never a specific pattern of strokes since most riffs can be played several ways and still technically be right. As time goes by alternate picking will be as natural as using a pick.

Now try another single note riff, this time from Metallica’s **“Enter Sandman.”**

```

          3    2    1
-----
-----
-----
-----
--2---2---/7-----5-----5-----4---5---4---
--0---0-----6---5-----3---0---3---0---2---3---2---
          |-----3x-----|

```

When playing the first two notes (02) give it some heavy down-strokes to get that metal sound. Try it with alternate picking as well to hear the differences in sound. Riffs can always be broken down into

parts like the two phrases that this riff consists of. Breaking down a riff by its separate musical phrases is always what you must do when any riff seems too difficult.

Now here's a more difficult one from AC/DC's "**Riff Raff.**"

2 3 1 3 2 4 2

E-----  
B-----  
G----2--2--2-----  
D----2--2--2-----2--4-----5-----  
A----0--0--0-----0--3--4-----3-0-----3--0---

You'll want to break this riff down to three phrases: the first three chords, the next five notes, and then the last five. It's fast and easy to trip up on but it's an addicting riff once you get it down. Use alternate picking on this one and play each phrase several times individually before putting them altogether.

For anybody out there reading who's not interested in either one of these riffs I want you to take the info about alternate picking and breaking down riffs. You'll need that to learn any riff and not just these two.

Nearly every great rock band has a couple of songs that make use of single note riffs like these. Dig around iTunes or whatever you use to find something that qualifies as such a riff.

Even though these are just three examples, single-notes basically require the same technique to play. To get these down find as many as possible that you'd like to play and play them many times.

## **Common Beginner Issues**

Before we end this lesson I want to go over some of the specific playing issues you've probably encountered so far. Try to find these problems in your own playing and patiently work to master them. If you don't have them, then cool, move about your business.

1. Awkward chord fingerings can be really uncomfortable and tedious to the beginner, but they are necessary for forming healthy playing habits. Playing as many songs as possible that require chord changes involving the basic shapes we've learned so far will help you overcome this difficulty. Take notice of the rhythmic demands of the riffs like whether they require quicker or slower changes. Always make sure you're locking into the chord shapes correctly, and when necessary let all the notes rings out.
2. Muscle memory is key to gaining a natural control over the instrument. What I mean by this is training your fingers to go to the places they're supposed to go without even thinking. This can only be achieved through constant, consistent playing of lots of riffs. Play as much as you can and the instrument will start to become a part of you.
3. Depending on the equipment that you have, working with all the knobs can be intimidating. I had to learn from someone else to work my way around it. Check out the settings in **Appendix C** to get started on finding your own tones that suit you the best. Browse the Boss and MXR websites for ideas on settings for effects pedals if you have one of their pedals. Spend only enough time on this

so that you won't have to rely on anyone else to get it done.

4. Moving your right hand between the guitar strings can feel very uncomfortable as well. I constantly didn't know whether to watch my picking hand or fret hand to watch for mistakes. The moment I took my eye off one hand the other started to mess up! My advice is to try watching just the fret hand and then concentrate on the tablature you're playing. This will force you to gain muscle memory and comfort as you develop.
5. Developing good legato phrasing is one of the signs of breaking out of that beginner's status. Use the tips of your fingers, keep the fingers loose and within a good playing position, and try not to let legato phrasings sound forced or muddy. What I mean is go for a smooth, fluid sound similar to what you might listen to when performing these techniques. Legato does mean smooth after all.

Another technique that gets misused a lot is bends of every kind. It will take practice to make sure you're bending to the correct pitch but it's essential that you work on this. The only way to make sure you're doing it right is to do it many times until you know the sound and feel of different bends, particularly half and whole step bends.

Vibrato is another technique that needs particular attention. A great vibrato will have a precise, uniform up-down motion executed from the wrist muscles with the arm staying

loose. Some people anchor their thumb over the top of the fretboard to get stronger wrist action while others are just fine with the collapsed hand position. I suggest trying them both, although thumb anchoring is more popular. Listen to B.B. King and Eric Clapton for an example of some amazing vibrato technique.

6. We already covered picking techniques like alternate picking and down picking but I want to take a little more time to stress their importance. The key to developing control over the instrument is to have the right hand working in sync with the left hand, and the lack of right hand technique is the make or break factor most of the time. It is often what makes the left hand look good during flashy lead guitar playing or during complex rhythm playing.
7. Playing too fast and not listening to what you're playing can be a huge detriment to your progress if you let it go unnoticed. It's easy to concentrate intensely on your hands and not the sound that's coming out of your guitar. Leave the fingers to themselves and focus on the sounds and it will fix itself. I was really bad about playing some riffs too fast once I learned them because I learned them too quickly and never took time to slow them down. It's much better to play a riff over several times slow than just a couple times fast.

8. The ultimate beginner issue that the rest touch on is relaxation. Beginners often look uptight because they're concentrating all of their energy into playing the music correctly and not make a mistake. The way to avoid this is to stay conscious of your breathing while playing. Breathe in through the nose and out the mouth. Avoid holding your breath at all cost. This will happen unconsciously for a long time but with practice it can be avoided.

## ***Chapter 6***

*"You leave a guitar alone for three days and it doesn't know you when you pick it up. It's just a constant battle getting acquainted with it and staying acquainted." –Chet Atkins*

Finger picking is a necessity for playing the acoustic guitar as well as certain styles of music like Classical, Country, and even Jazz. Many players will opt out of learning how to fingerpick because their style of playing, like hard rock, will make learning it unnecessary. You can also make the case that you can play most basic guitar riffs without this knowledge, but I'm going to stress that you don't take any chances. Learn how to play the guitar with your fingers and a pick!

If you decide to try out any of the styles I mentioned above you'll find that they are impossible to play with just a pick. Take a look

at a Chet Atkins tune and you'll know what I'm talking about. I rushed to the music store and bought a thumbpick right away!

More importantly finger picking will give your sound a stylistic similarity to a piano since having the ability to use your right hand fingers as four separate picks will make it seem as if several guitars are playing at the same time. In some ways and at the most basic level, this is really not tough to do. It takes some time to internalize the techniques but it's worth it. The guitar really comes to life in a beautiful way with the fingerpicking touch.

First you need to know the fingerings:

**P** = the thumb (try to keep it on the 6th, 5th, and 4<sup>th</sup> strings)

**i** = the index finger (stays on the 3<sup>rd</sup> (G) string)

**m** = the middle finger (stays on the 2<sup>nd</sup> (B) string)

**a** = the ring finger (stays on the 1<sup>st</sup> (E) string)

Your fingers won't have to stay on those strings for every riff. You'll find that some riffs can be played with just a couple of fingers, or even with just the thumb. There will always be a fingering pattern that's better than most, but don't be afraid to try something that might be a little easier on you. Always go for a pattern that will make the least demands on your right hand fingers, even when playing the harder finger picked songs.

The right hand pinky is rarely used among the finger picking gods like Chet Atkins, Andres Segovia, or Tommy Emmanuel. The reason is that its length makes it harder to use. Then again some

players like Jerry Reed used the pinky without a problem. Try it out and use your best judgment.

A lot of instructors and music books will demand that you don't deviate from these strict fingerings. The problem is that it's a waste of time to make anything harder than it has to be. Each player must strive to avoid bad habits, but not at the cost of tedious work that makes the instrument less fun to play.

The tab I want you to look up now is "**Mama I'm Coming Home**" by Ozzy Osbourne.

```
E---0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----  
B---0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----  
G-9-----8-----8-6-----4-----4-2-----1-----1-----1-----1-----  
D-----4-----2-----
```

It's a great, easy fingerpicking riff in E Major that makes use of the 1-3<sup>rd</sup> strings. The key to making this riff sound right is to pay attention to the melody descending down the G string starting at the 9<sup>th</sup> fret (E). You can play the whole riff with just the P, i, and m fingers with P playing the notes on the G string, i playing the B string, and m playing the high E. Make sure that all the notes are ringing together with the notes on the G string taking prominence over the others. You'll have to play it several times before the pattern and fingerings become second nature. If you're not comfortable playing with the fingers try it with a pick first.

The biggest obstacle to learning finger picking will be gaining independence between the fingers. To do this I suggest relearning some of the arpeggiated riffs from earlier like "Don't Cry" or taking your basic chords and playing each note with the intended fingerings.

Practice making chord changes and sounding out the chords with your fingers until you can gain some comfort with the technique.

A nice finger picking technique to apply to full chords is to down-pick and up-pick them with just the thumb (P). Wes Montgomery was one of the ones who popularized this way of playing the chords. It's a really great way to vary the way a chord sounds but don't let this become a substitute for using the other fingers.

Now I want you to look up "**Blackbird**" by the Beatles. This is a great riff that will test your finger independence and give you an example of that piano similarity I talked about earlier. It's also very simple and musical.

```

-----
--0-----1-----3-----/12---12--12---12---12--12---
--0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----
-----
--0-----2-----/10---10---10---10---
--3-----
-----
-----3-----5-----
--5-----7-----8---8---8---8---8---8---8---
--0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----
-----
--3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----7-----6-----6-----
-----
-----3-----
--7-----5-----5---5---4---4---4---
--0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----
-----
--5-----4-----3-----3-----3-----3-----
-----
-----
--3---3---3---2---2---2---1---1---1---0---0---0---
--0---0---0---0---0---0---0---0---0---0---0---0---
-----
--2-----2-----0-----0-----
-----
-----3-----3-----

```

Many finger picking riffs like this one will demand that you place special emphasis on the highest note. Even if you miss the bass note or the rest of the chord always go for this one! This is not a strict rule.

You will find cases like the Ozzy riff where the melody will not be on the top string, or there might not even be a strong melody to play.

Due to the solo nature of finger picking many players have utilized right hand and left hand mutes (X's in tab) to give a percussive style to their riffs. For a left hand mute all you have to do is lay your left hand across all the strings. Don't hold a chord shape or fret any notes. While the left hand is muting the strings, strum the guitar according to the demands of the riff. Often they'll be thrown in quickly between chord changes. Cat Steven's "**Wild World**" is a song that uses this technique. I ask that you be aware of these mutes not only in acoustic finger picking songs but all types of guitar parts.

```

      Am          D7          G          C          F          Dm
-----2-2-2-----3-3-3-----0-0-0-----1-1-1-----1-1-1----
-----1-1-1-----1-1-1-----0-0-0-----1-1-1-----1-1-1----3-3-3---
-----2-2-2-----2-2-2-----0-0-0-----0-0-0-----2-2-2-----2-2-2---
-----2-2-2-0-0-0-0-0-0-----0-0-0-----2-2-2-----3-3-3-0-0-0-0-0---
--0-0-----3-3-----3-3-----1-1-----
-----3-3-----1-1-----
      E          Esus4
-----0-----0-----
-----0-----0-----
-----1--1--1--1--1-1-2-----
-----2-----2-----
-----
--0-0-----

```

A right hand mute is a crucial technique for playing songs like Extreme's "**More Than Words**".

```

      G          G/B          Cadd9          Am7          C          Dsus4          G
---3-----3-----0-----3-0-----0-----3-0-----0-----2---3-----
---3-x-3---3-x-3---3-x---3-3-x-1---1-x-1-1-1-x-1---1-x-3---3-x-3---
---0-x-0---0-x-0---0-x---0-0-x-0---0-x-0-0-0-x-0---0-x-2---2-x-0---
---x-----x-----x-----x-----x-----x-----x---0---x---
---2-----3-----3---3---0-----0-----3-----
-3-----3-----

```

You can hear the mute after each two-note phrase that the guitarist, Nuno Bettencourt, plays. Can you hear it? It's similar to the left hand mute in that you must use your open palm to strike the strings and stop the chord from sounding out. Think of applying the

left hand mute with your right hand. Practice this with open chords or just about any song where there's some space between the chord changes to learn how to throw these into your playing.

Now that you know the fingerings for the right hand and have gained a little technique I want you to go back specifically to the arpeggiated riffs you learned earlier and relearn them with just the fingers. This is what we must do to really learn this technique. However you will notice how much prettier a lot of those riffs will sound without a pick. Mastery of all the riffs given so far will give you the tools to learn any finger-style riff within a moderate range of difficulty. Finger style can get very involved the higher you go up in difficulty, but will become more fun and rewarding if you ever get tired of playing just chords and single note riffs.

Here's some other songs to check out if you'd like to dive a little further into playing with your fingers:

**“Layla”** by Eric Clapton (Unplugged Version)

**“Yesterday”** by The Beatles

**“Landslide”** by Fleetwood Mac

**“Lagrima”** by Francisco Tarrega

**“Dust in the Wind”** by Kansas

**“Love Song”** by Tesla

**“Silent Lucidity”** by Queensryche

**“Take Me Home, Country Roads”** by John Denver

**“Why Georgia”** by John Mayer

**“You've Got A Friend”** by James Taylor

**“Friends in Low Places”** by Garth Brooks

A great website for anyone interested in classical guitar to check out is **Classtab.org** which has pieces by just about everybody and it's 100% free.

## ***Harmonics***

There's 3 types of harmonics than can be played on the guitar that suit different styles of music from heavy metal, blues, classical, and acoustic to name a few. These are definitely some of the coolest techniques for the guitar and all have more uses than I can possibly name here so please check out some of the songs I recommend for ideas.

The first type of harmonics is called **Natural Harmonics** and can be referred to as N.H. in tabs. These are the harmonics you'll get by placing your hand at the 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> frets, though they can be found at other spots. Now don't fret a note at these places, but touch the string lightly above the fret wire at whatever position you want to play it at.

A couple of things that will help you get stronger harmonics are high output pickups (like EMGs typical in metal guitars), picking closer to the bridge, and using more distortion. Still you can get great harmonics from an acoustic guitar, but it will depend on the quality of your guitar. It's unfortunate that low-end guitars won't get great harmonics, but they are still possible.

Eddie Van Halen would play N.H.'s all over the fretboard as fills so check out songs like "**Pound Cake**", "**You Really Got Me**", and "**Panama**". Songs like Disturbed's "**Down With the Sickness**",

Pantera's "Mouth For War", and Megadeth's "Tornado of Souls" are all great examples of songs that use natural harmonics in a rhythm guitarist's context.

### Mouth For War:

```

-----
-----2.75-2.75-2.75--
-----2.75-2.75-2.75--
-----
--2---5/9-----5-----5/9---5/9---5-----
--0---3/7---0--3---0--3/7-0--3/7--0-3-----

```

### Tornado of Souls:

```

-----
-----
-----7---
-----7-----
-9-----
-7--7-7-7-7-7-7---7-7---7-
  h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.
-----
-----
-----7---
-----7-----
-9-9-9-----
-7-7-7--7-7-7-7-7-7---7-7---7-7---
  h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.
-----
-----
-----7---
-----7-----
-9-----
-7--7-7-7-7-7-7---7-7---7-
  h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.h.

```

You'll find them used this way throughout lots of songs in Grunge, Alt Rock, and even Chet Atkins.

The second type of harmonic is called a **Pinch Harmonic** (aka artificial harmonic) and it can be found in tabs as P.H. They are a little tougher to get and their sound will depend on the same factors as natural harmonics for the most part. It's the same idea as a N.H. except that the harmonic you'll hit will be down where you pick with the right hand. You can get these anywhere on the fretboard, but I

suggest fretting the 2<sup>nd</sup> fret on the G string (A) and trying this technique there.

With your pick hand, hit the string with the left side of your right thumb quickly after picking the note. You will have to practice doing this in one motion and finding spots on the string to hit the harmonics. Again, it's the left part of your right thumb that you must hit. Once you've got it where the harmonics are sounding out try finding new ones. You'll notice that hitting pinch harmonics on the same fret at different places will get different pitches.

Higher output pickups really do help with this though they're not necessary. I once got these harmonics on a friend's ukulele! So work on the technique more than the gear and you'll soon be terrifying your neighbors with the high pitch squeals.

A couple of riffs to check out for examples of using P.H.'s in rhythm guitar are Extreme's "**Decadence Dance**" and Ozzy Osbourne's "**Crazy Babies**".

### Decadence Dance:

A.H.

```

-----
-----
-----4b--- (4) -----2-----2-----2-----2-----
-----2-----2-----2-----2-----4p-2h-4--5-----2-----2-----
-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----
-----

```

```

-----
-----2-----4/6---2---2-----2-----2-----2-----
-----2-----4p-2h-4-----2---2-----2-----4p-2h-4--5-----2-----2-----
-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----
-----

```

A.H.

A.H.

```

-----
-----4b-----2---4b-----2-----2-----2-----
-----2-----2---4b-----2-----2---4p-2h-4--5---2---2-----
-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----
-----

```

## Crazy Babies:

```
-----3-----  
-----3-2/4\2-----  
-----2/4\2-----  
-----2-----2-----2-----2-----2-----  
-2---2-2-2---0---2---2---0-AH---0---2---2-2-2-----2---0-AH---0-  
-0---0-0-0--0-3-----0-----0-3--3^-----0---0-0-0-----0-3--3^-----
```

Zakk Wylde is one of the greatest advocates of this technique as the riffs he wrote with Ozzy Osbourne are loaded with them. Pinch Harmonics have been used in lead guitar with a famous example being ZZ Top's "**La Grange**" around the 2:30 mark. Check out some of Steve Vai and Joe Satriani's songs for more examples as a lot of their music is loaded with pinch harmonics.

The third type of harmonic is called the **harp harmonic**. It also uses the same N.H. technique but slightly altered.

For an example, fret the 5<sup>th</sup> fret on the 6<sup>th</sup> string (A) then take your right hand and place it lightly over the 17<sup>th</sup> fret like you would pick a N.H. While lightly fretting that note with the right index finger pick it with your right thumb. These two opposite motions will feel weird at first to play but they must be executed at the same time. You'll know you got it when the harmonics start to sound similar to N.H.'s. If you're doing it wrong the lower pitch (at the 5<sup>th</sup> fret) will sound out instead of just the harmonic. Notice that the right hand index finger will be pointing at the fret where the harmonic is with the thumb picking behind it.

It's easier to perform this technique without the pick, but you can hold it with the right middle finger and thumb while fretting the harmonic with the index finger.

The harp harmonic will always be an octave above the note that you're fretting. The great thing about this technique is that you won't be limited to the frets that can sound out only natural harmonics. You can fret anything an octave up, even notes that don't have frets! (This is actually another way to play pinch harmonics) Use this technique to sound out chords, melodies, and nearly anything else to vary your playing with something besides fretted notes.

Go back and apply the harp harmonic technique to the songs you've learned before. Just remember that instead of picking the notes you hit the harmonics an octave above. For instance, if you were to do this to a D chord you'd hit the harmonics at the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> frets from the 1-3<sup>rd</sup> strings, respectively.

I know I'm really testing your reading comprehension here, and these directions can be tedious on paper. Please make sure you understand the directions. I'll sum up the most crucial directions to follow:

- Make sure you're lightly touching the frets for N.H.'s
- Hit the string with the side of your thumb for P.H.'s
- Perform the opposing motions for the harp harmonic technique simultaneously.

## ***Alternate Tunings***

We've already covered a few of these like Half-Step Down, but of course there are several more possibilities than simple variations of standard tuning. Pay attention to the tabs that demand these tunings because unless you make the music sound the same in

standard (Called transposing, which is difficult to do) the songs will sound off. The music of Jimi Hendrix, Van Halen, and Stevie Ray Vaughan among countless others all demand alternate tunings like Half-Step Down.

Here are a few others (Get out the tuner if you need to get in these tunings):

**Drop D** – You'll encounter this tuning a lot if you're into Grunge and Alternative Rock. Simply detune the 6<sup>th</sup> string a whole step down to D. To tune relatively, either match the pitches of the open 4<sup>th</sup> string (D) or the 5<sup>th</sup> fret of the A string (D). After going into this tuning enough you'll be able to do it completely by ear without relative tuning. This tuning is ideal for power chords, as they only need to be played with one finger. It's also very popular because lots of songs are written in D minor with this tuning, instead of the more common E minor or A minor keys.

If you're really into this tuning I suggest getting a drop-D tuning system that allows you to instantly go into it. You can find one on Musician's Friend. It's not necessary but helpful.

**Open Tunings** – These are very popular in many genres, particularly Blues and Country, and are used to play open chords more easily. For instance if you're in Open G, simply playing all the open strings at once will give you a G chord, while barreing a fret at any position will also give a complete chord. Open G and Open E are the most popular, but I'm going to give tunings for some of the most common ones. The notes will start with the open 6<sup>th</sup> string.

Open G: D-G-D-G-B-D

Open A: E-A-E-A-C#-E

Open E: E-B-E-G#-B-E

Open D: D-A-D-F#-A-D

See? All the strings are simply tuned to one of the three notes comprising the chord.

You'll encounter these tunings if you're interested in playing Delta Blues, the Rolling Stones, and the Allman Brothers (specifically the parts of Duane Allman). I generally avoid them because of the trouble tuning them back to standard. However there are entire worlds to be found here if you're willing to explore them.

That's only the beginning of the alternate tunings that are available out there. Some recording artists like Joni Mitchell, Curtis Mayfield, and Albert King all used special individual tunings to get different sounds or simply play their own way. Entire genres have been created this way. Even particular aspects of an artist's songbook are dominated by alternate tunings like Led Zeppelin, whose songs "Going to California", "The Rain Song", and "That's the Way" were recorded in them.

Check out the books "**The Complete Book of Alternate Tunings**" by Mark Hanson and "**Alternate Tuning Chord Dictionary**" by Chad Johnson if you're interested in going further.

### ***Ear vs. Tab and Learning Songs By Ear***

One of the epic debates of the guitar is how much we should rely on learning from tablature. Some of my favorite players like Steve Vai, Marty Friedman, and Nuno Bettencourt strictly advise learning by

ear, but I believe this limits your ability to learn. With the rise of the Internet in my time the need to slow down records and learn songs note by note has vanished due to the widespread availability of tablature.

I definitely agree that learning stuff by ear is essential to becoming a complete musician but if you're not that serious about playing the guitar it's a waste of time. Plus it's not reasonable to expect a beginner to have the ability to learn without tab if there are alternate methods.

My view is simple. Do both ideally, but don't worry about developing your musical ear if it's not your concern. In this book I recommend tabs because it's easier. Lots of people just want to strum chords and the experts should start satisfying the demand to play the guitar as a simple pastime.

However! I will show you how to learn a tune by ear with an example. There is no definite process to learning anything by ear except trial and error, but there are a few big concepts to keep in mind.

1. Is it high or low pitch? Melodies and leads will usually land on the 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> strings, while typical guitar riffs will sound better on the 6<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> strings. Use your best judgment to determine what range to work within.
2. Hum the melody and try to find the starting pitch. If it's chords you'll be hearing the highest pitch so try to hum that. Theory knowledge will help you guess what key

the starting pitch is in as well as what chords to try out that belong to that key.

3. Guess what exactly you're hearing in the song? Is it a specific type of riff or technique that you can recognize? It will take some familiarity with the instrument before this process gets easier, so practice figuring out what you hear on the radio first.

There is no wrong or right way to do this. I personally use my ear and my theory knowledge to break a song down, while lots of players will just kind of guess what strings and frets a song will be played in. It'll really boil down to your knowledge of the guitar. That is the real make or break factor to learning a song by ear. Try learning songs that have mostly power chords, basic open chords, and single notes and then progress to more difficult material. You'll be surprised how many songs can be broken down to these elements.

To give an example I'm going to tell how I figured out the song "**Bittersweet Symphony**" by the Verve. I just started picking notes on the B string till I hit fret 9 (G#) and 10 (A), which I recognized as the first two notes that make up the sung melody. The words "Cause it's a bittersweet" could be broken down to the notes 10-10-10-9-9-10 respectively to the syllables in that first lyrical phrase. The next part, "symphony that's life", was found by moving down to frets 15 (D) and 14 (C#). So I thought that D or A might be two of the chords in the song. I picked the triad for A (9-10-9) and D (10-10-11), which is chord inversions played higher up the fretboard, and noticed that they are part of the song!

I didn't have all the song figured out yet. Playing D then A corresponded to the last of the melody, but what about the beginning? So I tried E (79997) since that chord's right beside those two, and this sounded like the first chord. Listening to the song it sounded like there was one more chord in between E and A. So I tried B but it wasn't quite right. What about B minor? Nope. Bm7? Got it! So the chords I found were E – Bm7 - D – A and by listening to the song I could tell this was right. I settle on that.

What I really wanted to figure out was that strings riff. So I had the chords and figured that it must be derived from that. Thankfully it did! Here's a tab of the way I learned to play it:

```
E---7-----7-----10-----10-----9-----9-----  
B-----9-----10---7---10-----10-----10-----
```

I really hope that gave you some insight into how to learn a song by ear. As you can see, even with extensive knowledge you must use your ear and guess till you're close. With practice you'll be able to pick out chord qualities, determine whether songs are minor or major sounding, and determine little things about why a certain song is rock or blues or whatever.

There's no shame in using tabs for a while. It wasn't till my third year of playing that I figured out something by ear, and it was a song that I couldn't find anything on. Every riff will differ and it may take a while to figure some songs out, but don't lose your motivation to play something because there's no tab or even if it's not played for guitar.

***Guitar Magazines***

Guitar World and the now out of print Guitar One were a great help to me my first couple of years of playing. Guitar World has several columns that appear right before their tabs that are written by popular guitar players such as Zakk Wylde, Dimebag Darrell, Warren Haynes, Dave Mustaine, John Scofield, John Petrucci, and countless others. The tabs themselves are almost always something you really would like to learn. There are also interviews with these players into how they get their sound, what gear they use, and how they learned to play. Every issue is stocked full of gear reviews and useful ads for items you might be interested in.

Guitar One was my personal favorite and I'm disappointed it's gone because I still learn from my back issues of that magazine. If you can get a hold of these I highly recommend getting as many as possible as they have had stuff like personal lessons from Nuno Bettencourt and George Benson, columns strictly on Rhythm and Lead, and cover stories on how to learn new styles or get better as a player.

Notice that I advocate them only for the first couple of years because if you desire to become a serious musician you'll find there's little to learn from them after awhile. You'll want to learn new songs and styles that they merely touch on, or maybe get into songwriting. Remember that the focus of these magazines is strictly to educate people on guitar and satisfy the demand for info on the best players out there.

I eventually went to learning from music books sold by Hal Leonard, Alfred Publishing, and Cherry Lane Music Group since nothing beats studying the actual music from certified guitar transcriptions. Read up on Amazon before buying anything as some may have lots of mistakes, be available only in Piano-Vocal-Guitar, or might be in sheet music only. Avoid “Easy Guitar” books because the music is often in a different key or will probably make you die to play the real thing.

If you end up buying a tab where the music’s tougher to play, break it down to single notes so that you can at least get a taste of the real thing. This will save the need for easy guitar.

And if you haven’t already please buy a book that you really want to play, even if it’s difficult music to play. Those wanting to save money can simply find a tough song that they can’t play yet but want to someday.

## ***Chapter 7***

*"I can't play like Segovia. The flip side of that is that Segovia could probably never have played like me." –Kurt Cobain*

I want to ask you a question before we get started. Are you playing clean? Many electric guitar players start out playing with more distortion than they'll ever need, and when they go to play clean they wonder why their playing takes a stage dive. The reason is that distortion helps cover up our mistakes. If that's becoming a problem I suggest learning every riff you've learned so far strictly through the clean channel.

You may have noticed as well that some ugly tones can get mixed with the music. Most of the time it will result from not dampening the strings. Basically always strive to pick your notes in a precise and clean attack while making sure you're fretting with the tips of your fingers, not the nails. Dampening is mostly done with the right hand, and it will take time to predict when the ugly tones will come around. They'll come a lot when switching strings and especially when playing leads on the higher strings (1-3). One more thing is to be sure that your left hand fingers aren't accidentally hitting open strings.

If it just sounds really nasty try to ease back the volume knob on your guitar. This will help if your guitar has a really high output and you're using lots of distortion. Once you feel like you got a hold of dampening try switching the volume back all the way.

This is a lot to internalize and take in after learning finger picking, chords, and lots of riffs. This is just something you want to strive for in your playing. Trust me though; you want to learn this info to create a crystal clear tone, whether in clean or distortion.

### ***Playing Along With Recorded Music***

At first you won't be able to keep up, but that's okay. Practicing along with recorded music will help tighten up your playing in a way that no amount of solo repetitions can do. I highly recommend starting with chord strumming and then working to the easy riffs learned so far. Try to pick out tunes where the guitar stands out the most. Constantly try to visualize the riff ahead of you while following along. Eventually you'll learn to recover from a mistake and hop back in, but many times it will be better to start the riff over. Work until you start getting closer and closer to that original sound and you'll be amazed how much better your playing gets.

### ***Power Chords***

Finally! More than likely you've encountered this shape, as with an E5 (799 or 022), in lots of riffs. Why didn't I cover this earlier? I was hoping that you'd work at becoming familiar with basic chords beforehand. If you skipped over to this part that's no problem. I didn't

get to really nailing basic chords until my 2<sup>nd</sup> year and the first riffs I learned all involved power chords.

It is the ultimate rock n' roll chord for one reason: the perfect 5<sup>th</sup> is the strongest musical interval out there. Putting the E and B notes together (like in the E5) forms a tight musical bond that can exist by its self. The perfect 5<sup>th</sup> interval can work as a tiny chord in the absence of that third note (the major or minor 3<sup>rd</sup>) common to all chords. Don't worry about those intervals I threw at you. The shapes are all that matter, like these:

*A = 577655 or 02220 turns into A5 = 577 or 022 (Starting on the 5<sup>th</sup> string)*  
*E = 79997 or 022100 turns into E5 = 799 or 022 (Starting on the 6<sup>th</sup> string)*

See? You're only playing part of the barre chord that you learned already. You will see lots of songs that have an E5 with just two notes (0-2 or 7-9). The power chords shown above just sound fuller with the extra E or A note. It's not necessary to always play that extra note. Pay attention to the demands of the song and you'll figure out whether to use it or not.

So now we come to some of the ultimate beginner riffs:

**“Smoke On the Water” by Deep Purple**

D--5--8--10-----5--8--11--10-----5--8--10-----8--5-----  
 A--5--8--10-----5--8--11--10-----5--8--10-----8--5-----

**“Back in Black” by AC/DC**

B-----3---3---3-----  
 G-----2---2---2-----2---2---2-----  
 D---2-----0---0---0-----2---2---2-----  
 A---2-----0---0---0-----  
 E---0-----7---4---7---5---7---6---7-7-

**“Iron Man” by Black Sabbath**

D---4-----7---7/9---9-----12/11--12/11--12/11-----7---7/9---9-----  
 A---2-----5---5/7---7-----10/9---10/9---10/9-----5---5/7---7-----

## “Smells Like Teen Spirit” by Nirvana

```
G-----3-3--x-----6---6-----  
D-3--3-3--x-x--x-x--3-3--x---6--6-6---x-x--x-x---6---6-----  
A-3--3-3--x-x--x-x--1-1--x---6--6-6---x-x--x-x---4---4-----  
E-1--1-1--x-x--x-x-----4--4-4---x-x--x-x-----
```

The trick to playing all these riffs is to have that power chord shape completely under your control. When I started playing I used the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> fingers until I felt more comfortable with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> fingers playing the shape. Make sure the chords sound together as one and visualize the changes.

The Sabbath riff involves slides so I'd suggest playing the top notes before playing the full chords. Remember that it's a melody you're playing.

The Nirvana riff involves quick mutes that must be thrown into the changes so be careful when locking into and out of the shape. Be sure that you're not accidentally hitting other strings when playing the mutes and keep your mind ready for the move up to the 4<sup>th</sup> fret power chords.

The AC/DC riff can be played in many spots but the easiest will be the open chord shapes 022 (E5), 023 (D5), and 022 (A5). You can skip learning the riff that goes right after the D5 chord as Angus Young plays that by himself and Malcolm stops at that D5. It's totally playable at this level though. Give it a shot! The riff that leads the entire thing back to the beginning can be played entirely on the E string so make sure you got a tab that has it there.

After several attempts at hammering that shape it will come naturally to your left hand. Every riff you learn will teach some new little aspect of playing these chords so seek out a lot of them.

Metallica's Black Album has a ton of riffs that are within a beginner's grasp of power chords. "**Wherever I May Roam**" and "**Sad But True**" is two examples. Lots of alt rock music uses power chord changes in place of open chords so check out a couple of your favorite songs in that genre for some easy riffs. The Foo Fighters songs "**Everlong**" and "**Learn to Fly**" are two of my favorites to play. Queens of the Stone Age's "**Go With The Flow**" is another good one.

For those of you out there keen on 90s rock should try some songs in Drop D like Alice in Chains "**Them Bones**", Rage Against the Machine's "**Killing In the Name**", Soundgarden's "**Black Hole Sun**", and Papa Roach's "**Last Resort**" (Sorry they're 2000).

## ***Palm Muting***

When I first started playing I would usually ignore the palm muting signs because I liked the sound of the chord's full sound. However I noticed that some songs must be played with this technique if you're going to get close to the original sound.

To palm mute, place the side of your right hand about an inch from the bridge, while picking a note or chord. The riffs I'm about to ask you to play need to be palm-muted in order to sound right. Don't let the notes sound too muffled which will happen if you're too close to the bridge. Listen to the original recordings and match the sound

as best as you can. Move your hand little by little until you hit the sweet spot where the note won't sound dead.

Look up Van Halen's "**Ain't Talkin Bout Love**" which is a riff based on Am and G.

```

      2 1 2      1 1 2 3 3 2 2
-----0-1-----3-----
-----1-----1-----3-----
-----2-----2-----
---2-----
--0-----3~---2-3--
-----3-----
  
```

Though you can keep the chord shapes and play the single notes I suggest focusing on playing each note without keeping the shapes in your left hand. This way you can concentrate easier on muting the notes instead of the chord changes. Don't forget to visualize those chord changes or you'll easily lose your place.

Now look up the Police's "**Every Breath You Take**" which can be broken down to the chords Ab – F – Db – Eb. Take note that this song is in half step down tuning.

```

      1  2  4   3                1  2  4   1
-----
-----6-----6-----2-----2-----
-----9-----9---9-----9---9-----6---6---6---6---6---6---
---7---7---7---7---7---7---4---4---4---4---4---4---4---
-5-----5-----2-----2-----

      1  2  4   4  3          1  2  4   4  3
-----
-----9---7-----11---9---9\---
---7---7---7---7---9---9---
-5-----5-----5---7---7---7---
-----
  
```

It's a little tougher so play it slow and then work up to speed. Down-picking every note will make it easier and help you keep the palm down on the bridge.

It will be frustrating to think about playing the riff, dampening, and keeping up with the rhythms so play them without palm muting first. Add the technique as your fingers start to get accustomed to the riffs.

Both of these riffs might be a little tough for an absolute beginner. The essential thing to remember is that the technique doesn't change from song to song, only the notes do. Try palm-muting a couple of the power chord riffs in the last section if they seem a little too hard. These two riffs are simply great examples of the technique and are actually more common in metal and hard rock.

### ***Tips For Playing Metal Riffs***

Since we're discussing power chords and palm muting it's only natural to turn to this genre. Just to clarify, when I think of metal I think Metallica, Iron Maiden, Motorhead, Pantera, and not hair metal like Dokken, Winger, and Whitesnake. I'll leave it at that.

The first thing you'll notice is the rapid-fire power chords that are part of many metal riffs. Oftentimes you must play these slowly to get a feel for the riffs. I just recently learned how to play System of a Down's "**Chop Suey**" and I still had to slow it down. Imagine the song at half the speed and then play the chords. Some songs will change positions quickly and some will sit on a chord the entire verse.

These power chords need to be viewed as really quick chord changes. Also try strictly down picking some riffs, as many Metallica and Black Sabbath songs are played this way. Lots of metal riffs will

need to be played with alternate picking as there's no way to just down pick those and make it sound clean.

The way you hold a pick is really important too. When alternate picking you'll want to choke the pick until there's only a little bit of it to hit the string with. This will help you pick up and down the string a lot easier.

Instead of focusing on hitting the powerchords with just the pick let your right index finger nail graze the strings as you downpick. If you do this simple little technique and start throwing it into your metal riffs they will literally come to life.

Economical motion between chord changes is crucial as well. Since there's just one shape it will be easier to move up and down when staying on just two strings like A and D. It's when you got to go up to the 6<sup>th</sup> string that will cause trouble if you're not ready. The easiest way to make this change is to keep the first finger barred down while freeing the other fingers to make shapes as the song demands.

What you'll find in many metal songs is a combination of fast single note lines mixed with power chords. Megadeth's music is a big example. When you get to scales later on you'll start to notice how it's easier to memorize them when viewed in that format.

When playing metal music it's really not about how much gain you use but how well you manipulate the treble in the effects or amp you're using. Most of the metal riffs will also boil down to your mix of

attitude and technique. Watching Dave Mustaine and James Hetfield do this will give you a better education than I can.

A great technique that Dave uses is the spider technique of playing powerchords. So far you've been using the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> fingers to play powerchords. Keep any powerchords you might play in this fingering and when you need to play a powerchord on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> strings use the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> fingers to play the powerchord. If you do this it will allow you to easily change between powerchords on adjacent strings.

Many metal styles will test how much control you have over your playing. This will take a while but once you've got it down I truly believe there's no genre of music more fun to play on the guitar.

A cool site to check out for fans of Megadeth, Metallica, Nevermore, and Iron Maiden is [www.abyslord.com](http://www.abyslord.com).

***Review Questions for Lessons 5-7***

Good job! Believe it or not you actually have a greater command of the instrument than some who've played for years. The riffs are getting harder and I'm throwing more tips to keep in mind as you play so I want to stress the danger of moving too fast. The next couple of lessons are going to build on your knowledge and make more demands of the skills you've learned so far. Please be sure that you understand and can play everything learned. It doesn't have to be perfect but just enough to apply to the last lessons. Remember too that this is all stuff that will take many hours of playing time spread over several months, for most people, to really learn.

Here are some more questions to ask yourself before moving on:

Am I well acquainted enough with the beginner issues mentioned earlier to identify them in my playing?

Have I started warming up before playing?

Did I find any songs with the 7<sup>th</sup> chords in them?

Do I understand finger picking well enough to play any riff that demands it?

Can I play each type of harmonic?

What do I think of playing by ear versus using tablature?

Did I check out Guitar World or any music books with tablature?

Have I been playing on the clean channel if I'm amplified?

How well am I playing power chords?

If I encountered an alternate tuning would I want to play in it?

Did I find the sweet spot for palm muting?

What recorded music can I play along with?

Should I go on to the next lessons?

*I want to stress that you are learning more than just songs. It is really techniques and concepts that you are learning. The more familiar you are with what you've learned so far from practice the better prepared you'll be for any songs that come up in the future.*

*Here's what you should know how to do before moving ahead:*

- *Identify recurring chord shapes and use them as needed for particular songs*
- *Avoid making noise, practice playing clean exclusively, and hitting random strings to create a clear guitar tone*
- *Break down riffs in pieces so that they are easier to learn*
- *Apply fingerpicking to any riff you encounter even if it's not meant to be played that way*
- *Have the ability to choose the right instruction books according to your own individual needs*

## ***Chapter 8***

*"Blues is easy to play, but hard to feel." –Jimi Hendrix*

I really don't mean to ignore all the acoustic players out there as I've been primarily focused on electric. I hope that you've tried playing both types of guitars and seen that acoustic music can be played on electric and vice versa. The big difference with acoustic playing is that everything is harder to play due to higher gauge strings and wider guitar necks. This is what I noticed after playing solely electric for the first two years.

Acoustic in a way is like relearning the guitar. Almost immediately you're forced to reevaluate your right and left hand technique, and make those calluses a little thicker. If your fingers haven't been hurting that much they will now. Remember I'm not trying to scare you. It's natural to face a little resistance when growing as a player. If you decide to play more on the acoustic it will actually bring about higher quality playing in a short amount of time.

In both Electric and Acoustic Guitar you will find a combination of all the different types of riffs you've played so far:

1. Arpeggiated chord sequences
2. Single Note Melodies
3. Strumming Patterns
4. Double Stops (Power Chords)
5. Combinations of the above.

The last category is what you will find the most in acoustic guitar, which is what makes playing acoustic really difficult. When I'm talking about acoustic guitar I don't mean strumming chord progressions. The riffs I'm going to show you today will force you to

switch gears and amp up your finger picking. If you've been practicing the riffs so far they will only require minimal practice time.

Check out these songs: **“Hey There Delilah”** by the Plain White T's, **“Wild World”** by Cat Stevens, **“Dear Prudence”** by the Beatles, and **“Your Body's a Wonderland”** by John Mayer.

One thing all these riffs have in common is that they break the chords apart to give it a fuller sound, particularly by giving emphasis to notes in the bass. They also have quick chord changes unlike the riffs played so far. It will help to go through each riff to identify the separate chord shapes the songs are using.

Here's each of the chord progressions for reference:

**“Hey There Delilah” = D – F#m – Bm – G – A**

D	F#m	D	F#m
-----			
3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0
-----			

Bm	G	A	Bm	A
-----				
3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4
2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0
-----				

D	F#m	D	F#m
-----			
3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0
-----			

Bm	G	A	Bm	A
-----				
3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4
2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0
-----				

Leave the notes belonging to the 2<sup>nd</sup> fret to the 1<sup>st</sup> finger by barreing that fret, and use your remaining fingers to lock into the other shapes. This will make it easier to go between the D-F#m changes. Place special emphases on the bass notes that lead into the chord changes.

**“Dear Prudence” = D – C – G –A –C – D –C – Gmaj7**

E-----12-----  
 B-----10-----  
 G-----12-----  
 D-----0-----0-----  
 A-----0-----  
 D-----0-----

E-10-----8-----  
 B-----10-----8-----  
 G-----11-----9-----  
 D-----0-----0-----0-----0-----  
 A-0-----0-----0-----0-----  
 D-----0-----0-----0-----

E-7-----5-----  
 B-----8-----5-----  
 G-----7-----6-----  
 D-----0-----0-----0-----0-----  
 A-0-----0-----0-----0-----  
 D-----0-----0-----0-----

E-3-----3-----  
 B-----5-----5-----  
 G-----5-----5-----  
 D-----0-----0-----0-----0-----  
 A-0-----0-----0-----0-----  
 D-----0-----0-----0-----

E-2-----2-----  
 B-----3-----3-----  
 G-----2-----2-----  
 D-----0-----0-----0-----0-----  
 A-0-----0-----3-----  
 D-----0-----0-----0-----

E-2-----2-----  
 B-----3-----3-----  
 G-----0-----0-----  
 D-----0-----0-----0-----0-----  
 A-2-----1-----  
 D-----0-----0-----0-----

```

E-2-----2-----
B-----3-----3-----
G-----2-----2-----
D-----0-----0-----0-----0-----
A-0-----3-----
D-----0-----0-----

E-2-----2-----
B-----3-----3-----
G-----0-----0-----
D-----0-----0-----0-----0-----
A-2-----1-----
D-----0-----0-----

```

When the progression comes back down to open position keep the F# and D notes fretted with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> fingers respectively, then use your free fingers to hit the bass notes.

**“Your Body’s a Wonderland” = F5 – Csus4 – Bbsus2**

```

E-----
B-----
G-----10-10-----10-10-----10-10-----10-10-----
D-----10-10-----10-10-----10-10-----10-10-----
A---8-----
D-----10-----8-----10-----

```

If you’ve been playing songs with basic chords these will throw you off a little bit. Remember that no matter what funky letters or symbols you find beside the chord letter, like the D/F#, it’s still a D chord. It will take at least some minor knowledge of the fretboard to navigate through some of these chord shapes but you’ll be surprised how well you’ll commit these chords to memory once you’ve learned the riffs. Focus on keeping up with the shapes that you encounter. Most tabs and music books will give you the shapes and the chord symbols for reference at the beginning and sometimes at the end.

Hybrid picking is a technique that can be used when a song calls for strumming and arpeggiating the chord. Simply use your ring and middle fingers to finger pick while using the flat pick. You will want to make the fingers work as one when playing parts of chords

with this type of picking. Keep a good grip on the pick while using the fingers, as this will be the hardest thing to commit to your muscle memory.

This style of picking can open your right hand to ways of playing that are tougher with just a flatpick. Those who have trouble not using their index finger should consider playing with a thumbpick. Thumbpicks will feel funny because of the absence of the flatpick you've been using so far, and the desire to play strings directly with the thumb. However it will be a great advantage should you decide to go deeper into acoustic finger picking.

Another aspect of playing acoustic that you will encounter is the need for a capo. All that a capo does is barre all the strings at a certain fret so that you can play all the open chords learned earlier in a different spot. James Taylor's music in particular will require having one of these devices. Two songs that use one are "**Wonderwall**" by Oasis and "**Landslide**" by Fleetwood Mac. Some great acoustic artists to check out are Led Zeppelin, the Beatles, Jack Johnson, Jason Mraz, the Dave Matthews Band, and James Taylor.

## ***Summary of Rhythm Guitar***

We are about to leave rhythm behind to focus solely on lead guitar, and before we do that it's important that you see how closely linked they are. Though each discipline claims to dominate different parts of the fretboard I believe that the technique for each is no different from the other. You must be in control of your left and right hand, have skill at using many different techniques, and approach

learning each part in the same way. Learning more about rhythm guitar or lead guitar will help broaden your knowledge of the fretboard and playing technique in general.

Here is a brief review of what rhythm guitar entails:

- The ability to switch between many different chord shapes at any particular speed or type of rhythm.
- Applying techniques such as hybrid picking, strumming, alternate picking, and palm muting to the riffs you're playing in a musical way.
- Having a versatile command of different guitar styles like country, jazz, rock, blues, metal, reggae, funk, acoustic, fingerpicking, etc.
- Doing all of this with a well-groomed technique that creates a crystal clear sound.

To me, a player who can do all this is better than the shredders out there. That's because a great rhythm player realizes that the song elements are still important during the solo, and that will come out of his lead guitar playing. Shredding through a scale and nailing patterns will make you feel hot for a while, but you'll eventually get bored if the song is your concern. So please don't let your rhythm playing succumb to your lead playing.

## ***Pentatonic Scales***

We're almost ready to get into blues and lead guitar but I think it's necessary to cover one of the fundamental scales of guitar

playing, the minor pentatonic (a five note scale). This is the scale in E minor:

```
3 3 3 2 2 3 3 1 4 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 4 1 4
-----0-3-----12-15-----
-----0-3-----12-15-----
-----0-2-----12-14-----
-----0-2-----12-14-----
-----0-3-----12-14-----
-----0-3-----12-15-----
```

When you start on lead guitar you'll find this scale pattern EVERYWHERE! I really mean it. Lots of great guitar players never step out of the box but several bad players do not either. It's great for blues and rock but won't be enough for other genres. The good news is that every other scale is built upon the foundation of these five notes.

You can use your pinky to play the notes at the 15<sup>th</sup> fret or the 3<sup>rd</sup> finger, but you'll find that the pinky will help it sound a lot smoother. The 14<sup>th</sup> fret notes can be played with the second or third fingers. When playing this scale you want to use the most comfortable fingering as well as the smoothest.

Play this scale slow and fast. Make up some phrases and try to give that scale a blues feel. You'll find that it's really not hard. Concentrate on just a few notes of the scale to play or play it up and down. Try any of the techniques learned so far on this scale.

Think of it as just another riff to learn, and at the same time give yourself license to do anything you want with it!

After messing with it a little try throwing in the Bb at fret 3 and fret 14 on the G string (also at fret 1 and fret 13 on the A string) within

the same box pattern. Notice how it fits in? You're now playing the **blues scale** with the addition of this one simple note!

I want to avoid theory for this lesson and most of the book. There's plenty to learn about scales and lead guitar but I want you to get this scale under your fingers. It takes work to make a scale sound musical on its own. Play it slow and fast, try to throw in some of your own rhythms and phrases, and play the patterns all across the neck in different positions in the neck.

Notice that the patterns NEVER change, only the key center changes. Playing the pattern at say the 5<sup>th</sup> fret instead of at the open E instantly puts you in the key of A minor. Playing at 2 or 14 on the E string (either one) puts you in F# minor. Don't be afraid to throw in other notes to this scale. You'll be surprised what you find.

If you get more into lead guitar you'll notice that a lot of people bash this scale. Everyone, even Steve Vai and Joe Satriani will never stop playing this scale. Again, these five notes played straight through will get old, but as you learn to play it over different types of music, play it over certain chords, and throw in other notes you'll notice why it's so important. It's not my intention to leave you in the dark, but I don't want you to move too fast. For more info, check out the scale book recommended earlier to learn how to turn this simple scale into literally ANY other scale.

One more quick little technique that I want you to learn is the **tremolo**. Don't confuse this with the whammy bar, as you will hear it called from time to time. Simply alternate pick a note very rapidly and

keep it held down. That's it. For an example, check out Van Halen's "Eruption" around the 0:31 marks, or the song "Miserlou" By Dick Dale made famous by the movie Pulp Fiction.

For reference I want to give you the rest of the box patterns in E minor. Connect them together to get a complete view of this scale across the fretboard. It's very important that you do this on your own.

```

      1 3 1 3 1 3 1 4 1 4   1 3       3 1 3 1   2   2
-----5-7-----5-3-----
-----5-8-----5-3-0-----
-----4-7-----2-0-----
-----5-7-----2 (E) -----
-----5-7 (E) -----
--5-7-----
      1 4   1 4   1 3 1 3 2 4   1 4
-----7-10-----
-----8-10-----
-----7-9 (E) -----
-----7-9-----
---- (E) 7-10-----
--7-10-----
      1 3   1 3   1 4   1 4   1 3   1 3
-----10-12-----
-----10-12-----
----- (E) 9-12-----
-----9-12-----
-----10-12-----
----10-12 (E) -----

```

## ***The Blues***

Along with the commonplace box pattern, many of the techniques for the blues are simple to learn yet full of untapped emotion that really takes effort to master. Just take a look at the simple 12 bar blues shuffle common in songs like Stevie Ray Vaughan's "**Look At Little Sister.**"

```

-----
-----
-----
-----
-2-2-4-0-2-2-4-0---2-2-4-0-2-2-4-0--
-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0---0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0--

```

```

-----
-----
-----
-----2-----0h2-0h2-0h2-0h2-0h2-----2-2-4-4-5-5-4-4---
--2-2-4-0-2-2-4-2-----0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0---
--0-0-0-0-0-0-0-----0-----

```

Now check out the Beatles **“Helter Skelter”** riff at the chorus.

```

-----
-----
-----
-----2-2-4-4-5-4-2-0-----
-0-0-0-0-----5-4-2-0-
-----
-----
-----
-----2-2-4-4-5-4-2-0-----
-0-0-0-0-----5-4-2-0-

```

Led Zeppelin’s **“Rock n’ Roll”** is another typical example.

```

-----
-----
-----2--2-----2--5p2--4-----2--4--2--2--2--4--2--
-0--0--4--0--0-----0--3-----0--0--0--0--0--0--0--
-----
-----
-----2--2-----2--5p2--4-----2--4--2--2--2--4--2--
-0--0--4--0--0-----0--3-----0--0--0--0--0--0--0--
-----
-----
-----2--2-----2--5p2--4-----2--4--2--2--2--4--2--
-0--0--4--0--0-----0--3-----0--0--0--0--0--0--0--

```

Notice how they’re all basically the same riff? Try down picking with these riffs just to hear the difference in sound. I’m not knocking on the blues, but showing how common the blues shuffle is.

Whenever you hear the famous 3 chords that rock players only know how to play they’re referring to the I, IV, and V chords. This is

the common pattern that you'll see in many blues songs in the keys of E, A, and G:

*E – A – E twice then B – A – E to return to the beginning.*  
*A – D – A twice then E – D – A to return again*  
*G – C – G twice then D – C – G*  
*And so on....*

The chords go I – IV – I (as in E – A – E ), and then V – IV – I (as in B – A – E ). The roman numerals are referring to the chords formed from certain notes in a key. The chords in the key of E major for example go, from I – VII: E – F#m – G#m – A – B – C#m – D# diminished. These are not important to remember. Just see how the fourth and fifth notes (A and B respectively) make up the IV and V chords.

That's just a little bit of theory for you and I promise to stop there in order not to over complicate the issue. Try to listen for this harmonic pattern in blues and rock music, and look for them in every key. The blues, like every genre, can be explored deeper in terms of complexity.

Those interested in digging into the blues a little further should check out these artists:

<i>Robert Johnson</i>	<i>Muddy Waters</i>	<i>Buddy Guy</i>	<i>Elmore James</i>
<i>Howlin Wolf</i>	<i>Chuck Berry</i>	<i>BB King</i>	<i>Albert King</i>
<i>Son House</i>	<i>Stevie Ray Vaughan</i>		

*Eric Clapton/ John Mayall's Bluesbreakers / Cream / Derek and the  
Dominos*

## ***Chapter 9***

*"I not only use all the brains that I have, but all that I can borrow." –Woodrow  
Wilson*

There are just a couple of nit-picky things that we haven't covered that will help your playing sound a lot smoother.

One problem many beginners have when switching strings or chords is letting their fingers lift off the fretboard suddenly, thus allowing unwanted chord tones to sneak into your riffs. The best way to solve this problem is really to gain awareness over it, and predict when they come around. Practice either dampening the strings quickly before the changes or train your fingers to not make these sounds by practicing the changes slowly.

A lot of what becoming a good player entails getting the muscle memory to produce a clean sound consistently. It's not really the notes that are the problem but creating the tone. Anyone can learn the notes and forget about the tone.

Another closely related problem is fret noise on acoustic guitars. This is the squeaky sound you will get when switching chords while gliding the fingers lightly across the strings in a horizontal motion. It's quite common in even the most accomplished acoustic players, but it's quite easy to fix.

When you're about to make a chord change, get ready to dampen the string for any noise, and lift the hands off the fretboard into the next chord shape. See? Easy.

***Epic Songs: "Stairway to Heaven", "Hotel California",  
and "One"***

Learning to play songs like these is a huge peak for every player to reach because you feel like you're learning a real piece of music, and not just a repeating riff. I mean I have a lot of fun playing chord patterns and single-note riffs, but in epic songs you can feel them taking you some place.

It can seem intimidating to learn a 6 or 9-minute song, but don't worry. These songs are actually made up of a handful of riffs that can be pieced back together as one. Studying these songs is actually a great lesson in songwriting when you break down the riffs in pieces.

***Remember that you don't have to learn any of these songs if you're not interested, but whatever you do learn how to approach complete songs through these examples. I'm also going to assume that you already have these songs to listen to.***

If you're interested in learning the solos I suggest going to Chapter 10 and using the advice I give there to play them.

**"Hotel California"** is based on two chord progressions which you'll need a capo at the 7<sup>th</sup> fret to play: Em – B7 - D – E – C – G – Am – B7 for the main progression. The tricky part about using a capo is the shapes will be for different chords than you've learned already so make sure you've got the right ones.

When looking at songs like this that have lots of chords, they will break down into a verse or a chorus, and sometimes a variation of the progression. Listen to this song and you'll notice one guitar that strums the chord once and another playing the fingerpicking pattern.

Notice also that the pattern is pretty much the same when

playing each chord in that that both move down the strings from the lowest strings to the highest, which will look something like the tab below. Listen to the timing of the notes and visualize yourself hitting the notes as you change chords.

```

-----0-----|-----2-----|-----0-----|-----0-----|
-----0-----|-----0--2-4---|-----3-----|-----0-----|
--0--0--0--0-2-|--2-----|--2--2--2--2-|--0--0--0--|
--2-----|--1-----|--0-----|--2-----|
-0-----|-----|-----|-----|
-----0-----|-----3-----|-----0-----|-----2-
-----1-----|-----0--0---|-----1-----|-----0-----|
--0--0--0--0-|--0--0--0-|--0--0--0-|--0-2--2-
--2-----2-0h2-|--2-----|--2-----|--2-----|
-3-----|-----3-|-----0-----|-----2-----|
-----|-----|-----|-----|

```

When the progression isn't picked it'll be played with a strumming pattern, like at the first verse and chorus. Later in the song these chords will be played in their barre chord inversions.

And that's it for the rhythm parts! A lot of the song is characterized by Joe Walsh's melodic bluesy lead fills, which I suggest you learn when you get to the lead section. Make it a point to learn these rhythms first.

Now let's talk about "**Stairway to Heaven**". That beginning arpeggiated chord progression is a little involved so try playing it either with just a pick, just fingers, or hybrid picked like Jimmy Page does in the recording. Fingers however will add a nice classical feel to the progressions.

```

-----5-7-----7-|--8-----8-2-----2-|--0-----0-----|-----|
-----5-----5---|--5-----3-----|--1--1--1--1---|--0-1-1-----|
--5-----5---|--5-----2---|--2-----2-|--0-2-2-----|
-7-----6-5---|--5-----4-|--3-----|-----|
-----|-----|-----|-----|
-----|-----|-----|-----|

```

```

-----0-2-----2- | -0-----0----- | -----3-----3- |
-----3----- | -1-----0h1----- | -1-----1---0--- |
-----0-----2----- | -----2-----2----- | -----0-----0--- |
-----2-----0----- | -3----- | -----2----- |
-3----- | -----0---0-2- | -3----- |
----- | -----3----- | ----- |

```

The progression can be broken down as Am – Eaug – C – D – Fmaj7 – Em – A repeated twice, and then C – D – Fmaj7 – Am into the first verse where Plant sings over the first repetition of both progressions. Page will play a few variations through the first verses before getting to “And it makes me wonder” but notice that he’s still playing the same chords despite this.

Those two progressions make up the bulk of difficulties of the song. Watch for the subtle changes, and keep your emphasis on that descending bassline, as it will help you connect the chords together.

You’ll then encounter these two progressions: Am7 – D – Am7 – Em – D – C twice, and then C – G/B – Am – C – G/B – F – Am also twice. Pay attention to the hammer-ons Page throws into the progression.

```

-3---3-3-3--3--0-0- | -2-----2----- | -3--3-3-3--3--0-0--7- | --5---3---5--- |
-1---1-1-1--1--1-3- | -3--3--3--3-0-0- | -1--1-1-1--1--1-1--8- | --7---5---7--- |
-2---2-2-2--2--2-2- | -2-----0-0- | -2--2-2-2--2--2-2--9- | --7---5---7--- |
-2---2-2-2--2--2--- | ---0----- | -2--2-2-2--2--2-2--0- | -----0- |
----- | ----- | ----- | -----0- |
----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |

```

```

----- | ----- | -----0- | --0----- |
-----1-----3- | -0h1-----1----- | -----1-----0- | --1----- |
-----0-----0- | -----2-----2----- | -----0-----0-2- | --2----- |
-----2-----0- | -----2----- | -----2-----0-3- | --2----- |
-0h3-----2----- | -----0-----0-2- | -3-----2-----3- | --0---0-2- |
----- | ----- | -----1- | ----- |

```

The riff right before the solo can be broken down as D – C – D – C.

--2-----0-2--	-3----0-2--3--0-2--	---3-3-2-----
--3-----3-3-3--	-3--3-3-3--3--3-3--	---3-3-3-3-----
--2-----2-2-2--	-2--2-2-2--2--2-2--	---2-2-2-0-----
-----	-0--0-0-0--0--0-0--	---0-0-0-2-----
-----	-----	-----3-----
-----	-----	-----

You want to keep the shape of that D chord even when going into C. When you listen to the song and see the riff you'll notice that it's the 0 (E), 2 (F#), and 3 (G) frets one the E string that make the riff. Let the pinky (4<sup>th</sup> finger) handle the 3 and the middle (2<sup>nd</sup> finger) work the 2. If it feels a little tricky playing those notes with the shape play that single note melody alone before adding it in.

The riff right after the solo is just the barre chords of Am – G – F – G repeated 3 times and then thrown in with single note lines.

The real challenge with this song is just putting it all together and playing it smoothly.

Metallica's "**One**" is made up of five riffs that make up the whole song with fills to link them up and different rhythms for each to throw in some variation. It'll probably take you more practice to remember these changes and play the whole thing together.

The first riff is a melody centered on the 4<sup>th</sup> and open frets of the D string with a bassline going between the 2<sup>nd</sup> fret on the A string and 3<sup>rd</sup> string on the E string.

```

-----
-----
-----
-----0--
----4-----0-- (0) -----4-----0-- (0) -----4-----0-- (0) -----4-----0-- (0) -----
-2-----2-----3-----3-----2-----2-----3-----3-----
-----

```

Play each phrase separately at first then together. The G bass note can be easily thrown in with the middle finger while fretting the rest of the chord like a power chord.

The riff throws in a phrase with the open A on the 5<sup>th</sup> string (after playing the tab above for the second time), repeats the phrase with the G bass note, and ends with the 0 – 2 (B) – 2 (F#) – 2 figure. Letting that open D ring out then muting before the next phrase is important to play it right.

The first and second solos are perfect for a beginner to play, by the way.

The next riff consists of power chords with open notes in this progression: D5 – G – F – E.

-----	-----	-----0-----
-----0h3p0-----0h3p0-----	-----0-----0-----	-----0-----0-----
-----0-7-----0-----4-----4-----0-----	-----0-10-----0-----0-----	-----0-10-----0-----0-----
-----7-----7-----5-----	-----10-----10-----9-----	-----10-----10-----9-----
-----5-----	-----8-----7-----	-----8-----7-----
-----	-----	-----

The rhythm is tricky so play it slowly before speeding it up. Make sure you mute those open notes before changing positions. Also try different combinations of flat-picking and fingerpicking to see what might be more comfortable for you.

The power chord riff is different from the ones we played earlier and is a typical example of a highly rhythmic metal riff.

```

-----
-----
-----
-----2-4-2-----4-2--4-6-4-2-----
-5---0-2-0-5--4--2-0--2-4-2-0--3~-4~-
-3-----3--2-----

```

Try it with just the top melody first and then the power chords so that you can get a feel for the riff. In the song James Hetfield plays this riff just once before going back to the clean open note riff we touched on in the previous paragraph.

Going from clean to distortion will take practice and can be done two ways: turn the volume down low enough for a clean sound while on distortion or use a footswitch to go back and forth.

The octave riff and power chord progressions after the second solo are variations of the chorus riff. Again be aware of the melodies you're playing when learning these riffs.

The famous thrash riff that ends the song is very fun to play when you've really got it done. Metal riffs can be played really well by choking the pick to the point, where the sides are rolling back and forth off the string. If you're doing this right you will only be using a small part of the pick to play.

```
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----2-----2-----2-----2-3--  
-----2-----2-----2-----2-3--  
-0-0-0-0-0-0-----0-0-0-0-0-0-----0-0-0-0-0-0-----0-0-0-0-0-0-----
```

This riff is based on an open E5 chord where the open E is played six times with alternate picking and ends with a downstroke on 22 part of the chord. Those open notes can be broken into two triplets (two 3-note patterns). Identifying rhythms like these before you play them will help you see how you're supposed to be playing the riff.

Pay attention to how this stop-and-start rhythm is outlining a melody. It must be spot on with that triplet rhythm to capture the vibe

of the song. Many metal songs can be very complex when you break them down to 8<sup>th</sup> notes and such things like that, but it's not necessary at all to know this terminology to play the song. If you can tap the rhythm or repeat it in your head you have the ability to put that down in your playing, as long as you're hearing it right.

Once you practice throwing in the fills after the last solo you've got the whole song.

To sum up the conversation on epic songs all you must do is look at them as fun exercises. I wanted to show you how to break down these songs for a couple of reasons: to show how to identify the parts of complex songs, give insight into playing them as they're so popular, and tell how to play complete songs, as most of what we've learned only has about two or three riffs and it's done.

Don't just look at it as advice on how to play these songs, but also how to analyze some music by your self. Everyone will learn their own way and mine's not perfect, but if you've come this far you'll realize how necessary those skills will be.

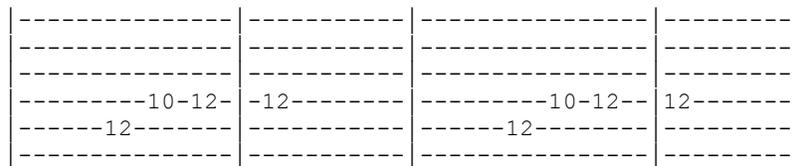
## ***Jim Hendrix***

Yes the all-time greatest player gets a section to himself. No player has escaped his influence after he passed, and this can be noticed simply in the widespread use of distortion common today. More importantly he raised the instrument to something more than

just a tool to accompany the singer with. And even more importantly a breakdown of his style will help you play a lot of difficult guitar music.

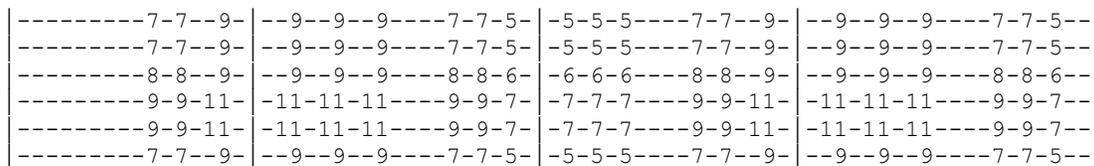
The way he combined rhythm and lead playing makes his songs hard to break down into repeatable riffs. I noticed this when I bought one of his music books and saw no power chords I recognized, plain weird chords, and lead guitar fills scattered across the pages. His music is very intimidating and can be difficult to break down without the right preset attitude.

A couple of songs like “**Fire**” can be played at an absolute beginner’s stage.



The main riff of “**Purple Haze**” can be played too, but at this point I’m going to assume that everyone reading has practiced enough to tackle some harder songs.

This is where memorizing those chord shapes will come in handy. Every book and tab will have the chord symbols above so that you know what Jimi’s playing in. Like in “**All Along the Watchtower**” he’s playing over B – C#m – B – A – B and repeats this progression the entire song.



If you analyze his fills closely you’ll see that they are outlining the chord tones.

Other songs like **“Wait Until Tomorrow”** will have you using a loose R&B strumming style. The chords Jimi’s playing can be viewed as basic chords with a few tones that don’t belong there originally (like the E7#9 chord). You can see this in the A – D progression in the verse of **“Wait Until Tomorrow”**. Many of his songs will be just two progressions at the most.

```

-----5-----5--5-----10--9--7-----
-----5-----x--5--5-----7---7---7--7--10--7--
-----6-----x--6--6-----7---7---7--7--7--7--
-----7-----x-----7---7---7--7--7--7--
---0-----0-----0-----0-----
-----0-----

```

It was his ability to add these chord tones and make nice melodies that made his rhythm style unique. **“Little Wing”** and the beginning of **“Hey Joe”** are typical of this. Little Wing is probably one of his most difficult songs to play, but it becomes easier to play after knowing the chords that he’s outlining. The mutes and broken up chord tones are very intimidating to someone who doesn’t know the chords so if you don’t know them, please learn them now. The whole song consists of this repeated chord progression: Em – Am – G – Am – Em – B – Bb – Am – G – F – C – D – E.

-----x-12\-	-----	-----3h5p3-3-----
-----x-12\-	-----x-x-----5\-	-----3-----3---3- (3) -3-3-----
-----x--x--	-----x-x-----0-----5-5\-	-----0-----0-4h=5--5-4-5-4-----
-----12--	-----x-x-----5--5-7\-	-----5-----
-----x--	-----x-x--0h2--5h7-----	-----
-----12\-	-0-----	-/3-----3-

-----5--5-----	-----8h10p8-----
-----5--5h7-5-----	-----7-----7-----7-7--7--7-7-
-----5h7-5--5-----	-----9-----7-7-7h9-7--7-7-
-----5-7--7-----5h7-----	-----7-----7-7-10-----10-7-
-5-----5h7- (7) -	-0-----

-----9-10-9--7-7-----	-----
-----7-10-7-7h10-7-7-----	-----
-----7--7-7-----7--	-----5-5-5-5-----5-5-5-----
-----9-----9-----8s7-	-----7-9-7-5-5-5-5-7-5-----
-----8-----	-----8-7-----
-7-----7-6-----	-5-----5h7\-

-----5s7-5-----5s1-----	-----1-3p1---0-	-----7---7-7-----	-
-----3s5-3---3-3-1---1-----	-----2-2---2-----	-----7-7---7-7---7-7-	7
-----0-----0-0-0---0---0---	-----2-2-----	-----7-7h9-7-7---7-7-	7
-----5-5s7-5-----5s3-----	-----0h3-----3---	-----5---5---5-----10-7-	9
-----3-----0-----1---1---1-			-

That’s a very long progression! What you have to do is visualize the barre chords as you move through the song, and you’ve got to learn the melody. After plugging in the notes, little by little you’ll start to see that the other three left hand fingers can play a lot of these notes. Learn it piece by piece but take it slowly, and keep the chords in mind. There’s no other way besides simply strumming the chords, which won’t help you play like him.

Chords like G (3X5433) and A (5X7655) will show up in some of his songs like the verse of Purple Haze.

-----8---8---8---8---8---	-----3---3---3---5---5---5---7-p-5---5---
-----7---7---7---7---7---	-----4---4---4---6---6---6---6---6---
-----6---6---6---6---6---	-----5---5---5---7---7---7---7---
-----7---7---7---7---7---	
-----0-----	-----3---3---3---3---5---5---5---5---

Fret the bass notes with your thumb and mute the 5<sup>th</sup> string with the thumb too. It will feel a little funny after fretting chords the other way so ease into it. Once you got that note fretted down you won’t have to worry about using your first finger to barre the chords. Instead give each note to a separate finger and practice strumming the chord, as it is to make sure you’re holding it right before playing the full progression.

Other Hendrix songs like “**Voodoo Child**” and “**Hear My Train A-Comin**” are built on lead fills mixed with a loose strumming of the open E chord.

-----	-----0~~~~~-----
-----	-----

-0---0-2b(4) r2p0-0-----	-0---0---0-2b(4) r2p0x---0--0-----
-2---2-----2-----2-	-2---2---2-----2--2-----
-2---2-----2-----	-2---2---2-----2--2-----
-0---0-----0-0h3b---	-0---0---0-----0--0--3b-

-----	-----
-----	-----
-14b(16) --14--14b(16) r14p12~~~~	---0--0--0-2b(4) r2p0---0-0
-----	14\ -2--2--2-----2-2
-----	---2--2--2-----2-2
-----	---0--0--0-----0-0

It'll be more important to match the feel than getting the notes right. Jimi will stay within the Open E chord position and play all his fills in different spots of the E minor pentatonic scale we talked about earlier. Learn each fill as a separate riff and you'll get to where you'll throw it in with the E chord.

Some of the effects that Hendrix liked to use were Fuzz (basically a variation of distortion), a Univibe pedal (to emulate the rotating Leslie speaker sound), and a Vox wah pedal. Jimi liked to go between clean and distortion a lot and used the effects mostly for lead playing. Listen to the songs that we've discussed so far and you'll start to see how he uses the effects once you have an ear for them.

## **Eddie Van Halen**

I'm going to get tapping out of the way first. This technique broadened everyone's view of the fretboard but in my opinion it's just for flash, if not used musically. It's very amateurish to learn this technique and wank off it so please don't use it unless you don't mind looking foolish. Trust me, this is one of the biggest mistakes the lead guitar players of the 80s made. Use it with caution.

The basic motion is to fret a note with the left hand and take your right hand middle or index finger (try both) and fret a note higher than one at the left hand while on the same string and pull-off. Some players like Eddie use their index but I use the middle so I can keep the pick in place. To get a strong tapped note tap it strong enough to where it's like completing a huge hammer-on and then pull off clean enough to go back to that fretted note.

The tapping solo at the end of "**Eruption**" is an easy example of the technique believe it or not. In this song the tapping pull-offs to the lower fretted note and then hammers-on to a higher note with the left hand. Randy Rhoads liked to change up the technique by doing either simple tap pull-offs (14-7) or complete pull-offs (14 – 10 – 7). Stay aware of the subtle changes in tapping technique, and check out the "**Crazy Train**" and "**Mr. Crowley**" solos for great examples of tapping.

Eddie learned a lot from Hendrix's lead fills and combination of rhythm and lead playing. These fills can be broken down to whammy bar scoops and dives, natural harmonics and pinch harmonics, tapping, and solo lines based on pentatonic scales or hybrid patterns Eddie was particular to. Pick scrapes, hand scratches, and slurs were often thrown in to vary his rhythm parts. Learn the lines part by part then mix these techniques with the riffs he's playing.

In addition to his lead playing, Eddie is an accomplished rhythm player too. The big thing to keep in mind when learning his riffs is that they are very precise, that is they aren't left to interpretation like

Hendrix's songs. The song must be played exactly as it is shown. You must also hit each chord or double-stop in a clean upward or downward motion or his chords will appear to be harder than they are.

**“Running With the Devil”** consists of barre chords and inversions (8-7-9 and 10-9-11) that must be played exactly as they are in the tab, unlike many of Hendrix's parts.

```

-----|-----|
--5---7-----x-x-|---7-H-8---10---9-----|
--5---7-----x-x-|---7-H---9---9-----|
--5---7-----x-x-|---7-H-9---11---9-----|
-----|-----|
-----|-----|

```

Simply barre the D chord at the 5<sup>th</sup> position and use your free fingers to lock in the two new notes. Later in the song you'll find these double stops that act as partial chords: (5-4), (4-2), and (2-0). Like the Metallica song they must be approached as tiny melodies that need particular care.

**“Panama”** is a classic song by Van Halen composed of several guitar parts.

```

-----|-----|-----|
---9-----10-----7-|-----9-----10---7-|-----7-----8-----5-|
---9-----9-----8-|-----9-----9---8-|-----7-----7-----6-|
---9-----9-----9-|-----9-----9---9-|-----7-----7-----7-|
---7-7---7-7---7-7---|---7-7---7-7---7---|---7s5---5-5---5-5---|
-----|-----|-----|

```

The first riff must be played with the index finger barreing the 7<sup>th</sup> fret then the 5<sup>th</sup>, when changing positions, while the loose fingers fret the shapes. Remember that emphasis must be put on the highest note or it won't sound right. This will be one of the first riffs you play

where only part of the chord (7) is palm-muted. You will have to practice switching gears between palm muting and pick strums.

The next two riffs will consist of A – C#m – B – A and E – D – A (in open position). Keep paying attention to the top notes, and practice the fills and you'll have the song in no time. (The rest of the song can be broken down using techniques from the Hendrix section)

Eddie's tone is one of the most sought after among many guitarists out there. Many have made it their mission to have all the same equipment as him, and even seek out the same people that worked on his stuff. The truth is that a lot of a guitarist's tone comes partly from this, partly from technique, and the rest from their personality. Although there are a few keys to his sound:

- A guitar with a Stratocaster body, single humbucker pickup, and a Floyd Rose tremolo system. Many companies like Ibanez and Jackson scrambled to create these guitars after Eddie arrived.
- A tube-driven amp like a Marshall JCM 800 or his Peavey 5150.
- The MXR Phaser, MXR Flanger, and Echoplex pedals are all he used in the old days, and really still uses today.

### ***End Note***

Studying these two titans of the electric guitar and learning to break down any player's style are the two things I want you to take away from this lesson. These are two of the most influential players out there, but many will disagree and think someone else is more

important. It wasn't my goal to set them up as gods. I'd do a section on every one of the greats (and probably will eventually) but for brevity's sake I'm only doing these two. Some player's tabs and gear info won't exist, but with the Internet it's now possible to put together every piece of the puzzle for even the most obscure players.

## ***Chapter 10***

*"Do your own thinking independently. Be the chess player, not the chess piece."*

*–Ralph Charrell*

I hope you noticed a few ways to emulate your favorite guitarists in the last lesson. Perfect imitation will always be a little out of reach for the most part, as the ability to play any riff will depend on your technique and individual personality. Van Halen will always sound like himself no matter what gear he plays through and that's true for every player. Jerry Cantrell of Alice in Chains always talked

about how his tone came from his fingers and not really the gear. The point I'm making is that you shouldn't get too caught up trying to get another player's tone. Create your own!

Here are a couple of factors to clarify the equipment process a little:

- What picks and strings do they use? How heavy or light does your favorite player go? Don't worry so much about the brand as the gauges and thickness.
- What's the type of amp and brand they use? Tube amps define classic rock while modern alt rock is dominated mostly by solid state. Some players use a hybrid amp that has both tube and solid-state amp qualities. Consider all of this especially when looking at older equipment.
- What guitar do they play? This is the big one and it can be broken down by more than just the brand. Consider the body style (Stratocaster, Les Paul, etc.), type of wood (ash, mahogany), fretboard (maple, rosewood, ebony), pickups (single-coil, humbucker), and the bridge (fixed or floyd-rose). The guitar's construction is important as well so look at whether it's a solid-body or semi-hollow and if it comes with a bolt-on neck or neck-through construction.
- What effects do they use? There are tons out there but you can basically identify them by quality, brand, intended use, and modification. The effects used in your favorite songs will vary throughout even the same song.

- Some player's style can even be defined through little things like guitar cables and the types of batteries they use in their effects pedals!

## ***Playing Solos and Learning Licks***

Despite all the tab books, online lessons, and general advice on lead guitar playing I consider the subject to be a very small part of learning guitar, when compared to what you've learned so far. If your desire is to become a lead guitarist then learning all the subtle nuances will be right up your alley. My perspective is that it's necessary to become a well-rounded player. Your rhythm playing and your lead playing need to be equal. Eddie and Jimi are two players that are admired for each type of playing, and why I wanted to focus on them in the last chapter. However you can't forsake lead guitar altogether because it helps you become better at rhythm, and vice versa.

The focus of this chapter will be to give you the tools to analyze and then learn lead guitar parts. I'm going to discuss this topic using the bare minimum amount of theory terms to discuss this, and most of the work will be put to you if you desire to play them. After going over several aspects of lead guitar I'm going to walk you through an easy solo and a harder one to visualize what you'll encounter. At the end of the lesson you'll find a list of easy solos to try.

## ***Breaking Down a Solo***

I view a solo as a string of tiny riffs thrown together. Viewing it in this way will help you see what parts will be easier or harder, and what will take a little bit longer to practice. When you've picked out a solo you'd like to learn, play it on your music player enough to be able to recognize the phrases on the tab. Go through the tab thoroughly until you can see what notes depict which part of the solo.

## ***Solos***

Many famous players will claim that they have no idea what they're playing during a solo, but I haven't found a solo yet that can't be referenced back to the major and minor scales. The reason I taught you all the patterns of the pentatonic box shapes was so that you could start putting them together and familiarize yourself with the fretboard. Another reason is that the minor pentatonic scale is the basis of most rock solos out there, and knowing it makes it easier to learn other scales.

Not every solo can be broken down by the box patterns, but a lot of them can be broken down that way. Finding what key the song is in will help you predict what scale the lead guitarist might play. The solo for "**Crazy Train**" for instance is played with notes from the F# minor scale in different positions. Check out the solo to "**Rock n' Roll**" by Led Zeppelin, and you'll see that the solo is played mostly at the 17<sup>th</sup> fret position in A minor.

Since lots of solos won't be played in minor pentatonic scales I want you to complete a few tasks if you have a scale

book. If you don't have one, go to the website [www.all-guitar-chords.com](http://www.all-guitar-chords.com) where you can look up any chord or scale in any key on command on a virtual fretboard. This site is great for learning arpeggios and new chords, and it was a huge factor in making a visual map of the fretboard for myself.

Now here's what I want you to do:

1. Familiarize yourself with the minor pentatonic scales of A minor, E minor, F# minor, D minor, and B minor as these are the most frequently used in lots of rock guitar solos.
2. Look up the G major pentatonic scale. See how similar it is to the E minor pentatonic scale? The root note is the only difference! It's the same scale except that it starts with G instead of E. Compare A major and F# minor, D major and B minor, C major and A minor, and then F major and D minor. Be aware of their similarities! This is a concept known as the **Relative Major/Minor**.

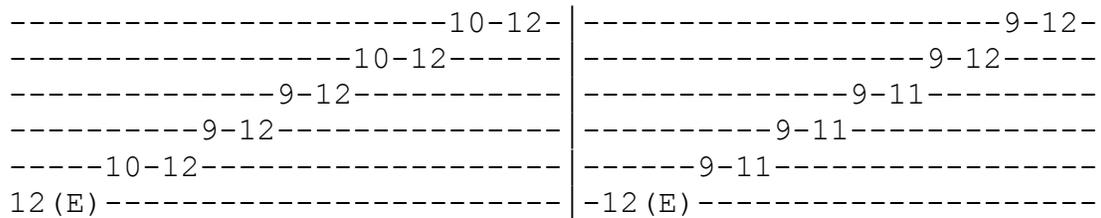
Here's a tab showing the E minor pentatonic scale in open position, and then the G Major:

-----0-----		-----0-3---
-----0-3-----		-----0-3-----
-----0-2-----		-----0-2-----
-----0-2-----		-----0-2-----
-----0-2-----		-----0-2-----
-0 (E) -3-----		-3 (G)-----

3. Another great concept is the **Parallel Major/Minor**. To see this, first make sure you've got the patterns of

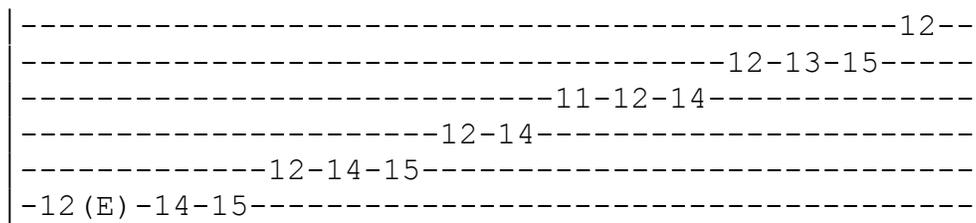
the E minor pentatonic scale down. If you think you got it check out E major pentatonic. All the patterns have moved down four frets, like the box pattern from the 12<sup>th</sup> and to the 9<sup>th</sup> fret. Play that major pentatonic scale and notice the difference in sound. Artists like Dickey Betts, Joe Perry, and Angus Young have utilized this concept to vary their lead playing. Simply borrow notes from the parallel scale to come up with a similar effect. Try this with the keys discussed at step 1.

Here's another example to illustrate this concept. The first scale will be E minor pentatonic at the ninth position, then E major at the same position:



4. Compare the E minor pentatonic scale to the straight up E minor scale. The minor scale is only made up of two more new notes, F# and C. All you need to do to make a minor scale is add those two notes to the pentatonic scale, and this works in every key! F# and C aren't the notes you add to every scale though. It's the positions where they show up in the patterns that you must remember. Try it out, and notice the places where you'd throw in these notes. Do the same with the major scale in various keys.

Yet another example to show where these notes occur in the very common E minor pentatonic scale at the 12<sup>th</sup> position:



5. The modes are a concept that's been VERY VERY overcomplicated. They are nothing more than modified major or minor scales. The Dorian, Phrygian, Aeolian, and Locrian modes can be thought of as modified minor scales (by the way, Aeolian is just the relative minor scale you learned in step 2). The Lydian and Mixolydian modes are modified major scales (notice that these are the scales that start on the IV and V notes). Occasionally you'll encounter the word "Ionian" which is just a fancy word for the major scale.

I'm only discussing modes so that you can be aware of them. Discussing them any further would make it necessary to discuss complex theory terms. Just compare a major mode to a major scale and see the differences for yourself. Except for Locrian (which has two new notes) the other modes will differ by just one note to their respective scale. Memorize the differences for yourself while I give an example of what I've shown. Watch how they differ from the original scale and you'll get the simple way to understand this concept.

I'm using the unusual scale (for the guitar anyway) of Eb Major just to prove how this concept works in all keys. Use this scale as a reference to the different modes by seeing how each mode starts on a different scale degree, signified by the number in parentheses beside the scale name, like (6).

Eb Major Scale Eb F G Ab Bb C D  
Aeolian (6) C D Eb F G Ab Bb

The Aeolian is the relative minor scale starting on the sixth (6) note degree in the Eb major scale. Every scale has a relative major or minor scale.

F Dorian (2) F G Ab Bb C **D** Eb  
F Minor F G Ab Bb C Db Eb

The difference between the two will always be that sixth note.

G Phrygian (3) G **Ab** Bb C D Eb F  
G Minor G A Bb C D Eb F

The Phrygian will always have the second note differ from the minor scale.

Ab Lydian (4) Ab Bb C **D** Eb F G  
Ab Major Ab Bb C Db Eb F G

This time it's that fourth note, but just because Lydian is the fourth mode of the Eb major scale doesn't mean that the fourth note is the scale degree that will differ. For instance, even though the 2<sup>nd</sup> mode is F Dorian the scale degree that's being changed is the 6<sup>th</sup> note, and not the "2<sup>nd</sup>" note.

Bb Mixolydian (5) Bb C D Eb F G **Ab**

Bb Major

Bb C D Eb F G A

Watch the seventh note on that one!

D Locrian (7)     D **Eb** F G **Ab** Bb C

D Minor             D E F G A Bb C

The Locrian only differs with the second and fifth notes.

Can you see it? A mode is nothing but altered major and minor scales. I hope you won't be annoyed after I tell you all of this, but you don't have to know any of this! The reason I bring it up is that for some reason guitar focuses on the modes a little too much as tools for lead guitar. After studying books about classical harmony and theory I never heard these funny words mentioned.

The only thing I want you to see after all of this is the importance of the minor and major scales. When you read other lessons and books they'll go off on random tangents about modes from time to time. Look at them as major or minor scales and you'll be able to understand all this theory. Yes, I've been teaching you theory. If you were able to get through all of this you actually have the means to tackle all the most important concepts if you want to.

For now, just apply this to your knowledge of scales that you'll need when breaking down solos. Trust me though; this is really all you need to know about scales. The real practice will be internalizing the different patterns and playing them in different keys. Whenever you want to learn a new scale simply compare them to the original major or minor scale. It will help you if you want to learn new ones while avoiding the need to memorize lots of patterns.

## ***Arpeggios and Sweep Picking***

This concept will help you see some solos beyond the scalar format and into the chord's realm. All you really need to know is a couple of common patterns of minor, major, and diminished arpeggios. After this you'll know plenty to prepare you for solos that include these, but guess what? You already know these arpeggio shapes.

Check them out at the [all-guitar-chords](#) site while I show them here:

### A Major Arpeggio (starting on Low E)

```
|-----5-----|
|-----5-----|
|-----6-----|
|-----7-----|
|-----7-----|
|-5h9-----|
```

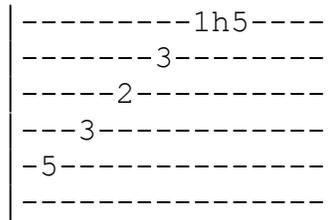
### A Major Arpeggio (starting on the A string)

```
|-----9h12-----|
|-----10-----|
|-----9-----|
|-----11-----|
|-12-----|
|-----|
```

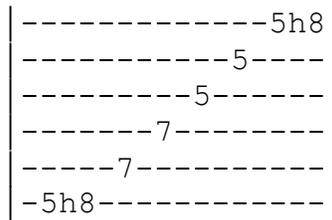
### D Major Arpeggio (starting on the A string)

```
|-----5h10-----|
|-----7-----|
|-----7-----|
|-----7-----|
|-5h9-----|
|-----|
```

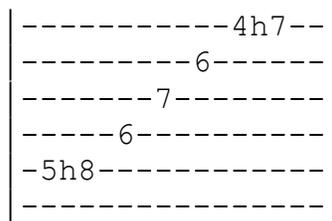
### D Minor Arpeggio (starting on the A string)



### A Minor Arpeggio (starting on the Low E)



### D Diminished 7<sup>th</sup> Arpeggio (starting on the A string)



Except for the diminished chord, you have seen these shapes before. Can you see the D shape? The barre chords? These shapes will obviously work for any position across the neck.

To play these arpeggios you can either pick each note with alternate picking or use **Sweep Picking**. Sweeping is very popular among neo-classical shredders like Yngwie Malmsteen, Jason Becker, and Tony McAlpine. I even saw a guy in an AC/DC cover band using it! It is very difficult to master and once you get to that point it can be abused like tapping.

Check out the solos in “**Hotel California**” and “**Sultans of Swing**” for some work in arpeggios that don’t use sweep picking. Otherwise, here are a few tips to nailing it:

- Think of a sweep as a slower strum. Go up and down slow enough to pick each note, and when coming back up or down avoid hitting any note twice. Simply go between strings like you would an open chord. Don’t alternate pick! Literally sweep the pick across the strings while playing each note of the arpeggio.
- Delegate all the muting to your right hand palm. The same area you would use for palm muting. You’ll want to dampen each string right after picking it so they don’t ring together.
- Sweep just two or three notes in a pattern before attempting the whole thing.
- Make sure you can alternate-pick all the notes cleanly in the pattern before attempting a full sweep of the pattern.
- For the barre-chord shapes you’ll need to “roll” your middle finger across the string to sweep them. Don’t go too fast or the notes will ring together! Hold the note and let go quickly after it’s swept.
- You will have to use your fourth finger in some shapes in order to complete the sweep as smooth as possible.

The best way to get this is lots of practice. There’s really no secret to playing lead guitar in general except lots of mistakes and practice.

Now I want you to look up any arpeggio of your choice and notice how these shapes overlap the scales. Can you see it? Now you know the concept called the **Scale/Chord Relationship**. The notes of the chord pattern come from the scale! Don't just compare an A major arpeggio (A – C# -E) to an A Major scale. Try to find other chords within the scale, like E major or D major within the A major scale. Here's the notes and scale for reference using the key of A major:

A Major Scale = A B C# D E F# G#

E Major Arpeggio = E G# B

D Major Arpeggio = D F# A

B Minor Arpeggio = B D F#

F# minor Arpeggio = F# A C#

Remember that a chord and an arpeggio are the same thing when looking at just the notes and not the shapes.

If you've gotten through scales, modes, and arpeggios and feel like you understand them you've now unlocked the fretboard. Some books I've read take thousands of words to describe these simple concepts and you've understood it in far less than that.

Another great thing about arpeggios is that as long as you're playing them over the corresponding chord you're playing the right notes! This is why they're so popular in lead guitar!

## ***Phrasing***

This is an elusive concept to describe because there's no clear-cut strategy for developing it. No one suddenly has good phrasing but

it can be picked up over time by studying other great phrasers like those in the greats list. Whether you play fast or slow, this is an important concept to grasp.

It can be defined as how well you fit your solo lines into musical time. Some lead players will pay no attention to whether anything fits in the rhythm underneath and will go wild on scales and arpeggios. To avoid this I'm going to give you a few things to study in lead solos to help your own phrasing:

1. Watch where bends and vibrato appear in a solo.
2. How do the lead lines sync with the chord changes?
3. The length of the phrase, whether it's one or twenty notes
4. Fast or slow playing
5. Use of different lead techniques
6. Pay attention to whether some notes are quieter or louder than others. This is referred to as the **timbre** or dynamics of the notes.
7. Are they using scale sequences or more melodic lines?
8. How does the rest of the band contrast with the soloist?

## ***Following the Chords***

Following the chords is a concept that you won't find applied very much in rock guitar. It wasn't until I studied other types of music like country and jazz that I saw what was out there besides scales and arpeggios. Not to knock on those concepts, they're great, but they will only let you see the guitar in one dimension.

The more you study music in general the more you'll find that it's the fundamentals that will make or break a tune. And in this case it's the harmonies, or chord progressions to put it simply. So try and follow the chords when applying your lead guitar techniques. It's simple advice that's hard to practice, but I'll give you a few tips:

1. Know the chords you're playing over. While soloing over them think of changing chords like you would in rhythm playing except you're probably just higher up the neck.
2. This is really optional, but knowing the notes of every chord will help tremendously. If you know the notes of the C, G, D, E, A, B, and F chords and knew the theory behind their construction you can easily think of a note to play during a solo to accent the chord change. I suggest making a list of every single major chord's notes and memorizing them. You'll find that's it actually not that hard and will give you an advantage over lots of lead players out there. If you do the work, you'll enjoy the rewards.
3. Visualize the various chord shapes across the fretboard and how they interlock. This especially will rely on how well you know your fretboard notes and patterns.

If you start to play lead like this instead of strictly in scales I promise that you will never get stuck, ever! The amount of progressions is endless for applying techniques and patterns to. That's why to me there's no difference between lead and rhythm, when it's thought like this. I had to think of the fretboard like this

because I hated backing tracks and got bored with scales. Many players have found this too hard and stayed within the scale shapes I showed you. Dare to go beyond them and you'll be amazed.

All these concepts really make you into a better improviser than a lead guitarist, but they can help you learn the notes a lot easier if you approach a solo with this knowledge. The best guitarists, whether they know so or not, were following the chords, and I've found it brilliant how they always played the right notes. So simply compare the lead lines to the chord it's playing over, which will be shown almost always in tabs and music books. In the rare case that it's not it'll either be a simple progression to crack or a repetition of an earlier one.

## ***Improvising***

This is the application of all the tools you've learned so far. This won't be necessary if you are looking just to play music at home, but in a band setting it's an essential skill. Jamming is essentially taking a chord or riff and soloing over it for a while, and that's basically how to practice improvisation. Once you start learning solos and seeing how they're built you'll start to see more. For now simply enjoy the thrill of playing scales fast or enjoying how the arpeggios sound. Try playing the patterns you've learned over just one chord (like E minor), and go to 2-chord progressions and so on. Also try some of the progressions you learned from songs. The thing about improvising is there's no set way to do it. Just let go and jam dude!

## ***Analyzing a Solo and Music Devices***

Isn't that what we've been doing this whole time? Yeah we have but I want to sum up how you should look at every solo: first the chords and key that it's playing in, the specific rhythms and phrasing used, and the specific notes and whether they're derived from the scale, arpeggios, etc. For a while I just focused on trying to figure out what scales the lead guitarist would play before focusing on the other stuff. Do whatever's the most comfortable for you to learn from a solo.

When learning a solo it's important to see how they're using specific musical devices, but this will vary from player to player. Try to gain knowledge and know-how of the following music devices:

- Legato
- Bends
- Alternate Picking
- Whammy Bar Tricks
- Harmonics
- Tapping
- Scales
- Arpeggios
- Double Stops
- Hybrid Picking
- Intervals
- Sequences

This is indeed a massive over-simplification but every lead guitarist's style can be broken down to using a few of these devices by preference, and these device's uses will vary from style to style.

Do your best to learn a little about each as entire books have been filled to sum up their uses.

## ***Learning Licks***

Approach learning licks just like learning riffs, and a solo as an entire song. However do it with the perspective I've given to you. Know the chord it's playing over and the scale when learning them (if you can identify them, otherwise just play it), as it will make it easier to memorize, and most importantly know how they sound in your mind. Many teachers will say knowing the scale will take out the soul of the music you're learning, but really it's just time management. Avoid making anything harder and more time-consuming than it has to be.

Focus on learning the stuff that grabs your ear, and find a couple of guitarists who do that the best. The purpose of learning licks is really to better know your way around the fretboard and get other player's insight of the fretboard. My advice is to not really worry if your playing is spot-on. Go for about 90% and have fun learning the solo. Let perfectionists worry whether they're playing note for note.

## ***Solo to the Beatles' "Something"***

This classic Beatles song has one of the greatest solos of all time, and it's perfect for a beginning lead guitarist. Go ahead and familiarize yourself with it before we go on if you have the song. The reason I picked this solo is every note is in the right spot and the phrases are easy to sync with the actual song. Most of the solo sits right in the box patterns you learned to make it even easier.

```

-----
-----8-----8b108b10r8-----
-----7H9-----9~-----7H9-----9~-----
-----
-----
-----

```

```

-----8-8-----
-----8h10-8---11--13--13b15r13-17-15-13----/10-----8-8---
-----7B9-----14~-----/9-----
-----
-----

```

```

-----9-8-7--/12-11-10
-----B12-R-10b12r10b12r10p---8-----
-----11-11-----
-----7~-----B9R7-/12-----
-----
-----

```

```

-----12-10-8H10--8---
-----8-----
-----B9R7B9R7B9R75---B9R7B9R7B9R75---B9R7B9R75/9-----
-----
-----

```

```

-----
-----10-----13\10---11~-----12~-----
-----
-----
-----

```

The chords George Harrison is playing over are recycled from the verse, and though it's not necessary to memorize them it may help to see how they fit over the chords. In this solo you can see how the notes follow the barre chord patterns of the implied chords. The progression (C – Cmaj7 – C7 – F – D7 – G – Am – Am maj7 – Am7 – Am6 – F – Eb – G) looks really involved, but if you start to see why each phrase is played over the chord it will open your eyes to the lead guitar concepts taught earlier (particularly following the chords).

One particular difference between this solo and many you'll encounter is that it's not improvised. Ironically, the way to tell this is by whether the guitarist is playing the right notes. The joy of

improvising is riffing on a scale and disregarding the chords. Again this is simply the truth, except in cases where the improviser is following the chords.

Studying solos like these will also help you learn the **Target Note** concept. Just like how you'd visualize the upcoming chord, you want to visualize a note to hit that will accent the chord changes being played over. In this solo, George will immediately go to a single note in a chord like when he changes from F to D. Practice this concept in your improvising and watch how musical your solos become.

### ***“Eruption” by Van Halen***

This solo is the benchmark for nearly every aspiring lead guitarist. It's a thrill to learn and play if you're into this type of soloing, and it will quite literally take you to a new level of playing once you get the notes down. It doesn't follow any implied chord progression and is played like an improvised solo. The single-note legato phrases all fit in the box patterns in A Minor. Eddie uses nearly everything in his bag of tricks from pinch harmonics, unison bends, tapping, pick scrapes, whammy bar dives, tremolo, and repeating licks. The solo can be intimidating to a first time lead guitarist so it's not really my intention for you to learn it, though you can and I did before I was playing for a year (although not very well I admit). As I go through the solo just see how I'm breaking it down in comparison to the full tab.

Some tabs will differ so take note of that when using my descriptions:

1. The toughest parts of the solo will be the repeating licks that look like this: (5h8p5p0), (4h7p5p4-7), and (20p17-19). You'll notice that these provide the illusion of speed and flash, while the notes between are slower or harder to make out.

Practice these figures slowly:

-----	-----	-----
--5h8p5p0--	-----	--20b (22) p17--
-----8-	--4h7p5p4--	-----19-
-----	-----7-	-----
-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----

2. The slower parts that go between must flow into and out of those repeating licks. Pay attention to the bends, palm-mutes, and pinch harmonics Eddie throws in.
3. Remember that the licks are staying within A minor and you'll have an easier time remembering where everything's played. This will really help when you try the faster licks.
4. The Tremolo section can be simplified to just these notes on the high E string: 12 - 16 - 19 - 17 in various combinations, and 12 - 14 - 10 - 12 - 9 - 7 - 5 - 3 - 1 going down the neck. If you play it slow and get a feel for it first, the speed will easily come about.
5. The section after the tremolo part can be identified with the 5h7 parts on the 4<sup>th</sup> string, and the trills on the 3<sup>rd</sup> string being the main part after (although some will have the trills in other places). You can learn it note for note, but if you keep what you play within A minor and focus on hitting those figures in the right spot you'll be close enough.

6. The tapping section can be simplified the same way, but I want you to try it yourself. Use your left hand pinky to make the stretches easier to play. This section can be broken down to chords but it won't help you learn the solo. Keep the entire thing on the B string and notice exactly where the patterns are going.

Every solo can be simplified into chunks of patterns and phrases. If you look at lead guitar with the perspective that you must not play a wrong note and veer from the original it will become tougher than it has to be. Focus on the patterns to practice as well as how the solo is constructed and it will seem very possible to play.

### ***Easy Solos List***

I hope you realize that I don't expect you to embrace the Beatles or Van Halen if you don't already. Just know that those two examples are there to help you break down solos that you want to learn, and give you skills to play more difficult ones later on. Remember that this is simply my way of learning solos and that many famous lead players never paid attention to its construction or key center. They just played. Try their perspective as well and keep an open mind. Every player, good or bad, can help you see more than you can right now.

This is an incomplete list so if there's anything not on here ask your self if it's fast or slow. Slow will obviously be better.

*Nothing Else Matters*

*The Thrill is Gone*

*Whole Lotta Love*

*Them Bones*

<i>Hotel California</i>	<i>Smells Like Teen Spirit</i>
<i>November Rain</i>	<i>Shook Me All Night Long</i>
<i>All Beatles</i>	<i>Bohemian Rhapsody</i>
<i>Comfortably Numb</i>	<i>Time (any Pink Floyd)</i>

## ***Final Note***

Some people reading this are probably disappointed that I went into technical theory and just broke down a couple of solos. I really can feel your pain because when I started playing lead this is all that the books and magazines gave me. There had to be some trick to make my fingers move fast enough to do breathtaking solos! If there was any trick I would tell you, but there are no tricks or magic bullets.

Learning a solo is no different from learning a riff. You gotta play it slow and get a feel for it, then try to play it cleanly, and then put it all together as one. All the same playing issues exist for lead guitar like they did for rhythm guitar.

I will tell you this though. If you take my advice and learn how to break down solos the way I taught you, you'll start to notice how lousy most of the information is out there. Many books will go off on very complicated theory tangents where they show you lots of licks and scales and techniques. If you read enough of those books like I did you'll notice that there isn't really a lot to say about lead guitar except learn the notes. I'm giving you the power to break through all that noise and really learn lead guitar. It's not about the scales or techniques but the soul you put into it. With the knowledge of lead

guitar that you have now you can play solos unlike anyone else if you want to.

So lead guitar really is an insignificant part of playing the instrument if you can relate to my point of view. Practice and patience are the only ways to learn to play this area of guitar and nothing else. Don't get discouraged though as now you have little reason to be intimidated by it!

### ***Review Questions for Chapters 8-10***

Do I understand why the acoustic guitar is a genre by itself?

Can I see the commonalities between rhythm and lead guitar?

How much have I played the pentatonic scales?

Have I played enough blues riffs to get a feel for the genre?

Is there any fret noise that I haven't noticed?

How well can I play complete songs like the epic ones discussed?

Did I look into some of my favorite guitar player's styles to learn from?

Is lead guitar something I want to pursue? If not, how could I adapt these skills to my rhythm playing?

Have I attempted to play any guitar solos?  
Did I reread the discussion on lead guitar to make sure I understood it?

*Nice, you've made it to the last chapter. Be sure to read the final advice because it's really more than a fare thee well.*

*Can you see what I've been trying to instill in you this entire time? I'm doing more than give you a couple of songs to play and tell how to palm mute or whatever. Every chapter in this book has been written to sum up an entire system that, once you've repeated using enough, you can apply to any guitar part that you will encounter to use however you want.*

*Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him his entire life. Have you heard this parable? That's been my goal and hopefully together we have accomplished it.*

*The past three chapters have been focused on summing up how to break down riffs, songs, and guitar styles. This is something that no book I've seen has appropriately focused on and I had to teach this to myself. It is probably the most important skill that you will learn in this entire book. Learning how to be independent in your progress is the most noteworthy goal in playing guitar, as well as in life.*

*One particular note I want to make about lead guitar is that there is an alternative to not using the tools I give you in the last chapter. Instead you will look at each solo like a huge block of notes*

*that have no relationship, which will require meticulous attention if you don't strive to break it down. I guarantee you that this is why many scurry away from learning how to solo or develop themselves as a player. Don't become intimidated by all the notes. It's better to take the time to repeat my instructions and eventually internalize these tools than to give it up for good because you think it will never click. Think about it. You'll either get it eventually (and probably in short time) or never. Never is a longer time than eventually. Don't settle for never.*

## ***Final Advice***



*“Truly there would be reason to go mad were it not for music.” – Peter Tchaikovsky*

Whether you took just a couple of lessons to heart or read all the way through, I want to congratulate you! Following through with your desire to learn anything is demanding and time-consuming. It's a very worthy goal for anyone to accomplish and you should be proud of yourself. You've got the ability to move forward and play anything you want on the guitar.

This knowledge took me seven years to accumulate and sharpen, and I'm pretty sure I acquired it through a passionate love of music and patience, and not talent. I don't believe in natural talent at all. There's a great player waiting to be unleashed inside everyone. So if you've gotten this far and still feel like you're not “getting it”, it's okay. Like I said, if you're not frustrated from time to time you'll never learn. Go back over the riffs that are bothering you and don't give up till you beat that sucker down! Do this and you'll see how good you'll start to feel about your self.

Once I leave you the guitar will only get more difficult, but the best way to handle anything is to be ready for it. You'll be surprised how simply knowing a little about the techniques I've taught will prepare for the hard stuff. And if you want to know more what you must do is seek out the tough stuff. If you want to know all about fingerpicking go to Chet Atkins. Virtuoso rock solos? Joe Satriani. Pinch Harmonics? Zakk Wylde. Acoustic? Dave Matthews. And on and on. No amount of knowledge will ever forsake the need for practice.

However much time you spend on your technique don't let it affect the need to express yourself. I did this by playing with friends, jamming with other musicians, and writing my own music and lyrics. Besides that music is meant to be heard. Get out there and play it!

Killer technique focuses on the things I talked about already: playing under control, mastering lots of music devices, using correct fingerings, playing in perfect time, sounding out the music clearly, and having the ability to play many genres. That right there is what every virtuoso is obsessed with. For the rest of us, all you have to do is play it close enough to the original not to annoy other people!

One of the last things I want to recommend is that you get into new music. To become a complete musician (or human being) we must be familiar with lots of stuff, even non-guitar oriented music. A lot of great guitar players listen to a lot of this stuff. Yngwie Malmsteen picked up stuff from violin players. Wes Montgomery and Charlie Christian listened to horn players. Tom Morello listened to

techno and hip-hop. You get it. The most important thing is to enjoy the music and never let it become an exercise to get into new music. If I can't "feel" the music, I leave it alone. But I used to be like "This sucks! No solo! Ugh!" and I would toss it aside! Keep an open mind, even if someone recommends Justin Bieber....

And I'm sorry if the tone of this book seemed a little dry at times. There are only so many jokes I can make about the G string.

### ***Checklist For Learning New Songs***

This checklist will only help if you've read the entire book, but will be priceless if you know how to use it. It will make you see how everything we learned can be applied to any song. With this you'll start teaching yourself new things and becoming independent.

- What's the best hand position for this song, riff, solo, chord, etc.?
- Which chords does the song demand to play, and are they right for the song in question?
- Is there a recognizable key, chord shape, or scale pattern that might help me break down a more difficult part?
- What techniques does the song require and how much of it? Any palm muting, harmonics, lead guitar ability, strumming, arpeggiation, etc?
- What picking pattern should I use for this riff? Alternate, fingers, thumb, hybrid, downpick, or a combination of these?
- Can I play this riff any cleaner?

- Is there a way to tweak my amp settings to get the sound the riff demands?
- Am I playing it under control? Do I need to play faster or slower? Can I play it at the song's speed?

These are the questions I ask myself when I'm learning whether it is something really simple or something really hard. It won't be necessary to memorize these because once you perform this process a couple of times it will sink in. Trust me. I'm still using them.

### ***Big Lessons That I Hope You've Learned From My Book***

I haven't been laying my whole view of life that I've gotten from playing guitar, but that's what it teaches you. The guitar teaches you a lot about yourself and the world if you listen to it. I wanted to leave you with some closing thoughts that sum up what I've learned and hope to teach to you.

- Accept the fact that you'll make mistakes
- Play the music that you love
- Stay open to new ideas, perspectives, music, etc.
- It takes time to learn anything worth learning
- Be ready for the chord changes
- Music is meant to be heard by other people
- Don't let those who can't play tell you that you can't
- Learn to slow down
- There's always more than one way to do anything
- Take good care of your guitar
- Pay attention to the time

- If you're going to play, play loud

I wrote this book because I wanted people to learn what's become my passion, music, and I want to thank you for coming to me to learn. Please go to my blog and read my emails, which you'll have unlimited access to, and let me know how your progress is coming. I hope to hear from you soon.

-Matthew King, Play It Loud