

GUITAR PLAYING TIPS

Playing your guitar is not a chore, it's something you enjoy, so when you pick up your guitar think of it as play instead of practice. What's the difference? Nothing really... it just makes the same activity more fun and gives it a more positive spin! Follow these simple but important guidelines to get the most out of your lessons and all the playing you do in between:

- ✓ **PLAY EVERY DAY...** Regular (daily) practice gets you further faster than lots of practice once or twice a week.
- ✓ **SET UP A DESIGNATED PRACTICE AREA...** "Out of Sight, Out of Mind": Have everything you need in a visible and easily accessible area so you are ready to play any time the mood strikes. Get a stand for your guitar and a music stand for your lesson materials.
- ✓ **LISTEN TO MUSIC...** Listen to music you like and listen to it often. Music is what inspires us to do what we do. It's good for developing your musical sense and will actually help you play better. Be an ACTIVE listener. An ACTIVE listener listens on a deeper level. We still enjoy the music but we also hear much more detail (individual instruments and nuances of the recording). A passive listener listens strictly for enjoyment and hears the overall piece of music. To begin developing active listening skills try this exercise: Listen, within the music, specifically to the instrument you play. Try to hear as much of what is being played as possible. Listen also to how it interacts with the other instruments.
- ✓ **LISTEN TO YOURSELF...** Listen carefully to what you are playing and how you are playing it. Be as objective as possible. Listen as though you are listening to someone else play. The little details that you notice (good and bad) will help you shape your playing sessions and give you the most improvement possible. Record yourself playing and then listen back. You will then notice even more about the details of your playing.
- ✓ **FOCUS ON THE DETAILS...** There are no minor details. Every aspect of your playing is important in shaping you as a musician. The more details and techniques you improve on the better your playing will be! It's what separates the GREAT players from the good ones.
- ✓ **DIVIDE & CONQUER...** Work on pieces of music in manageable-sized sections when first learning them. You will improve more quickly on smaller sections than by trying to play a piece from beginning to end right away. It will allow you to focus on the details (as mentioned above). Once you have the parts learned then work on playing the piece all the way through until you have mastered it.
- ✓ **JAM WITH FRIENDS...** Playing with other musicians gives you even more opportunity to play as well as further developing your timing and ability to "lock in" with other musicians (and other instruments). It can really polish your playing and even take it to another level altogether!
- ✓ **TEACH SOMEONE SOMETHING...** Share your musical knowledge with someone else. This helps you to understand things even better! Try explaining a musical concept or teaching a chord to someone you know. It requires you to have a deep understanding of what you do and why you do it.
- ✓ **FIGURE OUT A TUNE...** Try to figure out a simple song, tune or melody. Pick one you are very familiar with. This will assist in developing your "Musical Ear". Start with a single-note "melody" and go from there!
- ✓ **Last but not least... HAVE FUN!** If you are having fun playing, you will progress further and faster. Remember, what some call practice is still actually PLAYING. It's not a chore! The more you play, the better you get & the better you get, the more fun you have. Don't just take my word for it... try it for yourself!