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About the DVD

The DVD video corresponds to lessons in the book and the two are intended to be used together. Watching the valuable demonstrations in the video while following along in the book provides a fun, fast, and well-rounded way to learn the material. There is a video lesson for every example marked with this icon: .

DVD-ROM AUDIO

The DVD also includes MP3 files for every example marked with this icon: . To access these files, place the disc in the DVD drive of your computer.

Windows users: double-click on My Computer, right-click on your DVD drive icon, select Explore, and then double-click on the DVD-ROM Materials folder.

Mac users: double-click on the DVD icon on your desktop, and then double-click on the DVD-ROM Materials folder.

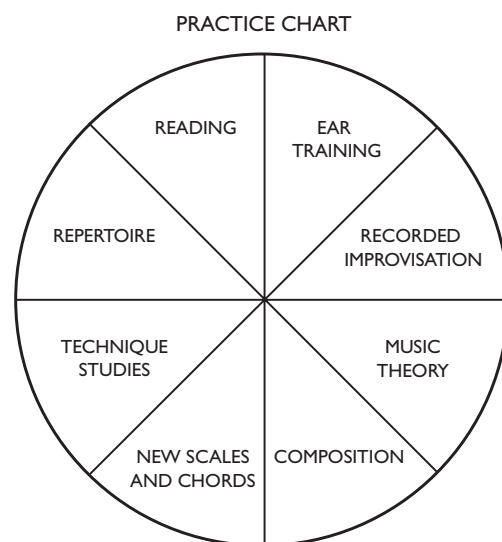


How to Practice

Some of the most commonly asked questions in my classes and clinics have to do with how to practice effectively. To this end I've developed a fun regimen that will help you develop deadly chops. Remember that skills are learned through repetition!

There are eight main areas of study:

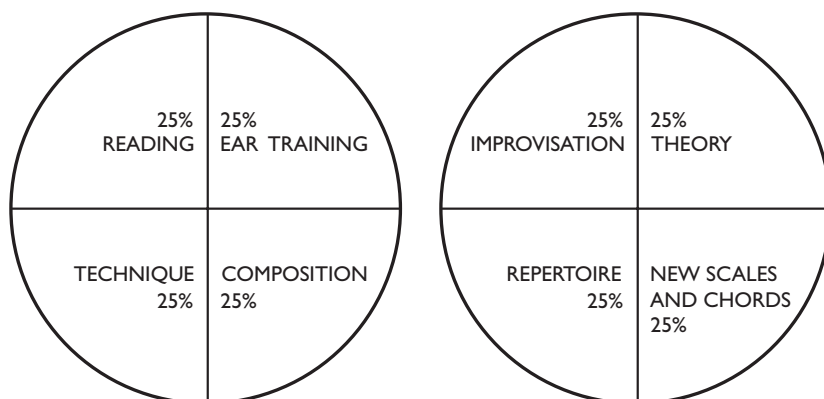
1. **Ear training** – Learn songs and transcribe solos from recordings. Start with the easy stuff and then try progressively harder tunes.
2. **Recorded improvisation** – Always record yourself when you improvise. You can't really hear yourself when you play because you're always thinking ahead. Study the recording for phrasing, vibrato and the coolness factor.
3. **Music theory** – Write scales and chords in different keys from memory.
4. **Composition** – Write something every day, whether it's lyrics or music. This is part craft and part inspiration, but for the sake of both, it needs to be practiced.
5. **New scales and chords** – Try to get comfortable with new fingerings for scales and new voicings for chords. Use them to compose.
6. **Technique studies** – Right-hand (pick and fingerstyle) and left-hand exercises.
7. **Repertoire** – Learn the standards in whatever style you are studying. I can't stress the importance of this enough.
8. **Reading** – Practice reading charts and notation. This is our written language. It's how we communicate!



"Repetition is the mother of skill"

Pick four areas from this list daily and divide the time you have to practice by four. We're all very busy; sometimes you may have twenty minutes to practice, sometimes four hours. No matter the amount of time, divide it into four segments, tackling four of the eight areas each day.

Think of creating a four-section pie chart for each day. For example, here are two charts showing two possible practice days:



Mix and match the areas of study as you please. Change the areas of study daily, and keep a practice log that includes a pie chart for each day so that you can easily see whether you're hitting all the areas.

Another very important thing is to get out and jam! There are chops you'll never get sitting in your room. One session jamming at an open mike, or even with some friends, is worth ten practice sessions at home!

▶ Moving One Note in a Chord

It's amazing what you can come up with by simply moving a single note within a chord one half step up or down. This technique has been used countless times in everything from classical symphonies to jazz and rock tunes. It's a great way to get more movement within a chord progression.

This example shows how beautiful a descending chromatic bass can be.

Example 52

42

C CMaj7 C7 C6

T	0	0	0	0
A	0	0	4	3
B	3	3	3	3
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	4	3
	2	2	2	2
	3	3	3	4

Here's a minor version of the same idea:

Example 53

43

Amin Amin/Maj7/G# Amin7 Amin6

T	5	5	5	5
A	7	6	5	4
B	3	2	1	2
	3	2	1	2
	3	2	1	2
	3	2	1	2
	3	2	1	2

Here's what happens we ascend from the 5th of a chord chromatically:

Example 54

44

D DAug Bmin D7

T	2	2	2	2
A	2	3	4	3
B	0	0	0	0
	2	1	1	1
	3	3	2	2
	0	0	3	4
	0	0	0	0

Here's what happens we descend from the 5th of a chord chromatically:

Example 55

45

D D^b5 Dadd11 D

T	2	2	2	2
A	2	1	0	3
B	0	0	0	4
	2	2	2	1
	3	3	3	2
	0	0	0	3
	0	0	0	4

▶ The Chord-Tone Approach

The *chord-tone approach* is a non-scalar way to improvise over chord changes. Instead of using scales, we use a number of different ways to resolve to the notes of the chord being played. This approach to improvising is great because it doesn't sound "scaly" and it adds color because it sounds a little "outside" (not within the key).

There are five concepts of chord-tone approach we will discuss in this section:

1. Landing on the "cool notes" in the chord
2. Chromatic approach from a whole step below
3. Chromatic approach from a whole step above
4. Chromatic surround
5. The "bebop" approach

The "Cool Note" Concept

In any chord there are certain notes that define the nature of the chord. If you review the theory chapter that starts on page 6, you'll see the only difference between a major chord and a minor chord is the 3rd—the minor chord has a lowered 3rd ($\flat 3$). Obviously, the 3rd is the defining note, and therefore is the most interesting or "cool" note. If I were improvising over an A Minor chord, I would probably resolve my phrase to the C, which is the $\flat 3$ of the chord.

Resolving to the "cool notes" is one of the great secrets of improvising. It's why great guitarists always sound like they know what they're doing. You probably don't want to do this on every phrase, as it would become somewhat predictable. Use it as a color in your palette. The following examples will use minor pentatonic scales to get to the "cool notes." Here is how it sounds to resolve a phrase on the $\flat 3$ (C) of an A Minor chord.

Example 65

56

Amin

3 3 | 3 |

In a 7 chord, it's 3 and $\flat 7$ that define the chord. In A7, that's C \sharp (3) and G ($\flat 7$). (Review the theory chapter starting on page 6 if you're getting a little fuzzy here.) Here's how it sounds if you resolve a phrase to the 3 and $\flat 7$ of an A7 chord.

Example 66

57

A7

4 4 | 3 |

(5) (5) 7 6 5

3 2 |

Practice finding and resolving to the "cool notes" in every chord!

CHAPTER 9

HARP SCALES AND HARMONICS

▶ Harp Scales

One of the most important lessons I've learned is that what's important is not how *much* you play, but rather how *cool* you play! I try to sound unlike a typical guitarist and will try anything to break out of the clichés that give guitar players a bad rap.

One of my favorite tools is to use *harp scales* whenever possible. Harp scales are scales arranged across the strings in such a way as to allow many of the notes to ring over each other. They give the guitar a beautiful ringing sound, much like a piano with the sustain pedal depressed or a harp (hence the name). There are certain keys and tunings that work well with these scales, particularly those with open strings in the key. In this section, we will explore harp scales in standard and D tuning. Eventually, you should try to arrange licks you often play normally in the harp scale format.

I will present the scales in a simple form. The brackets and ties within the scales indicate notes that should ring together, this being the whole point of harp scales. Sometimes this will involve quite a stretch for your fingers. Here's a tip: Place your thumb on the back of the neck halfway between the far points of the stretch, so you're reaching back as well as forwards. This will greatly decrease stress on your hand.

Let's look at some keys that work well for these scales. Here is a harp scale in the key of C Major:

Example 137

122

T
A
B

3 0 7 3 0 7 3 0 7 0 5 3 0 6 3
2 0 4 1 0 4 1 0 4 0 3 1 0 4 1

Here is a harp scale in the key of G Major:

Example 138

123

T
A
B

3 0 7 3 0 7 4 0 7 0 5 3 0 7 3
2 0 4 1 0 4 1 0 4 0 3 1 0 4 1