

Level 1 Week 1 Assignment

First:

Take Self Test #1 as described in video and fill in notes on Test #1 page two.

Assess your need for understanding basic symbols and basic music directives. This may be very new for some, but most of the beginning students have had a little introduction to music somewhere in their school experience.

You need to familiarize yourself with all of the terms and symbols.

If you need more assistance than the book and video afford, you may want to check out the FAQ or write an email to the instructor.

There are more sources for music information and ways of memorizing this info. Most of the things you need to memorize have an exercise that can be done each day. Sometimes it will be imperative that you just read over many times, to memorize certain rules, items such as the Basic Theory for Reading Chord Symbols.

Next: Start by working on the "E" Form Major Scale study. It

should sound like Do, Re, Mi and so on. It is a two octave exercise.

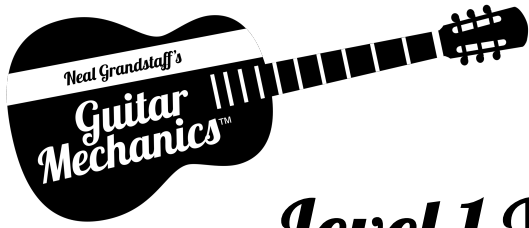
The video will show you the proper right hand and proper left hand technique. So watch carefully and emulate the number of repetitions per practice period each day.

And Finally:

Look at the segment on Right hands technique for strumming. And take Chord Primer#1 and strum as shown in the video, all down strokes, counting each bar 1,2,3,4, while playing 1/4 notes and counting, as described on the music, 1+2+3+4+, while strumming down and up strokes, playing the 1/8 note strum. This is also described in detail on the video segments.

You should try your metronome about the second week and start at about 60 to 70 bpm (beats per minute) playing 1/4 notes. You should be able to make the jury requirements if you stick to the program. And, in no time at all, be strumming your chord cadences at this same set of metronome settings. It will start sounding musical the more you practice, but at first your fingers will have to toughen up.

check out FAQ or contact us by email or set up an evaluation: neal@guitarmechanics.com



Level 1 Week 2 Assignment

First:

This is where you really need to put in the effort.

Make sure you start using your metronome with all exercises. And don't short yourself. DO THE REPS. The scale studies should also move forward to the "A" Form. You will note, in the text, there are two methods of playing this scale study. The video shows this as well. The first one you ascend and descend shifting on the forth finger through the first to the second octave. The second way is to ascend with the first, or "ascending" scale frame and descend with the second or "descending" scale frame shifting twice on your way back down in pitch.

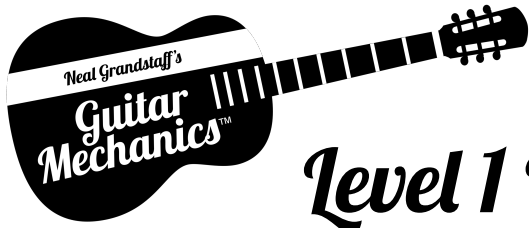
Next:

Take on Chord Primer#1 while using the metronome you may have to set it slower than 60 bpm to make all the changes with out a stop or hesitation. Even as slow as 40 bpm is not bad for starters. Try to make your chord transitions smooth and on time for the count of each measure. Your chordal transitions will get better with more practice on your scales. Believe it or not, the training you give your individual fingers is paramount to making good

“chordal rhythm playing” as well. It is imperative you learn to strum in time with another time source, whether it is a person playing with you or a metronome just keeping a 'clic'. Playing in time is of the essence and it is primary to playing real music and “being the note”.

Next:

Go to half reps on your first scale study but do not stop playing any of the scale studies during this crucial time of the first term. And get used to the metronome. It will be difficult to get to a musical sounding level if you are a real beginner and have never tried to play the guitar before but, many of my first term students who have really applied themselves, have found themselves playing (strumming and singing) through familiar material and songs that they have heard their favorite artists play. By the end of even just one term many of you will have really gained a skill on the instrument just by staying with it. You are, after all, studying a craft with some academics attached, not just an academic subject. So keep practicing. It will get a lot better by the 5th week or so. For all of the beginners who take the course, but have actually been “noodling around” on the guitar for a year or so, this won't be nearly as tough. But, keep with the regime for optimum results, and we will give all the students the resources to look for, and find, simple chord charts with strummable rhythms that we will all be able to play. Be sure to check out other resources on this site.



Level 1 Week 3 Assignment

Your fingers should be feeling the strain and, at about the 5th or 6th week, the callouses should be developing and most of the pain will be over until third term when most of you will start learning to play bar chords. You will probably start thinking you're just not going to get this. "The metronome is too hard to play along with." "My fingers won't get to the chords fast enough and it all seems better when I shut off the metronome." "My hand gets tired and my strum is kind of jagged." GOOD!!!

This is all normal, and it is the beginning of your development so, **STICK WITH IT**. I will be glad to give you some pointers on improving.

First I will tell a short story about diligence in practice routines. The first student who helped me start to compile this method book was David Gill. A second generation graphic artist working for his father's publishing and book creating business in Portland Oregon. I had published the book earlier, 1977 with lots of "shop manual" style hand drawn, hand written stuff (some of which is still in the current version). So, Dave agreed to help and I would take him on as a student. He was about 24 years old and was a

fine graphics man as well as a third degree black belt in the Korean martial art of Karate' (extremely disciplined). He followed my instructions to the max, practicing just his scales and the movement up and down the neck through the Five Chord Forms. (The latter exercise is for 3rd term and beyond) He had played a little in high school. So this very beginner stage some of you are in right now he had past. BUT! He had not been playing recently. As a matter of fact he hadn't played in about three years.

In just three weeks with about an average of 2 hours daily he was able to meet the Third year criteria for scales (see Syllabus for Third Year Program Juries). Now I know he was an exception but I have had people who have gotten over the "Beginner's Hump" and really started making the guitar sound musical no later than the end of the first term, but it takes that PRACTICE COMMITMENT - So enough of the mini-lecture.

Your assignment... should you choose to accept it, will be the easiest of all the scale studies. Take on the "C" Form scale study this week. It is a one octave study so your count remains the same but, you will go up and down, octave to octave in four measures rather than eight, when playing 1/4 notes. Remember to stay with the metronome and gradually move it up in speed by 6 to 10 bpm every five reps or so.

As for your chord cadences; go to Chord Primer #2 and give yourself a new set of changes to play but don't stop practicing Chord Primer #1. You have an easy reference for all the chords in your Text so consult the text reference pages often in the case that the new chord symbols are familiar. Remember too, I am giving you all the same set of instructions. Each individual beginner "can be" at slightly different levels. As a matter of fact I often have beginners that already know the Five Major Chord Forms in open position and some of their, modified to the minor form alterations, but just haven't been able to make the changes smoothly yet. WE ALL NEED PRACTICE. It is truly the only way. So.... look at all of your exercises as aerobics for the left and right hands.

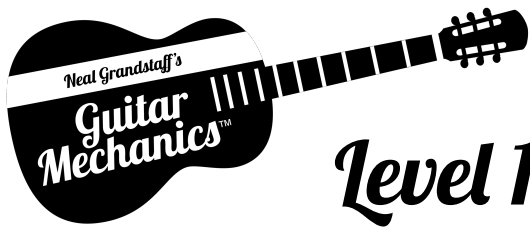
Tips:

1. Don't lean your fingers. Push straight down on the neck and keep them curved.
2. Don't squish them together or bunch them.
3. Keep them aligned with the FOUR FRETS, FOUR FINGERS RULE and use the tips not the pads to push down the strings.
4. This is the time when you must learn to move all your fingers together.

5. Think about the shape of each chord and how it feels in your hand.

6. Try NOT to put your fingers down one at a time instead try to move them smoothly all at once to their exact positions.

If you need further help watch the video segments. There is more to come, so stay on the practice trail. Always feel free to email me for more info. I am glad to help.



Level 1 Week 4 Assignment

Here's something to do, along with practicing:

Take 3 minutes and stand outside near the busiest intersection you can find and listen, without making any noise yourself. Now, when it's possible, find a restaurant or a place where there are a lot of people; MU Commons, a cafeteria, a train or subway station, and take 3 - 5 minutes. Listen to the interaction of the people's sounds with the machine sounds and, the animal sounds - you know - the birds, the dogs, cats, insects, little kids, etc. Can you hear a pulse or a rhythm yet? When you really, really "just listen" to "everything you can hear", you will hear what all musicians strive to stay in time with. THE GROOVE. THE GRAND ORCHESTRA. THE NATURAL METRONOME OF LIFE.

Now:

Take a look at the "G" form scale study and put it into practice this week. You now have 6 weeks left to learn this scale and the last of the scale studies and have all five of them memorized. There are a lot of things happening in your execution of these exercises that will get smoother and better sounding over these next few weeks. Always try singing, humming, or whistling with your scales. This INTERNALIZATION is crucial in the development of your hearing and reproducing pitch and notes that are in tune.

It is part of basic ear training. So COMMIT and START SINGING.

Also:

Add, this week, the Chord Primer #3 to your list of cadences. These song forms that you are working with are simple but they are the building blocks of most of the songs you will learn later in your development. Stay with the tips on the left hand from last week and try to get the metronome setting up to 90 bpm for scales studies and chord studies.

Instructor's Note:

This is an important time to be thinking about creating a video/audio file with your digital cam on your computer that you can email to us for a mid term critique. Or/ Let us know, through email, that you would like to schedule a "video guitar conference" with the instructor. The file should be no longer than 8 minutes and should be as direct as possible. You should play what you have learned so far with the metronome running and audible along with the guitar. You may not have to set the metronome too close to the microphone on your computer because computer mics usually condense the sound nicely. Just keep everything in close proximity and stay in the frame with both hands visible on your computer screen. You may have to make a couple of trial runs but, this process is pretty easy with today's modern computers. As far as the

conference, you need to set that up with Ecampus so be sure by the 5th week you let us know how you plan on proceeding. It is a craft and skill you are learning, so you do need, in all fairness, a watchful, professional eye and critique at this point to really stay on track.

For the accelerated students who really weren't beginners at the start, you may want to take a look at some more music to play right here on our website. So, go to the resource part of our site and I am sure you will be pleased with what you find there in the way of new exercises.

REPS REPS REPS:

You are building a consistent trail on the neck for all of your scale forms and this will eventually turn into an extended scale form running the entire length of the neck. Thus this larger scale form, created by connecting all five forms in a specific pattern, will become the fundamental and precise mechanism that allows you access to the entire realm of the instrument.

GOOD PRACTICING ONE AND ALL.



Level 1 Week 5 Assignment

Ok..... Here's the long and short of it.

If this applies to you, take it to heart, relate to the reality you are faced with, and move forward to a strong practice routine through the next 5 weeks. If not, and you have been diligent continue to do so. I am looking forward to everyone's Midterm Critique. I am always excited to really hear how my students are improving.

Remember Distance Ed students have the advantage of looking at the master instructor on the video over and over until they get it. The onsite student has to get it all in a single 1/2 hour once a week and that's it. Take advantage of your advantage and practice. Most of the students who are taking this course onsite have been practicing 15 min a day 2 days a week, a solid hour 1 day a week, and possibly a 20 or 30 minute "1 time shot" before they had to leave for a lab, or the library, or to go to another study session that requires a certain amount of cramming to make the mid term grade worth sending home.

One thing is for certain, many of the students are having difficulty at this point. So focus on your priority and properly schedule a good time to "be" with the guitar. Keep

the guitar out of the case at all times, when you are at home. If you have two guitars keep them in two locations out of the case so they are easily accessed. OUT OF THE CASE IS THE RULE. It is better to practice 8 times for fifteen minutes than to “not get around to taking it out of the case ‘cuz’ it's a hassle” or “I got too busy to set up my guitar practice area this week”. As a matter of fact you gain more accumulative knowledge with a lot of short bursts of practice than trying to cram it all into the last two days of the week before lesson time. You are studying a craft and a language.

THIS TAKES REPEATED ENGAGEMENT:

The mind set is more consistent if you can practice every day for even 15 or 20 minutes, never missing because you have left your guitar out where every time you walk past it you can pick it up and play it, and, you will still make progress. Now the truth is... if you can put in 20 minutes you can put in a 1/2 hour and if you make your practice time when you get done writing papers on your computer, for instance, it will be a reward to watch the video and stay on track unwinding with the scale studies as an AEROBIC YOGA FOR THE HANDS.

You can, (permission is granted when you have mastered all five scale studies), mute the sound on your TV and still watch programming while you practice. The speed of the

edits on TV is consistent enough to create a kind of visual metronome. All programming has a “pace” and a “pulse” and it is visible if you are doing something rhythmic at the time you are viewing it. I have had a lot of students who have watched sports programming while intensely practicing scales some of them playing 1/8 notes at 168

OK..... Here's the long and short of it. BPM or there about. Fairly brisk tempo, true, but when you reach this level you will get more mileage out of the time you spend practicing.

SO, MAKE IT EASY FOR YOURSELF TO PRACTICE AND YOU WILL PRACTICE.

Obviously there are many kinds and levels of practice so do your best and always push to get up to and be ready for your jury critiques. The only thing a distance Ed teacher worries about is not being there to encourage each student to practice and excel, and really use the talent that is in that person. Your inner voice is what you want to build a vocabulary with so you can speak from that place inside of you in this non verbal, all tonal and rhythmic, realm of music. It's a real rush when you get it right. The reward is out there, so just keep on practicing and it WILL get better.

Now:

Try to go through a minimum number of reps for every

exercise so far assigned. 1st scale study "E" Form, 20 times at each fret, up the neck. 7 frets and back down a total of 280 reps per day. When you add a new scale you drop the reps in half of the previous weeks scale study (10 times @ each fret up and back down 7 frets) so by the third week you should be practicing the first week's scales ("E" Form) 5 times at each fret up and back 7 frets worth. Once a scale study has dropped to 5 times at each fret that number of reps a day should stay the same till the end of the term. I will give you the total run down on number of reps but, by week five the scale study getting the most work should be "D" FORM with the 20 times and 7 frets routine. The "G" Form 10 times each fret by 7 frets up and back. The "C" Form, "A" Form, and "E" Form all 5 reps each at each fret by 7 frets up and back.

Notice Also:

The Chord Primers 1, 2, and 3 should be played daily at least 5 times each and don't forget to read the repeat signs.

Now, a real beginner will take most of the first week just finding their fingers and if you are among this group that's OK. I know by this week (week 5) the true beginner may have memorized all their scale studies but they haven't done the full number of reps every day. That's OK too. Just stay with it and eventually in the next few weeks you will

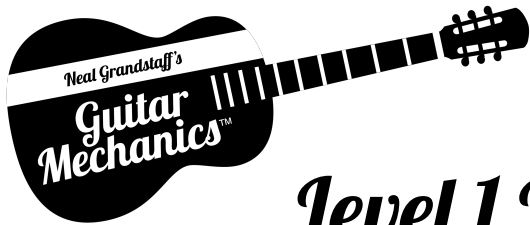
be able to play the exercises at a metronome setting that is fast enough for you to get through the complete suggested number of reps for optimum results and in the time you have allotted yourself to practice. Spend this week tightening up your technique, getting all the scales committed to memory and notice that you are probably starting to memorize your chord cadences from the 3 chord primers. This is also quite desirable. If, by the end of this term, you can jury with out looking at any part of the book while you are doing your performance this will go quite favorably toward your certificate of completion.

Important Note:

Music majors must take a closed book jury from the very first term. Remember you may take this course more than one time. It really is about gaining the skills not so much just passing a test.

If you are already adhering to a strong practice regime. Take advantage of the online site and practice while looking at the PDFs and the videos At the same time.

GOOD LUCK AND KEEP PRACTICING.



Level 1 Week 6 Assignment

Here we are at the 6th week and all I can say is PRACTICE. Now, Keeping your guitar in tune is something that we have taken as a given but, truly being able to “stay in tune” and “play in tune” on a stringed instrument (even one with frets) is at least 3 to 7 years worth of experience. You can help this time factor greatly by learning, from the text, how to tune one string to a note given to you by a tuning fork or a piano that is in proper tune, and then using either the traditional method or the harmonic method of tuning your instrument. It takes a bit of listening to perform this task but it is also essential and basic.

To help, we have a technology that has come along in the last 25 years. Electronic tuners have made a quantum leap beyond the old strobe tuners, and they can be used to help a student learn what an in tune note sounds like. Many of these modern marvels are chromatic (not just a guitar tuner). These chromatic tuners are extremely flexible and a novice should not be without one.

Secondly we have been studying exercises that require certain metronomic speeds to develop your sense of time. Onsite students or music majors can't take lessons without

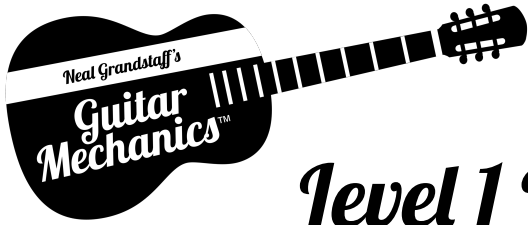
one so be sure you have one or the equivalent. A good drum machine with BPM (beats per minute) settings on it will be a lot of fun and much more flexible in the long run than just the single click type metronome. But either way you need a time creating unit to develop good "relative time" with a given pulse. As a matter of interest, some of the modern drum modules in keyboard units (Casio, Yamaha both make good cheap keyboards with these modules built in) will help you learn a variety of strums and rhythm patterns so a person could learn a ton of different styles while getting your left and right hand facility going through scale studies and Chord Cadences in your text.

This will be your next assignment:

1. All 5 scale studies 5reps at each fret, times 7 frets up and back. Remember this means you play the "E" form at the 3rd fret 5 times then move up to the 4th fret and repeat 5 times and so on until you reach the 10th fret then start back down going to the 9th fret and so on until you get back to the 3rd fret. 70 reps total "A" form 3rd to 10th "C" form and "G" Form 5th to 12 "D" form 2nd to 9th. Do these exercises every day at 3 different metronome settings over the week. Absolute beginners 60bpm 80 bpm 100 bpm 1/4 notes (a note on every click) Beginners with 1-2 years experience 80bpm 100bpm 120bpm 1/4notes. Do this for this week then bring the settings up in 10 point increments each day until you reach 200 - 220 bpm, 1/4 notes.

2. Your 3 Chord Primers need to become memory items this week as well as your scale studies. So play your chord studies both with 1/4 note strums and 1/8 note strums. We will shoot for 80 beats a minute for real Beginners and 100 beats a minute for the 1-2 year beginners. Don't forget, like the scale studies we want to move that bpm forward. Our goal is to play smoothly "without a seam" in the rhythm from 80 bpm up to 120 bpm both 1/4 and 1/8 note strums. My hearty suggestion is to put as much time as you can into this. Some people will make the goals and move into the intermediate level in a matter of a couple terms. Others will take a bit longer but everyone that practices the given material in this method will come out playing the guitar and, the music majors and music education students will be glad they took this fast track approach to the instrument.

Remember you are building a dependable simple major scale trail on the neck and each chord form has a scale study that corresponds with it. Think about how the shape of each chord feels as well as memorizing where your fingers fit in the strings Any questions at this point should be directed through email. Thank you for your participation and hard work. Be patient and diligent with yourself. It will payoff, so stay with it.



Level 1 Week 7 Assignment

You're At Week 7, Test Yourself :

Yes, that's right, I want you to make sure this week you fill out the 1st self test again both pages then set up your metronome and see how fast you can play your scales and chord exercises comfortably and with no buzzes, no seams, no purges, no hesitations and... in time with a setting on the metronome you can feel, sway to, or just tap your foot to.

Then write down this info and start keeping a tally and log of your practice every day through the rest of the term. Many of you, once you start keeping an accurate account, will find you are making progress even though you're not getting in as much time as you thought you were. That's alright, just start keeping track anyway. If you practice 15 minutes write it down. If you tested yourself and you can play all your scale studies at 90 bpm 1/8 notes then write it down and date it. It will help make goal keeping easier. So, keep a log of your practice.

THIS WEEK:

I would also like you to think of 5 songs that YOU think

might be easy enough and accessible enough for you to study and learn. List these and send them in an email. We will research them and I will choose two of them and make that literature available at least in the form of a “study exercise” that will allow for some personal bonding with the material covered.

I will look forward to hearing from you this week on this issue of personal study. So be brave and pick some cool, fun stuff. It is after all your personal, private guitar lesson. Get the most out of it by engaging it. Another step closer to the experience of “being the note”. So, have some fun with it, now that you are starting to see how it works.

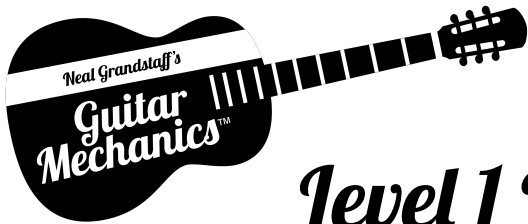
YOUR MISSION:

Besides all of the above, continue to do your aerobics. And, be sure to start a log and tally of your practice.

1. All Scales

2. All Chord Primer Cadences

3. If you haven't already read in “Course Information” the item on Juries please do so this week. Be sure, also to contact us on this issue so we can get your personal critique system up and running.



Level 1 Week 8 Assignment

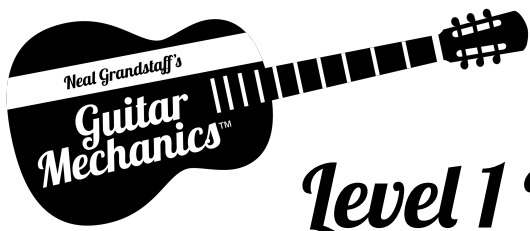
Reminders and Technique Building:

Be sure to work on your jury performance. It's time to get that metronome up to the required bpm according to your syllabus. So put in the reps this week FOR SURE!!!! You'll be glad you did.

Also remember to internalize by making every other pass at your scales one that you sing or hum along with. Once again I will mention this. Singing with your scales will help you internalize what you are learning and this is one of the first steps to "being the note".

Later when you are soloing with other people playing along you will have to have had some ideas internalized to create a basic vocabulary to speak with. A lot of musicians call these little note figures "licks" or "riffs". They are a combination of scales and arpeggiations of scales that make up some of the most basic melodic ideas. Although some of the best melodies are not arpeggiations at all but merely single notes outlining the chord that is being played and the notes are arranged rhythmically more like a person might sing a lyric or read a poem or speak.

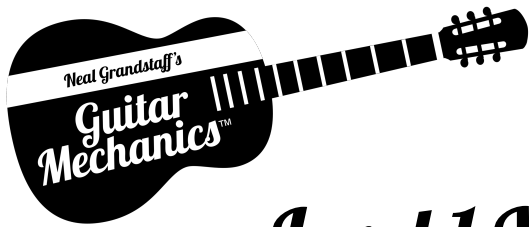
Keep your reps up for your chord studies as well as your scale studies. These next two weeks really count so stay on the practice routine.



Level 1 Week 9 Assignment

Continue your practice of fundamentals and, prepare for your evaluation. By now each of you has received an assessment on the extra curricular songs as well. Out of the five you listed there will be two chosen and your first duty is to learn to strum the rhythm accompaniment. Learn the chord changes just like you would a chord primer cadence. These extra tunes will give you a new focus and you will be able to put to use what you have been working on.

You are expected to do 3 to 5 hours per day no less than 20 hours a week. The progress for a Guitar Mechanics student can be substantial. If you are in need of more input just let us know, through an email, and we will see to it you get an evaluation and a placement commensurate with your abilities accomplishments.



Level 1 Week 10 Assignment

Critique / Evaluation Prep and Continued Study:

1. Have you read all of the lectures in Course Info section of this site and, done all the self tests in the book?
2. Have you discovered your extra text pages for continued study and the lecture on bar chords?
3. Have you prepared for your juries and have you made a decision when to submit them or participate in an online "guitar conference"?
4. Have you considered looking at the next term and some of the intermediate work ahead?
5. Have you worked on your two selected outside music pieces and gotten them memorized with the right rhythm strum and feel?
6. Would you still like to study "being the note"?
7. Have you worked on your listening skills by listening to the environment in 5 different settings and found the pulse?

8. Have you internalized the sound you are trying to make on the guitar by singing or humming or whistling the scales and other studies?

9. Have we answered your questions and do you know how to get response to your questions through Ecampus?

10. Have you been putting in the reps and making the gain?

Remember, you should have a running dialog with your instructor by this point. If you have any questions about resources and continued study, or, availability of "intermediate", "advanced", as well as "by the term" sections of the method for independent study, let us know at Guitarmechanics.com and one of our instructors will be glad to help you.