

## *Level 2 Week 1 Assignment*

Our goals for this term are:

1. Improving scale and chord playing skills, and preparing to meet the criteria of the second term syllabus.
2. Begin working on reading music written on the staff in open position.
3. Developing skills to allow for interplay with others by starting a basic song list. We will begin with the Blues and extend to some free song selections to be made by each individual student.
4. Developing “bar chord” skills and making the “Five Chord Forms of the Neck” a real usable template that will extend your knowledge base for later advanced development in this essential area.

It is important, if you have not completed the first term of this course, that you test and jury with the instructor to be sure you can meet the criteria to start second term. You may find this information by reading the first term syllabus and contacting Mr. Grandstaff through

email or by phone. BE SURE TO SET UP YOUR COMMUNICATION LINK WITH THE INSTRUCTOR RIGHT AWAY. This way you will get the attention you need and will be assured of starting your study at a comfortable level.

### Assignment 1st Week 2nd Term:

We will start with a review of what has come so far. You should be able to play scales as 1/4 notes and 1/8 notes at the rate indicated by the syllabus and the same for the strumming exercises (Chord Primers One, Two, and Three) often referred to as cadences or progressions.

It is crucial that while you continue to practice the fundamentals that you pay particular attention to your left and right hand address.

There will be a tendency for you to bunch your fingers, even into the third term of practicing, SO... keep the left hand open, aligning four fingers-four frets. Also, always be able to play the lowest string with the pinkie no matter where the first finger is.

You can refer to the video section on proper address of both hands. Right hand, keep the thumb out and keep the fingers at a right angle to the strings.

These are essentials to gaining good habits and will prevent developing bad technique.

### 1. REVIEW:

Continue practice regime and increase speed of metronome for scales and chord studies to 125 or 130. Our goal will be to become comfortable at this tempo over your second term development.

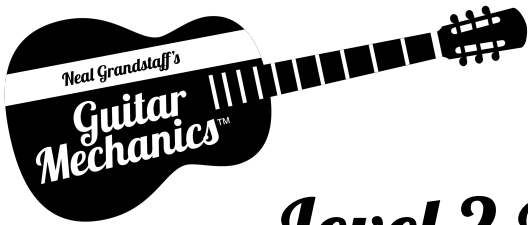
2. Start practice with the Five Chord Forms of the Neck. This exercise requires you do 30 reps per day at 70 bpm for the first week (7 days). Refer to Segment #6 for your video lesson on this set of exercises.

You will have to bar four of the five forms. You will also let each chord ring for 3 counts. On the fourth count of the measure you will move up the next form, strum once, and let ring for 3 counts. Again on the fourth count you will move to the next form and so on until you have moved all the way up and back down through the five forms.

Once this is accomplished, with all the right strings ringing clearly, and your movement is even and in time with your metronome, you will be moved forward into the next level of practicing the "Five Forms" in a universal exercise.

3. Put some time into the Chord Primers. Work on

smooth transitions between chords and seamless rhythm strumming both with 1/4 notes and 1/8 note strumming figures. Refer to video Segment #8 for a review of proper strumming techniques.



## *Level 2 Week 2 Assignment*

I hope you haven't cramped your left hand too much with the "Five Chord Forms" exercise but with time and the right amount of reps you will get stronger and eventually be able to relax the hand a bit.

Read the lecture in 1st term about the left hand and the "extras" lecture on playing bar chords.

The lectures and Segment #6 will help a lot towards making this transition to the intermediate level easier and faster. More practice at this point is crucial so stay with it. The goal is in sight.

1. Try getting all 30 reps in each day for one more week while working on your speed and clarity of strumming. You need to get the metronome setting up to 85 - 100 bpm with the same accuracy and tone as the slower speeds. Put in a day or two with the 70 bpm then step it up 6 to 12 bpm for a couple of days and so on. This will assure you of progress in the right direction.

2. This term you also need to strum through blues #1 at approximately the same tempo as your "Five Chord Forms

Exercise". 70 bpm 1/4 notes (one strum per beat) is a good rule of thumb for a starting point. (Refer to Segment #8 for strumming lesson.)

Then try strumming the exercise with an 1/8 note figure, same tempo. It's a good idea to start with a non stop 4 reps with this exercise and when you build up you bar chord playing, you should do 4 reps 3 to 5 times daily.

#### A NOTE ON BLUES #1:

G13 you will bar at the 3rd fret and fill the chord out with your remaining fingers 3rd finger on the 5th string, 2nd finger on the 3rd string, and 4th finger on the 2nd string as per the diagram above each measure on the music chart "Blues #1".

The C9 and D9 chords use the same fingering at different frets. For C9 the third finger triple blocks the 1st 2nd and 3rd strings (the three high strings) at the 3rd fret. The 2nd finger reaches over the top of the 3rd finger and double blocks the 6th and 5th strings at the 3rd fret. (The two lowest strings) Then the 1st finger curls and comes straight down on the 4th string on the second fret. For D9 you move the whole thing up 2 frets. We will discuss why this is a C9 and a D9 in later lessons. You should spend some time, throughout this term, reading and memorizing the rules of "Chord Symbol Theory" on the page so named in your manual. 3. Bring up the tempo on your scale studies.

If you can play them smoothly and without error, 1/4 notes and 1/8 notes at 70 - 100 bpm then; make your practice range 90 - 120 beats per minute.

Remember to always utilize the scale studies both to improve your left hand speed but also to improve the variety of right hand fingering by using the exercise suggested on "Right Hand Studies", the open position reading page, in your Guitar Mechanics manual.

Example:

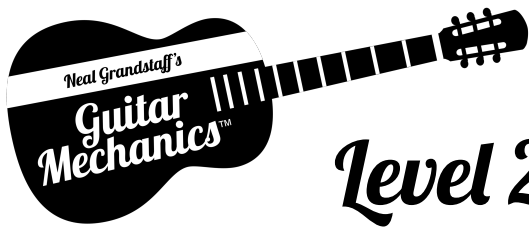
1st set of reps alternate Index and Middle fingers while playing scales

2nd set of reps alt. Middle and Ring fingers

3rd set of reps alt. Index and Ring fingers

If you have any questions about where you should be (what level?) by this time, please contact me right away and we will set up an evaluation.

Keep practicing. It solves nearly every problem.



## *Level 2 Week 3 Assignment*

Here we are at the third week and by this point you should have all the facility you need to really start improving on your use of bar chords. It may seem like balancing several spinning plates on several sticks it is important to always get in a little scale study a little bar chord practice a little and all the while keeping that right hand technique on your priority list. Here's how we stay on the trail without burning out on any one thing but still making steady progress:

1. As soon as you become proficient at your scale studies (all five) you may adjust the reps to 5 reps per fret. The parameters are: Top Speed 120 bpm playing 1/8 notes. (two notes per click) When this is accomplished you may reduce your reps to the 5 rep routine and at this point start working toward metronome settings in the 140 bpm to 170 bpm range. Stay with it. THE BETTER YOUR SCALES ARE THE EASIER YOUR CHORDS WILL BE TO PLAY.

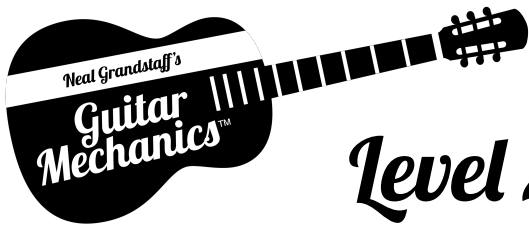
2. Keep working on the Chord Primers 1,2, and 3, again, adjusting the speed at which you are able to perform the exercises smoothly, without hesitations or any "seams" in your rhythm. Your target metronome setting is in the range of 140 bpm to 170 bpm. Practice both 1/4 and 1/8 note strumming patterns in that both skills are important



to keeping good time and “being the note” while playing accompaniment with a singer or other musicians.

3. This week take a look at Segment 4 on the Basic Folk Pick and Travis Picking. This right hand technique will really jump start you into playing a strong accompaniment style whether playing alone or with others. The exercise is self explanatory so start, as always, at 70 bpm working your speed up slowly. Don't get in a rush to play fast. You should be sure of every level you attain. Repeated practice on these basic skills will only improve you. Even though the practice may seem tedious at times have patience with your self and put in the reps. You will find it is time well spent.

4. Keep up the “5 Chord Forms” exercise one more week 30 reps per day and try to get to the target range of 90 to 100 bpm. Remember, video Segment #6 will be of great help (as are all the video segments) so use the reference when you are unsure of how to proceed. Try to practice in front of a mirror so you can observe and critique your own technique. Next week we will start on the other Blues exercises so, stay on the practice trail.



## *Level 2 Week 4 Assignment*

This week I would like to introduce an exercise that requires no more than 8 minutes a day, to start. If you are looking for a strength builder and a facility creating exercise this will help, but, you must refer to the video lesson in Segment #14. The Hammer-ons and Pull-offs section of our video lessons should help you build strength and agility, but this warning: Do not exceed 10 minutes a day and be cautious of how long you go between short rests. DO NOT CRAMP YOUR LEFT HAND.

Instead, like a body builder, work up to it. Read the manual carefully and watch the video. Then start with maybe 5 minutes a day for a few days or spend 3 or 4 minutes a couple of different times during the day working for even sound between notes and good solid rhythm with this exercise. As always start with the bpm at about 60 or 70. Think about tone and rhythm not speed.

Forget about squeezing rubber balls or those spring loaded hand exercisers. You don't learn anything about applying the strength of your hand to the guitar with these music store toys.

Besides, you don't want to practice closing your hand. We

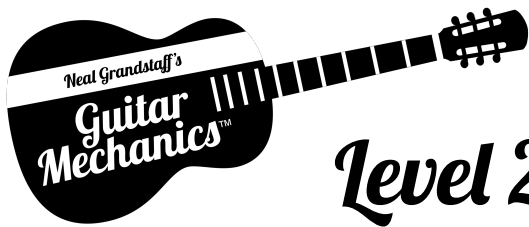
already do that naturally. What you want to practice is pushing straight down on the strings and this exercise will require some real individual finger control.

1. Start adding the hammer-on, pull-offs exercise to your routine. Maintain scale exercise regime.

2. We will reduce the 30 reps per day "Five Chord Forms" exercise to 12 reps per day. With each repetition you move up a half step (one fret) and so on until each chord form has appeared in the open position. Refer to video Segment #6 for the demonstration of this exercise. Also read the manual. It will describe this exercise in detail.

3. You can give the 3 Chord Primers a rest this week but continue with Blues #1. You should try to play 4 reps of this exercise before resting then come back and do 4 more. Somewhere between 3 to 5 times a day to start.

BTW, it would take about 16 reps of this exercise at (120 bpm to 140 bpm) to be equivalent to playing one song at a club, restaurant, coffee house, or concert venue. The average length of a song played in live performance can vary from 4 to 7 minutes. There is something to be said for developing stamina.



## *Level 2 Week 5 Assignment*

Well, it has come time for mid-term evaluation. If you haven't read the lecture under course information form 1st term you might want to give it a read. Remember you have a number of ways to set up an evaluation for mid-term and finals.

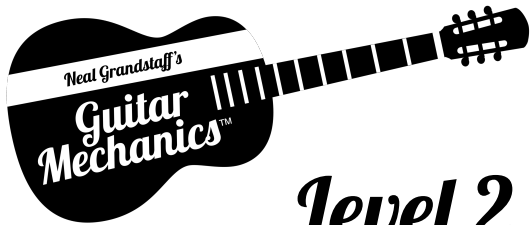
1. You can contact me by phone or email and set up a half hour meeting time via Skype.
  
2. You can find access to a web cam or use your own web cam to make an Mpeg4 file with audio from your own desk top or study area. This performing file should include the tasks and exercises set forth with each individual through our correspondence throughout the term. For example:
  - A. Scales (at tempo)
  
  - B. Chord Primers (at tempo)
  
  - C. 5 Chord Forms Ex. (at tempo)
  
  - D. Any Number of Blues Studies (at tempo) etc.

Each individual will know from our email communications what is expected from him or her at evaluation time

Remember also each student may have a slightly different level in certain specific ways but the general evaluation is over all the material set forth according to the syllabus. There is some flexibility depending on your status as a music major or non music major.

At Distance Ed we would rather hold the “Carrot of Knowledge” in front of you rather than hold “the threat of a bad grade over your head”. Obviously the best grade will be gotten by the students who have put in the reps but there is no demerit for how you decide to do your evaluation whether it is in person or online. We would prefer it to be online.

3. You can set up a time with me (and as many as two other jury members from the music staff at Benton Hall) and do a “LIVE GUITAR CONFERENCE” by using your own web cam set up from your own computer /or/ a friends computer /or/ access a computer at Distance Ed with the video people there. This method is the preferred method but will need some tweaking before it becomes common place. As of this writing, it is groundbreaking technology we would like to bring to each student and we realize not all students have the access yet but it is right around the corner. The proliferation of personal web cams is growing like wild fire. It is only a matter of time before this will be the standard for teaching a “non-academic skills” or “crafts” class online.



## *Level 2 Week 6 Assignment*

1. Continue with the Five Chord Forms exercise. Add, at this point, the musical "Spelling B", playing Chord-Scale-Chord at each position except for open position. This will put you through 12 reps of the Five Chord Forms moving up in 1/2 steps at each rep until all five forms have appeared in open position and you have arrived back at "E" major in open position. Look to your video segment for a demonstration of this technique for adding the scales to the proper chord form. In this way you will start associating the right scale with the right chord form all the way up the neck.

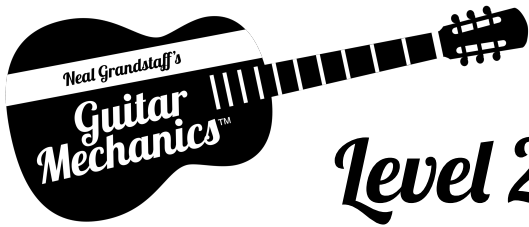
2. Also continue the discreet practice of all five scale forms and work your way up to a goal of 1/8 notes @ 110 -120 bpm. Again, each person will develop at different rates so stay with your daily reps and you will get to the goal by term's end.

3. I would like for you to Look at the new segment for this term having to do with the standard "Folk Picking" or what is referred to as "Travis Picking." This style of finger picking is named for Merle Travis, guitar master of the middle of the 20th century and mentor to Chet Atkins, another guitar giant of the last century. This extended right hand picking

technique study will help facilitate playing all manners of folk, country, blues, and popular music styles from the last 60 or so years. It's great fun, once you get the hang of it, and it allows the student practitioner to develop a broader style range that goes beyond strumming.

4. And finally, please take the time to go out this week and listen to some live music in your area or travel to a town that has some entertainment options and go observe some live music. When you get home I would like you to email me a critique of what you have heard and seen. How many musicians, instrumentation, how you liked or disliked what you heard and saw, type of venue, crowd reaction, and whether or not you felt like wanting to participate. This field study and listening exercise is a great way of focusing on what you want from your musical study and experience.

5. Don't forget the basic reading skills on the Right Hand studies page just following the Segovian Right Hand page in the book. I would like to have everyone reading through this exercise @ 90 bpm 1/4 note as a goal tempo for this term. The etudes on the following two pages we will tackle in Spring Term (3rd term). NEXT WEEK.....MORE BLUES.



## *Level 2 Week 7 Assignment*

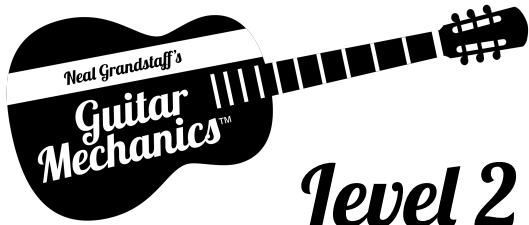
As I promised, this week we will spend working on the blues. Blues #1, of course is our first concern but it would be a real jump for most of the 2nd term students to get through and memorize Blues #2 and #3 before the end of this term and no later than the end of spring term.

This way you can continue to track your progress much the way a Music Major would and I believe it is a good idea to always try to stretch yourself a little. The reward gets better and better with the next levels of proficiency.

1. Continue your Scale and Five Chord Forms practice along with the Travis Picking. Try to put in about 20 minutes to a half an hour, but no more, on these exercises. Week 8 or 9 you can get intense with these studies but for now just maintain your reps as you have time.

2. Concentrate this week's efforts on the Blues section in the back of your books and you should once again look to the video resource for guidance in these exercises. I really like getting a dialog going with each of you so don't be shy about asking questions through email or phone. Stay on the practice trail and get those reps in every day. You will reach the goals you want to attain by diligence and focus.





## *Level 2 Week 8 Assignment*

This is where it gets tricky:

You have a wide variety of things to focus on and practice. You need the fundamentals but the Travis picking and the Blues are so much more fun that the scales and the chord forms practice that the latter takes a back seat.

Here's the deal:

If you have gotten your metronome settings up to a respectable 110-140 bpm your exercises will take much less time than when you first started and should be more of a warm up, aerobics type of mind set. It should no longer take all of your practice time to get through the scales and chord stuff, so check yourself on this.

Time it and see how long it takes to do:

1. Scales, 2 reps @ each fret (90-140 bpm, you chose) through the frets indicated for each scale form (for example, E form frets 3-10 and back) all 5 scale studies.

Time it.

2. Five Chord Forms study. The twelve reps version with the scales include at each appropriate chord position but definitely @ 90 bpm and hopefully @ 110-120 bpm.

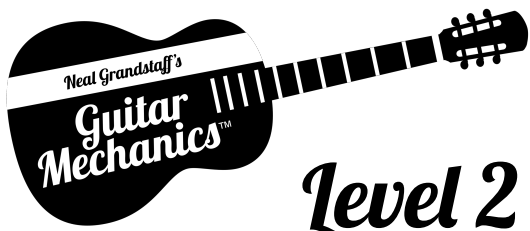
Remember in this exercise always play the scales in 1/8

notes. Time it. This is, in a way, a kind of self test, so be diligent. It is just as important, at this point of your development, that you learn how to practice as it is to decide what you to practice. The songs and cadences are not as crucial as getting the proper amount of reps on the essential fundamentals without losing the inspiration for playing the instrument.

So..... this week:

3. Pick some of your favorite songs on tape or CD and spend at least 30 minutes a day listening to these songs. This listening exercise is very important. Next term we will start building an "outside the book" song list that each of you will have as an individual project. Hopefully this repertoire building will work into playing with others in a private and eventually in a public setting. It starts with practicing with a friend at home and works into playing and singing in a coffee house or at church or at picnics and friendly gatherings. It really is a lot of fun and can be a very good social tool for making long term playing partners and friends.

Who knows? You may even start playing gigs. WAY COOL.

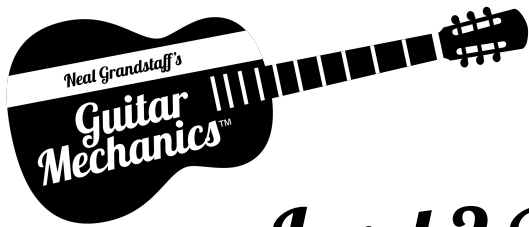


## *Level 2 Week 9 Assignment*

CONTACT ME THIS WEEK FOR AN EVALUATION, BY LIVE WEB CAM, BY WEB CAM CREATED AUDIO VISUAL MPEG FILE SENT TO ME FOR CRITIQUE.

This week:

1. All exercises according to syllabus requirements. Test your self before we get together. Scale Forms and Chord Forms and Chord Cadences including the Blues studies. Some of you may have some individual things you are concentrating on for your final so refer to this term's past email correspondence as to what we decided was best for each of you. Be assured, everyone will have to play there scales and chords at the requirements of the syllabus.
2. Get plenty of practice these last weeks and if you take a break for a term before continuing be sure to keep up a good practice routine. Playing guitar is an acquired skill and a craft that takes a constant maintenance by practicing daily. Good luck and I will see you all during finals week.
3. One last thing this week. This is the time, so please, if you have any questions be sure to email me or call one of the contact numbers on the cover of your books. Thanks again for being part of the program and practicing so much.



## *Level 2 Week 10 Assignment*

While you're preparing for your final evaluation and getting ready for next term:

1. Take a look at the video (Segment #14) on Hammer-ons and Pull-offs once again and review this simple muscle building exercise. Try to incorporate this into your daily routine. It really helps individual finger control.
2. Check out the "Tuning with Harmonics" part of this segment and when we get together for your final, either on the web or in person, we will discuss this technique for playing and tuning with harmonics.

Thanks once again for your participation and I will be looking for all of you next term.

Special Note:

The list of video segments should appear under "Course Information" in 1st and 2nd term website pages.

If you would like more of this resource or more information about future study with Guitar Mechanics, please, feel free to contact us. We will be glad to get back to you through email or Skype.