



Secrets to Success Teaching Yourself Guitar

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[GuitarSuccessNow](#)

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Message from the author

Hello. I'm Ken Radwell, and when I first started trying to teach myself Guitar I found it was a real struggle. My first attempt failed, but when I tried again some years later, I used a number of methods to help me stay motivated and on track.

I know that many others struggle to learn guitar by themselves. I also know that many lose their way and give up. I don't want that to be you, so I decided to share the methods I used inside this report.

I really hope these methods prove helpful to you.

Wishing you all the best for your guitar playing – and keep practicing!

Ken Radwell

INTRODUCTION

During the first few weeks after I started my first job I went to a lunch time leaving celebration for one of the staff. We all assembled in one corner of the bar. The manager had brought along his acoustic guitar and once everyone had had a drink and was feeling relaxed, he slung his guitar strap around his neck and began to play. Some people joined in the singing and we all had a great time. I was really impressed by how he could play anything anyone could think of.

That lunch time session stayed in my mind for a long time, and eventually I decided that I would love to be able to play like that. I rushed off and bought myself a cheap acoustic guitar. As this was my first job and I wasn't earning much, I couldn't afford proper guitar lessons. Instead, I bought a guitar tuition book from my local music store. I struggled with this and managed to learn a few chords. Learning guitar was proving more difficult than I thought. The manager had made it look so easy. I kept trying, but my progress was really slow. Eventually I lost interest and gave up.

The truth is that without someone to teach you, it is difficult to teach yourself and stay motivated. There are many self teach courses and books available for guitar, but unless you have the self discipline to stick at it, your chances of success are slim.

Imagine if you could pick up your guitar and play almost any song you could think of. How good would that feel? Is it really possible to get to this stage teaching yourself?

It will take time and effort, but it is definitely possible.

There is so much rush in our lives today. Everything needs to be done now. We

are geared to instant gratification. If we want to hear a piece of music, we can download a track from the internet. You can get a burger in the time it takes to blink! Heck - there is even speed dating, speed reading etc.. So many aspects of our lives today are available almost instantly. Our minds have been conditioned to believe that if we want something, we can usually get it quickly.

Unfortunately, to develop a skill is not instant. It requires patience, practice and determination. For many people, and it is not their fault, the level of commitment required often proves too great.

Whatever level of commitment you have, I hope that the methods described in this report will help keep you on track until you reach the level of skill you desire.

THE LEARNING TRAP

What do you think stands between you and playing the guitar? Lack of skill? Can't read music? Wrong! You can learn a skill or learn to read music. The only thing standing between you and Guitar Success is MOTIVATION.

OK, so you're really keen now. You have bought a Guitar and are excited about being able to play it, but the reality is that once you start trying to play, you will hit a number of difficulties, and depending on the level of passion you have about playing the Guitar, your motivation will weaken.

When you receive tuition from a professional teacher you get help when you are struggling. You are also more motivated as your teacher will have expectations of you and you will not want to let them down. But when you are teaching yourself, as soon as you experience problems, your motivation is under attack. With no one to help you and no one to show what you have achieved practicing, you will be less inclined to push yourself. Time passes and although you keep trying, you see little progress. You become disappointed and less inclined to practice until eventually you give up.

Your dream is lost!

HOW TO BREAK THE LEARNING TRAP

The key to success learning Guitar by yourself is to maintain your level of motivation. There are a number of ways that you can do this.

KNOW THYSELF

OK now it's time for a bit of honesty. You need to understand just how great your own level of desire to learn Guitar is.

Why are you learning Guitar?

- ◆ Do you want to be a play in a Band, start your own Band, or even be a Rock Star?
- ◆ Do you want to play in a local music group?
- ◆ Do you want to play for your own pleasure - family, friends?
- ◆ How passionately do you want this skill?

The level of desire will affect your ability to cope with the difficulties you will face. There is nothing wrong with having an average level of desire. Not everyone wants to be a mega rock star. Many people just want to be able to play for the pleasure they get playing. But it is good to be honest with yourself about your level of desire. This will give you an idea from the start what level of risk there is to your motivation.

In recognising this you will be pre armed for the battle ahead. You can prepare, using the methods described in this report, to confront the issues that may lay ahead as you learn.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFESTYLE

Do you have a regular pattern to your day or is your day usually unpredictable?

For example if you have a regular job with set hours, you will be able to set aside a regular time for practice during your free time. But, if you are in a job that involves irregular hours or travelling, being able to schedule practice times becomes more difficult.

Do you have an environment in which practice will be possible, or would there be conflicts within the household regarding times that you can practice? When you're starting out, you're not always going to sound that great! Could this be an issue that may prevent your progress?

Do you have sufficient free time to have a serious go at this? Would you have to sacrifice something to be able to make the time, and is your desire to learn greater than the sacrifice? Will any sacrifice you make, over time, regain it's importance and start to steal time from your learning schedule?

Take some time to consider where and when you will work at your new skill and think about any possible factors that may interfere with your plan. It is good to be aware of any possible problems before you start, so that you have some time to think of ways to deal with them. You may not be able to deal with all issues you have, but at least you will understand that they will have an effect on your ability to progress. Don't become discouraged. You will get where you want to be - it will just take a little longer.

CHOICE OF LEARNING MATERIALS

There are a number of methods available for self teaching Guitar - Books, DVD, Computer based online courses, Computer based software courses to download.

Choosing the right course is an important and difficult task. The easiest place to start is the internet. A search for “Learning Guitar” will reveal a bewildering number of sites that offer both free and paid Guitar lessons. You could also search Amazon to see what books are available. With so many options, how do you choose?

First you should consider your level of commitment and your budget. If you are a hobby guitarist, you may not want to spend hundreds on a comprehensive high quality course that takes you to high levels of skill. If you are planning to play as a performer, amateur or professional, then you will be looking to get as much out of your course as possible so cost may not be such a factor.

Once you have decided what level of skill/cost you feel comfortable with, you can then aim your search at either the high end or more modest levels.

Think about how you like to learn. Books are a good way to learn, especially the theory side as you can study your book anywhere, but they are not so good at demonstrating playing techniques as they have to rely on photographs or diagrams. To overcome this some book based courses include a CD-ROM, or DVD. This adds a visual element that makes the learning method more complete.

DVD based courses, often with a supporting booklet or notes, provide a strong visual learning method, which many people prefer.

If you opt for a computer based course how easy will it be for you to play Guitar in front of your PC. If you have a laptop with wireless broadband, you can be more flexible about where you learn. If your PC is in an awkward location, then a book or DVD based course might be better.

Getting some interactivity into your learning is a great way to speed up your progress. Online and computer software based course can offer this, so be sure to check out some of these courses. The interactivity offered within these courses is often in the form of a game. This is a bonus over Book and DVD courses as the interactivity provides a fun and quick way to develop your skills.

One popular course that contains some interactive learning games is [Jamorama](#). This course contains interactive games to improve your recognition of chords when played and also your ability to read musical notes.

Try to get a view of some of the course materials. Many books listed on Amazon have a "view inside the book" facility, or you can hunt down the book at your local book store. Some Computer sourced courses offer free trial mini lessons so that you get a feel for the course before parting with your cash.

Spend some time looking at the various courses available and make a short list of your favourites. You should then try to find out what others think of these courses. Try looking at some of the review sites that appear when you search for "learn guitar". Another good way to get some info is to visit guitar forums, and do a search within the forum for the courses you are interested in and see what comments have been posted.

After your research, you will usually find that there is one or more courses that you are drawn towards. Go with your gut feel. If you have been happy with the examples of course materials you have seen, the likely hood is that the full course materials will also work well for you.

Be prepared to use more than one course. Treat the first course that you take as your main resource, but consider supporting it with another course or book. A book is a useful supporting option. You can take it with you wherever you go and study it even if you don't have your guitar with you. You will often find that if you become stuck on a certain aspect of your main course, the same issue in a secondary course or book may describe the issue in a different way that helps to clarify it for you.

There are many good courses to choose from, but if you can find one with some element of interactivity, you will gain an advantage in the speed at which you learn.

Choosing the right course is a critical step to ensure your success. Getting the wrong course, can quickly snuff out your enthusiasm. Don't just grab the first attractive looking offering. Spend some time investigating the resources available and get this right.

MANAGE THE LEARNING ACTIVITY

- Break Down the Task

There is the old saying - "How do you eat an elephant - one bite at a time".

Learning Guitar is your elephant!

Break your learning into manageable size pieces or sections. In this way you create milestones that will give you a sense of achievement when you have successfully completed learning a section. It will also help you to focus your efforts on the topic of each section, without being overwhelmed by what you still have to learn.

To do this look at the table of contents from your course and use this as an initial guide to breaking it down. If the content of each entry in the table of contents is large, try to identify steps within each entry so that you have a smaller units of work.

- Make a Plan

Here is where we prepare your battle plan.

You should construct a table where the first column contains the Step Number and the second column contains descriptions of the work units identified. The remaining columns might be Date Started, Date Completed, Comments. You can develop a style of chart to suit you, or use the example chart that has been included at the end of this report for you. What is important is that you identify the steps and have a means to keep track of your progress.

Writing down comments on your chart, good or bad as you progress, helps you to focus on your abilities and weaknesses so that you can concentrate on the areas that need extra work.

Try to keep the chart up to date. This will help motivate you as the chart shows you inching towards the final section and the success you have dreamt of.

Of course it could have the opposite effect if you get stuck on a particular section. You could become discouraged as you have a visual record of your lack of progress staring you in the face.

If you find a particular section difficult to master, try moving on to another section and leave the difficult section in a suspended state. Nothing is worse than slogging away for ever at something you find difficult and can't progress. This will do more to damage your motivation than anything else.

When you have moved on a few steps, return to the step you had difficulty with and try again. This reduces your stumbling block to a temporary gap and allows you to make progress on other steps and keep your motivation level up. Don't sweat over a temporary difficulty. You will often find the section you had difficulty with is a bit easier after a break.

- Create Milestones.

Creation of milestone is important in reinforcing your motivation. Once your skill level has reached a milestone, you will obtain a certain amount of satisfaction and this will improve your motivation level.

From the table constructed, pick certain key points within the table and mark these as milestones. Try to pick natural changes in topic e.g. completion of a set of chord lessons, completion of a set of scales lessons etc.

To help you reach your milestones, you should also set up incentives by assigning a reward to each milestone. These can be whatever you want, guitar related or something completely different. When you reach a milestone make sure you indulge yourself in the assigned reward. Have some fun thinking up the rewards you would like.

For inspiration have a look at these sites:

www.guitargifts.com

www.gigmate.com

www.zzsounds.com

SCHEDULE REGULAR PRACTICE TIMES

Try to set up a schedule or regular practice times.

When I first started playing guitar, I just practiced whenever I felt like it. This didn't work very well as I found I would spend an hour or more one day and then not touch it for over a week. When you are young there are lots of distractions! It is far better to have regular 15 min practice sessions than one big one with no follow up. This of course is easier to achieve if you have already broken your learning into sections as suggested above. A small section that you are learning should fit nicely into a 15 minute practice session. You may find that you can do a couple of 15 minute sessions a day, which would be great.

Try to do your practice sessions at the same time each day. practicing will then become a habit. Once you have made your sessions a habit, you will no longer have to think about when to practice. Your sessions will occur like clockwork. This is much easier than having to decide each day "when can I fit a practice session in? ". Chances are you will forget or not be able to fit a session in one day. Then things gradually begin to slip.

Make it a habit so you can relax. Don't sabotage your chances.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PRACTICE

To succeed at learning guitar, regular practice is essential. But even if you are diligent enough to make sure you practice regularly, you may not be getting as much out of your sessions as you could. Many guitar students find that in spite of spending hours practicing they don't seem to make much progress. What can be done to change this?

Before you start your guitar practice session, you should carry out a warm up. This can be just simply opening and closing your hands repeatedly. Then simply play a sequence of notes up and down the fret. Spend about 5 minutes on this. This will help you get your playing position and holding of the guitar comfortable and warm up your muscles before the serious stuff begins. As your learning advances, you can improve your warm up session by playing scales and arpeggios.

Make a plan or routine for your practice sessions. An example plan might be to start with practicing a scale, followed by learning one or two new chords. Finally you could finish off by learning part of a song that you want to be able to play. Using a plan for your practice sessions allows you to get on with practicing rather than waste time wondering what to do next in your practice session and drifting through it aimlessly. .

Try to build into the session plan a target such as learning two new chords. As you are teaching yourself, setting targets is important. Without targets you are likely to drift in your practice session, and this will affect your progress. The targets could be for completion in one or more sessions depending on the difficulty of the target. Try to be realistic when setting targets so that you don't undermine your confidence. Having a target provides a challenge, and this helps to motivate you during the practice session.

When you are learning something new, a scale or chord sequence for example, make sure that you practice slowly. If you practice too fast you will make mistakes. As you repeat these mistakes in the practice session, you are simply learning to make mistakes. It is the accuracy of what you are playing that is important, not the speed. Once you can play what you have been learning easily and accurately, then you can try speeding it up. practicing too fast is a common mistake that beginners make. Try using a metronome to control the speed at which you play.

If what you are practicing is proving too difficult, don't keep trying and trying and end up frustrated and tired. Take a break and come back to it later. Be kind to yourself and practice something less demanding. You will often find that when you return to the problem, even in a later practice session, it will play a bit easier. Slogging away endlessly at something you find difficult is a big motivation killer. Don't do it!

If you feel any pain aching or soreness while practicing, you should stop immediately. If you have warmed up and your posture and hand position on the neck are correct, you shouldn't suffer any pain during a normal practice session. The only exception may be when you are a beginner, as your muscles will have to adapt to the new prolonged positions that they hold and work in.

Make sure you are giving your practice your full attention. Don't practice somewhere where there are lots of distractions. If you spend 30 minutes practicing, but your mind is wandering towards what's going on in the other room, your practice won't be worth much. Never practice in front of the TV!

To make your practice more successful, try to include music that you really enjoy in your practice session. practicing a song you hate is not going to get you very far. Sometimes you will have to learn a piece of music from your lessons

that you just don't like. You should still learn this, as there will be something about the piece, technique, chords etc., that it is important for you to try in the context of a song. When this happens add a piece that you enjoy to the session as well to compensate and lift you up again.

Finally, at the end of the session, just play around with your guitar and have some fun. This will help you finish in a good mood and will set you up in the right frame of mind for your next session. If you end a practice session tired and frustrated, you will not be looking forward to your next session and that is bad news. Aim to make your guitar practice fun and see just how much progress you can make!

VISIT GUITAR FORUMS

As you are learning on your own, the Guitar Forums on the internet are a great place to hang out as you can get a lots of tips and encouragement from the posts. It is also encouraging to see posts on topics that you are having difficulty with. It's always nice to know that you are not the only one stuck on a particular point, and of course there will be a number of answers to the post that you can read. You can also join and post your own questions if you need extra help. You will get lots of helpful replies.

Two of the best forums I have found for the beginner are:

www.GuitarForBeginners.com/forum

www.GuitarNoise.com/forums

Make sure you use these forums if your motivation is suffering.

CREATE A LEARNING SUPPORT SYSTEM

You need to provide yourself with a number of inspirational prompts and treats that will help keep you motivated. Some examples are:

- ◆ Put a poster on your bedroom wall of your Guitar hero or heroes.
- ◆ Put a smaller picture of your Guitar hero in a picture frame (if you are no longer a teenager!) in your living room, den, office - anywhere where you will see it often.
- ◆ Get videos of your favourite Guitar performers and watch them regularly.
- ◆ Even better - watch out for a live performance by your favourite Guitar player and go see 'em!
- ◆ Keep a picture of your favourite Guitar player in your wallet/handbag.
- ◆ Keep a CD of your favourite Guitar player in your car and listen to it wherever you go.

I'm sure you can think of many more. The idea is to put the thought of learning Guitar in your conscious mind as often as possible. This reinforces messages to your subconscious, where the real work in maintaining your level of desire is carried out.

For a great range of music related posters, try www.allposters.com. Click on the music category and check out the different styles of music covered.

NOW IT'S DOWN TO YOU

The key to success when teaching yourself Guitar is to get the right course that suits your learning style and maintain your motivation. Someone once said “if you fail to plan, you plan to fail”. Spending some time on the methods described in this report will give you an edge and a much better chance of becoming a successful guitarist.

In this report we have covered the following techniques to stack the odds in your favour:

- ◆ Know Thyself
- ◆ What is your Lifestyle
- ◆ Choice of Learning Materials
- ◆ Manage the Learning Activity
- ◆ Schedule Regular practice Times
- ◆ How to Get The Most Out of Your Practice
- ◆ Visit Guitar Forums
- ◆ Create a Learning Support System

A Short Story...

There was a guy called Sam and guy called Tom. Sam wanted to travel from his home town to Successville. He had heard it was a great and exciting place to be, so he was keen to go. Successville was about 300 miles from Sam's home town. Sam quickly packed his bags, jumped in his car and set off in a hurry. “In just a few hours, I'll be there” thought Sam. He knew that Successville was due west of his town so he set off on the main western highway out of town. Eventually he came to a fork in the road. The left fork looked the best way to go, so he took it. Several hours later he was still driving around back roads completely lost.

Tom, who lived in the same town as Sam had also heard about Successville and was also keen to go. He knew it was a long way to travel so he got his map out and started planning a route to take. He made notes of the roads to take and various places and landmarks on the route that would help confirm he was on the right track. He set off on the same western highway that Sam had taken. He too came to the fork in the road, but his route told him to take the right fork. Six and a half hours later Tom could see the bright lights of Successville ahead.

Where do you think Sam is now? Do you think he ever got to Successville? Are you a Sam or a Tom?

I hope that you will be a Tom and apply the methods provided in this report to help you reach the level of success you desire playing Guitar. Remember if you approach your guitar learning in a casual way, you're going to get casual results.

Finally, here is a closing thought :

Some times you want to give up guitar, you'll hate guitar. But if you stick with it, you're gonna be rewarded

- Jimi Hendrix

Wishing you all the best for your Guitar playing

Ken Radwell

www.GuitarSuccessNow.com

