

# Practice Items & Tips:

Below are some general study avenues for rock and blues guitar. Because students of various levels will be reading these lessons, they are broad jump off points for your consideration. Work down the list and see which you are comfortable with and which may need some work. Many of the below items will be addressed in detail throughout these written lessons.

Remember your guitar playing is an evolution. Use some of the below items to set musical goals and then chip away at them a little each day. Set some goals, then get out there and achieve them!

- **Learn the notes on the neck** cold. No way around this one, it is super critical.

- As you study lead guitar, **continue to learn chords and work on your rhythm playing**. You will be playing rhythm often so your lead playing will really only ever be as good as your rhythm playing.

- Learn some music theory**. It will help propel you faster along in your guitar journey as well as you will be able to better communicate the language of music.

- Don't just learn scales alone**. Learn the scale but also learn how to apply it. Learn when it works, over what chords, and how to play it in all keys. Knowing the scale itself is only half the battle.

- Kick off your lead guitar journey by **learning the Minor Pentatonic scale**. Start with the basic box shape and then learn all five boxes and expanded scales. Pentatonic scales are the cornerstone for blues rock soloing.

- Learn how to convert minor pentatonic scales into major pentatonic scales** by using the concept of major to relative minor. This is a huge help as you won't have to learn another full neck of scales.

- Don't just learn shapes**. Take the extra time to learn the notes of the scales you are playing and the notes that are in chords. This will help you immensely in so many ways along your guitar journey.

- Be sure to know how to solo comfortably in **both minor AND major key**.

- Always try to compliment the song with your lead lines**. Remember, no matter how good a solo is, in the end it's the song that will be remembered. Play for the song, not for yourself.

- Learn some triads and arpeggios**. They really open up your playing, add color and variety, and get you out of playing straight scales. They are super useful and can be super melody builders.

- After you have a firm grasp on pentatonics scales and how to apply them start to **learn Major and Natural Minor Scales**. These are the building blocks to learn the modes of the major scale.

- Learn the modes of the major scale**. For rock and blues playing start with Aeolian, Dorian, and Mixolydian.

- Study and learn the leads of some of your favorite players**. Learn why their leads work and what you like about them. Then make their licks your own, put your own spin on them. Also try imitating the melody of a vocal line on your guitar. This really helps to understand and build melodies on the instrument.

- Practice soloing and improvising over jam tracks**. Know the chords of the rhythm track and just get lost in it. It's critical to practice and apply what you are learning in a musical context. Jam tracks are both an invaluable practice tool and a lot of fun.

- Develop your ear**, don't rely solely on tablature. Try to learn songs and licks by ear. Listen for the color of chords and try an ear training that you can get your hands on. It's hard work, but well worth it.

- And remember.....you can't learn less!**