

So Jeff,
My good friend
May it prosper & grow.
Stan Garrison

Basic Skills for Guitar

by Stan Garrison

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The standard tuning of the guitar is mystically, very symbolic. The strings represent the nervous system of the guitar. The guitar itself, is said to replicate the feminine figure. The sound hole is the womb from which the children - the musical notes - are born, resulting from the loving relationship of the musician and the idyllic essence of the guitar. Before playing, the nervous system (the strings) must be placed in a harmonious state. This is done by adjusting the head of the guitar, based on a knowledge gained by a long acquaintance with the different possibilities of string-harmony relationships. Through the years the system of tuning has developed into its

present form.

The two outer strings of the guitar are the same note - E ; but yet, there is a broad expanse of pitch between the two. These outer strings represent the exoteric, physical constitution of the guitar's nervous embodiment. There is much to experience between these two strings, yet they are pretty much the same.

The next two strings, the A and the B, represent a harmony that requires considerable mental effort to appreciate. This harmony, a strange harmony - nevertheless a harmony - represents the mental-intellectual aspects of the guitar's musical qualities. These strings are more confined than the

outer strings, yet they still cover a wide range of pitch. They stimulate the mental functions in an attempt to understand and appreciate their harmony relationship. They seem to leave the listener in a sort of unrest, yet this unrest is their quality that is appreciated.

Finally, to understand the two innermost strings, one must have some knowledge of the construction of the musical scale. In the western musical scale, there are two notes (the 4th and 5th steps of the scale) that are called "perfect" notes. This means that they are the same for both the major and the minor scales. They are changeless... secure... and unaffected

by changes of the other notes of the music. The two inside strings are in a revolving "perfect" harmony relationship. The D string is in a "perfect 5th" harmony to the G string; which is, in turn, in a "perfect 4th" harmony to the D string. These strings represent the spiritual core of the guitar's nervous constitution. They are deeply embedded in the center of the nervous system, and are in perfect harmony.

To my knowledge, this revelation of the guitar's tuning has never before been presented to popular scrutiny. I hope that this mystical understanding of the guitar's nervous system will be understood by appreciators of the spirit of the guitar.

The purpose of this book is to provide the correct basic skills for playing the guitar. This book can be used by a student at any level of ability to develop any style of guitar playing. It can be used as a complete introduction to the guitar, or it can be used along with one of the many "courses" that are available today. It can be used as an easily understood guide to the guitar by the beginner with no previous experience, or it can be used to improve the technique of those who already play the guitar.

This book, and the other books of this series, use picture-diagrams and explanations, rather than the standard musical notation.

My main concern, however, is to transmit the ability to play the guitar and leave the development of any particular style of playing as unhampered

as possible. It is my belief that a student should not learn by rote - mechanically repeating what is learned. It is a sad misfortune that many long-time students can recite almost any piece of music, yet haven't experienced the joy and freedom of expression found in improvisation. It is for this situation that I have undertaken the task of writing this book.

Stan
Garrison

How to Use This Book

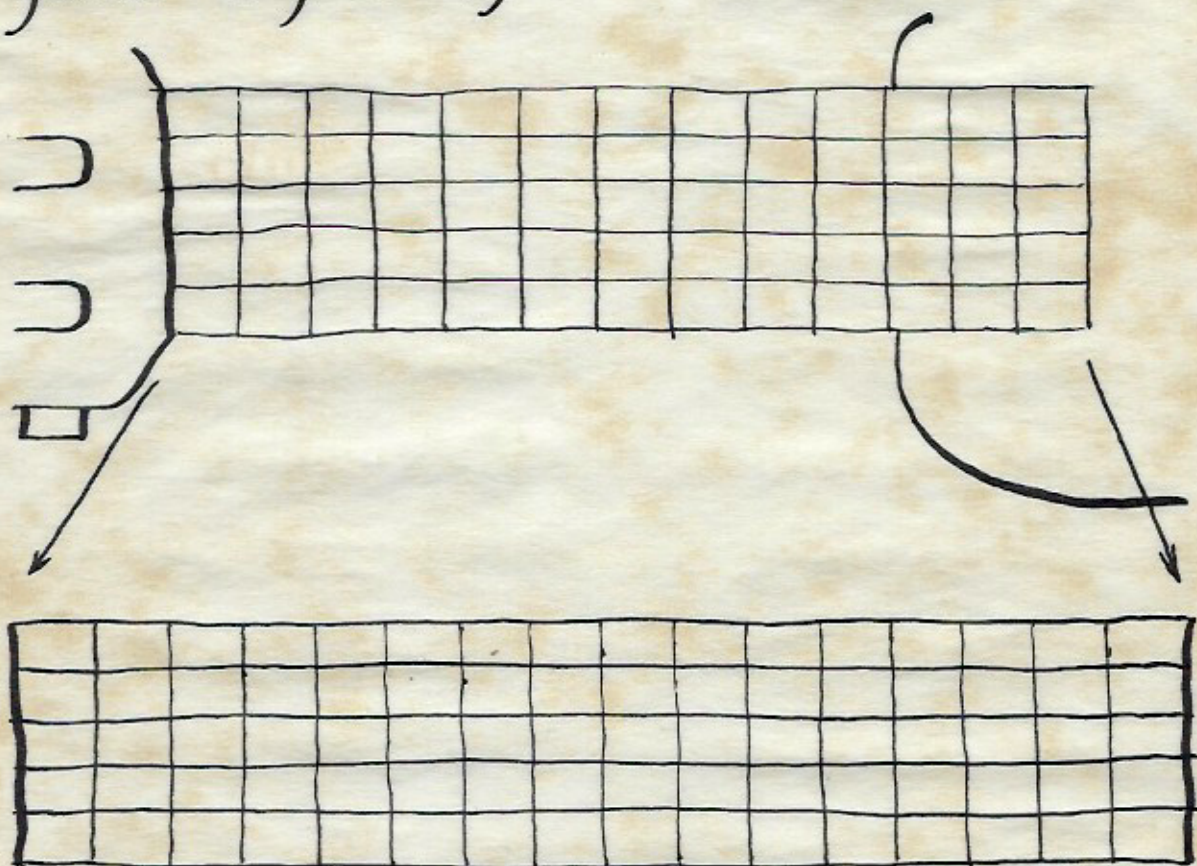
Many people play the guitar using incorrect form, this causes many difficulties that could be avoided. This book will give you the correct method for playing the guitar; come as close to this as possible - it is worth the effort.

Using the skills given here, play along with your favorite music or create your own.

First, skim through the whole book in order to find out what is in it. Then, study each section carefully. The other manuals of this series will be very helpful; they are: "The Bar Chord System", "Lead Guitar Playing", and "Rhythm Guitar Playing".

For the beginning student, I recommend going to "The Bar Chord System" after completing this book.

The diagram of the guitar neck used in this book is as if the guitar is lying across your view with the head of the guitar to your left.



Section I: Practicing

This section on practicing has been placed at the beginning because correct practicing is probably the most necessary thing for the beginning student to learn. Practicing should be done as carefully as performing. Unfortunately, very few courses say anything about how to practice.

Posture and Technique

Before playing that first note, adjust your body to a good posture and place the guitar in a firm and comfortable position. Specific points of technique should be reviewed; and periodically, posture and technique should be checked

so that bad habits won't be allowed to creep in. Practicing in front of a mirror is sometimes helpful.

Speed

It is very important to begin playing an exercise or song at a speed that is slow enough to stay free from any mistakes. Considering the muscles themselves; ~~any weightlifter knows~~ ~~that~~ slow, controlled, more difficult movements are much more beneficial than rapid and often imprecise movement.

Over a period of time, each exercise should gradually become faster - but never sacrifice control or tone to achieve

greater speed. An audience would much rather hear a simple song played well, than a complicated song played poorly.

Mistakes

Mistakes should never be tolerated. If you are making many mistakes, slow down or stop to compose yourself and start again. In most pieces of music, there is at least one certain area that is harder than the rest. These areas should be practiced an extra number of times by themselves.

If you develop a habit of practicing with mistakes, you are more likely to perform with mistakes. Remember these things and remain mistake-free.

Smoothness and Tone

The guitar is a unique instrument in that its tone quality is very versatile. By striking the string near the bridge; a sharp metallic sound is produced. And by striking the string over the soundhole near the fingerboard; a heavy bass sound is produced. Start experimenting with these things now, because experience is the best teacher of such things.

Loudness is another characteristic of sound that can be used to excite or relax the feeling of the music. Understandably, a louder volume creates excitement. Always, though, a firm definite note is required to produce good tone. Most beginning guitarists play too softly; watch watch for this, but be careful not to play too loud as well

Tremolo is a left hand technique that affects the quality of the sound. There are two types of tremolo - slight and full. Slight tremolo is produced by waving the hand in a motion parallel to the strings while the finger does not move on the string. Full tremolo is made with the finger moving the string back and forth across the fingerboard. Experience will show how they are used.

Most important is the clarity of the notes. To be a good guitarist, you must tune your ear to the instrument and learn to listen to every sound that is made. Many fail to hear the smaller, more subtle sounds of string noise; notes that ring too long or too short; and variations of rhythm, tone,

and volume. Mastery of all these sounds is necessary to be able to perfect your command of the instrument and the music being played.

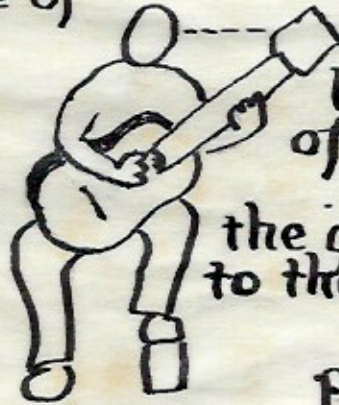
Posture

Posture is important for more reasons than just the playing of the instrument. From playing the guitar since the age of seven, I developed a serious back problem that could have been prevented by using the correct posture.

When playing the guitar, the body must be in good posture so that a long practice won't be tiring. There are several general positions for different styles of playing, but the main thing is that the shoulders, hands, and arms should be able to move freely.

Classical Position (best)

place middle of forearm in line with bridge, on the edge of the face of the guitar



the head of the guitar should be level with the head of the player

the guitar is held close to the body

stretched shoulder

poor posture

crooked neck



good posture

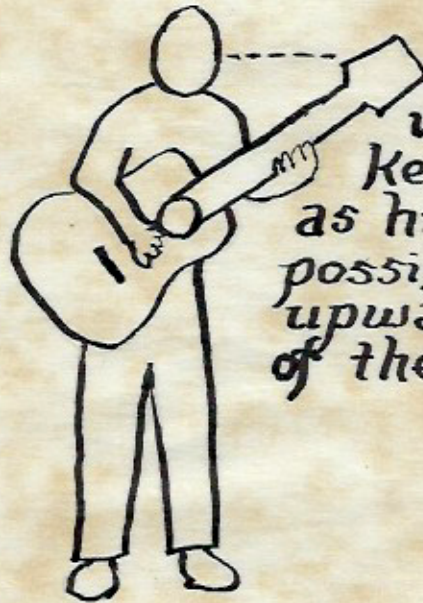
improper alignment of fingers to neck



neck at a slant

body of guitar held fast by pressure of arms toward the body, if the guitar is not balanced, it will slip from your hands. Do not grasp the guitar with your left hand - this hampers the agility of the fingers.

good posture



when playing while standing, keep the guitar as high as possible with an upwards slant of the neck

poor posture



guitar is too low, and the neck of the guitar should be slanted

These positions are generalizations of the optimum conditions for playing the guitar. You can make minor adjustments to suit individual tastes, but large variations are almost always restricting.

Concentration

Concentration can be a difficult concept for some people to grasp, but it plays an important part in any aspiration—whether it be musical or otherwise. In the practice period, always try to hold your undivided attention towards your work for greater lengths of time.

Rhythm and Timing

It is best to start practicing with rhythm at the earliest opportunity. Rhythm is

one of the most important ingredients of music. When playing along with other instruments, it is absolutely necessary for each instrument to be in the same rhythm and timing for the music to be correct and understandable.

From the very start, each exercise should be played in relaxed rhythm with a regular, constant tempo. Work to avoid slowing down for difficult areas and speeding up during the easier parts. The difficult passages should be practiced separately. Especially, remember not to burden yourself by practicing too fast.

Practicing Exercises

An exercise has a definite purpose~

developing some particular skill. This should be kept in mind while working on any exercise. You should know what particular abilities are gained from each exercise. Then, when you have a difficulty because of weakness in some skill, a corresponding exercise should be reviewed. In this book, an explanation of each exercise is given for this purpose.

Exercises are limited. A basic skill is transmitted to the student, but this skill is useless until it becomes a matter of "habit" or "second nature". Then, what takes over is the inborn melody that the player is thinking. The skills of guitar playing are the tools to "voice" this melody.

Section II: Technique

Technique involves how things are done. It is important to use correct technique so that when a difficult maneuver is required, the fingers will be able to perform it. Good technique allows you to play even the most difficult passages without having to shift or alter the positions of the hands. Good technique also allows for ease of movement, leaving no wasted motion. Bad technique causes you to tire quickly because of so much wasted motion and internal resistance of one muscle acting against another. If you are plagued with cramps and tiredness, incorrect technique is probably the reason. Trouble spots

vary with each person, but the more frequent areas are the thumb and wrist of either hand. Remember this when you study the mechanical aspects of form and technique later in this section.

Left Hand Technique

It is necessary to hold the guitar in such a way that the left arm is not extended away from the body so far that it restricts the movement of the hand. For this reason, you should have the neck of the guitar close to your body, slanting upwards.

Many people will hold the neck of the guitar in position. This is harmful because it keeps the fingers from moving freely.

The guitar should rest in the correct position while not even touching it with the left hand. Instead of holding onto the neck, you should place the fingertips on the fingerboard and use the thumb for support in applying pressure. The palm or any other part of the hand (except in certain cases) should not touch the neck of the guitar. The very tips of the fingers should press against the strings. The fingers should be curved and separated and not allowed to lean on each other.

The fingers should be placed close to the fret, but not on the fret:



To be able to play the bass strings more easily, the secret to stretching across the neck is in the wrist and thumb.

for the treble strings:



normal playing position

for the bass strings:

roll thumb
across neck



bend wrist

lean towards the guitar with left shoulder

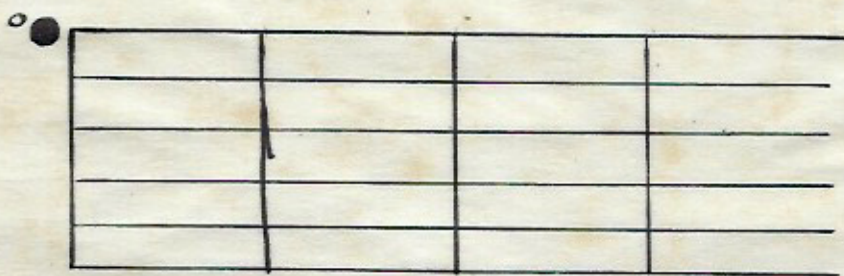
Examine your hands in the mirror to see how closely they resemble the illustrations. If they are very different, correct the differences in order to avoid trouble when you are ready for more difficult playing.

Exercises for the Left Hand

First, ready yourself by checking the posture and positions of your hands and arms - then, play the exercises. Start slowly, gradually developing speed, but never sacrifice form or tone. And do not tolerate mistakes.

On a single string;

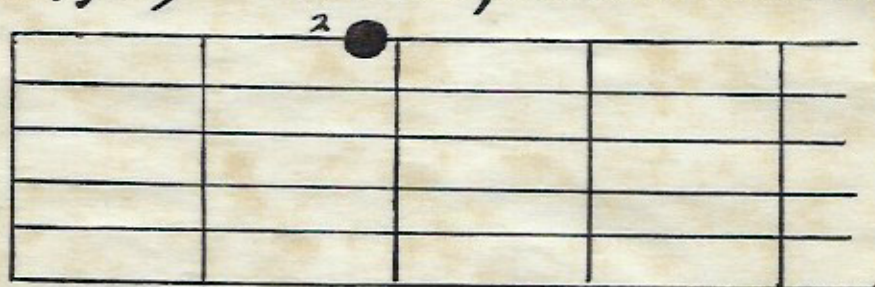
Start by playing the open string:



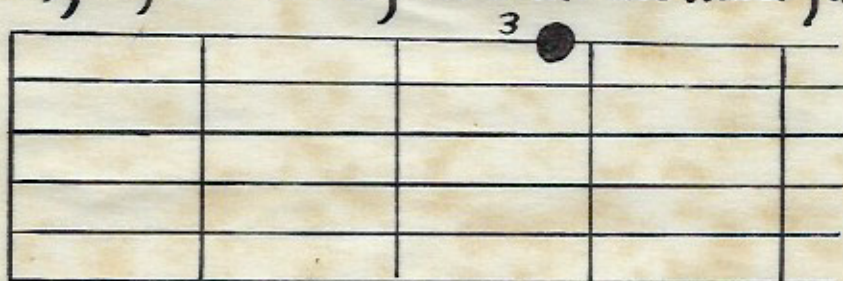
Then, play with the first finger on the first fret:



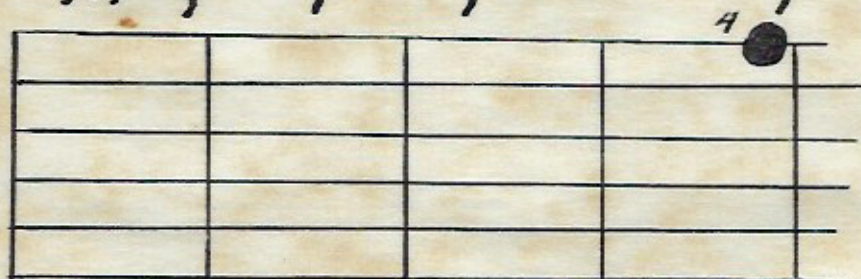
Next, play the second fret with the second finger:



Then, play the third fret with the third finger:



Finally, play the fourth fret with the fourth finger:



And so, you have this exercise:

0 1 2 3 4 . . .

It should be repeated many times on each string ~ and always in rhythm.

For the next exercise, reverse the order of the previous exercise:

4 3 2 1 0 . . .

Again, repeat many times on each string.

For the last exercise, combine the two previous exercises:

0 1 2 3 4 3 2 1 . . .

The more advanced guitarist may not think that these exercises are necessary, but make sure that you can do them well before going on. Remember to start slowly, gradually getting faster. Every note should be played clearly and with good tone. Each note should flow directly into the next - they should be smooth and not "choppy".

Right Hand Technique

There are several different ways of picking the strings. They usually go along with a particular style of music. The right hand styles in this book are: plectrum style; folk style (there are many different types of folk style picking, this book deals with mainly the position of the hand); and classical style. It is best for a well rounded guitarist to be familiar with every style of picking as each style gives a different feel to the instrument and the music.

Plectrum Style

Plectrum is the name used when playing with a flat pick. The pick should be held with only the thumb and the index finger.

The pick should be held at an angle to the strings and pulled across the strings smoothly:



The wrist and hand lie even with or below the strings. The fingers and thumb angle upwards, pulling the pick in towards the hand.

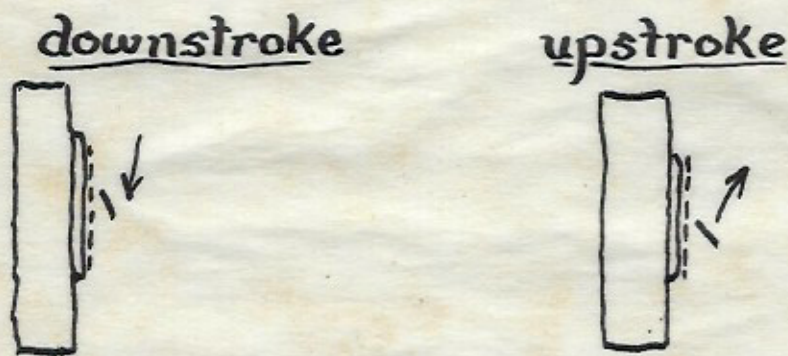
For more volume, pressure is applied inwards - towards the guitar:



For soft smooth tone, the strings are struck nearer to the neck of the guitar.

Striking the strings near the bridge creates a louder, "harder" sound. When playing near the bridge, the heel of the hand often rests on top of the bridge. When the hand is brought towards the strings, it can dampen the sound, causing a "muted" effect which can be used effectively.

The upstroke is made with the hand in the same position - the only difference is that the direction of the picking is reversed. The pick actually goes slightly underneath the string and pulls upwards and outwards.



Exercises for Plectrum Style Picking

The symbols for downstroke and upstroke are: downstroke = V V V , upstroke = ^ ^ ^ .

For the first exercise, on a single string, pick all downstrokes in an even rhythm steadily getting faster. When you start making mistakes, slow down or start again. Do this on all strings.

V V V V . . .

For the second exercise, play all upstrokes in an even rhythm steadily getting faster.

^ ^ ^ ^ . . .

Finally, alternate up and down strokes:

V ^ V ^ V ^ V ^ . . .

Here, timing becomes especially important, because almost everyone plays the downstroke

faster than the upstroke :

down up-down up-down . . . etc.

when it should be :

down . . . up . . . down . . . up . . . down . . .

So, be very careful when playing alternating up and down strokes at an even tempo.

The more advanced guitarist might think these simple exercises are unnecessary; but in my experience of teaching, I have found that almost every guitar player (even some very good ones) lacks precise control of their right hand. So, test yourself on these exercises, and see if you can do them well and quickly - you might be surprised.

Next, it is good to 'work on accenting different strokes of a series. To accent a

note is to play it louder than the others. It is usually given the sign, >, directly above.

Here are some accent exercises:

a four-note downstroke series, accenting the 1:

>
v v v v
1 2 3 4 . . .

next, accent the 1 and 3:

> >
v v v v
1 2 3 4 . . .

then, accent the 2 and 4:

> >
v v v v
1 2 3 4 . . .

Do these same accent exercises using all upstrokes; and then, using alternating up-and-downstrokes. Remember to repeat each exercise many times.

Here is another good exercise:

with a three note series, picking the alternating up and down strokes, accent the 1, (notice that it is upstroke one time and then downstroke the next):

$\begin{array}{cccccc} > & & & > & & & \\ \vee & \wedge & \vee & \wedge & \vee & \wedge & \\ 1 & 2 & 3 & 1 & 2 & 3 & \dots \end{array}$

These exercises are helpful to anyone who wishes to master the plectrum style of guitar playing. They are exercises that the more advanced guitarist might use to warm-up. They are especially important for those who play melody or lead guitar.

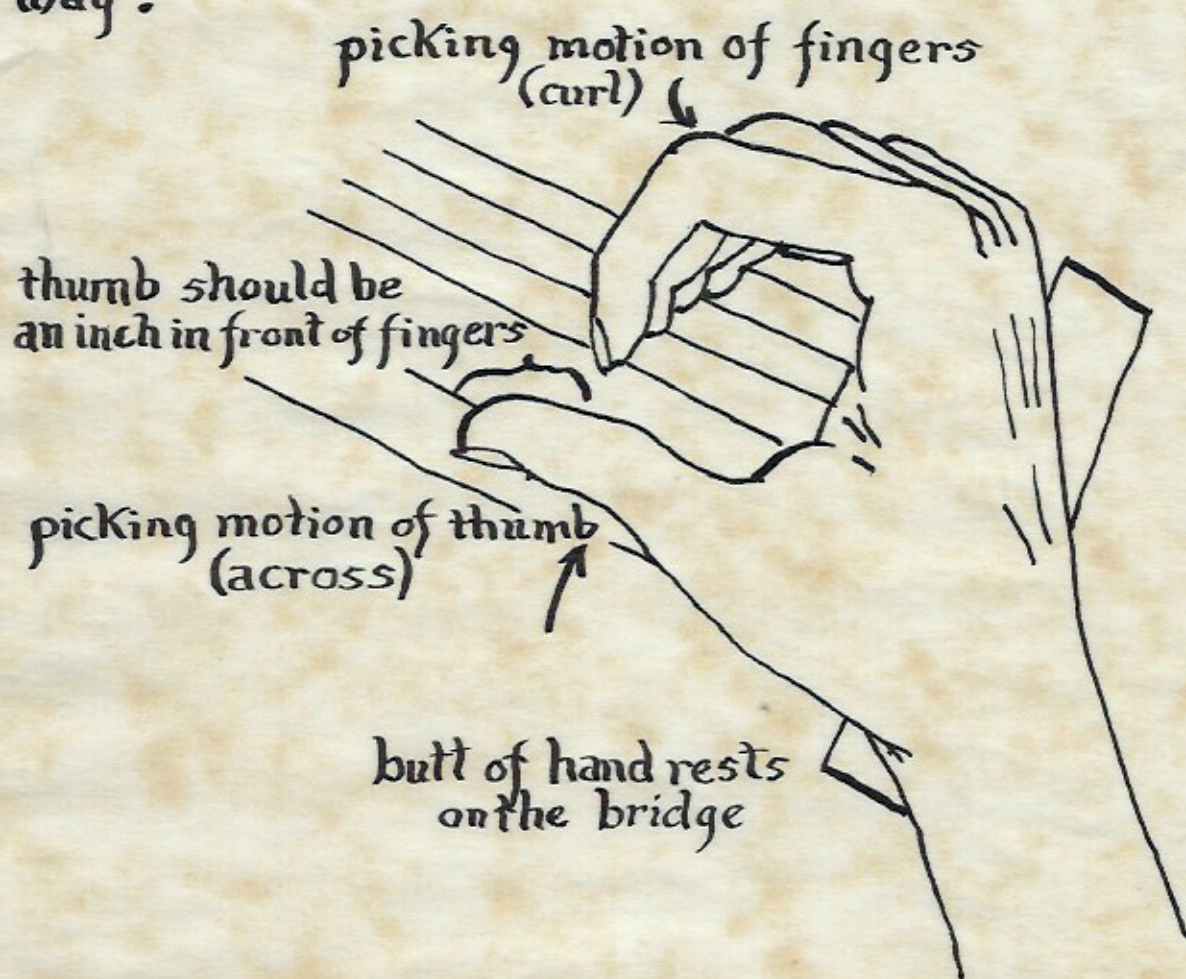
For more specific work in this area, I refer you to my manual "Lead Guitar Playing".

Folk-Style Finger Picking

This right hand technique uses the same positioning of the hand to play many different rhythms and patterns. Some patterns use the thumb and three fingers, while others use only two fingers or even one finger and the thumb. However, the position of the hand is the same for all. This book does not explain all the different styles, it explains how the movement of picking is performed and leaves the development of a particular style to the individual.

The butt of the hand rests on the bridge of the guitar. The fingers pick by making a curling motion, while the thumb lies almost parallel to the strings and the side of the thumb moves in a horizontal motion across

the strings. The thumb lies about one inch in front of the fingers, this makes it possible for the thumb and the index finger to work close together without getting in each other's way.



Exercises for Folk Style Picking

For three-finger picking, the fingers are often abbreviated like this:

T = thumb

1 = index finger

2 = middle finger

3 = ring finger

The thumb picks the fourth, fifth, or sixth strings; the index finger usually picks the third string; the middle finger usually picks the second string; and the ring finger usually picks the first string.

Practice these exercises while holding a simple chord like G or C. The thumb can pick any string that fits into the chord being used. Remember to start at a slow, constant tempo.

T 1 2 3 . . .

T 3 2 1 . . .

T 3 1 2 . . .

Play many repetitions of each one before going on.

Next are some exercises that have two strings picked at the same time:

T $\frac{1}{2}$ 3 $\frac{1}{2}$. . .

T $\frac{3}{2}$ 1 $\frac{3}{2}$. . .

T $\frac{3}{1}$ 2 $\frac{3}{1}$. . .

After some progress is made and these exercises are well under control, you should start alternating the string that the thumb picks, between the fourth, fifth, and sixth strings (depending on what chord is being played - some chords are not played on the

sixth or even the fifth and sixth strings).

In this next exercise, the thumb alternates between the fourth and fifth strings:

4 5 ----- number of string
T 1 2 3 T 1 2 3 ...

In this exercise, the thumb alternates between the fifth and sixth strings:

5 6
T 1 2 3 T 1 2 3 ...

Now, go back to the earlier exercises and play them with the thumb alternating the bass note strings. Remember, as in earlier exercises, these should be practiced slowly at first. And always, they should be played very carefully and correctly - and above all, they should be played a relaxed, regular tempo.

Next, we have some two-finger exercises :

T 1 2 . . .

T 2 1 . . .

T 1 T 2 . . .

Finally, alternate the thumb :

4 5 5 6

T 1 2 T 1 2 . . . or T 1 2 T 1 2 . . .

4 5 5 6

T 2 1 T 2 1 . . . or T 2 1 T 2 1 . . .

4 5 5 6

T 1 T 2 . . . or T 1 T 2 . . .

Now is a good time to play along with some of your favorite folk songs using the skills you've just learned.

Classical Right Hand Technique

Classical style (on the classical guitar) is probably the most difficult way of playing when it is done well. The hand is suspended from the mid-forearm, giving the fingers more power and freedom while demanding more effort and precise control of position.

Anyone seriously studying classical guitar should be working closely with a qualified instructor. Sometimes, though, instructors are misguided themselves, and in-turn misguide their students. One main rule to remember is that a good technique should be natural. That is, the movements should not conflict with the natural movements that the hand is used to making.

The hand should be the same as if it were hanging at your side, suspended by the mid-forearm on the face-corner of the side of the guitar. The forearm should be resting even with or in front of the bridge. A slight curve of the wrist should bring the fingers to rest lightly on the strings. The fingers should be separated so that each one can act independently of the others. The hand should form an approximately 90° angle at the large knuckle. The movement of picking is at this knuckle - this gives length and power to the fingers. The thumb is held at least one inch in front of the index finger.

In classical style, there are two different ways of striking the string. First, there is what is known as the hammerstroke. It is a loud, strong, heavy stroke used mainly for single note passages. In more advanced playing, it is played in a chord to give the melody note extra volume while the other notes of the chord are played in a different fashion. A difficult trick, The hammerstroke is executed by coming down upon the string and coming to rest upon the next string.

Hammerstroke



The other type of stroke is called the escapement stroke. It is used in all types of playing, but mainly for chord playing. It is a lighter stroke, it has less volume, and a slightly more treble tone. It is executed by starting the stroke at the string and pulling outwards.

Escapement stroke



This hammerstroke - escapement stroke principal can be applied to the plectrum guitar also. One learns how either stroke is used by experience; but usually, the plectrum downstroke is a hammerstroke and the plectrum

upstroke is an escapement stroke. When the downstroke is played with an escapement stroke, it produces a hard, sharp, percussive note that is limited in speed but can be used for its particular effect.

When playing in the classical style, you should be familiar with both strokes so that they can be used to their fullest advantage. In classical guitar music, the different voices of the music need to be played at different strengths; the two types of strokes make this possible.

The fingers are abbreviated:

p = thumb

i = index

m = middle

a = annular

Exercises for Classical Style

You should begin exercising with a single alternating stroke, occasionally changing the fingers and the style of stroke. Correct rhythm is always essential to develop smooth playing.

On a single string, using hammerstroke, and resting the thumb on any of the lower strings; play these exercises (notice the accents):

> > > > > >
i m i m i m . . . m i m i m i . . .

> > > > > >
m a m a m a . . . a m a m a m . . .

> > > > > >
i a i a i a . . . a i a i a i . . .

Then, after playing many repetitions, play the same exercises using escapement stroke. Begin playing them on different strings, and don't forget rhythm.

After much work is done on these exercises, begin exercising the thumb. First, on a single string - p p p ... Do this on each of the lower strings, then start playing on all three of the lower strings in sequence :

p P P ...

then, reverse the order :

P p p ...

Now begin alternating the thumb with the fingers (on separate strings) :

> p i	> p i	> p i	...	> i p	> i p	> i p	...
> p m	> p m	> p m	...	> m p	> m p	> m p	...
> p a	> p a	> p a	...	> a p	> a p	> a p	...

Next, we have three note patterns; the thumb picks hammerstroke while the fingers pick escapement stroke. With the left hand, hold any familiar chord that covers the strings that you are playing.

> > > >
p i m p i m . . . p m i p m i . . .

> > > >
p i a p i a . . . p a i p a i . . .

> > > >
p m a p m a . . . p a m p a m . . .

> > > >
p i p m p a . . . p a p m p i . . .

After these exercises are under control, begin changing the thumb from one string to another. Also, begin changing the left hand chord in rhythm with the right hand.

Next, we have four-note patterns. Again, use hammerstroke with the thumb and escapement stroke with the fingers.

> >
p i m a p i m a . . .

> >
p a m i p a m i . . .

> >
p m i a p m i a . . .

> >
p a i m p a i m . . .

> >
p i a m p i a m . . .

Next, using all escapement strokes, begin striking two strings at the same time. The thumb can play any of the three lower strings. Holding a constant tempo here can be very difficult.

Repeat each exercise many times:

> $\frac{p}{i}$ m a $\frac{p}{i}$ m a . . .

> $\frac{p}{a}$ i m $\frac{p}{a}$ i m . . .

> $\frac{p}{m}$ i a $\frac{p}{m}$ i a . . .

> $\frac{p}{i}$ m a m $\frac{p}{i}$ m a m . . .

> $\frac{p}{a}$ i m i $\frac{p}{a}$ i m i . . .

> $\frac{p}{m}$ i a i $\frac{p}{m}$ i a i . . .

> $\frac{p}{i}$ m a $\frac{p}{i}$ m a . . .

> $\frac{p}{a}$ i m $\frac{p}{a}$ i m . . .

> $\frac{p}{m}$ i a $\frac{p}{m}$ i a . . .

> $\frac{p}{i}$ m a $\frac{p}{i}$ m a . . .

$\overset{>}{p}$ a $\overset{m/i}{/}$ a $\overset{>}{p}$ a $\overset{m/i}{/}$ a . . .

$\overset{>}{p}$ m $\overset{a/i}{/}$ m $\overset{>}{p}$ m $\overset{a/i}{/}$ m . . .

This is a long list of exercises, but persistence and patience will pay off. A well planned system of exercises conveys the needed skills to all the fingers evenly, avoiding weakness in some areas and too much strength in other areas. It requires hard work, but you learn better when learning by a system of exercises. Once you gain mastery of the skill of playing the guitar, you are free to develop the style of music that you wish to play.

Section III: Basic Music Theory and Scales

Understanding the structure of scales is necessary for a thorough knowledge of melody and chord formation. In all music, the melody and chord instruments must be in agreeable scales. Scales constitute the framework from which the melody, chords, and chordal movements are created. In order to understand scales, you must first learn the basic tools that are used.

Intervals. An interval is the distance from one note to another. In most scales, intervals are either half-steps or whole-steps. Half-steps are the distance of one fret on the guitar, and whole-steps are the distance of two frets.

For all practical purposes, there are two different scales — the major scale and the minor scale. What distinguishes the major scale from the minor scale is the half-step/whole-step pattern of either one. There are eight steps in a scale (DO, RE, MI, FA, SO, LA, TE, DO), with the eighth step (DO) being the repetition of the first (it is called the octave). Both scales have two halfsteps each, the rest of the steps are whole-steps.

The half-steps of the major scale are placed between the third and fourth notes (MI and FA) and between the seventh and eighth notes (TE and DO) of the scale. All the rest are whole-steps:

1 2 3 half-step 4 5 6 7 half-step 8

For the *minor scale*, starting with the first note (DO), go up a whole-step to the second note (RE), then go up a half-step to the third note (MI), go up another whole-step to the fourth note (FA), up another whole-step to the fifth note (SO), then go up a half-step to the sixth note (LA), go up another whole-step to the seventh note (TE), and finally another whole-step to the octave (DO).

1		2	3		4		5	6		7		8		
DO		RE	MI		FA		SO	LA		TE		DO		

Chord Formation from Scale Structure

As there are two different types of scales, there are two different types of chords — major and minor chords. A chord is built

from the basic unit called a triad (triad = three)
A triad is the first, third, and fifth notes
(DO, MI, SO) of a scale - whether it be major
or minor.

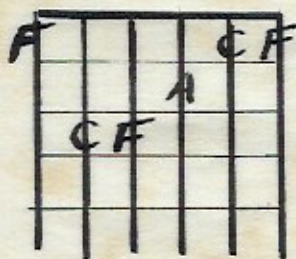
A major chord is made from the first, third,
and fifth notes (DO, MI, SO) of the major scale;
and the minor chord is made from the first, third,
and fifth notes of the minor scale.

The important note here is the third - MI. If
you take the C major scale and the C minor scale,
the first and fifth notes are the same for either
scale - C and G; but the third note (MI) is a
half-step lower in the minor scale than it is in
the major scale.

C major = C, E, G

C minor = C, E^b, G

Any normal chord is constructed from the repetition of these three main notes. We'll use the F chord as an example (F-stands for F major). It has the notes F, A, and C.



As you see, it has 3 F's, 2 C's, and 1 A. In order to make the different chords like the sixth's, seventh's, ninth's, etc; you add another note of the scale to the triad or alter the triad in some way. There are a few rules in doing this. Here are the more common ones:

1) A 7th chord is made by adding the seventh note of the minor scale (sometimes called the dominant seventh note) to either a major or a

minor triad. When the seventh is added to a major triad, it is plainly called a 7th chord; and when the same note is added to a minor triad, it is called a minor 7th chord.

2) A major 7th chord is formed by adding the seventh note of the major scale to a major triad.

3) A 6th chord is made by adding the sixth note of the major scale to either a major or a minor triad. When the sixth note is added to a major triad, it is called plainly a 6th chord; and when the sixth note is added to a minor triad, it is called a minor 6th chord.

4) To augment means to raise. An augmented chord is made by raising the fifth note (5th) of the major triad by one fret.

5) To diminish means to lower. A diminished chord is made by lowering the fifth note (SO) of a minor triad by one fret and adding a dominant seventh note to the triad.

6) A ninth chord is made by adding the 9th note of the scale (it is actually one octave above the 2nd note RE, and it is the same for both major and minor) to a triad. A minor 9th chord is made by adding the ninth note to a minor triad; and a regular ninth chord (the major is implied, as in G9) is made by adding the ninth note to a major triad.

7) It is possible to add two (or more) of these extra notes to a triad at the same time; as in E⁷ or Cm⁶.

Remember these rules so that you can

better understand the structure of the chords you will use in the next section which deals with bar chords.

Bar Chords

Instead of merely listing a number of bar chords to learn, I will teach you a system of "bar chords" where you construct chords rather than memorize them. Bar chords can be put into a simple system in which only the names of the notes on two strings and a few chord forms are memorized. By coordinating these two factors, two different ways to play any chord are easily and quickly found.

The first thing to do is to learn the names of the notes on the two bass strings, E and A.

Learn these notes well, because they will need to be remembered quickly so as to not waste time when other things are being worked on.

A	A [#] B ^b	B	C	C [#] D ^b	D	D [#] E ^b	E	F	F [#] G ^b	G	G [#] A ^b	A	A [#] B ^b						
E	E	F [#] G ^b	G	G [#] A ^b	A	A [#] B ^b	B	C	C [#] D ^b	D	D [#] E ^b	E	F						

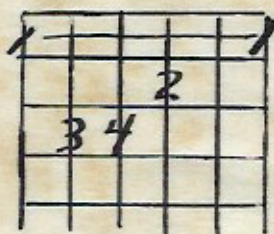
Next, you need to memorize a few of the basic chord forms. These may be somewhat difficult at first, but here again, patience and persistence are well rewarded. They are divided into two groups, the reason for this will be explained later.

The first group of chords is called the 6th string group; because they are placed on the neck according to the notes

on the 6th string.

6th String Chord Forms

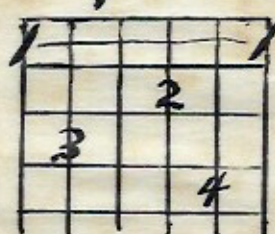
major



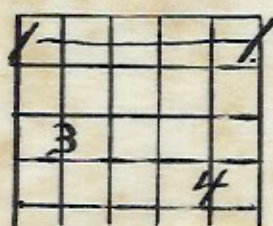
minor



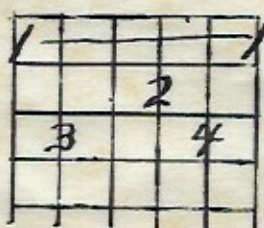
7th



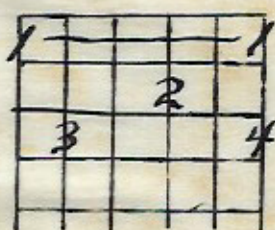
minor 7th



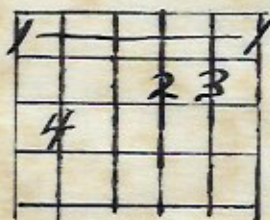
6th



9th



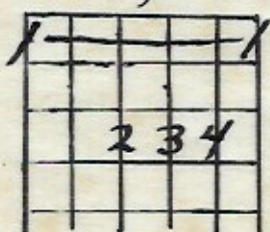
augmented



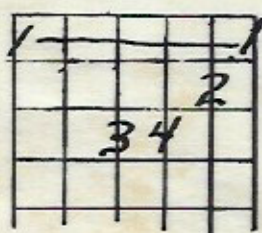
Next, we have the 5th string group of bar chords. These chords follow the 5th string notes for their placement on the fingerboard.

5th String Chord Forms

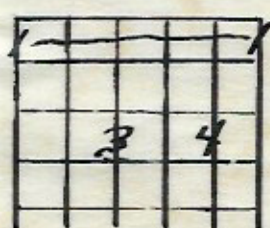
major



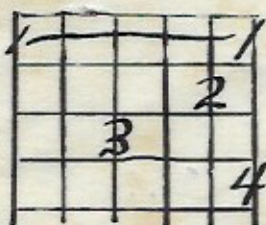
minor



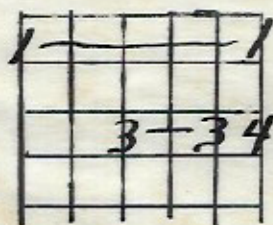
7th



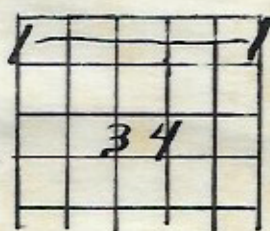
minor 7th



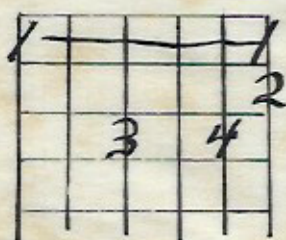
6th



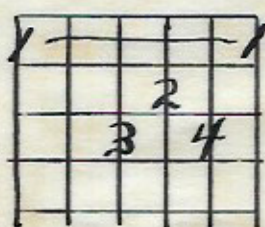
9th



augmented



major 7th



Now you have two different forms for each chord except the major 7th; no 6th string chord is given for this chord.

Now that you have the basic tools with which to work, you need to understand how to put the notes of the two strings together with the chord forms to form all the different chords.

First, we need to look at the name of a chord. For an example, we'll use F7;

there are two parts to the name F and 7

the letter name signifies where the chord is placed on the neck

F

7

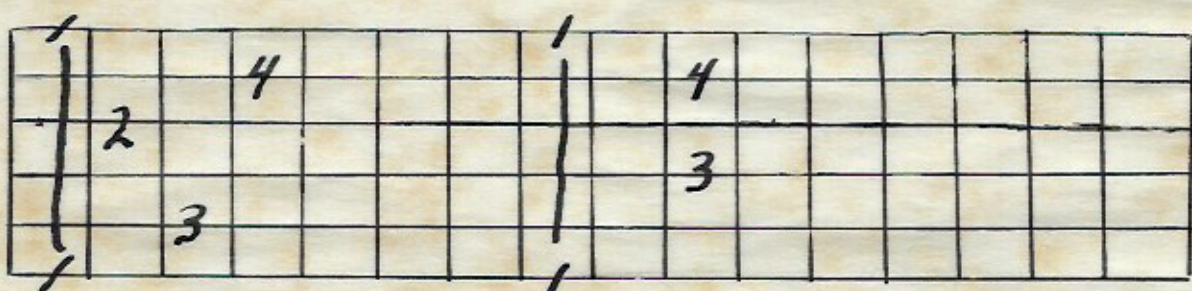
this part of the name tells which chord form to use; but it doesn't tell which chord group to use

F is found on the 6th string at the 1st fret; and on the 5th string at the 8th fret

either chord group has a 7th form, the 5th string chord must be used with the 5th string note; and the 6th string chord form with the 6th string note

When playing the F^7 with the 5th string group chord, place the chord with the bar on the 8th fret where the F note is on the 5th string. Likewise, when using the 6th string group chord form for F^7 , place the bar on the 1st fret where the F note is on the 6th string.

Here, we have the F^7 chord in both forms:



6th string F^7 chord

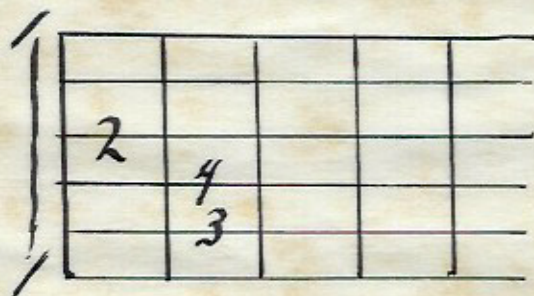
5th string F^7 chord

You must be very careful not to get these crossed over by putting a 5th string chord form with a 6th string note, or vice versa.

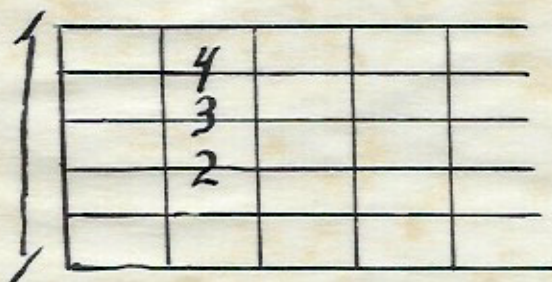
There are two chords which need some attention here, they are the 5th string A chords and the 6th string E chords. When playing these chords

imagine that the 1st finger is barring on the other side of the zero fret (sometimes called the nut, or neck bridge).

the 6th string
E chord



the 5th string
A chord



Exercises for Bar Chords

Find the 6th string bar chord and then the 5th string bar chord for these chords: (You can check yourself by the sound of the two chords - they should sound somewhat similar.)

G⁶; C^m (the m stands for minor); F (major is understood); F^{#7}; A^{m7}; C^{maj7} (5th string form only); E⁷; G^{aug} or G⁺; B^b_m; E^{b7}; C⁶; A⁹; F^{maj7}; A^{#6}; C⁹; G^{b7}; D⁹; C^{#+}; D^{#m7}; and A.

Some of these chords are quite difficult, take your time and make sure that you are correct. Now is a good time to go to some of your favorite music books and play familiar songs using bar chords instead of regular open chords. A slight problem is encountered in deciding which chord is better to use - a 5th string chord or a 6th string chord. The best solution to this is to play whichever chord is easiest to get to.

To find out more about this bar chord system, see my manual entitled: "The Bar Chord System".

Section IV: Scales and Harmonies

Before getting too deeply involved in scales, it is necessary to work on the agility of the fingers. To do this, several exercises like the ones used in the section on left hand technique are very helpful. Make sure the right hand is operating correctly. Memorize the pattern and while repeating it many times, concentrate on the control and the technique of the left hand fingers. These exercises will help to develop all of the fingers evenly:

0 1 2 1 3 1 4 1 . . .

0 2 1 2 3 2 4 2 . . .

0 3 1 3 2 3 4 3 . . .

0 4 1 4 2 4 3 4 . . .

0 2 1 3 2 4 3 4 . . .

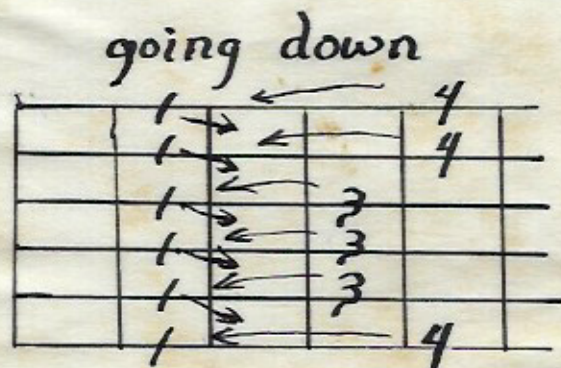
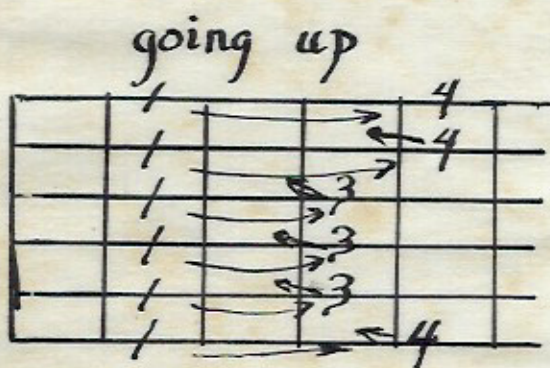
0 4 1 4 0 4 1 4 . . .

1 3 2 4 1 3 2 4 . . .

On each string, repeat each exercise many times.

Every note should sound clearly, and each note should flow directly and smoothly into the next. Remember to play at a constant tempo, and continually check the positions of the hands.

Here are two exercises to practice changing strings quickly:



In this book, I give you two different patterns for both of the scales. The scales are located in the

for one scale placed on the neck according to the string for the other scale. Here is the fingering pattern for the 5th string G minor scale:

								1	2		4	4				
								1	2		4					
								1		3						
								1		3	4					
								1		3	4					

Here, the first finger is placed on the G note of the fifth string, which is at the 10th fret.

Now, let's change these two scale patterns to another key, the key of B minor. So, for B minor, we have these two positions;

								1	2		4	4	1			
								1	2		4					
								1		3			1	1		3
								1		3	4		1		3	
								1		3	4		1		3	4
								1		3	4		1		3	4

5th string scale
6th string scale

Learn both ^{all of the} ^{MINOR} scale positions well, and practice them in other keys.

Next we have the major scale patterns. We have the same situation in placing the scales as we did in the minor scales except that the second finger is used for placing the major scales. First, we have the fingering pattern for the 5th string major scale:

		1		3																
		2		4	4															
	1		3	4																
	1	2		4																
		2		4																

5th string C scale

This particular scale starts on a C note, so it is a C major scale. It is a 5th string C scale because the C note is on the 5th string.

Here is the 6th string form of the major scale:

					1	2								
						2		4						
					1		3	4						
					1		3	4						
					1	2		4						
						2		4						

6th string C scale

Now, let's put these two scale patterns together in another key - G major:

	1	2						1	3	3	4			
		2	4					2	4	4				
	1		3	4				1	3	4				
	1		3	4				1	2	4				
	1	2		4					2	4				
		2		4										

6th string G scale

5th string G scale

Exercises for these scales can be made from your favorite popular songs or just simple tunes that you make up yourself. Of main importance is that you use the fingering of the scales - instead

covering the whole fingering

of plunking out the tune on a single string with one or two fingers. Don't be suprised if you find notes that aren't in the scale - there are exceptions to almost every rule.

~~For more information about scales and harmonies, I have written a book entitled "Lead Guitar Playing". It is self-explanatory and should be very helpful.~~

Next, give exercises for playing scales in the positions shown. DO FA SO (etc)
outside → 1 2

A Few Extra Words

This book is directed mainly towards the beginning guitarist, but it has some valuable information for the advanced guitarist as well. In these last paragraphs, I have a few words for all guitarists.

The guitar is one of the most responsive of all instruments to the touch of the player. This gives it certain characteristics all of its own. Besides considering the notes themselves, one must work almost as enthusiastically at the subjective "air" of the music. This requires a very delicate balance of emotions used in conjunction with the mentality required for the executions being made. This balance could be called "expression"

To develop this expression requires an amount of technical skill, awareness and control of the subjective feelings, and the experience that comes with the hard work of aspiring towards unrealized goals. The musician with an over-abundance of technical skill is usually in the recital hall or the teacher's chair. The musician with a great awareness and control of subjective feelings is often the "romantic", the high energy, or the "dreamy" type of music player. The last type of player would be the blues player. He has much experience of the hard work of striving to reach something that he just can't quite attain. This is not to say that there are only these types of musicians, but that every musician has these traits in varying

degrees - thus making the individual personalities of the individual musicians.

I was always puzzled by often seeing excellent technicians bore an audience, and poorly skilled musicians hold an audience spell-bound. This observation led me to believe that there is an unnamed "essence" that is the key to the communication of music. There is a certain medium of communication that the musician and the audience must be absorbed in to have a successful exchange. I believe that the musician should play to the audience. Not reciting, not paying attention only to the music; but, concentrating on handing each note to the audience wrapped in package of care and effort. A concert should be as much of a

treat to the performer as it is to the audience.

This is my idea of a true musician.

It is to the people who wish to experience the true essence of music that I dedicate this book. I am an Instrument used to teach the willing to control an instrument; so that they, too, might learn to become an Instrument.

A Word About This Book

by Jeff Foster, guitarist

The author/artist of this book, Stanley Garrison, is a multi-talented fellow. For present purposes, I'll bypass his business acumen, fine woodworking and inventive luthier skills, and focus my attention here on his musical accomplishments, their influence on me as a young musician, and how I came to be in possession of Stan's original manuscript.

I first met Stanley Garrison back in the early 1970s when we were both young men. He worked as a guitarist in our hometown of Muncie, Indiana, and taught guitar at Rocky's Music Center, where I had recently begun my own teaching career. I was still a teenager at the time, and Stanley had already had a dozen years of jazz guitar instruction under his belt, was gigging constantly in successful bands, and was widely considered the most versatile and accomplished guitarist in central Indiana.

Stanley had developed into a skilled classical guitarist, as well, and used his formidable fingerstyle technique in conjunction with his jazz skill to play in a style inspired by fingerstyle jazz master Joe Pass, predating the appearance of Charlie Byrd, Earl Klugh, Tuck Andress and others.

Stanley was also a multi-instrumentalist, playing tenor, plectrum and 5-string banjos, bass, mandolin and Irish fiddle. To a younger guitarist seeking to expand my horizons, Stan was a true inspiration, and I'm proud to say that he served unselfishly as a mentor to me. We came eventually to be bandmates, working as a duo who each played multiple instruments, covering an extraordinary range of material (as such, we were extremely hard to categorize, and thus difficult to book).

Reflecting his intellect and interest in life, philosophy and spirituality, Stan delved into areas of thought that tangentially influenced his approach to the guitar. One such influence was Eastern philosophy... which included the study of zen calligraphy.

It was during these days that Stan gave me the handmade manuscript you see scanned in this PDF. He had inked the entire work by hand on traditional parchment paper. A glance through the work reveals that it wasn't quite a finished work — Stan had scratched out the occasional word or sentence, pencilling in corrections, and killing an entire paragraph at one point.

Clearly he was passing on the product of many many hours of painstaking work, taking a pass on fulfilling his original vision of it. Why had Stan given the manuscript to me? Perhaps he felt that he had taken the project as far as he wanted... perhaps the entire point of the work was as a way to practice his calligraphy... perhaps he was simply inspired by some new interest and felt that he had given the book all the time it deserved. I may never know the answer to that.

Nonetheless, I felt honored by the gift, and have safeguarded it all these years. With the advent of scanning technology years ago, the idea of producing a PDF of the book came to me, but it took many years (and just happening to run across the manuscript in my file cabinet on a day when I had time to finally scan the pages one by one) for it to happen.

So here you have a gifted guitarist's vision of the instrument as it was in 1975, when he was still in his early 20s. I can say with confidence that Stanley's awareness of the guitar, of music, and how he would communicate all that has evolved greatly in the ensuing years. Nonetheless, this manuscript stands as a timeless and accurate presentation of the basics of the guitar, and also as a work of calligraphic art in and of itself.

Please enjoy this work... I certainly have for many years.

~~~~ Jeff Foster  
StringDancer.com  
March 8, 2017