



The Guitar Method Based on  
the Laws of Body Learning

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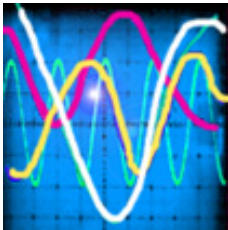
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April 6, 2010

Vol 218

## Feature Article

### The Learning Curve of Various Styles of Guitar (Part II: Strumming & Singing)



Strumming & Singing:

Being a "strum & sing" player is pretty much the entry level for being a guitar player.

I have to say that the first time I knew I needed to play the guitar was when a family friend showed up at our house with her guitar. I watched her move her fingers around the neck (chords) and make the sound with her other hand (strum) and it was the most magical thing I had ever seen. I knew I had to learn how to do that. I started teaching myself from a book, and practicing two to three hours a day. I learned it rather quickly.

This ability to strum and sing is what I call "first base" in guitar. Anyone can get to first base, but not everyone can get there by themselves. Many folks do need the guidance of a teacher to learn to strum, sing, and most importantly, change chords smoothly.

However, many students, even though they take lessons, fail to learn how to strum and sing, and changing chords smoothly without losing the beat. This is because of incompetent teachers... teachers that simply do not know how to deal with someone who seems to be completely unable to move their fingers into the necessary shapes of each chord and move them in time with the beat. The problems always has to do with excessive tension generated in the large muscles of the shoulder and upper body from improper attempts to utilize undeveloped finger and hand muscles. "Correct Practice" is the key to eliminating this tension.

Another overlooked problem for beginners is this: it is exceedingly difficult to sing a rhythmically complex melody over chords that are being played to a steady, basic beat. Teachers take this skill for granted and do

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not appreciate its complexity, and do not break it down in the proper way for students. I do this very thing in my book, [“The Path Level One: Chords & Rhythm”](#).

I want everyone to know that they can learn to strum and sing easily if they practice correctly. The methods I have created in “The Principles” and “The Path” work for everyone who uses them; no exceptions. There is no longer any reason for anyone to not learn to strum and sing well. The only reason for failure now is simply not knowing about, or not properly using these methods.

When we understand how to practice, becoming a “strummer & singer” can be accomplished in about 3 – 6 months with about 20 min to a half hour a day practice time.

If you are having trouble getting to first base with guitar, I strongly suggest you watch these free videos. They will explain to you why you are having trouble getting somewhere with guitar, and what to do about it.

Free Videos to watch:

[Intro to The Principles of Correct Practice for Guitar](#)  
[Your First Perfect Lesson](#)  
[The Secret of Changing Chords](#)

The Bottom Line on Strumming & Singing:

Time Required: 3 – 6 months with about 20 minutes-30 minutes a day of Correct Practice.

Tools Required: the basic first position chords, basic strum patterns

Recommended Resources:

[“The Principles of Correct Practice for Guitar” book](#)  
[“The Principles of Correct Practice for Guitar” DVD](#)  
[“The Guitar Principles Path Level One: Chords & Rhythm” book](#)  
[“How to Play the House of the Rising Sun” \(online course\)](#)  
[“Chord Confusion” Free Article](#)  
[“Basic Chords” Free Article](#)  
[“Practicing Chord Changes” Free Article](#)

Advanced Strumming & Singing:

**Did You Know That You Can Make Money Selling "The Principles" Through Amazon? (Lots of People Already Are)**



All you need is a website and an Amazon.com account. To join the Amazon Associate Program and start making money right away by selling Guitar Principles books, go to Amazon and join their Associate Program now:  
<https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/>

After learning the basic chords that are played in the first position on the guitar, many players are happy to just keep learning more songs that use those chords. However, sooner or later they will run into songs that require more complex chords, and many of those will be some type of bar chord played up the neck.

Learning these bar chords presents a new technical challenge that stops the progress of many players. Again, ineffective teaching and practice methods are to blame. The correct and best way of learning bar chords is given in my essay "[Easy Bar Chords](#)", which for many who have read it, has enabled them to do bar chords for the first time in their lives.

If we practice bar chords correctly, we can handle them easily with another 6 to 9 months of reasonably consistent practice, spending 20 min to a half hour a day. After that period of vertical growth, we have the possibility of continuous horizontal growth afterwards, learning more songs and using the same chords and strum patterns. Other techniques such as bass runs and hammers and pulls will make our playing even more attractive.

Whether we stick with the basic chords, or continue on to learn the more complex chord shapes, once we learn them, we've got them. Like riding a bike, once you can do them, you do not lose your ability to handle chords as time goes on even if you do not play for awhile.

Oh, one more thing – there are two ways to go about learning the advanced aspects of strumming and singing. You can do it alongside learning to read music, or you can work from tabs. Obviously, working from tabs is quicker, and learning to read will give you more musical understanding as time goes by.

I recommend you do both if you have the time. If not, go with tabs. Just make sure your technique is good as you learn these new and more complex movements. Your left hand should be trained with the [Left Hand Foundation](#) from "[The Principles](#)" (see video). Once you can do the movements taught here, all bass runs and other types of scale work will become easy.

The Bottom Line on Advanced Strumming & Singing:

Time Required: A year or so beyond the initial start up time to reach "First Base Strumming & Singing"

Tools Required: the basic movable (barre chords) basic strum patterns, bass runs.

Recommended Resources:

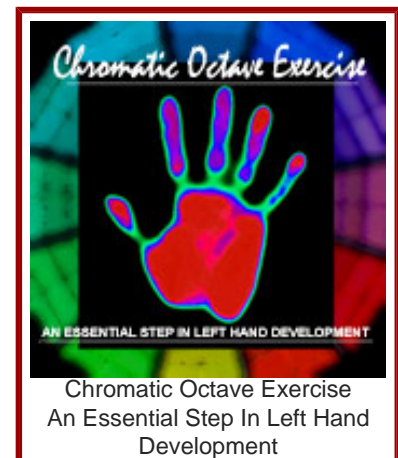
["Easy Bar Chords" Free Article](#)

["The Principles of Correct Practice for Guitar" book](#) (the Left hand Foundation Exercises)

["The Principles of Correct Practice for Guitar" DVD](#) (the Left hand Foundation Exercises)

["Hammers & Pulls According to "The Principles" ebook](#)

[Mel Bay Note by Note: According to "The Principles" online course](#) (teaches note reading also)



[“How to Play the House of the Rising Sun” \(online course\)](#)

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## Fingerpicking

If we wish to expand our abilities to include fingerpicking as well as strumming our chords, that is much more demanding. Players who have acquired too much tension in the arms and hands from bad practice will find it nearly impossible to control their fingers as they try to learn fingerpicking.

The right hand exercises in [“The Principles of Correct Practice for Guitar”](#) will give you real control and independence in each finger, which will open the door to real power and speed with the right hand fingers. From there, the [“Guitar Principles Classical/Fingerstyle Course”](#) will give you a wonderful foundation in all the basic right hand techniques and patterns you will need. Then, you can easily learn whatever you wish, and will be able to effectively use all the other resources for fingerstyle/classical guitar on the market.

If we know how to practice correctly, wonderful fingerpicking ability can be gained in 6 months to a year with about 45 minutes to an hour a day.

The Bottom Line on FingerPicking:

Time Required: 6 months to a year, 45min –1hr a day

Tools Required: ability to control each finger independently of the others, keeping hand and arm tension to a minimum. Learning a number of standard picking patterns and runs to use between chords.

Recommended Resources:

[“The Principles of Correct Practice for Guitar” book](#) (FingerStyle Foundation Exercises)

[“The Principles of Correct Practice for Guitar” DVD](#) (FingerStyle Foundation Exercises)

[“The Guitar Principles Classical/Fingerstyle Course” \(online course in 6 parts\)](#)

[“How to Play the House of the Rising Sun” \(online course\)](#)

Go to: [The Learning Curve of Various Styles of Guitar \(Part I\)](#)

### The Principles DVD On Sale! Lowest Price Ever!

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## Guitar Principles Blog

### 3 Responses to “Playing From The String: The Little Known Secret of Guitar Mastery”

[Read the full article here...](#)

**Don Smith says:**

Jamie, thanks for posting this. I have a strong suspicion your guidance here is going to have a significant impact on my playing. I think this is exactly what I needed.

Any similar advice for a way-to-tense left hand? I'm not breaking as many E strings as before (doing lots of bending), but it doesn't feel like I'm out of the woods yet. Then again, if in fact my whole upper body is tense, maybe the technique you describe here will help my left hand too. Thanks again!

**Milton Wood says:**

A remarkable analysis that has in-depth implications. Not only speed of play, but also how to coax all of the subtle variations of sound that a string can produce! Outstanding! (I am reminded of another metaphor in sailing. When I learned to “feel” the wind in the main sail of my boat, the boat not only “came alive,” but I was able to literally extend my consciousness into the sail thus pulling all of the energy the sail and wind offered into the boat's performance.)

**Jamie Andreas says:**

Thanks for your comments Milton and Don.

Don, all the Foundation Exercises in “[The Principles Of Correct Practice For Guitar](#)” build these most necessary conditions in the left hand touch on the strings.

The bottom line is this: there is a particular way that the strings should be touched, whether right hand, left hand, or pick. If we do not touch the strings this way, it will not be possible to play to the level of ability we are capable of.

This truth of playing guitar is little known, and less understood. And, even if talked about, there is no method to actually put this training in the hands, except for my methods, contained in “The Principles” and my other work.

It is here for anyone who wants it!

## House Of The Rising Sun Instant Download

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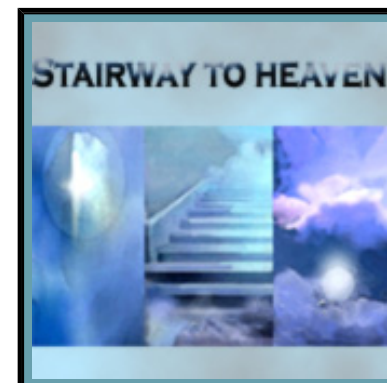
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You can learn about ["The Principles" here...](#)

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Follow Jamie on Twitter!	<p>Top Tweets! The Best Of Jamie's "Twitter Teaching"...</p> 
	<p>"An Introduction To The Principles Of Correct Practice For Guitar"....a quick video that could change your life! <a href="http://ow.ly/1uljH">http://ow.ly/1uljH</a></p>
	<p>An actor pursues lifelong dream of playing guitar WELL! His personal journey and happy ending... <a href="http://ow.ly/1t961">http://ow.ly/1t961</a></p>
	<p>Guitar Secret: "Fast Pull Offs Across Strings"...a common error analyzed and corrected. <a href="http://ow.ly/1s6E6">http://ow.ly/1s6E6</a></p>
	<p>To think you play the guitar just with your fingers is like thinking you walk just with your toes! <a href="http://ow.ly/1rBT8">http://ow.ly/1rBT8</a></p>
	<p>Can't count rhythms, or strum and sing with smooth chord changes on guitar? Here's the answer... <a href="http://ow.ly/1ulGA">http://ow.ly/1ulGA</a></p>



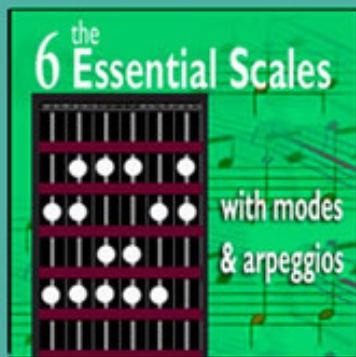
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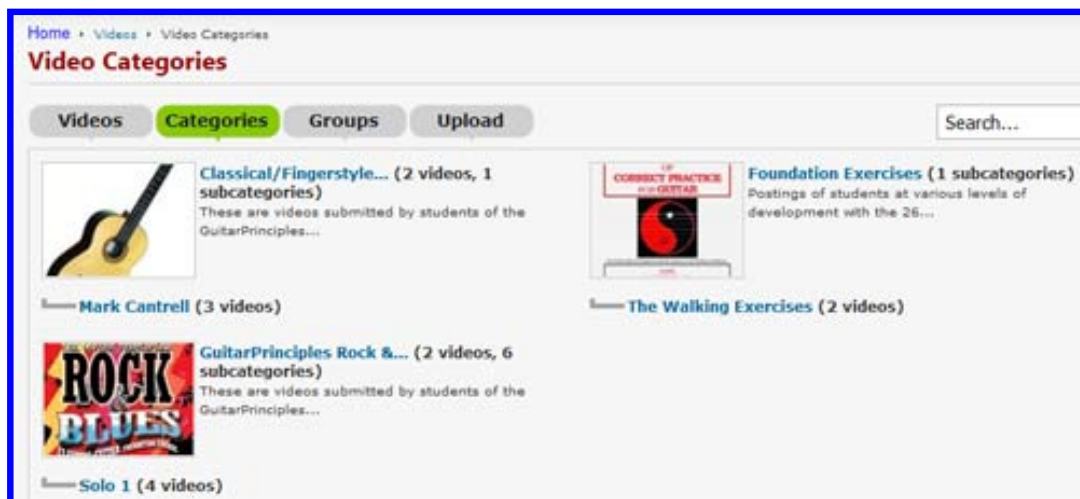
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[See video and check out further info...](#)



## Guitar Principles Video Gallery Will "The Principles" Work For Me?



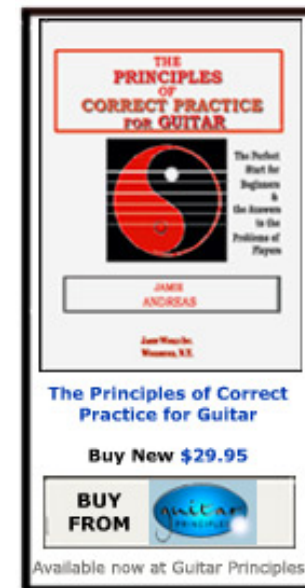
Remember when you were in school and the teacher would say "make sure you show your work!". Well, I always liked that point of view, because it is by observing and understanding the process of learning that we gain control over our own ability to learn and grow. Even better, when we observe the actual process of other people's work we can really accelerate our own rate of growth. This is because when we learn any new skill, 90% of the problems we are going to have are the same problems everyone else is having!

Here at Guitar Principles, we love to "show our work"...actually, we love to show our students work - and the results of that work! It helps us make the point that when a guitar student uses Guitar Principles instructional material, they learn and they become able to PLAY! That is because our lessons are unlike any others you will find, because we do not merely show you what you need to be able to do, and then leave you on your own, no, we show you how to become able to do it, and that means how to practice that material.

Please stop by our new [VIDEO GALLERY](#) and see the work being done by students of Guitar Principles. You will find students of every level of ability, some learning classical, some learning rock, and some just fixing their basic technique. And more than that, you can trace their practice process by [visiting the Guitar Principles Improvement Workshop](#), where I give feedback and personal guidance to students at each step of their practice on a particular lesson.

I want each student to see what everyone else is going through, the good and the bad, and to use what they see in their own practice. I also want them to see that when we practice the right way, when we do what I call "correct practice", we will learn, we will get better, in fact, we cannot fail to get better.

Alexander, a new student in our Guitar Principles Workshop, after observing the work that another student was making in the important matter of separating and strengthening the left hand fingers, said this....



"I'm a newbie here and just spending some time reading some of the postings. One of the great things about being part of this community is getting to see other people at different levels actually practice. I mean, how often do you really get a peek at someone's practice. Usually I see players wailing away and wishing I could do it. Anyway, I really enjoy, and see and learn a lot watching you. The separation and movement is really clear to see.

I have a tendency to want to move on quickly, but it's very clear working this way that one practice area leads to another. It really make sense to me that if can gain the separation (like you have it) no-tempo, it can lead to me doing it that way @60 and so on. It's funny, it sounds so simple "practice slowly, get it, then move on" ...duh...so simple yet almost revolutionary."

Alexander

If you want to kick your guitar playing into high gear, no matter what your previous history with learning guitar, [visit the Guitar Principles Video Gallery](#) and see what folks just like you have accomplished, and you will see that you can do it too!

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### Essentials Top 3 Articles at Guitar Principles

The Least You Need To Know!

**Guitar Practice: 5 Biggest Mistakes Guitar Students Make!** - Reasons that prevent students from getting to their next level of playing ability...you just may recognize yourself here.

**The Importance Of Repertoire** - Over the years, I have met many guitar students who could not actually play anything well or completely even though they had years of lessons and spent thousands of dollars! Do you have a repertoire, a group of songs that you can play? If not, here's how to start!

**Natural Talent** - You Don't Need Any To Play Guitar Well!

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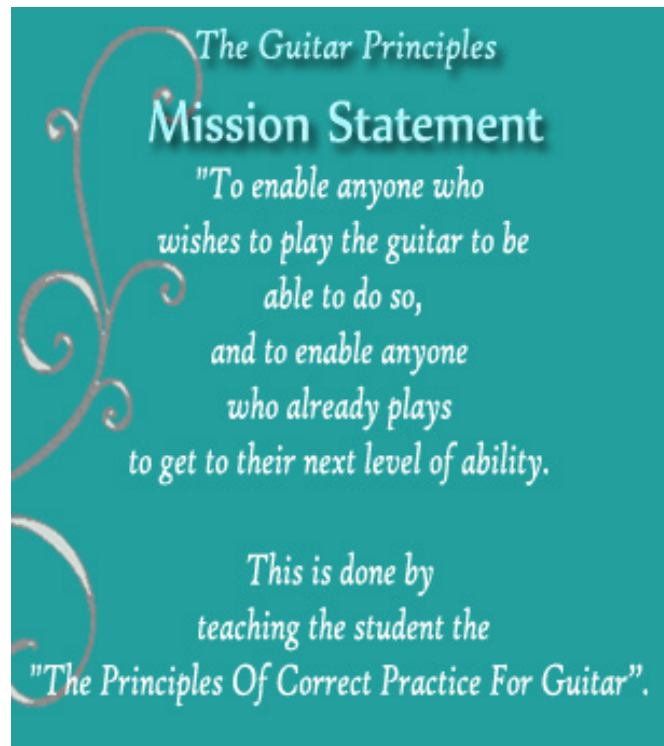
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Thomas, from North British Columbia, Canada has been stuck in his playing for years. Not anymore! A week's intensive study with Jamie has raised his playing to a new level, and now he knows how to keep the progress going!

[Jamie teaches any level student and all styles of guitar. Find out the various plans available....](#)



Get a **FREE video lesson** on "Your First Perfect Guitar Lesson"! This lesson contains the most essential information and methods that a beginner must have to be successful in learning the guitar.



***Thanks for reading, and happy practicing!.....Jamie***

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