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Avoid These Major Learning Mistakes Most Guitarists Make

By Jason Loup

Mistakes are somewhat inevitable when learning to play the guitar. These include playing the wrong note to developing a bad practice habit. One is minor and the other is major. Obviously, major mistakes are more important to avoid. Avoiding these types of mistakes will allow to progress at a much faster rate. Let's look at some common, major mistakes most learning guitarists make and how to avoid them.

Most guitarists in the earlier stages of learning practice too much, believe it or not. They often think they have to devote hours at a time to the guitar. This simply is not true. Ever heard of quality over quantity? It applies here. Let's say for example that you can devote a total of one hour per day to guitar. It's better to have four 15 minute sessions than one long session. There are several reasons for this. One, practicing for one hour straight will lead to frustration and a loss of focus. Frustration is the number one reason people quit guitar. Two, it's a fact that the brain retains more from shorter bursts of practicing. So having shorter sessions with more intense focus will greatly benefit your learning guitar.

Another major mistake is playing too fast. What I mean here is learning a piece of music, whether it is a song, scale, chord progression, whatever...then trying to play it at too fast a pace. If you're just learning the piece, you will not be able to play it like a pro yet. This is a very common and major mistake. Playing too fast too soon is a sure path to frustration as well as a bad practice habit. To correct this, play the piece as slowly as you need to play it correctly. Then scale up as needed. This will develop a good practice habit and eliminate frustration with your progress. A quick side note on speed. When you try to play too fast too soon, you greatly increase the amount of tension in your left (fret) hand, forearm, upper arm and shoulder. It also contributes to misalignment in your back as the tense left shoulder blade exerts pressure on the right. Continuing to do this will eventually become painful and could lead to injury.

Playing music that is too complicated for your current level is also a major mistake. I know everyone wants to learn to play their favorite songs. But if you are a relatively new guitar player, how would you know if the song is complicated or not? Trying to play pieces too complicated for your current level will certainly lead to frustration. See a recurring theme? Many just press on until the guitar looks like a chore rather than fun. Believe me; you can get plenty of enjoyment out of playing simple pieces of music. Start simple, and then as your skills improve, you will be able to play more complicated songs.

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I bet you have noticed a recurring theme here about starting simple and building on that. The other thing I bet you have noticed is that avoiding these mistakes will greatly reduce frustration. Getting enjoyment out of guitar playing is your number one priority. By avoiding these major learning mistakes, you will enjoy guitar more and learn much faster.

About the author: Jason Loup is an accomplished guitarist with over 14 years experience playing guitar. For a limited time, you can download his 4 part, professional quality, beginning guitar course absolutely free at <http://www.TheGuitarUniversity.com>

The Difference Between A Lead Guitar And A Rhythm Guitar

By Gray Rollins

Lead guitar and Rhythm guitar. You've heard about both, but aren't quite sure of the difference between the two. That's understandable, as most beginners (myself included when I was at that stage) are confused by all of the different terms used to describe guitar related things. In this lesson, we'll go over both the Lead and Rhythm guitar.

The Lead guitar

To put it simply, the Lead guitarist in a band is the one who plays melodies, single notes (and not as many chords), riffs and solos.

Lead guitarists are responsible for providing the most noticeable guitar sound of the song. As a result, lead guitarists must master several more techniques than rhythm guitarists must. These techniques include the basics such as hammer-ons, pull-offs, bends and slides, plus more advanced techniques like arpeggios and trills.

Lead guitarists are, essentially, in the spotlight. They have to be very skilled, as if they mess up, it'll be pretty noticeable to those listening. They also must be able to improvise—they must be able to come up with catchy riffs, solid solos and good melodies. It takes a lot of practice and knowledge to become a skilled Lead guitarist.

The Rhythm guitar

You're probably thinking by now that the Rhythm guitar is much easier to play than the Lead guitar is. That isn't an accurate statement, though. Rhythm guitarists, too, must master several things that Lead guitarists really don't have to.

Rhythm guitarists are responsible for the timing (rhythm) of the music. They must play the chords that hold the music together. Without a good Rhythm guitarist, the music as a whole suffers no matter how good the Lead guitarist is.

Rhythm guitarists must master the ability to switch quickly and efficiently between chords. They must also be able to strum well and must master the basic hammer-on, pull-off, slide, and bend techniques. Rhythm guitarists must also make sure that what they are playing is in sync with what the drummer and bassist are playing

While Rhythm guitarists play an integral role in the music, they are often overlooked. This is because the Lead guitarist's playing (which is usually amped louder so that it can be heard over the drums and Rhythm guitar) often overshadows what the Rhythm guitarist does.

Which should I learn to play?

The most skilled guitarists, in my opinion, are those who have the ability to play both Lead and Rhythm guitar. For that reason, it is worth mastering both styles of guitar. That is to say, it is a terrific idea to master not just the techniques associated with Lead guitar (all the basics plus trills, arpeggios and other

advanced techniques) but also those associated with Rhythm guitar(the basics plus quick chord switching, good strumming and good timing). Those guitarists who have mastered both techniques are highly skilled musicians.

Gray Rollins is a featured writer for Guitars Land. If you're interested in learning more about guitars, visit <http://www.guitarsland.com/leadguitar/> and <http://www.guitarsland.com/electric/>

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