

# ULTIMATE BEGINNER GUIDE



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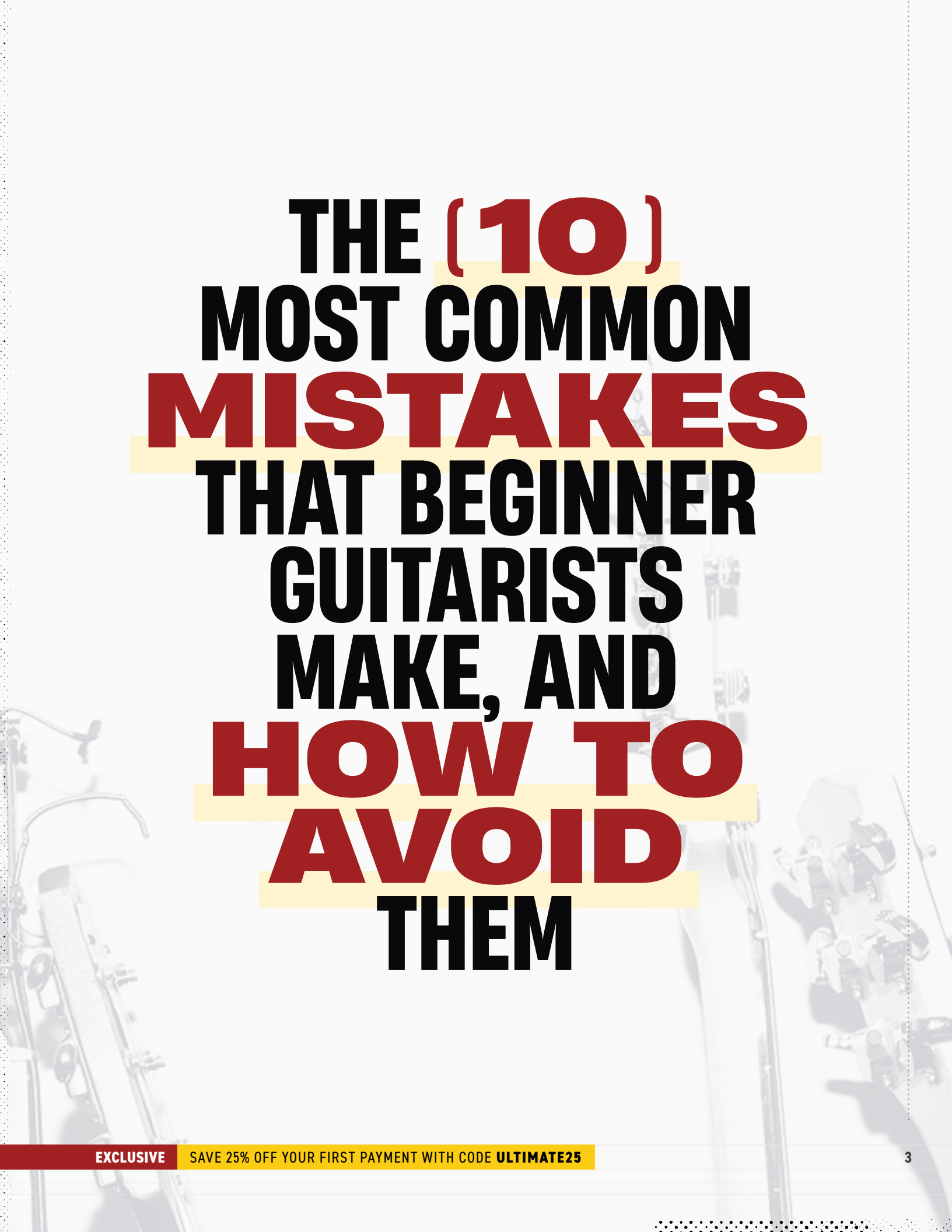
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**THE (10)  
MOST COMMON  
MISTAKES  
THAT BEGINNER  
GUITARISTS  
MAKE, AND  
HOW TO  
AVOID  
THEM**

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# 1



## 10 MOST COMMON MISTAKES

# NOT GETTING YOUR GUITAR A PROFESSIONAL SETUP

Getting a professional guitar setup is a crucial step for any beginner guitarist. Beginner guitarists often struggle with pressing down strings, experiencing fret buzz, or finding it difficult to navigate the fretboard. A setup by a skilled technician ensures that the action (string height) is just right, making it easier to fret chords and notes, ultimately making it easier to play. The technician will adjust the intonation, ensuring that your guitar is in tune across the entire fretboard.

A well-set-up guitar can make the learning process smoother and less frustrating. When your instrument responds predictably and consistently, you can focus more on developing your skills. Playing a guitar that feels and sounds great can be incredibly motivating, making you more likely to practice regularly and stay committed to your musical journey.

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# 2



10 MOST COMMON MISTAKES

## NOT TUNING YOUR GUITAR BEFORE EVERY PRACTICE SESSION

Tuning up before every practice session is very important. It develops a good ear for pitch accuracy and sets the stage for effective practice. Starting with a well-tuned guitar helps you train your fingers to produce the right notes and chords, reinforcing the foundations of good technique, and leading to more enjoyable and productive practice. It allows you to focus on refining your skills and exploring your creativity without the distraction of dissonant or out-of-tune sounds.

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# 3

10 MOST COMMON MISTAKES

## NOT HOLDING THE GUITAR PROPERLY

It's essential for beginners to learn the correct way to hold the guitar, including hand placement on the neck and body, as it forms the foundation for developing good technique, speed, and agility. When beginners neglect proper hand and finger placement, they often struggle with fretting chords accurately, causing buzzing or muted strings.

Good posture is also important. Keeping your back straight, resisting the urge to slouch, staying as relaxed as possible, and even investing in a good practice chair all contribute to a better learning experience.



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# 4

## USING TOO MUCH FINGER PRESSURE ON THE FRETBOARD

Beginner guitarists often make the mistake of applying excessive pressure when fretting notes and chords on the fretboard, thinking it's necessary to produce a clear sound. However, using too much pressure can result in hand fatigue and discomfort, making it difficult to play for extended periods and hindering progress. Also, pressing too hard can cause the strings to go out of tune more frequently, as it can bend the strings slightly and affect their pitch. Learning to apply just enough pressure to cleanly fret the strings is what beginner guitarists should be aiming for. It not only helps conserve energy and prevent physical strain, but also allows for faster and more accurate chord changes, and smoother transitions between notes.







# 5

10 MOST COMMON MISTAKES

# PLAYING TOO FAST

Many beginner guitarists play too fast while practicing. Playing at a slow speed is a much more desirable strategy. When you start slow, you can focus on precision, proper finger placement, and synchronization between your fretting and picking hands. This deliberate pace allows you to build muscle memory effectively, ensuring that you can execute complex movements accurately as you progress to faster tempos. Slow practice helps you internalize rhythm and timing, which is essential for playing with a steady and consistent tempo. As you gradually increase the speed of your practice sessions, you'll find that your overall playing ability improves more rapidly.

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# 6



## 10 MOST COMMON MISTAKES

# NOT PRACTICING CONSISTENTLY

Consistent practice is the cornerstone of progress for beginner guitarists. It is through regular, dedicated practice that fundamental skills and proficiency are ultimately achieved. Playing the guitar requires muscle memory, finger dexterity, and a keen sense of timing, all of which can only be honed through repetition and dedication. Consistent practice fosters discipline and perseverance, which are essential traits for any aspiring musician.

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# 7

10 MOST COMMON MISTAKES

# TRYING TO LEARN TOO MANY THINGS AT ONCE

Attempting to work on too many things at once as a beginner guitarist is a common and significant mistake. The guitar offers a vast array of techniques, chords, scales, and songs to explore, which can be overwhelming for someone just starting. Focusing on too many aspects simultaneously can lead to frustration, slower progress, and confusion. It's more effective to concentrate on mastering one skill or technique at a time, gradually building a strong foundation before moving on to the next challenge. This approach allows for better retention of what's being learned, ensuring that each skill becomes an integral part of your playing.



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10

# NOT MEMORIZING WHAT YOU LEARN

Memorizing what you're learning as a beginner guitarist is very important. When you commit chords, scales, and songs to memory, you develop a deeper understanding of the instrument. Memorization enhances your playing confidence, allowing you to focus on expression and musicality, rather than struggling to recall what you've learned. Simply following tablature or notation, while necessary at first, can become a hinderance or crutch, and prevent you from truly internalizing the skills and concepts that make a great guitarist.



8



# 9

10 MOST COMMON MISTAKES

## NOT FOCUSING ON STEADY TIME AND TEMPO DURING PRACTICE

Practicing with steady time and tempo is absolutely crucial for beginner guitarists. It forms the backbone of musicality and precision in your playing. A consistent tempo provides structure and coherence to the music, making it sound smoother and more polished. It's also a foundational skill for playing with other musicians, as everyone relies on a steady beat to stay in sync. When you practice with a metronome or drum track, you develop a strong internal sense of rhythm, which is essential for smooth chord changes, accurate picking, and clean strumming.



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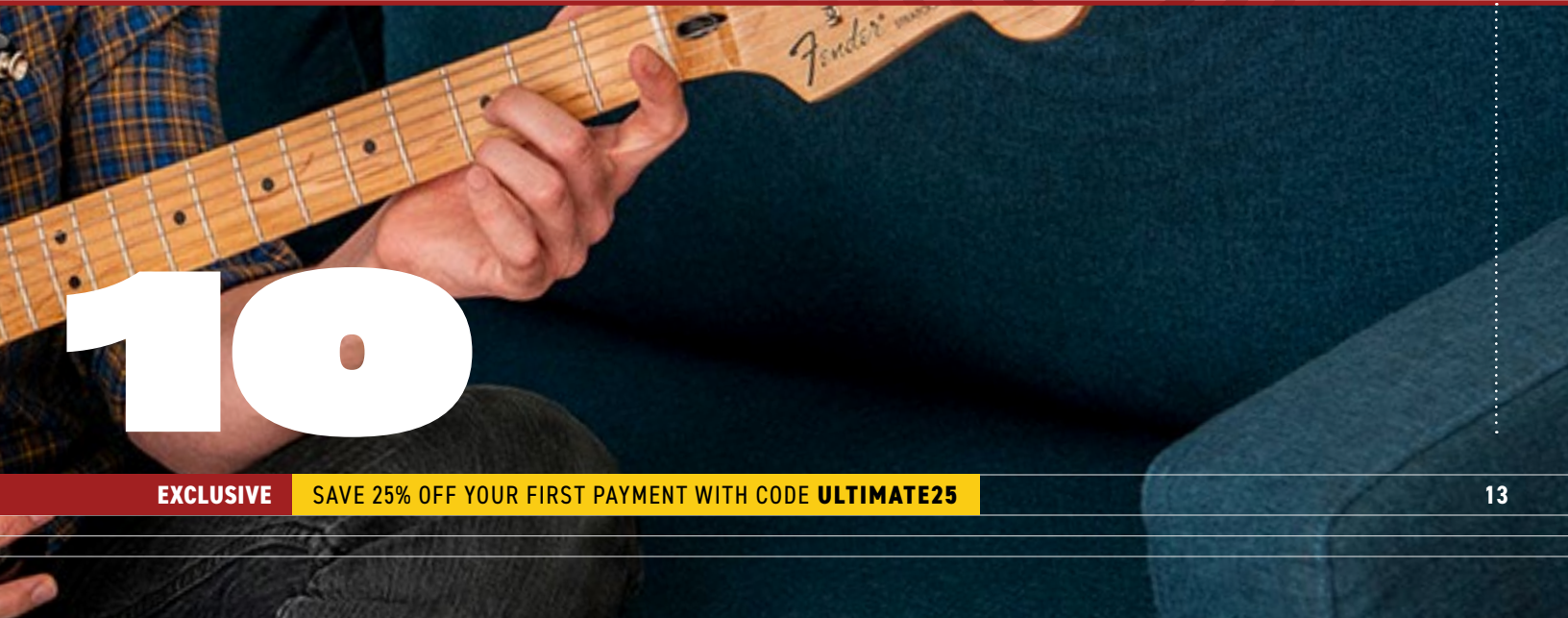
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# NOT LEARNING THE NOTES ON THE FRETBOARD

Knowing the notes on the fretboard makes it SO much easier to locate chords, scales, and notes anywhere on the neck quickly. Instead of hunting for an F#, guessing, and playing the wrong note, you can go straight to it. Plus, you'll be able to talk in the language of music with other musicians rather than saying, "It goes like this." Knowing the note names is a part of music theory, and that's a powerful tool.

**CHECK OUT  
THIS TUTORIAL  
ON GUITAR TRICKS  
TO GET STARTED**



# 10





# HOW TO PRACTICE

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## HOW TO PRACTICE

- ▶ Begin by working through the Fundamentals Level 1 Course on Guitar Tricks. Spend roughly 1/3 of your practice session working your way through the course. Do not skip lessons! Only proceed to the next lesson once you've fully digested the material and/or you can play the example confidently. Once you've completed Level 1, move on to Fundamentals Level 2.
- ▶ The most important thing you can do as a beginning guitarist is to commit to a steady and consistent practice routine. Ideally, you'll want to aim for 1 hour per day of focused practice with no distractions. Of course, this isn't always possible, so fitting in 30, 20, or even 15 minutes of focused, consistent practice per day will still yield strong progress.
- ▶ Spend another third of your practice time learning a Made Easy song on Guitar Tricks. The Made Easy tutorials teach popular songs using open chords and a simple strum pattern. This is a great opportunity to work on chord changes, timing and groove, and strumming.



## HOW TO PRACTICE

- ▶ The final third of your practice time should be devoted to exercises that work on the basic mechanics of playing the guitar. Some examples are a chromatic single note warmup, playing scales with a metronome, drilling chord changes, or playing any small chunk of music that you find challenging, slowly and with lots of repetition.
- ▶ Learning the guitar takes time and patience. Don't get discouraged by initial challenges or slow progress. Focus on quality practice over quantity. Concentrate on improving specific aspects of your playing during each session rather than mindlessly strumming or plucking. Remember that persistence and dedication are key to becoming a skilled player.





# SAMPLE PRACTICE ROUTINE

(60 MINUTES)

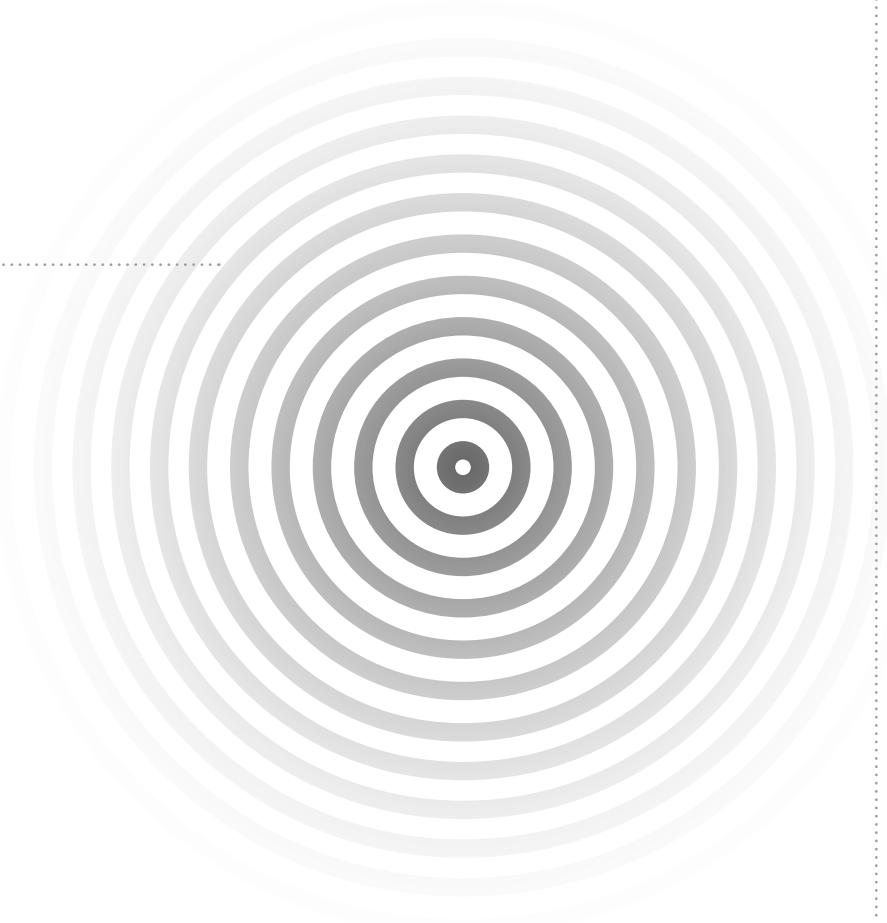
## NOTE

IF YOU ONLY HAVE 30 MINUTES TO PRACTICE, THEN EITHER CUT EACH SECTION'S TIME IN HALF, OR SPREAD THE ROUTINE ACROSS 2 PRACTICE SESSIONS.



## 5 MINUTES

Play through a warm up exercise to get going





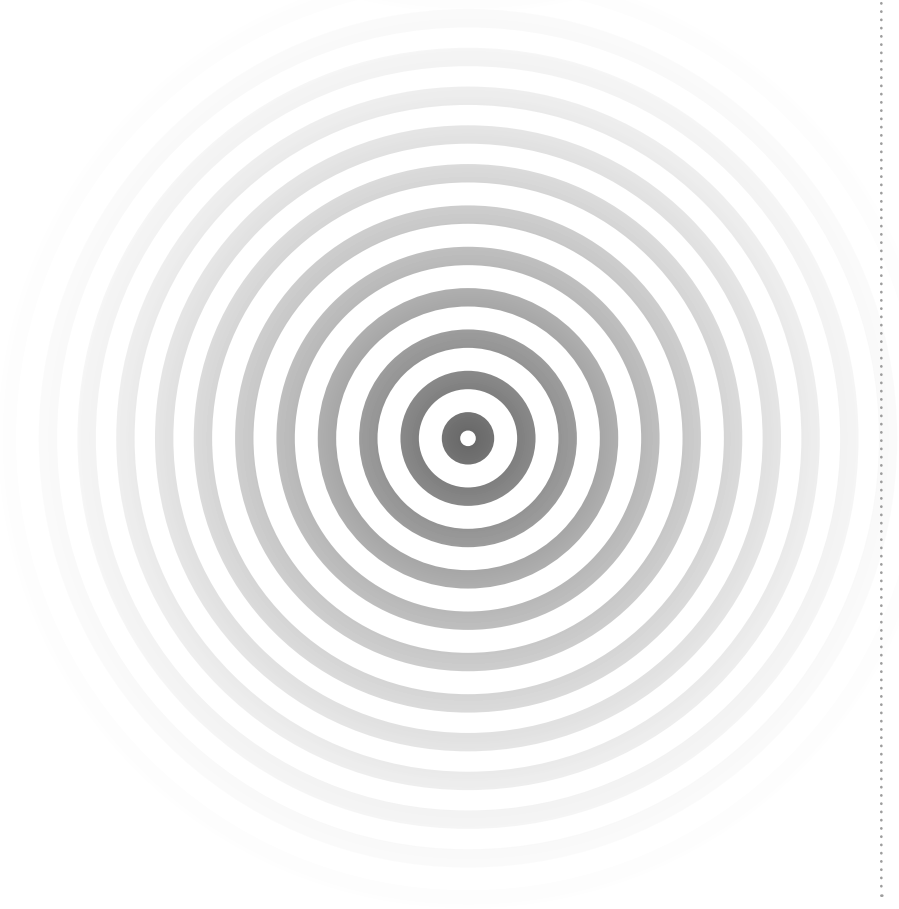
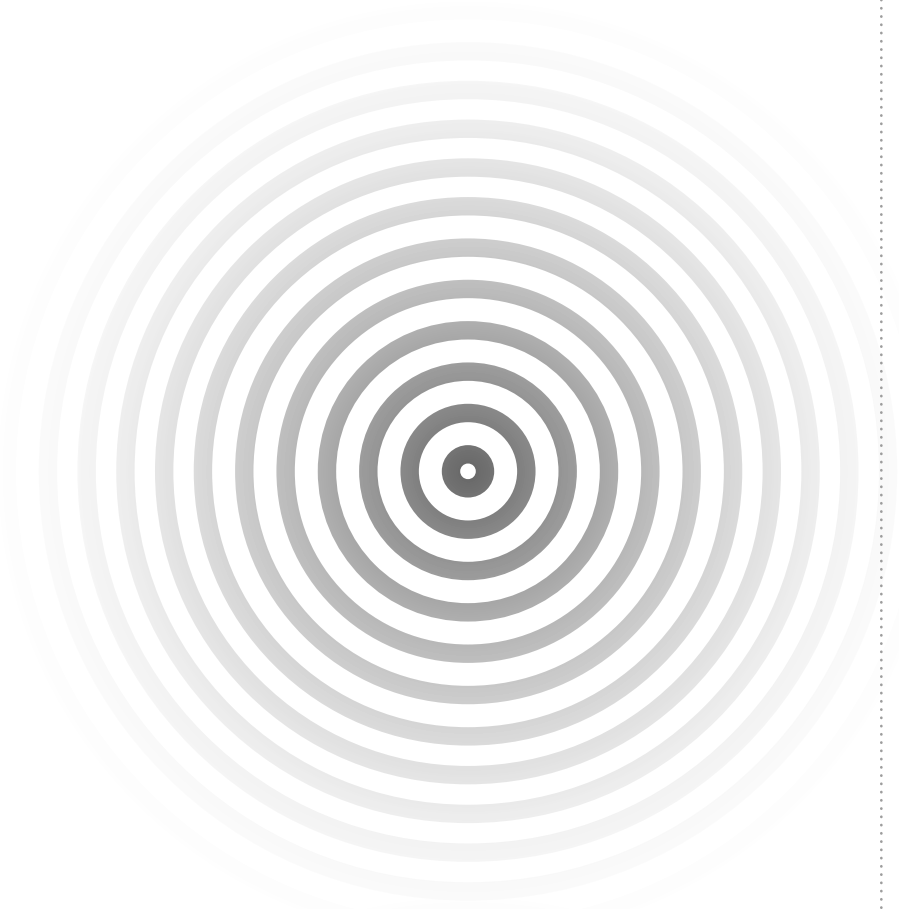
HOW TO PRACTICE

▶ **20** MINUTES

Continue working through a lesson from the Fundamentals Course.

▶ **20** MINUTES

Continue learning and practicing a Made Easy song of your choice.



# 8 MINUTES

Practice any challenging chord change (eg - G to D) by strumming the chord 4 times, then switching to the next chord. Repeat at a slow tempo.

## REMAINING TIME

Practice playing the Pentatonic Scale (eg A minor pentatonic scale) with a metronome. Play through each note up the scale, then back down. Start slowly, and as you get more comfortable, raise the tempo slightly.



# BEGINNER CHORD CHART

Use this handy chord chart to begin learning your chords. Start with E minor, G major, and C major, as they are the easiest of the bunch. Follow the legend for correct finger placement.

Pick 2 or 3 chords, and spend 5-10 minutes per practice session fretting the chord, checking that each note rings out clearly and cleanly, making any necessary finger adjustments, then taking your hands off the fretboard to repeat the process.

If you do this consistently, you'll find it easier and easier to fret the chords quickly and accurately. In no time, you'll get to the fun part - playing songs and making music!



# BEGINNER CHORD CHART

**A Major**      **A Minor**      **B Major**      **B Minor**      **C Major**

**C Minor**      **D Major**      **D Minor**      **E Major**      **E Minor**

**F Major**      **F Minor**      **G Major**      **G Minor**

**FINGER LEGEND**

- I** INDEX
- M** MIDDLE
- R** RING
- P** PINKY
- OPEN STRING
- ×** AVOID PLAYING

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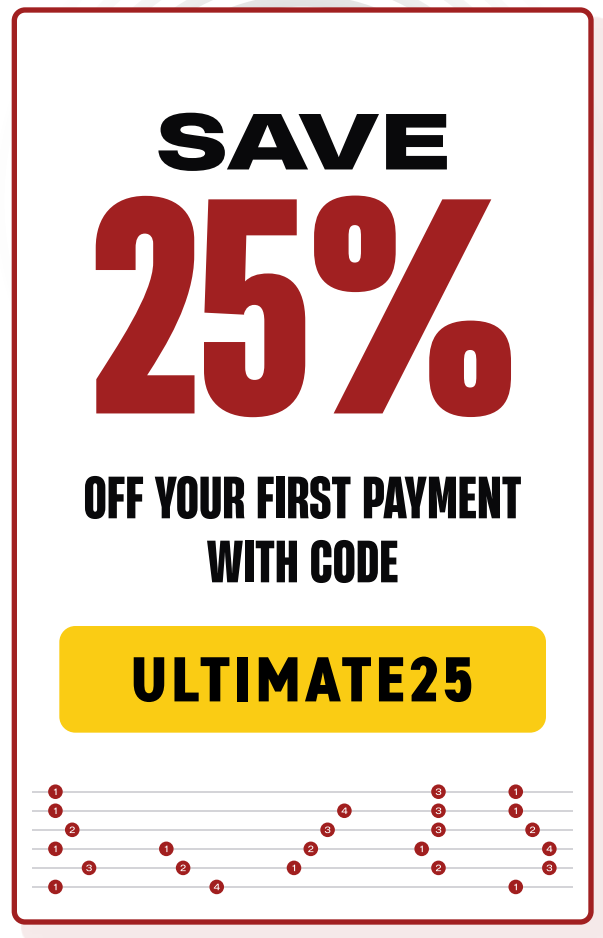
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# READY TO DIVE IN?

## Get A Full Access Guitar Tricks Subscription

### Why You'll Love Us

- You're never alone on your guitar journey. Our dedicated team of instructors is on standby to help you overcome trouble spots.
- With our step-by-step program, you can go at your own pace and simply follow along to easy bite-sized lessons that incorporate real music rather than stale exercises and drills.
- Playing songs is part of the fun, so we've created Made Easy song versions to help you understand the basics as you work on your technique.



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