

## Day 4: Adulting and Guitar Playing

→ 9 Life Hacks to help you structure your Practice so you make gains and still slay at your job and life.



Ok welcome to Day 4 of my Metal Guitar Bootcamp. So we've been quite intense and quite heavy on exercises, drills and content and that's been by design. You might be feeling a little overwhelmed, and a little like, ok how the hell do I fit all this stuff in and how do I structure my practice so that I can get results and keep getting results sustainably over time.

So today we are going to explore a bunch of super important concepts around how you approach the Guitar. I'll be sharing the Nine Life Hacks to help you structure your Practice so you make Guitar gains and still slay at your job and life. It won't be so much a day of playing and exercises like the last few have which will allow you to integrate. Instead we need to work on this thing, your mind because the difference between someone who makes it with guitar and someone who doesn't is literally all about their psychology and whether they can overcome all of the bullshit that lives in this thing and self actualise into the best version of themselves up here first. It then translates down to the hands and onto the fretboard.

So No. 1 we want to develop what I call the Bulletproof Practice Mindset. This is where you turn into a superhero and excuses, circumstances, anything external to you bounces off of you like bullets hitting Superman's chest. Tired? It doesn't matter. Sick? It doesn't matter. Lost your job? So what. Don't have time? Bullshit, make time. Sore or injured? Work around it. None of these things we tell ourselves that limit us, or hold us back from our goals on the Guitar matter. What does matter is giving your best. Now, yes "your best" is circumstantial and changes week to

week and even day to day. If you are sick, injured, tired then you aren't going to be performing as well as you could on a day where you don't have those things, but all I ever ask of my students is that despite the circumstances, they just give their very best. That they honour the Guitar and that they respect it and this amazing thing that has called to us by giving their very best to it. Not halfassing it, not being lazy, not being disrespectful. Because if there is one thing I've learned, the Guitar will kick your ass, especially if you disrespect it.

No 2. Discipline and playing every day. It is more important to play a little every day than it is to play a few days a week and have insane hours on those few days a week. This is extremely important for your muscle memory and how the hands actually develop and if you want to be a good Metal Guitarist, your hands will go through what I call "technical development periods". These are periods where your hands are growing, changing and learning a new technique and the habits required to fully install it into your subconscious. If you miss in these periods, its like missing a step in a staircase. Its gonna be wobbly and you'll probably stack and hurt yourself! So its really important that you learn to commit to the guitar and you keep yourself accountable. That can be through a number of ways, its a big part of what I do as a teacher for my students but make sure you stay committed, you think long term, you are patient with yourself and the guitar and you stay accountable to it. Now lets actually talk about what happens when you miss days practicing. It doesn't take very long to actually start going backwards and this is one of the main reasons why the Guitar is so hard. Miss one day, ok you wont move forward but you wont really go backwards to much. Miss two and guess what, you start to go backwards. Miss three and it turns into a landslide. There's a famous quote all musicians understand "If I miss one day of practice, I notice it. If I miss two days, the critics notice it. If I miss three days, the audience notices it." So don't be a fool. Dont be one of these rollercoaster Guitarists who go hard on the weekends and put in 6 hour days but then nothing during the week. You're literally wasting your time if you dont pick the thing up every day and do your duty. Get in, get it done and then move on to the rest of your life guilt free knowing you slayed.

No 3 The Skyscraper and the Jenga tower. When you are growing as a Guitarist I tell my students that they are essentially building a Skyscraper or being less dramatic, playing a game of Jenga. You have to build your foundations and make sure they are solid first, and the most important foundation is practicing every day, then its what you do inside of your practice which I will talk about shortly. As you get more advanced and your skyscraper gets taller, if you fuck up your foundations ie practicing daily or not practicing properly, the consequences are actually more severe because what happens when you fall off a mountain vs falling off a step? Its obvious right. So as you get more advanced, the consequences for fucking up become heightened. This keeps you humble and makes sure that you stay in a place of respect for the instrument and the craft and honestly it weeds out the chumps who are in it for the wrong reasons too.

No 4. Stretch out your timeline. Its epic that you've taken action and signed up to this Bootcamp. I love that. I love that you've committed yourself, shown up and put in some work. But what's super important if you want to succeed with Guitar and have it as a cornerstone in your life along with all the other epic shit you have going on is that you can stretch out your thinking

timeline and start thinking in years. This makes the hard days or weeks seem inconsequential for one, but it also settles you down and teaches you one of the most important things: Patience. Guitar and playing to a high level simply takes time. Its not an easy thing to do or unlock in your body and you have to give your body the gift of patience and time. This is why commitment, discipline and accountability are so important as values to master and live by if you want to succeed with Guitar. The best players are able to think in years and at the advanced level its how Guitarists actually talk to each other. I recently jumped on a video call with an insanely high level player out of America who literally said to me about a technique he had developed “yeah so you do this and then you just practice that every day for like a year”. A lot of people struggle with getting through a week of practice let alone an entire year, so its important you mentally stretch out your timeline and at the end of the day, you want to be thinking this way anyway because we want to be playing for the rest of our lives right?!

No. 5 Understand the difference between Playing vs Practicing. If you are noodling and playing stuff you're comfortable with, or just sitting there shredding the same old fucking “comfort licks” you've done for years, YOU AREN'T PRACTICING. You are Playing. Practicing is where you are doing things you aren't comfortable with. Practicing is where you are reaching into your discomfort zone so that you GROW and become a better Guitarist. Playing is not that, it is maintaining what you've got at best. So many players make this mistake, they confuse practice for playing and they wonder why they feel stuck and stagnant and why they aren't getting results. Practice should feel a bit like a workout. When I am practicing, I am fully focused. Any distraction, including an internal mental distraction, knocks me off course and I cant play what I am working on. So its important you understand this distinction and become conscious in your own Guitar time of the difference between Playing and Practicing and when you are making the mistake of Playing instead of Practicing. I've had plenty examples of students who have come to me who are reasonable players but they are stuck and aren't growing. They play the same old comfort licks and try and flex to me with them, but I simply just get them to do a new lick under the pressure of a metronome or backing track and they fall to shit. Most of the time, because they are so conditioned to PLAYING and their egos latch onto the feeling of security the comfort zone gives them, they go straight back into their comfort licks to feel better, but this isn't what the art of Guitar and getting better at the guitar is actually all about. Seek out the discomfort, seek out the growth zone. Focus, work through it and you are guaranteed to get results.

No. 6 The Perfect Practice Plan. One of the biggest problems every Guitarist faces is knowing what to practice. This is where a teacher or a course/program can help. It can give you structure and guidance and tailor a plan to you and your goals. But this isn't easy to do for yourself and YouTube is actually terrible at doing this because you tend to seek out one lesson at a time on the platform and surf between channels trying to find something appropriate and waste a lot of time and energy doing so that could be put to better use just putting in the work on the Guitar. But here is the general rule I give my students about practice. You want to split it into 3 areas.

1. Technique
2. Knowledge
3. Performance

For technique you are working on specific techniques. So for example you might take some of the things that challenged you most in the last 3 days of this Bootcamp and work on them for 10 mins if you only have 30 mins to practice on a given day. This could be for example Gallops for your right hand, legato for your left hand and maybe Alt picking for both of them.

You then move into anything that improves your Knowledge of the instrument. This can include scales. It might be working on theory. Maybe arpeggios/triads. Maybe it's chords. Maybe it's note names up and down the fretboard. The point is to invest time every day into something that improves your Knowledge of the Guitar. Knowledge will give you confidence.

The last area is performance. And I will talk a lot about this part of your practice routine in tomorrow's lesson but this is where you work with backing tracks to actually perform a piece of music. This is usually where you will work on your songs and what I call your "set list". This part of your practice you develop soft skills, and learn flow and keeping your shit together so you dont wipe out under pressure or over think and then crack. Its usually the most fun and rewarding part of your practice as well.

No. 7 Injury management and prevention and the Guit-Athlete mindset. I've seen too many players get hurt playing Guitar over the years. And I'm not even talking about students, I'm talking about how some of my mentors and idols actually develop injuries from over playing or just from not looking after their bodies. I like to think of being a Guitarist is like being an Athlete and I dont think enough people think this way about the Guitar. They think because for the most part you're sitting down at a desk in the modern age, you are resting when you are playing Guitar but its far from the reality. Guitar is very strenuous on the body. You are essentially playing a sport with your arms and the rest of your body goes into a weird twisted and contorted shape to play. So its actually incredibly hard and strenuous on the body. And yes, I have injured myself and have had to manage some scary moments where I had numbness in my hands and tingling for months on end. It led me on an amazing health journey and studying with some incredible health professionals, Physios, Osteos, Personal Trainers and even Doctors to learning more about the body and how to take care of it. Guitar is a sport. If you took up a sport, you would stretch, you would strengthen the muscles you need most to compete in that sport and you'd ensure you recover and rejuvenate so that you can go back out there and perform again. So why wouldn't we do the same things on the Guitar?!

No. 8. Never ever play through frustration. If you get pissed off, which will happen on the Guitar. Take a breathe, put it down, hit the reset button and come back with some respect. If you dont do this, Guitar will claw your face off. It reflects back whatever energy, emotion or intention you bring to it so be very careful with making sure you stay in a good space with it. Remember that Guitar is like a Cat, it is not a Dog. So that means its love and affection is not unconditional like a dog. Its like a Cat, you have to earn its love, respect and admiration, and most of all, you gotta worship the dang thing!

No 9. Emotional Hygiene and the Temple. Your Practice time and space is a temple. You must treat it like a temple emotionally and mentally. You wouldnt drag mud into a temple or holy

place. So don't bring your bullshit or the world's bullshit into your temple; your Practice room and Practice time. I spend a lot of time understanding my students emotionally. I talk to them, I figure out what's going on in their lives and where they are emotionally because Guitar and music is emotional. If you aren't dealing with your emotions and you bring this stuff near the Guitar, it will creep into your practice, affect your results and actually limit your ability to make progress. So just remember, emotional hygiene and the temple. Leave work at work. Leave your relationships and drama behind. When it's Guitar time, it's your time and space so protect it because no one else will and unfortunately, most of the time, the rest of the world wants to pull you away from the Guitar so it's on you to make sure you set boundaries and protect it.

Ok so there it is. Nine Life Hacks to help you structure your Practice so you make gains and still slay at your job and life. Which of the 9 rules were you breaking or have you broken in the past? Which is the most important one you need to look out for and remain vigilant on so you kick ass on the Guitar and keep getting results? I'm excited to see how you implement these 9 Hacks and how they improve your relationship to the Guitar. Now tomorrow we will be exploring Backing Track Beastmode → Playing along with your favourite songs. So get ready because it's time for you to start to learn everything you need to know about how to actually get playing along with your favourite songs. See you tomorrow!