


50 Ways to Improve Your Playing. NOW


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We found this great article in a guitar magazine. It gives you 50 hints on how to become a better player.

We are doing almost all of them - this gave us even more confidence in our teaching methods here at Bandwagon.

These are marked with - 

Some we aren't doing but believe they are great ideas. These are marked with - 
These ideas will be progressively added to lessons.

Some hints are only for the very serious guitarist. These are marked with - 

We are always looking to improve our teaching - so the new ideas will add even more to your lessons.
Even by just reviewing the list we have refreshed our own ideas on teaching.

No.	Title	What They Mean	Bandwagons Reply	Bandwagon Level
1	Tune Up	Tune your guitar	 We have a unique system that teaches you how to tune.	Chords 1 and 2.
2	Warm Up	Warm up before playing.	 We often start with an old song to get the fingers warmed up.	
3	Shape Up	Physical well being.	 Although not a thing we talk about - it's a common sense part of life to keep healthy.	
4	Give it to the Fingers	Finger Picking	 We teach great finger picking songs like - Stairway, Under the Bridge & basic classical songs.	Chords 3.
5	Get Hybrid	Hybrid Picking	 Using the pick and fingers at the same time to play.	Chords 2.
6	Break Stuff	Arpeggios	 An excellent tool for soloing.	Lead 4.
7	Get Your Hammer On	Legato - hammers, etc	 We show you all the legato tricks, and the use them in songs.	Lead 1. Techniques.
8	Open Your Mouth	Pitching your solos	 By creating sounds in your head you are actually making a piece of music rather than a finger pattern.	Aural Training.
9	Tap Dat Axe	Tapping	 Tapping is a real show off and fun !!!	Lead 4.
10	Go to Da Club	Go out and see bands.	 An excellent way to improve your playing - watch others who are better & more experienced. Students can watch the more experienced players on Making Music nights.	
11	Swing Both Ways	Down and up picking.	 We emphasis the importance of down and up picking during exercises and songs.	Lead 1. Techniques.
12	Love to Sight Read	Actually read music.	 Although not a favourite of guitarists we can teach you how to read music.	Reading 1.
13	Step Outside	Chromatics	 Clever use of these "outside" adds unusual sounds to your solos.	Lead 2.
14	Play Nice With Others	Jam	 Bandwagon unique systems called Making Music and Mini Woodstocks gives students the opportunity to jam with others.	
15	Skip School	String skipping in solos	 Most solos use small note jumps - so adding bigger note jumps adds a new flavour to your solos.	Lead 4.
16	Make Arrangements		 Here you take a song and rewrite the combinations of melody and chords to how you like it.	
17	Get Better Picking Mileage	Economy picking	 A clever way to lessen your pick movements. Added to the common down and up picking method.	Lead 1. Techniques.
18	Stop, Look and Listen !	Listen to music	 Often an intense session of listening will reveal a lot you didn't realize before. These listening sessions can sometimes take the place of a physical practice.	
19	Press Mute	Fret hand muting	 Add some crunch to your sound !!!	Chords 2 & Lead 1.
20	Name That Note	Learn the notes on the guitar.	 A good idea - you can use these notes as starting points for scales, chords and arpeggios.	Reading 1.
21	Thumb It	Use your thumb for notes.	 The chord hand sometimes needs a helping thumb !!	Chords 2.
22	Double Up	Play in octaves	 A very common harmony - instead of playing one note you add a "friend" to enhance the sound.	Lead 4.
23	Memorize It	Learn songs off by heart.	 A fantastic idea - this way you can show off to your family and friends without the music.	All levels.

24	Pump Up Your Pinky	Use your little finger more.	✔ A real trap if you neglect your little finger. It is already the weakest finger - don't let it fall further behind. You will need for some songs !!!	Lead 1. Techniques.
25	Practice Efficiently	Set goals	✔ Setting goals and the achieving them gives you a real boost. You should have short term and long term goals.	All levels.
26	Ornament Your Open Chords	Use chord adders	✔ Chords like add2, sus4, 6/9, etc. How cool to make sounds like these !! - and they are mostly easy.	Chords 3
27	Study the Classics	Learn some classical songs	✔ You might not like the idea - but we bet you'll be surprised. Not only do they sound cool - you will see where lots of rock songs come from.	Chords 3
28	Conquer Stage Fright	Play live for better results	✔ We use our Making Music and Mini Woodstocks to give students to opportunity to play live.	
29	Hear No Evil	Aural training	❗ Although we have a course for aural training we only used it when students ask for it. Now we are going to incorporate some training during lessons.	
30	Start a TAB	Write out songs	✔ We do this a little bit when you are being taught how to solo.	
31	Go on a Bender	Work on bends	✔ One of a guitarist greatest tricks. We work on all the correct techniques and tricks to make your banding work perfectly.	Lead 1. Techniques.
32	Picture This	Practice mentally	✔ Talked about all the time - see our hints on practicing.	
33	Use Parallel Construction	Mix scale patterns	✔ Wow! What an amazing trick. Gives you a larger palette of sounds than just the basic scales.	Lead 4.
34	Move On Up	Play with better musicians	✔ We use our Making Music and Mini Woodstocks to give everyone the chance to play with others.	
35	Don't Get Pent Up	Try "outside" notes.	✔ Always fun to add those non scale notes. You can add eerie and scary sounds to your solo.	Lead 2.
36	Power Up	Dress up your power chords	❗ We look at dressing up open and bar chords already. Now we are going to add dressing up power chords!	Chords 3
37	Shake It, Don't Break It	Practice your vibrato	✔ Without vibrato your solos will sound a little plain. Vibrato adds amazing colour to notes. It is used by all musicians.	Lead 1. Techniques.
38	Play the Grace Card	Use "grace notes"	✔ A lot of the solo we study use grace notes. We then encourage you to use these tricks in your licks.	
39	Record Yourself		❗ We have done some recording in the past, but are now preparing to do it on a more regular basis.	
40	Live in Harmony	Add harmony notes to your licks.	✔ All musicians study harmony - it's an unbelievably powerful way to add new dimensions to your sound.	Lead 1, 2, 4.
41	Bend Together	Unison bends	✔ Another common harmony. Dress up your melody with this powerful trick.	Lead 1. Techniques.
42	Kick Four to the Floor	Use "sequences" in scale practice and solos.	✔ An excellent way to learn scales. You really have to think of where the notes are. These sequences are also used in solos. Why not - you've practice them hard during your scale work, plus they sound great.	Lead 1. Techniques.
43	Flip the Script	Learn chord inversions.	✔ Many great songs use the idea of inversions. They add more flavour than basic open and bar chords.	Chords 3.
44	Open Your Own Barre	Use "barless" barre chords.	✔ The Aussie classic "Throw Your Arms Around Me" is one song we study using this system.	Chords 3.
45	Tune Things Upside Down	Try some alternate tunings e.g. dropped D tuning.	✔ You've probably already used Drop D, but there's a "million" other tunings to explore.	Chords 3.
46	Improve Your Relationships	Learn how to target chords during a solo.	✔ An absolute must to learn. Many solos need to have their notes matching the individual chords.	Lead 2.
47	Put Her Down for Awhile	Sometimes a take a break from practicing and playing.	You often find over Christmas there's no time to practice - but things seem a little clearer when you pick the guitar up again.	
48	See the World	Learn some exotic scales e.g. Japanese scale	✔ Learning new sounds opens up whole new world and gives you a new lease on playing.	Lead 5.
49	Drill it Home	Learn to feel 4 bar phrases	✔ A common tool for solos - each person does a 4 bar solo in turn.	Lead 1. Techniques.
50	Teach the Children Well	Teaching others will help you really learn your stuff.	❗ Paul and Cameron have both found teaching has increased their understanding on guitar.	