

Modern Guitars



Playing Guitar – True Freedom

You've joined our magazine, and that's **awesome!**

As promised here is your bonus for joining. Some of these tools you can pick up tomorrow, some you will probably want to save up for, like the Tronical Tuner.

Beginners

If you're a beginner then this is your lucky day because these tools and the bonus tip could be the best information you've gotten so far in your quest to learn the guitar.

Experienced Players

If you know your way around a guitar then there's something here for you too – read on my friend.

Five Awesome Tools for Guitar:

Tool #1

The Tronical Auto-Tuner

Tuning sucks. Well, a lot of beginner guitarists (and even experienced ones!) will tell you that.

But now there is a new modern system for tuning guitars automatically, perfectly and in mere seconds.

Tronical Tune installs in 10 minutes. It retunes your guitar in 2 seconds and offers 12 alternate tunings plus 6 custom tunings. Already available for dozens of the most popular guitars – electric and acoustic – it sells for just \$299 US! (as of release of this information) Tuning has never been easier.

Check out this video to see Tronical Tune in action:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfQgqjFJc74>



Tool #2

Stacked Humbucker Pickups

Not too long ago, a friend who had a cherished Strat learned that he could accomplish his dream: he wanted a humbucker to replace the single coil, bridge pickup on his guitar. The problem was that he also wanted to preserve the Strat's appearance, and that meant finding a humbucker that looked like a single coil. For those of you who have the same dream, may we present....

The Riffbucker Stacked Humbucker!

That's right: the two coils of a humbucker have been stacked vertically, instead of side-by-side, to preserve the Strat's original look while providing real humbucker punch and tone.

Check it out in this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ocgTZny1lg>

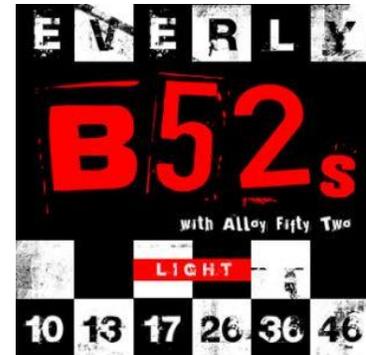


There are other stacked pickups out there now, including ones from major manufacturers such as Seymour Duncan, EMG and others. Some of these offer true humbucking tones while others use the stacked arrangement to cancel noise while preserving the genuine single coil sound. It's a modern new tool for the electric guitarist and the choice is yours. Replacing an OEM pickup with a stacked pickup isn't difficult, requiring only simple tools and a little TLC (don't ruin the finish on your guitar!) but having a professional take care of the job is the best way to go.

Tool #3

Guitar Strings – Everly B52's

As a long-time guitarist, I have owned about a dozen guitars and gone through a lot of strings from different manufacturers. Until recently however, no one set of strings every stood out as being exceptional.



Recently, when I wanted new strings for my 40-year-old Hagstrom Swede, a trip to my local guitar shop presented me with the usual quandary of choosing from a massive selection. That is until another guitarist said: "Do you know about Everly B52s?"

I had never heard of them, so I bought them. And my ears were like: WOW! With a high nickel content in them, these strings boost the output from your pickups. The organic distortion from my all-tube Fender Blues DeVille went up a few notches. The bridge pickup was crunchier and the neck pickup was fatter and both offered improved dynamics along with great tone.

I have since put B52's on my Washburn Strat with similarly impressive results. They may not suit every musical taste, but if you haven't tried them it's worth the small investment for one set of strings to hear what I am talking about.

Tool #4

Picks, Plectrums and Pinkies

When I first picked up a guitar I was given a choice of picks to use and found that I really liked the feel of a softer pick. That worked for me until I started playing in a band. On stage my adrenalin



kicked in and the soft pick wasn't doing it for me when I played power chords and solos, so I moved on to a hard pick.

The reality I learned is this: you can't play hard with a soft pick, but you can play soft with a hard pick.

Another reality I eventually learned was that you can use anything to pick a guitar! I can do some very simple finger-picking but it has never really appealed to me. However, I am blown away by good finger-picking, such as how Tommy Emmanuel or any classical guitarist plays. I am astonished at the sounds Jeff Beck coaxes from an electric guitar with just his fingers – now that's pure guitar wizardry.

So... think about how you pick and don't limit yourself. Try hard and soft picks, full-sized plectrums, your finger tips and fingernails, and anything else that comes to mind. Coins. Pieces of wood. A credit card. Pay attention to the subtleties of picking angles, upstrokes and down strokes and so-on. All of these things make a difference to the sound your guitar produces and the more variety you have in your picking and plucking, the better you will be able to communicate effectively through your guitar.

Tool #5

Chord Changes

Many of us find chord changes particularly difficult – and they are! As with any guitar-playing technique, there are tools to help.

My favorite tip for improving my chord changes was to research alternate chord forms. By doing this you will find that many common chord progressions can be achieved in a sort of “box” pattern that minimizes the distance your fingers and hand has to move.

For example, the traditional E major chord we learn as beginners involves a sort-of fist formation right at the nut, using three fingers and leaving the 1st, 2nd and 6th strings open.

The next most obvious way to produce the same chord is with your index finger on the 5th string, at the 7th fret, and the 2nd, 3rd and 4th strings barred by your pinky at the 9th fret.

Another great chord change practice routine involves repositioning just one finger at a time. This is obviously slow – at least at first – but in the long run (**with practice**) it will lead to much faster and more fluid chord changes. It will also help you to discover which fingers don't need to move when changing chords, which is more common than you might think.



Also, those unused fingers can be put to good use. How? By holding them close to the strings in anticipation of the next chord so that the change is enhanced by minimizing the distance your fingers have to move.

Watch as Mark McKenzie demonstrates the “box” technique in action

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7vKpR1id8o>

Bonus Tip

Practice, Practice, Practice

So obvious it shouldn't need repeating. Frequent, disciplined practice is essential – not just noodling.

30 minutes a day is better than 3 hours once a week. Keep a list of songs and techniques to practice and go back to it regularly. Your fingers need to be trained to move the way you want them to. Their muscles need to be strengthened. The calluses on your fingertips need to be thickened and your memory needs to be stocked.

All this comes with practice. Record yourself playing. In a few months go back and listen and you will be surprised at how much you have progressed. Think the greats don't practice?

Wrong! They practice for hours every day to maintain their skills and to improve them. Finally, find someone else to practice with, especially someone whose playing is more advanced. Most of us learn better when we work with others. Don't just bang out chords to your favorite songs, but determine what aspects of your playing you need to work on and...work on it!



Advice For Beginners

No matter what your goals are for the guitar, practice is essential. The first few months learning guitar can be really exciting if you just focus on it a little every day.

ModernGuitars.com has been designed to deliver interesting information and to support what we do, we sell EKO guitars, amplifiers, guitar lessons and related accessories.

Here's the scoop – If you're serious about learning guitar then spend the money and get the training. We spent countless hours researching online guitar lessons to sort through the crap and find a course everyone could afford – and deliver the goods. In our quest we came across Jamorama – Amazing, understandable instructions – with – brilliant presentations.

Presenting...

Jamorama

Check out this intro video



[Click here to take a closer look at Jamorama](#)

All the best

Doc Edwards