

3 Ways To Solve Your Guitar Playing Problems

Practicing Concept #1 Focus Rotation:

1. Repeat an item (at least) 6 times at a certain metronome speed (start at about 50-60% of your top speed), with each repetition focusing on one of the following:

Picking hand efficiency
Fretting hand efficiency
Picking articulation
2 hand synchronization
Tension control
Excessive string noise

(note: you can add more items to the list of things to focus on)

2. After all elements are perfect, increase the speed.

3. When you notice one (or more) elements consistently imperfect, focus on refining it by doing the opposite of whatever the problem is and back off on the speed if needed, in order to allow your mind to focus better on the problem area.

When/how to use this practicing concept: use it on any exercise that you want to play faster or cleaner.

Practicing Concept #2 Exaggerate The Difficulty:

Make any guitar playing challenge even MORE difficult to play (intentionally) and then do the best you can to repeat that "exaggerated" version many times. The goal of this is to make the original practice item/problem you used to struggle with feel MUCH, MUCH easier by comparison.

When/how to use this practicing concept: use it on items where you already know WHAT the specific problem is. Example: items with difficult fretting hand stretches or position shifts, or picking licks where the picking motions are particularly difficult.

Practicing Concept #3 Freeze Framing

To be used for: building speed and identifying specific mistakes when you aren't sure what exactly to focus on.

1. Start at 80-90% of your top speed (of course warm up to it before).
2. Randomly stop on various notes and ask yourself:
 - Is the note you stopped on really clean?
 - Are you relaxed in every part of the body that isn't used to play notes?
 - Did you eliminate all string noise from strings that shouldn't be ringing?
 - Are your hands in sync?
 - Did you pick the note with enough articulation?
3. If the answer is "Yes", you do it again and stop on another note in the passage. If the answer is "No", you need to now solve the problem by employing one of the other two practice concepts above.

When to use this practice concept: use it to evaluate how well you've applied the first 2 concepts to practicing a challenging practice item. By practicing at 80-90% of your top speed, you will be able to focus on specific notes and identify if you need to do more work at slower speeds to refine certain areas of your technique.