

Having taught guitar for over 40 years has taught me that no method should be static. Periodic tweaking of the system may be essential to shore up some of the deficiencies in the process of teaching and learning.

Guitar Fundamentals Book 1 has gone through a slight revision in 2010. All previous lesson material has remained the same as in earlier editions but a number of new lessons have been added. The added lessons deal primarily with the "glide picking" technique which is mostly applicable to playing arpeggios. This technique can also be applied to scale playing perhaps on a slightly more limited basis. The original volume already contained many studies involving the glide picking technique but not to such a large degree. I deemed it prudent to add a number of specific lessons on this valuable concept.

This book is aimed at the student who is willing to put in more than just a mild effort to discover his or her talent. You will only know if you have some talent after you have made some effort. There are no sure-fire tests to check for talent prior to making an attempt at musical study although authors of many articles and books lay claim to having discovered such tests. Probably the best indicator for a musical talent is an aptitude for mathematics.

Guitar Fundamentals is not meant to be the absolutely definitive book on playing the guitar. To write the absolutely definitive book containing "all" necessary material for study, would be a monumental task. The resulting volume would also be of monumental proportions.

This book is intended for serious students who are interested in developing or repairing their basic technique and who are also concerned with learning to read musical notation. A quick glance at the contents will show that the book advances rather rapidly. Students must already have some guitar experience as this book begins where the Guitar Fundamentals Primer left off.

All of the music contained within, is exactly that! Music! The exercises have been written specifically for various technical features. When performed accurately at a good tempo, they will all sound very musical. Like all compositions, when performed poorly, they will just sound like sequences of notes. All of the music is totally original, meaning that you will find no familiar standards. If you are intent on learning how to read music, it is generally best to work on music that you have never heard before. In playing familiar tunes, you will most likely default to your ear more so than bother with reading the notes.

This book does not contain any "guitar tablature" because in my mind, the tablature system leads nowhere. Only guitar players decipher music through the tablature system. If you should ever decide to pursue music on some higher level of learning, as at a college or university, it is unlikely that the courses will be taught in tablature.

Playing by ear is encouraged. Unfortunately, you can only learn by ear, the music that you have heard before and no one has heard everything. Knowing how to play by written music and by ear is the ultimate goal. The ability to read music will expedite the learning process.

Some lessons on fundamental music theory are distributed throughout this book. These lessons are added at the points where they become pertinent.

"Guitar Fundamentals Book 1" contains enough material to keep a good student busy for several years. If you only practice a half hour per day and on only a few days per week, you are probably doomed to failure in regard to achieving good skills. It is very much like the golfer who plays 9 holes every few weeks. It is very doubtful that that golfer will ever play at the Masters or the British Open. Thousands of hours, not hundreds of hours, are required to develop good skills.

The text is just as important as the musical content. It is my experience that many students skip reading the text, resulting in making poor musical and technical choices. Attention to detail will produce good skills. Inattentiveness usually ends up with failure. Most of all, you must listen to what you are playing. It is not good enough just to hear what you are producing.

Good luck and let's play the guitar.

George Arvola
(Guitarist and Instructor since 1968)