

You may have begun the study of the Guitar Fundamentals Primer as a novice, but now at the end of the book, you will have more than just scratched the surface in the plate of knowledge needed for playing the guitar.

Have you done your share of reviewing the fundamental skills? Perhaps now is a good time to take a careful look at your playing technique. Even with the aid of a teacher, it is easy to get into some poor habits in basic posture. This does not only mean your sitting position but pertains to everything you do physically in your playing. Is your right arm positioned correctly on the guitar body? Are you gripping the pick correctly? Is your left hand thumb in the best position on the back of the guitar neck? Are your left hand fingers arched enough to allow for consistent clear sounds and especially so when playing chords? This list of questions might go on for quite a while.

In regard to your basic music reading knowledge, there are other questions to be asked. Do you know the names of the notes which you are reading and playing or are you just relating to the notes by their fingering? The latter is a most common problem. Strangely enough, many students can read music for the guitar at an elementary level without ever learning the note names. Many years of teaching experience has shown this to be true. Perhaps a word of warning here might be effective. Relating to the notes, only by their fingerings, will come back to haunt you in your future studies.

The other, and perhaps most important aspect of music reading is the rhythm of the notes. Are you counting the beats steadily and accurately or are you just faking it by feel? When you are playing a familiar tune, it is easy to simply estimate the rhythmic time because you have a built in history of that tune. (memory of some other persons performance.) It is going to be difficult to play a song which you have never heard if you attempt to play it by "feel." You won't have a feeling for the song because feeling relates to memory.

The Guitar Fundamentals Primer was specifically designed to lead into the series of five volumes of Guitar Fundamentals developed by George Arvola and Tony Bradan. Book 1 of Guitar Fundamentals will review a bit of what has taken place in the Guitar Fundamentals Primer but at a much more advanced level. The reading and playing skills are developed through systematic study of scales, arpeggios and chords. Chords are mostly presented in musical notation rather than chord diagrams. There are also studies and suggestions for more advanced aspects of rhythm guitar.

Hopefully, in your study of the Guitar Fundamentals Primer, you have come to the conclusion that reading music is actually not that difficult. It may not be the only way to learn to play the guitar but having the ability to read music will certainly never get in the way of your playing or musical creativity. The falsehood that being musically literate will inhibit your style has been bandied about by many players but mostly by those who do not have any reading skills. One of the purposes of the Guitar Fundamentals course of study is to promote musical literacy.

Good luck and we will see you on the first page of Guitar Fundamentals, Book 1.

George Arvola and Bruce Arbuckle