

# Mind and Ear Practices

- Throughout all exercises, be conscious of all note names while you play.
- You do not need to do all the exercises in a category every day. Begin with simple exercises and then, once proficient, move on to the more complex ones.
  - For example, once you can do two-handed chords, you do not need to keep practicing one-handed chords since they are included within two-handed voicings already.
  - As we move through the course, future exercises will replace these.
- As much as you can, sing everything!
- After looking over these pages, determine where you're at and craft a personalized practice routine that you can complete everyday.

---

## VISUALIZATION AND KEYBOARD SKILLS

### Intervals:

1. Visualize and play 5ths all around the circle of fifths. When doing this, consider that the distance you are playing is known as a “perfect fifth” but also think in scale degrees. Do this by considering the note given by the circle as 1 and the note you are finding as 5 in *relation* to that 1.
2. Do the same exercise but with 3rds. Do “major thirds” first (1 to 3) and then “minor thirds” (1 to b3).
3. Now move on to all other intervals, using 5ths and 3rds as reference points. For example, if you know where 5 is, 6 is whole-step higher and 4 is a whole-step lower.
4. Do the same exercise backward. For example, if the scale degree is b6, the note on the circle is now the b6 of some *other* note. In this case, C is the b6 of E, or G is the b6 of B, etc.

### Scales:

1. Using the circle of fifths, build and play major scales on every note. Use the scale formula (R+W+W+H+W+W+W) but also think in terms of numbers (1,2,3,4,5,6,7).
2. Same exercise with minor scales. Here the scale formula is (R+W+H+W+W+H+W) and the numbers are (1,2,b3,4,5,b6,b7).
3. Soon, you will not need to think about the whole-step/half-step formula because you will instinctively know the distance between all scale degrees. You can then work purely with scale degrees.
4. Once you have built a scale, feel free to let your fingers roam around and create simple melodies.

### Chords

1. Using the circle of fifths, build and play major chords on every note. Use the formula (1,3,5) to do this.
  - a. Right-hand, then left-hand.
2. Do the same with minor chords (1,b3,5).
  - a. Right-hand, then left-hand.
3. Two-handed voicings:
  - a. Root note in the left-hand with the chord in the right.
  - b. 1 and 5 in the left-hand with the chord in the right.
  - c. Consider the various inversions you can do with your right-hand.
4. If you're up for it, do the same with diminished, augmented, and suspended chords!

### The Number System and Chord Progressions

1. Review, repeat and memorize “Ma-mi-mi-Ma-Ma-mi-dim”. These are the diatonic chords of any major-key.
2. Memorize which degrees of a key are major, which are minor, and which is diminished.
3. Follow these steps:
  - a. Choose a key to start with.
    - i. Easy keys are C, G, F, D, Bb
    - ii. Build the scale and write down the notes for reference.
  - b. Choose four numbers at random to create a simple chord progression.
    - i. For example: **ii-V-I-vi** or **IV-iii-IV-V** or **vi-vii-I-ii** or any other progression at all. We are not concerned about making something amazing, this is just for practice!
  - c. Apply the numbers of your progression to the notes of your chosen key to generate the specific chord names.
    - i. For example: in C Major, **ii-V-I-vi** gives us **Dm-G-C-Am**.
  - d. Learn to play the progression with two-handed voicings.
    - i. Use inversions in your right hand to create the smoothest possible motion.
    - ii. Use your sustain-pedal to help you with chord changes.
  - e. Once you can play the progression cleanly, choose another easy key (or hard one!) and recreate the **SAME** progression in the new key.
    - i. So long as you remember the numbers from your progression, you can simply repeat the process in the new key.
  - f. Observe that the progression yields the same emotional feeling in both keys even though the specific note names are different!

### Learning Songs

1. Choose a song with relatively simple chords.
  - a. Pop, classic rock, folk, country, and other similar genres are a good place to look.
  - b. You may need to change songs if the chords are too complex.
2. Look up the song on [www.ultimate-guitar.com](http://www.ultimate-guitar.com) (or another equivalent website).
  - a. Be sure to choose a “chords” version:



- b.
3. Learn to play the first few chords with two-handed voicings, using right-hand inversions to create smoothness.
4. Once smooth, attempt to play in time with the recording.
  - a. Nothing fancy. Just hold each chord and then change to the next when appropriate.
5. Repeat this process for the rest of the song.
6. Attempt to play the entire song with the recording!
7. Post your results in the FB group!

---

## LISTENING

- Block out time in your day for conscious listening. This means doing nothing except listening—not driving, not internet surfing, not working, NOTHING! Just sitting with your eyes closed, listening to music.
- Remember to utilize the Listening Guide to find new music in a variety of genres.
- You can subdivide this time up with the following exercises.

### Raw Sound - Listening Like a Baby

1. Leave all ideas of everything behind.
2. No analyzing, visualizing, thinking or anything else. Just pure experiencing.
3. Experience the inseparability of sound and feeling.
4. Allow yourself to be taken completely by the music without even thinking “this is music”.

### Analytic Listening

1. Choose a song you love.
2. Decide what you are listening for—melody, harmony, bass, rhythm, structure, etc.
3. Alternatively, listen for conceptual techniques—tension and release, contrast, expectation, and subconscious associations.
4. Listen for the chosen element through the whole song and take notes on any observations you make.
5. Listen through again with a new focus.
6. Observe your emotional responses and how they correspond to various elements.

### Ear Stretching

1. Choose a genre you never listen to and put on a playlist.
2. Listen with openness.
3. Take notes on what you like and dislike.
4. Observe what you have resistance to and consider why.

---

## AUDIATION

- Musical imagination.
- Can be done throughout the day whenever you have a minute.
- Power and clarity will increase with time.

### Replication

1. Listen to some music.
2. Pause the music and attempt to replicate it in your mind as accurately as possible.
  - a. Begin with just the melody.
  - b. Slowly add more elements and go for longer stretches.

### Improvisation

1. Listen to some music.
2. Pause the music and begin replicating what you've heard.
3. Leave replication behind and improvise new content.
  - a. Remain in alignment with the style and feel of the music.
  - b. Create variations and explore possibilities.

### Composition

1. Either begin with some reference music to provide direction or not.
2. Begin audiating and allow your inner-ear to flow.
3. Start simply—just a melody.
4. With practice, add complexity.
5. Strive to hear with clarity and accuracy.

---

## EAR TRAINING

- The ability to identify musical structures and relationships by ear.
- Be sure to train your ears every day.
- Best done in short bursts throughout the day.
- Singing everything you are working on, while being conscious of what you're singing, is massively beneficial.

### Functional Ear Trainer (App)

1. Develops your recognition of melodic scale degrees within a key.
2. Read the tutorial.
3. Slowly increase complexity over time.
4. Strive for mastery and 100% success.

### Complete Ear Trainer (App)

1. Trains your recognition of intervals, scales, chords, progressions etc.
2. Being on "Easy Mode"
3. Read all the tutorials.
4. Strive for mastery and 100% success.

---

## TRANSCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

- The process of working out music by ear.
  - Usually accompanied by either writing down or recording what you have figured out.

### **Melodic Transcription**

1. Choose a simple melody that you are familiar with.
2. Sing the melody along with a recording.
3. Transcribe the melody and learn to play it on the keyboard.
  - a. Utilize various methods to slow down and loop the music when necessary.
    - i. YouTube
    - ii. AnyTune or Capo (for Mac)
    - iii. Transcribe! (PC)
    - iv. Your DAW
4. Record the melody into your DAW
5. Figure out the key of the melody.
6. Figure out the scale degrees and sing them with the melody.