

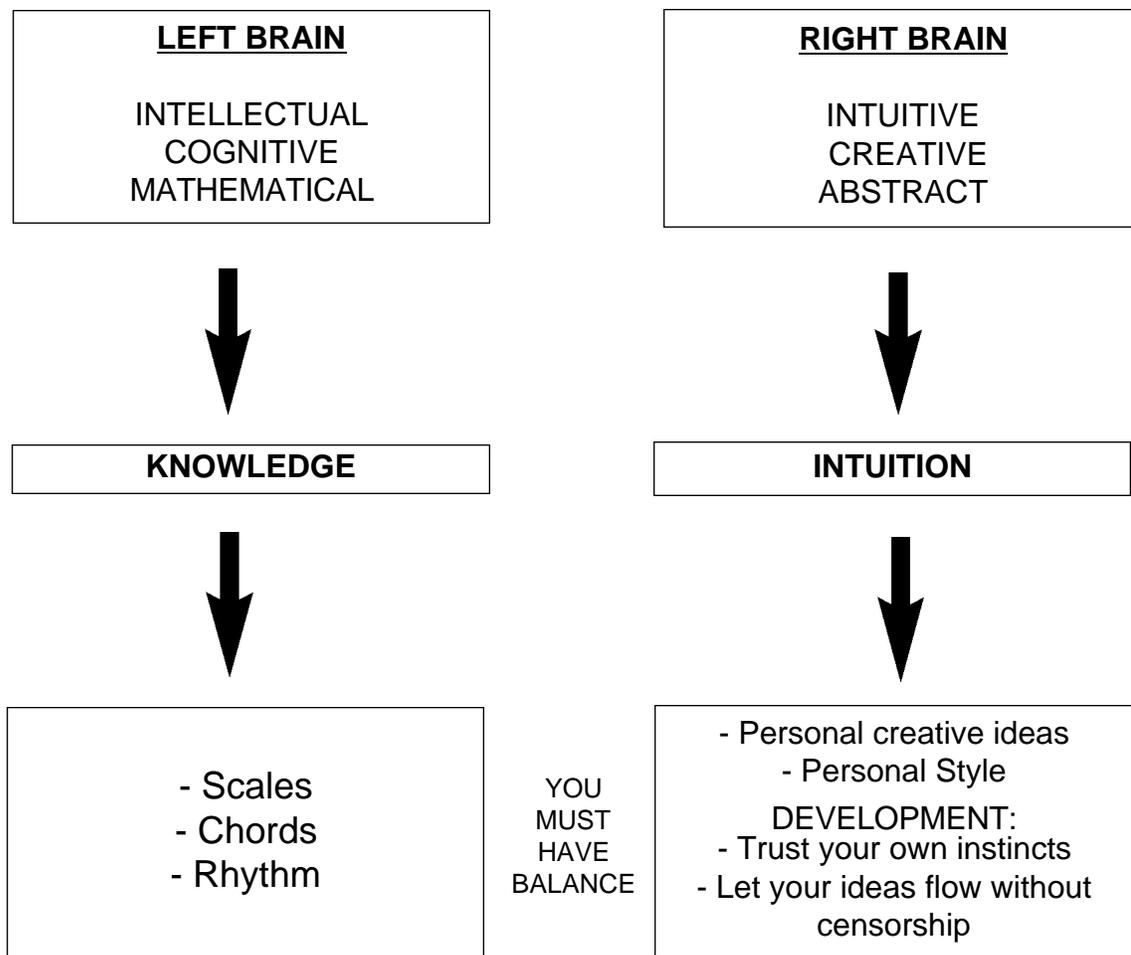
The Art of Practice

Preface:

Effective practice is an art. Learning to do it well can help you become the player you want to become many times faster than a less organized approach, which is usually unfocused and generally hap-hazard. In the long term you can literally take years off in the the development of your skill by simply being smart with your time.

HEMISPHERES: The Left and Right Brain Connection

Becoming a good musician has a lot to do with developing numerous skills. We need to work on Left and Right sides of the brain. First off, let's make it very clear what each sides job is. Look over the chart below.



What Do the Best Players Have?

The Best Players are Highly Individual. . .

Many aspects of "Musical," knowledge are finite. Let's examine 3 elements of music.

<i>Melody</i>	/	<i>Harmony</i>	/	<i>Rhythm</i>
Scales		Chords		Rhythmic Patterns

*Once you learn a scale or chord on your instrument
you'll never have to learn it again . . .*

Knowledge is Cumulative:

Whatever you learn, learn it well because you will also encounter things very similar to the relationship of past knowledge. All new learning experiences become cumulative.

Balanced Practice:

A balanced approach to practice where all the important elements are covered is the most sensible approach to take. A sensible strategy to balance your practice in the context of a standard tune. It is described below . . .

A STRATEGY FOR LEARNING THE "TYPICAL" TUNE:

- 1). Learn the tune by listening to the CD.
- 2). Learn the Chords, Melody and Scales for improvisation, (use a metronome).
- 3). Work on really developing the rhythm (groove).
- 4). Spend time on rhythm guitar ideas.
- 5). Spend time on soloing.
- 6). Practice doing "Mock" Performing. Put yourself in a different headspace and play the tune . Pretend you are in front of an audience.

Balanced Practice Continued...

The goal is to absorb all the information. Practice a piece or assignment until it completely sinks in. Spend time on one element at a time until you feel like you have engrained it into your playing.

The Paradox:

Sometimes limiting the time you work on something forces you to concentrate more and get more done in less time. Working with a timer or clock using short time frames can be highly effective. Set the timer to only 2 - 3 min. per individual topic.

THE SECRET WEAPON!

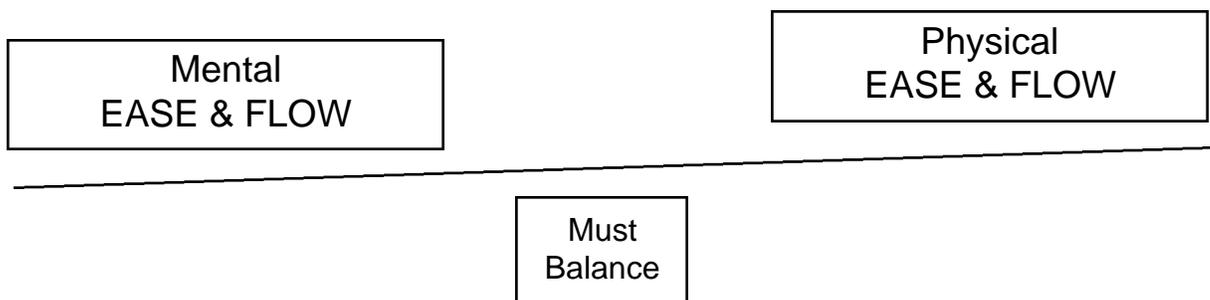
RECORD YOURSELF

By recording yourself you bridge the gap between what you hear and what is performed live. Use both audio recording and video recording.

THE GOLDEN RULE:

Never practice faster than you can play perfectly.

Everything you do must flow easily and with minimal effort.



You can practice trust, confidence and fun or practice anxiety, tension and frustration.

Balanced Practice Continued...

Listed below are a number of great things to keep in mind while practicing your instrument.

- Always be patient and relaxed while practicing.
- Be kind and gentle with yourself.
- A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step at a time. If you walk everyday you can't help but get there.
- Keep a positive attitude.
- Guard your mind from negative thoughts; i.e., "I suck," or "I'll never make it," or "Hey, the Simpson's are on." Replace those with positive thoughts; i.e., "I'm getting there," and "I've come a long way," and "I've seen that episode."
- Good practice is great for self-esteem.
- Repetition is the mother of knowledge only if the perfected passage is repeated more often than the faulty one.

A Practice Process :

- STEP ONE: GROUND WORK - Figure something out.
- STEP TWO: Learn to play something well no matter how slow you have to go in the beginning, then *practice* it.
- Repetitive practice, *meditative* practice will engrain music on the mind and body.
- STEP THREE: Use a metronome to slowly increase the tempo.
- STEP FOUR: Everyday take a few minutes and do "Mock" performance. Play what you can and then record it. Then listen!
The next day can begin with you listening to the previous day's recording.
- STEP FIVE: Practice away from your instrument using visualization.

ARE YOU DISCIPLINED?

Ask yourself if you are doing what you think is right for you. Continue asking questions like, "How does my playing sound?"

How Long Should You Practice?

The following are some good tips to help maintain balance in the amount of time spent on instrument practice.

A BALANCED APPROACH

- Remember to have a balanced approach.
- Spend enough time to engrain it.
- Experimenting is the way to find out what works for you.
- Start with an easily attainable goal and expand from there.
- Keep a practice log.
- Split your practice time Morning / Evening.
- Try the same time everyday.
- Practice when you know you won't be disturbed.
- Let your "GUT" instincts guide you.
- Make practice a sacred time, you can think about everything else and your worries when your done, they will still be there.
- It will take time to develop a good method and once you do you'll find that it will evolve as your playing changes.
- Don't play the stuff you can already play, work on what you can't.

NOTE:

Cut out the outline given above and pin it up where you practice as a reminder. These ideas won't become habit unless you are constantly reminded.

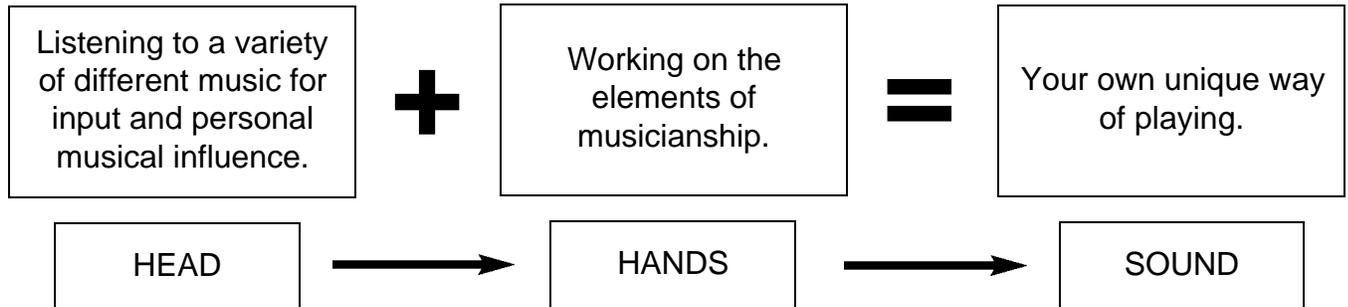
DEVELOPING PERSONAL STYLE:

THE SECRET TO DEVELOPING PERSONAL STYLE IS SIMPLE...

Take the time to work out the ideas in your head and put them on your instrument.

Listen to a variety of music for input. You will naturally gravitate towards players you like. Through this you will develop your own personal sound conception for music. Add that to your constant practice of working on the elements of music and you will wind up with your own unique way of playing or, "your style."

FORMULA:



THE LAST WORD:

The list given below are a few final thoughts to keep in mind on your road to becoming a great musician. Thanks for reading this manuscript.

- ' *Music can exist in many forms, keep an open mind.*
- ' *You won't like some great CD's on first listening.*
- ' *Play in many different musical situations.*
- ' *Be objective when people give you advice.*
- ' *Be self directed.*
- ' *If you are not having fun, Rethink!*