

## **Musical Cross-Training: The Practice Regime** **Lindsey Boult**

Practice, practice, practice. The most obvious of tasks that seem to stump even the most disciplined of guitar players. Here's an approach to practicing that cuts to the chase of focused learning. Spend a minimum of ten minutes on each of these areas.

**Sparkling musical creativity** – Spend the first few moments of your practice session being creative—play your favorite song, strum your favorite chord progression, practice your best guitar dance moves. At most gigs, after you've loaded your equipment and schmoozed the bar-owner for more dates, in no time, you're on stage, pounding out the first tune. Learn to quickly get into a performance mode without the use of warming up your technique.

**Left Hand Technique** – Warm up the left hand by playing any of a variety of simple scales or fingering exercises. See Example 1a & 1b.

*Example 1a & 1b:*

Play the semi-chromatic scale across the neck. Advance the scale in positions up the fretboard of the guitar. After each pass, adjust the tempo of your metronome in increments of 10 bpm.

**Right Hand Technique** – While keeping a consistent metronome setting and using a technical pattern from the previous section, play 8<sup>th</sup> notes, triplets, and 16<sup>th</sup> notes throughout the exercise. See Example 2.

**Family of Sound** – Apply your knowledge of scales, modes, patterns, sequences, and triads to the fret board. See Example 3a & 3b:

*Example 3a:* Sequences.

Number each note in the E minor pentatonic scale chronologically and follow this sequence: 1-2-3. 2-3-4. 3-4-5, etc., ala Jimmy Page.

Example 3b: Sequences. For more advanced players, try this mindbender.

**Melody/Ear-training** – Put on a favorite song and try to play the melody on the guitar. For more advanced players, learn the chord progression or even the solo. This hones the inner voice and your ability as a musician to reproduce melody.

**Licks Around The Cycle of 4ths** - Choose your favorite lick of the week and advance it around the Cycle of 4ths with a metronome. See example 4.

Example 4: For more advanced players, try this blazing Jazz-Rock Lick

**Applying musical creativity** – We've come full circle. End your practice session by playing a song from your repertoire as if you are in front of an audience. Over time, you will see components of your practice session integrate into your playing.