

# EXAMPLE PRACTICE SCHEDULE

GUITARIST

TIMING	CONTENT
Before session	Wash hands in warm water and loosen up fingers by opening and closing hands, stretching fingers gently and shaking hands gently.
2 mins	Play chromatic scale in F over three octaves, ascending and descending in quavers at 70BPM
30 secs	Break
1 min C	Major scale ascending and descending in quavers at 70BPM. (consistently, without stopping)
20 secs	Break
1 min	C Major Scale – 70BPM
20 secs	Break
1 min	C Major Scale – 75BPM
20 secs	Break
1 min	C Major Scale naming the notes as they are played (no tempo)
30 secs	Break
10 minutes	Work through notation reading exercises in C
1 min	Break
1 min	E Blues Scale – ascending and descending (quavers) @ 75BPM
30 secs	Break
1 min	E Blues Scale – 77BPM
30 secs	Break
1 min	E Blues Scale – 80BPM
30 secs	Break
10 mins	Work on written 12 bar solo using E Blues Scale
5 mins	Break – lie down, walk around the room or put the kettle on
10 mins	Slowly strum through chords of C, G, D, A, E – naming the notes in the chord as each note is sounded
1 min	Break
10 mins	Break
1 min	Work on “Hey Joe” by Jimi Hendrix using these chords
5 mins	Break
End of session	Improvise a solo using the E Blues scale along with the recording of “Hey Joe” Watch Eastenders

## LET'S EXAMINE THE SESSION

This practice session lasts for **one hour and five minutes**. The content is very prescriptive and detailed but the advantage in this is that every single second is accounted for.

Not all practice has to be so disciplined – if you like playing scales while you are watching telly, then great – keep doing it. Research has proven that this also helps you to develop speed techniques because there is more focus on developing your sub-conscious mind and muscle memory if you are not thinking about what you are playing all the time! However, at least one hour of focused practice ensures that you are developing specific techniques consistently and regularly.

**NOTICE HOW IT IS STRUCTURED** – warm up – scales – chords – note naming – developing repertoire (i.e. learning a song and using the chords that have been practiced in the song – smart move!!), the fun bit (the pay off) – jamming along with Jimi Hendrix to reward yourself and remind yourself why you are doing this!

**THE SCALES ARE TO BE PLAYED CONSISTENTLY UP AND DOWN** for the time allocated. In doing this we are sending constant signals to the brain and developing a “neural pathway” which will send appropriate signals to our hands to do what we want – e.g. play the C Major Scale. This will only become secure if we do it a lot. Repeating the scale constantly for a minute also helps to build strength in the fingers, quite like an athlete training for the Olympics.

**MICRO BREAKS** – notice how many short breaks are built in. If practicing is intense, it is important to stop for short periods of time to avoid the dreaded RSI – tension and strain are the musician’s enemy and short breaks will help to avoid this.

**NOTE NAMING** – this has been built into the session to help the musician develop a fuller understanding of the instrument. This is crucial and must not be overlooked!

**RELEVANCE** – all the technical stuff that was practiced was relevant e.g. the use of the C Major scale in the reading exercise, the E Blues scale was the basis of a written 12 bar solo, the chords learned were leading to a Hendrix tune – it’s important to reward yourself – learning a load of scales without applying them is unmusical and quite meaningless.

**HAVE FUN** – try to end your session with the fun bit – e.g. having a jam along with a Hendrix tune. If you want to continue this for an extra hour, that’s ok too!