

The Practice Plan

Example

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What do you want to achieve?

Memorise and perform all major and natural minor scales in every key, over two octaves in any position on the guitar.

How are you going to do this?

1. Apply the principles of the 'CAGED' system (exclusive to guitar players) to break down the scales into shapes which relate to open chords.
2. Practise, for example, G major followed by G natural minor in the same position to spot similarities and differences between the notes in each scale.
3. Practise every shape in each position and cycle through the keys in fourths.
4. Use a metronome to gauge your progress and consistency.
5. Cycle through all twelve keys, playing each scale without changing position and without making any mistakes. Then progress onto the next fretboard position.

Are you going to give yourself a timeframe to achieve your goal? if so, how long?

Six weeks. I already have a reasonable command of these scale shapes, but I realise that I need to really study them for them to feel automatic.

How are you going to measure your success?

Detailed in point five above. The scales need to be played as quavers at 80bpm, fluently and without any mistakes. A four-beat rest is allowed each time I change key.

What is your motivation for working towards this goal, and when you lack motivation, how are you going to find it?

I want to achieve a better understanding of the fretboard as I've identified gaps in my knowledge of scales. I also know that a strong knowledge of major and minor scales will help me to apply modal scales, in addition to providing me with more options to use across the neck when improvising. I really enjoy watching Jaco Pastorius' 'Modern Electric Bass' videos. His command of the instrument is utterly inspiring and I use his videos as a way of inspiring me to work towards achieving a greater level of fluency in my playing.

Identify the things that you think you are going to find difficult during this process.

The lesser used keys are difficult to remember; Db, Gb, Eb and Ab are not keys that I commonly use. I will spend the majority of my practice time working on the scale shapes from these keys.