

Ear TRAINING

Melodic, Harmonic
and Rhythmic

REFERENCE GUIDE



LEAD GUITAR WORKSHOP

EAR TRAINING

Lesson #1

By Suke Cerulo © 2025

Music can be thought of as having three fundamental components.

MELODY: one note at a time, a single “voice”

HARMONY: two or more notes simultaneously, these are chords

RHYTHM: combining sounds and silence in varying patterns relating to a beat. The heart and soul of music

A good musician is well versed in all three and an excellent musician also has a good ear for all three.

Music is an aural art form and our most effective tool is our ear and ability to listen to musical information and to other musicians. Developing a good ear is essential to being a musician and not just a guitar player.

The three components as they relate to Ear Training:

MELODY: all 12 intervals up to Octave, Pentatonic, major and minor scales

HARMONY: (chords) Major, minor, diminished, augmented, Major 7th, Dominant 7th, minor 7th, Sus2/Sus4 etc.

RHYTHM: whole, half, quarter, eighth, triplet, sixteenth notes and their equivalent rests.

EAR TRAINING

Lesson #1

MELODY

INTERVALS

Unison (U) = notes are equal

minor second (m2) = half step(h)/semi tone = 1 fret* (*on same string)

Major second (M2) = whole step(W)/tone = 2 frets*

minor third (m3) = whole+half step = 3 frets*

Major Third (M3) = two whole steps = 4 frets*

Perfect Fourth (P4) = two+half whole steps = 5 frets*

TriTone (TT) = three whole steps = 6 frets* (aka #4, aug4th, b5)

Perfect Fifth (P5) = three+half whole steps = 7 frets*

minor sixth (m6) = four whole steps = 8 frets*

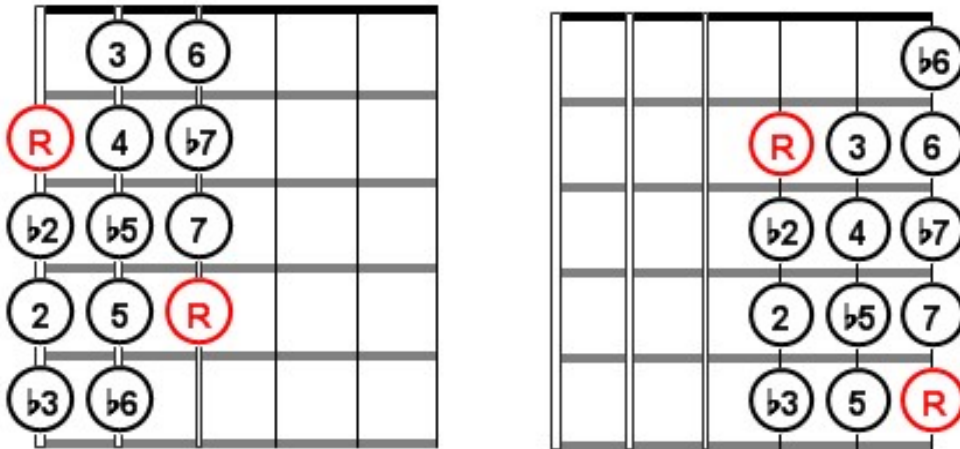
Major Sixth (M6) = four+half whole steps = 9 frets*

minor seventh (m7) = five whole steps = 10 frets*

Major Seventh (M7) = five+half whole steps = 11 frets*

Octave (8) = six whole steps = 12 frets*

Below are the 12 intervals shown in 2 positions on the fret board



How to Practice

At first you need to sit with your instrument and get used to playing and listening to all 12 intervals. Often they will remind you of a famous song or melody, you can use that to help you remember them.

Sing along with every tone as you play them. This will internalize them and help you hear them in your head, your inner voice.

Play a note and then sing the interval your are practicing

Use a piano or other instrument instead of a guitar. This is a really effective way to understand music as a language outside of any single instrument. (Piano app)

TESTING

Method #1

Requires two or more musicians testing each other by playing a single tone and following it with another (within one octave). The other musician must guess what the interval is. Practice intervals ascending and descending.

Method #2

There are many computer programs, websites and apps that work the same way.

Website: www.musictheory.net

iphone app: Tenuto

Android app: Perfect Ear, Interval Recognition

TIPS

Try to practice ear training everyday. The apps make it easy to practice while your on the go.

Do a minimum of 10 tests for intervals during a session.

Start with smaller intervals first (m2 M2 m3 M3) then get larger Often you can isolate a test to just use specific intervals only.

Sing along with your practice.

Try to put a minimum of 20 minutes of ear training during a practice session.

Sing a note and then find it on the guitar.

Try to figure out simple melodies (kids songs, Holiday songs, commercials, theme songs).

Check out https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interval_recognition for some familiar music titles and the interval used.

EAR TRAINING

Lesson #2

Music can be thought of as having three fundamental components.

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EAR TRAINING

Lesson #2

HARMONY

TRIADS

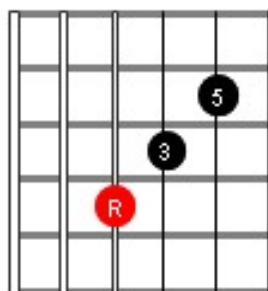
Major R 3 5
Minor R b3 5
Diminished R b3 b5
Augmented R 3 #5

SEVENTHS

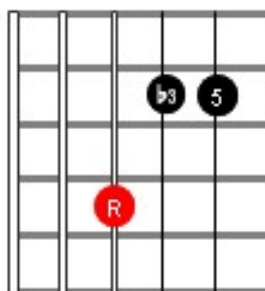
Major 7th
Dominant 7th (7th) minor 7th
minor 7 flat 5 (aka half diminished)
diminished 7th

TRIADS

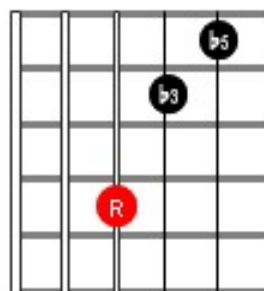
Major



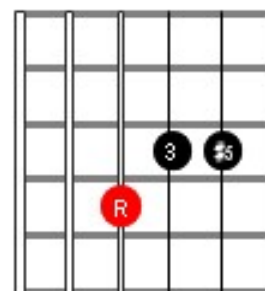
minor



diminished



Augmented



EAR TRAINING

Lesson #2

How to Practice

Start with just Major and minor triads and really listen to them, eventually add the diminished and augmented triads

Sing along with each tone of the triad as you play them. This will internalize them and help you hear them in your head, your inner voice.

Use a piano or other instrument instead of a guitar. This is a really effective way to understand music as a language outside of any single instrument. (Piano app)

TESTING

Method #1

Requires two or more musicians testing each other by playing one of the 4 triads and the other guessing the chord type. Start with Major and minor, then add diminished and augmented.

Method #2

There are many computer programs, websites and apps that work the same way.

TIPS

Try to practice ear training everyday. The apps make it easy to practice while you are on the go

Do a minimum of 10 tests for triads during a session

Start with Major and minor then add diminished and augmented. Often you can isolate a test to just use specific triads only

Sing along with your practice

Try to put a minimum of 20 minutes of ear training during a practice session

Sing a note and then find it on the guitar

Try to figure out simple melodies (kids songs, Holiday songs, commercials, theme songs)

EAR TRAINING

Lesson #3

Music can be thought of as having three fundamental components.

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RHYTHM: whole, half, quarter, eighth, triplet, sixteenth notes and their equivalent rests.

EAR TRAINING

Lesson #3

RHYTHM

Below is a chart of the basic rhythmic elements and their equivalent rests.

There are some variations of notes vs. rests.

Most important is that the rhythms mathematically add up to correspond with the time signature (i.e 4/4 needs the equivalent of 4 quarter notes)

The image displays six examples of rhythmic patterns in 4/4 time, each consisting of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The patterns are as follows:

- 1 Whole Note/Rest:** A single whole note on the treble staff and a whole rest on the bass staff.
- 2 Half Note/Rest:** A half note on the treble staff and a half rest on the bass staff.
- 3 Quarter Note/Rest:** Three quarter notes on the treble staff and three quarter rests on the bass staff.
- 4 Eighth Note/Rest:** Four eighth notes on the treble staff and four eighth rests on the bass staff.
- 5 Triplet/Rest:** A triplet of eighth notes on the treble staff and a triplet of eighth rests on the bass staff.
- 6 Sixteenth Notes/Rest:** A pair of beamed sixteenth notes on the treble staff and a pair of beamed sixteenth rests on the bass staff.

EAR TRAINING

Lesson #3

How to Practice

Rhythms are a little harder to practice. It is advised to get a mechanical pencil (.9mm) and music staff paper and practice writing rhythmic patterns in 4/4 time.

Start easy with Whole, Half, Quarter notes and their equivalent rests.

Set a metronome (60-120 bpm) and tap your rhythmic patterns. Then apply them to your instrument

TESTING

Method #1

Requires two or more musicians to test each other.

First set a metronome somewhere between 60 -120 bpm.

Second tap a 1 bar rhythmic pattern

Third the others musician(s) tap the rhythm they just heard.

Fourth is to also write the rhythm

Method #2

Although harder to find, there are computer programs, websites and apps that work the same way. Search the app market as new apps are created.

TIPS

Try to practice ear training everyday. The apps make it easy to practice while your on the go

Do a minimum of 10 tests during a session

Start with whole and half notes and then slowly increase

Tap your foot as you play

Sing along with your practice

Try to put a minimum of 20 minutes of ear training during a practice session

EAR TRAINING

Lesson #4

Music is
Melody, Harmony and Rhythm

MELODY

INTERVALS: The distance between two notes. Intervals can be ascending or descending.

Unison (U) = notes are equal/same

minor second (m2) = half step(h)/semi tone = 1 fret* (*on same string)

Major second (M2) = whole step(W)/tone = 2 frets*

minor third (m3) = whole+half step = 3 frets*

Major Third (M3) = two whole steps = 4 frets*

Perfect Fourth (P4) = two+half whole steps = 5 frets*

TriTone (TT) = three whole steps = 6 frets* (aka #4, aug4th, b5)

Perfect Fifth (P5) = three+half whole steps = 7 frets*

minor sixth (m6) = four whole steps = 8 frets*

Major Sixth (M6) = four+half whole steps = 9 frets*

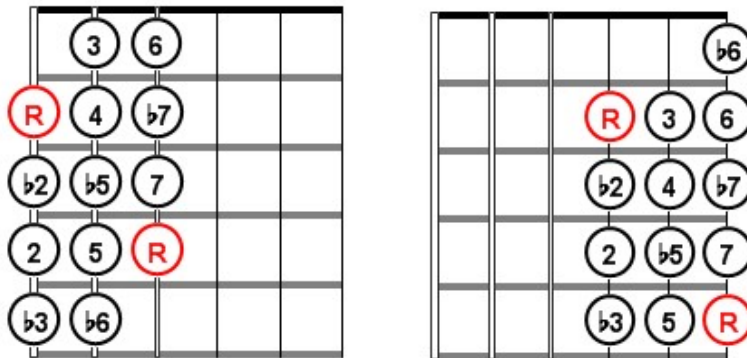
minor seventh (m7) = five whole steps = 10 frets*

Major Seventh (M7) = five+half whole steps = 11 frets*

Octave (8) = six whole steps = 12 frets*

Lesson #4

Below are the 12 intervals shown in 2 positions on the fret board



How to Practice

Intervals ascend and descend and both need to be studied.

After getting comfortable listening to one interval that connects two notes, start adding intervals to make small melodies (3-5 notes)

Sing along with every tone as you play them. This will internalize them and help you hear them in your head, your inner voice.

Play a note and then sing the interval your are practicing

Use a piano or other instrument instead of a guitar. This is a really effective way to understand music as a language outside of any single instrument. (Piano app)

EAR TRAINING

Lesson #4

TESTING

Method #1

Requires two or more musicians testing each other by playing a single tone and following it with another (within one octave). The other musician must guess what the interval is. Practice intervals ascending and descending. Start adding more notes.

Method #2

There are (10) mp3 examples online to download from NYC Guitar School. The examples start easy and get progressively harder with more notes. Each example is played 4 times. It's important to NOT use the instrument in your hands but the ones above your neck. Listen and try to recognize each interval as it goes by without touching an instrument. Try to name each interval.

TIPS

Try to practice ear training everyday. The apps make it easy to practice while your on the go

Do a minimum of 10 tests for intervals during a session

Start with smaller intervals first (m2 M2 m3 M3) then get larger Often you can isolate a test to just use specific intervals only

Sing along with your practice

Try to put a minimum of 20 minutes of ear training during a practice session

Sing a note and then find it on the guitar

Try to figure out simple melodies (kids songs, Holiday songs, commercials, theme songs)

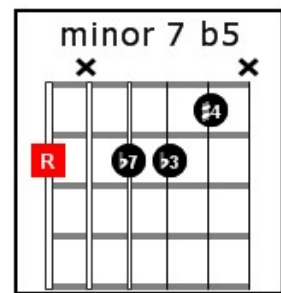
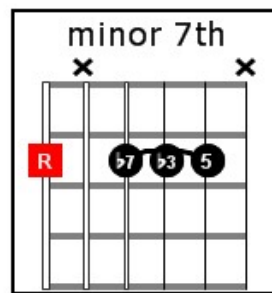
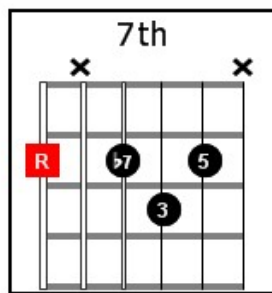
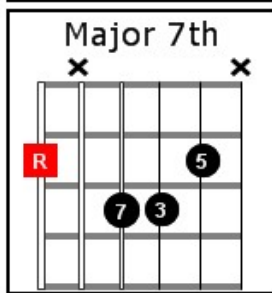
Lesson #5

HARMONY

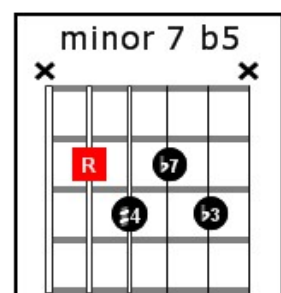
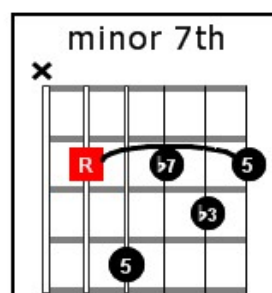
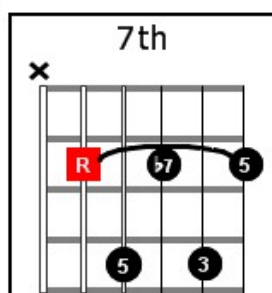
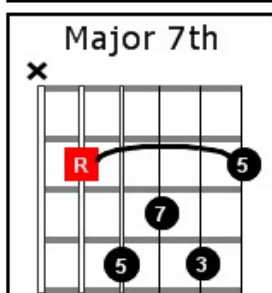
Below are the 4 diatonic seventh chord shapes on (2) string groups.

Maj7 = R 3 5 7
7th = R 3 5 b7
min7 = R b3 5 b7
min7b5 = R b3 b5 b7

6th string root



5th string root



Lesson #5

How to Practice

Start with just one string group and really listen to them,

Major seventh chords I call “green grassy field chords”

Seventh chords are funky major chords

Minor seventh chords have a “cool and mellow” color

Minor seven flat five chords are a dark and unresolved sound

Sing along with each tone of the triad as you play them. This will internalize them and help you hear them in your head, your inner voice. Please note that many guitar chords are not in the order in which they’re musically built (i.e. R 7 3 5). Pay special attention to what the intervals are in a chord voicing.

Use a piano or other instrument instead of a guitar. This is a really effective way to understand music as a language outside of any single instrument.
(Piano app)

TIPS

Try to practice ear training everyday. The apps make it easy to practice while your on the go

Do a minimum of 10 tests for triads during a session

Often you can isolate a test to just use specific chords only

Sing along with your practice

Try to put a minimum of 20 minutes of ear training during a practice session

Sing a note and then find it on the guitar

Try to figure out simple chord progressions, (Neil Young, Tom Petty etc)

Lesson #6

RHYTHM

On the following page is a chart of the 5 most common groupings of sixteenth notes. They should be learned by sound and by sight.

They are notated in rhythmic and standard notation. The left groupings are notated with ties and the right without ties.

Standard music notation uses two separate elements, notes and rhythms. Although they have nothing to do with each other they work magic when combined

1

mf

3

5

7

9

Lesson #6

How to Practice

Rhythms are a little harder to practice. It is advised to get a mechanical pencil (.9mm) and music staff paper and practice writing rhythmic patterns in 4/4.

Start with just one of the sixteenth note groups. Play 3 quarter notes and then the group your studying on the 4th beat. Eventually move the group your studying to different beats in the measure and then to multiple beats.

Set a metronome (60-120 bpm) and tap your rhythmic patterns. Then apply them to your instrument. Sing the rhythms, Da and Ta are common phonetics to use

TESTING

Method #1

Requires two or more musicians to test each other.
First set a metronome somewhere between 60 -120 bpm.
Second tap a 1 bar rhythmic pattern using one or more of the sixteenth note groups Third the others musician(s) tap the rhythm they just heard.
Fourth is to also write the rhythm, not just tap it

Method #2

Although harder to find and a bit limited, there are computer programs, websites and apps. Search the web and app market as new apps are created.

TIPS

Music (especially rhythms) is a real time event, always play it with a beat
Rhythms are with you 24/7 practice them on the train, as you walk, whenever and wherever
Try to practice ear training everyday. The apps make it easy to practice while your on the go
Tap your foot as you play
Sing along with your practice
Try doing two bar phrases

EAR TRAINING

Lesson #7

Music is
Melody, Harmony and Rhythm

MELODY

SCALES

There are 4 types of scales in the music world that make up a significant amount of music. Below are the names and interval contained in the scale (They are Major/Perfect intervals unless noted with a flat symbol (b) then they are minor intervals)

Pentatonic Major: R 2 3 5 6

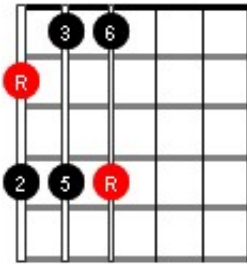
Pentatonic minor: R b3 4 5 b7

Major Scale (Ionian): R 2 3 4 5 6 7

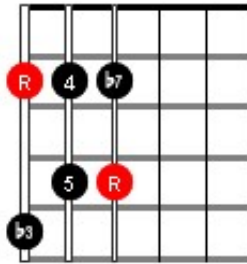
Natural Minor scale (Aeolian): R 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7

Below are the 4 scales shown in root position for 1 octave on the fret board

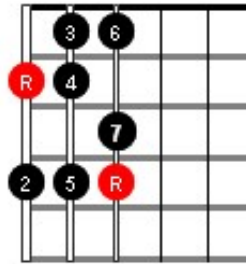
Pentatonic Major



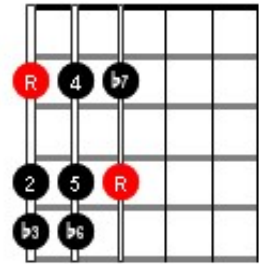
Pentatonic minor



Major (Ionian)



minor (aeolian)



EAR TRAINING

Lesson #7

How to Practice

Play the scales ascending and descending, and of course listen

Sing along with every tone as you play them. This will internalize them and help you hear them in your head, your inner voice.

Play a note and then sing the next scale tone.

Use a piano or other instrument instead of a guitar. This is a really effective way to understand music as a language outside of any single instrument. (Piano app)

TESTING

Method #1

Requires two or more musicians testing each other by playing an ascending scale. The other musician must guess what the scale is. Eventually Practice scales ascending and descending.

More advanced players can play melodies with the scale, not just running up and down the scale

Method #2

The apps and software incorporate scales into the exercises and are usually custom configurable.

TIPS

Try to practice ear training everyday. The apps make it easy to practice while your on the go

Do a minimum of 10 tests for intervals during a session

Start with pentatonic scales and then add the full 7 notes scales

Sing along with your practice

Try to put a minimum of 20 minutes of ear training during a practice session

EAR TRAINING

Lesson #8

HARMONY

Below is a list of very common chord progressions and some example songs that use them. Often the chords can last from 2- 4 beats during the progression (split or full measure) and there are a lot of variations.

Upper case Roman numerals indicate Major chords and lower case Roman numerals indicate minor chords.

I IV V V - “La Bamba”, “Twist and Shout” “Like a Rolling Stone”, “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds”

I IV V IV- “Wild Thing”, “Louie Louie”, “Hang on Sloopy”

I IV I V- “American Pie”, “Brown Eyed Girl”, “The Lion Sleeps Tonight”

I V IV I- “Bad Moon Rising” “Baba Oreily” (stays on IV)

V IV I I - “Magic Carpet Ride”, “Sweet Home Alabama”, “Maggie May”

V IV I V - “Sweet Child o Mine”, “Sympathy for the Devil”

I vi IV V- 50’s progression (Do Op). “Every Breath you Take” “Perfect”

I V vi IV- “Let It Be”, “No Woman No Cry”, “So Lonely”, “Under the Bridge”, “Don’t Stop Believing”

I V V I IV I V I- “Happy Birthday”, “Hey Jude”

Vi V IV V “All Along the Watchtower” “Stairway to Heaven”, “Dream On”,

“Southern Man” variations include “Layla”, “Sultans of Swing”

I I I I IV IV I I V IV I V- 12 bar blues, “Blue Suede Shoes”, Johnny B Goode”, “Red House”, “Say its your Birthday” and thousands more

How to Practice

Start with the key of G Major (G=I, C= IV, D= V and Eminor= vi) and play through each of the progressions. Initially start with just the I, IV and V chord’s as they are the backbone to western music. Even then only start with either I and IV or I and V, then add the third and eventually the vi minor chord.

TESTING

Method #1

Requires two or more musicians testing each other by playing one of the chord progressions and the other naming the progression. Try not to play the progression in a way that will give it away in terms of a famous song (i.e. don’t strum it like “Louie Louie”)

Method #2

Although they are tough to find there are computer programs, websites and apps that work the same way.

EAR TRAINING

Lesson #9

RHYTHM

On the following page is a chart of a few common rhythmic patterns. They should be learned by sound and by sight. They are notated in rhythmic and standard notation.

The first is 3 3 2, meaning notes grouped by 3 3 and 2. These can also occur with sixteenths etc. This pattern happens everywhere in music in a number of ways.

The second is an old rhythm known as the Clave, also known as the Son Clave or the 3 2 clave (represents the attacks per measure). It's shown in half and double time. Bo Diddley and George Michaels "Faith" use this pattern

The third is a very common pattern in the rock pop world, from ZZ Top (Cheap Sunglasses) to the Eagles. It's shown in half and double time

1 3 3 2

mf

Son Clave (3 2)

mf

mf

EAR TRAINING

How to Practice

Rhythms are a little harder to practice. It is advised to get a mechanical pencil (.9mm) and music staff paper and practice writing rhythmic patterns in 4/4.

Count out every pattern and go beat by beat as your learning them. Its very helpful to find a song that uses these patterns so you have a mental reference.

Set a metronome (60-120 bpm) and tap your rhythmic patterns. Then apply them to your instrument. Sing the rhythms, Da and Ta are common phonetics to use

TESTING

Method #1

Requires two or more musicians to test each other.

First set a metronome somewhere between 60 -120 bpm.

Second tap one of the rhythmic patterns

Third the others musician(s) tap the rhythm they just heard.

Fourth is to also write the rhythm, not just tap it

Method #2

Although harder to find and a bit limited, there are computer programs, websites and apps. Search the web and app market as new apps are created.

TIPS

Music (especially rhythms) is a real time event, always play it with a beat
Count out every rhythm, start with just one beat and keep adding to it
until you work out the whole pattern

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Tap your foot as you play, Sing along with your practice Try doing two
bar phrases

Join the
SIX STRING COMMUNITY
at Lead Guitar Workshop



www.SixStringCommunity.com

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