

Title:

Guitar Lesson: The Power Of Guitar Speed Goals.

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Summary:

Do you ever get the feeling that you're not progressing at your fastest possible rate? Do you ever feel overwhelmed? How about the feeling that you're not really 100% sure if you're improving or not? If you do...you're definitely not alone!

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Article Body:

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Learning guitar can be a bit overwhelming at times. There are literally enough things to learn to keep anyone busy for MANY lifetimes. This can be both a blessing and a curse. It's a blessing because you'll never run out new and exciting things to learn. It can also seem like a curse because you'll never get to the bottom of your "to do" list! So how do you keep motivated and constantly have the feeling of progress? That's where speed goals come in...

I've been using speed goals for about the last 15 years. They are one of the most powerful weapons in my guitar practice arsenal. Let's take a look now at what they are, and what benefits you'll gain by setting speed goals.

What Are Speed Goals?

A speed goal is a goal that you set to reach a particular metronome setting. For example, you might say that your speed goal for a particular sweep picking exercise is sixteenth notes at 160bpm (beats-per-minute). You would practice that exercise daily until the target speed has been reached.

An effective speed goal has these qualities...

1. No Deadline. Unlike traditional goal setting, there are no deadlines with speed goals. This is because you must allow your technique to develop in a relaxed and natural way. If you set a deadline, you may be tempted to increase your metronome speeds at too fast a rate in order to meet the deadline. Result? You'll basically program tension into your muscles and most likely get frustrated.
2. Challenging. Your speed goal must be challenging. It should be fast enough to make you grow as a player. For example, if you can currently play an exercise at 120bpm then something like 144bpm would make a good goal. Once you reach 144bpm, then you might set another speed goal of around 160bpm. See how this works?
3. Realistic. Don't set your speed goal too high. If you can currently only play an exercise at 120bpm, then 240bpm would probably be too high. I generally set speed goals that I think I can achieve within a month or two.

Benefits of Speed Goals

A few benefits of setting speed goals include...

1. They give you something to work towards. This helps you to stay motivated and enthusiastic about your guitar practice.
2. They give you a feeling of progress. You'll feel great each time you reach a speed goal. These small wins help you feel like you are progressing steadily towards the larger goals that you have set for your guitar playing.
3. They tell you when you can STOP practicing an exercise. Once you've achieved your goal you can then move onto something else. The speed goal stops you from mindlessly practicing an exercise that you have already mastered.
4. They give you measurable results. If your speeds are increasing then you have quantitative proof that you are improving. You KNOW for sure that you are getting better. This helps you become more confident about your guitar playing.

I encourage you to set a few speed goals now. If you set them consistently, I think you'll be amazed at how fast you'll progress.