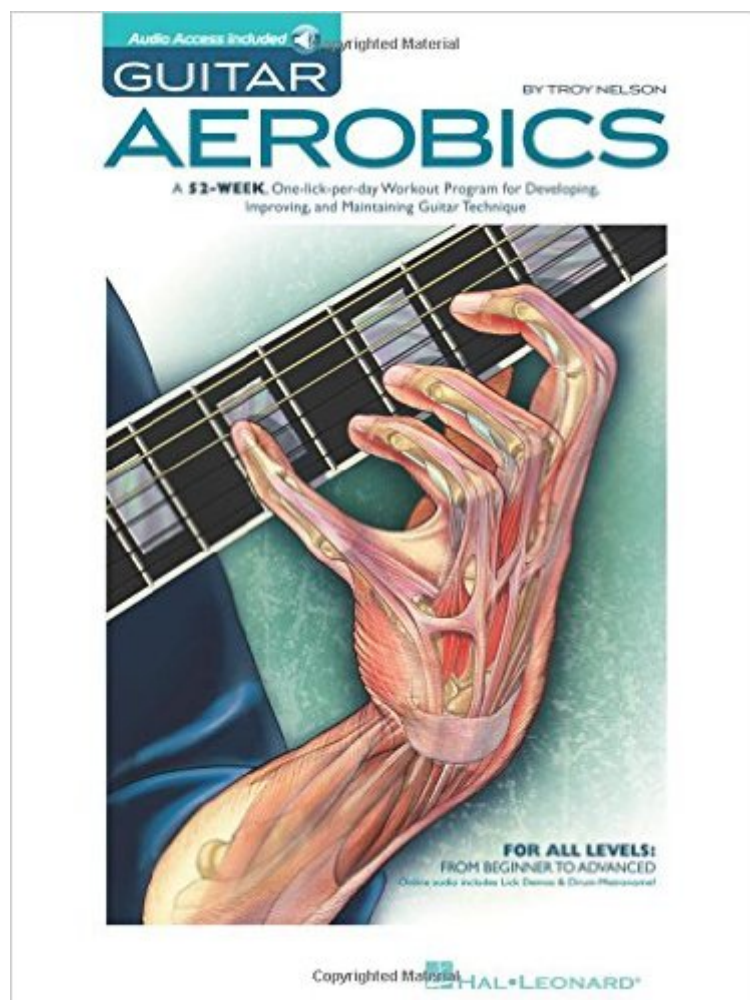




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Guitar Aerobics: A 52-Week, One-lick-per-day Workout Program For Developing, Improving And Maintaining Guitar Technique Bk/online Audio





Synopsis

From the former editor of Guitar One magazine, here is a daily dose of vitamins to keep your chops fine tuned for a full 52 weeks. The guitar exercises cover several musical styles including rock, blues, jazz, metal, country, and funk. Techniques taught include alternate picking, arpeggios, sweep picking, string skipping, legato, string bending, and rhythm guitar. These exercises will increase your speed and improve your dexterity and pick- and fret-hand accuracy the more you practice them.

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Today I finish Week 6 in this book, and I honestly have only good things to say about it. Well--only good things at the end of it all, that is.* Its day-by-day structure helps easily-distracted players like me keep a schedule. It will quickly become useless if you miss days, skip exercises, or try to use it

irregularly. With that in mind, I've been able to stick with it every day, which keeps me playing everyday. Quite the feat. You COULD try to use it as a source for guitar licks, but that's not what this is meant to be and there are better books for that.* If one's serious about using this as the skeleton to their practice method, as I have, you actually have to develop an advancement system on your own. They don't provide one. You have the daily exercise in notation and tab, a couple short paragraphs on what it's teaching and a quick tip on how to properly play it, or how to get a little more out of it (such as switching up the picking style, etc.), the bpm speed range that the rhythm CD will provide, and a couple other small tidbits of information. Unless you're an extremely gifted player, you're not going to master even the first lick at its top speed of 112 bpm on the first day. You need to keep coming back to it for a while. Also, by the time you get to the first Friday's exercise, there's no way you'll master it the first day--I still goof it up. Plus, rushing through each one to max out the speed is not useful. You need to spend time with each one at slower speeds before cranking up the metronome. Such is basic practice knowledge. It took me a bit, but I developed a plan of attack that I like. I start each new exercise at the slowest recommended starting speed, so far 40 bpm in every case. Once I've practiced it for a while and feel that I have it down at that speed, I bump the metronome up +10 bpm to 50, and move to yesterday's exercise, which I did yesterday at 40. Once I have that down at 50, I go +10 bpm again to the day before yesterday's exercise, which I did yesterday at 50, and so on, all the way up to 10 bpm past the top recommended speed for the exercise a little over a week ago. On days when I don't have much time, I'll do my best to just quickly learn the new exercise so I can practice it more at 50 bpm the next day. Thankfully I've only needed to do that a couple times. At first I struggled with "putting away" the much older exercises when I get so far from them, but was able to relax when I reminded myself that . . . * Each day of the week is always the same technique area. Monday is always alternate picking. Tuesday is always string skipping. Saturday is always legato (hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides). Etc. In addition to that, each new week's exercise builds on or expands the previous week's, in most cases. I was actually getting frustrated with it at one point because of that. How many legato sequences can you build out of the same Am pentatonic scale? But then one week, it switched up dramatically enough that it felt new again. This at first seemed to me like lazy writing, but I changed my opinion. It is SO important that it is done this way. It's baby steps. Even advanced players need baby steps with new stuff and with mastering new techniques. Also, this helps my personal practice approach to the book--since, for example, this Thursday's arpeggio exercise is building yet again on the same ideas from the Thursday exercise from 2, 3, 4 weeks ago, I don't need to keep practicing those ones. I'm slowly building the complexity, which means I'm able to fly through the old ones without hindrance. With

this slow build, however, keep in mind . . . * There are a LOT of exercises here. If you stick with this and actually do this over an entire year, it would be impossible for it to not improve your playing. That's not because the book is magical or something, or so amazingly clever, but because to do so means you're practicing regularly and advancing slowly but surely. At the start of my sixth week of this book, I was getting a little frustrated that I'd been at it for seemingly so long but so little progress in regards to the complexity of the exercises had been made. So I took some time to finally put both the rhythm CD and the exercise examples CD onto my iPod for easy access. Well, I had to type out and name all 53 tracks on the example CD, and got reminded about how many exercises there really are. Today I do exercise 42. Of 365. My weeks aren't even in double digits yet. So in the end, this is a great book if you use it exactly how they suggest. Don't make it your only book or source--be sure to throw in some scale sequences, chord progressions, exercises to memorize the note structure of the fretboard, music theory study, and get some tab or something for some songs you like, too--but this book can easily be your daily motivation.=====SIX MONTH UPDATEToday I started week 27 of 52 in Guitar Aerobics. Yes, I've stuck with it 100%, and my opinion has remained absolutely the same as it was four and a half months ago. The only thing that has changed is my personal advancement system that I described before, which is now a week-by-week system where I perfect all seven exercises over the seven days in a given week, using both a metronome and the provided drum tracks, and then come the next Monday I start with seven new exercises and do the process over again. These daily exercises keep me immersed in a variety of techniques and genres and regularly challenge me with stuff I wouldn't have thought of on my own--and more often than not, with stuff that I wouldn't have ran into any other way--and my focus is form and technique rather than getting the exercise to "sound right." Not only has my playing noticeably improved, but I've developed new skills as well, my personal favorite being hybrid picking. I can say with absolute certainty that I never would have tried hybrid picking had it not been for this book. Again, let me reiterate that my satisfaction and success with Guitar Aerobics is not because it's the most brilliant guitar book ever written or anything like that, but instead because it provides the core of the daily motivation that I lacked in previous attempts to maintain a practice schedule (in that the book becomes pointless once you start being careless about keeping up with it). It's not flawless. I do have a few gripes, but nothing that ruins the book and nothing that I'll list so as to avoid leading anyone into opinions they might not have had otherwise. I'll do a final update again in six months. Until then: If you are looking for a guitar book with lots in it, a wide variety of things to learn, and a structure that makes it easy to keep a schedule, then you certainly can't go wrong with this one.=====FINAL UPDATEUnfortunately I cannot hold my head

high and say I made it through all 52 weeks. I got to week 44 and stalled in light of life and frustration with the monotony of this book and finally, after six weeks of not being able to stick with it anymore, put it away. I said in my last update that I didn't want to list any gripes that I have in fear that I would influence someone else to have those same gripes, where they may otherwise not. Well . . . I'll loosen that rule up a little in order to state what I think is a valid "heads-up" to anyone who sets out on the same quest as me: brace yourself for a lot of mind-numbing monotony; like, more than you expect. For example, every Friday is a sweep-picking exercise. You'll learn that there's a five-exercise (or is it seven?) cycle that gets repeated throughout almost the entire book. After about 25-30 weeks of this, it can become too much to bear. The authors fall back on this repetitive crutch for several other days of the week, too (though Fridays are by far the biggest place for it). This doesn't ruin the book--after all, it's about getting better at guitar and not about entertainment, so monotony is part of the deal--but I think knowing what you're in for a little more might help one to weather more of it than I eventually could. This is still a 5-star book in my opinion, though. As I've stated before, without this book providing the daily motivation, I wouldn't have advanced to where I am on guitar nearly as much. I had a solid 7-8 months of 90 to 180 minutes of daily practice largely due to using this book. I'll take it back out eventually, too, and maybe try to advance through it a different way or a different pace. It's by far the most important guitar book I own.

This is a great book I got it this morning and am pretty happy with its content. I have been playing guitar for about 13 years and this book does a good job of making an intermediate to advanced player slow down and really work on any bad practices they have developed. Plus it gives me something to look forward to everyday and expands my already established practice routine.

There's a lot of work that went into putting these exercises together - each one is shown in TAB and standard notation, along with stroke direction, and fingering/finger number and chord position. Add to that an audio demo of each lick PLUS rhythm tracks (!) and you have a very generous workout program for the money. Some people ding this the CD combines a few of the audio demos per track, which indeed isn't the most convenient thing, but they probably had to do this because of the indexing limitations of the CD format - i.e., if they had put each exercise on its own track, it would have spanned over 4 CDs - not very cost effective. Maybe a future edition could separate each exercise as an MP3 download? :) Another point is you don't have to necessarily limit yourself to one exercise per day. Since some of them are ascending and descending patterns, you can combine some of the exercises into longer workouts.

Ok, I enjoy this book but you have to create your own strategy around it. I like learning a new lesson every day. It motivates me to pick up the guitar and go right to this book and learn something new. It fits exactly to my style of learning. I am not a DVD guy and this helps give me what I need to do to keep progressing my skills. I also have developed my own strategy. I plan on redoing every daily lesson in a 10 week block. So, I start on Week one. By Week 10, I still practice my warm ups on Week 1 on every day and then I go all the way up to the most recent day lesson. Then when I get to the 11th week, I start on warm ups on Week 2 and play them all up to week 11. So, I am constantly practicing each daily exercise to make them more precise. I don't play one and then forget it. I play it every day for 10 weeks straight. Now, I am only up to week 8, I haven't essentially implemented this strategy but for now, it is my plan on doing so. Overall, the book is great for my ability to play and learn. I hope to start his other books when I complete this in August 2017.***UPDATE#1: I have finished week 26 and still do the past 10 weeks of exercises. I am happy that I'm half way done and I have a couple things to note. First, my finger strength is really getting good. I can tell because I use one of those gimmicky 4 finger exercise tools and it is getting easier to do it, especially my pinky finger. But I also do daily extra finger exercises outside this book that I copied from YouTube. I am also learning the full Rust in Peace album by Megadeth. I started around the same time, I started guitar aerobics, working in them daily and I have to admit, it is getting easier to play those songs. Don't get me wrong, it has been a lot of work and I am nowhere near completing those songs but it is slowly getting easier to play. On average, I put in at least 90 minutes a day on guitar. In the past 200 days, I only missed 24 days of playing (11 of which was because I had surgery). I am still excited about this book and already have purchased Fretboard Freedom to start when I finish this book in August (hopefully).*** UPDATE#2: I just finished week 37. I am still progressing along pretty good. As others mentioned the daily lessons get repetitive but I tend to think it reinforces technique over and over to master it. I keep working pretty hard on clarity of notes and precision and I think going over similar structure is really beneficial to developing long term technique. For example, I find sweep picking easier and easier to do and now I implement subtle sweep picking into my improvising. I only have 15 more weeks to go (+10 extra weeks of follow up - as mentioned above) and less than 4 months feels like I am finally seeing the end at the light of the tunnel. I still recommend this book but it does take time to really fully dedicate to it. You really need to commit the time. I have a friend that recommended this book to me and he admires my tenacity at keeping up with it, he says he doubts he could've. With where I am at, I am committed to finishing the book and I started pre-reading Fretboard Freedom, so I can pick up when I finish Guitar Aerobics.

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