



ESSENTIALS OF THE WERNICK METHOD

FUNDAMENTALS

- Music should be fun.
- Do what gets you the most musical fun the soonest. Easy is good, as long as the music is good.
- Learn chords and basic timekeeping first. Start by playing along with 2-chord songs, then 3-chord songs.
- Practice jam skills at home. Play/sing from a songbook. Play along with recordings and videos.
- Keep it slow at first, about 70 beats per minute.
- It's easy enough to be in tune, so make it a practice to check tuning regularly.
- Jam in a circle. Groups of 4-6 are best for bluegrass, 8-10 unwieldy. When possible, divide into smaller groups.
- Soloing is optional, and is easier once jam skills are learned. Instrumentals are difficult for novices. Stick to songs.
- Song leading is a necessary part of a jam. At least one person in a jam, but preferably more, must have this skill.
- Students may not read chords from paper in a jam; read a guitar player's left hand. If no guitar player knows the chords, the song leader first teaches a guitar player the chords. There is usually no need to call out chords.
- Ear skills are needed for bluegrass, tab and music reading skills are not. Cultivate ear skills.
- Learn about bluegrass basics, and work on them first.
- Learn the typical ground rules and protocols for jamming.
- Respect bluegrass sensibilities and traditions.

GO FOR LIFTOFF

- Learn to control your backup volume.
- Practice singing so you can carry a tune and sing in a jam. For each song, choose the key that's best for your singing, one that you and your fellow jammers can probably play in.
- Learn the number system, for following chords and transposing keys quickly.
- Learn choruses by listening/singing. Only a lead singer needing the words may have a book open.
- Learn to reinforce the pulse effectively.
- Learn "placeholder" soloing, do it when appropriate.
- Learn more chords so you can play more songs, in more keys.
- Help others stay on track.
- Learn the basics of using a capo. Players of non-capoing instruments: learn to read capoed guitar chords.
- Learn "filler content" soloing as an upgrade to simple placeholder soloing.
- Learn how to find melodies and build simple solos that include them.
- Playing exactly memorized instrumental solos is difficult, and not necessary but optional in jams.

FOR EXTRA PARTICIPATION AND RESPECT

- Learn to lead songs.
- Learn to take good-sounding solos, including kickoffs.
- Learn to sing harmony, and practice adding harmony on the fly.

FOR RESPECT AND THE SUCCESS OF THE GROUP

- Work with the limitations and preferences of your fellow jammers.
- Share the spotlight—give others a chance to show off.
- Bring good material to the jam that you are prepared to lead.

I understand that as a Wernick Method teacher I am expected to, and will, consistently uphold these principles and practices of the Wernick Bluegrass Music Method. I agree to conduct myself professionally as a Wernick Method teacher, taking care to respect everyone associated with the class.

I understand it is never OK to make sexist, racist, discriminatory, off-color, or other inappropriate remarks that might make students uncomfortable for no reason.

Signature

Print Name

Date