

## Pete's Fast Track to Practising Scales and Arpeggios

All instrumentalists have a responsibility to practise rudiments in order to:

- Engage the musical part of the brain (think rhythmically, melodically and harmonically).
- Warm up limbs, vocal cords, secure posture etc.
- Develop dexterity and technique.

What follows is a step by step method we can use to incorporate all of these.

- 1) Set a metronome to a comfortable speed (somewhere between 50bpm and 60bpm).
- 2) Play or sing the scale/ arpeggio you are working on in quavers (2 notes per 'click'). A good method is to go through the circle of fifths, but starting on F, then Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb/F#, Cb/ B, E, A, D, G and finish on C. ***This allows you to work through all twelve keys so you will be suitably prepared to play/ sing in any key.***
- 3) Repeat this but play the notes as a dotted quaver and semiquaver (one long, one short). This introduces a fast rhythm and ***encourages you to think about the longer note.***
- 4) Do it in reverse (semiquaver followed by the dotted quaver). This means the stress is on the second note and helps us to ***concentrate on the weight of the longer note along the way.***
- 5) Do it as a quaver followed by two semiquavers (one longer, two shorter). The speed is gradually increasing at even more. ***The long note allows us to anticipate the two faster ones that precede it.***
- 6) Reverse it and play/ sing two semiquavers followed by a quaver (two short notes and a long note). We now focus on ***reaching*** the longer note.
- 7) Play them all as semiquavers (all fast, four notes per 'click'). You are now playing/ singing in double time

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compared to the tempo established by the metronome. **So if you are working at 50bpm, you are now operating at 100bpm.**

- 8) Each week increase your bpm by 2. You will not only become more efficient at pitching and playing, but also do it much smoother than if you were to just start at a faster tempo.

### Self-Assessment

**To monitor your own progress**, challenge yourself to learn something (song, technique, solo, fill etc.) that you think is currently beyond you.

- 1) Start by maybe only learning the first 8 bars, the first 4 bars or even only the first bar.
- 2) If the tempo is beyond your current threshold, practise slowly with a metronome and gradually increase the tempo by 2bpm each time you play it correctly.
- 3) Once you have increased it by 10 bpm, return to the slower tempo: this is tangible evidence you can measure and appreciate.
- 4) Now increase the tempo by 20 bpm and try it. If you can play it easily, then increase by increments of 5bpm until you determine your threshold. ***This is your benchmark that you now know you need to best when working on this song or technique.***