GUITARSHELF · FREE PDF GUIDE

GUITAR WARM-UPS AND TECHNIQUE: 10 MINUTES A DAY

Ten exercises, from waking up the fingers to mobility, in 10 sheets

A short routine with no chords or songs: ten exercises to wake up the fingers and build consistency and precision, ten minutes per session.

10 sheets · level 1 to 4 · at your own pace

Layout optimised for 7-inch e-readers (Kobo, Kindle, Boox…), also easy to read on phones and tablets.

Created by Guitarshelf, a guitar exercise sheet generator and catalogue — https://guitarshelf.com

WHY THIS PACK

This guide is not a programme to follow to the letter but a menu of ten exercises with no chords or songs, ranked from the simplest to the most demanding. The idea is to bet on consistency rather than length: ten well-kept minutes every day beat a long occasional session. The order is deliberate: first wake up the fingers and work on string changes (sheets 1 to 3), then chromatic speed on one string and across two strings (4 and 5), then legato gestures (6 and 7), and finally the mobility of the picking and fretting hands along the neck (8 to 10). The classic trap is to play these exercises fast just to have done them: they only work if they stay slow, even and relaxed.

THE 10-SHEET PATH

01 **Warm-up — one fret, all 6 strings**
LEVEL 1 · BLUES
The starting point: one fret, all the string changes, no left-hand difficulty.

02 **Warm-up — chromatic run on the low E string**
LEVEL 1 · BLUES
The 1-2-3-4 pattern on the low E string: the basis of every chromatic exercise that follows.

03 **Warm-up — spider walk (low E / A)**
LEVEL 2 · ROCK
The classic "spider": the same chromatic fingering, but alternating two strings, to build finger independence.

04 Chromatic velocity — one string

LEVEL 1 · ROCK

One finger per fret, back and forth on a single string: even pressure before speed.

05 Chromatic velocity — string change

LEVEL 2 · ROCK

The same pattern with a string change every four notes: the difficulty moves to the picking hand.

06 Warm-up — chromatic legato (hammer-ons and pull-offs)

LEVEL 4 · ROCK

The same chromatic pattern, but pure legato: the picking hand rests, the fretting hand does all the work.

07 Rapid trill (chained hammer-on/pull-off)

LEVEL 3 · ROCK

Chained hammer-ons and pull-offs between two neighbouring frets, without re-picking: legato at high speed.

08 String skipping — low E string to D string

LEVEL 3 · ROCK

Jumping from the low E string to the D string while ignoring the one in between: picking-hand accuracy.

09 Double stop on two neighbouring strings

LEVEL 3 · BLUES

Two neighbouring strings played together at the same intensity: control of the pick attack.

10 **Warm-up — chromatic run in a higher position**

LEVEL 3 · POP

The opening chromatic pattern replayed at frets 5 to 8: the frets get closer together and the hand has to adapt.

SUGGESTED PRACTICE PLAN

Week 1 — Waking up the fingers (sheets 1 to 3)

A typical ten-minute session: three minutes of warm-up, five minutes on the day's exercise, two very slow minutes to finish. No tempo imposed: clarity comes first.

Week 2 — Chromatic speed (sheets 4 and 5)

One finger per fret, first on one string, then changing strings. Slow down precisely at the string change, where the mistakes concentrate.

Week 3 — Legato (sheets 6 and 7)

Chained hammer-ons and pull-offs, then the trill. Work in short bursts and rest the hand between attempts: fatigue is the signal to stop, not to push harder.

Week 4 — Mobility (sheets 8, 9 and 10)

String skipping, double stops, then the chromatic pattern higher on the neck. Rotate these three exercises from one day to the next rather than running through all of them on the same day.

01 · WARM-UP — ONE FRET, ALL 6 STRINGS

Level 1 | Blues

Online sheet: https://guitarshelf.com/en/fiche/warmup-one-fret-6-strings

ITS PLACE IN THE PATH

The starting point: one fret, all the string changes, no left-hand difficulty.

GUIDE TIP

Watch the picking hand, not the fretting hand: each string change should be a small, clean movement. If you hear a neighbouring string, drop back to a tempo where it stays silent.

A single fret (fret 5) played with the same finger across all 6 strings, from low E to high e and back: the simplest exercise to train pure string changes, with no fret change involved.

TIPS

Focus entirely on the picking hand: every string change should stay clean, without grazing the neighbouring string.

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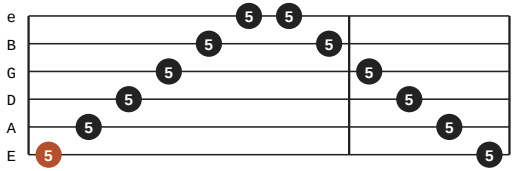

02 · WARM-UP — CHROMATIC RUN ON THE LOW E STRING

Level 1 Blues

Online sheet: https://guitarshelf.com/en/fiche/warmup-chromatic-low-e

ITS PLACE IN THE PATH

The 1-2-3-4 pattern on the low E string: the basis of every chromatic exercise that follows.

GUIDE TIP

No tempo to begin with: play each note as if it were alone. Add speed once all four fingers land in the same place every time, without looking.

One finger per fret, 1-2-3-4, on the low E string alone, back and forth. It's the barest warm-up there is: no musical note, no chord, just the four fretting fingers learning to move independently of each other. Done two minutes before playing, it wakes up circulation in the fingers and clearly cuts down wrong notes in the first minutes. It's not an exercise to nail: it's a routine to repeat, like scales for a pianist.

TIPS

No tempo at first: every note must sound full and clean, no buzz, before you even think about evenness.
Keep the non-playing fingers hovering just above the strings, close to the fretboard, not up in the air: that's where speed comes from later.
Bump the metronome by 5 BPM only when a full pass goes clean three times in a row.

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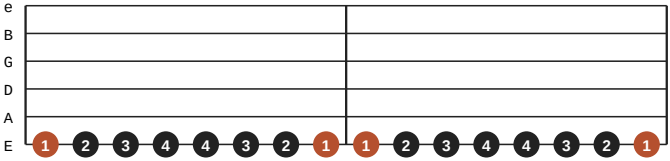

03 · WARM-UP — SPIDER WALK (LOW E / A)

Level 2 Rock

Online sheet: https://guitarshelf.com/en/fiche/warmup-spider-walk-e-a

ITS PLACE IN THE PATH

The classic "spider": the same chromatic fingering, but alternating two strings, to build finger independence.

GUIDE TIP

Check from time to time that each finger stays on "its" fret when changing string: if a finger drifts, slow down rather than correcting on the fly.

The "spider" exercise: the 1-2-3-4 chromatic fingering moves fret by fret while alternating between the low E string and the A string, instead of staying on one string like the basic chromatic warm-up. Each finger keeps its assigned fret (index fret 1, middle fret 2, ring fret 3, pinky fret 4) even when it switches strings — it's that string change while keeping the finger assignment that really builds independence, more than repetition on a single string.

TIPS

Never let a finger leave its assigned fret: the index stays on fret 1 on both strings, never fret 2.
Play one direction only at first (down the neck), coordination before speed.
If a finger still lingers on the old string once the hand has already switched, that's the sign to slow down further.

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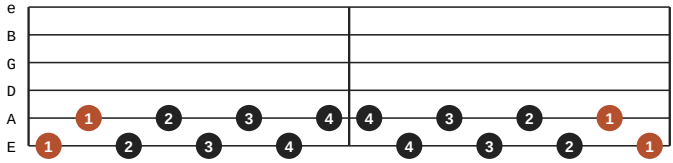

04 · CHROMATIC VELOCITY — ONE STRING

Level 1 Rock

Online sheet: https://guitarshelf.com/en/fiche/chromatic-velocity-one-string

ITS PLACE IN THE PATH

One finger per fret, back and forth on a single string: even pressure before speed.

GUIDE TIP

Count "1-2-3-4" out loud: if your voice hesitates, your fingers will too. It is a simple consistency test, no metronome needed.

The same motion as the catalog's chromatic warm-up — one finger per fret, 1-2-3-4, on the low E string — but filed here under technique rather than warm-up: the difference isn't in the movement, it's in the purpose. As a warm-up, it's a two-minute ritual before playing. Here, it's a building block: the same four-finger independence that underlies the legato, bend and vibrato work covered further into this section.

TIPS

If the chromatic warm-up is already part of your routine, don't do it twice — it's the exact same exercise, only the moment you play it changes.
Rest the fingers that aren't playing just above the strings, ready, rather than lifting them in the air between notes.
Once the back-and-forth is smooth, move straight into technique-legato-1corde or technique-slide-1corde: it's the logical next step of the same fretting-hand work.

05 · CHROMATIC VELOCITY — STRING CHANGE

Level 2 Rock

Online sheet: https://guitarshelf.com/en/fiche/chromatic-velocity-string-change

ITS PLACE IN THE PATH

The same pattern with a string change every four notes: the difficulty moves to the picking hand.

GUIDE TIP

Prepare the string change on the fourth note: the picking hand should already be on its way when the little finger plays. Anticipation, not speed, makes the change smooth.

Same principle as the previous exercise (one finger per fret), but changing strings every 4 notes: from the low E string to the A string, then D, and so on.

TIPS

The string change is the tricky part: slow down right at that moment rather than across the whole exercise.

06 · WARM-UP — CHROMATIC LEGATO (HAMMER-ONS AND PULL-OFFS)

Level 4 | Rock

Online sheet: https://guitarshelf.com/en/fiche/warmup-chromatic-legato

ITS PLACE IN THE PATH

The same chromatic pattern, but pure legato: the picking hand rests, the fretting hand does all the work.

GUIDE TIP

Stop as soon as the weakest notes die away: the quality of a hammer-on's strike fades quickly with fatigue, and it is better to finish early than to finish badly.

The same 1-2-3-4 pattern as the basic warm-up, but played in pure legato: only the very first note is picked, everything else is chained through hammer-ons going up and pull-offs coming back down. The picking hand does nothing — it's all left-hand strength and precision.

TIPS

If a hammer-on note doesn't ring out loud enough, it's almost never a picking-hand issue to fix: strike down harder with the ascending finger, without moving the others.

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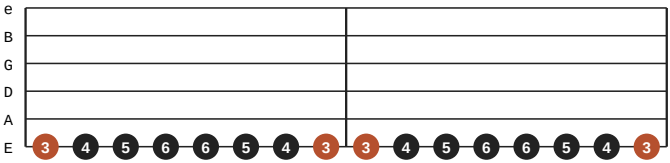

07 · RAPID TRILL (CHAINED HAMMER-ON/PULL-OFF)

Level 3 Rock

Online sheet: https://guitarshelf.com/en/fiche/rapid-trill

ITS PLACE IN THE PATH

Chained hammer-ons and pull-offs between two neighbouring frets, without re-picking: legato at high speed.

GUIDE TIP

Aim for evenness of sound, not speed: a slow but even trill beats a fast one where every other note sounds weaker.

A pure technical exercise, no chord or scale involved: on the A string, alternate a hammer-on and a pull-off very quickly between two neighbouring frets, in a continuous loop, without picking the string again.

TIPS

A trill naturally slows down as the fretting hand tires: practice in short bursts (10-15 seconds) rather than continuously, to keep a constant speed on each attempt.

08 · STRING SKIPPING — LOW E STRING TO D STRING

Level 3 Rock

Online sheet: https://guitarshelf.com/en/fiche/string-skipping-low-e-d

ITS PLACE IN THE PATH

Jumping from the low E string to the D string while ignoring the one in between: picking-hand accuracy.

GUIDE TIP

Look at the destination string, not the one you left: the eye guides the hand, and the skip becomes a gesture rather than a gamble.

A pure technical exercise, no chord or scale involved: pick a note on the low E string then jump straight to the D string (skipping the A string in between), without the pick touching the middle string.

TIPS

Slow down right at the moment of the skip: that's where the pick most often catches the skipped string by accident. A slightly wider wrist motion than usual helps clear it cleanly.

09 · DOUBLE STOP ON TWO NEIGHBOURING STRINGS

Level 3 Blues

Online sheet: https://guitarshelf.com/en/fiche/double-stop-g-b

ITS PLACE IN THE PATH

Two neighbouring strings played together at the same intensity: control of the pick attack.

GUIDE TIP

Record thirty seconds and listen back: if one of the two notes stands out, adjust the angle of the pick before adjusting the force.

A pure technical exercise, no chord or scale involved: play two notes at once on two adjacent strings (G and B strings), making sure both ring out with equal intensity.

TIPS

Strike both strings with a single pick motion, not one after the other: a double stop should sound like one two-note attack, not a fast arpeggio.

10 · WARM-UP — CHROMATIC RUN IN A HIGHER POSITION

Level 3 Pop

Online sheet: https://guitarshelf.com/en/fiche/warmup-chromatic-higher-position

ITS PLACE IN THE PATH

The opening chromatic pattern replayed at frets 5 to 8: the frets get closer together and the hand has to adapt.

GUIDE TIP

End of the path: replay sheet 2 first, then this one, and compare the feel. The gap between the two shows where you actually stand.

The same 1-2-3-4 chromatic pattern as the basic warm-up, but played further up the neck (frets 5 to 8): the frets sit closer together, so the finger spacing needs to shrink accordingly.

TIPS

Don't try to keep the exact same finger spacing as at fret 1: higher up the neck the frets are closer together, so the hand should naturally close up.

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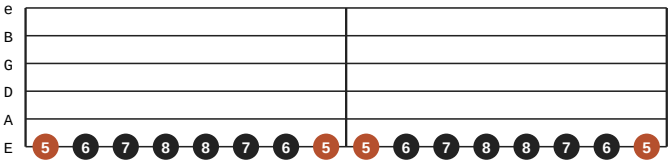

HOW TO USE IT

1. Print the sheets in order, or keep them as a PDF on a tablet near your guitar.
2. One sheet per session is enough: better to replay it for several days than run through all ten at once.
3. Note the date and the tempo reached on the back of each sheet: playing is refined by ear, but progress is measured with a metronome.
4. Once you've gone through all the sheets, the same path exists in other keys on the site to transpose what you've learned.

WHAT IS GUITARSHELF

Guitarshelf is a guitar exercise sheet site, free and with no account to create:

- A catalogue of sheets sorted by style, level (1 to 6) and exercise type (grid, riff, scale, technique...).
- A generator that creates a brand-new exercise sheet on demand, based on chosen criteria.
- A glossary and gear guides to understand the vocabulary and upkeep of the instrument.
- A personal songbook: build your own selection of sheets and export it as a PDF, like this one.

Continue the journey on https://guitarshelf.com