



## Practice Schedule

by John Falstrom

Try dividing your practice time into these four "tried and true" categories:

1) **Ear Training**-----Figure out the bass parts from songs (CDs, tapes, the radio, etc.). Also try to figure out melodies, guitar parts, keyboard parts, horn parts, etc. This is how you learn to play "by ear". This will teach you relative pitch (being able to duplicate what you hear from a song).

**Tip:** Have a stereo system in arms length of you and your bass guitar. (You'll be stopping, rewinding, and pausing songs constantly to get "the parts" correctly). This is an extremely good thing.

2) **Reading**-----Read any form of music that you can apply to the bass guitar. Analyzing (instruction books, sheet music, etc.). Analyze the bass parts "against" the chord changes.

**Tip:** Stay away from tablature (you'll never see it on an actual bandstand) i.e. you'll never use it or need it I tell my students that tablature "takes you south when you should be heading north", and it does.

3) **Theory**-----Play and memorize as many scales, chord arpeggios, double stops, strummed, and/or plucked chords as possible. Every song is written around a major or minor scale (this is where the melodies, chord changes, bass lines, solos, etc. come from). Transfer any music theory information (that you can find) to the fret board of your bass guitar. Memorize "the shapes" that scales and chords have on the fret board.

4) **Improvisation**--"Make up" your own ideas on the bass, i.e. original songs, bass lines, solos, exercises, etc. Using a metronome and/or drum machine will help you "come up" with an incredible amount of fresh ideas.

I must mention that playing with other musicians is of the utmost importance for your development of becoming the bassist/musician that you strive to be.