

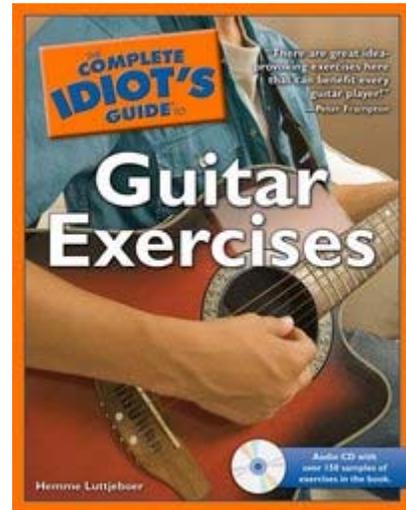
# Guitar Exercises Interview

## From LoveToKnow Guitar

In this guitar exercises interview, author Hemme Luttjeboer shares some of the helpful info contained in his book, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Guitar Exercises*. Learn how practice exercises can really help you improve your playing as well as your command of your instrument. These are tips every player should know.



Hemme Luttjeboer; guitar player, instructor and author



## Guitar Exercises Interview with Hemme Luttjeboer

### Background

LoveToKnow (LTK): Hemme, please tell us about your background as a guitar player.

Hemme Luttjeboer (HL): I first picked up a guitar around 1970 and immediately started lifting things from records. The guitar, for me, was a serious hobby learning how to play any [guitar music](#) note-for-note, especially YES, Deep Purple, Neil Young, Focus and then Larry Coryell, Al Di Meola, John Mc Laughlin etc.

I'm formerly self-taught except for a one-year tenure at G.I.T. (Guitar Institute of Technology) in Los Angeles in 1985/86. Before that in 1982, I decided to take my playing up a notch and began to earn a living teaching guitar. So after 12 years of sitting on the fence about where I wanted to take my life with the guitar, I realized I really needed to dig in and learn this instrument. So when I became a runner-up for the Lenny Breau Memorial Scholarship in 1985 sponsored by G.I.T., I decided it was time to move to L.A.

Teaching, though, helped me a lot since I learned to transcribe to paper all my lessons for my students. In essence, I started doing what I did when I first picked up the guitar, and I continue to do it today - just that I'm earning a living at it now.

### Guitar Exercises Info and Tips

LTK: For anyone who is new to guitar playing, what are guitar exercises?

HL: Guitar exercises are like any exercises an athlete would perform in order to maintain the dexterity needed in order to perform/play. Guitar exercises can range from scales, arpeggios, chords/progressions, string

skipping, playing through chord changes, etc. There are a multitude of exercises you can work on depending on your level.

LTK: How can practice exercises benefit the beginning player?

HL: Exercises really help the beginner guitarist familiarize him or herself with the instrument, explore muscles and coordinate the use of both hands.

LTK: Do more experienced players still need to practice their exercises?

HL: Almost all [guitar players](#) could/should practice to maintain their chops and level of performance.

LTK: Are there particular exercises that focus specifically on the right or left hand?

HL: Guitar practice exercises, as for most instruments, usually involve using both hands. Sometimes an exercise may focus solely on the right or left hand. For example, alternate picking exercises for the right hand can involve single string, two or more string skipping exercises while the left hand exercise can involve simply playing chords and solo line passages using all four fingers. There are an infinite amount of exercises for each hand, and they all vary depending on what's needed.

LTK: What are the three most important exercises a player should practice?

HL: All guitarists should practice scales, arpeggios and chords for a start as well as how/where to apply the scales in relation to chords and be able to transcribe. Along with playing scales and solos, players should be able to sing what they hear and play.

After learning and practicing scales everywhere along the neck, [guitarists](#) should know how to play over chords using various chord progressions such as ii-V-I, vi-ii-V-I and so on. If your solo outlines the chord progression convincingly without an accompaniment, you are nailing the crucial harmonic guide tones and elements of the progression. Practice blues and jazz tunes and everything in real books.

LTK: Are there different types of exercises better suited to a particular playing style such as blues or jazz versus rock or country?

HL: Each genre of music has its own characteristic sound that yields its own definitive guitar stylings. Blues and jazz, for example, use specific phrases as do rock and country. Jazz, and sometimes blues, may be somewhat richer in harmonic content than country and rock, so each style will have its own bag o' tricks.

Guitar practice exercises are universal in that scales, arpeggios and chords should be practiced no matter which type of music is involved. Jazz scales and chords can be intense. Country favors "cowboy chords" (triads) and major pentatonic scales, and rock and blues prefer major/minor pentatonic and blues scales. In essence, there are no real different types of exercises for each genre; scales, arpeggios and chords all need to be practiced.

LTK: Are there particular exercises that are better suited to [lead guitar](#) or rhythm?

HL: All guitarists should meld rhythm and lead together. However, rhythm guitar prompts chord playing, which means practicing exercises involving triads, 4-part chords, Freddie Green style comping, upper partial chords, substitutions and more. Lead guitar entails solo playing, so exercises focusing on scales, arpeggios, guide tones, etc. would strengthen a player's ability in that area.

LTK: Which exercises are most important for a bass guitarist?

HL: A bass guitarist's function is to lay down the foundation of a chord progression. So a good knowledge of chord construction would involve arpeggios and scale exercises.

LTK: Tell us about your book, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Guitar Exercises*.

HL: The Complete Idiot's Guide to Guitar Exercises is a great exercise workbook for any guitarist of any level. You could be a beginner or a seasoned player; there are exercises for everyone.

I wrote the book designed for guitarists who'd like a clear direction in their daily regime of practice. It begins with warm-ups, and then segues into easy chord triads up to 4-part chords using the CAGED system. This is an organized method of plotting out the sometimes-confusing playground of the [fretboard](#) into a logistical and concise manner.

Each letter of the word CAGED spells a major chord triad, each with a definite finger shape. There are five letters and five shapes; hence five different areas on the fretboard where the chords can be played. CAGED also applies to scales, arpeggios and melodic patterns.

The major scale, minor scale, harmonic & melodic minor and blues scales are all explored with a lot of exercises and tune samples. Melodic pattern exercises are also a focus to help alleviate the sometimes tediousness of playing scales. These patterns are a great way to memorize scales.

The book has over 150 examples on a 91 track CD to help the reader along with the standard notation and tab exercises. There are chord and neck frame diagrams to clearly illustrate them all, and there are actual tunes to play along with as well.

It surely is a great supplement for any guitarist!