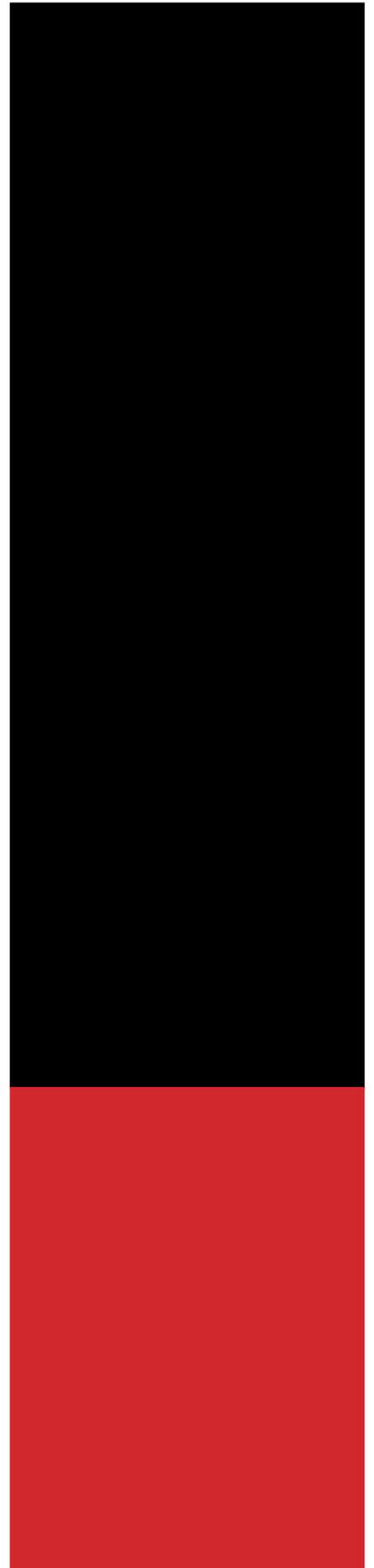


**THE
THREE
BIGGEST
MISTAKES
MUSICIANS
MAKE
AND HOW TO
OVERCOME THEM**

COURTESY OF: DAVID MOTTO



THERE ARE THREE MISTAKES NEARLY EVERY MUSICIAN MAKES

Have you ever felt like you're not making enough progress on your instrument? When you try to learn new songs or new techniques, do you ever feel overwhelmed—that you'll never move up to the next level?

Most of this frustration is caused by three very common mistakes that nearly every musician makes.

These mistakes will stop you dead in your tracks.

They stop you from improving. They make you question yourself. And, **most musicians don't even know they're doing anything wrong.**

Of course you think that the way you're practicing now is the right way to go about it. After all, you wouldn't make these mistakes on purpose. Everything you're doing seems perfectly normal to you.

So, you practice and work on new material. You go about it the best way you know how. But, **you're probably making these mistakes—every time you play.**

You need to know the truth

It's not your fault if you're making these mistakes. Most likely, no one has ever told you the best way to learn to play your instrument.

Why hasn't anyone ever given you this information? There's good reason for this:

Most people don't know the best way to learn a musical instrument.

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This is a sad truth about the music world today. Teachers, students, amateurs, and professionals all just do what everyone else has been doing for years—whether it's successful or not.

Even though there's a pile of information available on the best methods for learning music and practicing your instrument, only a few experts have ever paid attention to this information.

How to get rid of these mistakes

I'm one of the people who pays attention to all the latest research about learning to play music. And, I've found the top three mistakes musicians are making whenever they play.

If you recognize these three mistakes, you can learn to overcome them. You can change your habits. You can even eliminate these mistakes from your playing!

These three mistakes are stopping you from achieving your dreams. If you want to become the musician you've always dreamed of being, you must free yourself from these mistakes.

This Special Report will help you recognize and eliminate these mistakes

Once you get rid of these mistakes, you'll:

- **Accomplish more—in less time**
- **Be able to learn any song**
- **Feel better about your playing**

Imagine how great that will feel.

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MISTAKE #1: YOU'RE GOING TOO FAST

Yes, it's true. Whenever you're practicing and trying to learn new material, you're going too fast to actually learn it!

This is the most crippling mistake musicians make. And, they make it over and over and over again.

You don't have to be playing at a lightning fast speed to be going too fast. Even learning a song at its normal tempo means you're going too fast.

It's human nature to try to play music the way you hear it—at the normal speed of the song.

The problem is, playing the song at its normal speed is what you will do when you're ready to perform it—after you've learned it, worked it up to speed, and mastered it.

Going fast at the beginning of the learning process will just lead to frustration.

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How do you know when you're going too fast?

You know you're going too fast when:

- **You can't play all the notes accurately**
- **You have to constantly stop and restart to get through all the material**
- **You feel out of control or uncoordinated**
- **You get frustrated**
- **You slow down to play certain notes and then go back to your regular tempo**

If any of this is happening to you when you play, then you're going too fast.

Going too fast isn't about the actual speed that shows on your metronome. **You're going too fast anytime you're playing faster than you can control all the notes.**

Many bad things happen when you go too fast

It's really pretty simple:

At high speeds, you have less control. Doesn't matter if you're driving a car or playing a musical instrument.

You already know how loss of control feels when you're playing too fast. You can't hit all the notes and you feel frustrated. And, it can get difficult to keep going when you don't feel you're making any real progress.

Unfortunately, there are long-term consequences too. By going too fast when you're playing your instrument, here's what else is happening:

- **You waste huge amounts of time.** When you go too fast, you keep making mistakes. You try to fix these mistakes one at a time, but they keep coming up over and over again. This constant fixing of wrong notes takes up so much of your valuable time that you may wonder if you'll ever be able to play everything right.
- **You slow down the learning curve.** Instead of seeing the improvement you know you deserve, you slow down your ability to learn new skills and new songs by playing too fast. You could actually play for years with no improvement at all if you keep making this mistake!
- **You teach yourself mistakes.** By going too fast, you are making all those wrong notes part of your long-term memory. Instead of remembering how to play everything correctly, you'll remember how to play wrong!

At high speeds you have less control.

Doesn't matter if you're driving a car or playing music.

- **You lose confidence.** When you are constantly battling wrong notes and wondering why you can't play everything correctly, you start to feel bad about yourself. This lack of confidence in your playing can lead to higher stress, memory lapses, and maybe even stage fright.

Here's how you fix this mistake: Slow Down!

Okay, that seems pretty obvious. If you're playing too fast, of course you need to slow down to take control of things!

But, here's the important question to answer:

How slow do you need to go?

You already know that going at the normal speed of a song is too fast.

Going half speed might be too fast.

Believe it or not, going one-quarter speed might even be too fast.

That sounds crazy, but it's true.

If you want to learn things correctly, and **if you actually want to make progress on your instrument**, here's how slowly you need to play:

Play so slowly that you can play and control all the notes you're trying to play.

This means you might need to play out of time altogether, pausing after each note to prepare yourself to get to the next note.

Playing this slow is one of the most effective ways to play a musical instrument! You'll avoid all the costly errors that are forcing you to stop and start over and over and finally take control of your instrument!

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There are benefits from slowing down the music

When you play very, very slowly, not only do you take control of the notes you're working on, you also get several other benefits:

- **You avoid errors before they even happen.** At slow speeds, it is possible to see and feel the exact moment when you're about to make an error. You can make a quick adjustment, and play everything correctly.
- **You work more efficiently.** Who doesn't want to save time when learning a new song? By playing the notes correctly—right from the very beginning—you learn much more quickly. You're not wasting time cleaning up wrong notes.
- **You gain confidence.** Going slowly lets you gain forward momentum. You learn one phrase correctly, and you realize you can learn the next one correctly too. This keeps building. Suddenly, you see that you can learn any song correctly. That is an amazing feeling.
- **You memorize music more easily.** Learning mistakes is confusing. If you learn something wrong, you'll have to un-learn the mistake. This is very frustrating. Then, you've got to re-learn the notes correctly. Going through this process makes it nearly impossible to memorize your music. You're as likely to remember the wrong notes as the right ones.
- **You become a better player.** This is the most important benefit of them all. By going slowly, you find that you improve your technique and become a better musician. That makes learning everything easier in the future.

Do you want to become a better player so you can learn any song? You know you do!

Slow down, take control of the music, and **avoid this mistake forever.**

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MISTAKE #2: YOU'RE PLAYING TOO MUCH AT ONCE

The second big mistake musicians make is trying to play too much material at one time.

For instance, when faced with a new song to learn, nearly every musician will start at the beginning of the song and play all the way to the end of the song.

The process looks something like this:

- Start at the beginning, play to the end. Repeat.
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- Start at the beginning, play to the end. Repeat.

Seem familiar?

This is the “Top to Bottom” method of practicing, and it seems a lot more like performing than learning! The Top to Bottom method is not a successful way to figure out how to play a song.

It's not successful because you're covering too much music at one time.

When learning a new song, nearly every musician starts at the beginning and plays all the way to the end.

That's a mistake.

The problems from playing too much at once

Think about what happens every time you try to learn a song by playing it straight through from the beginning to the end:

- **You make tons of mistakes.** Just like playing too fast, when you go through too much music at one time, you'll hit a lot of wrong notes. With a new song, you're just not ready to take on the whole thing at first.
- **You don't learn the parts.** You need to take the time to focus in on any parts you can't play. When all you do is play a song from start to finish, you go through the parts that need this focus and instantly move on. If all you ever do is play songs all the way through, you may NEVER learn these parts!
- **You miss the transitions between the sections.** For most musicians, making the change from the end of one section of a song to the beginning of the next section of a song is a challenge. When you play straight through a song, it's likely that you're not as solid as you need to be whenever you transition to a new section. This makes the song sound bad!
- **You waste a LOT of time.** Let's say a song is pretty easy for you to play—except for two bars of music that are really hard. As you keep playing through the song, not only are you not learning those two difficult bars, you're spending a lot of time playing the rest of the song even though it's already totally playable for you.

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There's a better way: Break your music into sections

Instead of using the Top to Bottom method of practicing, there's a better way:

Break the music into short sections that can each be learned comfortably.

Instead of feeling overwhelmed by an entire piece of music, each section becomes something you can learn to play today.

Sometimes, the music is already broken into sections for you:

- A pop song will have verse, chorus, and bridge sections
- A long music chart will have rehearsal letters or numbers
- A jazz standard will have an A section and a B section, often in an A, A, B, A order.

This makes your job of practicing a lot easier. It's pretty easy to work on just one section today. The trick is not thinking you always have to start at the beginning!

Sometimes even one section of a song is too long to work on. If that's the case, **break the music down into sections that are so short you can master one section today.**

How short?

As short as you need! It's okay to work on only one bar of music at a time. You can even work on one or two notes at a time. You need to **do whatever it takes so you are in control of the music.**

***Do
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You'll gain a lot when you don't play too much at once

There are many benefits from breaking music into small sections:

- **You'll feel more motivated and confident.** Working on small sections will let you actually learn the difficult stuff you're avoiding right now. When you work out these difficult areas, you'll be a lot happier about your playing. This will inspire you to play even more in the days to come.
- **You'll realize that you can learn ANYTHING.** When you play through whole songs, you're always worried that you can't play everything correctly. When you dig in and focus on one small section, it dawns on you that it's not so bad to take control of that section. You can do this same thing with any song.
- **You'll memorize songs a lot faster.** It's much easier to memorize short amounts of music than entire songs. Once you've memorized each short section, all you have to do is string the sections together and the song will be ready to play!
- **The whole song will sound good.** There's a common pitfall from playing through songs from beginning to end all the time. Often, the beginning sounds great but the middle sections and ending sound pretty bad. That's because you lose your focus by the time you get to them. If you work on just the ending or just a middle section by itself, you'll be fully focused and get it to sound really good.

Give yourself a break from slogging through huge amounts of music that you barely know. Instead, play short amounts of music and really learn it!

Give yourself a break from slogging through huge amounts of music you barely know.



MISTAKE #3: YOU'RE SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME PLAYING EASY STUFF YOU ALREADY KNOW

You know how it is when you decide to start playing your instrument. You have every intention of working on that new song or scale that you know you need to learn. You really want to make progress on that.

To warm up you start playing that favorite riff of yours. You know the one—it's what you always want to do when you first play your instrument.

The next thing you know, twenty minutes have gone by. You've been jamming on that one riff, maybe doing some variations on it, and having a lot of fun. Now, you're out of time.

Playing the stuff you already know is fun. There's no doubt about it. And, it's important to review what you can already do well to keep up your chops.

But, this won't make you a better musician.

Here's why playing easy stuff is bad for you

There are so many reasons not to spend all of your practicing and playing time doing what you already do well. Here are a few of the top reasons:

- **You waste time playing all the easy music.** Yes, just like playing too fast and playing too much at once, playing only easy music wastes time. Let's say you're learning a rock song. If you play straight through, you'll only play the bridge one time each time you play the song. What if the bridge is harder than the rest of the song? You're going through the

Playing music you already know won't make you a better musician.

verses and choruses many times—even though they're easy. You don't have time to practice like that!

- **You never improve your technique.** Playing what's easy for you keeps your technique exactly where it already is. Your technique can even get worse because you'll get lazy about doing things correctly.
- **You get in a rut.** If you keep playing what you already know, your playing will always sound the same. It could even get a little stale.
- **You can feel bored.** Even though it's fun to play music you can play well, it's very limiting to stick with the easy stuff you can play today. This can lead to a sense of boredom, that playing your instrument isn't as exciting as it should be.

To improve, focus on the tough stuff

Instead of just playing easy, familiar music, you'll make big improvements to your playing by focusing on the difficult parts of the music.

These sections are usually the notes that are too fast or too high or that just seem impossible to play when you first come across them.

At first, focusing on this tough stuff will seem risky. You'll be in uncharted territory and will need to navigate carefully. That's how you reach your goals!

Here are some specific strategies to try:

- **Spend most of your practice time on stuff you cannot play.** If you're going to play your instrument for 30 minutes today, at least 20 minutes should be spent on whatever music you can't play right now. The rest of the time is for warming up and reviewing.

***To
reach
your
musical
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- **Find the short sections of each song that truly need the work.** It's often no more than 10 or 20% of the notes that need to be worked out in detail. Sometimes, it's a specific rhythm or just one section of a song. Once you learn it, you can play the song successfully. It's pretty rare that an entire song is difficult from start to finish.
- **Figure out a way to make the tough stuff seem easy.** You can slow it down or play one note at a time. You can listen to a recording so you're absolutely sure what it's supposed to sound like. You can go over a VERY short part of it—maybe only two or three notes—over and over again until you're happy with how it sounds.

When you stop playing just the easy stuff, you transform your playing!

- **You'll change your sound.** Trying to play new songs, new techniques, and new riffs will change how you sound—for the better. Each new item you learn will add to your bag of tricks and give you new sounds to pull up when you need them.
- **You'll become a better player.** By challenging yourself to learn difficult music, you'll improve your technique. This kind of growth only happens when you tackle music you can't play currently. Remember: everything you can play now was at one time unplayable for you. Progress comes from trying new material.
- **You'll get rid of fear.** Many musicians simply avoid difficult music. It seems overwhelming to even try to play it. Running away seems easier. However, when you have one success learning something new and unfamiliar, you'll want that successful feeling again and again. After a while, you'll realize the fear that caused you to avoid some music isn't worth it. Having the courage to try new music feels great!

Remember:

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- **You'll be able to play songs you once thought were out of your league.** You know the songs I'm talking about. The ones that seem totally impossible. The ones that seem like they're for other musicians to play—not you. Every time you learn something new, you get one step closer to playing those songs.

You CAN play anything you want, but not by spending all your time on what you can already play!

Are you ready to change your playing for the better? If so, step away from the easy and familiar music and go after music you can't currently play.

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JUST THINK IF YOU ELIMINATED ALL 3 MISTAKES FROM YOUR PLAYING

By avoiding any one of these three mistakes, you'll become a better musician. Imagine if you could get rid of all three!

Here's how to do that:

Take the strategies from this Special Report and combine them.

The next time you start to play your instrument, try this:

- **Find one section of the song that really needs your attention.** It might even be just one or two bars of music. You know what needs the most work. Start there.
- **Don't even play the rest of the song.** Skip the easy stuff! Your practice time is limited. Don't waste it going over everything you can already play well.
- **Play that one section VERY slowly so you can hit all the notes—right now.** Still missing some notes? Slow down even more! Do not go too fast.

By slowing down, focusing on just one section, and not wasting time on the rest of the song, you'll avoid all three of the mistakes that stop musicians from making progress.

This will improve your playing faster than ever before.

Just think if you did that every time you played.

***You will
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THESE AREN'T THE ONLY MISTAKES YOU'RE MAKING

This Special Report has given you strategies to eliminate the 3 most common mistakes that musicians make.

But, it doesn't stop there.

Imagine if you had strategies to help you with every aspect of your playing. Would that change your playing for the better?

I've put together 101 strategies that reveal the secrets used by top professional musicians to improve your playing.

Forget all those myths about what it takes to become a better musician. My strategies offer you real-world advice to make playing your instrument effective, efficient, and fun—faster than you ever thought possible.

You'll discover how to:

- **Master any song—no matter how difficult.**
- **Improve your playing instantly.**
- **Feel inspired and motivated every time you play.**
- **Achieve your musical goals—in a fraction of the time.**

If you want to achieve your musical dreams, you owe it to yourself to see all 101 strategies.

[Get more information on the 101 strategies now!](#)



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



David Motto is a musician, writer, and expert on the best way to learn musical instruments. He is in demand throughout the United States as a speaker and teacher. David is the coauthor of the best-selling book, [Musician's Practice Planner](#), and the author of three instructional books for the bass guitar. His latest five books are [The Ten Minute Virtuoso](#) series.

David is also the owner of Molto Music Publishing Company and writes the [blog on the Molto Music website](#). He has taught private lessons for over 25 years and was a member of the music faculty at San Francisco State University for 12 years. He has performed on over twenty commercially released albums and is a member of the Recording Academy—which gives him the privilege of voting for the Grammy Awards.

David has done countless hours of research on exactly what helps musicians excel. He has accumulated a huge body of information on what works and what doesn't work to master a musical instrument. This raw information has been turned into 101 specific strategies that save musicians hundreds of hours and transform their playing. These strategies are collected in his [Ten Minute Virtuoso](#) books.

[More information on these strategies and The Ten Minute Virtuoso books.](#)

[Contact David](#) with questions or comments about this special report and to let him know how these strategies are working for you.

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