

2. BEFORE YOU START

Is your guitar playing good enough ?

There are several points to make here:

Nobody ever finishes (in the sense of *completes*) the process of learning. In fact the more you learn, the more you realise there is to learn.

The vast majority of students (the word I use to describe your clients) will be beginners or almost beginners.

In this business the quality of your *teaching* is many times more important than the quality of your playing.

I own a Music Teaching Studios and employ around 20 tutors. Over the years I have learnt that exceptionally good musicians actually find it harder to be good teachers. Why is this? Well the further away from the beginning stages you get the more apt you are to forget how it feels like to have five thumbs on each hand. If you have only been playing a couple of years yourself, you will relate well to the beginner and you will have a similar enthusiasm that comes naturally when a subject is still fresh.

Having said all that it is obviously necessary to have a certain level both of understanding and ability to play guitar in order to present yourself in a creditable fashion.

As a guitar tutor you will be expected to be able to

- Read and interpret tabulature and rhythm charts.
- Understand and interpret standard notation.
- Listen to reasonably easy guitar parts and transcribe them into tabulature.
- Name notes on the fretboard.
- Explain basics of music theory.
- Accompany your student playing lead or rhythm guitar.
- Improvise.
- Demonstrate how to use the various controls

on your guitar and amp.

If there are one or two of these things you can't do at all then I would advise teaching yourself to do them as soon as you can, but that's not necessarily a reason to delay starting to teach others (perhaps on a 'beginners only' basis).

If you are short on most of the items on the list then consider an intensive few weeks of self-tuition before you start teaching.

It will help if you have learnt to play at least the basics of several different styles of guitar.

The demands of your students will vary according to where in the world you are of course, but in the UK I can say that there are probably 100 new students expressing an interest in playing Rock, Indie or Pop music for every 1 interested in Jazz or Classical guitar.

If you can broaden your spectrum of expertise it will help you build your client base quicker.

Can you teach ?

Teaching is a specialised form of communicating. It does not have to be a particularly complex process. This manual will provide you with the essential know-how and in particular tell you what to avoid. Further help is available from the [free articles](#) on my website.

The two essential elements this manual can't give you directly are confidence and patience.

You are going to be helping your students to gain confidence in their playing and confidence is infectious, so *your* level of confidence directly affects your students' progress.

The rate at which people learn varies enormously. You must be prepared to spend a whole lesson helping a student achieve something that you feel you might have achieved in mere seconds yourself. If you don't demonstrate patience in these situations then that will badly affect your student's confidence. So patience is an essential quality in a

good teacher.

Building your confidence

It's vital that you don't keep putting off the decision to start teaching.

What is going to make you an expert teacher is **DOING LOTS OF TEACHING!** There is simply no substitute for experience.

If you really feel that you can't justify charging money for your teaching just yet then start teaching for free. Ask around your friends and neighbours and see if there's anyone trying to learn the guitar and just pitch right in and offer to help them - no shame in that as a confidence-building step.

Meanwhile spend every spare minute sorting your own playing out. Treat yourself as you would a paying client. Set yourself goals, buckle down and practice the basics (Chords, Scales, Arpeggios, Finger exercises). Surf the net for sites that offer theory-made-simple lessons. There are plenty of [free sites offering guitar lessons](#). Absorb what you can.

Find others to play with - it will add greatly to your confidence to find your feet as a 'group musician'. If you can join a band, even just a rehearsing outfit, then so much the better. You don't *have* to be a gigging musician to teach, but again, if you can get some live performance experience it all helps boost your confidence and credibility.

Are you ready to run your own business?

You may have some qualms about giving up the security of your day job and relying on your own efforts to earn a living.

The answer is simple: **DON'T GIVE UP YOUR DAY JOB JUST YET!**

Wait until you have established your teaching business on a part-time basis and have been running it for long enough to know what your typical income pattern is.

The point is that this is a repeat-business type

venture meaning that your clients generally keep coming back week after week. Of course some drop off along the way, some come for one lesson and never come back. But before long, if you stick to the guidelines in this book, you will have a central core of reliable weekly clients that provide you with a reasonably predictable income.

What about the formalities?

Depending on whereabouts you are in the world requirements to register a new business will vary. It is vital that you check this out with a suitable professional (Lawyer or Accountant) before you start.

Important note

I must also ask you to check out any local legal restrictions on teaching from home. In the UK there are no restrictions whatsoever, but I don't have the resources to check out the legal position for other parts of the world. I should add that if for any reason local laws make it difficult to run a guitar teaching business as described in this manual I will be happy to arrange an instant refund of the price you paid for this book. Just email details to: legal@TeachGuitar.com