

Beginning Guitar Warm-Ups

Here are three warm-ups you can do every day to help prevent injury and improve your technique. I still do the first two warm-ups every morning (stretching and tremolo). I don't play the third exercise anymore (chromatic exercise); I play chromatic scales instead.

[Click here](#) for a free video demonstration of these warm-ups.

Physical Stretch

Before touching the guitar, stretch your fretting hand and fingers.

1. Hold your fretting hand straight out. This will be the left hand for most players.
2. Use your other hand to **gently** bend your fingers back 3 to 4 times. This should be a gentle stretch. You should mainly feel the stretch in your forearm.
3. Then bend each finger back – **gently** – starting with your thumb and working your way to the pinky. Don't overdo it. You just want to feel a little bit of a stretch.
4. Then rotate each finger – gently – starting with your thumb and working your way to the pinky.
5. Then repeat step one again.

[Click here](#) for a free video demonstration.

Tremolo on Each String

After stretching your fretting hand, warm up your picking hand (usually the right hand) with a **tremolo** exercise. A tremolo is simply picking down and up rapidly on one string. This is an excellent exercise for developing control with your pick.

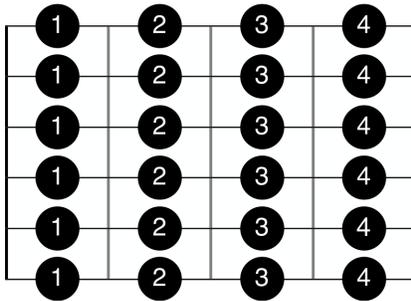
- Starting with the 1st string (the smallest), pick down and up rapidly and smoothly for 30-40 seconds.
- Do the same on each string.
- At the start, focus on playing evenly. The speed will come over time.

Tremolo Tips:

- Hold your pick at an angle and move your pick as little as possible. Holding the pick flat against the string will cause it to catch.
- Point your thumb down slightly. This way, the edge of the pick closest to the tip of your thumb will point downward slightly, and the other edge will point up.
- When you pick downward, the “thumb tip” edge of the pick should slice downward through the string, and the other edge should slice upward through the string.
- In the beginning, pick **SLOWLY**, with **minimal motion**. Work on playing evenly. Once you can play evenly, begin to pick up speed.

[Click here](#) for a free video demonstration.

Chromatic Exercise



This last warm-up is great for developing coordination between your fretting hand and your picking hand. The pattern is simple:

- Start on the 6th string (the biggest) and play frets 1-2-3-4 with fingers 1-2-3-4.
- Do this on each string.
- Once you play 1-2-3-4 on the 1st string, reverse the pattern and play 4-3-2-1 on each string, all the way back to the 6th string.

Focus on these things as you play the chromatic exercise.

- Fretting hand position: Keep your fingers curved, play on your fingertips, and place each finger close to – but not on – the fret for best tone quality.
- Work on timing your left and right hand. The tendency is to put your finger down before you pluck the string. Don't do that. Instead, pluck the string at the same time you put down your finger.
- Move your fingers as little as possible. Keeping your fingers close to the strings will help when you're ready to start playing faster, so right now, at the very start, get in the habit of keeping your fingers close to the strings.
- You may not be able to do this yet, but at some point, try leaving each finger down when you play the 1-2-3-4 pattern. This reinforces minimal finger motion, and it's also a good stretch.

[Click here](#) for a free video demonstration.