



Mindset: 3 Things To Prioritise

Whether you are a professional or play for fun the key to getting the most out of music lies with what goes on between your ears. This can mean anything from how you approach practice, your stage presence, earning money as a working musician to what gear you buy and use.

There are so many things to learn as a musician (just look at this free course as evidence of that!) that it can be difficult to know where to start. Here are the 3 things I think will get you the most mileage.

- **Technique.** Start with basic fingerstyle and/or plectrum if you like that sound. Good, solid technique allows you to play the bass with ease and without having to worry about stumbling or fluffing lines. One of the biggest stumbling blocks to progress is a weak technique. That is the easiest way to feel bad about your playing.
- **Learn to figure out bass lines by ear.** This is so, so important. Forget TAB, forget YouTube, forget asking your friend how something goes. Rely on your own ear. It can take years to develop a good ear but I think this is THE most important skill a musician can have. The benefits are enormous:
 - ★ You can learn a bigger volume of music in a short time, figure out cool bass lines quickly with the added benefit of learning why those lines are so good.
 - ★ You can be on a gig and pick up a tune the band leader has called that you don't know by following your ear (possibly with some stumbles but certainly without the fear that grips you if you don't have a developed ear!).
 - ★ You can be on a recording session and pick up the form and arrangement of a tune as well as come up with a line quickly by taking in all the other instruments. Because you have learnt so many tunes you can call on those

tunes as a reference point for the bass line you are about to make up (sometimes on the spot).

- **Work on your groove, timing and feel.** I think that this is connected quite closely to technique in that a decent, solid technique gives you enough physical control over the instrument to be able to apply your groove to. Groove is something inside of you that comes out when connected to the physical instrument. It's tricky to explain but that's the best I've got right now!