

Guitar Techniques - Slides, String Bending & Tremolo Picking

Learning how to play lead guitar is an art and it can only be mastered applying some of the most important and advanced techniques like string bending and tremolo picking among many others.

The most important part of playing the lead guitar is playing it well and using the several techniques to your advantage without going out of tune. Such guitar techniques come into picture only in the advanced stages.

The tremolo or the whammy bar as many call it is a useful tool when it comes to lead guitar techniques and can bring out a distorted, sometimes melodic sound that is common in hard rock or heavy metal bands like Metallica, Megadeth and Dreamtheater. Some of the other lead guitar techniques include doing the slide and string bending.

Slides

Playing slide style guitar is great fun, and opens up a new world of sound and tones that you cannot get with fingers only approach. There is no end to the different types of slides and materials you can use to make slides. When doing the slide on a lead guitar, you need to take care of an aspect, which is raising the strings of your guitar a little higher of the neck. You can always use an extension nut for this purpose. For sliding you can use your hand or another instrument called the slide. When you press the slide against your guitar strings, the pitch of the strings change and you can even vary the pitch to an extent by moving your slide upwards or downwards on the guitar neck. Slide is a lead guitar technique that is also known as the bottleneck guitar. It is an effective technique because it helps you to create pitch transitions continuously on your lead guitar.

String Bending

String bending also known as radial pitch-shifting is an important technique of playing the lead guitar. String bends are an important part of your overall playing ability. This technique is great for allowing feel and emotion to come out in your playing. The two important aspects of string bending are: finger strength and ear training. To create string bending, you have to move the string that has been held down in a particular direction, which is normally perpendicular to the axis and is always parallel to your fingerboard. This is a type of pitch-shifting that is most often used by in a rock or heavy metal band. String bending is most commonly used with other distortion techniques for making the lead guitar playing sound smoothly and melodic. It is limited to not more than 1 or 2 semi-tones but you will get to use even 3 semitones once you are highly skilled. Instances of 5-semitones can also be seen especially when you hear the guitar solo played by David Gilmour (Pink Floyd) in Another Brick In the Wall Pt.2 from the album "The Wall." The biggest secret I learned about bending notes is that you MUST use supporting fingers!

Tremolo Picking

Tremolo picking is when you play one note rapidly. It's basically alternate picking, but usually faster. To aid them with tremolo picking many guitarists anchor their pinky finger on the body of the guitar, this helps them maintain a steady rhythm and increase stability. When you need to play some fast phrases on your lead guitar, you can use tremolo picking. With the help of tremolo picking, you will be able to play a particular note multiple times in quick succession. It is also known as double picking and you can do it with your finger or with your pick. The main reason for using tremolo picking in lead guitar is because it adds more sustenance to melodic lines.

About the Author

E Walker is the founder of Planet of Rock Music Studios and contributes regularly to many guitar publications. Find out how [Guitar Backing Tracks](#) will improve your guitar playing. Planet of Rock also provides Custom [Backing Tracks](#) Recordings.

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