



How To Improvise On Guitar - Imitate, Assimilate, Innovate

Imitate, Assimilate and Innovate these three words described the creative process and it describes perfectly how to learn to improvise on the guitar.

I got these words from the Jazz Great *Clark Terry* and of course it applies perfectly to Jazz improvisation but it really describes any style of music in fact it can be used to describe the process of learning any creative endeavour.

Let's start with **IMITATE**. Go about imitating artist that you admire. Imitate could be in the form of listening to an album, transcribing it and playing the licks of the phrases. It could be a book where you go and read the notes. Keep in mind that you can't really get a lot of these from the book but they can help. Tablature helps a lot of just learning little phrases both from the lessons and from instructors and from other artists as well. Imitate something that moves you and preferably something that you know it's really good.

Then **ASSIMILATE** while you imitated. Another way of saying that is integrate that into your body and then into your ear. Don't just play the notes but listen for the subtleties and

make it a part of your very being. The how long or how short you ought to know, where the spaces are, the exact phrasing, the way you hit the notes, go for the tone - the subtleties and the tone of the instrument as well.

Finally, **INNOVATE** - innovate means making it your own. Go ahead and make changing it little by little until it doesn't even sound like the original anymore. Add some notes and different timing from different spacing. Now this is a process and that you don't start from one place and just go in order, it's a cycle and you constantly doing this all the time.

There's one more concept I wanna talk about and I've actually save it for last because I think it's the most important. It actually comes before all of these and that is to **LISTEN**. When I say listen, I mean listen to the artist that you admire and have really touched you. Listen to good music that you like also listen to your own playing, really listen to the subtleties and use that to critically adjust to what you're doing, to fit more of what you really want to say in your music.

When you listen, it helps guide what you want to imitate, the way you assimilate into your and of course eventually how you actually innovate.

I hope this has been some help. I know it's a little philosophical but it has really done a lot for me and help guide me to practice in a way that actually gives me a result that I want. I hope it does the same for you. Take care.

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Take care.

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