

# Practical Improvisation: A Guide For Young Improvisers

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## What is improvisation?

- Spontaneous composition
- Melodic embellishment
- New melody/same form

How to start:

- How many melodies can you play on your instrument by memory?
- Practice learning melodies by ear.
- Sing the melody of a popular tune (spotify, radio, itunes...), and then learn it on your instrument.

## Common chord types

- Major 7
- Dominant 7
- Minor 7
- Other chords (diminished/fully diminished)

## Scales, scales, and more scales....

- Major (Major 7/CM7/Cmaj7)
- Mixolydian (Dominant 7/C7)
- Dorian (Minor 7 /C-7/Cmin7)

## Connecting chords

- Focus on 3/7/9
- Look for half step motion
- Look for differences from chord-chord
- Connect chords across the bar line

**Example:**

**G7 ---- C7**

**F     Bb**  
**D     G**  
**B     E**  
**G     C**

**How to practice jazz...**

- Focus on: rhythm, melody, and harmony
- Slowly & with a metronome
- With recordings
- With “play-a-longs” (Aebersold/Carman)
- With other people!

**What to practice...**

- Memorize melodies (any melody!)
- Play “singable” solos
- Learn all major scales
- Learn all arpeggios (ascending & descending)
- Embellish the melody
- Time, time, and then, work on your time...
- Practice playing with other musicians

**Jazz Resources**

Real Book (Hal Leonard 6<sup>th</sup> Edition)

[www.jazzbooks.com](http://www.jazzbooks.com) (Jamey Aebersold)

[www.paulcarman.com](http://www.paulcarman.com) (CD Metronome)

*The Jazz Language* (Dan Haerle)

The Jazz Musician's Guide to Creative Practicing (David Berkman)

Buy (and listen to..) great jazz recordings!

