

ARE THERE ANY TIPS I SHOULD KNOW BEFORE I START LEARNING THE BANJO?

Banjo is a stringed instrument, and as a beginner, it could be your first attempt in learning to play such instruments. Everything may feel so strange since you're not used to this, but keep calm and don't get discouraged, because great banjo players were once beginners just like you.

To become a professional banjo player, you must ensure that your desire for perfection does not supersede the love you have for the instrument. This means that you must learn from your mistakes and have fun, instead of trying to be perfect from the beginning no matter what it takes.

Proficiency in banjo playing needs more time on the instrument - the more time you spend playing the banjo, the faster you'll learn.

Focus on what you can learn at a time, instead of spending time trying to find out what people think about the instrument. The most important thing is to gain some basic skills, and then you can start playing with people at your level to speed up the learning process.

In recent times, learning materials such as DVDs, smartphones and apps, CDs, and books, which can easily fast track a learning process were introduced, hence, we have a free technology everywhere around us.

Here, we've listed a few skills that'll help you master the banjo.

1. Listen to the music played on a banjo

Music can be downloaded from online music stores such as iTunes and saved in iPod or phones. You can then listen to them while running, walking, or biking as the case may be.

2. Make wise purchase decisions

They're some affordable starter banjos meant for beginners and are easy to play. What you should do first is to locate an acoustic store, specifically for banjos and banjo players.

As you make your purchase decision, ensure that the instrument you're purchasing is based on the genre of music you're interested in, and the amount of money you can offer for it.

3. Tune your banjo

Always try to keep your instrument in tune each time you practice - this is important whenever you play with others. Although this can be frustrating initially, by paying great attention to each of the pitches produced with a little practice, you're on your way to success.

When you're sure of being in tune, firstly, choose a comfortable posture for both standing and sitting, and know that the neck should not be raised too high.

Secondly, use a strap. These suggestions if utilized properly will make you discover your comfort zone.

4. Use your left hand to fret chords

Melody is supported by chords - the foundation for backing other musicians. If you sound more than three notes together, a chord is produced, and if you want to explore this music world, you must be familiar with G, C, and D7, which are well-known chords.

Position your left hand comfortably to form these chords and have fun, but the thumb should touch the back of the instrument's neck at the top. When you've got this, sink your elbow and shoulder into your body, then use your fingertips to press the strings at the back of the frets.

5. Use your left and right hands

As a banjo player, you must learn to coordinate your left hand, create new notes, and make chords while picking with your right hands. When you're able to allocate specific jobs to both hands and master them, know that you've laid a good foundation for your banjo music production.

6. Look for specific tunes and practice on your banjo

You'll start having fun with your instrument when you're able to use banjo styles to showcase your techniques by playing melodies. You can organize melody notes in groups known as Scales, and it's easier to identify melody notes in songs after mastering these scales.

You can now utilize the techniques you learned with your left and right-hands after having the authentic feel for the group of notes. Use these techniques to capture melody notes, create arrangements that will give good sounds on your banjo.

7. Enjoy music with other musicians

As a banjo player, you can produce music with guitarists, mandolin players, bassists, and fiddlers. But as you play with others, ensure that the sound produced from your banjo

corresponds with what others play. Listen and play actively with a good rhythm to encourage other musicians to give in their best.

8. Meet with other banjo players

Meeting with lovers of a banjo can expose you to several opportunities such as interaction with professionals, going to festivals and workshops, having fun by connecting with people of the same mind.

If you want to learn the banjo fast, interact with other banjo players right from the beginning, to learn from their experience instead of waiting until you've acquired more skills before asking for help.

Workshops and seminars are being organized for people at all levels, and you can always learn new things by interacting with banjo experts and also making new friends.

9. Maintain the great sound from your banjo

Banjo as a stringed instrument may be adjusted, compared to the bass or guitar, although you don't need to be an instrument-repair expert to keep it in a good shape. The strings must be replaced after some months of playing to keep the instrument running. Always keep extra strings with a wire cutter handy to take care of any unplanned occurrence.

Also, ensure that the head of your banjo is kept tight, to give a loud, bright sound, with the bridge maintaining its position on the head of the instrument which will help maintain the tune of the fretted notes.

10. Overcome your fears

In the process of learning the banjo, you must encounter fear, and to become a hero, you must overcome those fears. You cannot become a professional if you don't make mistakes, because mistakes are part of the learning process, and that's how some beautiful music was produced.

Conclusions

The tips we've listed here are the best starting points for learners of the banjo. If you are an aspiring professional in banjo playing, then you can either hire a tutor from a music shop or get an online teacher. There are teachers available online that will assist you to the next level of your playing adventure.

Each player has a particular reason for learning banjo. Maybe you want to have a banjo playing experience or you are a fan of a particular music style such as bluegrass music.

Whatever reason you may have for learning this stringed instrument, we hope that by following these guidelines, you'll surely have a pleasurable experience.

Happy learning.