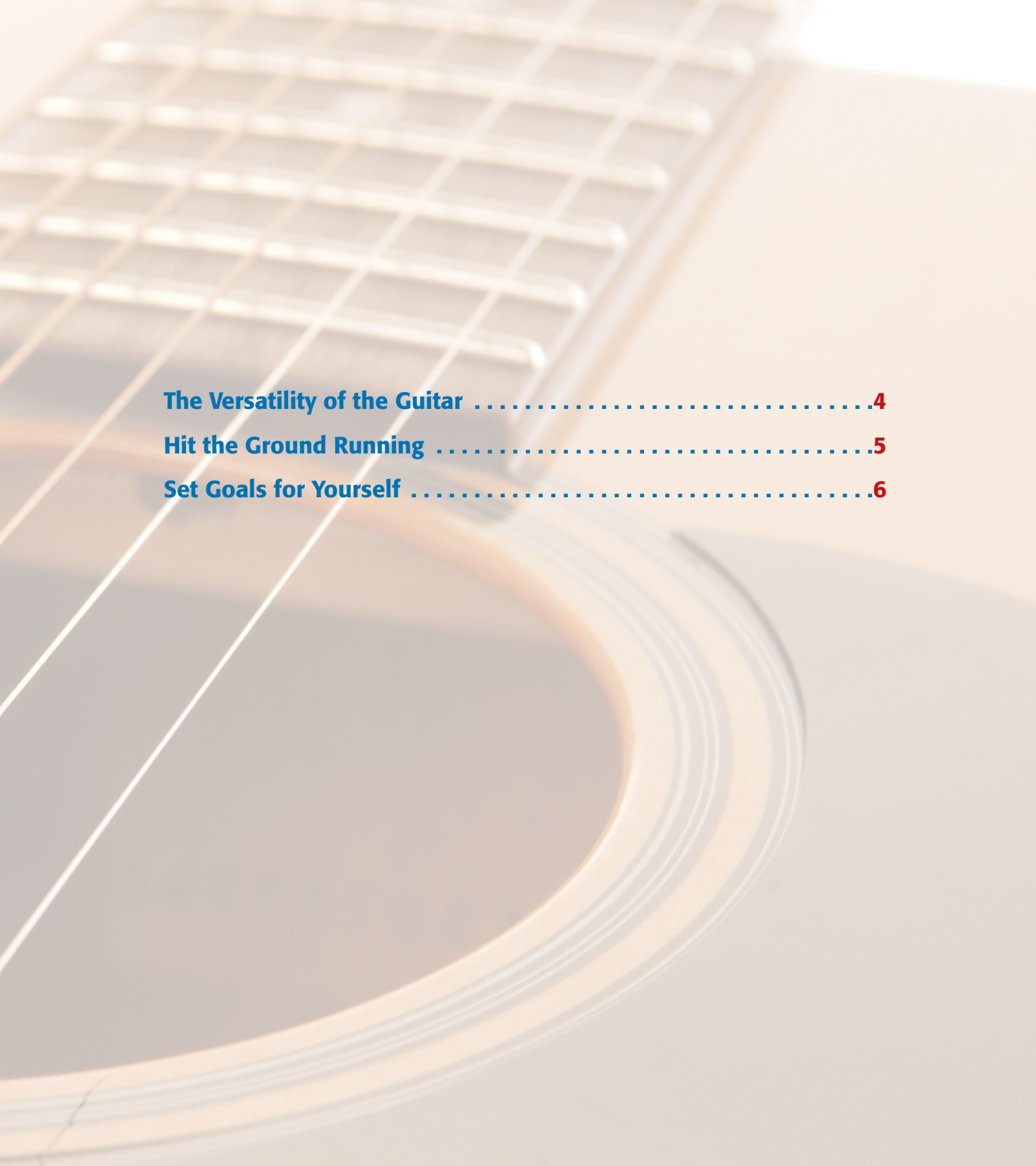


chapter

1

Introduction to the Guitar and Learning to Play

**You've chosen to start off on a musical adventure: playing the guitar.
Let's take a look at some of the facets of the instrument and the
different musical options it offers.**



The Versatility of the Guitar4

Hit the Ground Running5

Set Goals for Yourself6

The Versatility of the Guitar

The guitar is found everywhere in modern popular music. Learning the fundamentals of the guitar unlocks the potential of playing numerous genres of music.



The guitar is found in many genres of music, including folk, classical, rock, pop, blues, country, and jazz. A guitarist can play a melody as well as play chords and accompany a singer. Even a beginning guitarist can embrace all the aspects of a song by playing a few chords while singing the melody.

The guitar is also versatile because it's a remarkably rhythmic instrument. While the guitarist's one hand works the neck of the guitar to create chords and melodies, the other hand works the strings like a snare drum, creating beats and rhythms with fingers or picks. With the power to manipulate harmony and rhythm at the same time, you'll soon realize why it's a primary tool of singers and songwriters.

It's Portable and Affordable

The guitar is an ideal instrument to pick up for many reasons. It's compact and portable, making it easy to take along when meeting with friends for a jam. Beethoven likened it to a miniature orchestra that you could carry in your lap. A good-sounding guitar is also relatively affordable compared to many other instruments.

Hit the Ground Running

chapter 1

You'll be playing in just a few pages! Compared to other instruments, the guitar is an instrument you can play from the first day using a few simple chords.



Start Playing Today

Violin and trumpet students have to practice diligently for years to play a major scale with a warm tone while playing in tune. While the guitar will eventually make its intricacies known to you, you can learn the first three chords (see Chapter 5, "Your First Chords") and a simple strumming pattern (see Chapter 8, "Rhythm Guitar") on your first day. The frets, which divide the string length, do the job of keeping you in tune, and you'll play simple rhythms until you develop more coordination. While there are obviously different levels of proficiency you'll eventually want to master, you can start creating music right away!

Set Goals for Yourself

The trick to teaching yourself anything is to practice on a steady schedule and to set realistic goals for yourself. Give yourself time to learn and don't get discouraged if things don't come to you immediately.



Set Realistic Goals

People often become their own worst enemies in learning a musical instrument because they set unrealistic goals. Remember that mastering an instrument involves a learning process that is both mental and physical.

Don't get frustrated: You understand what you have to do, but your hands take time to train. Allow your body to develop muscle strength and memory, which are slower to develop in an adult. You will, however, eventually develop those skills, so don't lose patience!

How to Practice

Develop a reasonable but steady practice regimen. Try to practice every day, if only for 15 or 20 minutes. If you can't practice every day, try not to put your guitar away for several days in a row. Make sure you're playing at least every other day. Leave the guitar next to the TV or somewhere else where you'll see it often, and let your hands get used to the instrument in your spare time.

Starting and stopping your guitar playing will only make the process more discouraging. You will probably progress more quickly than you realize or give yourself credit for. Be prepared to work through the rough spots. Your efforts eventually will be rewarded!

Keep the learning experience fun by playing songs you love. Doing so will take the "work" element out of practicing, and you'll master the skills you need before you know it!

**TIP**

Learn a song that you love and practice will never be work.