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# **“Know When & When Not to Use Guitar Effects”**

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# Introduction

I remember as clear as day the first time that I heard Crazy Train by Ozzy Osbourne. Or the first time that I heard Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love by Van Halen. Actually, I can recall many classics that I heard the first time... And what usually jumped out so loud and clear to me was the sound of the GUITAR... And often times that sound was created by using "guitar effects".

Guitar effects, are essentially devices that affect the guitars original sound in one way or another for a specific desired sound. There are many types of effects available today and the numbers are increasing at a seemingly exponential rate.

For the new guitarist, the understanding of these specific devices can be just as daunting as the guitar itself without having some guidance. That guidance is what I am going to provide for YOU so that YOU can properly navigate the world of guitar effects by first knowing a broad idea of what certain families of effects will do. We will then drill down to the specific effects, and then eventually guide you on how you can use these effects as well, in order to color your sound and get the desired tone that you hear in your head.

Thank you for trusting me with your time. I do not take it lightly and I promise to respect it by being concise and providing useful information that you will use in real-world settings. After reading through this PDF and walking with me through the two live broadcasts dedicated specifically to the subject, you will have a much better understanding of guitar effects and how to use them. This will put you well ahead of most electric guitar players.

I'm very excited about showing this one to you. We are going to have a lot of fun! Let's do this!

# Guitar Effects Primer

To provide a little background information for the effects that we will be talking about, we will break down guitar effects into the following categories listed in the order that you would typically find them on a pedal board:

- **Dynamic, Filters, and Pitch Effects pedals**
- **Gain Based Effects Pedals**
- **Modulation Effects Pedals**
- **Time Based Effects Pedals**

## Dynamic, Filters and Pitch Effects Pedals

These would include effects such as Compressor Pedals, Wah Pedals, and Octave Pedals. A *Compressor Pedal* is used to even out the high and low notes and clean up the sound which also provides more sustain. This is often called “normalising the sound”. A *Wah Pedal (or Wah-Wah)* is a pedal that sounds very much like its’ name suggests. For an excellent example of a Wah Pedal in action, picture Hendrix playing the into riff to “Voodoo Chile”. An *Octave Pedal* is an effects pedal that mixes the guitar’s signal with a synthesised signal that is either one octave higher or lower than the original. Hendrix was also one of the earliest popular musicians to use this effect.

## Gain Based Effects Pedals

Gain based effects pedal would include Overdrive Pedals, Distortion Pedals, and Fuzz Pedals. An *Overdrive Pedal* is a very popular effect in rock and blues guitar for the gritty or crunch sounds it provides. It is meant to mimic the sound of “cranked” amplifier and provides some extra punch to your playing. A *Distortion Pedal* is synonymous with heavy metal music. While *Overdrive Pedals* are meant to mimic a cranked amp, *Distortion Pedals* unapologetically saturate the sound beyond recognition. A *Fuzz Pedal* is a distortion pedal meant to mimic the early overdrive pedals of the 60’s.

## **Modulation Effects Pedals**

Modulation Effects Pedals include pedals such as Chorus Pedals, Flanger Pedals, and Phaser Pedals. The *Chorus Pedal* gives your guitar the effect of multiple guitars playing at one time. Just think of Nirvana's opening guitar on "Come As You Are". A *Flanger Pedal* is similar to a *Chorus Pedal* except with shorter delay and it does not split the signal. It has been described as creating the sound of a jet plane "whoosh". A *Phaser Pedal* is similar in essence to the Flanger Pedal, except that it is probably more subtle and "otherworldly". An example of a Phaser pedal would be "Eruption" by Van Halen.

## **Time-Based Effects Pedals**

Time-based Effects Pedals include effects such as a Delay Pedal or Reverb Pedal. A *Delay Pedal* is a pedal that takes your guitar's signal, delay it for a brief moment and play it back creating an echo effect. A Delay is used heavily by David Gilmour of Pink Floyd and Edge from U2. A *Reverb Pedal* creates an effect that is often found on your guitar amp (though pedals often provide more control). It is essentially a room simulator, as it makes the guitar sound like it is in the room.

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