GENERAL

taking care of business lyrics and chords

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Taking Care of Business: Lyrics, Chords, and Everything You Need to Play

When you think of classic rock that still sounds fresh on the radio, one song that immediately springs to mind is ZZ Top's "Taking Care of Business." Released in 1979, the track became an anthem for anyone looking to get things done, whether it's closing a deal, finishing a project, or simply powering through a tough day. The song's swagger, memorable riff, and unmistakable groove have made it a staple on guitar lesson lists, karaoke nights, and late night road trips alike.

In this guide we'll dive deep into the world of "Taking Care of Business" – from a quick look at the song's history and meaning, to a step by step breakdown of the chords, strumming patterns, and practical tips for playing it on guitar. Whether you're a beginner looking to impress your friends or an intermediate player searching for a new challenge, this article will give you everything you need to master the track in clean, SEO friendly HTML.

About the Song

ZZ /Top, the Dallas based trio of Billy /Gibson, Dusty /Hill, and Frank /Zappa, has long been known for their blend of bluesy guitar licks and hard rock swagger. "Taking /Care /of /Business" appears on their 1979 album *Eliminator*, a record that helped propel the band into mainstream popularity thanks to its polished production and the then new use of synthesizers.

The song's lyrics revolve around a man's determination to finish what he started—whether that's a relationship, a job, or a personal goal. The repeated refrain "I'm taking care of business" acts as a mantra, a declaration of intent that resonates with listeners who value hustle and resilience.

Why It's Still Relevant

Even decades after its release, the song's themes of ambition, perseverance, and confidence remain relatable. The line "I'll be back on the road again" echoes the modern gig economy mindset, where people constantly juggle multiple projects and commitments. That timeless message, combined with the infectious riff, keeps the track fresh for new generations of guitarists.

Lyrics Overview (Short Excerpts & Summary)

Below we provide a brief excerpt from the chorus, followed by a concise summary of the entire song. The full lyrics are copyrighted, so we've kept the excerpt short and included a summary instead.

Excerpt from the Chorus:

"*Take my time, I'll get it done, I'm taking care of business*"

Song Summary: The narrator talks about working hard, staying focused, and not letting distractions get in the way. He repeatedly emphasizes his commitment with the phrase "taking care of business." The verses paint a picture of a man who is determined to close deals and keep moving forward. The bridge introduces a slight change in tempo, highlighting the urgency of the message.

Chord Breakdown

“Taking Care of Business” is built around a simple yet effective chord progression that makes it approachable for guitarists of all levels. The song is in the key of A major, but the main riffs use power chords and open chords that create a driving rhythm.

Key Chords Used in the Song

- A – Root chord that anchors the song’s tonality.
- E – Provides a strong dominant feel.
- D – Adds a lift in the chorus.
- F&om – Gives the verses a darker, bluesy tone.
- G – Used in the bridge for a brief turnaround.

Chord Diagram (Textual Representation)

Below is a simple textual diagram you can use as a reference. Feel free to copy it into a guitar chord app or write it on your practice notebook.

```
A   - 0 0 2 2 2 0
E   - 0 2 2 1 0 0
D   - X X 0 2 3 2
F#m - 2 4 4 2 2 2
G   - 3 2 0 0 0 3
```

These chord shapes are the foundation for the song’s structure. Below we’ll walk through each section and explain how to play them.

How to Play the Song

Playing “Taking Care of Business” is a great way to practice power chords, open chords, and a steady strumming pattern. The following sections break down each part of the song and provide practical advice for mastering it.

Intro & Verse Pattern

The intro starts with a classic ZZ Top riff that uses a mix of open chords and power chords. The riff is played at a moderate tempo (~110 BPM) and sets the groove for the rest of the track.

1. Start with an open A chord, strumming down twice.
2. Move to an E power chord (root on the 2nd fret of the A string). Strum down, then up.
3. Return to A, then switch to D for a quick upward strum.
4. Finish the riff by playing a quick F&om power chord (root on the 2nd fret of the E string).

Repeat this pattern for the verses. The rhythm is steady and syncopated, so pay attention to the timing of the down strokes and up strokes.

Chorus Progression

The chorus uses a simple progression: A – D – E – A. Strum each chord for two beats, then let the chord ring out for a full bar before moving to the next one.

1. Strum A for two beats.

2. Move to D for two beats.
3. Switch to E for two beats.
4. Return to A for the final two beats.

Feel the groove shift slightly as you move from the verse to the chorus. The emphasis on the “A” chord at the end gives the chorus a satisfying resolution.

Bridge & Outro

The bridge introduces a G chord, creating a subtle turnaround that keeps the listener engaged. Use a simple down up strumming pattern, then return to the verse riff for the outro.

1. Play G for two beats.
2. Move back to A for two beats.
3. Repeat until the final chorus.

When you reach the last chorus, let the final A chord ring out to close the song.

Strumming Pattern

The strumming pattern for “Taking Care of Business” can be broken down into a 4/4 time signature with a steady pulse. A recommended pattern is:

- Down, Down, Up, Up, Down, Up.

Apply this pattern across all chords, adjusting the emphasis on the down strokes to match the song’s rhythmic feel. Practice with a metronome set to 110 BPM to keep your timing tight.

Tips for Beginners

- Practice Chord Transitions: Spend 10 minutes each day moving between A, E, D, and F&om. Smooth transitions are key to a solid groove.
- Use a Capo: If you find the original key too high, place a capo on the 2nd fret and play the chords as if you were in the key of G.
- Record Yourself: Listening back helps identify timing issues and missed strums.
- Start Slow: Begin at 80 BPM and gradually increase to 110 BPM as you become comfortable.

Advanced Techniques

Once you’re comfortable with the basic chords, you can add more advanced elements to give your performance a polished ZZ /Top feel.

Slide Guitar

ZZ Top’s signature sound often features slide guitar. Try adding a slide from the 2nd to 3rd fret on the G string during the chorus to add texture.

Palm Muting

Use palm muting on the lower strings during the verses to create a tight, rhythmic feel. This technique is especially effective on the E power chord.

Lead Riff Integration

In the bridge, you can add a simple lead line that follows the chord changes. Practice playing a single-note line that mimics the vocal melody, and then incorporate it into your rhythm playing.

Practice Routine

Below is a structured practice routine that will help you master the song in just a few weeks.

1. Week 1 – Chord Mastery: Focus on the four main chords. Play each for a full bar, ensuring clean transitions.
2. Week 2 – Intro & Verse: Combine the chords into the intro riff. Practice at 80 BPM, then gradually increase.
3. Week 3 – Chorus & Bridge: Add the chorus progression and bridge. Work on strumming dynamics.
4. Week 4 – Full Song: Play the entire track from start to finish. Record and listen for timing, transitions, and overall flow.
5. Week 5 – Advanced Additions: Incorporate slide, palm muting, and a lead line. Refine your technique.

Consistency is key. Even a 15 minute daily session will yield noticeable progress over time.

Performance Tips

When performing “Taking /Care /of /Business,” keep the following points in mind:

- Energy & Presence: ZZ /Top’s live performances are all about attitude. Let your body move to the music.
- Vocal Dynamics: Even if you’re not singing, mimic the vocal phrasing in your guitar playing to maintain the song’s rhythmic integrity.
- Interaction with the Crowd: Encourage sing along moments during the chorus. The repeated “I’m taking care of business” is perfect for audience participation.
- Equipment: Use a guitar with a clean tone and a mild overdrive to replicate the classic ZZ /Top sound.

Conclusion

“Taking /Care /of /Business” is more than just a rock anthem—it’s a timeless reminder that determination and hard work pay off. By mastering its chords, learning its strumming patterns, and adding a few advanced techniques, you’ll not only be able to play a classic track but also develop essential guitar skills that apply across many genres.

Start with the basics, build a solid practice routine, and soon you’ll be strumming along to ZZ Top’s iconic riff with confidence. Whether you’re playing at home, at a jam session, or on stage, let the music remind you to keep moving forward and, of course, to keep taking care of business.

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