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BEGINNER



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by Eric Slone

Dedication

This book is dedicated to Michele. I love you dearly.

Special Thanks

Thanks to Mom, Steve, Dad, Grandma, Justin, Melony, Jarrod, Jean, Irving, Jacklyn, Robert, David, and the rest of my family for your continued love and support. Thanks to Royal Music, my students, and all others who have helped in the production of this book.

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Credits

TabIt: www.tabit.net – for tablature guitar notations

Power Tab Editor: www.power-tab.net – for standard music and tablature notations

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation: www.fender.com – Fender® Stratocaster® (electric guitar), pg.7

Tacoma Guitars: www.tacomaguitars.com – Jumbo JK50C (steel-string acoustic guitar), pg.7

Hofner Guitars/The Music Group: www.hofner.com www.musicgroup.com – Jazzica Custom Archtop Guitar (hollow-body guitar), Verythin Classic Archtop Guitar (semi-hollow body guitar), and HM88

Master Series Guitar (nylon-string acoustic guitar), pg.7

Taylor Guitars: www.taylorguitars.com – Taylor 510-CE Acoustic Guitar, Pg. 8

Brian Moore Guitars: www.brianmooreguitars.com – Brian Moore i9 Electric Guitar, front cover.

i8p Electric Guitar, pg. 2, pg 8, and back cover.

Wittner Metronomes: www.wittner-gmbh.de pg.125

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About the Author

Eric Slone began playing guitar at the age of nine. Since 1992, he has taught hundreds of students varying in age, level, and musical style. Eric earned an Associate's degree from Nassau Community College and a Bachelor's degree from SUNY College at Old Westbury. In 1999, he was featured on the local news station for his expertise in guitar instruction. Eric has worked with a variety of music teachers, composers, and musicians, and has professionally performed at various locations throughout Long Island and New York City. Eric proudly owns and operates **EJS Guitar Lessons**, one of the leading providers of private guitar instruction in Long Island, New York. Students throughout the United States are also enrolled in Eric's **Guitar Lessons Direct**, a program which provides instructional mailings and support via e-mail. Eric's innovative teaching methods, comprehensive curriculum, and personalized attention has enabled his students to reach their highest learning potential. Occasionally, Eric works as a recording studio musician. When Eric is not teaching, he is often learning a new song for a student, working on an arrangement, or keeping current with the latest music teaching methods. Eric is very passionate for guitar and enjoys teaching it to others. If you like, you can contact him via e-mail at:

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A Message from the Author

Hello, my name is Eric Slone. I'd like to thank you for your interest in *Guitar Success, Your Solution to Learning and Mastering Guitar!* The completion and distribution of this book has been one of my lifelong goals as a private guitar teacher. I am grateful to share this book with you. I wish you the best of luck with *Guitar Success!*

-Eric Slone

www.guitarsuccess.com

Free E-mail Support*

Think of me as your very own personal guitar teacher! I will provide you with free personalized e-mail support should you have any questions with the material covered in this book. Feel free to contact me directly at support@guitarsuccess.com. I'd be glad to help you out as much as possible.

*Based on availability.

Introduction

Welcome to *Guitar Success*! This book has been put together over many years of teaching, playing, performing, and interacting with other teachers and musicians. Guitarists of all levels and styles can use this book as their primary source of instruction. *Guitar Success* will get you started from the beginning and take you to an advanced level of playing. You will also be playing in a variety of styles such as rock, pop, metal, blues, jazz, classical, country, and folk. This comprehensive approach to learning guitar will help all players to become well-rounded, knowledgeable, and experienced musicians.

Guitar Success is separated into three sections. **Section one** covers things such as basic playing techniques, tuning, reading tablature, playing scales, playing chords, chord progressions, strumming patterns, reading music, and more. **Section two** teaches rhythm and soloing techniques, ear training exercises, barre chords, fingerpicking and hybrid picking technique, 12-bar blues, arpeggios, and other exciting things. Jazz chords and progressions, alternate tunings, modes, scale sequencing exercises, soloing techniques and licks, developing speed, transcribing songs by ear, classical guitar, unique guitar tricks, and many other things are covered in **section three**. Section three includes a special final lesson, "101 Tips on Improvisation, Soloing, and Solo Construction." Sections one and two contain twelve lessons each, and section three contains sixteen lessons. Each section contains a lesson on music theory. There are **ten appendixes** following section three which will teach you how to practice properly and effectively, work with a metronome, learn songs, and a variety of other things. I have also included blank charts and manuscript paper for you to use to further your studies. In addition to the appendixes, you will learn cool **riffs and licks** in different styles, **how to write your own songs, useful tips and tricks for playing guitar**, and *more!*

Feel free to start from Lesson #1 and work to the end of Lesson #40. Or, if you wish, jump around if you already have some playing experience. Diagrams, standard musical notation, and tablature are used throughout this book.

Finally, you are welcome to share your thoughts, comments, and questions about *Guitar Success* on my message board at www.guitarsuccess.com.

Let's get started!

Buying a Guitar

There are many different styles of guitars available on the market. First off, you should get a sense of what kind of music you want to play. Is it hard rock, blues, jazz, or maybe something else? Most guitars can be used for a variety of styles. However, I suggest that you search for a guitar that is compatible with the style you'll be playing in. For example, if you're into hard rock or heavy metal, you should seek an electric guitar with double-coil pickups. If you're a classical enthusiast, look into purchasing a nylon-string classical guitar.

The main styles of guitars include:

- Steel-string acoustic (often used in acoustic rock, folk, country, and bluegrass)
- Nylon-string acoustic (often used in classical, Spanish flamenco, Latin, and jazz)
- Solid-body electric (often used in pop, rock, heavy metal, blues, and country)
- Semi-hollow body electric (often used in blues, jazz, rock)
- Hollow-body electric/"jazz box" (often used in jazz and swing)

The next step is to take a trip to your local music store. Tell the salesperson the style of guitar you are looking to purchase. You should be able to get a good first guitar with about \$150 or so. There are less expensive guitars and package deals available through online retailers such as www.musiciansstorehouse.com, www.musicyo.com, www.music123.com, and of course, www.ebay.com. You may also find some inexpensive new or used gear at your local music store or in the classifieds.

The most important things when purchasing a guitar include:

- Playability and feel
- Sound
- Workmanship
- Warranty (if applicable)
- Company reputation
- Price

Finally, check that everything on the guitar is in good working and playing condition. Do the tuning keys turn smoothly? Is the action (the distance between the strings and the fretboard) set at a good level? Are there any cracks on the guitar? These are some types of questions you should ask before making any decisions.

Buying an Amplifier

If you buy an electric guitar, you're going to want an amplifier. The different kinds of amplifiers include: mini battery-powered amplifiers, small practice amplifiers, tube amplifiers (which use vacuum tubes like in old radios and produce a warm tone), solid-state amplifiers (which are less expensive than tube amps and don't have as warm of a tone), and digital amplifiers. At the music store, try out various amplifiers and determine what you like in terms of sound, features, wattage, and price.

Guitar Care and Maintenance

Treat your guitar like you would like to be treated. Don't ever expose your guitar to extremes of heat or cold, keep it in the trunk for an extended period of time, or leave it lying down. The best place to store your guitar is in a hardshell case or gig bag (preferably in an upright position). A good hardshell case is often over \$100, while a gig bag is considerably less. You are paying for a difference in durability and protectiveness. If you're buying a gig bag, make sure that it is well padded. You can also store your guitar on a guitar stand (a guitar stand is generally around \$15). A case or gig bag is considered safer, but storing a guitar on its stand makes it easier to grab and play!

You should also humidify your guitar during dry climates. If you have a solid body guitar, you can keep a humidifier in your case with the guitar. Place a humidifier in the sound hole if you own an acoustic guitar. Most music stores sell humidifiers. A humidifier can be purchased for approximately \$10-\$15.

Guitars also need "set-ups." A "set-up" generally includes the following:

- The changing of strings
- Neck adjustment (truss rod)
- Action adjustment (string height)
- Intonation adjustment (accuracy of pitch)

Some guitar techs or repair specialists will also clean the fingerboard (typically with lemon oil), clean the electronics, clean and polish the body, and adjust the pickups if needed.

It is recommended that you get a set-up whenever the season changes. Since a set-up can run anywhere from \$15-\$60, it might be worthwhile for you to learn how to do it yourself. Some music stores also include a set-up or service plan with the purchase of a new guitar. Be sure to inquire about this.

The last thing I'd like to mention concerning guitar care and maintenance is changing strings. String life is influenced by factors such as:

- How often you play
- What you play and how hard you hit the strings
- The amount of perspiration your fingers produce
- If you clean the strings before and after each practice
- If you wash your hands before each practice
- Where the guitar is stored or exposed to

There is no exact science as to how often you should change your strings. On average, I like to change my strings every two weeks. Next time you get a "set-up," ask your guitar tech or repair specialist if they can show you how to change your strings. The style of guitar will slightly influence how the work is performed. Change one string at a time when replacing a whole new set. I'd also suggest buying a couple complete sets of strings to keep in your practice area. Buy spare strings too, particularly B's and High E's, since they tend to "snap" or break most frequently. New strings sound bright, feel great under the fingers, and will stay in tune better after they have been broken in.

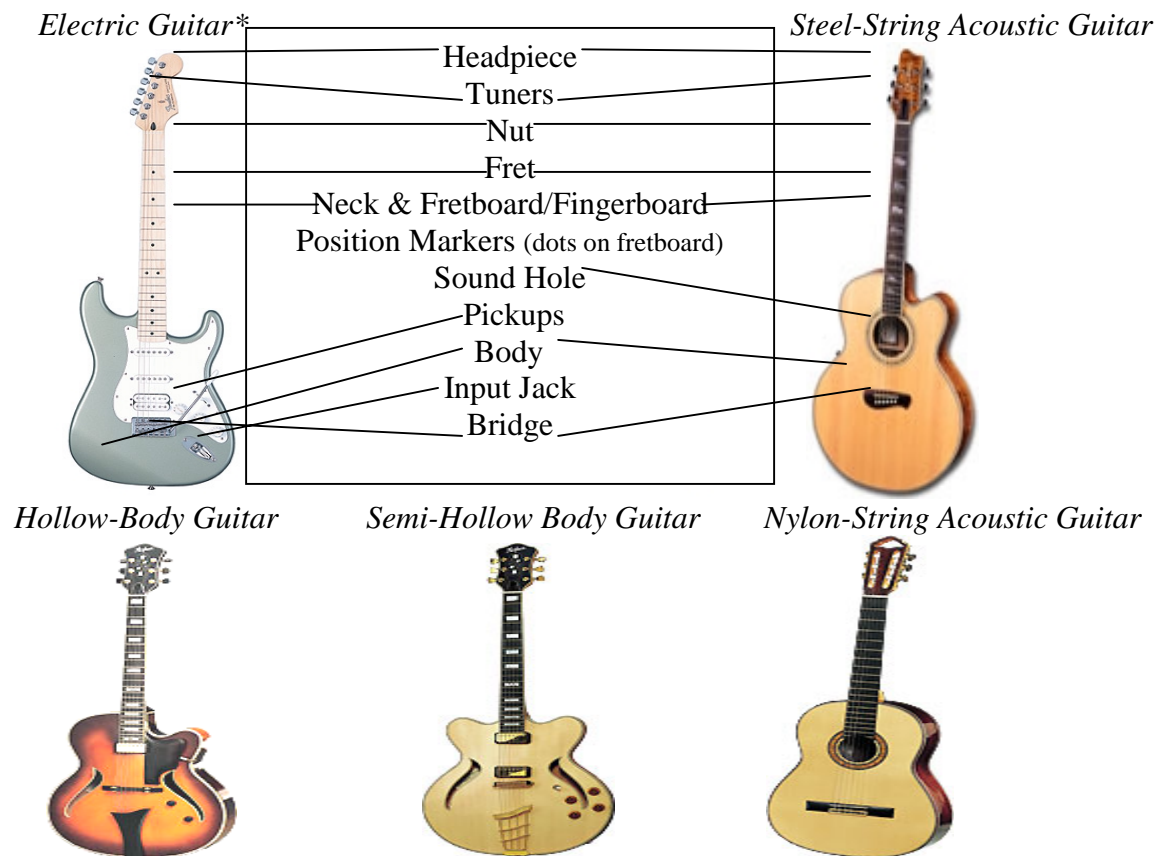
Section I

- Getting Started
- Basic Playing Techniques
- Tuning Your Guitar
- How to Read Tablature
- Warm-up and Strengthening Exercises I
- Playing Scales
- Playing Chords
- Chord Progressions
- Strumming Patterns
- Beginner Music Theory
- How to Read Music
- Reading Music Exercises, Melodies, and Studies

Lesson #1: Getting Started

Parts of the Guitar

The journey to learning and mastering guitar begins with knowing its parts. Carefully review the diagrams and information below.



Other parts and functions of the electric guitar:

- Tremolo/Whammy Bar (attached to bridge; used to change pitch)
- Pickup Selector Switch (next to tremolo bar; used to change pickup configuration)
- Volume and Tone Controls (next to pickup selector switch; adjusts volume and tone)

String Names and Numbers

String Names	Low E	A	D	G	B	High E
String Numbers	6	5	4	3	2	1
	↑					↑
	Thickest string, closest to ceiling					Thinnest string, closest to floor

*A Trick for Learning the String Names:
"Eric And Dave Go Buy Electrics!"*

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Playing Position

You may hold your guitar while sitting down or standing up (with a strap, of course!). If sitting, practice on an armless chair with a back support and sit up straight. Position the neck to be level or slightly upwards. Hold the guitar close to your body and position yourself in a way that you will be comfortable and avoid tension. Be relaxed at all times.



Fretting Hand Fingers

The fretting hand fingers are labeled “thumb,” “1st” for index, “2nd” for middle, “3rd” for ring, and “4th” for pinky. The thumb should be placed in back of the neck opposite the 1st and 2nd fingers. Fingers 1-4 will fret notes or chords.

Placement of Fretting Hand Fingers

Use the closest fingers to fret notes and be consistent with finger usage. Place your fingers close to or on the frets and keep movements at a minimum. Only lift finger(s) if necessary. Many guitar players use the position rule:

1 position = 4 frets. The name of the position is determined by which fret the first finger plays. For example, if the first finger plays the 7th fret, it would be referred to as “7th position.” Assign each fretting hand finger to each fret within the position. Remember to use the closest fingers.

Using a Guitar Pick

The guitar pick comes in a variety of shapes, sizes, gauges, colors, textures, and designs. Use what is most comfortable for you. There is no “right” or “wrong” pick to use. I suggest that you hold the pick with your thumb and index finger. Only a small amount of the tip of the pick should be visible. Hold the pick just firmly enough so it does not fall out. You may also play with your thumb and/or fingers if you wish.



Lesson #2: Basic Playing Techniques

In this lesson, we will establish basic playing techniques used by “righty” guitar players. If you are a “lefty” guitarist, don’t worry...just reverse everything! These techniques are the foundation for playing guitar properly.

Picking, Strumming, and Fretting Techniques

The right hand is also known as the “picking or strumming hand.” This hand picks the notes and strums the chords. Use more wrist movement for picking technique (many players prefer to anchor the heel of their picking hand at the bridge). Rest your forearm over the guitar body when picking. Use more arm movement and range of motion, particularly in the forearm, for strumming technique (think of shaking water off your hand). Practice picking each string down, up, and alternating down and up. Practice strumming all six strings using the same procedures.

The left hand is also known as the “fretting hand.” This hand frets the notes or chords on the fretboard. Arch or curl your fingers, use the fingertips (unless otherwise noted), press firmly, and play behind the fret wire to produce a clear tone. Make sure there is enough space between your left hand and the lower portion of the neck. Practice fretting different notes on the fretboard with each finger. Many players find it helpful to use the position markers to find frets quickly.

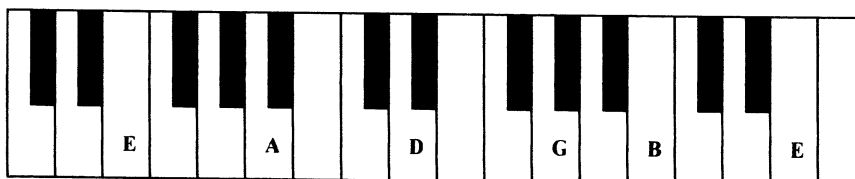
Lesson #3: Tuning Your Guitar

Tuning is essential to playing guitar and training the ear to distinguish the notes. Below are several methods you can use to tune your guitar.

Tuning to an Electronic Tuner – The easiest and most accurate way to tune up is by using an electronic tuner. This small device “reads” the pitch and tells you whether or not you’re in tune. I recommend that you use an electronic tuner if you’re playing live or in the recording studio. You can get a good tuner for usually around \$20.

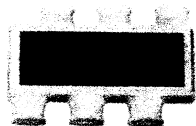


Tuning to a Piano or Keyboard – Tune each open string (Low E, A, D, G, B, High E) to the E, A, D, G, B, E notes on the piano or keyboard. Choose an area of the piano or keyboard that corresponds best to your guitar. If tuning to a piano, be sure that the piano is tuned.

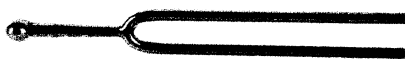


Tuning to Another Tuned Instrument – You can tune to another instrument (by matching the open strings) as long as the other instrument is tuned. A great instrument to tune to, besides the piano, is the bass guitar. You can also tune your guitar to another guitar that is already tuned.

Using a Pitch Pipe – A guitar pitch pipe has six holes and slightly resembles a harmonica. Tune each open string to the corresponding pitch on the pitch pipe.



Using a Tuning Fork – There are “E” and “A” tuning forks available. Strike the tuning fork lightly on your knee and place the end of the fork handle on the top of the guitar. You'll hear a bell-like sound which you'll tune your E or A string to. Since the tuning fork doesn't offer a tuning reference for each string, you'll have to use it in conjunction with another method.



Tuning to a Chord – Play each note of a chord containing all six strings, such as an E chord (see Lesson #7).

Relative Tuning (5th Fret Method) – This is where we tune the guitar to itself. It is called “relative tuning” because the strings are tuned relative to one another. Some refer to this method as “5th fret method” since the 5th fret is mainly used. Here are the steps:

1. Tune Low E string to the E note on any of the following: Tuner, piano/keyboard, another tuned instrument, pitch pipe, or an “E” tuning fork. ***TRICK*** - you may also tune 1st fret, Low E string (F note) to the ***DIAL TONE ON A PHONE!!*** This will put your Low E string in tune. If you have nothing to tune your Low E string to, just approximate.
2. Tune the A string to 5th fret, Low E string.
3. Tune the D string to 5th fret, A string.
4. Tune the G string to 5th fret, D string.
5. Tune the B string to 4th fret, G string.
6. Tune the High E string to the 5th fret, B string.

Tips for Tuning

- Sing each note. This will give you a better sense of whether the pitch is low or high.
- Think of how the tuning makes you feel. Something low in pitch might make you feel lazy or sluggish, while something high in pitch might make you feel alert or woken up.
- Practice tuning by ear as often as possible. You can check your work with the tuner.
- Tune your guitar at each practice session.

Lesson #4: How to Read Tablature

Tablature or “TAB” is a shorthand method for notating music. Most guitar players read tablature since it is “easier” to read than standard music notation. However, knowing how to read music is a valuable skill that will help make you a better and more knowledgeable player. Lessons 11-12 will teach you how to read music.

Description

Tablature graphically represents the guitar fingerboard. Each horizontal line represents a string, and each number represents a fret. Tablature usage dates back to the 1600’s.

Thinnest String

Examples of Tablature

High E
B
G
D
A
Low E

3 7 0 5 5

Thickest String

3rd fret, Low E string 7th fret, G string Open D string 5th fret, B string and High E string together

Lesson #5: Warm-up and Strengthening Exercises

Warming up is an essential part of playing any musical instrument. Be sure to warm-up at the beginning of each practice session. Also, stretch out your fingers, wrists, shoulders, etc. before you even pick up your guitar.

This lesson contains some very helpful warm-up exercises. These exercises may also be used to develop extra strength, dexterity, and coordination. Practice these exercises daily for at least 10 minutes.

Warm-up Exercise #1

E
B
G
D
A
E

5 6 7 8 5 6 7 8 5 6 7 8 5 6 7 8 5 6 7 8

Warm-up Exercise #2

Musical staff for Warm-up Exercise #2. The staff consists of six lines labeled E, B, G, D, A, E from top to bottom. The notes and their positions are: E (5), B (6), G (7), D (8) on the top line; B (5), G (6), D (7), A (8) on the second line; G (5), D (6), A (7), E (8) on the third line; D (5), A (6), E (7) on the fourth line; A (5), E (6) on the fifth line; and E (5) on the bottom line.

Warm-up Exercise #3

Musical staff for Warm-up Exercise #3. The staff consists of six lines labeled E, B, G, D, A, E from top to bottom. The notes and their positions are: E (8), B (7), G (6), D (5) on the top line; B (8), G (7), D (6), A (5) on the second line; G (8), D (7), A (6), E (5) on the third line; D (8), A (7), E (6) on the fourth line; A (8), E (7) on the fifth line; and E (8) on the bottom line.

Warm-up Exercise #4

Musical staff for Warm-up Exercise #4. The staff consists of six lines labeled E, B, G, D, A, E from top to bottom. The notes and their positions are: E (8), B (7), G (6), D (5) on the top line; B (8), G (7), D (6), A (5) on the second line; G (8), D (7), A (6), E (5) on the third line; D (8), A (7), E (6) on the fourth line; A (8), E (7) on the fifth line; and E (8) on the bottom line.

Variations to Practice

- In different positions on the neck
- Combine exercises
- Create variations off these exercises
- Use downstrokes only
- Use upstrokes only
- Use alternate picking starting with a downstroke
- Use alternate picking starting with an upstroke (generally more challenging)
- With a metronome (it is always helpful to practice with a metronome)

▣ is the symbol used for “downstroke”

∨ is the symbol used for “upstroke”

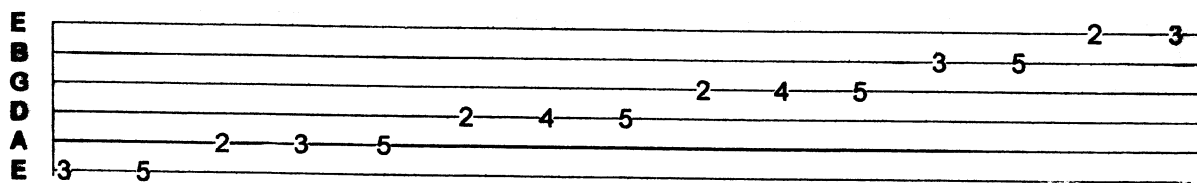
Lesson #6: Playing Scales

What is a scale? A scale is a sequence of notes that ascends and descends in pitch. Playing scales will improve your playing technique and help develop your musical ear. Scales are also helpful in terms of writing music, figuring out music, warming-up, and improvising.

Below are patterns for some of the most common scales used in rock, pop, blues, jazz, and country. Play these scales evenly both up and down in pitch. The root note for these scale patterns (note that identifies the scale) is G. The scales illustrated below include the G Major Scale, G Minor Scale, G Major Pentatonic Scale, G Minor Pentatonic Scale, and G Blues Scale. To play these scales with a different root, simply shift the lowest note (first note) of the scale to the desired fret. Refer to the *Fretboard Chart in Appendix IV*.

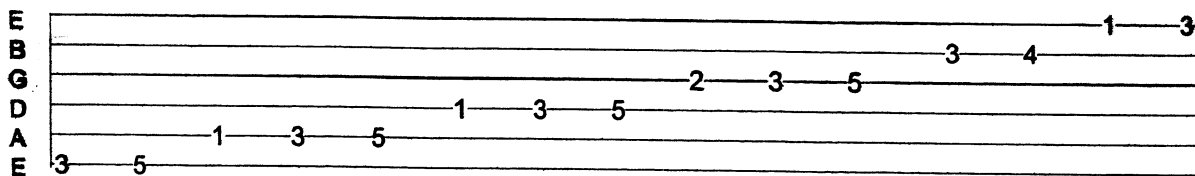
Scale Patterns with "G" Root

Major Scale

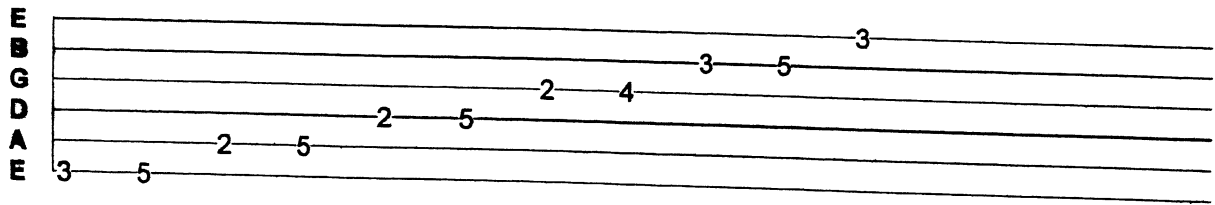


Suggested Fingering: 2 4 1 2 4 1 3 4 1 3 4 2 4 1 2

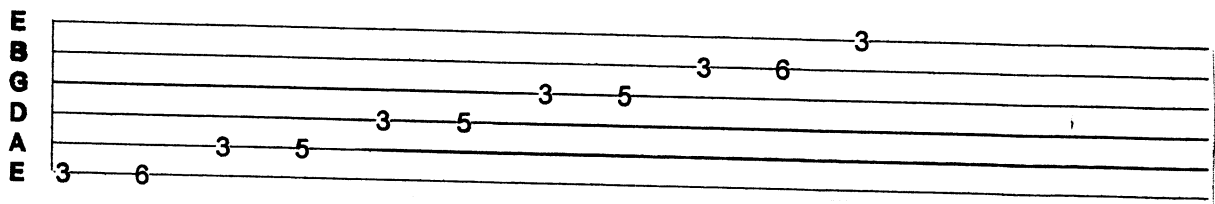
Minor Scale



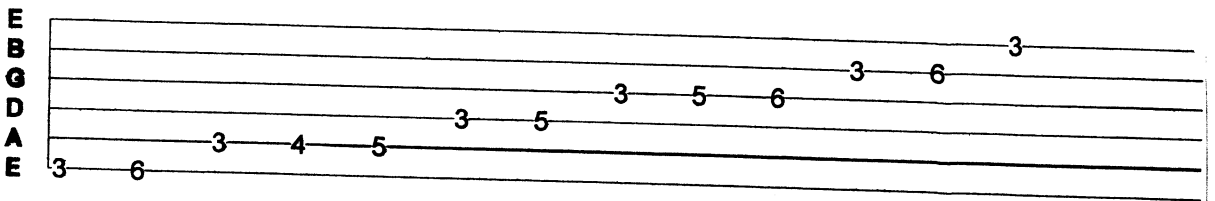
Suggested Fingering: 2 4 1 2 4 1 2 4 1 2 4 2 3 1 2

Major Pentatonic Scale *

Suggested Fingering: 2 4 1 4 1 4 1 3 2 4 2

Minor Pentatonic Scale *

Suggested Fingering: 1 4 1 3 1 3 1 4 1 4 1

Blues Scale

Suggested Fingering: 1 4 1 2 3 1 3 1 3 4 1 3 1

*Are examined in much greater detail in **Lesson #21**.

Using Scales to Make Music

Many players just “play” scales and that’s why “scales” sometimes have a negative connotation. It is very important to make music with scales. Did you know that the main part to “My Girl” (The Temptations) is based on the C and F Major Pentatonic scales? Or, that classic riff to “Sunshine of Your Love” (Cream) is based on the D Blues scale? The list goes on and on. Apply these scales to your own original music right away.

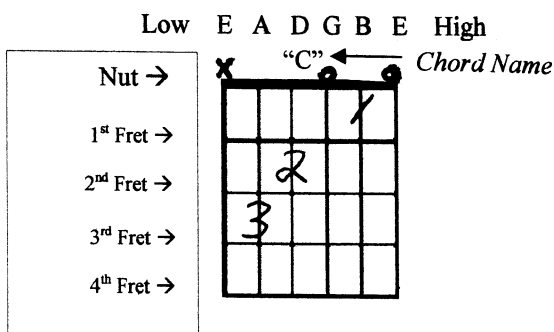
Lesson #7: Playing Chords

What is a chord? A chord is a combination of tones sounded together. Chords, which relate to harmony, are often played by the rhythm guitarist. Chords are an essential part of playing the guitar and are great to use when accompanying a vocalist.

Tips for Playing Chords

- Arch fingers
- Press firmly
- Position finger close to fret wire
- Keep your fingernails as short as possible
- Sound the notes individually to check for clearness

Reading a Chord Diagram



X = Don't Play O = Open String

⌒ = Barre Technique (to lay finger flat over 2 or more strings)

Number on Chart = Play this note. This is also the suggested finger.

Power Chords*

- Are the staple of pop, rock, heavy metal, and punk styles.
- Contain only 2 notes (Root + 5th of scale).
- May also be referred to as "fifth" chords.
- Are built off the 6th, 5th, or 4th string roots.

*Are examined in much greater detail in Lesson #17.

Open Position Chords

- Contain open strings and are played within the first few frets
- “Resonate” or ring out more due to the open string quality
- Are sometimes referred to as “Cowboy Chords”
- A folk thumb positioning (“thumb over neck”) is often very helpful

Common Chord Abbreviations for Major and Minor:

Major: Maj, Ma, M
Minor: min, mi, m

Practice and memorize the power chords and open position chords shown below. It is helpful to visualize the relationship between chords, such as A-Am-A7, D-Dm-D7, etc.

Non Movable Power Chords (Open Position)				Common Suspended 2 (Sus2) Chords			
Movable Power Chords				Common Suspended 4 (Sus4) Chords			
Open Position Major Chords							
Open Position Minor Chords							
Open Position 7th Chords (“Dominant 7th Chorus”)							

Block Chord VS. Broken Chord (Arpeggio)

A “block chord” is where all the notes of the chord are struck together. A “broken chord,” or “arpeggio,” is where the individual notes of the chord are played. Block chords work well when a “full” sound is desired, while broken chords lend themselves well to ballads (a slow song that is usually love related). For broken chords, let the notes ring into one another. Practice your chords in block and broken chord style.

If you are playing arpeggios in a song, be sure to go into the corresponding chord positions. Many times, the chord symbols (chord names) will appear above the arpeggios.

Lesson #8: Chord Progressions

A chord progression is a sequence of chord changes. Chord progressions serve as the basis for virtually every song. They are also good to play when accompanying a vocalist. Chord progressions can be challenging at first, so don't get discouraged.

Tips for Changing Chords

- Strum the open strings between chord changes to maintain the flow. Be sure to stay in time. It's helpful to practice with a metronome (see **Appendix II**).
- Keep your finger(s) down when possible when switching from chord to chord (if the next chord you're changing to has any of the same notes). Known as pivot technique.
- Move fingers as a unit when changing chords. Also, practice CHANGING chords only.
- Make up your own chord progressions using the chords from **Lesson #7**.

Common Progressions Using Power Chords

Progression #1

E				
B				
G				
D	2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2	2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2		
A	0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0	0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0		
E			2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2	2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2
			0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0	0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0

Progression #2

E				
B				
G				
D				
A	2-2-2-2-3-3-3-3	5-5-3-3-2-2-2-2	3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3	
E	0-0-0-0-1-1-1-1	3-3-1-1-0-0-0-0	1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1	2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2
				0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0

Progression #3

E				
B				
G				
D	9-9-9-9-9-9-9-9	7-7-7-7-7-7-7-7	5-5-5-5-5-5-5-5	7-7-7-7-7-7-7-7
A	7-7-7-7-7-7-7-7	5-5-5-5-5-5-5-5	3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3	5-5-5-5-5-5-5-5
E				

Progression #4

E				
B				
G				
D		7-7-7-7	6-6-6-6	
A	4-4-4-4-5-5-5-5	7-7-7-7-4-4-4-4	4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4	2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2
E	2-2-2-2	5-5-5-5	2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2	0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0

Progression #5

E				
B				
G				
D				
A	7-7-7-7-7-7-7-7	5-5-5-5-5-5-5-5		7-7-7-7-7-7-7-7
E	5-5-5-5-5-5-5-5	3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3	5-5-5-5-5-5-5-5	5-5-5-5-5-5-5-5
			3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3	

Progression #6

E				
B				
G				
D				
A	5-5-5-5-5-5-5-5	2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2	5-5-5-5-5-5-5-5	7-7-7-7-7-7-7-7
E	3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3	0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0	3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3	5-5-5-5-5-5-5-5

Common Progressions Using Open Position Chords

(Practice varying these chord progressions in terms of "feel," tempo, and strumming/arpeggio pattern)

Progression #7



Musical notation for Progression #7, showing four measures of chords: G, Em, C, and D7. The notation is in treble clef, key of G major, and 4/4 time. Each chord is represented by a single note on the staff with a downward-pointing arrow indicating the strumming direction.

Progression #8



Musical notation for Progression #8, showing four measures of chords: A, D, E, and D. The notation is in treble clef, key of A major, and 4/4 time. Each chord is represented by a single note on the staff with a downward-pointing arrow indicating the strumming direction.

Progression #9



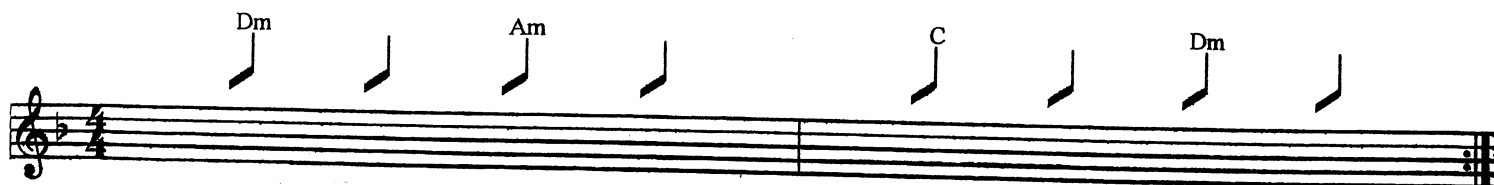
Musical notation for Progression #9, showing four measures of chords: B7, E7, A7, and A7. The notation is in treble clef, key of B major, and 4/4 time. Each chord is represented by a single note on the staff with a downward-pointing arrow indicating the strumming direction.

Progression #10



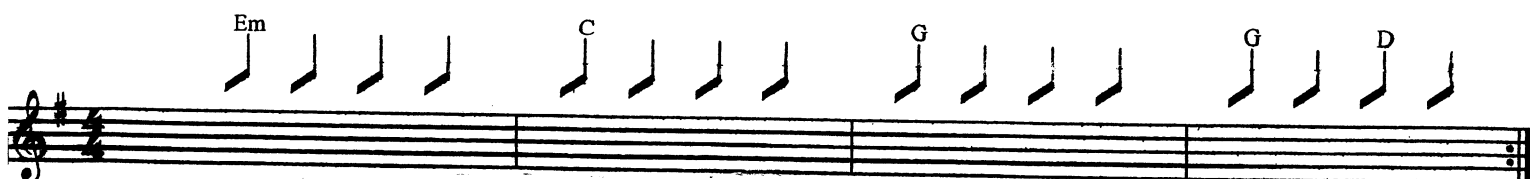
Musical notation for Progression #10, showing four measures of chords: Am, Em, Dm, and Em. The notation is in treble clef, key of A minor, and 4/4 time. Each chord is represented by a single note on the staff with a downward-pointing arrow indicating the strumming direction.

Progression #11



Musical notation for Progression #11, showing four measures of chords: Dm, Am, C, and Dm. The notation is in treble clef, key of D minor, and 4/4 time. Each chord is represented by a single note on the staff with a downward-pointing arrow indicating the strumming direction.

Progression #12



Musical notation for Progression #12, showing four measures of chords: Em, C, G, and G D. The notation is in treble clef, key of E minor, and 4/4 time. Each chord is represented by a single note on the staff with a downward-pointing arrow indicating the strumming direction.

Lesson #9: Strumming Patterns

A Variety of Strumming Patterns Used in Many Styles

▢ = Strum downward (toward floor) ▽ = Strum upward (toward ceiling)

Now, let's enhance those chord progressions you just learned with various strumming patterns. You can also apply these strumming patterns to individual chords if you wish.

Rhythm Notation →



4/4

Count: 1 2 3 4

T
A
B



4/4

Count: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

T
A
B



4/4

Count: 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

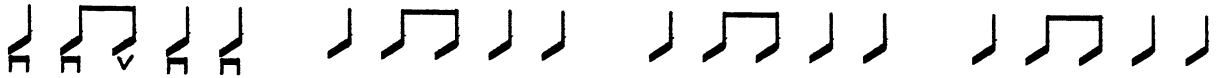
T
A
B



4/4

Count 1 2 + 3 + 4 +

T
A
B



4/4

Count :1 2 + 3 4

T
A
B



4/4

More Strumming Patterns

Diagram:

Count: 1 2 3 + 4 +

T
A
B

Diagram:

Count: 1 2 + (3) + 4 +

T
A
B

Diagram:

Count: 1 2 3

T
A
B

Diagram:

Count: 1 2 + 3

T
A
B

Diagram:

Count: 1 2 + 3 +

T
A
B

Diagram:

Count: 1 2 +

T
A
B

Lesson #10: Beginner Music Theory

Music theory is the study of how music works. Understanding music theory will help you communicate with other musicians, write songs, understand music better, and excel as an overall player. In this lesson, we will cover the basic elements of music theory. Study and memorize the following information and how it pertains to the guitar.

Basic Terms and Meanings

- $\frac{1}{2}$ step = 1 fret
- Whole step = 2 frets
- Sharp (#) = raises a note $\frac{1}{2}$ step. Example: G \rightarrow G#
- Flat (b) = lowers a note $\frac{1}{2}$ step. Example: G \rightarrow Gb
- Natural (\natural) = not # or b. There are 7 natural notes in music. They are A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. These natural notes may also be referred to as the MUSICAL ALPHABET.

Notes in Music and Concepts Associated

Including #'s and b's, there are 12 different notes. These 12 notes comprise the Chromatic scale.

A	A#	<u>B</u>	C	C#	D	D#	<u>E</u>	F	F#	G	G#
	Bb			Db		Eb			Gb		Ab

Notice that there are no #'s or b's between B-C and E-F. A good acronym: “Big Cats Eat Fish.”

Out of the 12 notes, 7 are natural (A, B, C, D, E, F, G) and 5 are enharmonic (A#/Bb, C#/Db, D#/Eb, F#/Gb, G#/Ab).

An enharmonic is one note that has 2 names.

Generally, the sharp name is used when going up in pitch, and the flat name is used when going down in pitch. The key of a song or musical situation will determine if the sharp or flat name is most appropriate.

Understanding the Fretboard

Refer to the *Fretboard Chart in Appendix IV* to understand how the notes and concepts are applied. We will further explore the notes on the fretboard in the “**How to Name Notes on the Fretboard Quickly and with Ease**” section of **Lesson #24**.

Chart of Intervals

An interval is the distance between 2 notes. Intervals are the building blocks of music. Study and memorize the following intervals in the accompanying chart.

<u>Type of Interval</u>	<u>Distance</u>
Perfect Unison	None
Minor 2nd	1/2 Step
Major 2nd	1 Whole Step
Minor 3rd	1 Whole Step + 1/2 Step
Major 3rd	2 Whole Steps
Perfect 4th	2 Whole Steps + 1/2 Step
Augmented 4 th , Diminished 5th	3 Whole Steps
Perfect 5th	3 Whole Steps + 1/2 Step
Minor 6th	4 Whole Steps
Major 6th	4 Whole Steps + 1/2 Step
Minor 7th	5 Whole Steps
Major 7th	5 Whole Steps + 1/2 Step
Perfect Octave	6 Whole Steps

Simple VS. Compound Interval

A simple interval is an interval that is within the span of one octave. All the intervals in the accompanying chart above are simple intervals.

A compound interval is an interval that exceeds the span of one octave. 9ths, 11ths, and 13ths are examples of compound intervals.

Melodic VS. Harmonic Interval

A melodic interval is when you play one note after another.

A harmonic interval is when you play two notes together at the same time.

Intervals of the Major and Minor Scales (in relation to root)

Major Scale: Root, Major 2nd, Major 3rd, Perfect 4th, Perfect 5th, Major 6th, Major 7th, Perfect Octave.

Minor Scale: Root, Minor 2nd, Minor 3rd, Perfect 4th, Perfect 5th, Minor 6th, Minor 7th, Perfect Octave.

Key Signatures

Each piece of music is based on a particular key. The key, or key signature, indicates the tonal center of the piece. The tonal center is the “home base” in which the piece gravitates back to. Below you will find each major and minor key signature, the number of sharps or flats in each key, the names of sharps or flats in each key, as well as each key signature’s staff representation.

Key	Number of Sharps	Names of Sharps	Staff Representation
C Major A Minor	None	N/A	
G Major E Minor	One	F#	
D Major B Minor	Two	F# C#	
A Major F# Minor	Three	F# C# G#	
E Major C# Minor	Four	F# C# G# D#	
B Major G# Minor	Five	F# C# G# D# A#	
F# Major D# Minor	Six	F# C# G# D# A# E#	
C# Major A# Minor	Seven	F# C# G# D# A# E# B#	
Key	Number of Sharps	Names of Sharps	Staff Representation
F Major D Minor	One	Bb	
Bb Major G Minor	Two	Bb Eb	
Eb Major C Minor	Three	Bb Eb Ab	
Ab Major F Minor	Four	Bb Eb Ab Db	
Db Major Bb Minor	Five	Bb Eb Ab Db Gb	
Gb Major Eb Minor	Six	Bb Eb Ab Db Gb Cb	
Cb Major Ab Minor	Seven	Bb Eb Ab Db Gb Cb Fb	

Memorizing each major and minor key signature can be difficult. “**Lesson #24: Intermediate Music Theory**” will assist you in memorizing the key signatures through the “Circle of 5ths” as well as other useful tips.

Lesson #11: How to Read Music

Importance of Reading Music

Knowing how to read music is very valuable. In this lesson, we will examine many aspects of reading music with regard to standard musical notation. Standard musical notation is more difficult to read than tablature, but is far more comprehensive and specific. For example, standard musical notation includes rhythm, while tablature does not. Being able to read music will also make you a “literate,” well-rounded musician. Just think...if you know how to read music, you can play ANY music you get your hands on, you can learn how to play other instruments quicker, you can do work as a studio musician, and so on. Now I’d say it’s definitely worthwhile to learn how to read music. Let’s get to work.

The Musical Staff

Music is written on 5 lines and 4 spaces called the musical staff.



The notes on the 5 lines (from low to high) are E-G-B-D-F. These letters can easily be remembered by the sentence “Every Good Band Draws Fans”

The notes on the 4 spaces spell the word “FACE”



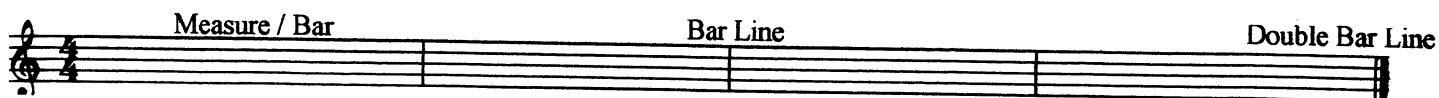
The Treble Clef

Guitar music is written in “G” or “Treble Clef”. Many people call this the “G” clef since it circles around the G line.



Measures, Bar Lines, Double Bar Ending

A measure (also known as a “bar”) is the space between the 2 bar lines. The double bar line is used at the end of a piece of music.



Repeat Signs and Instructions

$\%$ = Repeat previous measure

 = Repeat what is in between

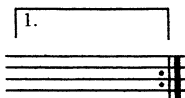
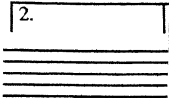
D.C. al Fine = return to the beginning of the piece and play to *fine*

D.S. al Fine = return to $\%$ and play to *fine*

D.C. al Coda = return to the beginning, play to the \oplus and then skip to the *coda*

D.S. al Coda = return to the $\%$, play to the \oplus , and then skip to the *coda*

First and Second Endings:

Play through  first and then skip to  on the repeat.

Ledger Lines

The small lines that extend the staff upward or downward are known as ledger lines.




Comparative Note Values and Rests

Whole		Half		Quarter		Eighth		Sixteenth		Thirty-Second		Sixty-Fourth	
Note	Rest	Note	Rest	Note	Rest	Note	Rest	Note	Rest	Note	Rest	Note	Rest
	4 Beats		2 Beats		1 Beat		1/2 Beat		1/4 Beat		1/8 Beat		1/16 Beat

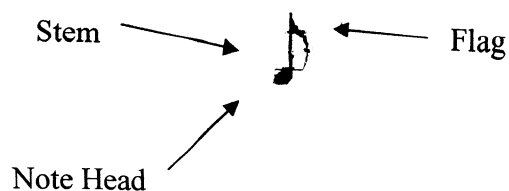


A **rest** is a moment of silence. To rest, place the edge of your right palm over the strings. You can also cover the strings with your left hand to produce a rest. This is known as **dampening technique**.

Dotted Notes

A dot placed next to a note or rest increases its value by half. For example, a dotted half note  equals 3 beats.

Parts of a Note



Time Signatures

At the beginning of each piece of music (next to the clef sign) is a time signature. A time signature tells you how to count the beats. The time signature is very rhythmically important in a piece.

The top number tells you how many beats there are per measure.

The bottom number tells you what kind of note gets 1 beat.

Example: 4/4 time, the most common time signature:

4 (4 beats per measure)

4 (Quarter note gets 1 beat)

Note: Usually the bottom number is 4. If, however, the bottom number is 8, an eighth note would get 1 beat, if the bottom number is 16, a sixteenth note would get 1 beat, and so on.

Counting in 4/4 Time

(Pick the open High E string)



Counting in 3/4 Time

(Pick the open High E string)



Tied Notes

A tie is a curved line that lengthens the value of a note into the following measure(s). Strike the note initially only. Be sure to still count according to the time signature. Practice the example below and pay extra careful attention to the timing.



Pick here only

Direction of Note Stems (refer to the labeled notes)

- From the A note down in pitch the stem turns up.
- For the B note the stem can turn either down (typically) or up.
- From the C note up in pitch the stem turns down.

etc.

**Tempo Markings**

Tempo markings tell us how slow or fast to play.

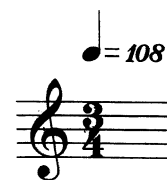
TermMeaning

Grave	Very slow
Largo, Lento	Slow
Larghetto	A little faster than largo
Adagio	Moderately slow
Andante	“Walking” pace
Andantino	A little faster than andante
Moderato	Moderately
Allegretto	A little slower than allegro
Allegro	Fast
Presto	Very fast
Prestissimo	As fast as possible

You may also see a BPM (beats per minute) setting at the beginning of a piece. This setting is what you set your metronome to. Example: the quarter note gets 108 beats per minute.

Dynamic Markings

Dynamic markings tell us how soft or loud to play.

SymbolTermMeaning

<i>ppp</i>	Pianississimo	As soft as possible
<i>pp</i>	Pianissimo	Very Soft
<i>P</i>	Piano	Soft
<i>mp</i>	Mezzo Piano	Moderately soft
<i>mf</i>	Mezzo Forte	Moderately loud
<i>f</i>	Forte	Loud
<i>ff</i>	Fortissimo	Very loud
<i>fff</i>	Fortississimo	As loud as possible

Other Useful Signs, Symbols, and Terms

Accelerando (accel.) = to gradually get faster

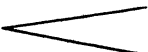
Ritardando (rit.) = to gradually get slower

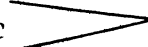
All tempo = to resume the original tempo


Rubato = to speed up and slow down according to taste


Issimo (a suffix) = very


Poco = a little


Crescendo  = to gradually get louder


Decrescendo  = to gradually get softer


Accent  = to emphasize or play louder

Marcato  = heavy accent

Tenuto  = to hold for the full value

Staccato  = short

Fermata  = to hold beyond normal length

Grace note  = barely played

Slur or Legato  = a curved line connecting two or more



different notes. Play the notes smoothly and do not confuse this with tied notes.

8va = to play an octave higher than notated

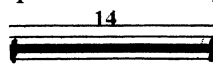
15ma = to play two octaves higher than notated

Loco = cancels a previous 8va or 15ma indication

C = Common time (the same as 4/4 time)

♩ = Cut time = values are cut in half

Modulation = the process of changing the key in a piece

Extended rest  = number above staff that indicates how many bars the player should rest - (fourteen bars in this example)

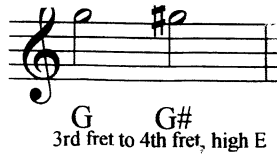
Consonance = sounds that are pleasant or harmonious to the ear (in most music).

Dissonance = sounds that are harsh or unpleasant to the ear (sometimes in classical or jazz).

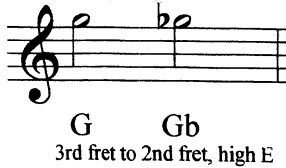
Reading Sharps, Flats, and Naturals

Sharps and flats are also known as *accidentals*.

To sharp (#) a note, play the written note $\frac{1}{2}$ step higher.



To flat (b) a note, play the written note $\frac{1}{2}$ step lower.



Sharps and flats are effective for an entire measure unless canceled by a natural sign (♮).

Reading Music in Different Keys

The key signature is a collection of sharps and flats (except the Key of C Major and A Minor, which contain all natural notes) that are placed next to the treble clef sign. The key signature exists on each line of music to remind the reader of possible accidentals. A key signature is an efficient way of notating sharps or flats throughout the piece.

Many pieces are based on the Key of C Major (no #'s or b's). The Key of C Major (and the relative key of A Minor) are by far the easiest to read since there are no accidentals.

Key of C Major (no sharps or flats)

T
A
B 3 0 2 3 0 2 0 1 0 2 0 3 2 0 3

C D E F G A B (C) B A G F E D C

Key of A Minor (no sharps or flats)

T
A
B 0 2 3 0 2 3 0 2 0 3 2 0 3 2 0

A B C D E F G (A) G F E D C B A

Other keys we can read music in:

Key of D Major (all F's and C's are sharped)

D E F# G A B C# (D) C# B A G F# E D

T
A
B

Key of G Minor (all B's and E's are flatted)

G A Bb C D Eb F (G) F Eb D C Bb A G

T
A
B

Refer to the key signature section in **Lesson #10** to identify the other possible key signatures. Practice writing out your own music in various keys.

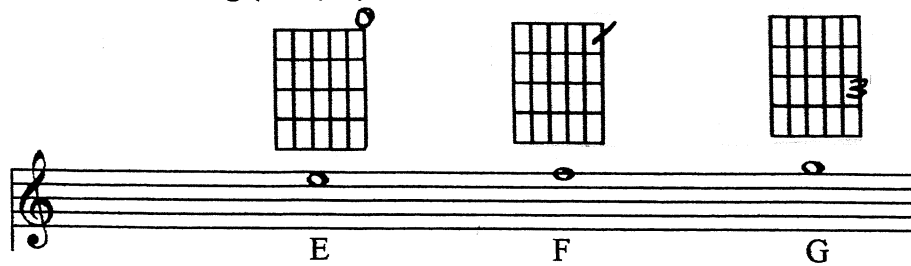
Tips for Reading Music

- Practice sightreading as often possible. Sightreading is playing music at first glance.
- Say notes aloud before and while playing
- Sing note names as you play
- Practice with a metronome
- Play as evenly and smoothly as possible
- Look ahead, especially when holding out notes
- Think of the alphabetical relationship between the notes on the staff
- Remember the “E-G-B-D-F” acronym and “FACE” regarding the notes on the staff
- When you play something, practice reading the notes instead of the tablature
- Practice reading music at least 15-20 minutes per day
- Play and review the notes in terms of where they are located on the fretboard (do this before reading the music)
- Be patient, reading music fluently takes time

Ready to read some music? In the next lesson (Lesson #12), we're going to do reading music exercises, melodies, and studies!

Lesson #12: Reading Music Exercises, Melodies, and Studies

Notes on the First String (E, F, G)



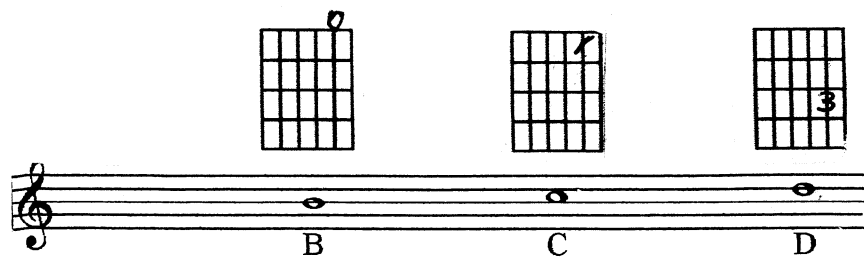
First String Exercise



First String Melody



Notes on the Second String (B, C, D)



Second String Exercise



Second String Melody



Notes on the Third String (G, A)

A diagram of a guitar fretboard for the third string. The first fretboard shows the open string (0th fret) with a note G. The second fretboard shows the 2nd fret with a note A. Below the fretboards is a musical staff with a treble clef, showing a whole note G on the second line and a whole note A on the second space.

Third String Exercise

A musical exercise for the third string in 4/4 time. The first four measures consist of eighth-note patterns starting on G (open) and moving up to A (2nd fret). The fifth measure is a whole note G, and the sixth measure is a whole note A.

Third String Melody

A musical melody for the third string in 3/4 time. The melody consists of quarter notes: G (open), A (2nd fret), B (3rd fret), C (4th fret), D (5th fret), E (6th fret), F (7th fret), G (8th fret), A (9th fret), B (10th fret), C (11th fret), D (12th fret), E (13th fret), F (14th fret), G (15th fret), A (16th fret), B (17th fret), C (18th fret), D (19th fret), E (20th fret), F (21st fret), G (22nd fret), A (23rd fret), B (24th fret), C (25th fret), D (26th fret), E (27th fret), F (28th fret), G (29th fret), A (30th fret), B (31st fret), C (32nd fret), D (33rd fret), E (34th fret), F (35th fret), G (36th fret), A (37th fret), B (38th fret), C (39th fret), D (40th fret), E (41st fret), F (42nd fret), G (43rd fret), A (44th fret), B (45th fret), C (46th fret), D (47th fret), E (48th fret), F (49th fret), G (50th fret), A (51st fret), B (52nd fret), C (53rd fret), D (54th fret), E (55th fret), F (56th fret), G (57th fret), A (58th fret), B (59th fret), C (60th fret), D (61st fret), E (62nd fret), F (63rd fret), G (64th fret), A (65th fret), B (66th fret), C (67th fret), D (68th fret), E (69th fret), F (70th fret), G (71st fret), A (72nd fret), B (73rd fret), C (74th fret), D (75th fret), E (76th fret), F (77th fret), G (78th fret), A (79th fret), B (80th fret), C (81st fret), D (82nd fret), E (83rd fret), F (84th fret), G (85th fret), A (86th fret), B (87th fret), C (88th fret), D (89th fret), E (90th fret), F (91st fret), G (92nd fret), A (93rd fret), B (94th fret), C (95th fret), D (96th fret), E (97th fret), F (98th fret), G (99th fret), A (100th fret).

Solo Strings Study (Strings 1-3)

A musical study for solo strings in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a sequence of notes: G (open), A (2nd fret), B (3rd fret), C (4th fret), D (5th fret), E (6th fret), F (7th fret), G (8th fret), A (9th fret), B (10th fret), C (11th fret), D (12th fret), E (13th fret), F (14th fret), G (15th fret), A (16th fret), B (17th fret), C (18th fret), D (19th fret), E (20th fret), F (21st fret), G (22nd fret), A (23rd fret), B (24th fret), C (25th fret), D (26th fret), E (27th fret), F (28th fret), G (29th fret), A (30th fret), B (31st fret), C (32nd fret), D (33rd fret), E (34th fret), F (35th fret), G (36th fret), A (37th fret), B (38th fret), C (39th fret), D (40th fret), E (41st fret), F (42nd fret), G (43rd fret), A (44th fret), B (45th fret), C (46th fret), D (47th fret), E (48th fret), F (49th fret), G (50th fret), A (51st fret), B (52nd fret), C (53rd fret), D (54th fret), E (55th fret), F (56th fret), G (57th fret), A (58th fret), B (59th fret), C (60th fret), D (61st fret), E (62nd fret), F (63rd fret), G (64th fret), A (65th fret), B (66th fret), C (67th fret), D (68th fret), E (69th fret), F (70th fret), G (71st fret), A (72nd fret), B (73rd fret), C (74th fret), D (75th fret), E (76th fret), F (77th fret), G (78th fret), A (79th fret), B (80th fret), C (81st fret), D (82nd fret), E (83rd fret), F (84th fret), G (85th fret), A (86th fret), B (87th fret), C (88th fret), D (89th fret), E (90th fret), F (91st fret), G (92nd fret), A (93rd fret), B (94th fret), C (95th fret), D (96th fret), E (97th fret), F (98th fret), G (99th fret), A (100th fret).

Notes on the Fourth String (D, E, F)

D E F

Fourth String Exercise

Hold down 2nd finger

D (open) E (2nd fret) F (3rd fret)

Fourth String Melody

Notes on the Fifth String (A, B, C)

A B C

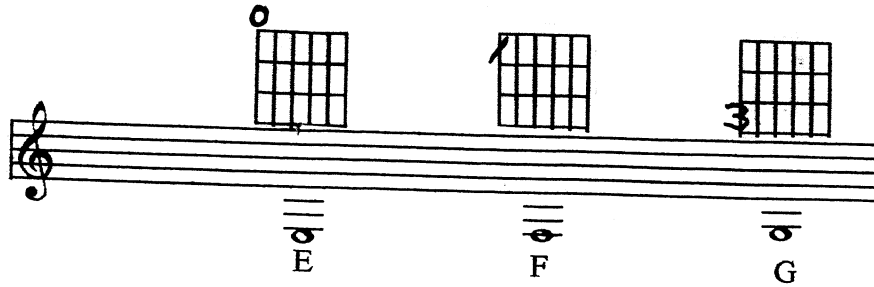
Fifth String Exercise

Hold down 2nd finger

A (open) B (2nd fret) C (3rd fret)

Fifth String Melody

Notes on the Sixth String (E, F, G)



Sixth String Exercise

Hold down 1st finger

Musical notation for the Sixth String Exercise in 4/4 time. The exercise consists of a single melodic line on the sixth string. It begins with the open string (E), followed by the first fret (F), and then the third fret (G). The notes are played in a sequence of eighth notes, with the first finger held down for the F and G notes. The exercise is repeated for several measures.

Sixth String Melody

Musical notation for the Sixth String Melody in 3/4 time. The melody is written on a single staff with a treble clef. It consists of a sequence of eighth notes, starting with the open string (E) and moving up to the first fret (F) and then the third fret (G). The melody is repeated for several measures.

Bass Strings Study (Strings 4-6)

Musical notation for the Bass Strings Study in 4/4 time. The study consists of two staves, both with treble clefs. The first staff contains a sequence of eighth notes, starting with the open string (E) and moving up to the first fret (F) and then the third fret (G). The second staff contains a sequence of eighth notes, starting with the open string (E) and moving up to the first fret (F) and then the third fret (G). The study is repeated for several measures.

Study on all Six Strings (Key of E Minor)

Note Summary in First Position

	Low E String			A String			D String			G String		B String			High E String		
	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
T																	
A																	
B	0	1	3	0	2	3	0	2	3	0	2	0	1	3	0	1	3

Remember that a sharp (#) raises the pitch 1/2 step and a flat (b) lowers the pitch 1/2 step.

Continue Your Reading Music Studies

This lesson has provided you with a variety of reading music examples in standard musical notation. However, reading music fluently is a lengthy process that goes beyond the scope of this lesson. I encourage you to continue reading music as often as possible.