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TOTAL Guitar

ANNUAL 2020

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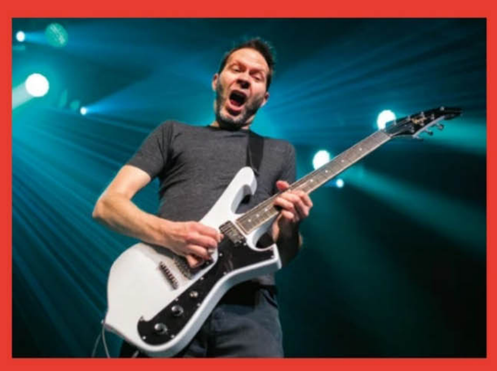

EXPERT ADVICE / TECHNIQUES / MAINTENANCE / LIVE TIPS / AND MORE!

Digital Edition

FUTURE

VOLUME 3

WELCOME

TOTAL Guitar ANNUAL 2020

Welcome to the Total Guitar Annual 2020, filled with the very best features, interviews, advice and more from the past year. Our 50 Ways to Play Better Now feature is essential reading for all guitar enthusiasts, bringing you the very best ways to improve your playing. And that's just for starters! We've got a whole host of other brilliant features that offer something for all levels and styles – check out our expert advice and pro tips in 30 Guitar Lessons, explore new acoustic styles and sounds in the Go Unplugged! feature and find out how to recreate the sounds of Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones, The Who and The Beatles in Sounds of '69. We've also got exclusive interviews with Guns N' Roses' legendary lead guitarist Slash, while we also talk funk with Cory Wong, branching out with Muse's Matt Bellamy and jazz influences with Paul Gilbert.

Whatever your skill level, we're also here to help – our tips, tricks and tutorials will give you the confidence to master your guitar, while our maintenance guides will ensure you're equipped with the knowledge and knowhow to fix common guitar issues. You'll find a wealth of easy-to-follow tab throughout this annual, complete with free downloadable audio and backing tracks. To get started, head over to filesilo.co.uk/tg-annual2020 and download your files. Enjoy!

FUTURE

TOTAL Guitar ANNUAL 2020

Future PLC Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill,
Bournemouth, Dorset, BH2 6EZ

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Cover images
Getty Images

Photography
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Media packs are available on request
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Printed by William Gibbons, 26 Planetary Road,
Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001

Total Guitar Annual 2020
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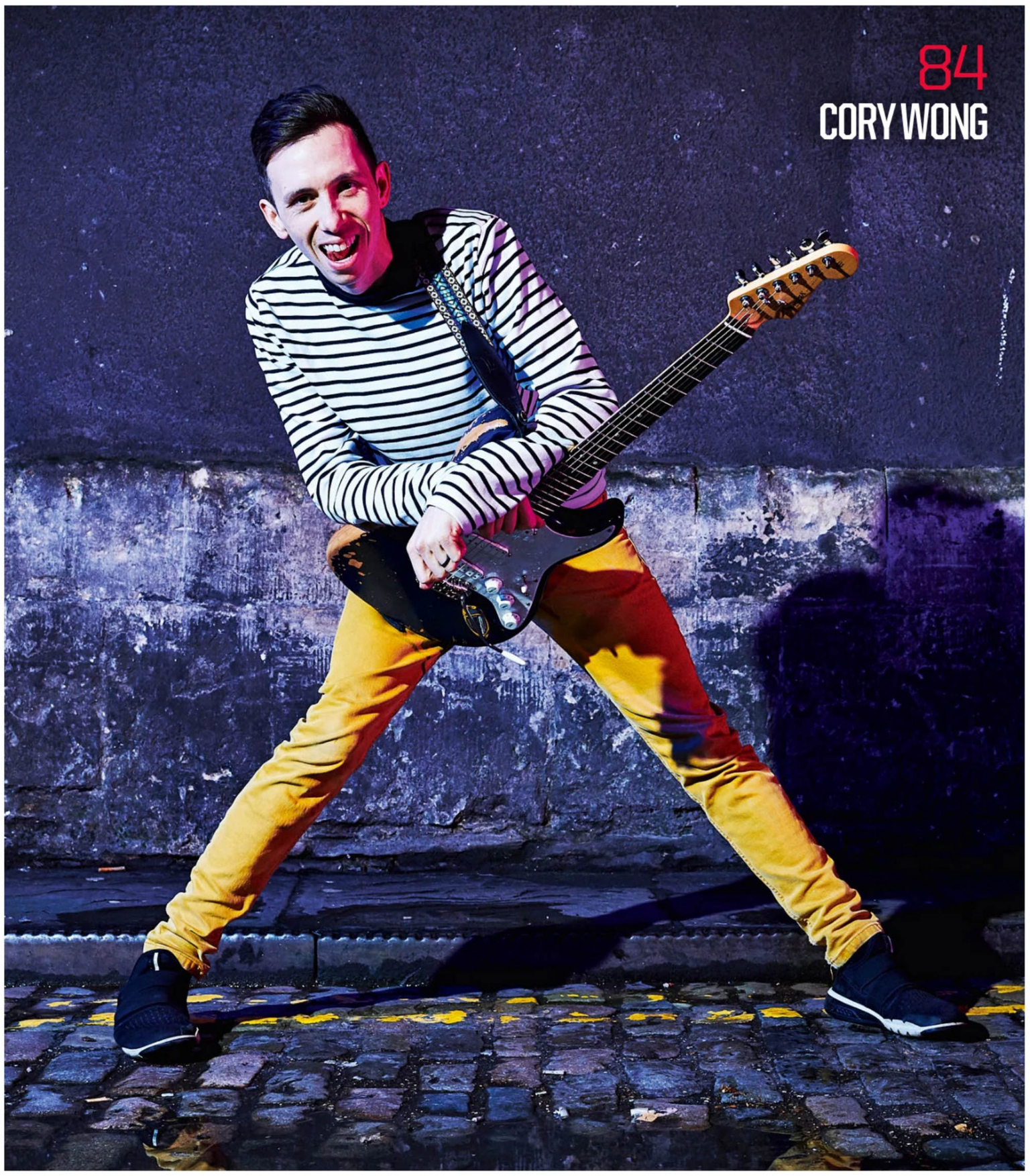

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CORY WONG

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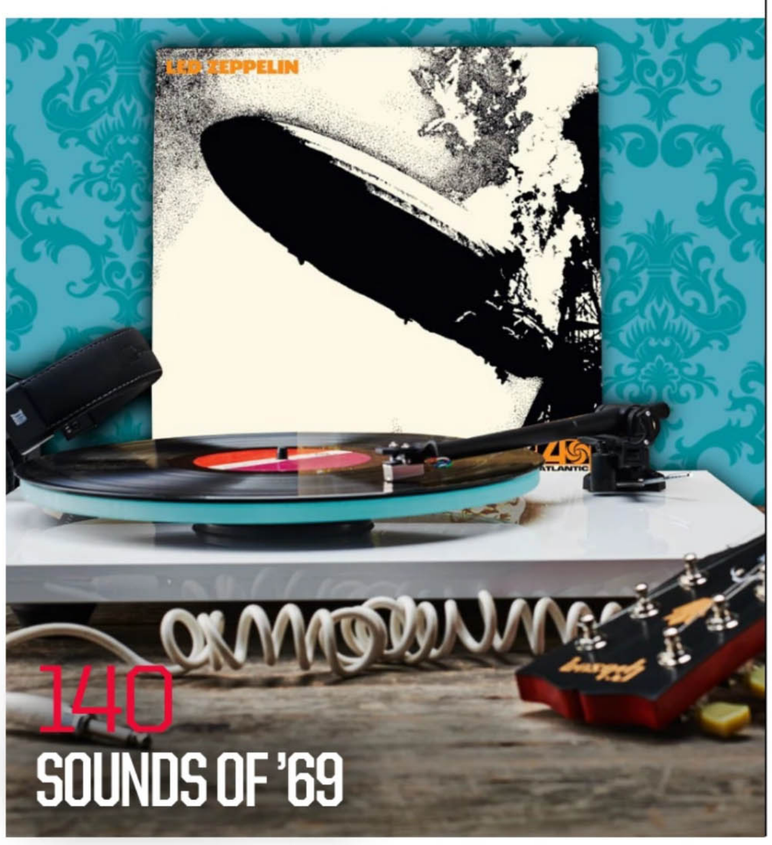

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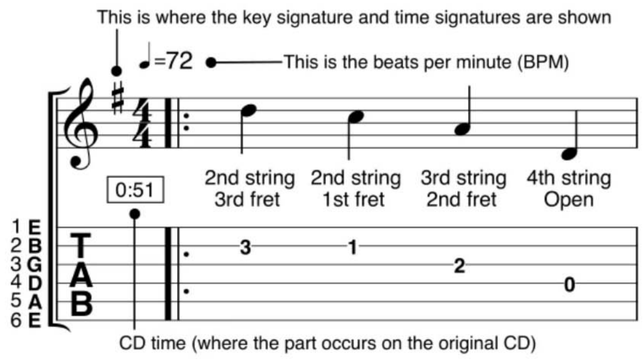
SOUNDS OF '69

TAB GUIDE

Get more from TG by understanding our easy-to-follow musical terms and signs

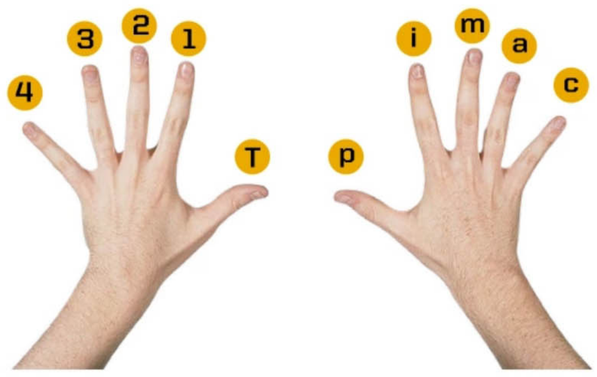
What is tab?



Tab is short for tablature, a notational system used to give detailed information as to where notes should be played on the fretboard. Tab appears underneath conventional music notation as six horizontal lines that represent the strings of the guitar, from the sixth (thick) string at the bottom to the first (thin) string at the top. On these lines, numbers represent which frets you place your fingers. For example, an A note on the 2nd fret, third string, will be shown as a number '2' on the third line down on the tab. Unfretted strings are shown with a '0'. The key and time signatures are shown in the notation. TG also includes a timestamp to tell you where in the original track you'll find each example and tempo expressed in beats per minute.

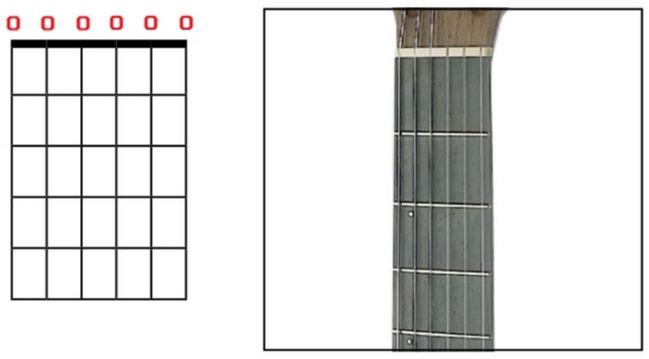
FRET BOXES: CHORDS, SCALES AND CAPO NOTATION

HAND LABELLING



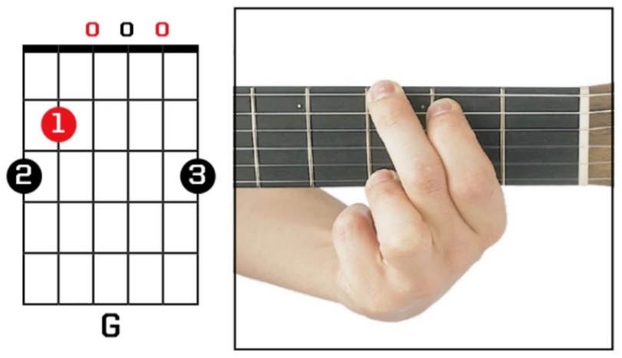
Here are the abbreviations used for each finger. Fretting hand: **1, 2, 3, 4, (T)** Picking hand: **p (thumb), i (index), m (middle), a (annular), c (little finger)**

NUT AND FRETBOARD



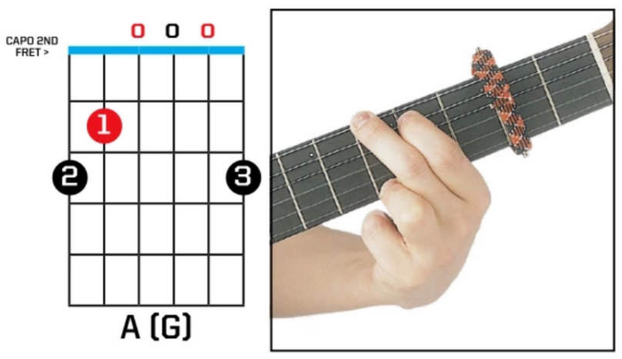
This fretbox diagram represents the guitar's fretboard exactly, as seen in the photo. This design is used for ease of visualising a fretboard scale or chord quickly.

CHORD EXAMPLE



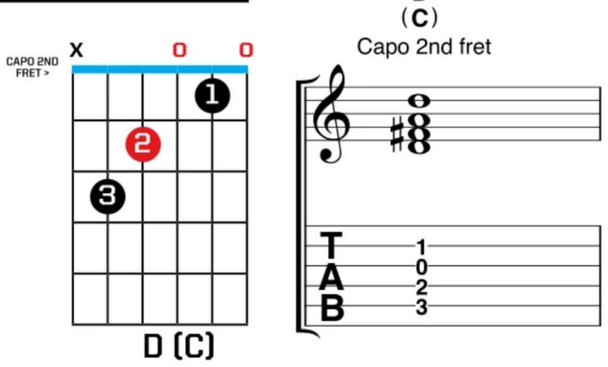
This diagram represents a G chord. The 'o's are open strings, and a circled number is a fretting hand finger. A black 'o' or circled number is the root note (here, G).

CAPO EXAMPLE



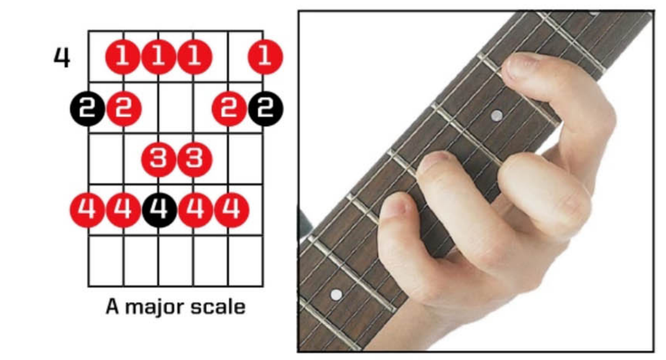
The blue line in the diagram represents a capo – for this A chord, place it at the 2nd fret. Capos change the fret number ordering. Here, the original 5th fret now becomes the 3rd fret, 7th fret now 5th fret, etc.

CAPO NOTATION



Here the chord looks like a C in the tab, but the capo on the 2nd fret raises the pitch to make it a D. The 2nd fret capo'd notes are shown with a '0' in the tab as if they were open strings.

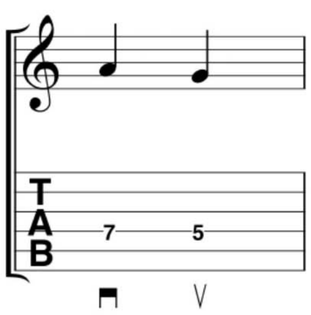
SCALE EXAMPLE



The fret box diagram illustrates the fret hand fingering for the A major scale using black dots for root notes and red dots for other scale tones. The photo shows part of the scale being played on the fourth string with the first, third and fourth fingers.

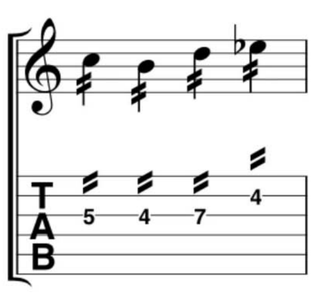
GUITAR TECHNIQUES: PICKING

DOWN AND UP-PICKING



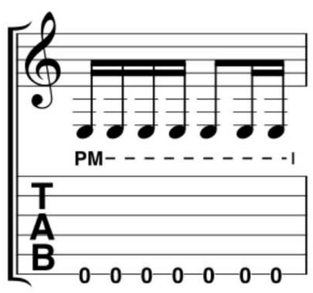
The symbols under the tab tell you the first note is to be down-picked and the second note is to be up-picked.

TREMOLO PICKING



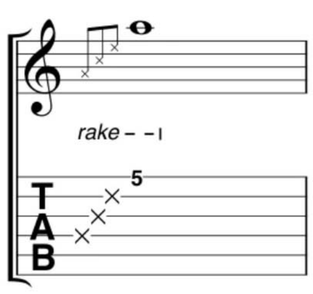
Each of the four notes are to be alternate-picked (down and up-picked) very rapidly and continuously.

PALM MUTING



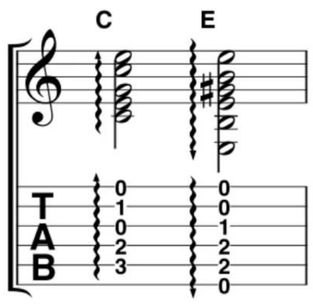
Palm-mute by resting the edge of your picking hand palm on the strings near the bridge saddles.

PICK RAKE



Drag the pick across the strings shown with a single sweep. This is often used to augment a rake's last note.

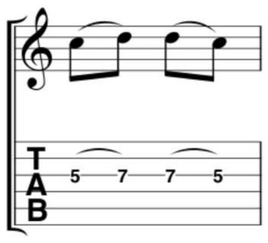
APPREGGIATED CHORD



Play the notes of the chord by strumming across the relevant strings in the direction of the arrow head.

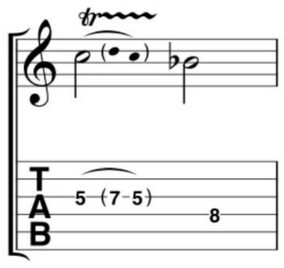
FRETTING HAND

HAMMER-ON & PULL-OFF



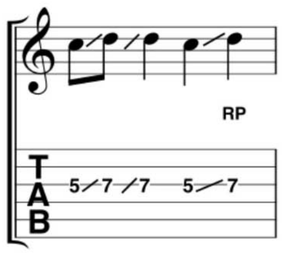
Pick the first note then hammer down on the string for the second note. Pick the third note and pull-off for the fourth note.

NOTE TRILLS



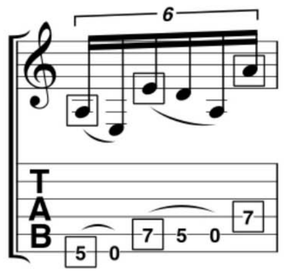
After picking the first note, rapidly alternate between the two notes shown in brackets using hammer-ons and pull-offs.

SLIDES (GLISSANDO)



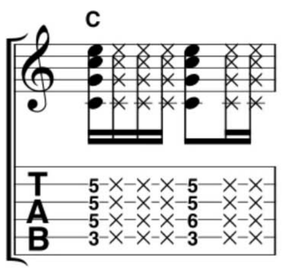
Pick the first note and then slide to the next. For the last two notes pick the first, slide to the next and then re-pick it (RP).

FRET-HAND TAPPING



Sound the notes marked with a square by hammering-on/tapping with your fret hand fingers, instead of picking.

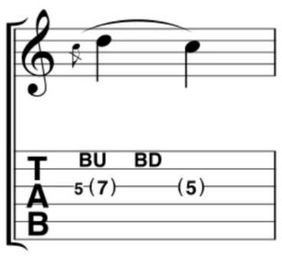
FRET-HAND MUTING



X markings represent notes and strings that are muted by your fret hand when struck by your picking hand.

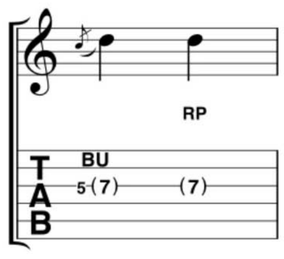
BENDING AND VIBRATO

BEND AND RELEASE



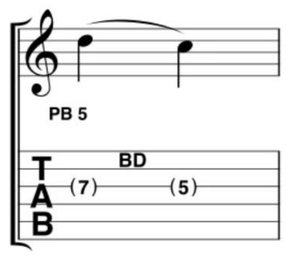
Fret the first note (here, the 5th fret) and bend up to the pitch of the bracketed note, before releasing again.

RE-PICKED BEND



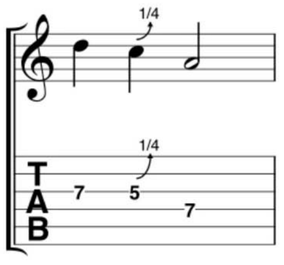
Bend up to the pitch shown in the brackets, then re-pick the note while holding the bent note at the pitch shown.

PRE-BEND



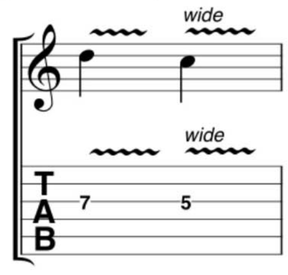
Silently bend the string up from the 5th fret (PB5) to the pitch of the 7th fret note, pick it and release to the 5th fret note.

QUARTER-TONE BEND



Pick the note then bend up a quarter-tone (a very small amount). This is sometimes referred to as a 'blues curl'.

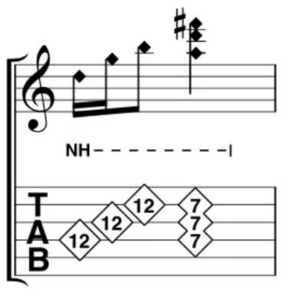
VIBRATO



Your fretting hand vibrates the string by small bend-ups and releases. Exaggerate this effect to create a 'wide' vibrato.

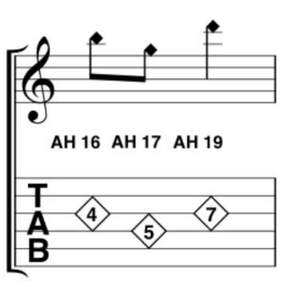
HARMONICS

NATURAL HARMONICS



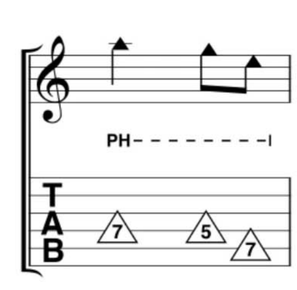
Pick the note while lightly touching the string directly over the fret indicated. A chiming harmonic results.

ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS



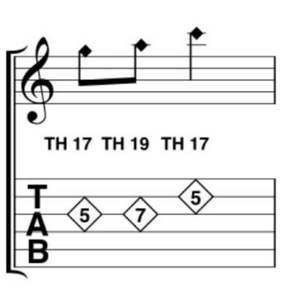
Fret the note as shown, then lightly place your index finger directly over 'x' fret (AH'x') and pick (with a pick, p or a).

PINCHED HARMONICS



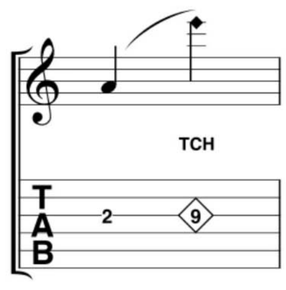
After fretting the note in the triangle, dig into the string with the side of your thumb as you sound it with the pick.

TAPPED HARMONICS



Place your finger on the note as shown, but sound it with a quick pick hand tap at the fret shown (TH17) for a harmonic.

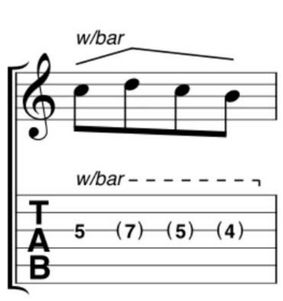
TOUCHED HARMONICS



A previously sounded note is touched above the fret marked TCH (eg, TCH 9) for it to sound a harmonic.

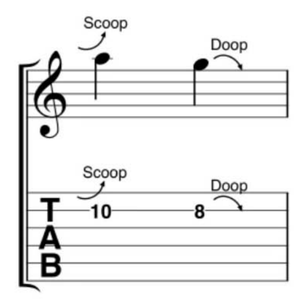
VIBRATO BAR / WHAMMY BAR

WHAMMY BAR BENDS



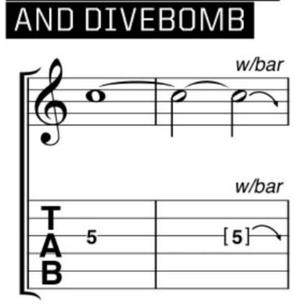
The note is picked as shown, then the vibrato bar is raised and lowered to the pitches shown in brackets.

SCOOP AND DOOP



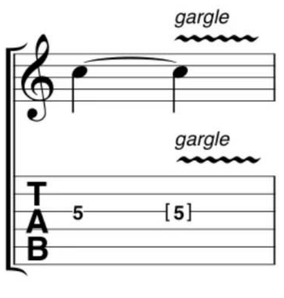
Scoop: depress the bar just before striking the note and release. Doop: lower the bar slightly after picking note.

SUSTAINED NOTE AND DIVEBOMB



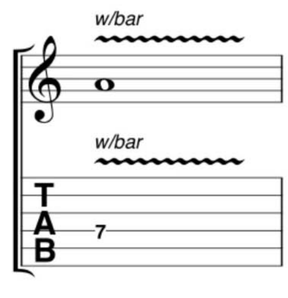
A Note is sustained then the vibrato bar is depressed to slack. The square bracket indicates a further articulation.

GARGLE



Sound the note and 'flick' the vibrato bar with your picking hand so it 'quivers'. This results in a 'gargling' sound!

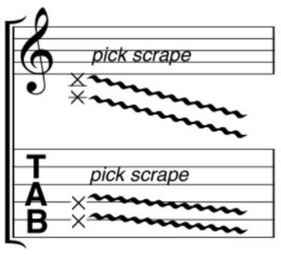
WHAMMY BAR VIBRATO



Gently rock the whammy bar to repeatedly bend the pitch up and down. This sounds similar to fret hand vibrato.

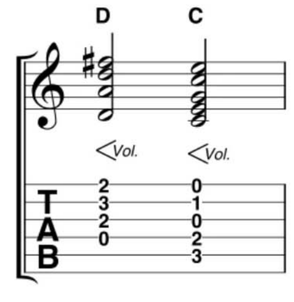
OTHERS

PICK SCRAPE



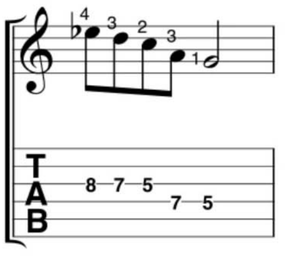
The edge of the pick is dragged either down or up along the lower strings to produce a scraped sound.

VIOLINING



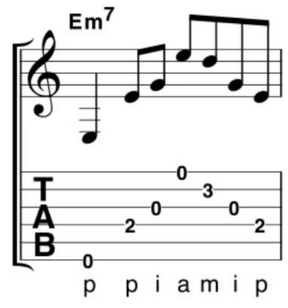
Turn the volume control down, sound the note(s) and then turn the volume up for a smooth fade in.

FINGER NUMBERING



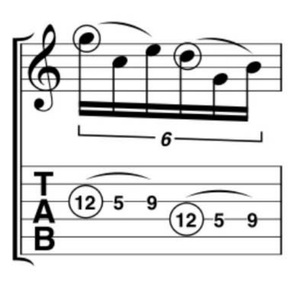
The numbers in the traditional notation refer to the fretting fingers required to play each note.

PIMA DIRECTIONS



Any kind of fingerpicking requirements are shown at the bottom of the tab notation.

PICK HAND TAPPING



Tap (hammer-on) with a finger of your picking hand onto the fret marked with a circle. Usually with 'i' or 'm'.

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WORDS
CHARLIE GRIFFITHS, CHRIS BIRD, ROB LAING

GUITARS AND BACKING
CHARLIE GRIFFITHS

PHOTOGRAPHY
OLLY CURTIS

50 WAYS TO PLAY BETTER NOW!

GET AUDIO FILES
Head over to **filesilo.co.uk/TG-Annual2020** to download your audio files

We've selected the very best ways to improve your playing – from tone to technique and recording to rhythm

When we think about improving as players, we usually think about what we're playing – and we should. But what inspires us and drives us to improve is about more than that. And it doesn't mean spending money either. It can be everything from using an old pedal in a new way, to changing your tuning or using the controls on your guitar more efficiently. And sometimes playing well is just about feeling more confident as a musician in what you're doing. There are many diverse ways to get better, and that's why we've made this monster feature of 50 carefully chosen tips and lessons digestible for you in sections.

These are all invaluable tips we've discovered and been inspired by as players on the TG team, and continue to use. From getting more out of your limited practice time to nailing great guitar tones, we guarantee you'll improve with this feature!

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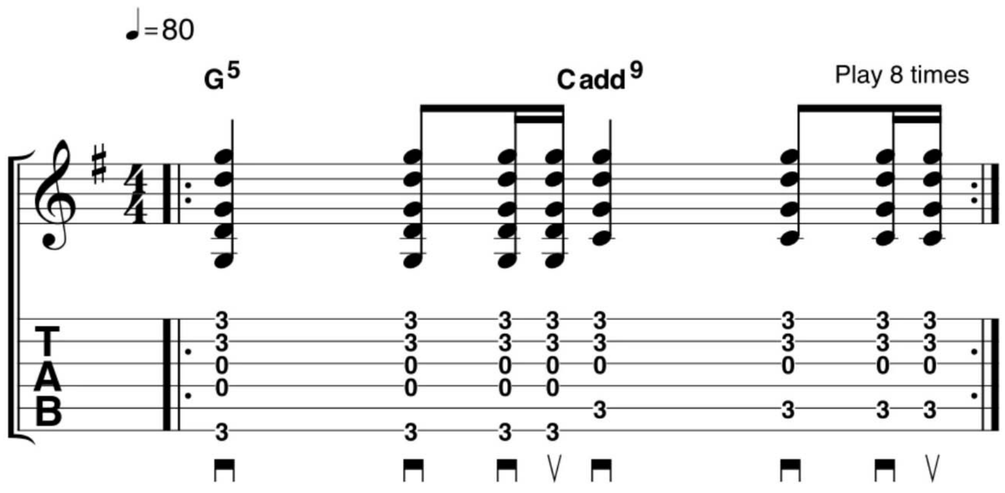
PRACTISE SMARTER NOW

Cover some essential basics before you tackle the advanced stuff and you'll see improvements in your playing fast...

Let's start with one vital tip that'll see every guitarist right: practise basic techniques every day. Sure, there's always loads of music to learn, but neglect those basics at your peril! Just a few minutes spent honing timing, chord changes, rhythm, strumming and so on will help you improve. Not convinced? Follow our exercises and focus on clean fretting and steady timing.

01 STEADY STRUMMING

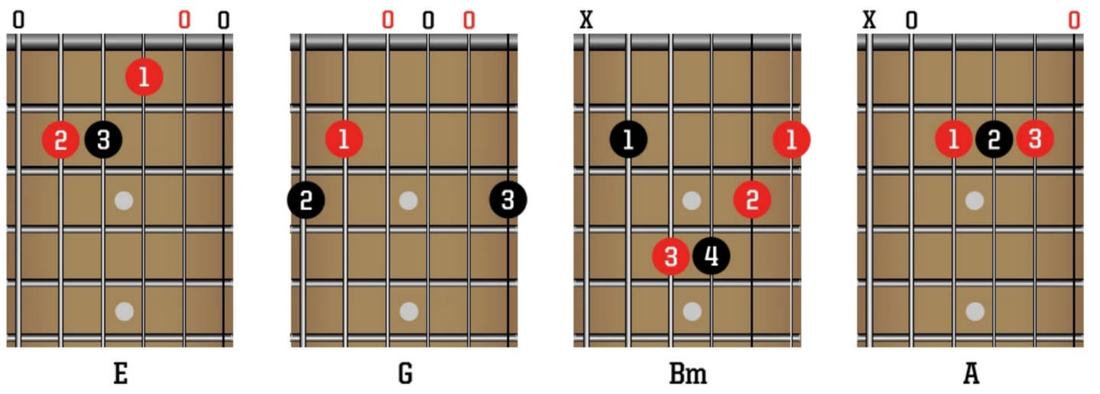
TRACK 13



For this Noel Gallagher-inspired part, strum the G5 chord with a 'down, down, down-up' motion then use the same pattern on the Cadd9. Keep your wrist loose and don't grip your pick too tightly.

02 SHARPER CHORD CHANGES

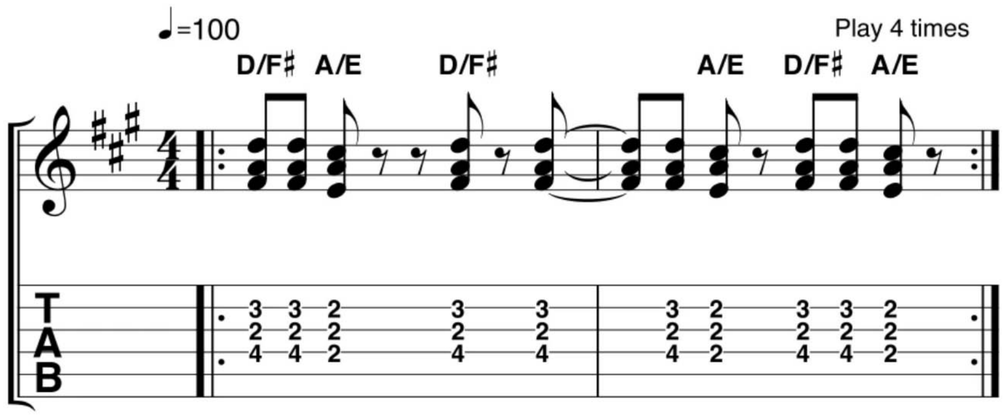
TRACK 14-15



1 Choose your chords. We'll get you started with a handful of easy open shapes and a barre chord.
2 Play the chords at a slow tempo – slow enough that you don't make any mistakes.
3 Check for fretting errors, string scuffs, muted strings and make any adjustments.
4 Now try speeding up as you change, and, for a challenge, play the chords in a different order.

03 USE DRUM LOOPS FOR BETTER TIMING

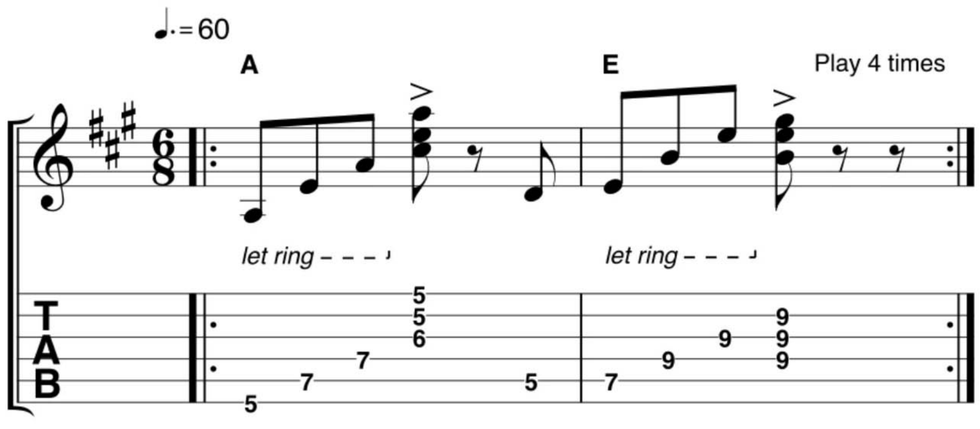
TRACK 16



Practising with a metronome or drum loop will improve your timing as you'll hear if you speed up or slow down. See if you can keep our easy Stones-style riff going to the end of the drums and bass backing music!

04 PLAY TIGHT OR PLAY LOOSE

TRACK 17



Hone the finer elements of your timing here. We've recorded this example to strict timing, so try that first. Next adopt a more relaxed, laid-back style – a technique known as playing 'after the beat'.

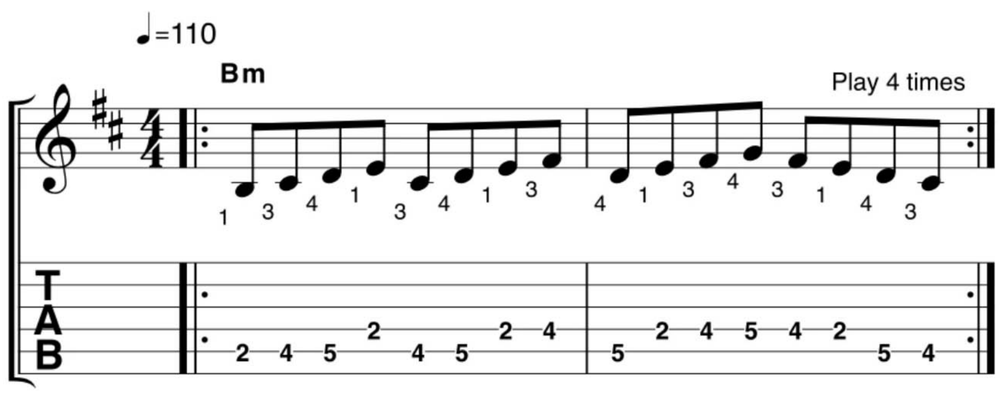
05 BUILD SPEED WITH A METRONOME

There's nothing like the unrelenting click of a metronome to help you improve timing, accuracy and playing speed. Choose any short section of music you're trying to learn and apply this process.

1 Play your riff to a super-slow metronome beat – so slow you almost can't make a mistake. If the metronome is too slow to latch on to, then set it to double time.
2 Repeat your riff a few times to get comfortable with the changes.
3 Increase the tempo in steps of four to five bpm. It's a tiny increase in speed, but each step will challenge you further.
4 As the speed gets more challenging, increase in smaller increments, say, one to two bpm.
5 Finally, drop your tempo back to your starting speed and repeat the process.

06 SCALE RUNS FOR FINGER INDEPENDENCE

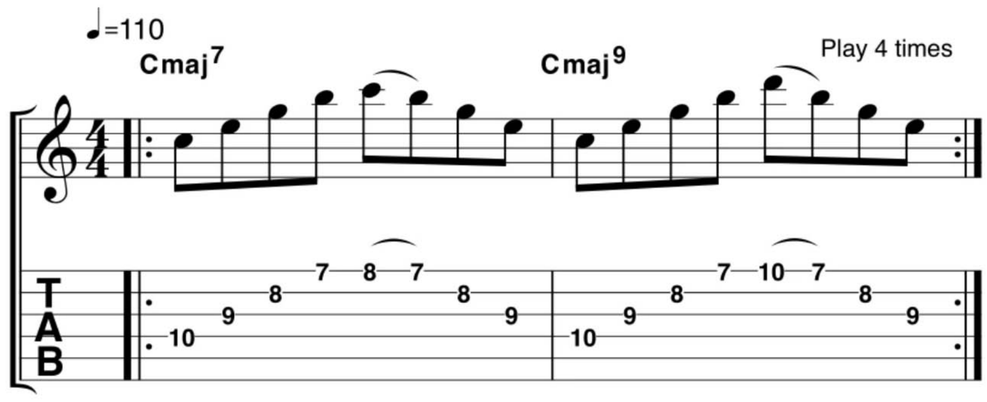
TRACK 18



It happens to everyone – you try to move a finger but it just won't go! This Muse-style riff will help you develop independence in your fretting fingers and synchronisation with your picking.

07 ARPEGGIOS AND DEXTERITY

TRACK 19



Here we're using an arpeggio to help develop finger dexterity. Try keeping the chord notes ringing first; then have a go at keeping each note separated from the last. It's tough, so practise slowly!

08 PRO TIP THE FALLON SCALES, THEORY AND JAMMING PLAN

Gaslight Anthem frontman and solo artist Brian Fallon tells us he abides by three fundamentals for getting better, and we think they're spot on…

"JustinGuitar said, 'A lot of people say practice makes perfect. It doesn't. Practice makes permanent,'" explains Brian. So you have to practise correctly or you will inherently make mistakes over and over again. And the other thing, and this is for anyone searching, what do I practise to get better? What is going to get me to the goal?"

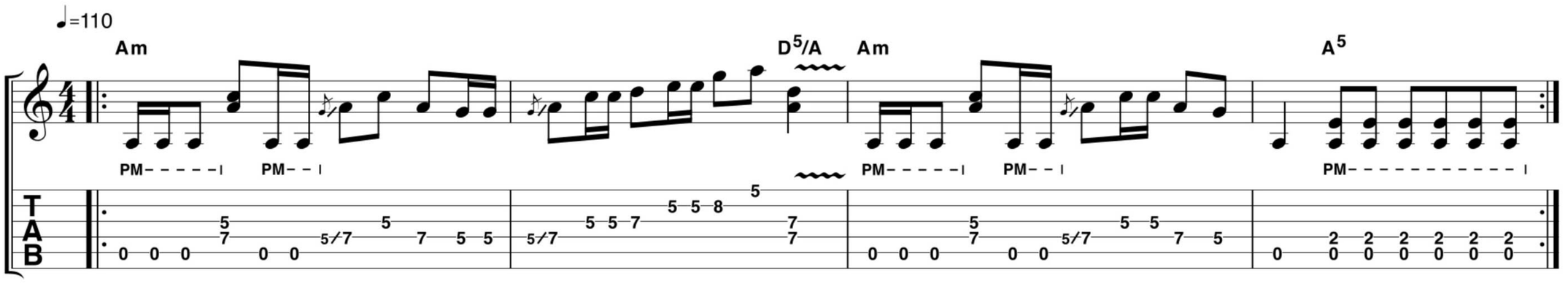
1 "You have to **learn technique**. Meaning your fingers have to move correctly and a lot of this comes from scales."

2 "You have to **learn theory** to explain why am I hitting this note at the time when this chord is being played; what is the relationship? And it's an incredibly important thing that people do not spend enough time on."

3 "The third thing is **create with complete abandon**; you must jam alone. So when you find a backing track, download that thing. It doesn't matter if you've taken one lesson or 100, just jam, because you will learn more from jamming than you will learn from anything else in a book or in a lesson. But you need diligence in those three things to progress, or you will just spin your wheels. Which I did for months and it's horrible, so listen to what I'm telling you."

09 LEARN CHALLENGING LICKS NOW!

TRACK 20



1 Bite-sized phrases: Don't try to learn this tricky lick in one go. Short one-bar phrases are easier to play and quicker to memorise.

2 Join the dots: Make sure to practise *across* the bar lines too. It's easy to neglect the all-important changes from bar to bar.

3 Get creative: Try rewriting and rephrasing the lick or using a shuffle feel. Maybe try 'reverse' picking, swapping your downs for ups!

Photo: Noam Galai/Getty

10 DIVVY UP YOUR PRACTICE TIME TO SEE RESULTS

Being realistic with your time will help you identify what to practise, whatever level you're at. Basics come first – you mustn't let those skills slip. Next up, dedicate roughly equal time to learning or writing songs – it's why you play guitar, right? Finally, a small amount of time spent pushing technical limits will help you improve. Adapt this one-hour plan according to your own goals.

1 Warmups and basic skills: 10 minutes
2 New songs and riffs: 30 minutes
3 Rhythm guitar technique workout: 10 minutes
4 Lead guitar technique workout: 10 minutes

TAKE IT DOWN
Tuning a half step down, Jimi-style, gives a heavier sound and makes the band sound bigger

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12 DROP YOUR E STRINGS

We've all heard of Drop D tuning, right? This is an interesting addition to that old favourite: Double Drop D. Simply drop your high E down to D too. It's not just a metal move, and works especially well on acoustic. Neil Young's *Cinnamon Girl*, The Doors' *The End* and Zeppelin's folky *Going To California* are three classics that utilise it and Craig Finn uses it in The Hold Steady. Indeed, dropping your high E can be good for slide blues parts.

13 USE VOLUME CONTROLS AS BOOSTS

You can control your gain without touching a pedal. Here's how…

1 Turn your guitar's volume up to full.

2 Set your amp to a usable medium to high gain tone for your playing.

3 Dial back your guitar volume and it should clean up, allowing you to dial back in gain as you need – for example, a lead break.

4 If your guitar has a volume control for each pickup (Les Paul, SG etc) you could keep two different gain levels on call by following the previous steps and dialling in different volume levels on each one.

GET MORE FROM YOUR GUITAR

Sometimes you have everything you need to play and sound better at your fingertips

11 PLAY FLAT!

Many great players have tuned a half step down – from our lord and master Jimi to SRV, Jerry Cantrell and Slash. But why? A darker and heavier sound is an obvious trait, and as a band it makes you sound *bigger*. You may find it opens up more songs as a vocalist too – making high notes easier to get to (many bands tune down as their singers get older to lower the key – Whitesnake being one). You'll need to consider whether you need to go up a gauge when you tune down as it will affect intonation. Some players may prefer the looser feel – especially for easier bends. Remember though – playing in E♭ (D#) or D (whole step down) will affect your bass player and fellow guitarists too, and your bassist may choose to transpose if it's only a couple of songs you're tuning down for.

Extra tip: Want to play in standard again? Put your capo on the 1st fret if you're half a step down or 2nd if you're a full step down.

14 GET YOUR PICKUP HEIGHT RIGHT

Your pickups are the heart of your guitar's sound, so it's vital you set their height right to get the best out of them. The closer they are to the strings, the louder they will sound. But louder doesn't necessarily mean better. For humbucker height, start by fretting the top and bottom E strings at the final fret. Using a steel rule, adjust the humbucker's height until its treble and bass sides both sit evenly 2.5mm beneath the fretted strings.

A Strat-style single coil should be adjusted to sit with the treble side slightly higher than the bass for a good

balance. Again, fret the two outer strings at the final fret, then adjust the pickups so the pole piece tops sit 2.5mm and 3.5mm from the treble and bass E strings respectively. But watch out for wolf notes – these occur when the pickup's magnetic field is too close to the string's field of movement, preventing it from vibrating naturally.

Because strings vibrate more freely near the neck than at the bridge, neck pickups sound louder for a given height. We'd advise experimenting with height settings for pairs or trios of your pickups to establish a good balance in volume when switching between them. Adjustable poles allow you to fine-tune things further.

15 PRO TIP UPGRADE YOUR PICKUPS

Before you know what you want from a new pickup, you first need to understand some fundamentals about them. Here's Bareknuckle Pickups chief Tim Mills with some essential points to remember when shopping for new pups:

Pickups are about frequencies

"You've got to remember that a pickup doesn't generate frequencies, it reproduces them very much like a microphone. I think that's a mistake a lot of people make. They tend to think that, 'I'm going to use X pickup because it's going to give me more bass'. Well, the pickup itself won't generate that, because nothing comes out of it until a string vibrates in its magnetic field. So, it's about what frequencies does that pickup listen to?"

The magnet influences the tone

"This is very important; the two most common magnets used in guitar pickups are Alnico and ceramic. They reproduce very different tones from a guitar when used in a pickup. Alnico, as a general rule, always produces a fuller, warmer tone with pronounced mid-range and sweeter highs. Ceramic, by comparison, produces a much brighter high, smoother mids and tight, fast-tracking bottom end."

Potted or unpotted?

"As a general rule, most players that use a lot of gain, and a lot of volume, will be better off with a potted coil. Anything gained by dynamic sensitivity in an unpotted coil is generally lost at that kind of volume level anyway. But for the pure tone-hounds, an unpotted pickup does give you this touch-sensitivity; it gives a more vocal tone and arguably a little bit more high-end as well."

ABOVE
Bareknuckle Pickups chief Tim Mills is a pro player who has become one of the world's most respected pickup designers

Low output pickups have their advantages

"If you overwind a pickup or use a magnet that is too strong, all the high end gets rolled off. That leaves you with a tone that is dynamically unresponsive and lacking in any sort of definition. Ultimately unusable. With a proper selection of wire gauge and magnet it is possible to get extremely high output from pickups, while retaining a good degree of clarity, although the higher in output you go, the more compressed the tone gets. A lot of people don't realise lower-powered pickups can work really well in applications usually reserved for high-output pickups."

Do pickup covers matter?

"When it comes to putting covers on pickups, the cover material will probably be of more importance than anything else. Using brass as your base material – which is an easy material to draw into a deep cover – can create a lot of extra capacitance. In other words, it knocks a lot of highs out. Change to nickel and that effect isn't anywhere near so pronounced, but it's a much harder material to draw in a tool."

Is hand-wound better?

"The bottom line is you get a better dynamic response from the coil. Most people who play a hand-wound pickup say it sounds more 'open'. It's easy to make a pickup sound brighter but to have a truly open voice it's got to be dynamically responsive – and that's what scatter-winding [intentionally irregular hand-winding of a pickup coil] does. Also, compared to a machine-wound coil, the frequency response is slightly extended. So the sound is bigger and you hear more not just in the high frequencies but also in the depths of the frequency response."

"MOST PLAYERS THAT USE A LOT OF GAIN AND VOLUME, WILL BE BETTER OFF WITH A POTTED COIL"

16 HANDLE IT WELL

If tone is in the hands we need to make sure we're getting that part right – from experimenting with different kinds of plectrums and not just sticking with the same old, to questioning the way we hold them for different applications...

1 For lead

Plectrum: This is about precision. Hold your plectrum so only the very tip is visible.

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Hand: The ideal place is to rest your hand on the bridge with the plectrum positioning to touch the string you want to play. Keeping your hand movements at a minimum is vital to reducing string noise.

2 For rhythm

Plectrum: Strumming requires a wide hand movement, as you're covering several strings on every stroke. Let more of your plectrum show for that flappier sound of pick on string.

Hand: In general, your plectrum should touch the strings halfway between the bridge and the end of your fretboard. So to add more treble to your sound, strum closer to the bridge.

17 TUNE MORE ACCURATELY

Plugging into a tuner? Use your neck pickup and roll your tone right down. You've now reduced many of the overtones that can interfere with electronic tuner accuracy and created a clearer signal.

18 EMBRACE YOUR TONE CONTROL

It's a sad fact that many of us will very rarely touch the tone controls on our guitars. But it's an instant low-pass filter to change its personality; bright to warm, thick to thin. Because sometimes guitar players need to back off, it's a quick way to reduce your treble or round out your overdriven tone. Make sure to give it a try!

19 PRO TIP USE A BIGSBY ON CHORDS

They're not just for rockabilly licks, you know! Both Pearl Jam's Stone Gossard and the late, great Chris Cornell are players who introduced them to their rhythm roles. "It ended up being something that I really, really appreciate," says Stone. "And I think the main reason why is even as you play less and as you deconstruct your parts for songs, you're hitting chords and just as it's dying out if you can give something – the chord can still speak in the part. But it doesn't have to do anything more than a little wiggle. They're a really expressive kind of tool that isn't like the divebomb tremolo either."

LEAD GUITAR
For lead, hold the plectrum so only the tip is visible and keep hand movements to a minimum

RHYTHM GUITAR
For rhythm, let more of your plectrum show and use a wider hand movement

"YOU LEARN A THING OR TWO IF YOU GO BACK TO ELECTRIC AFTER STUDYING ACOUSTIC GUITAR"

20 PRO TIP PLAY ACOUSTIC

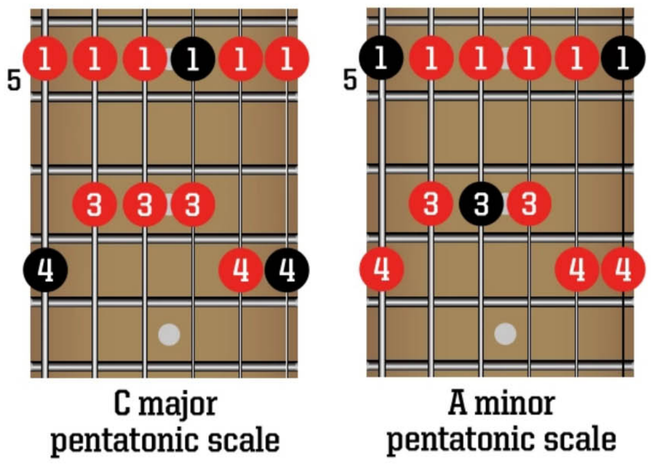
There's some clear gains to be made by an electric player picking up an acoustic regularly; you'll build finger strength that will benefit your vibrato, and it's a great way to learn to play riffs cleanly. But most of all, it's great for strumming. As Opeth's Mikael Akerfeldt says… "It's important to be able to strum properly. Give an acoustic guitar to a shredder and ask him to strum on an E major and see how it sounds. A lot of them are going to fail miserably. You need that kind of smooth, calm strumming like David Gilmour. You learn a thing or two if you go back to your electric guitar after studying acoustic guitar."

BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE

Arming yourself with a few jamming and improv tips, and getting your onstage environment organised, you can make sure you're at your best

21 ONE SHAPE, TWO SCALES, JAM WITH ANY MUSIC YOU LIKE!

TRACK 21



C major pentatonic scale | **A minor pentatonic scale**

The C major and A minor pentatonic scales are essentially the same – they just start on different root notes (black dots). Our short U2-style progression alternates between C and Am chords. Not exactly classic improv material we admit, but it shows you how one easy shape is all you need in the event of an impromptu live jam. Here are your options…

1 The easy choice: Use the A minor pentatonic scale throughout.
2 The alternative choice: Use the C major pentatonic scale throughout.
3 The logical choice: C major pentatonic scale over C; A minor pentatonic over Am.
4 The bigger picture: Both scales work over *any* chord in the key of C major or A minor, so try writing your own progression then jamming with the scale.

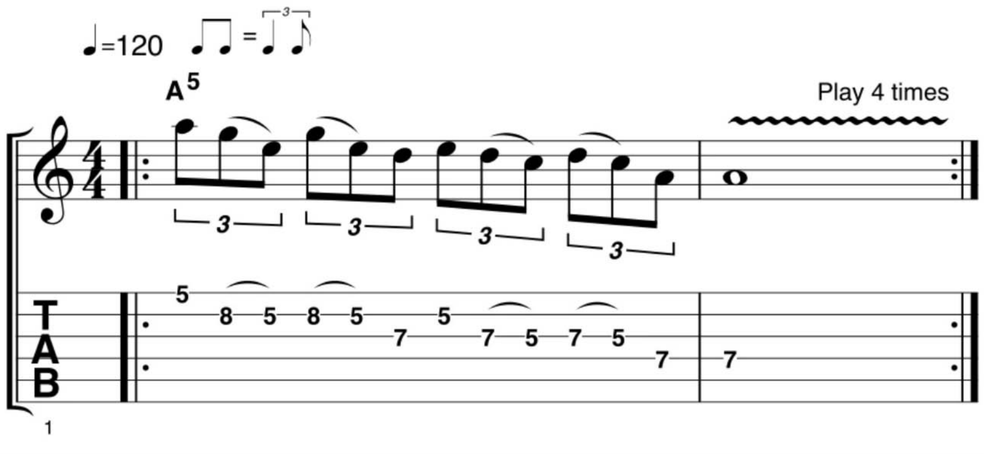
25 MAKE A CHECKLIST BEFORE YOU PLAY LIVE

It's easy to get distracted in the rush setting up before a gig, but forgetting things can affect your performance later on. Try this checklist before you play to ensure you'll have some peace of mind up on the stage…

1 Tune your guitar and the backup guitar.
2 Double-check your amp settings but don't change your volume from soundcheck (it's already set).
3 Make sure none of your pedal patch cables have become disconnected. Check your pedal knobs.
4 Can everyone who's playing see a setlist?
5 Keep a spare plectrum handy in case you lose one.
6 Make sure you have water before you play to stay hydrated, especially if you're singing too.

22 JAM FOR LONGER WITH PENTATONIC SEQUENCES

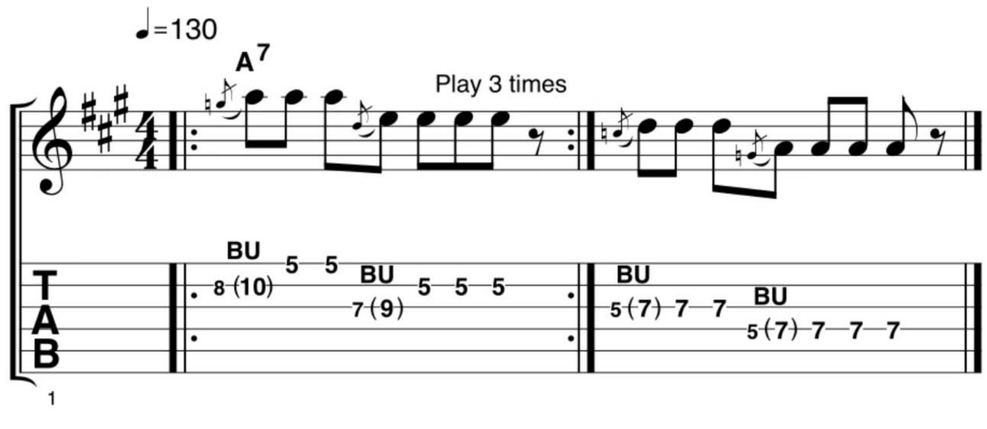
TRACK 22



Ever felt like you ran out of ideas too soon? This Angus Young/Jimmy Page-style lick uses short, repeating phrases to keep the minor pentatonic goodness going for longer. Milk it for all it's worth!

23 REPEAT-PEAT-PEATING IS GOOD

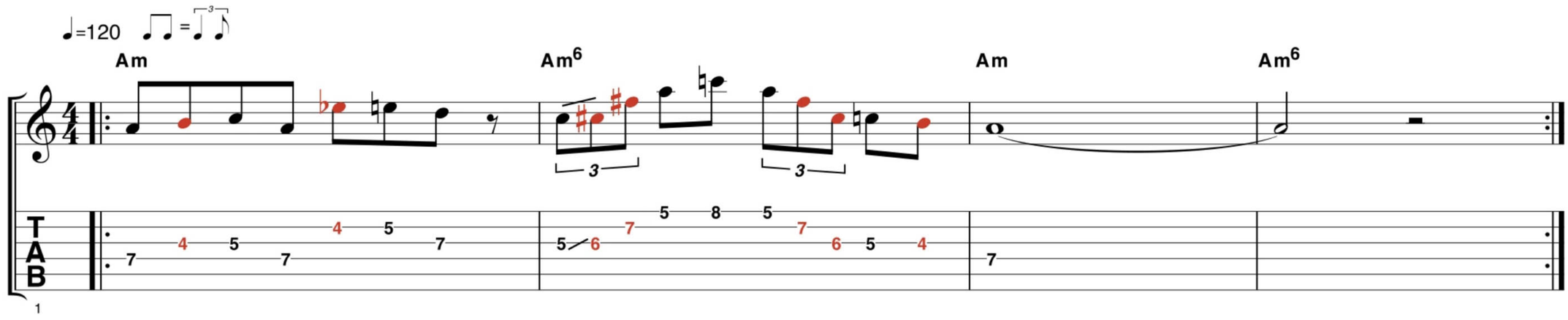
TRACK 23



Repeating licks isn't a bad thing. In fact it's a vital part of music, keeping listeners latched on and listening for longer. This Beatles-y rock 'n' roll lick will help you get more from pentatonics.

24 PENTATONICS FOR JAZZ

TRACK 24



Jazz often ventures outside familiar pentatonic scales but take a close look here. The black notes are from the A minor pentatonic scale – a handy framework to build on. The red 'non-pentatonic' notes use the jazz trick of only going one fret away from a scale note. Improvise with a pentatonic scale, then throw in a few one-fret shifts. Instant jazz!

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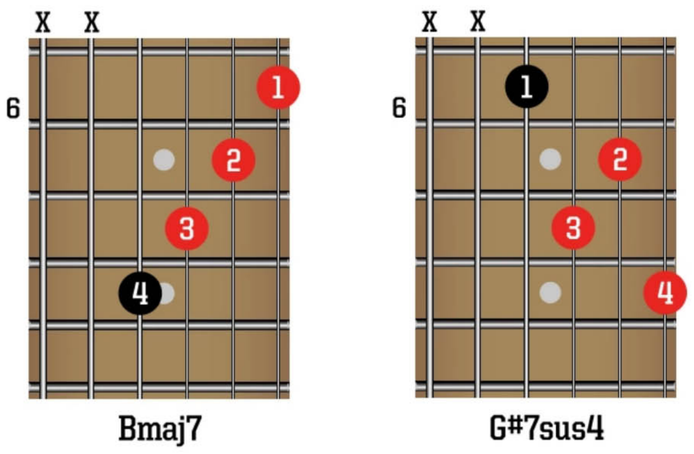
REVITALISE YOUR RHYTHM

Get some essential chord shapes and changes down, then take your timing to the next level with our 16th note strumming exercises

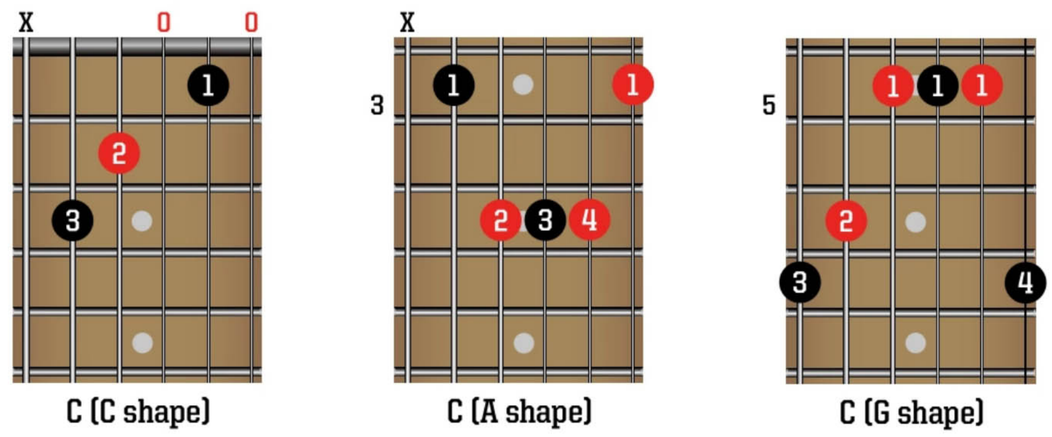
26 PRACTISE TRICKY CHANGES

TRACK 25

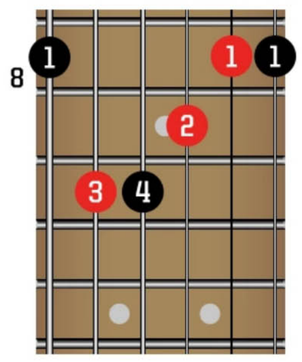


Before you even think about your strumming hand, take a moment to check you've got any tricky chords or changes down. Remember this for any rhythm part you play. And, if you're in the mood for a finger-twisting challenge, try cycling through these four shapes to see improvements right away. Don't worry about the complicated names. Just play the chords.

27 FIVE CHORDS TO CROSS THE FRETBOARD

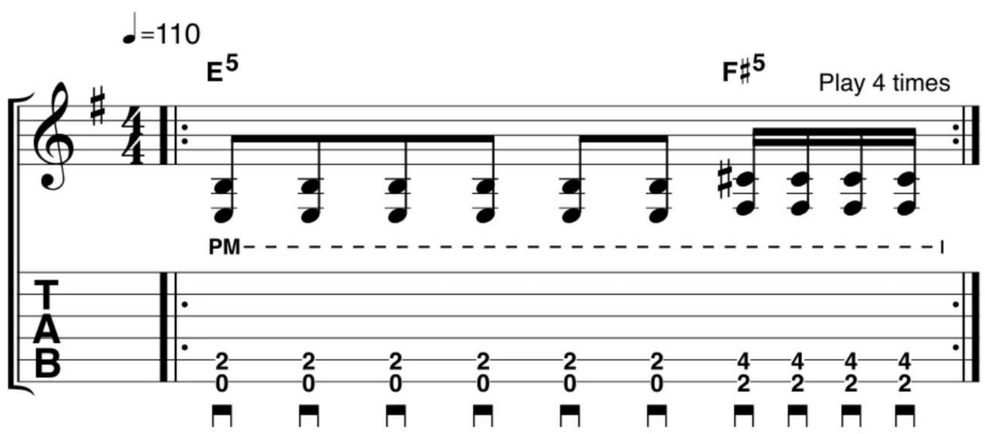


Yep, we're still talking about chords! These five shapes will help you traverse the whole fretboard with your riffs and rhythms – the secret lies in how they link up. Each chord shares at least one note with its predecessor. So what? Well, armed with five shapes of the same chord, you can start to think of ways to transfer your ideas from shape to shape, unlocking new creative ideas in the process.

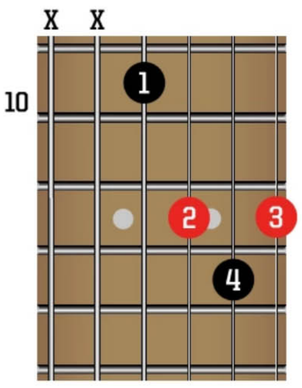


28 BUILD SPEED AND STAMINA WITH DOWNPICKING

TRACK 26



This thrash metal-style riff starts slow, like a jog, before doubling speed with a quick sprint finish. This short burst of speed should be manageable without tensing up and is something to build upon with longer 'speed sprints' over time.

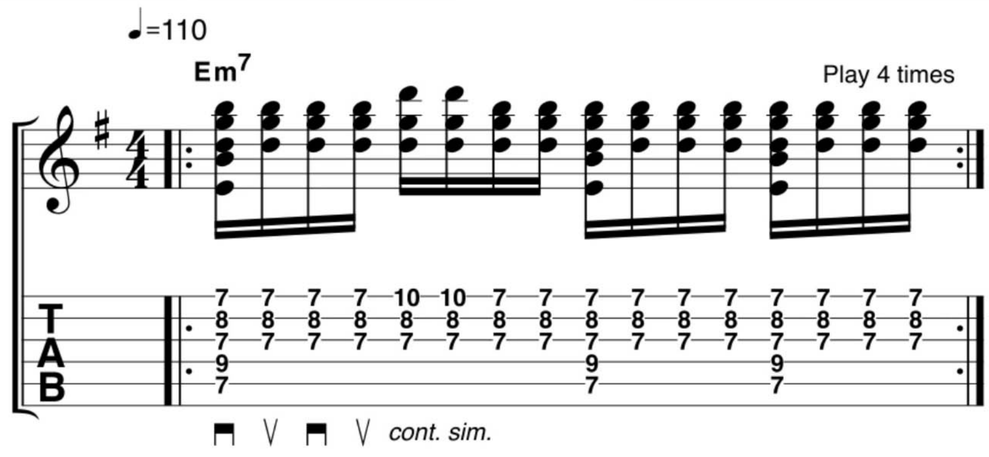


GIMME FIVE

Use these five chord shapes to cross the whole fretboard

29 FEEL THE DOWNBEAT AND BUILD A GROOVE

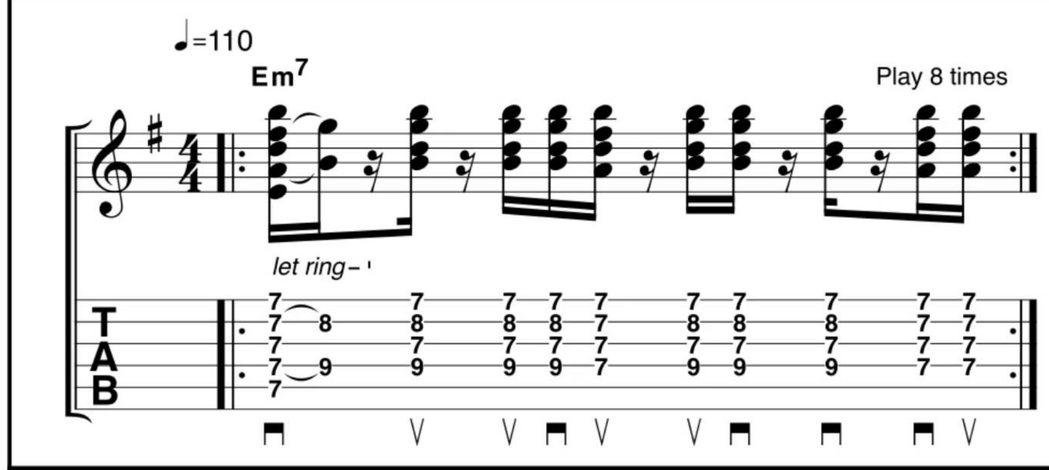
TRACK 27



This Nile Rodgers-style rhythm is played using constant 16th notes. Emphasise beats 1, 2, 3 and 4 with a heavier downstroke to lock in with the backbeat and play the other pick strokes more gently.

30 DEVELOP YOUR TIMING WITH SYNCOPATED 16THS

TRACK 28



Another funk/disco riff, this rhythm includes space for a more creative sound. For perfect timing, use constant down- and upstrokes, strumming slightly away from the strings on the rests.

PEDAL POWER-UP

Getting more from your pedals can inspire great things – and it doesn't mean spending boutique money

31 IMPROVE YOUR LOW VOLUME TONE

Two pedals can help simulate a valve amp turned up, but at low volumes. A clean boost and compressor can both enhance your dynamics, especially when practising at low volumes in the home. The boost will push the front end of your amp a little harder. The compressor can reduce the front attack of your notes while sustaining their decay, giving you a great base for blues rock especially.

32 PRO TIP MAKE YOUR SOLOS HEARD

When you want to cut through the mix with your solo, stomping on a higher gain pedal isn't necessarily the answer. Indeed, the more gain you add, the less headroom you'll have because you're compressing more and the audience won't hear you as clearly. Again, the good old clean boost or an EQ pedal might be your friend here for enhancing what you already have; cut the bass level a little and up the mid and treble. Stereophonics guitarist Adam Zindani subscribes to these principles live. "With my Orange [amp] I use the [Boss] EQ a lot," he tells us, "because it just lifts the volume. What you find with overdrives, or what I've found, is until you get things like the Klon, they take away from the actual sound and you lose the bottom end. An EQ pedal lifts the whole sound."

DRIVING SCHOOL
When using overdrive, you need to balance the relationship between your gain and mid frequencies

33 AVOID 'TONE SUCK'

If you've got a larger than average pedalboard the issue of signal quality loss through long cable-runs via multiple pedals comes into play. This is the dreaded 'tone suck'. You can lose high end and general fidelity when using long cable-runs as a result of capacitance. While buffered pedals can help deal with the losses (capacitance), some pedals that are buffered when in a bypassed state can be tone suckers themselves because their buffers colour the tone. Even worse are pedals without true bypass. So tone sucking is really an issue when pedals are switched off, and using a true-bypass loop or loop switcher keeps them out of your signal chain when you're not using it. Using true bypass pedals and shorter cable runs also helps minimise tone sucking.

34 PRO TIP DIAL IN YOUR AMP FOR GIGS

Ever got your sound just the way you want it at home, only for it to seem completely different when you get to a gig? "You need to EQ your amp and your rig to that particular environment," Adrian Thorpe of Thorpy FX explains. "Typically, if you're running louder – usually the case at rehearsals or gigs – you'll need

A CLEAN BOOST AND COMPRESSOR CAN BOTH ENHANCE DYNAMICS

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to lower your treble and upper mids as well, just to make sure your tone is not a scythe that cuts through the audience. Treble and mids can get harsh at higher volumes, which is to do with Fletcher-Munson curves and how your ear perceives certain frequencies at certain decibel levels. At higher volumes, your speaker is in its optimum zone as well: it is just pumping out the decibels and working at its most efficient, so it's able to beam sound outwards very effectively. "So if you're running an amplifier really, really loud," adds Adrian, "firstly I would suggest you get someone in the band to go and stand where the punters are going to stand while you do a soundcheck. If you don't get your EQ right at proper gig volume, with someone you trust standing where the audience will stand to help you dial it in, all that top end is going to cut the audience's heads off."

35 GET HEAVY BUT NOT LOST

A hi-gain sound chops off the very top and the very bottom of the signal – compressing it. That's automatically limiting how much you'll be heard, especially if you're making the old metal move of scooping your mids. So there are two factors at play; compression and EQ. You need to consider balancing them with any quest for heaviness and the fact is, you really need some of those mids in the mix. Because the guitar is a mid-heavy instrument, after all. If you do insist on scooping them (and yeah, we've all been tempted) consider dialling back the gain a bit and compensating some of that mid level you're lacking from the pedal, with the amp.

36 PRO TIP TAME THE GAIN

"Just dialling back on the gain a little can make you sound much better," says Daniel Steinhardt of The GigRig and That Pedal Show. "There are times, for sure, when loads of gain is really appropriate – like with fuzz. But you spend all this money on a good guitar, a good amp… and sometimes, if you use a generous amount of gain, you can't even hear the sound of the guitar itself. So sometimes just dialling back on that a hair lets you hear some of the characteristics of the guitar come through. And you might find when you turn the gain down you have to work a little bit harder – once you've found that beautiful sound, you may have to work harder to get it to come through than if you had endless gain and sustain. But that can actually be a real gift, making you more thoughtful about your note choices, dynamics and all the rest of it."

37 PRO TIP INVEST IN A QUALITY POWER SUPPLY

Who wants to spend their hard-earned cash on a power supply instead of a new pedal? Well, it could be the wisest investment you've made for your 'board according to one of the most respected effects builders around right now… It's vital to use a quality power supply," says JHS Pedals' Josh Scott. "Invest in a good, clean power supply, like a Voodoo Lab Pedal Power, or one of the new Strymon power supplies. The sound of your drive pedals, particularly, will be much more consistent."

ABOVE LEFT
Daniel Steinhardt recommends dialling back the gain a little to let the guitar's character come through more

38 PRO TIP DON'T ALWAYS PLAY ON 10

We've already talked about the potential at your fingertips with your guitar's volume and tone controls. Keeley Effects' Robert Keeley believes the advantages apply to pedals too: "I've noticed that guitars don't always sound their best with the volume and tone all the way up. If you give certain pedals a little less signal they do something different. It doesn't work in every case – for example, with compressors, generally – but the tone can be dramatically different. Listen with your eyes closed and use your ears!"

COCK O' THE WALK
Get your wah in a sweet spot for mid goodness

39 USE A COMPRESSOR

This unsung effect has plenty of uses. Place it at the start of your pedal chain to tame peaks, while giving you a volume boost. It can smooth and fatten overdrive response. Or, put a compressor on at the end of your chain and it can give you a more consistent signal level as you switch different pedals in and out.

40 COCK YOUR WAH

Fixing your wah in a sweet spot of midrange frequency (sweep slowly and you'll know when you find it) is a great tone for solos – and the late Mick Ronson made great use of it in his work with David Bowie (hear the solo on *Moonage Daydream*). And fixing it toe-down makes for a low-fi intro or breakdown tone.

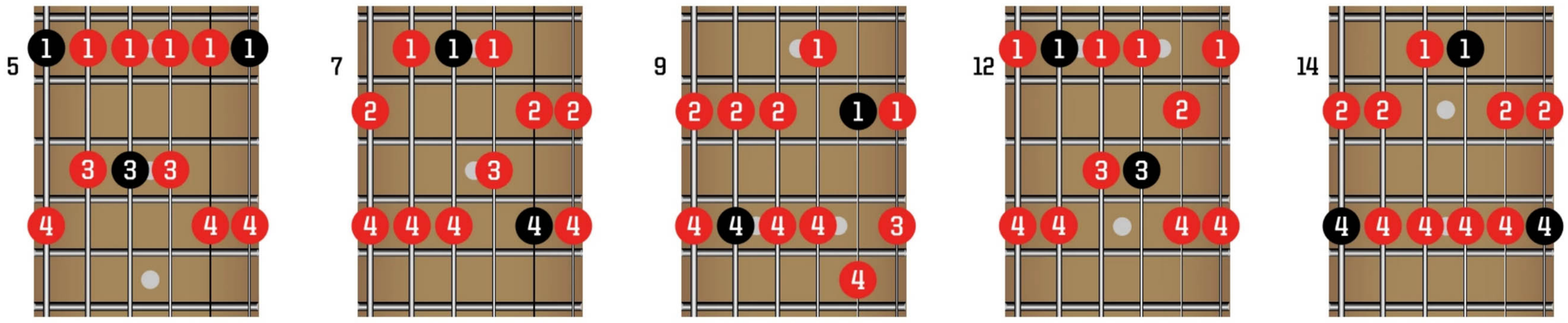
"CERTAIN PEDALS WITH LESS SIGNAL DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT"

SUPERCHARGE YOUR SOLOS

Start with some scale basics then think outside of the boxes with our creative tips, tricks and lessons

41 LEARN PENTATONICS ACROSS THE FRETBOARD

TRACK 25

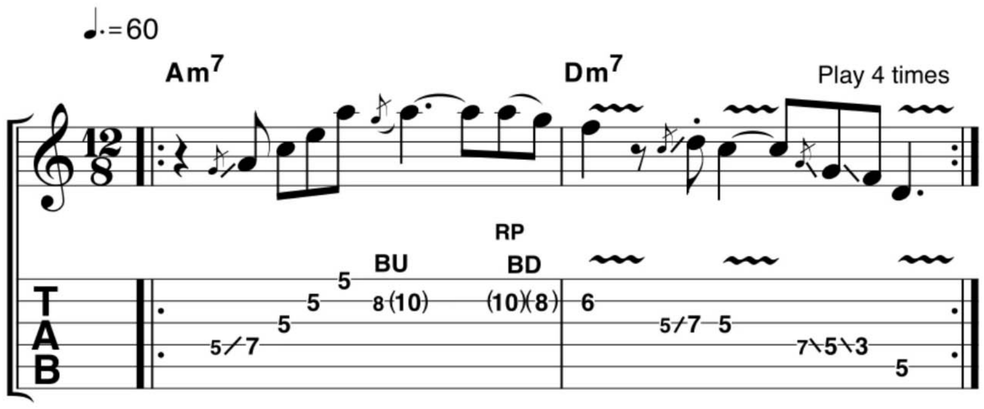


A minor pentatonic scale (shape 1) | A minor pentatonic scale (shape 2) | A minor pentatonic scale (shape 3) | A minor pentatonic scale (shape 4) | A minor pentatonic scale (shape 5)

Many guitarists get a bit hazy when venturing outside the minor pentatonic scale. Take your soloing to the next level by learning these five shapes. They're all the same scale but each shape starts on a different note. You'll be racing around the whole fretboard in no time.

42 TARGET CHORD TONES FOR SLICKER MELODIES

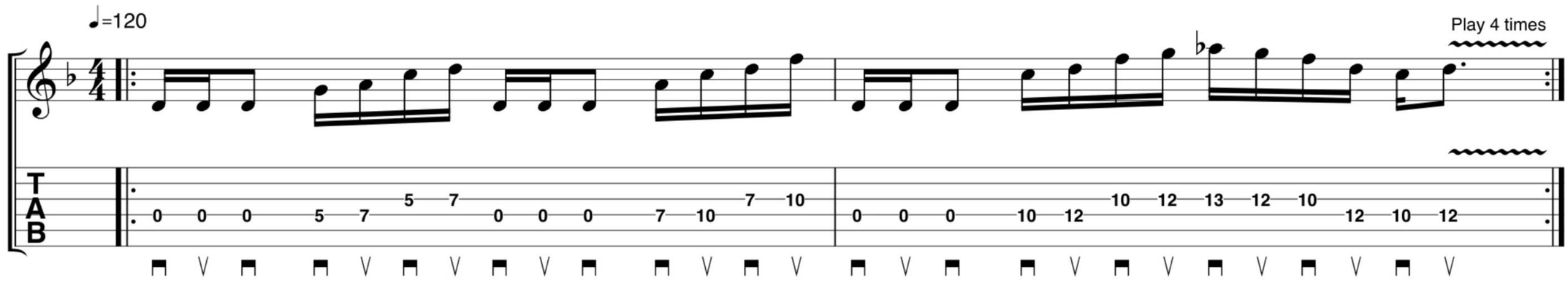
TRACK 29



This blues idea is played over Am7 and Dm7. In theory, the A minor pentatonic scale is fine over both chords, but spell out the change by playing a different scale for each chord. Use A minor pentatonic over Am7 and D minor pentatonic over Dm7.

43 SYNC YOUR PICKING TO THE MUSIC

TRACK 30



This is both a timing tip and a way to streamline your soloing and riffing. Using 'down up' style alternate picking helps you to sync your playing to the rhythm of the music. Think of it a bit like strumming, but with single notes. Just make sure to play downstrokes on the main musical pulse and the ups should fall naturally into place.

Photo: Daniel Knighton/Getty

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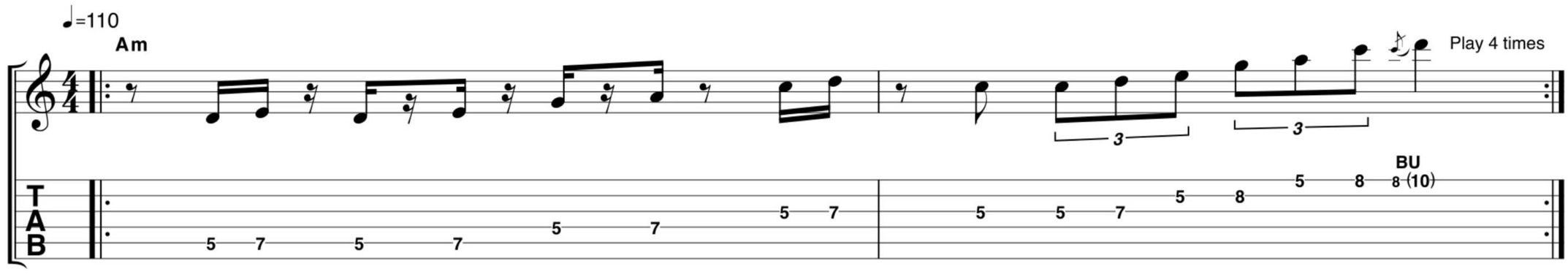
44 PLAY RHYTHMICALLY

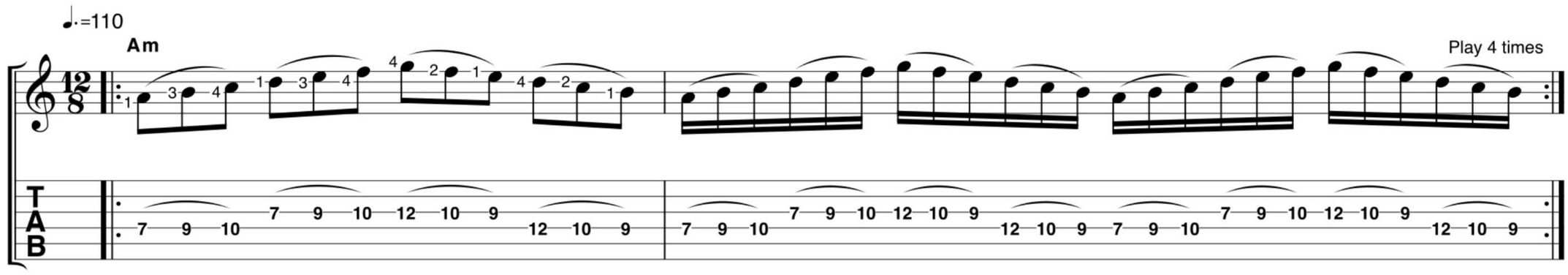
TRACK 31



One of the most important factors for creating cool solos is to think rhythmically before adding notes. This John Frusciante-style lick uses lots of funky 16th note syncopation in bar 1 before switching to a triplet feel in bar 2. Practise the lick on a one-note rhythm, getting comfortable with the feel before introducing the notes.

45 BUILD SPEED WITH LEGATO

TRACK 32



Training your fretting fingers to play fluent hammer-ons and pull-offs is a great way to build swift, slick leads. For this Joe Satriani-style lick, hammer on with your first, third and fourth fingers for the first six notes; pull off with your fourth, second and first fingers on the next six notes. Practise slowly and focus on accuracy and clean finger tone.

Photo: Chris McKay/Getty

46 PRO TIP
PAN YOUR PARTS

You don't have to use different guitars for rhythms, overdubs or leads, but consider how your tones can be panned and separated in the mix. That could mean a different pickup position, amp model or overdrive pedal. Even veteran players have to consider it when they find themselves as the only guitar player in the studio – as Slash did with his *World On Fire* album with Myles Kennedy & The Conspirators… "I really wanted to go in and do a proper recording where you have harmonies and rhythms maintained throughout and the guitars go on the top," Slash tells us. "Like pretty much every record I've done, up to *Apocalyptic Love*. What I did was I treated the speaker right guitar as my tone, and the solos in the middle. But for the speaker left guitar I used different guitars and different amps, just so it didn't sound like one thing. I had a few different Marshall combos that I used for my sound and for that side I used different combos that could be anything from a HiWatt to a Mesa/Boogie to an Orange, then maybe a Marshall combined with those."

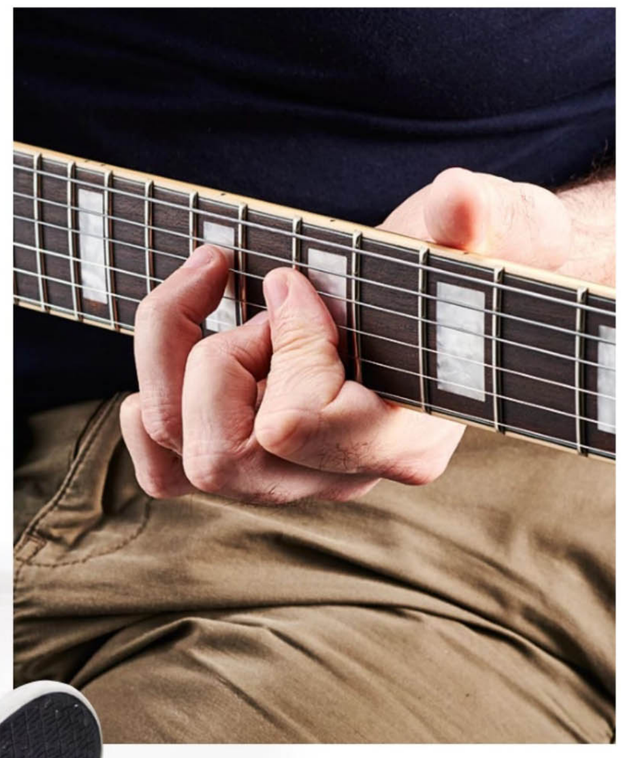
RECORDING HACKS

Sound better, play better, track better – check out these simple tips for your next session

47 PRO TIP USE DELAY FOR GIRTH

Dialling in a short slapback echo can give your leads more thickness and also inspire you. Iron Maiden's Dave Murray always uses it in his monitor mix when recording for that reason. "It's nice to have a bit of delay," he tells us, "because in the studio it can be really dry and you want to feel you are in a live situation where you have that hall echo that you can play off." Rock and metal producer Romesh Dodangoda is a firm fan on delay for his recordings: "With lead guitars, delay units can be your friend in getting things to sit on the edge of the speakers," he says. "Try a 1/4 on the left and 1/8 on the right, for a starting point. The different delay times on the left and right will create the illusion that the guitar is wider. I use this quite a lot for interesting rhythm effects in stereo. Putting the delay in the effects loop or after the mic will give you a cleaner sounding delay, which may sound wider than using a delay straight into the input of the amp. The sound of the delay will be different depending on where you put it in the chain so experiment and see where it sounds bigger to you."

ABOVE
As the only guitarist on the *World On Fire* album, Slash panned the tones of one guitar, as well as bringing in different guitars and amps



48 TRY CHORD INVERSIONS

There are different ways to play the same notes on the guitar and you can use that to your advantage when recording. If you have a chord progression, try it in two different ways (eg open chords and bar chords). You can then pan the two approaches to add width to the guitar. This is all something to consider before you even think about your guitar tones, because specific voicings will just sound better for certain parts. Sit down with an acoustic and test them out.

49 UNDERSTAND MIC PLACEMENT

Positioning One Mic

Positioning your mic close to the speaker is the easiest and most convenient way of recording your guitar. A dynamic mic will handle the high SPL of your cab, so you can place it as close as you can physically get it. Start in the centre of the speaker cone, and move it towards the edge of the speaker.

The brightest tone is found dead-centre of the speaker – right on the dust cap. As you move the microphone to the edge of the speaker, you'll find the sound gets progressively darker.

The Effect Of Distance

Distance will also play a key role in your resulting tone – placing the mic very close to the speaker will capture the amp's sound in detail, with a lot of attack and definition. With this type of

"A BIT OF DELAY IS NICE – IN THE STUDIO IT CAN BE REALLY DRY"

PASS THE MIC
The distance of the mic from the speaker plays a key role in the resulting tone of your recording

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setup you're recording the sound of the speaker, with hardly any room sound. The further you move the microphone away from the speaker, the more you'll capture the room reflections, adding ambience and depth to your sound.

Ambient Mic'ing

For some styles of music – or just personal taste – you may prefer to capture the sound of your amp in a more natural, ambient way. Ambient mic'ing will capture more of the sound reflections in the room, as well as the amp, and can really help your guitar to sit in the mix well later. Because you'll be placing the mic further from the source, we'd recommend using a condenser mic; the extra sensitivity and frequency response will keep your sound full, even at a longer distance.

Start with your microphone about a foot (30cm) away from the grille. As with close mic'ing, the tonality of your captured sound will change, depending on which part of the speaker you aim the mic at – however bear in mind that this effect will be lessened the further you get from the speaker.

The rule here is simple: move it further from the amp to record a more distant, roomier sound, and closer to the amp to capture less ambience.

LEFT
Producer / guitarist / cape fan Adam D finds that if he backs off the mic about six inches he gets a more balanced EQ curve

PRO TIP ADAM D KILLSWITCH ENGAGE

"I personally have the best luck – or at least I think so – when I back the mic off a little bit. I know a lot of engineers throw it right on the grille to get the bass boost, the proximity effect and all that garbage, but I find that if I back it up about six inches, I get a more balanced EQ curve."

AMBIENT MIC'ING CAN HELP YOUR GUITAR TO SIT IN THE MIX LATER

50 PRO TIP BALANCE IMPROVISATION WITH PLANNING

Nobody likes to enter a recording situation completely unprepared, but there's also a lot to be said about what you can create 'in the moment' when you're playing. Europe's John Norum tells us how he blends both elements in the studio…

"I usually like to work out something ahead of time with a nice melody. I can usually get some ideas from the vocal and the melody with that – and maybe incorporate some of it into the solo. But if it's uptempo I usually just go for it and see how it comes out. Hopefully I can get it on the first or second take. I don't usually do more than five; I'll stop because you can lose that intensity and it starts going downhill. That's what I've noticed with myself. After five if I can't find anything that's good I'll just erase it and start all over again. It's about 50/50 with improvisation – that spontaneity makes it fun and I want to surprise myself too. I don't like to have everything planned ahead of time, it gets kind of boring."

CELEBRATE THE GREATEST ROCK BAND OF ALL TIME

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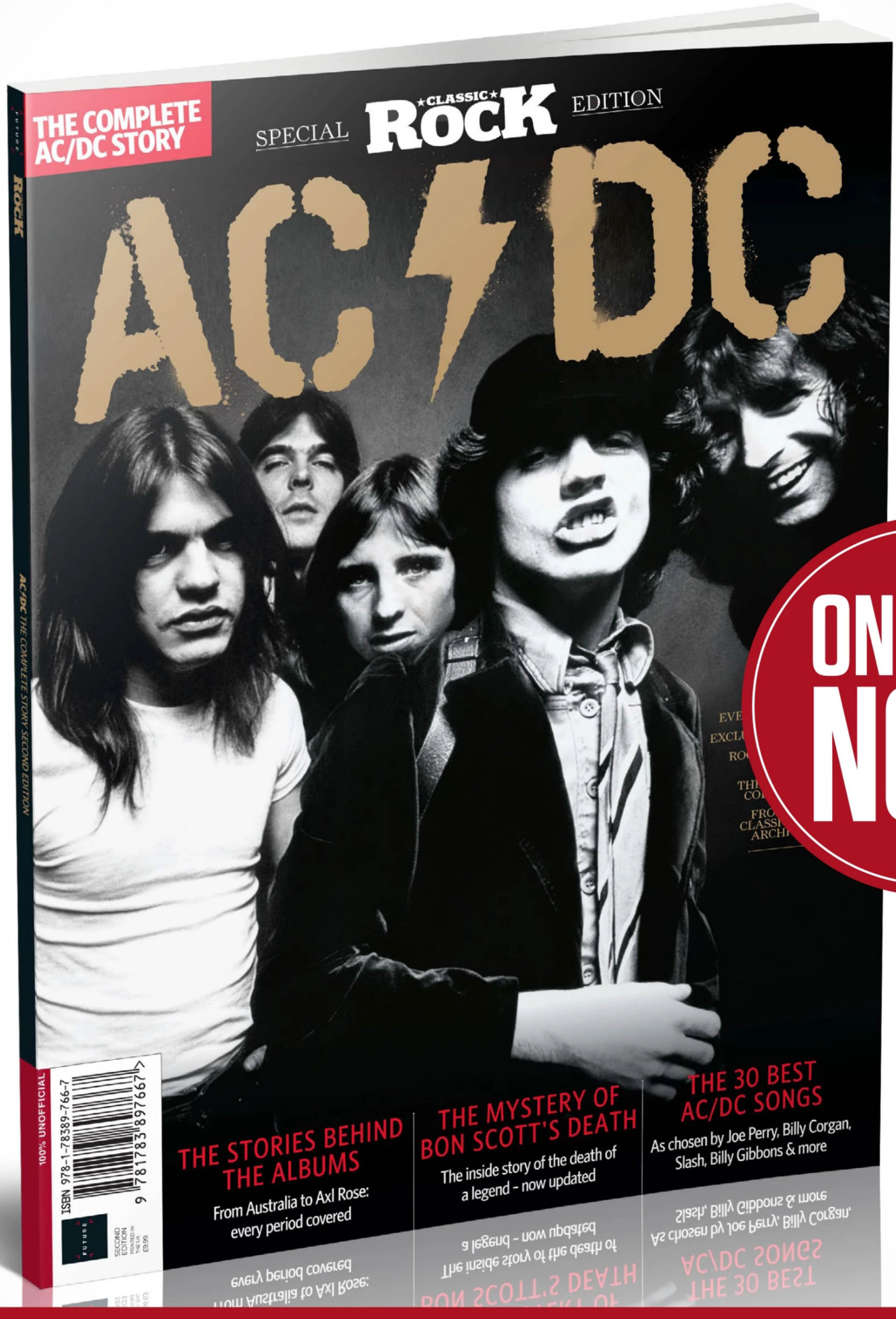

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GETTING STARTED WITH...

OPEN G TUNING

Here we take a look at the chord-based tuning known as open G

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ How to retune your guitar to open G
- ✔ A handful of easy chord shapes
- ✔ Riffs in the style of famous rock bands

"Retuning our guitars sounds complicated!"
If you've never changed the tuning on your guitar then, yes, there's a bit of a mental leap to make. Once you've retuned though, hopefully you'll be inspired by the new chord shapes at your disposal. We're looking at open G here.

"Okay. What does G refer to and what does it mean when you say it's open?"
Hopefully you've played a G chord before. Well, in this tuning, when you strum the 'open' strings you get a G chord. 'Open' just means you don't fret any notes to get the G chord.

"But why tune my guitar to *always* be a G?"
Well it doesn't stay as a G when you play. You still play notes all over the fretboard just as you would in standard tuning. But in any altered tuning the gaps between the open strings is different – not the physical gaps, obviously; we mean the relationships between the notes. Open G sounds nice and it's fun to play in.

"I get it. How do I go about retuning then?"
Have a look at the boxout on the right. Retuning is a relatively simple process and it's made much easier if you use a tuner. Hardware tuners are very affordable – any multi-fx pedal will include one – and there are loads of free tuner apps available for smartphones.

"So I simply adjust the open strings until they reach the new notes, right?"
Exactly. For example, slacken off the sixth string with its machine head until it changes from E to D. Simple.

"Are a lot of songs played in open G tuning?"
Sure. Check out *Jealous Again* and *Twice As Hard* by The Black Crowes, Robert Johnson's *Walkin' Blues* and both *Start Me Up* and *Brown Sugar* by The Rolling Stones – in fact, Keith Richards uses open G tuning *a lot*!

"Got it! Shall we play some music?"
Sure! Look at the first tab example below. The very first chord shows you the most amazingly useful thing about tunings like open G… the one-finger major chord. No need for weird shapes – just rest one finger over all six strings.

"I like it. What's next?"
Our second tab example shows you another simple way to build on the one-finger shape. In each case just place your third finger on the fretboard two frets higher up.

A DAY AT THE GGS...

A GUIDE TO RETUNING YOUR GUITAR TO OPEN G

1 STANDARD TUNING NOTES
In standard tuning the names of the open strings are:

E A D G B E

2 OPEN G NOTES
These are the names of the strings in open G tuning:

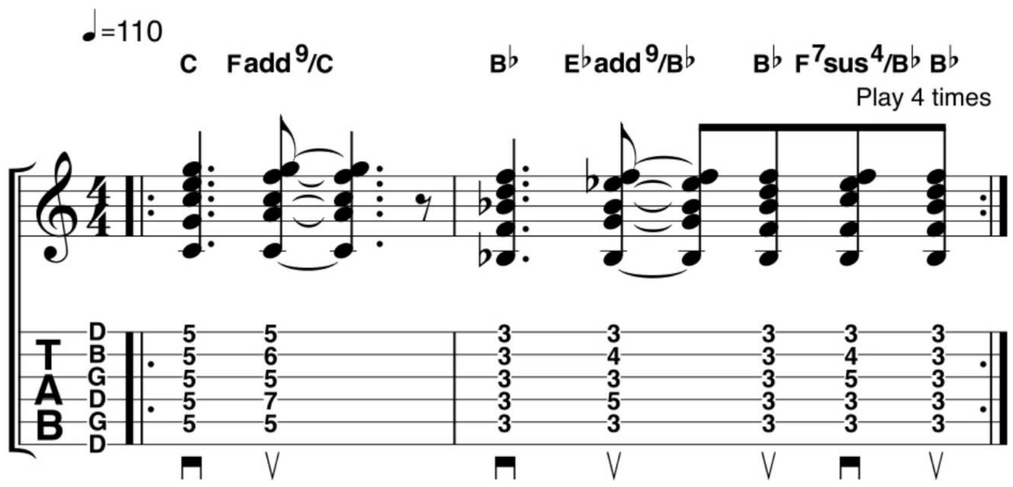
D G D G B D

3 ADJUST THE SIXTH, FIFTH AND FIRST STRINGS
Three of the notes are the same in both tunings, so there are three other strings to retune. All three strings go down by two semitones – the same as two frets.

D G D G B D

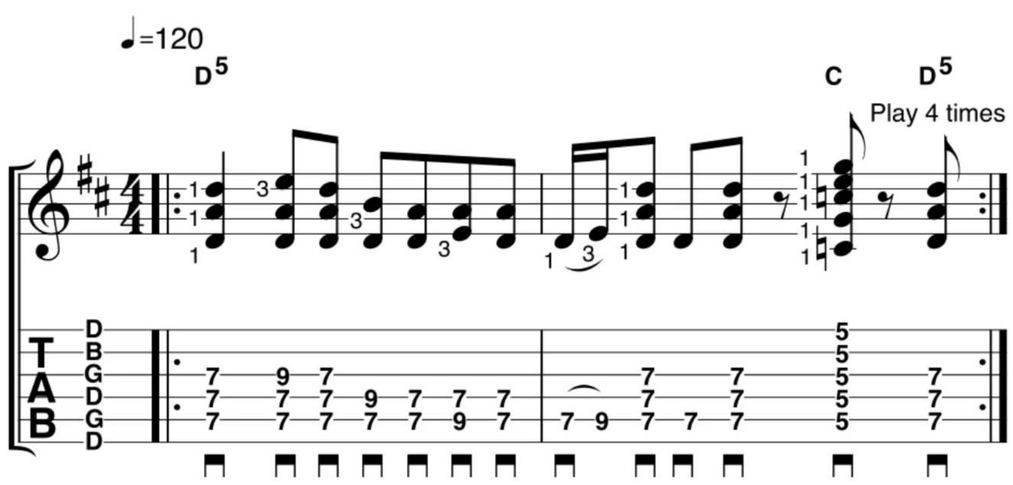
4 SLACKING OFF
Remember you'll be *down* tuning these three strings so you should feel a bit of slack creeping in as you lower the string tension with your guitar's machine head.

1 ROLLING STONES STYLE RIFF — TRACKS 07-08



These chords are typical Keith Richards fare. It's all about the opening one-finger chord. The other shapes are easy variations on this basic shape.

2 BLACK CROWES STYLE RIFF — TRACKS 09-10



Once again, be guided by your first finger. Hold this vital digit steady and you'll be in prime position to add the 9th fret notes with your third finger.

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WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ One easy riff in 4/4 time
- ✔ A simple guitar riff in 3/4 time
- ✔ Play a 4/4 riff over 3/4 music

HOW TO

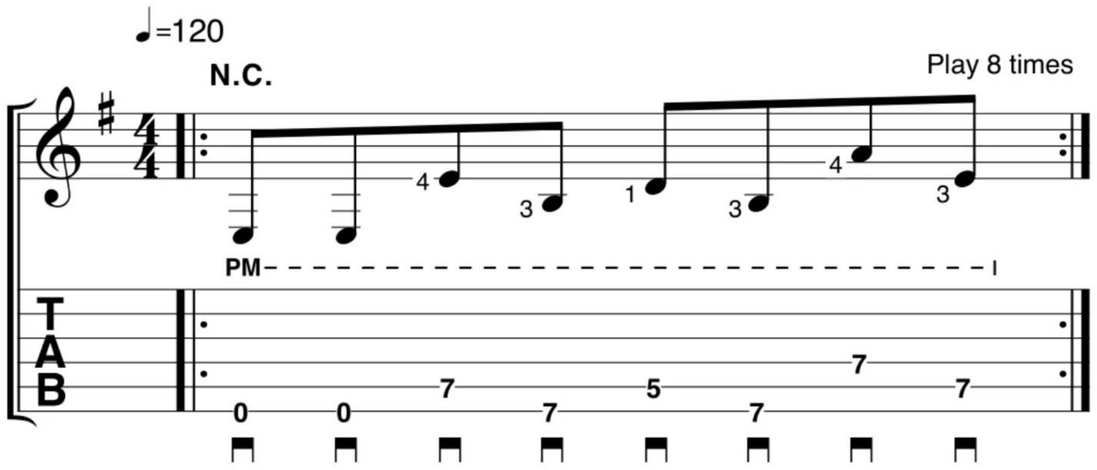
WHAT THE F?

CROSS RHYTHMS

Freshen up the riffs you write with TG's easy lesson that's guaranteed to boost your creativity

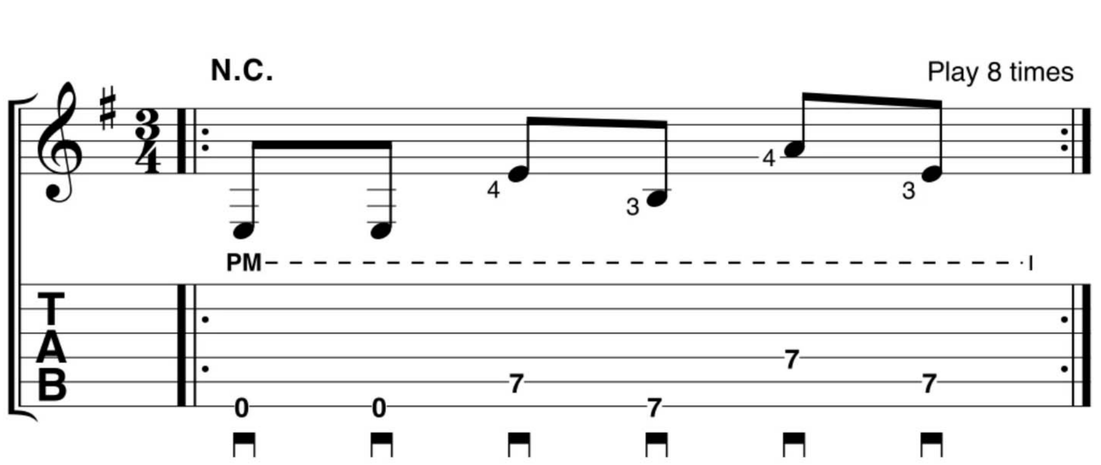
Whether you're improvising or writing songs, you probably already play your own riffs – most guitarists do! In this lesson we will help you get more from these motifs using a method called a cross rhythm. This means that the time signature of the music you're jamming with is contradicted by the riffs you play. Don't worry! It'll make more sense once you try out our tab and audio examples. Suffice to say it's used heavily in progressive music – Dream Theater and Tool, for example. We're keeping things simple here, swapping 3/4 and 4/4 riffs around but feel free to get creative with your own ideas and try out other time signatures.

1 BASIC 4/4 RIFF — TRACKS 11-12



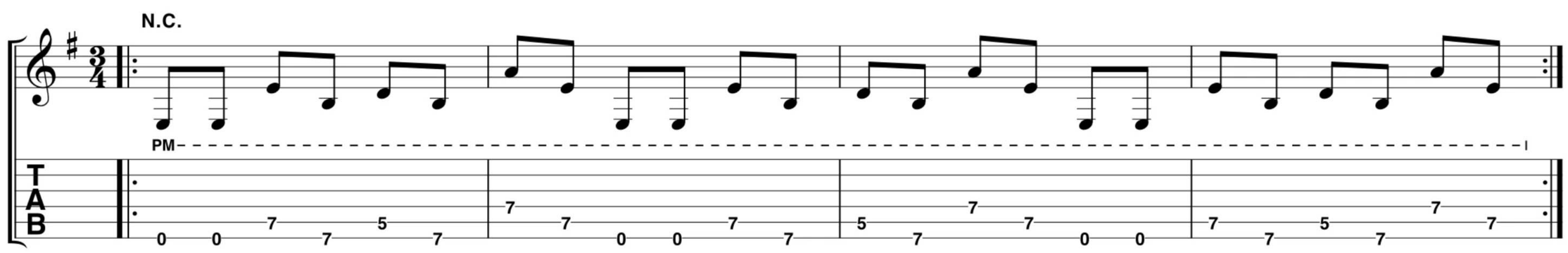
We've played this simple 4/4-time riff a full eight times over our backing track to help you get a feel for it. One riff, one bar of music – simple!

2 BASIC 3/4 RIFF — TRACKS 13-14



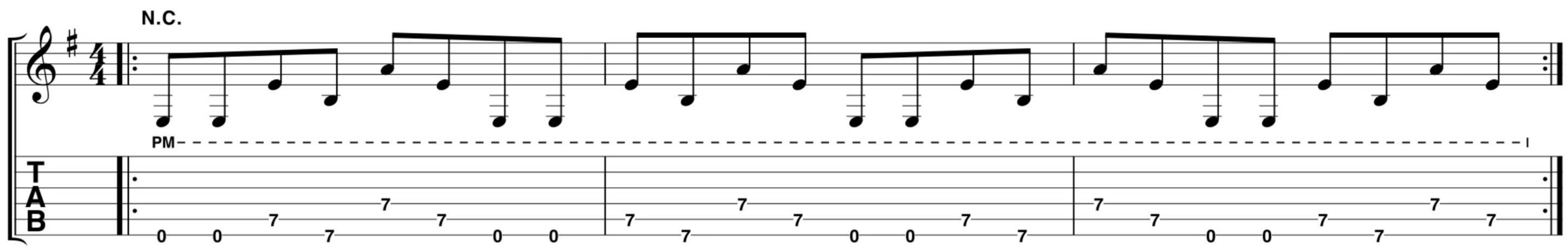
Now here's a riff in 3/4 time. This isn't remarkable in itself (just count to three instead of four to keep time), and, as before, there's one riff and one bar of music.

3 4/4 RIFF OVER A 3/4 BACKING — TRACKS 15-16



Here we're playing our 4/4 riff over the 3/4 backing track, generating a cross rhythm in the process. The backing music has an emphasis on the first beat of every bar (that's once every three beats), but the riff is four beats long, so it doesn't repeat in sync with the track. In fact, it takes four bars until the riff begins on beat 1 again.

4 3/4 RIFF OVER A 4/4 BACKING — TRACKS 17-18



Here, in an alternative take on the same idea, we've played our 3/4 riff over the 4/4 music, meaning, once again, the emphasis on beat 1 of the backing track isn't mirrored by the first note of the riff. This time, you'll play for three bars until the riff starts on beat 1 again. Try to play the riff with the 'feel' of the 4/4 time signature.

07 WAYS TO PLAY BETTER GIGS

From prep to performance, there's simple ways to step up live

1 PACK A SURVIVAL KIT

Unless you're one of the select group of musicians with a road crew, you'll need to be your own tech. And there are certain things you will definitely need at some point if you're playing live. Here's our essential list to pack and why:

- **Pen and paper**: Not just to write the setlist for you, but any other members too
- **Strings**: You were taking these anyway, right?
- **Spare guitar leads, patch cables, pedal power leads:** Make sure you check all your connections before soundcheck and the start of your set.
- **Gaffer tape:** The universal cure for all manner of breaks.
- **Multi-plug adapter:** Never assume that the venue will provide them.
- **Amp backup:** A portable power amp like the Electro-Harmonix 44 Magnum essentially gives you a backup handheld head that can be plugged into a speaker.
- **Picks and Blu Tack**: What happens if you drop your pick mid-song? Attach spares on your mic stand or guitar.
- **9V batteries**: Backups for your more essential pedals if your power supply goes down.

- **First aid**: Painkillers in case a headache strikes, Vocalzone for throat issues and microtape / plasters for any cuts.

2 TREAT YOUR SOUND ENGINEER RIGHT

You need to treat your pre-gig routine as a checklist, which will mean there's a slimmer chance of things going wrong when you actually perform. Your routine should include introducing yourself to the sound engineer when you arrive and clearly communicating what you have in terms of gear, mic'ing requirements and what you need from the monitor sound. They can't help you if they don't know. And buying them a drink certainly won't hurt either – politeness, respect and a pint make for a winning combination.

POLITENESS, RESPECT AND A PINT ARE A WINNING COMBINATION WHEN DEALING WITH SOUND ENGINEERS

3 USE YOUR SOUNDCHECK WISELY

Soundcheck isn't for last minute practice; it's for the sound engineer to get the levels, mix and mic placements right and also to make sure you have the right monitor mix to hear your instrument, voice and the other band members you need. Communicate with the engineer, and listen to what they're instructing from the desk. When it's time to play a song through, try to choose something that really showcases your sound so the engineer gets a good insight. Listen to that monitor mix; can you hear yourself? Can the rhythm section hear what they need to follow the changes?

4 TUNE, AND THEN TUNE AGAIN

As any of you who have played live will know, gigs are strange mixes of adrenaline, joy and sheer panic. You need to take the variables out of the equation so you can focus on the fun parts and if your guitar is out of tune, it's obviously not a great start. Tune every guitar you'll use in the set ahead of soundcheck, and then tune them again just before you play. Yes that means the backup too – and make sure that's handy. String breaks are unfortunate, making the crowd

wait in silence for five minutes while you locate and tune your other guitar is just bad planning. And of course, monitor your tuning between songs – for you singers and backing vocalists that means mastering the art of talking to the audience while fine-tuning your B string.

5 TAME YOUR LEVELS, BOOST YOUR MIDS

We'd advise setting your amps to sensible volume levels onstage. Especially if you're mic'ing them and the audience isn't reliant on stage levels alone to hear you. Keeping those onstage levels down is not just for the sake of your ears but also allows the sound engineer to have more control over the overall front-of-house balance. That will mean the monitors don't need to be pushed to levels where they begin to feed back in order for singers to hear themselves.

Always remember that when it comes to EQ, the guitar is designed to be a mid-heavy instrument – embrace that, as mids can give you the punch you might be looking for instead of added gain. And scooping the mids essentially buries you in the rhythm section.

6 KEEP THE MOMENTUM

Banter isn't the only way to keep a crowd engaged. Feel awkward talking on the mic to cover between songs while people tune,

change guitars and the drummer adjusts their high hat? Maybe fill that silence with musical segues that make you sound like a well-oiled musical machine. You could engage some pre-prepared loops on a pedal, or have musical pieces ready to play. Silence may cause the audience's attention to drift so joining together your songs in some way is a great way to keep the momentum going.

7 KEEP SOMETHING IN YOUR BACK POCKET

Set times should be respected – go over and it eats into someone else's time or forces you to curtail a grand finale. Time your sets in practice as best you can, allowing for a few minutes for things like tuning and unforeseen fixes. But you may also find your audience wanting more and the venue happy to allow it – so it's best to keep something ready for such an enviable encore situation. Maybe a cover that you know will go down well and keep the energy levels up and end on a high.

GO LOOPY
Using a looper can help fill the silences between songs to create musical segues

PRO TIP: EQ ANY AMP FAST

Matt Schofield explains how

There may come a time where logistics or necessity mean you have to borrow an amp to play a set. Immediately you might feel that you're outside your comfort zone and your tone will be compromised. Fear not; even with the unfamiliar there are universal truths when it comes to tone. Matt Schofield is a tonehound but also a blues guitarist who has gigging experience all over the world. He says these three simple points to remember enable you to make any amp as good as it can get...

1 "You'll find that every pot has an obvious cusp point in its rotation – every single one – where it goes from not doing much, to where it really kicks in. So I sweep through the pots one by one and find those spots. All amps will do this – bass is especially easy to hear... nothing, nothing, nothing, then bang, there it is!"

2 "Gain is just the same, master... and so on. Maybe not so much for reverb – just put that where you like it – but all the others have a strongest sweep point in the rotation, so I find it, and that's where it gets set! It's the same with any pedals, all drives and tones."

3 "If you do that, the amp is set as evenly as it can be; not too trebly, not too dark. With everything set right on the cusp, you can push it over by digging in, or pull it back by playing softer. It makes everything really responsive and sensitive to what you do. The rest is up to you!"

THE MOST **ICONIC ROCK GUITARIST** OF THEM ALL MEETS UP WITH TG AS HE TRANSITIONS FROM THE STADIUM-CONQUERING MADNESS OF **GUNS N' ROSES** TO HIS EVER-SO-SLIGHTLY MORE TRANQUIL ENDEAVOURS WITH THE **SOLO** BAND...

PERMANENT VACATION

Words Amit Sharma
Photography James Sharrock

This guitar hero never rests. He's just wrapped up another leg of Guns N' Roses' Not In This Lifetime tour – which has seen him reunited with singer Axl Rose for three and a half hour-long sets every night in the world's biggest stadiums – and he's now sat in the UK's Gibson Guitar HQ promoting the release of his next solo album with Myles Kennedy And The Conspirators. It's titled *Living The Dream* – a sentiment that couldn't be more apt in its summary of Slash's life as a guitar player. Here the notorious cat in the hat delves deep into his most recent whirlwind years, from re-familiarising himself with his original band's lesser-known back catalogue and analysing the secrets behind those game-changing performances to his latest body of work and beyond…

Life just doesn't seem to stop for you. All puns aside, you've always stuck to your guns when it comes to gear... but is there anything new we can hear on this album – or even anything you've tried recently that's blown your mind?

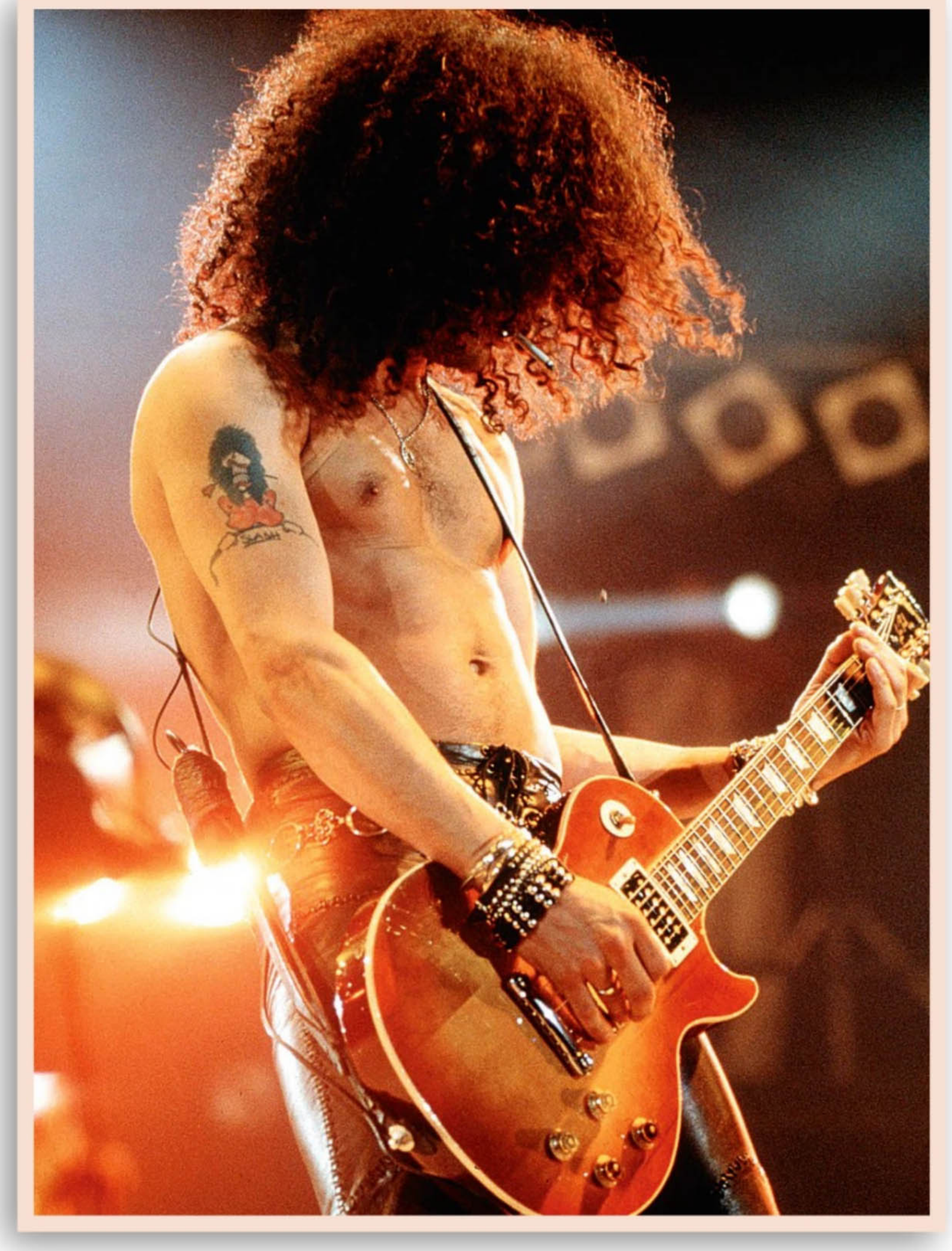
"This whole record was done with a brand new 100-watt Marshall Jubilee. I had a bunch of old ones, about seven of them, which all sounded really good and I was keen to use. But Marshall had given me a new one and it sounded so good, I ended up using that... I didn't want to deal with all the other ones! That was the main amp, except for one song called *The Great Pretender*, which I recorded using my '59 going through an old Fender combo. My friend loaned me three because he was looking for this particular sound... I was specifically after a Fender Deluxe Twin initially, but the one I was given didn't sound as good as this other model. And for guitars, I went with something a bit different to what I usually do. I used a 50s Goldtop with the soapbars in it as well as this '59 that I had only used once before. I also

got out my '58 and my Derrig on some songs too, plus this really nice tobacco sunburst '58 reissue I bought here in the UK after seeing pictures online. It's been my favourite Les Paul finish since I was a kid."

The solo in *Slow Grind* ends with a beautiful arpeggio that ties everything together perfectly. What's the secret to finding a good ending to these mini 'stories'?
"That end phrase seemed to really fit the song. Whenever I get to the solo section, I always try to stick with what I came up with spontaneously the first time round. It's the initial ideas that tend to work for me! That escalation idea for *Slow Grind* just happened and I kept it. As you rehearse and rehearse, you keep the general idea but change little notes here and there, so by the time you go in for recording, you have a structure in place – give or take certain notes."

***The One You Loved Is Gone* has a solo with some incredibly tasteful major phrases. What advice do you have for all the rock players who struggle with note choices outside of the typical minor chord movements?**
"Oh god, you're putting me on the spot, I don't know what I'm doing half the time either ha ha! The thing about playing in that kinda vibe, when it's neither a ballad or up-tempo but more mid-tempo with major chords that have a happy feel to them, is because I still think in blues. I just don't put the minor thirds in, I try to stick with the major. So it's more of an old-school, 12-bar BB King feel... in my head I still see it as a blues thing."

You've been playing faster than ever on the Not In This Lifetime tour. Despite being one of the most recognisable guitarists in music history, did it ever feel like you had a point to prove... as if you're only as good as the last gig you played?
"What's funny is that when we were doing rehearsals, I didn't really do *anything*. I didn't have my solos mapped out because I try to stick with the live improvisations for each show. There's a lot of stuff that's not set in stone, so I would just play *whatever*. But it all came into place after that first show, where I almost had to fly by the seat of my pants and make something up while stood in front of all these people. And actually there's an amazing amount of energy feeding back to you from audiences 80,000 strong. *That's* what fuels a lot of the energy in my playing."



LIGHTNIN' FAST
Slash still hasn't boarded the slow train, playing faster than ever on GNR's most recent tour

You've been using in-ear monitors for the first time in your career. Maybe that had something to do with it too?
"Maybe it's the in-ears as well, because I can hear everything very fuckin' clearly. I don't have any effects for my in-ears, so it's all really dry and there's not as much sustain without live cabinets pushing air and ambience. With all that clarity, I end up playing faster than I normally would I guess! I still play the blues stuff and the slow stuff fine... but there's something about the energy that's been making me just fuckin' go for it and see what happens."

Do you think you will keep the in-ears for the solo tours or other projects you might work on?
"It was mostly just for this, but then I found the positives sorta outweigh the negatives – you can go anywhere on the stage that you want, you are forced to hear every single fuckin' thing you play whether you like it or not, there's no escaping it. I hate to use the word accuracy, because it's not cool, but you pay attention because you can hear every mistake, overbend or underbend. It *makes* you more accurate. The negatives are that in-ears don't sound natural, they sound horrible! Jerry Harvey, who makes the in-ears we are currently using, saved my life because I *had* to use the in-ears. I didn't have any real choice because Axl had been working with a band using them for 15 years before I came back into it. I had to try and work with it rather than instantly walk through the door and say, 'Nope, not doing it!' and just start the whole thing on a negative. Now I'm thinking I will continue using them – though with live cabinets on the stage, because I've missed having them onstage to react with my pickups and make hundreds of little different nuances."

"THE ENERGY JUST MADE ME FUCKIN' GO FOR IT"

Your harmonic minor runs in *Double Talkin' Jive* have more in common with the flamenco masters than any kind of neoclassical Yngwie worship. Where does this influence come from and what tips can you offer players struggling with that sound?
"I look at the guitar players that are around these days, especially online, and most of them are more accomplished at all that shit than I am. So I don't need to be giving any of these guys advice, but the one thing for me is knowing what the notes *need* to sound like to accomplish whatever it is I'm going for. I'm not thinking in technical terms because I don't really know it specifically, I just know this note is a half-step flat to what it would normally be. I try to know where on the neck those sounds live and from then on I just try to keep it bluesy so it still sings. I don't want to just play scales or some cool arpeggiated technique that sits in an E major and F major repetition. The most important thing for me is getting away from the technical point of view and focusing on the feel or mood of what I'm trying to achieve in those phrasing combinations."

All guitarists have a tendency to overplay – what's remarkable about you as a guitarist is that you know when to go for it and when not...
"It's similar to BMXing or skating or

Photo Mick Hutson/Redferns

LES AMOUR
Slash loves a Tobacco LP finish, but the signature model he brought to our shoot is his latest green Anaconda Burst

PAUL OR NOTHING

Slash explains why his love for Les Pauls remains undiminished, even after all these years...

"I still find them tremendously sexy. For me, being in a room full of Les Pauls is akin to being in a room full of naked girls... it never gets old, ha ha! I don't know what else to compare it to. These guitars are a major turn-on for me. I still look at the Les Paul as a particular model or style that's the most awesome. I really don't think there's a better-looking or more understated looking guitar out there. Plus, you never run out of sustain. Funnily enough, I was watching a thing on Mark Knopfler recently – who is an awesome player who I never really talk about – and he was in the studio having a discussion about his fingerstyle, talking about the differences between a Strat and a Les Paul. He's one of those guys who can really make you appreciate the flavours of each type of guitar he plays. I definitely think the Strat is great for certain things, they're probably the best guitars if you want to do a big variety of stuff. But Les Pauls have this certain thickness, warmth and sweetness that I just can't get away from... they have this sound I gravitate towards and no other guitar can compare.

"There's a reason why Tobacco Burst is my favourite finish: I remember I had this neighbour way back in the day and he had this Tobacco Sunburst Les Paul in his living room, which you could see through the big bay window at the front of the house. I would look at it every single day, even though I was only 14 and had only just started playing. To be honest I was still a bit of a punk back then, so I would think about how I could break in there and steal it... I never did! That's when the obsession started."

RIFF BANK
Slash is stockpiling some "cool riffs" should the Guns creative wheel start turning again

other freeform sports. I remember it was all about pure expression when I was a kid. I'd watch other people going for it and it would always be this emotional thing despite the technique and tricks involved. That concept of just going for it and doing something wild in the moment. Then the technique aspect comes in and starts to evolve and evolve... 30 or 40 years later, people will find they can do shit that's just mind-blowing. Guitar playing has become like that for a lot of people too – where it becomes about the accents to the melody or theme of a song, putting in statements that actually extenuate that idea. Suddenly, this great platform for people to express all kinds of shit becomes so technical, it gets harder and harder to explain to people. You *don't* have to go there. Art forms don't have to be about all the cool techniques, even if they're really, really bitchin'! Someone who knows how to sweep through all the right notes can be really impressive and cool to listen to, though emotionally it won't do much – at least not for *everyone*. Technique can become the main aspiration for people, and I don't want to rain on their parade, but for me it's more about expressing some sort of emotional content and finding melodies that fit the whole thing. It's important to have that side *as well as* the technical side... it's all about how you mix it all together, you know?"

You and Richard Fortus make a formidable team indeed. What is it about his playing that helps bring out the best in yours?

"Sit me down with a guitar by myself and I might not know what I'm doing or find things that will impress people. It tends to be within the *context* of the music I play over that allows me to go places. Richard is a really cool player in that he has this technical ability that means he can sit there with a guitar and play a lot of amazing stuff that's still very emotive. It's one of the reasons why when Guns N' Roses started back up, I really leaned towards playing with him. Because there were a couple of other guys who used to be in the band too that were being considered, but I jammed with Richard because he was the first guy there and I knew he was fuckin' great. He helps me out because we do a lot of soloing off each other. When he's doing his own cool stuff, it pushes me into doing something

different that's the exact opposite. And vice versa, sometimes I'll go for something really fast and he'll do something bluesy to counteract that. It's a good natural relationship. We never sat down to work things out, that's generally how I like to work with other guitarists... it's all I've ever done. It's nice that we can pick off each other's feel."

We heard on the grapevine that you were stockpiling ideas into Guns and Conspirators folders. Clearly, it's early days, but how is that potential new Guns stuff shaping up?

"There are a couple of ideas that I've earmarked for Guns that I won't be using for anything else. But I don't know where we are going with this, it remains to be seen what we'll end up doing. I think the other guys would agree we're just going to see what happens. When you think about it, we've been working this entire time, so there's been no chance to map out what we'll be doing once this tour is over or what kind of approach we will take. Now we've gotten past all our shit from 20 years ago, we want to keep this thing going and keep it fresh and so on and so forth. Let's see what happens! Should that wheel start turning, I have some cool riffs ready."

How did it feel coming back to some of these songs after all these years and what were the biggest challenges for you?

"It's been 20 years since I've played some of these songs. *Estranged* was fun to do again. I hadn't done that in a while! Even the material I had been playing in other bands, I had kinda adapted them to take on a unique feel in a new context. I had to reacclimatise to the whole Guns N' Roses vibe having not done it for a while. I realised just how unique it is when Duff and I are playing together while Axl is singing. There's a chemistry there that's so powerful and on its own... after being away from it for so long, you almost forget just how massive it is. So that definitely retooled my approach to particular songs. There was nothing that felt daunting, but I did drive around listening to the records to remember the parts. That way I could walk into rehearsal and people wouldn't have to stand around while I tried to remember the fingerings, ha ha! The other side of it was figuring out what my version of *The Chinese Democracy* stuff would be like, because that was a whole different Guns N' Roses animal in terms of the musicians involved. A lot of it I thought was really cool, like Buckethead did some cool shit so I would stick to that but do it in my own way so it didn't feel too foreign or like I was squeezing a round peg into a square hole. That was interesting and fun... more fun than it was intimidating."

NAKED AMBITION
"Being in a room of Les Pauls is akin to being in a room full of naked ladies"

On the song *Better*, instead of trying to play like Robin Finck trying to play like you – as per the recorded version – you chose to do your own thing...

"Some of the stuff I won't do note-for-note because it doesn't have a serious melodic significance to the song. It sounded like they were making it up..."

What about practice regimes being such an accomplished...

"...ha ha that's bullshit! I'm playing my guitar all the time because I'm trying to *keep* this shit going. I don't know what your question was going to be but there's *no* sense of accomplishment. You have to constantly play and play, that's the only way I can feel confident and comfortable in what I do. If I go for a long time without playing, I start to feel really insecure as a guitarist. When I'm on the road is when I'm happiest, because after a few weeks that's when you start falling into a groove and can be really spontaneous, coming out with freeform shit that you simply wouldn't have sat around jamming at home. It's really been a fun run with Guns N' Roses. Right now, I feel like there's no limit to what I can do. We have this huge stage on which we can play for as many hours as we want – obviously, we use them all! There's all this space to do stuff and if you love playing guitar, getting to do that everyday is just the fuckin' best."

What do you think are your biggest weaknesses as a guitarist?

"Playing rhythm is one of the main ones. There are specific things I practise before a show, for the first 20 minutes I won't do anything too outrageous and just loosen up. I think it's important to remember those techniques are a key part of what I play. You don't want to be stiff when it comes to those right-hand patterns, so I might play any number of songs. *Pinball Wizard* is always a good one! And then for lead stuff, I might try to find things that move up and around the neck, random patterns I've picked up from other players that sound interesting. It's about finding the things that help you do whatever it is you do before you walk out there and play. Don't think about set rules or anything – just try to focus on your weaknesses."

***Living The Dream* is out now on Snakepit / Roadrunner Records**

"I'M PLAYING MY GUITAR ALL THE TIME... TRYING TO KEEP THIS SHIT GOING"

MAKING A NEW BONE NUT

TOP TIP!
Apply some Big Bends Nut Sauce into your new string slots and the bone will soak it up and give you tuning stability

Going nuts: learn how to make your own and what goes into it with our DIY guide

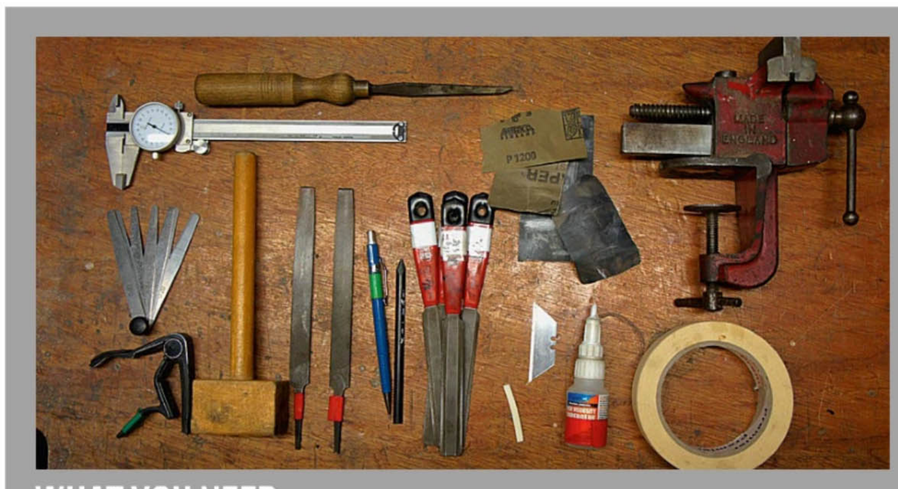
Words: Jack Ellis

Nuts are not as simple as they appear: each one should be made bespoke for the guitar. A bad or worn-out nut can give you an array of symptoms: poor tuning, action and intonation. Sometimes, it's been bad since the day it was made!

Bone is a traditional material that machines well and has the great advantage of being porous, meaning tuning lubricant is absorbed permanently. It's also the right amount of tough and it won't wear out prematurely from tuning and doing tremolo dive bombs.

You'll need some specialist files for this job – there's no way around it – but most of the other tools are commonplace. We regularly use the Stewart Macdonald double-edged gauged nut files. Remember, having the right tools isn't everything: they still require skilful use.

We've not yet found a pre-made nut that's ready to fit with no adjustment. Spend time making yours and you'll see the benefits of this small, inconspicuous part!



WHAT YOU NEED

- Stanley blade
- Hammer
- Small chisel
- Calipers
- Bone blank
- Sharp pencil
- Half pencil
- Small flat files
- Small vice
- Nut spacing rule (optional)
- Superglue
- Gauged nut files
- Capo
- Feeler gauges
- Wet/dry paper (240, 400, 800, 1200, 2000 grit)
- Big Bends Nut Sauce
- Masking tape

SKILL LEVEL

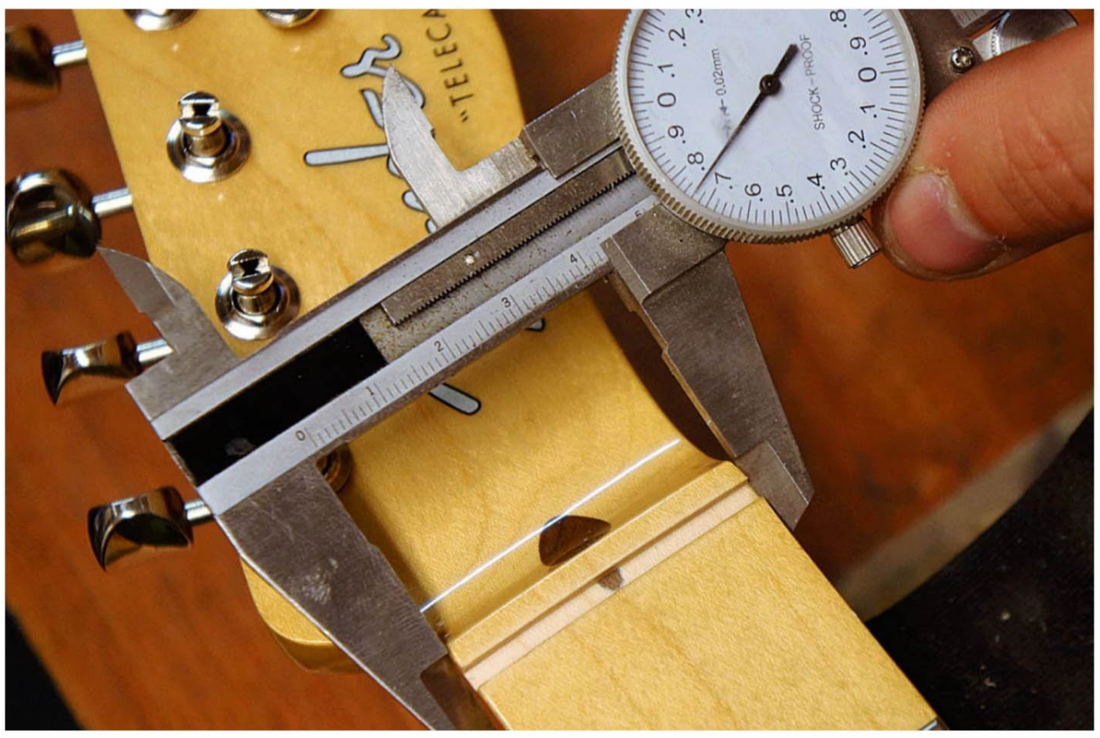
Intermediate

MEET YOUR EXPERT

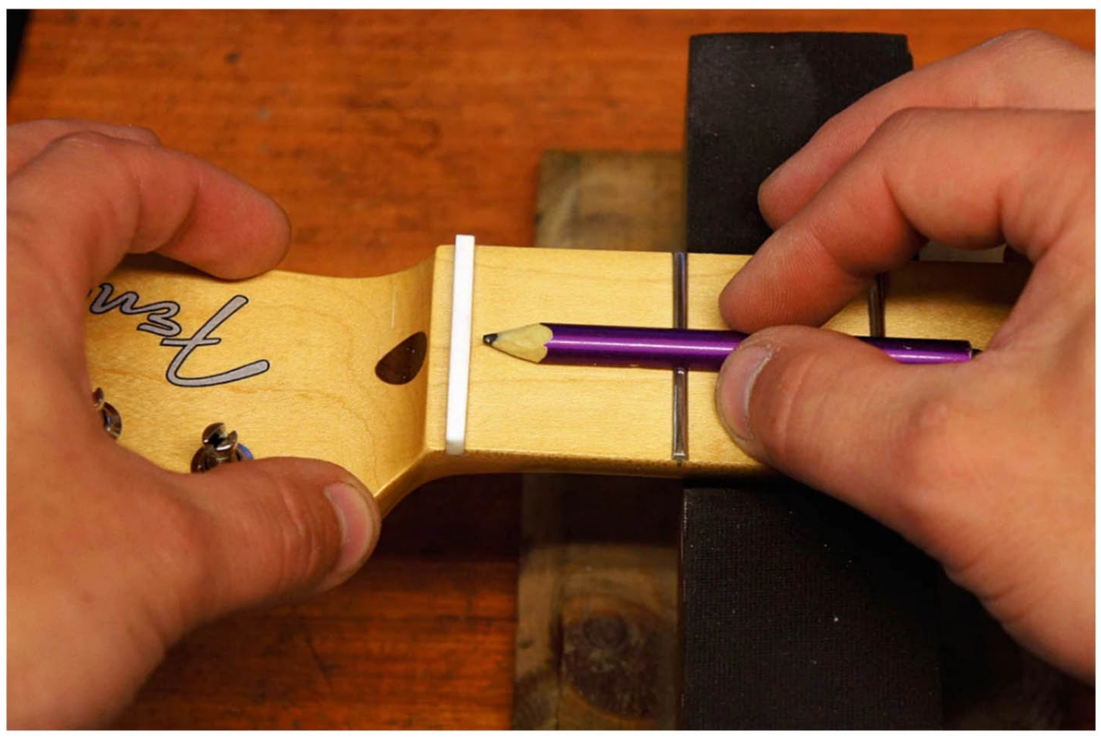
Jack Ellis runs Jack's Instrument Services from his workshop in Manchester. In his career he has worked on thousands of instruments, from simple fixes and upgrades, to complete rebuilds. For more info, see: www.jacksinstrumentservices.co.uk

1 Out with the old: score around every edge of the old nut to cut through the lacquer. Most Fender and Gibson nuts are glued in before the paint job, if you tap out the nut without cleanly cutting the lacquer, you may chip it. Use a brand new Stanley blade.

2 Time to see how well secured this old nut is... Use a thin chisel to drive out the old nut. We're attacking from the ends with the chisel; it's angled so the nut will lift up out of the slot it's in. Tap gently with a light hammer on each end and you should get some movement. Be very careful!



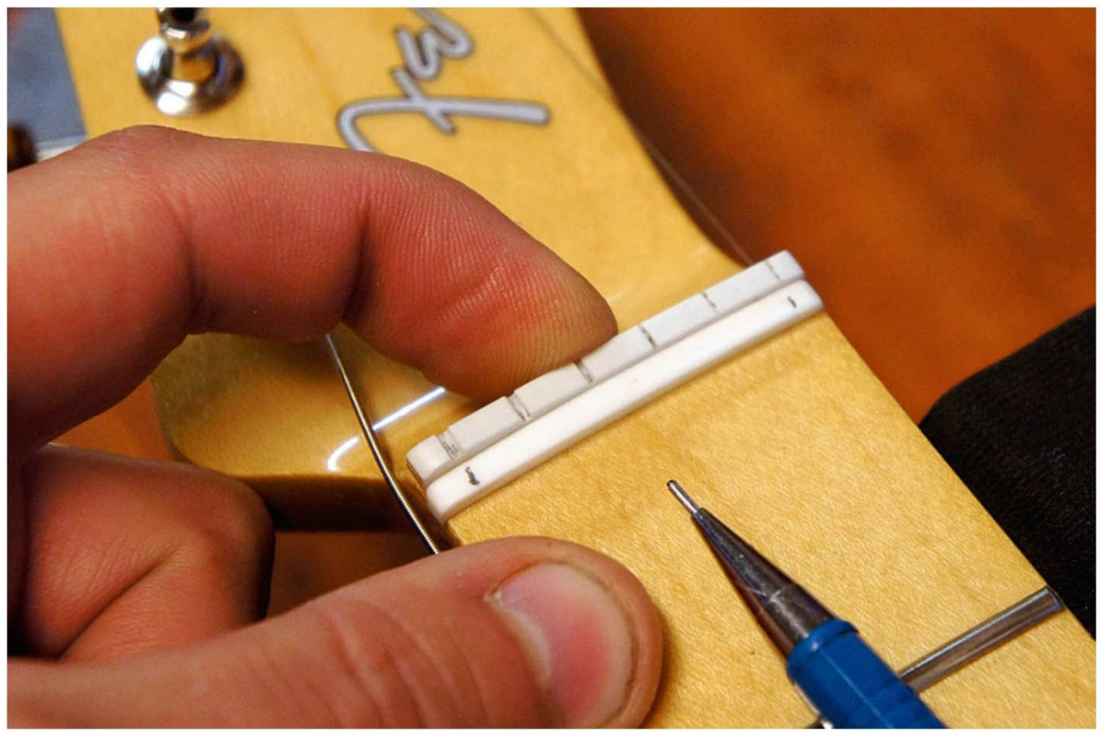
3 With the nut slot out, you may find some old glue that needs cleaning up. Measure the length and width of the nut. You want to use a piece of bone that's too tight then sand it back to be a nice, snug fit. Sand the edges of the bone blank to leave a nice finish at the edges of the nut.



4 With the nut dry-fitted into its nut slot we're going to use half a pencil to mark a rough top profile. Use a pencil sanded in half so its cross section is a semicircle. Lay this on the frets and draw up against the nut. This is a rough indication of where the string slots depth will end up.

5 We've made this vice specifically at the workshop, it allows great access around the nut with files for shaping purposes. Take off the bulk of the top profile of the nut with a file. You should leave 1.5mm above the sixth string's pencil line and 1mm above the first's pencil line as a guide. We like to put a slight round-over on the top too.

6 Glue in the nut with two small blobs of superglue only. Install the sixth and first strings only and eyeball their placement; you can play with a wider string spacing. Check that the strings stay on the fretboard properly all the way up the neck, (this can be due to other problems). Mark on your desired placement for the two string slots.



7 We're making a direct copy here in spacing terms, so use the old nut as a guide – but a guide only. Never trust that an old nut has equal spacing. Even from a factory there are plenty of terribly spaced nuts! StewMac sell a graduated 'string spacing rule' for this purpose, that accounts for the strings getting thicker. Very clever!

8 After you've very carefully checked spacing, take a nut file and make a nick in the nut top. This will serve as a starting point for our strings. Use your thumbnail as a file guide; you can roll side to side to really fine-tune the location of the cut. A couple of file strokes will do.

9 String up your guitar with your desired gauge of string. Tune it too as this presents the right tension for the neck. You cannot cut a nut without being under tension as the neck bows forward slightly under pressure at the nut. We need to account for this bow. Your truss rod must also be set correctly before the next step.

10 Let's cut each slot to its final depth. Stick a capo on the 3rd fret, we'll check the clearance over the 1st fret with a feeler gauge. The clearance should be .004" under the first string graduating to .008" under the sixth string. Cutting the slots too shallow will give you bad playability; cutting too deeply will buzz on the open strings.

11 We use gauged, rounded-bottom files for this task; each string needs a different size slot. Use a shallow angle, aiming down to the headstock to ensure that the strings' contact point is on the fretboard side of the nut. Work slowly and test your progress by re-tuning and checking the clearance with the capo and feeler gauge.

12 With the slots finished, let's complete the top profile. Pull the strings out of the way and pop on some masking tape. Sand down with each grit of wet/dry paper ascending in grit number. Erase the previous paper's scratch marks, all the way up to 200 grit. That's no longer sanding, that's polishing!

CLASSIC ROCK'S DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO GUNS N' ROSES

Covering the past and continuing adventures of Guns N' Roses, this bookazine from the makers of Classic Rock magazine reveals the true story of the band's hit-making and decade-spanning career by the people who were there

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BECOME THE ULTIMATE RHYTHM PLAYER

Elevate your playing with TG's huge, all-encompassing lesson on rhythm guitar

There's an old adage that guitarists spend 90 per cent of their playing time on rhythm duties, but 90 per cent of their practice time on lead. There's probably some truth to this so in this feature we're going to help you with the accompaniment side of guitar playing. However, it's not all routines, drills and click tracks. No, without so much as a metronome in sight, we're looking at rhythm guitar in the broadest sense. We want you to be a better, more rounded player by the end of this lesson! With that in mind we're providing you with creative new chord shapes to try out, some textural, ambient approaches to rhythm playing, as well as all the info you need to improve your timing and your understanding of rhythm. Want to play like your favourite rhythm guitarist? Check! All of our examples will help you understand how real players approach rhythm guitar. So, plug in, go get your downloadable audio files and let's get started!

Photo: David Munn/Getty

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SOUL MAN
Groove meister Nile Rodgers is partial to an Em7

01 LEARN MORE CHORDS!

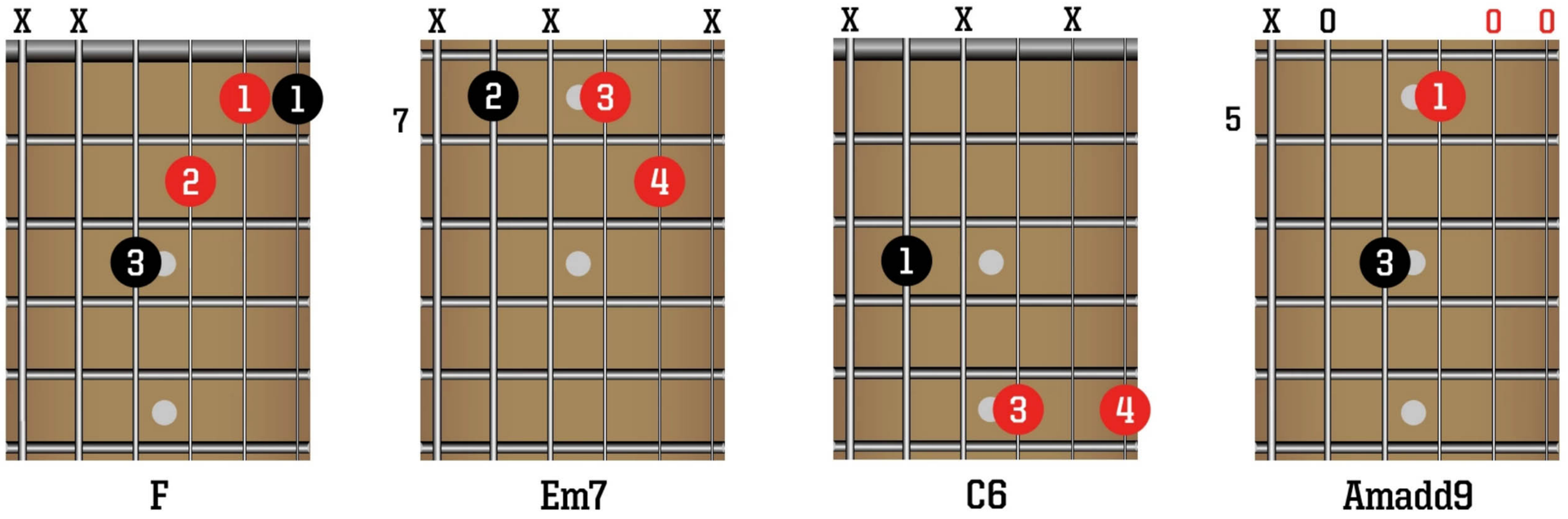
Start your rhythm guitar workout here as we take you beyond basic open and barre chords with some cool, creative shapes

TRACK 28

PARTIAL CHORDS

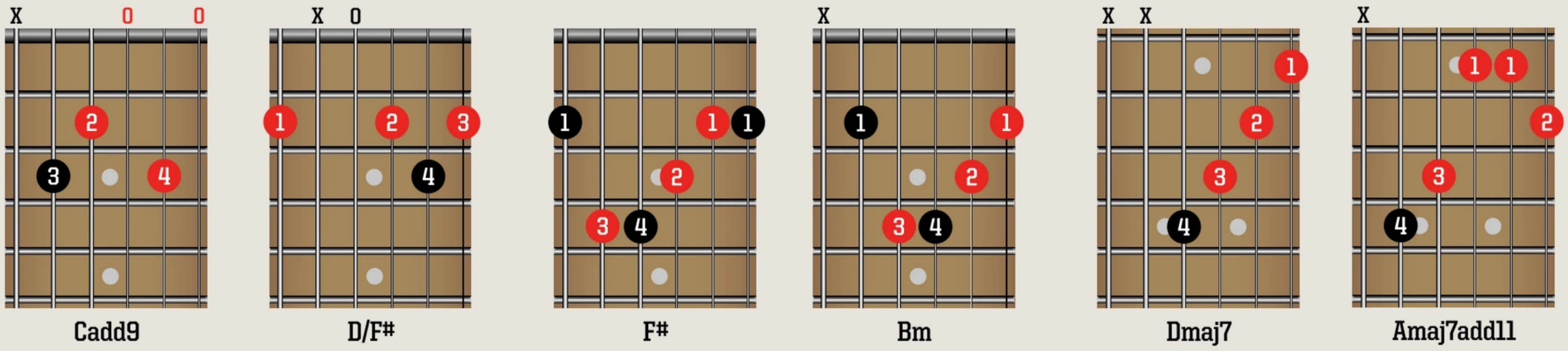
Playing a few notes of a chord is a great way to create a rhythm part that fits in with other chordal instruments, such as keyboards. Our F shape is a great way to simplify an F barre chord.

Em7 is a typical Nile Rodgers shape and the C6 chord gives you the kind of sound that soul session supremo Steve Cropper uses in songs such as *Soul Man*. Try out the Amadd9 for a dark, moody sound.



LOOSE CHANGE...

TIGHTEN UP YOUR CHORD CHANGES WITH THREE FINGER-TWISTING EXERCISES



1 ANCHOR FINGERS

Anchor your fourth finger to guide your other fingers. Try it with other chords you know.

2 MOVING YOUR FINGERS IN ONE 'BLOCK'

An exercise with both major and minor shapes.

3 USE ALL FOUR FINGERS

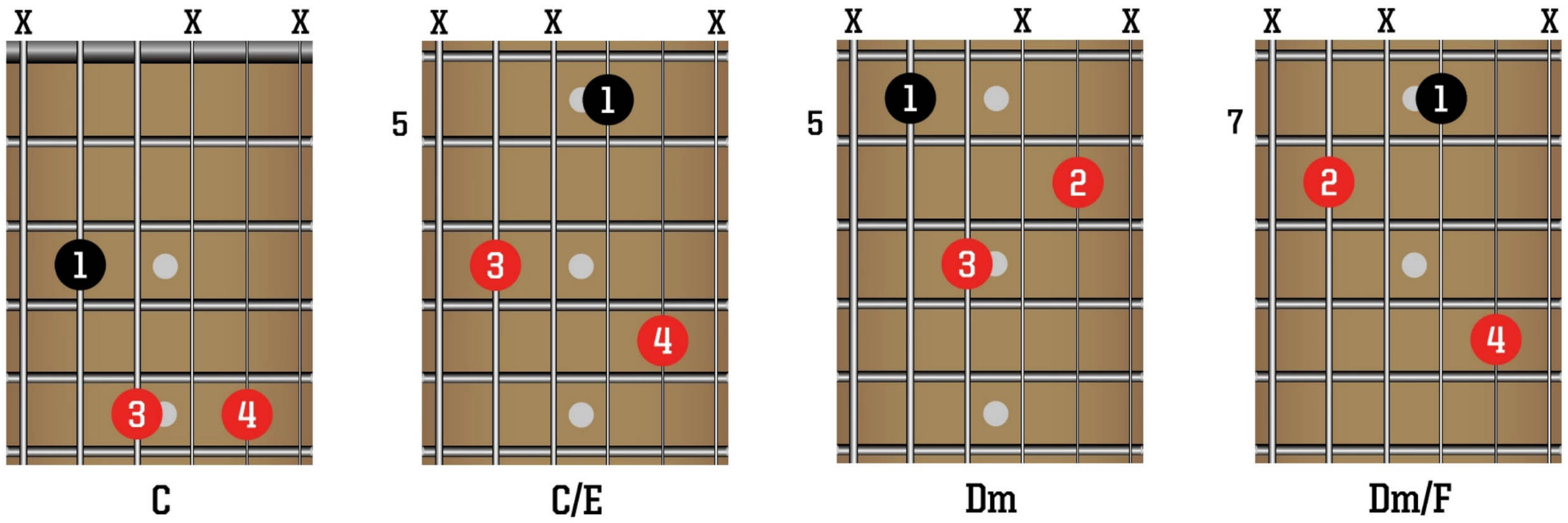
Moving all four fingers is a guaranteed way to improve your dexterity and speed.

Photo: Graham Lowe/Redferns/Getty

TRACK 29

WIDE INTERVAL CHORDS

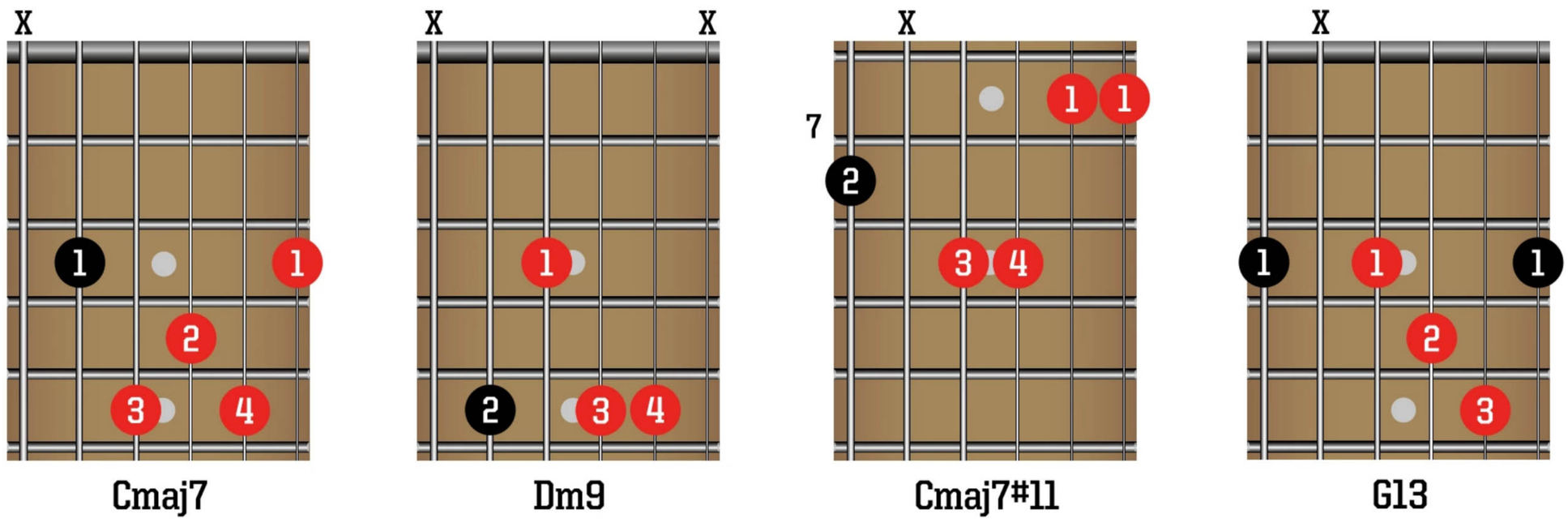
This trick will give you a clearer, less muddy sound than standard barre chords – an approach often used by John Frusciante, Eric Johnson, James Bay and most notably in *Blackbird* by the Beatles. It's simple: most chords cover more than an octave; simply ditch one or two of the middle notes to give the top and bottom frequencies more breathing space and a clearer, less muddy sound. Try including an open string too.



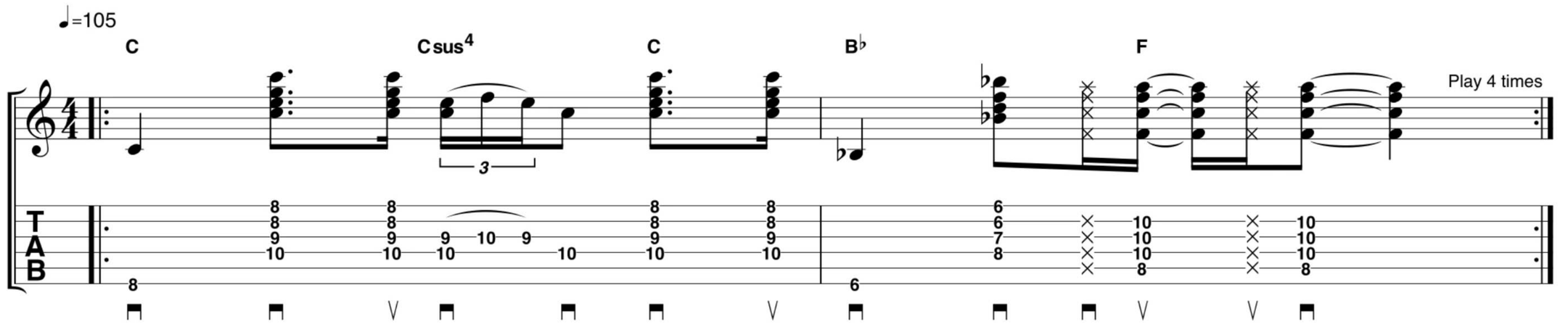
TRACK 30

EXTENDED CHORDS

Technically, extended chords include 9th, 11th and 13th intervals, but it's easier to think of 6ths and 7ths in the same way too. All these chords add notes to basic major or minor chords (C, Dm and so on), 'extending' them with more colourful sounds (such as Cmaj7, Dm9). Jeff Buckley's 1994 album *Grace* featured dozens of extended chords. Also listen to Amy Winehouse's *October Song*. The maj7#11 chord is loved by shred gurus Joe Satriani and Steve Vai. G13 sounds great in soul, jazz and blues.



CHORD EMBELLISHMENTS — TRACK 31



Using the thumb to play bass notes on the sixth string frees up other fingers to play extensions and melody notes. Jimi Hendrix was a master of this approach and guitarists like Stevie Ray Vaughan and John Mayer followed suit. The triplet embellishment in bar 1 is pure Jimi.

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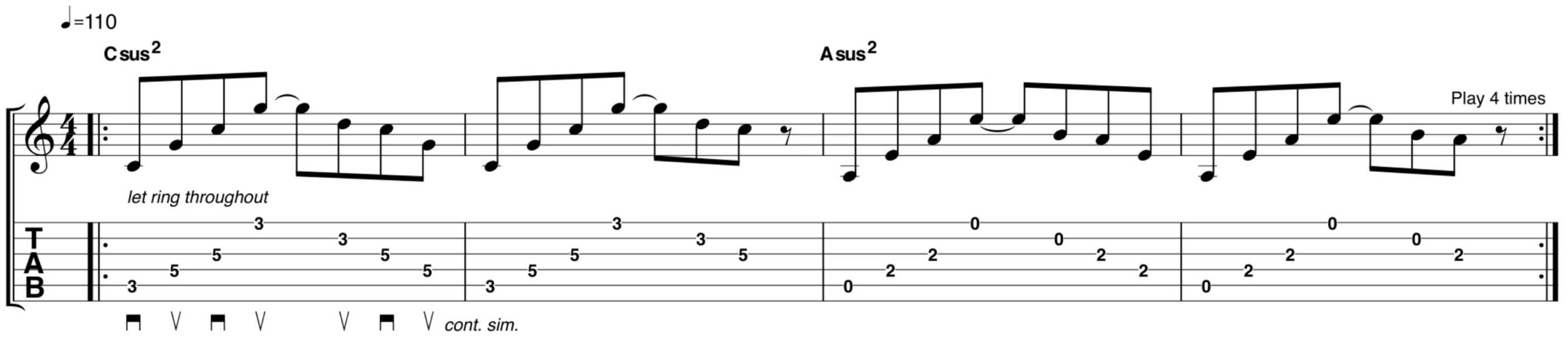
02 TEXTURAL PLAYING

Rhythm guitar isn't just about timing! Dial in some delay and get creative with textural techniques with TG's riffs

If you ever needed a reminder that rhythm guitar isn't always about the guitarist's right arm, just take a listen to players like The Edge, Johnny Marr, Tom Morello and Jimi Hendrix.

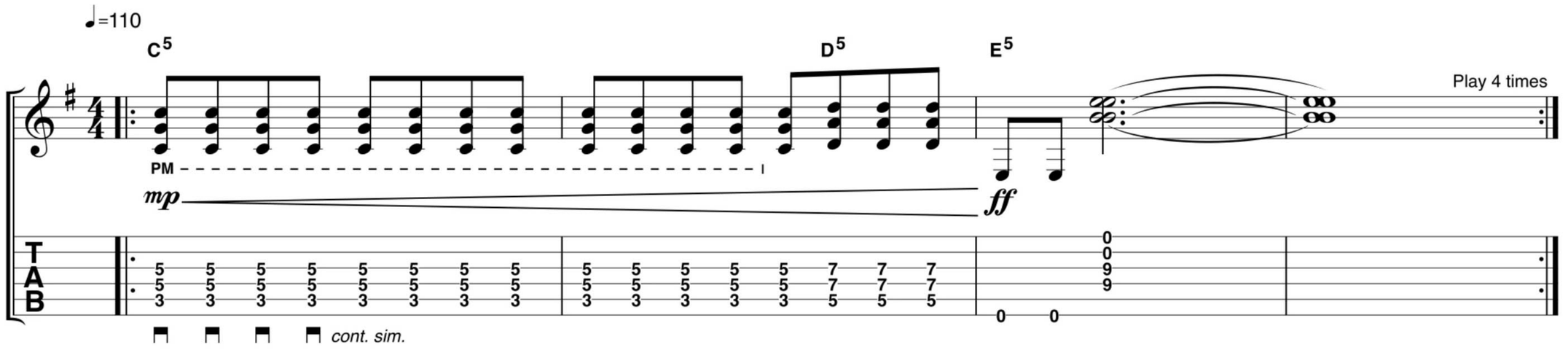
Sure, Morello and Hendrix in particular are fiercely funky, but we're more interested here in how these players have explored experimental fx-laden tones, along with dynamics and textural techniques like arpeggios. It's a different kind of rhythm playing, but, just like any other aspect of playing the guitar, you can still hone your chops! Try out our examples and try to apply what you learn to your own music.

ARPEGGIOS INSTEAD OF CHORDS — TRACK 32



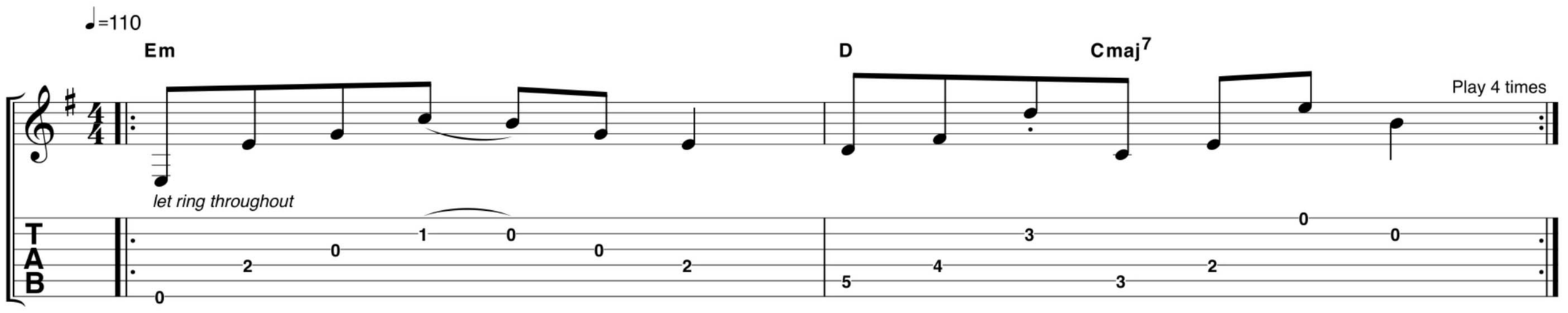
Playing the notes of a chord one at a time (known as an arpeggio) is a great way to create a relaxed more textural sound in your rhythm parts. REM's *Everybody Hurts* is a great example, as is *Message In A Bottle* by The Police. The key to our riff is to hold down the chord shape and let all the notes ring out together.

USING DYNAMICS — TRACK 33



How loud or soft you play is one of the most underrated playing techniques – it's crucial to getting the all-important 'feel factor' down. Our example is designed to help you improve this part of your playing. Simply start quiet and gradually play louder. Start off with a palm mute then release it little by little as you pick harder.

AMBIENT DELAY — TRACK 34



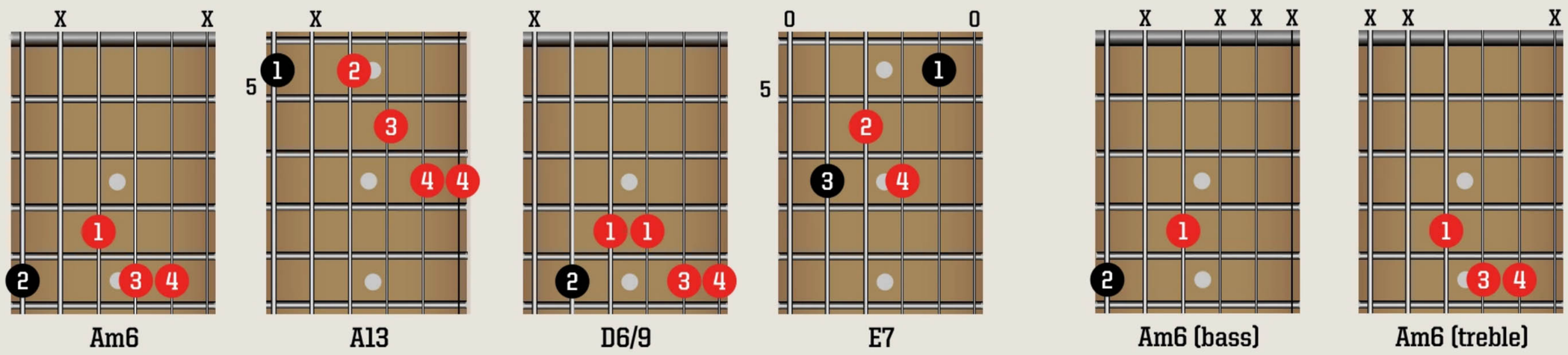
Think of delay in two ways: timed, where the repeats sync with the music to give a regular groove (as in U2's *Where The Streets Have No Name*); or textural, where the timing can be looser – generally keep your repeats quieter with this approach. Our riff is inspired by The Police and Linkin Park.

ROYAL RHYTHM
The bass-fuelled riffs of *Little Monster* are classic Royal Blood

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE REINHARDT...

TRACK 35

THREE TIPS FOR EASY GYPSY JAZZ RHYTHM!



1 CHOOSE A JAZZY CHORD

Am6 gives you an instant gypsy jazz sound akin to greats like Django Reinhardt, Birélli Lagrène and new kid on the block Remi Harris. Try A13, D6/9 and E7 too.

2 STRUM ON EVERY BEAT

Count to four to keep time and strum a downstroke on every beat. Emphasise beats 2 and 4 for that typical gypsy 'la pompe' groove.

COUNT:	1	2	3	4
STRUM:	down	down	down	down
ACCENT:		>		>

3 BREAK IT DOWN

Give the illusion of guitar and bass playing at the same time by alternating between the bass and treble strings instead of playing the whole chord.

Photo: Phil Bourne/Getty Images

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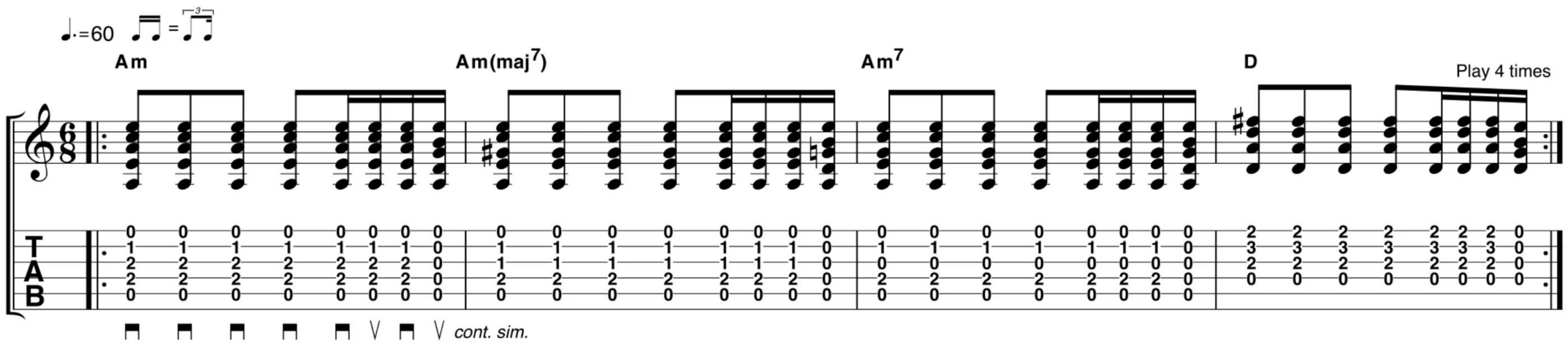
03 ESSENTIAL RHYTHM SKILLS

Hone your technique and cover some rhythm guitar essentials as we focus on strumming, riffing, timing and groove

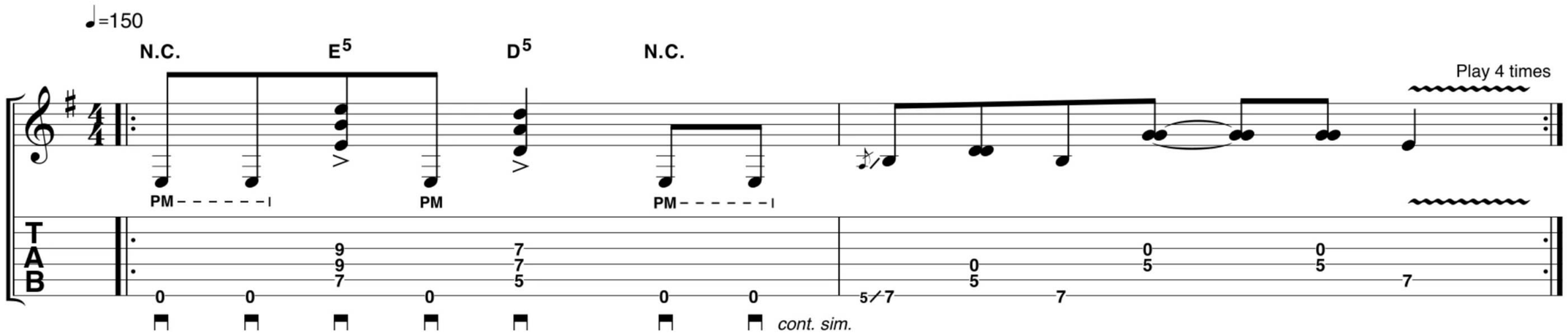
Seasoned players and guitar newbies alike need to stay in shape when it comes to core skills like strumming and timing – so that's what we're looking at here. And if you thought the minor pentatonic scale was only for lead guitar, think again! This vital scale is at the heart of countless riffs, from Led Zeppelin's *Whole Lotta Love* to Royal Blood's bass-fuelled *Little Monster*. Try out our riffs and hone these essential playing skills.

FOLKY ACOUSTIC STRUMMING — TRACK 36



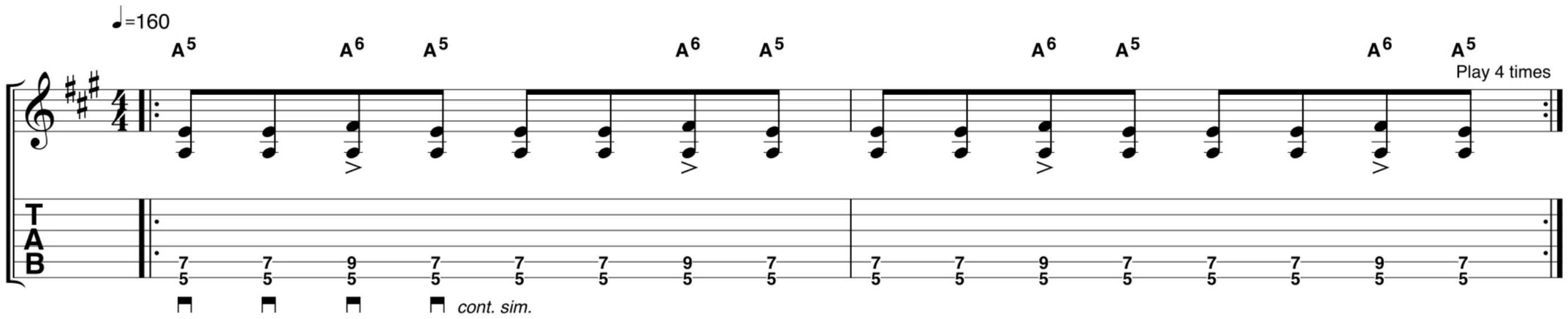
From Coldplay style pop to the folky roots-rock of Ryan Adams, basic strumming forms the backbone of countless players' rhythm styles. This 6/8 rhythm keeps things interesting by adding a light swing feel to the 16th notes so listen out for a slight 'bounce' to the 16ths at the end of each bar of music.

PENTATONIC RIFFING — TRACK 37



If you fancy yourself as a bit of a riff-meister you'll need timing, note choice and creative ideas aplenty, so, inspired by Led Zep's Jimmy Page, we're using the E minor pentatonic scale (E G A B D). Powerchords and open strings help fill out the sound; accents and vibrato add flair. Develop the idea by experimenting with notes that aren't in the scale.

ROCK 'N' ROLL GROOVE — TRACK 38



Sometimes, all you have to do is just lay down a groove and stick to it. Our rock 'n' roll style riff has a straight eighth note feel in the vein of songs like Chuck Berry's *Johnny B Goode* and Status Quo's *Rockin' All Over The World*. Use downpicking with an accent on beats 2 and 4, and aim for rock steady timing.

04

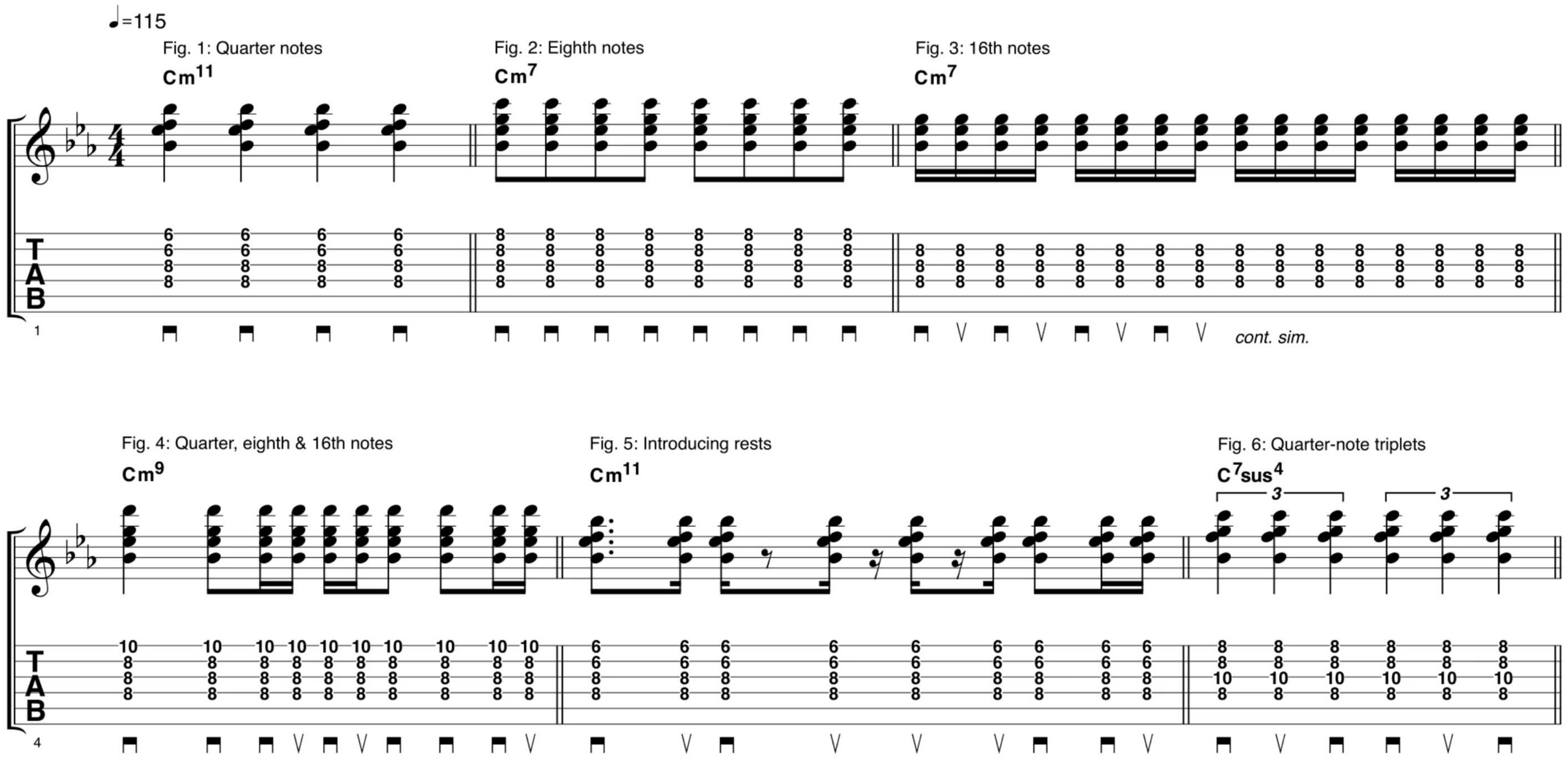
LEARN YOUR RHYTHMS

Tell your eighth notes from your 16ths and master musical rhythms with TG's 'listen and repeat' style guitar exercises

You're probably used to counting or tapping your foot in time with music. Well, in a similar way, sheet music represents the timing of the notes based on the main musical pulse, in turn making it easier for us guitarists to work out the exact rhythm. Still, you don't have to be heavily into reading music – we've played six one-bar rhythm examples four times each before leaving a gap on the backing track for you to join in and practise what you've just heard. Simply listen and repeat, and trust your ear to pick up the timing.

SOMETHING GOOD Ryan Adams has honed his strumming style to be the backbone of his rhythm playing

RHYTHM WORKOUT **TRACK 39**



1 Simply play four downstrokes in a row, counting to four to keep time. **2** Eight downstrokes this time, but at twice the speed; try a down-up approach too. **3** Double speed again, so there are 16 strums in this bar; you'll have to play down-up style here! **4** This is a mixture of the quarter, eighth and 16th notes you've seen so far. **5** Another mixture, this time with rests; simply avoid contact with the strings on the rests. **6** This last example is a triplet – that means playing three strums in the space usually reserved for two.

Photo: SGranitz/Getty Images

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POWER PICKED Metallica's James Hetfield is a master of down-picking

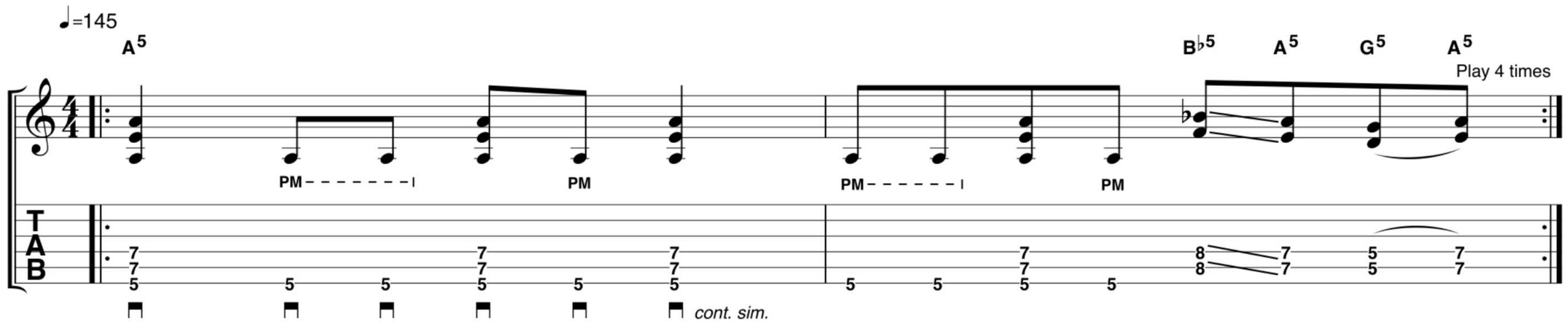
05 HARD ROCK AND METAL TECHNIQUES

Develop your pick hand technique with TG's look at some of rock and metal's greatest players

Rock and metal techniques can be fiercely challenging, particularly when it comes to the accuracy and timing in your picking hand. However, if you feel like your progress is slow, fear not, we've got your back! Here we're focusing on some key picking techniques, taking in a handful of standard rock riffs as we go. Simply read on, try out our tab exercises and expand your arsenal of riffs as you go.

DOWN-PICKING

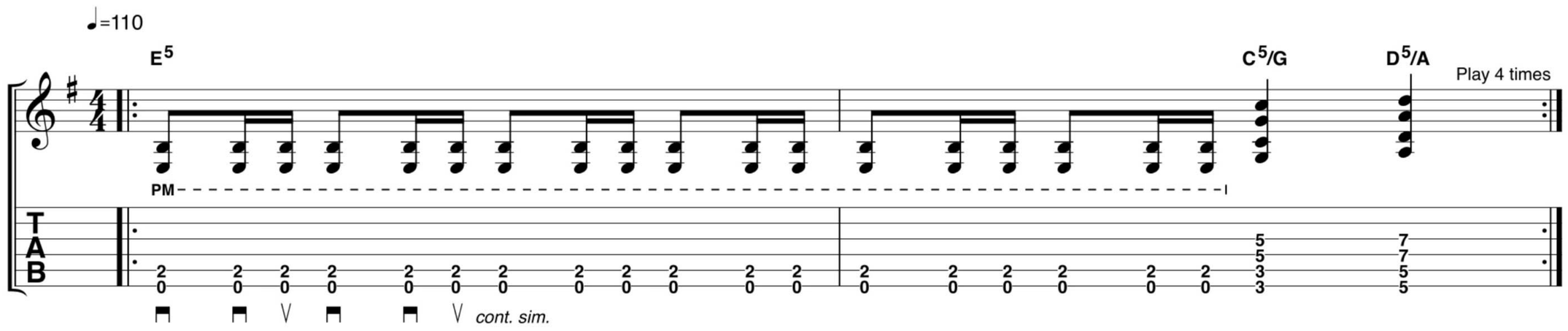
TRACK 40



Metallica's James Hetfield and Megadeth's Dave Mustaine are bona fide riff-meisters with enviable picking stamina. Our riff is designed to help you hone your downpicking skills; we're showcasing thrash metal trademarks such as sliding powerchords and chunky palm-muted bass notes. Release your palm mute to let the accented chords ring out.

GALLOP TO THE HILLS

TRACK 41

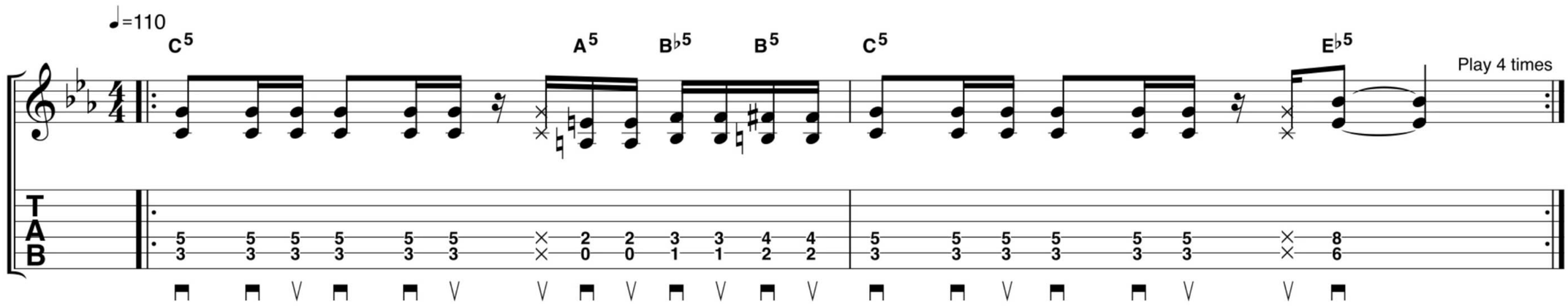


A well-known rock and metal groove, the gallop rhythm features in classics like Dio's *Holy Diver*, Iron Maiden's *Run To The Hills* and Heart's *Barracuda*. It's based on a 'down-down-up' picking pattern, with the first downstroke always landing on the beat. As ever, listen carefully to our audio example and practise slowly first.

Photo: FilmMagic/Getty

PLAYING ROUND THE LEAD GUITAR

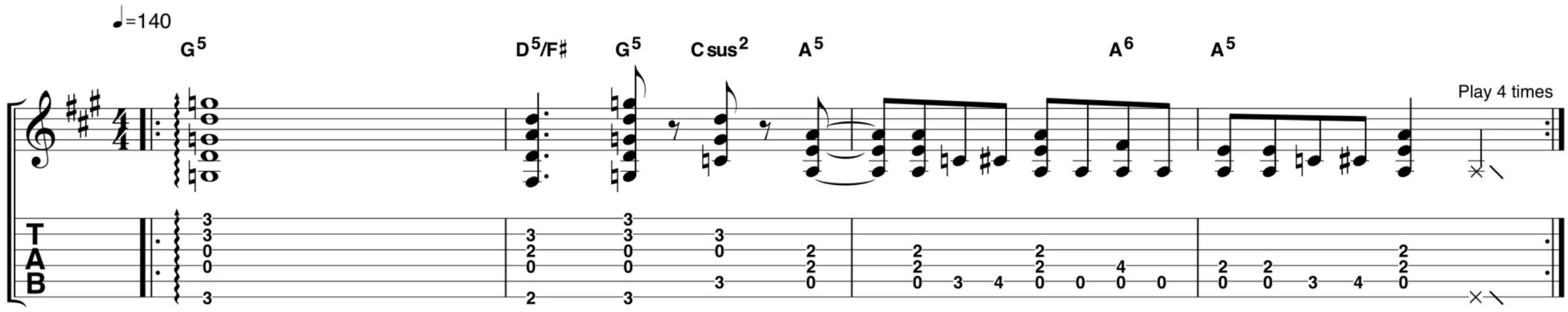
TRACK 42



Playing parts that act as a counterpoint to the lead guitar is a fine art – Aerosmith's Brad Whitford and Izzy Stradlin from the Gun 'N Roses *Appetite...* era lineup are masters. Our example shows how a 16th-note rhythm can inject a rock riff with a light, funky vibe – perfect for the lead guitar to weave around!

PUSH AND PULL

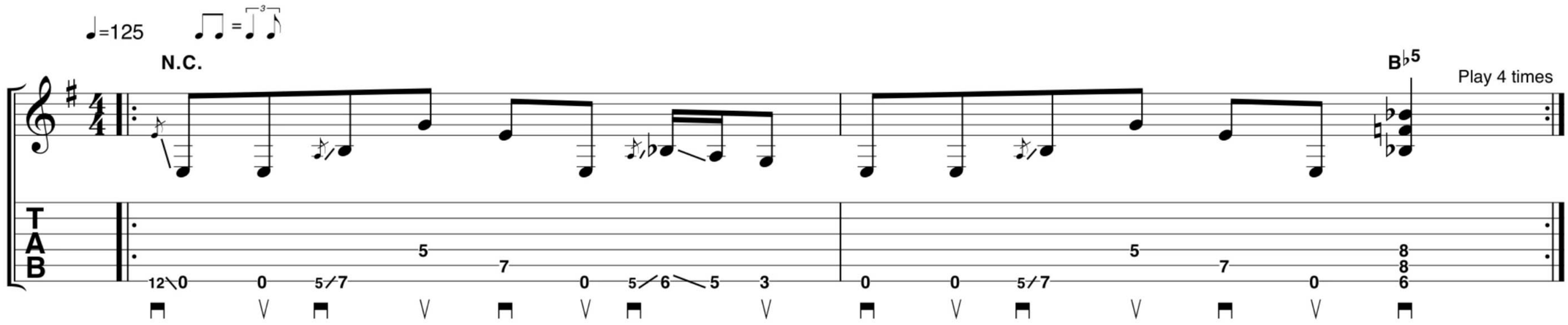
TRACK 43



As a core member of the AC/DC engine room, Malcolm Young concentrated his efforts on the band's relentless riff work. Our riff features the powerchords and open shapes Young used so heavily, but, more importantly, notice the timing of the chord changes in bars 2 and 3. Often referred to as 'pushes', these changes appear on the offbeat.

AIN'T WORTH A DIME

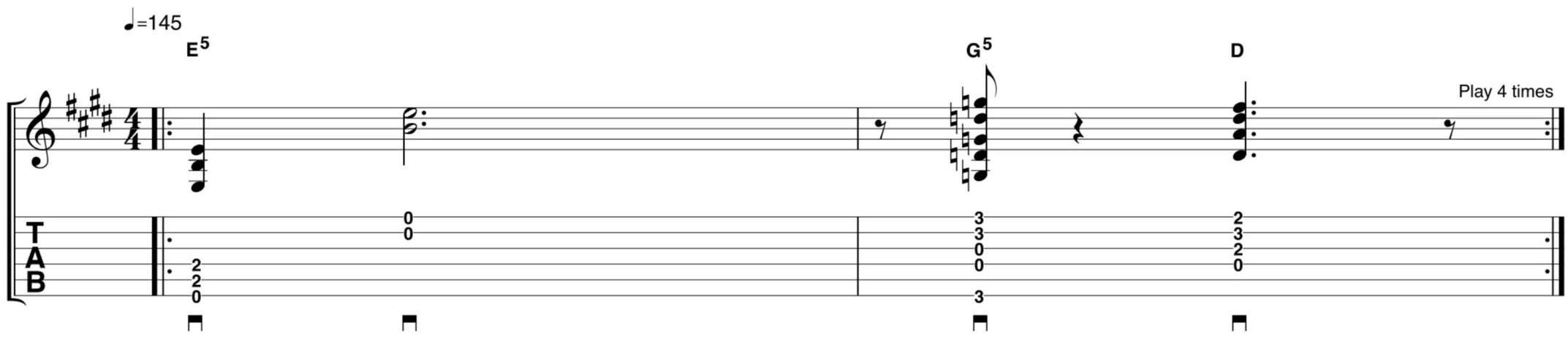
TRACK 44



If there's one heavy metal guitarist known for feel and groove it's Dimebag Darrell. We're focusing on the kind of swing feel heard in Pantera's *Walk* and *Good Friends And A Bottle Of Pills* here – a rhythm more associated with blues and classic rock than metal. It's all about feel, so make sure to lock in with the backing.

WHO'S AGGRESSIVE?

TRACK 45



Guitarists like The Who's Pete Townshend and The Clash's Joe Strummer mixed an aggressive strumming attack with an explosive performance style. Our example features a mix of ringing, open-position chords that provide plenty of punch and sustain. There's space in the rhythm for a strumming arm windmill should you feel the urge!

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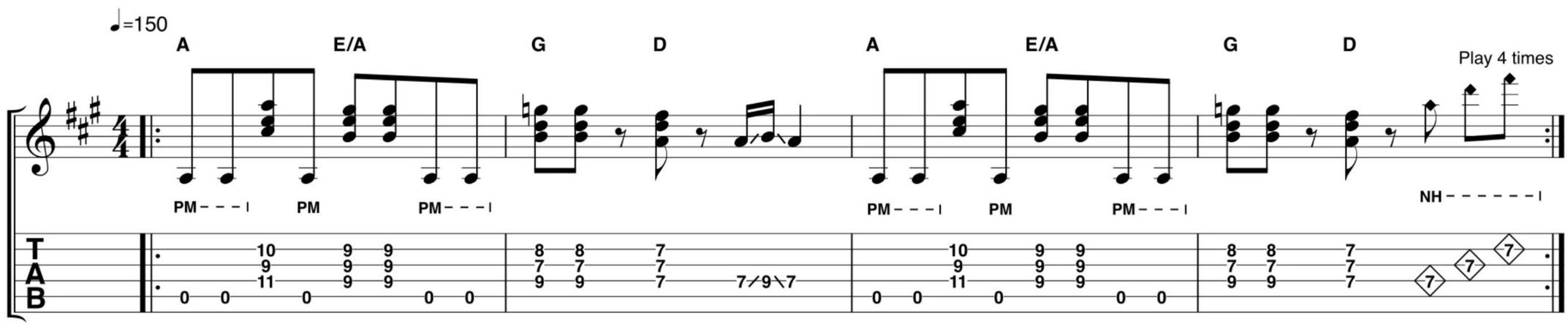
06

ODD TIME, FUNK, RHYTHM AND LEAD

Get creative and take your rhythm playing even further with three open-ended musical concepts

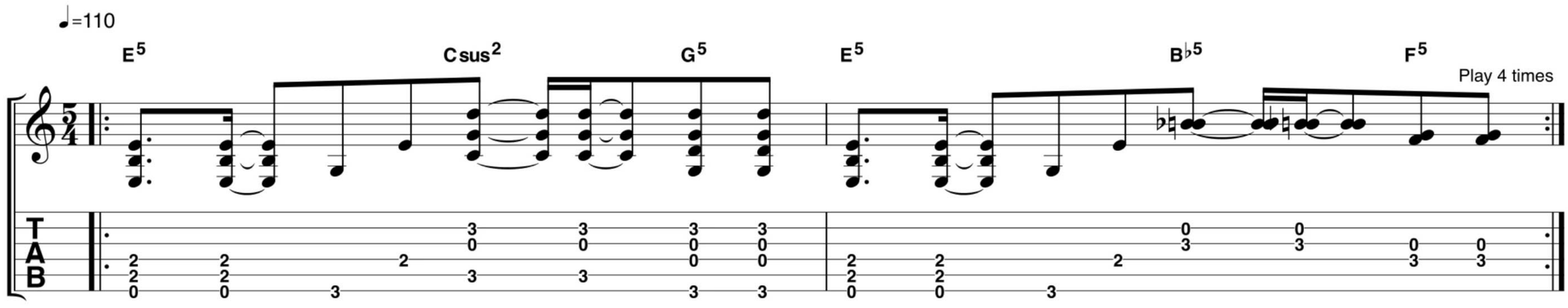
We round off our rhythm lesson with three broad concepts. First is the idea of combining rhythm and lead guitar. Most players do this and bands with only one guitarist are the main exponents: Rush, Van Halen and Jimi Hendrix for example. It's a vast topic, so it's perhaps better to focus your practice on rhythm and lead separately and rely on inspiration to bring your ideas together. We're also looking at odd time and 16th-note style funk rhythms. And if you're bitten by the odd time bug, take a look at Classic Track on p68 where Soundgarden's *Outshined* weaves through 7/4, 4/4, 6/4 and 5/8 time signatures. For now, try our bite-sized example in 5/4.

IN THE BACK OF THE VAN — TRACK 46



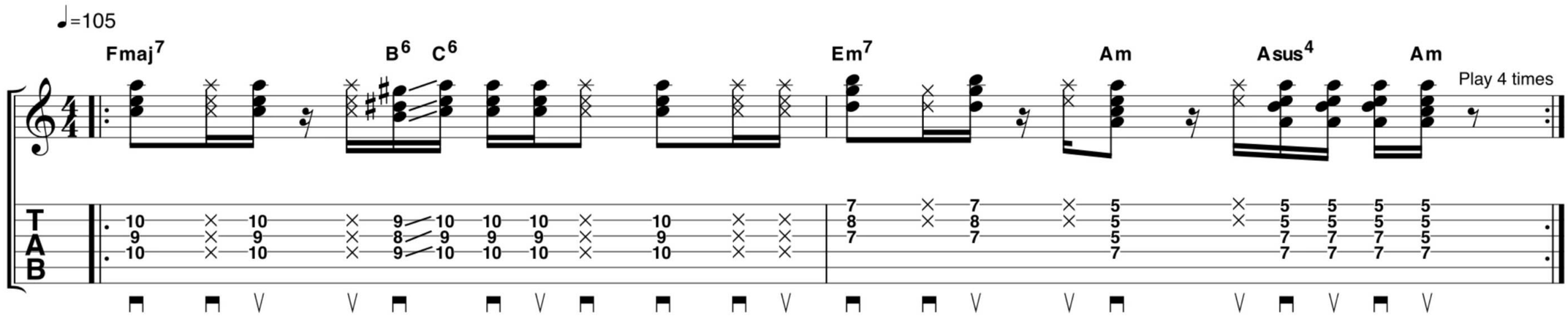
Few guitarists are as adept at combining rhythm and lead as Eddie Van Halen. Our EVH-inspired line features melodic flourishes at the end of bars 2 and 4. It's a great way to give your riffs a lift, so, if you're struggling, try omitting the preceding D chord to begin with rather than ditching the colourful melodic bits.

ODD TIME — TRACK 47



Any guitarist working on their rhythm skills needs to think about common time and odd time. The former is 4/4 time, where, in general, you'll count to four to keep time. Our riff is in the 'odd' time signature of 5/4, so you'll count to five. Listen to bands like Soundgarden and Rush for some odd time inspiration.

GET FUNKY — TRACK 48



Nile Rodgers and his Fender Stratocaster (nicknamed 'The Hitmaker') have featured on countless top 40 hits, initially with Chic but also with Duran Duran, David Bowie and Daft Punk. You'll need a steady down-up style strumming approach to get close to his style. Aim to strike only two or three strings at one time for the full funky effect.

DOING TIME!

TIME SIGNATURES EXPLAINED

1 4/4

4/4 is so commonly used that it's known in music theory as 'common time'. Count to four to keep time.

HEAR IT! AC/DC - *Back In Black*

2 3/4

Only three beats per bar here. Just like 4/4 then, but, er, one beat shorter, obviously!

HEAR IT! The Beatles - *Norwegian Wood*

3 5/4

Predictably, a bar of 5/4 music has five beats. Count either '1 2 1 2 3' or '1 2 3 1 2', depending on the song, and emphasise the '1's to feel the pulse.

HEAR IT! Primus - *Here Come The Bastards*

4 6/8

6/8 time has six eighth notes in every bar. Count '1 & a 2 & a' and emphasise the '1' and the '2'. It's harder to say '1 2 3 4 5 6' while you're playing!

HEAR IT! Gary Moore - *Still Got The Blues*

5 12/8

12/8 is the same as two bars of 6/8. Sometimes you can just count '1 2 3 4', making it feel like a mix of 4/4 and 6/8 time.

HEAR IT! Wolfmother - *Woman*

HOW TO

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- ✔ How to be more creative with arpeggios
- ✔ How to apply mini arpeggios all over the fretboard
- ✔ How to tighten up your coordination between the two hands

20 MINUTES TO...

BETTER ARPEGGIOS

Play creative, musical lines and learn some essential arpeggios without immersing yourself in fretboard diagrams and techniques. Learn while you burn!

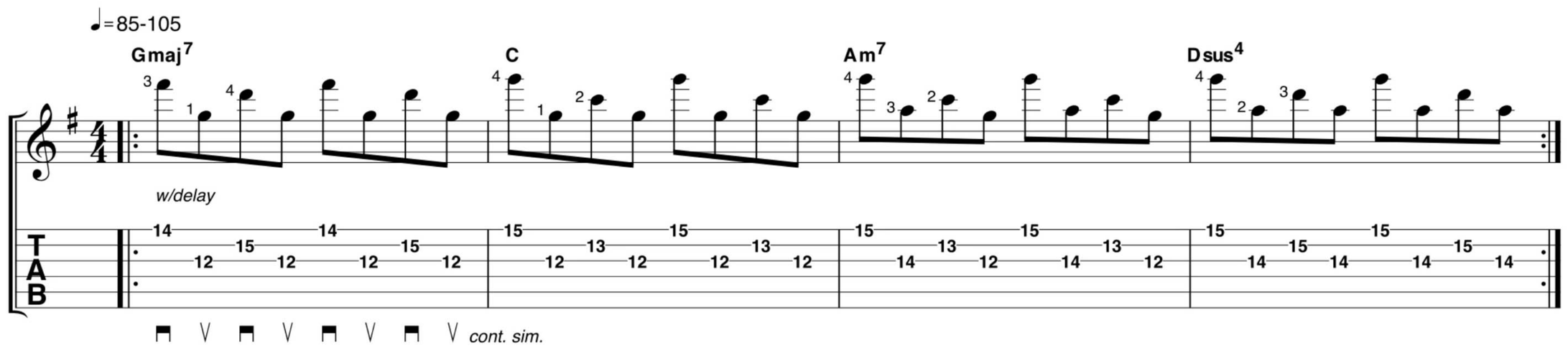
This guide to arpeggios is all about real-world guitar playing and applying some nifty, musical ideas to your jam sessions. Learning this way will help you to absorb our riffs and licks without the need for diagrams or metronomes, allowing you to be more creative when improvising.

And, though we're not focusing on shred guitarists, that's not to say there won't be one or two technical challenges. We've instead looked to guitarists such as Mark Knopfler, David Gilmour, The Edge, Gary Moore and Misha Mansoor – who are all players that use arpeggios in creative, and, dare we say it, more musical ways!

Within each example there are, of course, important shapes to be learned. However, the really great thing about the guitar is that it's relatively easy to extrapolate these ideas across the fretboard and into different keys.

As ever, we have four examples for you, all played slowly and then up to speed on your downloadable audio files.

EDGE STYLE DELAY — TRACK 7



This eighth-note riff played with a 'dotted' eighth-note delay (at 529ms and 428ms respectively) gives you The Edge's ambient vibe. Focus on making swift, tidy chord changes – we've shown the fingering next to the notes at the start of each bar. Notice how these shapes are based on open chords, just played an octave higher.

Guitars and backing: Steve Allsworth

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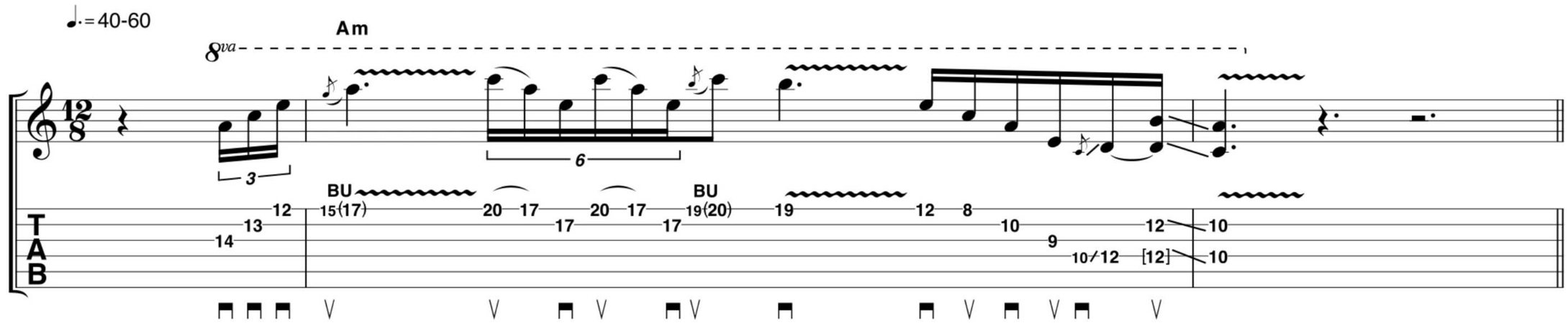
PINK FLOYD INSPIRED LEAD

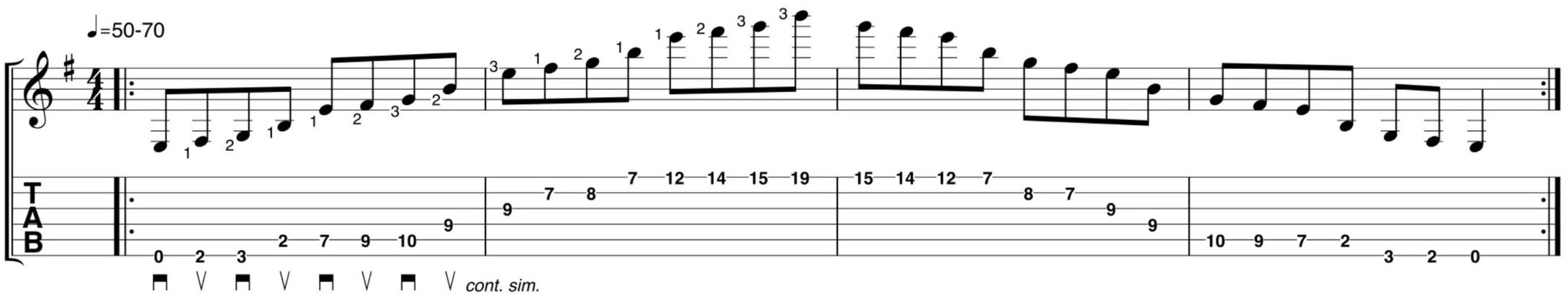
TRACK 8



This bluesy lick outlines A minor arpeggios throughout. First, a three-string shape, which you can play with a single down-pick (known as sweep picking) or with three individual pick strokes. Second is a minor pentatonic phrase – it's still an arpeggio! We round things off with a bigger shape, which may take a little more practice.

HARD ROCK MINOR LICK

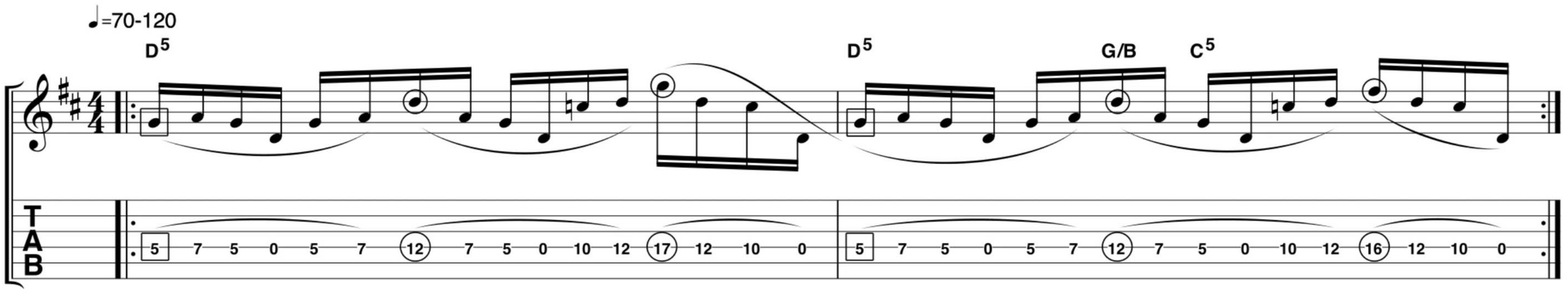
TRACK 9



This E minor arpeggio includes the 9th interval (an F# note) that's a particular favourite of players like Gary Moore and Paul Gilbert. Part of the challenge here is the middle part of the arpeggio as you cross three strings – essentially you use an open Am chord shape for the last note of bar 1 and the first two notes of bar 2.

TAPPED ARPEGGIO

TRACK 10



With fret-hand mobility you can cover nearly the length of the fretboard here in this Misha Mansoor inspired tapping lick – that means using a pick-hand finger to 'tap' the circled notes. The fret-hand part is identical in both the 5th fret position and the 10th. Move your finger away from the 12th fret before your fret hand gets there!

PRACTICE PLAN

1. **One minute: Play through one exercise slowly**
2. **Two minutes: Slow down further and focus on tricky parts such as position shifts**
3. **Two minutes: Gradually build your playing speed**
4. **Try out the other examples**

Examples 1 and 2 can easily be moved around the fretboard to other key signatures. It's a quick way to change the sound and you might just fire off some new creative ideas too. Examples 3 and 4 include open strings, so, if you plan to transpose either lick, make sure to bear this in mind. Simply fret the relevant note if you're moving Example 3; Example 4 works better if you move the lick onto another string. Try also tapping different notes to take the lick into new melodic territory.

HOW TO

GETTING STARTED WITH...

PALM MUTING

Try out this easy guitar technique, as heard in rock, metal, funk, disco and more...

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ Master the basic palm muting technique
- ✔ Identify the chunky, dry sound of palm muting
- ✔ Play two palm-muted rock guitar riffs

"What's palm muting all about then?"
This technique proves that there's truth to the old adage that a guitarist's tone is 'all in the hands', as you'll be using your pick hand to control your strings' resonance and give them a dry, chunky sound. Palm muting is easy, so any guitarist can have a go.

"Easy sounds good! Can you recommend some music to check out?"
Sure! This technique is used extensively in heavy metal rhythm, so, for instance, the riff at 0:04 in Metallica's *Master Of Puppets* mixes palm-muted single notes with un-muted powerchords. Green Day's *Basket Case* also swaps between muted and un-muted notes. For a lighter feel, the opening rhythm guitar line in Tom Petty's *I Won't Back Down* is played with palm mutes. The technique is much used in funk and disco too, but it's often combined with fret-hand muting, so it can be hard to hear which hand is creating the effect.

"Plenty to listen to then. How do I get started?"
Take a look at the boxout on the right where we've outlined some basics. All you have to do is dampen your guitar's sound ever so slightly by placing your hand on the strings near the bridge. Naturally it's a balance – move your hand too far onto the strings and you'll mute them out all together. Aim for somewhere between completely un-muted or totally deadened.

"It's quite easy but my sound isn't great. Any tips?"
A dirtier sound can really help palm-muted riffs cut through. Try upping the gain and treble on your amp or using an overdrive or distortion pedal. It's fine to use a clean sound, but you may find you need to be more accurate with your palm mutes.

"Got it! Shall we play some music?"
Good idea! Our first riff, tabbed below, shows a simple hard rock powerchord idea. The G5 chord is easy, but notice that the first downstroke is played without muting. Remember what we said about *Basket Case*? This is it in a nutshell – a mix of muted and un-muted notes provides contrast.

"I get it. The first chord is loud and the others are dry and chunky. What's next?"
Our second tab example is a bit more involved. You'll need to take care as you switch between muted single notes and un-muted diads (two-note shapes). Pro tip! Position your palm mute on the bass strings so that the diads on the higher strings ring out clearly.

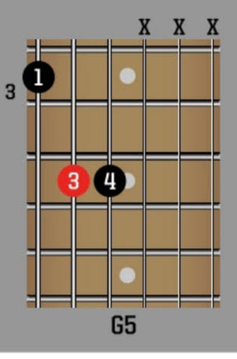
IT'S ALL IN THE HANDS...

PALM MUTING EXPLAINED

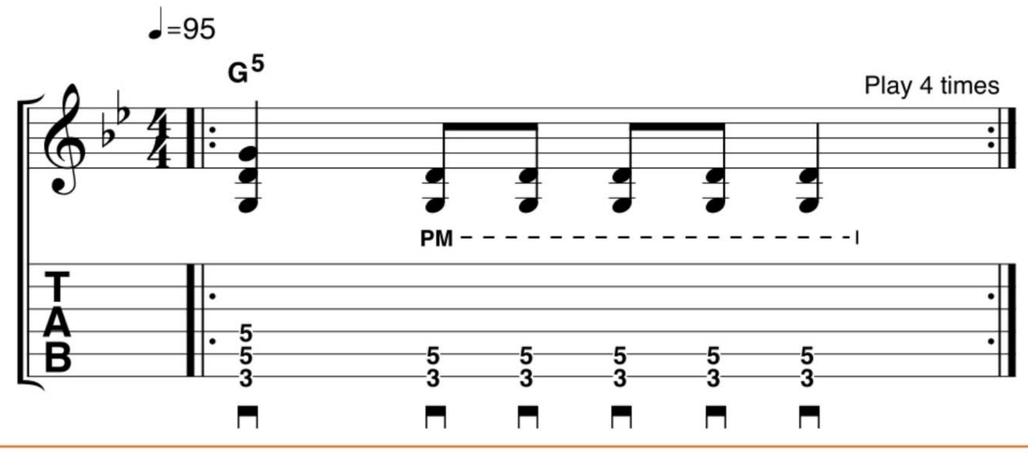
STEP 1 Hold your pick comfortably and rest the side of your palm on the strings where they meet the bridge. Fret a note and pick the string to see how it sounds.

STEP 2 Gradually move your hand farther onto the strings for a stronger dampening effect or onto the bridge to allow the strings to ring out more clearly.

STEP 3 You've tried a single note, now try fretting this G5 powerchord. Position your pick hand so that you mute out all three of the guitar's bass strings.

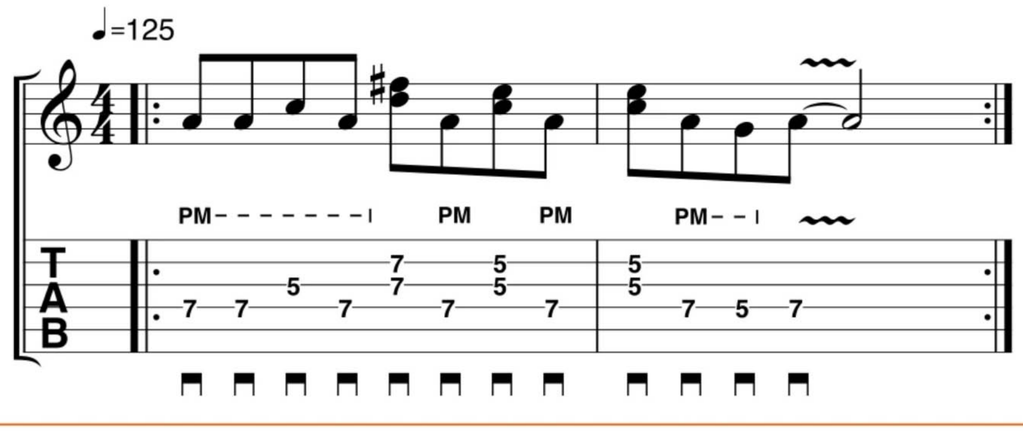


1 BASIC POWERCHORD RIFF — TRACKS 11-12



The first G5 chord rings out, totally un-muted. From there, simply place the side of your pick hand on the strings to give a chunky rock style muted sound.

2 FUNKY HARD ROCK — TRACKS 13-14



Here the un-muted two-note shapes contrast with the damped sound of the palm-muted single notes. Add vibrato to the final note to make it sing.

DOWNLOAD FROM FileSilo FOLDER 2

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ How the Aeolian and major scales are related
- ✔ The character and mood of the Aeolian mode
- ✔ Jimi Hendrix-style chord progression and lick

HOW TO

WHAT THE F?

AEOLIAN MODE

Get a feel for the dark, moody sound of minor key music with TG's look at the Aeolian mode

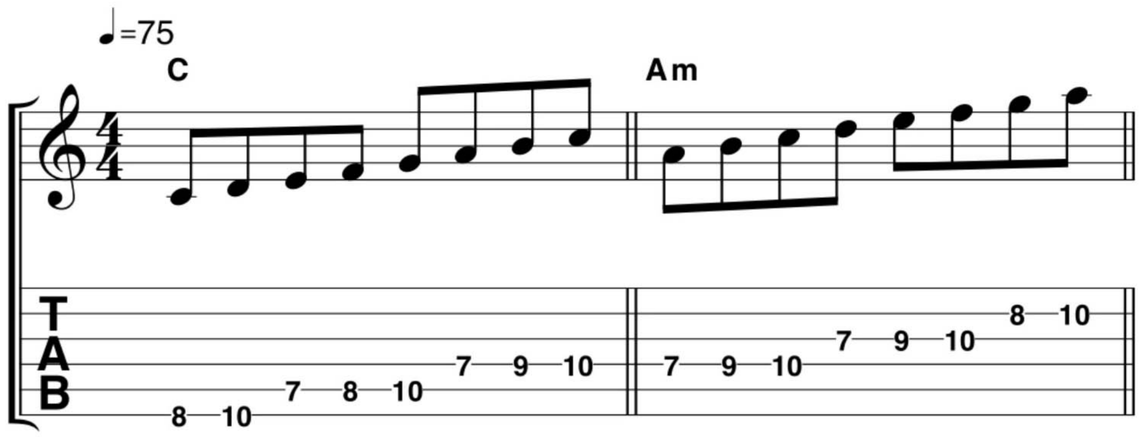
As we've said before the easiest way to understand modes is to think of them as re-workings of the major scale, simply starting on a note that isn't the root. The Aeolian mode is no different. Just start on the sixth note of the major scale and you'll be playing this mode. Hopefully, for instance, you can see that C major (C D E F G A B) gives you A Aeolian (A B C D E F G). This mode is a special example because it actually has two names, due to also being known as the natural minor scale. The reason for this is that the Aeolian mode is the scale that minor keys use.

1 C MAJOR AND A AEOLIAN SCALES

TRACK 15

Despite using the same notes, the gap between the first and third notes in the Aeolian mode (A and C) is a minor 3rd (three semitones) compared to a major 3rd in the major scale (four semitones between C and E). The minor 6th and 7th intervals are also a semitone narrower, giving the mode its trademark moody sound.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 C major
C D E F G A B C D E F G A
A Aeolian 1 2 ♭3 4 5 ♭6 ♭7 8



Here we're playing C major and A Aeolian. The notes are the same, but listen out for a dark, moody sound in the Aeolian mode thanks to its minor intervals.

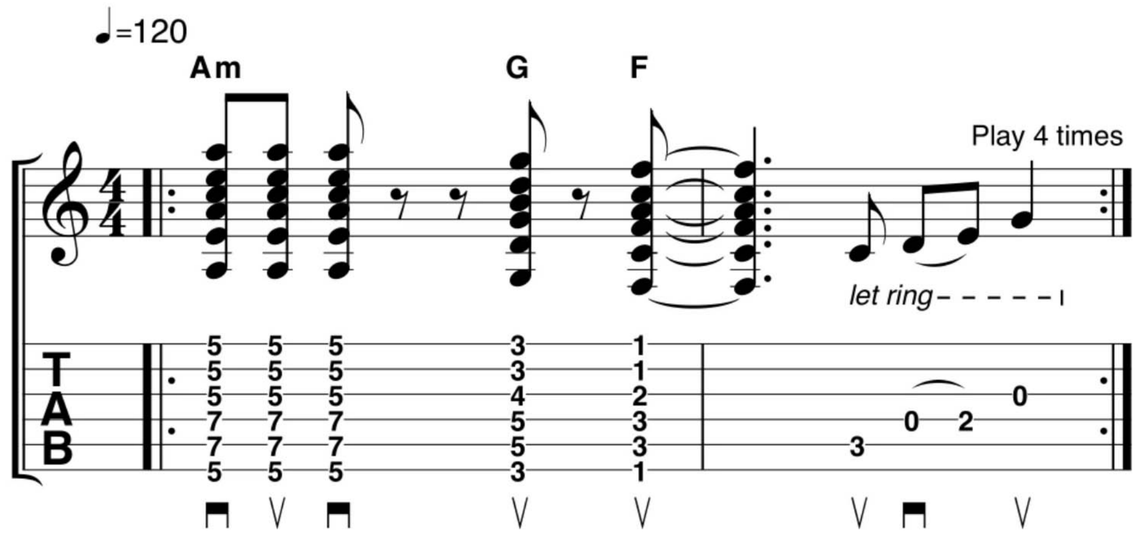
2 CHORDS IN THE AEOLIAN MODE

TRACK 16

These are some basic chords you can play using the notes of A Aeolian. Remember, because the two scales share the same notes, you'll find the same chords in C major – just starting on C instead. Any progression of these chords with Am as its root can be described as an Aeolian piece of music.

A AEOLIAN:
1. Am
2. Bdim
3. C
4. Dm
5. Em
6. F
7. G

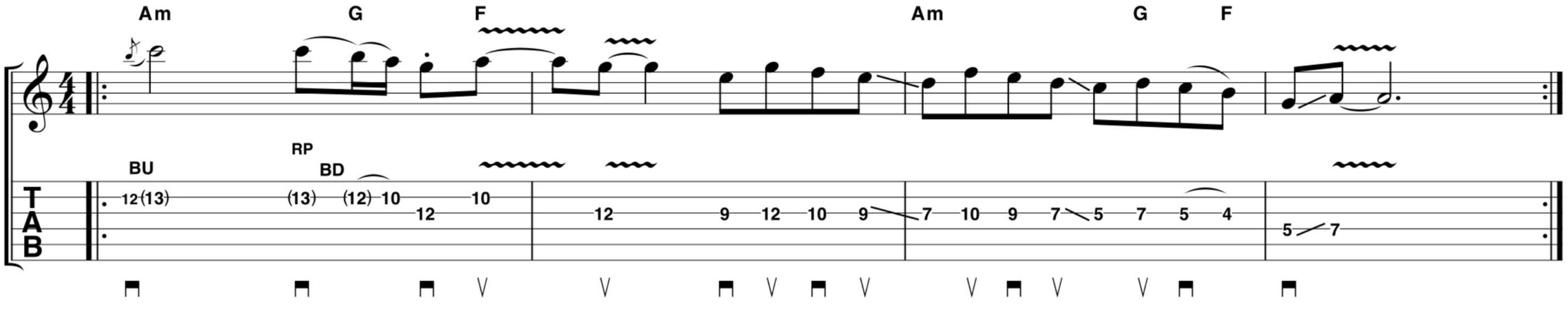
C MAJOR:
1. C
2. Dm
3. Em
4. F
5. G
6. Am
7. Bdim



This *All Along The Watchtower* style chord progression uses Am, G and F chords. Try experimenting by adding in other chords from A Aeolian, such as C or Em.

3 AEOLIAN LEAD LICK

TRACK 17-18



This lick uses the A Aeolian mode exclusively. Remember, the notes are the same as C major, but the Am chord *feels* like a natural resting place for the music and that's why there's an Aeolian sound. We've finished the lick on an A note to help bring it to a natural sounding conclusion.

Words Joe Bosso / Photography Joby Sessions

BEHOLD PAUL GILBERT

EVER THE SONIC EXPLORER, PAUL GILBERT REVEALS HOW JAZZ, BLUES AND WORKING WITH PLEDGEMUSIC ALL INFORMED HIS NEW ALBUM, *BEHOLD ELECTRIC GUITAR*; AND HOW LOOKING FORWARD CAN SOMETIMES MEAN NODDING TO THE PAST

Every time we think we've got Paul Gilbert pegged, he surprises us. Throughout his solo career – which he began after leaving Mr Big in 1999 and has maintained even after rejoining the group in 2009 – he's continued to push the boundaries of synapse-altering guitar derring-do while staying true to his Beatles-loving roots; his records often alternate between dizzying instrumentals and 60s-tinged, pop-flavoured vocal tunes. Both sensibilities co-exist beautifully – in fact, at times they seem to merge as one – on his latest album, *Behold Electric Guitar*, but he even adds some new colours. Many of his riffs and solos feature stinging, bluesy slide work, and a great deal of his licks are informed by his recent affinity for jazz.

ON FIRE
Paul and one of his Ibanez Fireman signatures live with Mr Big in 2017

"Listening to jazz over the last few years has really opened my ears to how a melody can be handled by an instrumentalist but still have the authority to be gripping to the listener," Gilbert observes. "I didn't hear much jazz as a kid, so it took me a long time to come around to it. It sort of snuck in through the blues door."

Behold Electric Guitar is full of other firsts for Gilbert. It's his debut album for the online direct-to-fan music platform PledgeMusic, and it marks his first time working with Joe Satriani's longtime producer/engineer, John Cuniberti. And that's not all. The astonishing sonic punch and clarity of the record is the result of a "crazy concept" the two decided to try: Gilbert, bassist Roland Guerin, drummer Brian Foxworth and keyboard player Asher Fulero – all new to the guitarist's world – recorded the entire thing live with just one microphone capturing every performance as a listener in the room might hear it. In some ways, the record can be viewed as Gilbert's *Let It Be*, a spontaneous 'warts and all' document.

"It was a very demanding project because we really had to play well," says Gilbert, "but that's exactly what I wanted 'demanding' to be. I much preferred it to, 'Phew... We just spent 10 hours editing and mixing.' I'm in a place right now where doing lots of post-production work just seems like a waste of time. Playing live music and having it finished and sounding great right away makes me feel truly alive. I absolutely get high from it. That's what music is all about for me."

Compositionally, what was your over-arching agenda for *Behold Electric Guitar*?

"My initial ideas are just a starting place. As a record goes along, it becomes more about making discoveries and getting excited about new songs. I guess the main discovery I made this time was how well it worked to write melodies from a vocal perspective – even writing pages of lyrics – and then to use those vocal ideas as a framework for the guitar to take over and play the melody instead.

"It took me a long time to accept the idea that the guitar can take the place of a singer. Since I grew up listening to The Beatles, I always thought that singers should handle the melody, and that the guitar should play chords, riffs or bluesy solos. Blues is like the gateway drug that leads to digging jazz. I really enjoy jazz now, which is totally surprising to me. Letting jazz elements into my playing scares me a little, because I still respect my 16-year-old self as well as all the kids out there who want to rock. At the same time, if I love something, I have to love it. And it's really exciting to me to have opened doors into these new worlds and to be moved by what I find."

"BLUES IS THE DRUG THAT LEADS TO DIGGING JAZZ"

What brought about the move to PledgeMusic? And how is doing an album for them different than working with a traditional label?

"My friend [singer-songwriter] Linus Of Hollywood was doing an album for PledgeMusic, and I asked him how it was going. He was really happy with how it was working for him, so I went to the site, and I saw artists like Joe Satriani, Bon Jovi, Black Sabbath and Judas Priest with various products on there. I felt like I was late to the party, so I talked to my manager, and we decided to try it.

"The biggest surprise to me is how much I enjoyed getting feedback from listeners during the making of the album. In the past, I've always wanted to keep the music top secret until the record was finished. But that can sometimes be a nerve-wracking process, because without any feedback, you don't get a sense if anyone will actually like what you're doing. Self-doubt creeps in and makes you second-guess yourself and you become a bit paranoid and crazy. But from sharing small pieces of the songs on my PledgeMusic video updates along the way, I got lots of encouragement from people, and that really made a difference to my level of sanity as I wrote the album."

Was John Cuniberti's history with Joe Satriani a big factor in working with him? And what made you guys decide to record to one mic?

"I actually heard about John through his *OneMic* project; I was pleasantly surprised to find out that he had worked with Joe Satriani. John had been doing lots of sessions at the Hallowed Halls studio in Portland, where I now live. I was researching the studio, so I checked out videos that John had engineered, and I thought they sounded great. The idea of recording with one microphone really appealed to me. The *OneMic* sessions tended to be quieter acoustic bands with vocals, so I was a little concerned that loud instrumental

Gonzales Photo/PYMCA/Avalon/UIG via Getty

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO JAZZ ROCK
"Letting jazz elements into my playing scares me a little"

guitar music might not be what he was used to. We did a test session to see how it would go, and it turned out great.

"John uses a stereo mic, so it's like a human being with two ears listening to music in a room. Our 'mix' comes from how loud each instrument is relative to its distance from the mic. I found it was really useful for me to wire a boost pedal at the end of my pedalboard, which would increase my overall volume for solos. That worked really well if I used distortion pedals earlier in the chain and I set the amp on clean. I also adjusted my 'monitor mix' by simply walking closer to my amp. It was right next to me, so I could hear it and feel it moving air."

You tried so many daring things on the record. And you used a band you had never worked with before, too.
"That's right. Since I moved to Portland, I wanted to meet some local musicians and see what kind of players were there. I had already done some work in a couple of studios, so I asked the engineers for recommendations, and that's how I heard about Brian and Asher. Brian's groove is just ridiculously solid, and he knows the names of about 27 different kinds of shuffles. And, of course, he can stir up some ferocious fills if a song starts heating up.

"Asher plays a really wide variety of music, and after I hung out with him for just an hour, he had already expanded my horizons. I could also tell that his influences were not just keyboard players; he was really looking outside of his own instrument for inspiration. It's nice to have a fellow seeker aboard.

"As for Roland, I had recently jammed with him at an Ibanez event at Sweetwater Sound, and we got along really well. He's from New Orleans, and he plays bass with all the legendary blues cats there. He also plays upright bass really well, both with fingers and a bow. I asked Roland to come out to Portland early so we could rehearse and prepare for the sessions, and fortunately he had time."

You started writing *I Own A Building* with the intention of it being a vocal song, but you turned it into an instrumental. Why was that?
"The truth is, I'm coming to terms with the limitations of my voice, but I'm still trying to express the melody with my guitar. When I sing, there is an almost

constant struggle with pitch and with reaching notes in the higher register. On guitar, high notes aren't a problem at all. They're there for me whenever I need them."

Your bluesy slide playing on that song is quite striking.
"When I was working on my last record, [2015's] *I Can Destroy*, I discovered I play slide much better when I use my middle finger. Recently, I had some powerful magnets glued into the lower horn of a few of my guitars. This holds a metal slide in place so I can easily get to it and put it back, even in the middle of a song. So I've been able to spend a lot more time with the slide since it's always within reach. The challenge is that I'm always playing slide with standard tuning and light strings. I keep my action on the high side, which is not only good for slide, but it's also good for vibrato and bending when I'm playing normal guitar without the slide."

***Sir, You've Got To Calm Down* starts out with a fiery riff, but then the song eases into a real in-the-pocket, funky groove. Are some of the chords a result of listening to jazz?**
"The main 'unusual' chord is an Eadd9 with the third in the bass. The guitar voicing looks like a Bsus/G♯, but it functions more like an Eadd9/G♯. It's a very moveable shape, so it can get me out of a tangle if I've modulated and can't find my way back."

MR BIG
PG embracing the hair metal scene in 80s LA

Paul Natkin/Getty/Jesse Wild

"MELODIES ON GUITAR ARE A HUGE CHALLENGE"

Along with the Ibanez / Marshall dynamic on the record, did you bring in anything new effects-wise?
"I used a TC Electronic MojoMojo to give me my basic distortion. Then I had a variety of distortion pedals before it, which I used as I needed them. The Supro Drive, the MXR Distortion Plus and the Xotic Effects AC Booster are my favourites. For volume boosts for solos, I used a Supro Boost. For swirly sounds, I used a Mojo Hand Villanova or an MXR Phase 90. And for wah, I like the Dunlop mini Jimi Hendrix Cry Baby.

"I never used to use a reverb or delay pedal, but I've been using them a lot lately – they work so well when the amp is set clean. My delay is a TC Electronic Alter Ego. Reverbs are either a Catalinbread Topanga or a TC Electronic Arena. If I needed stereo chorus, I used a TC Electronic Stereo Chorus Flanger."

You moved from Pennsylvania to LA as a teenager. What are your memories of the hair/shred metal shred scene back then? Did you fit in?
"I think normal attracts normal. I read an unauthorised biography on Yngwie Malmsteen, and he came to LA around the same time I did. But his experiences were so different. I never really saw drugs, alcohol or destructive wildness. I went to music school, practised a lot, researched and listened to new music.

"The big difference from Pennsylvania was that the musicians in LA were much more driven to have a career. They didn't see it as a hobby. And because of that, they would show up to rehearsals and deliver the goods when they played their instruments. I played with some really talented people in my teenage bands in Pennsylvania, but it was hard to get them to commit to music 100 percent."

SLIDE RULES
Paul now has his slides close at hand on some his Ibanez guitars via a magnet on the lower horn

Is there anything on the guitar you'd still like to do that you can't?
"Melodies are still a huge challenge. If I pick up a kazoo, I can play a melody without having to think about it. To play a melody on the guitar, I really have to pay attention. But if I can practice a bit, I can get more expression and tone from the guitar than from the kazoo. It's only going to get easier. And that's when I can go onstage and only think about one concept to get me through the whole night: connection. Connect to the band. Connect to the audience. Connect to the universe if it happens to peek its head into the gig. That feels so good."

***Behold Electric Guitar* and *Vernon Solos* available via pledgemusic.com**

FACE MELTER

Paul's other new release is an unearthed tour-de-shred

Along with *Behold Electric Guitar*, Paul has another new album. Except it's also old. It's called *Vernon Solos* and it's the guitarist back in 1998, playing for an hour straight. And playing hard.
"Racer X used to rent a rehearsal room at an old building in Vernon, California," explains Paul. "It was great because we could leave our gear setup and go in and play at any time of day or night. Playing through a cranked-up, fire-breathing Marshall is a whole lot different than playing at a polite level in an apartment. So I used to show up to rehearsal early to build my instincts on how to control feedback and string noise – as well as to just experience the mild terror you get from being loud. I set up a recorder, plugged in a couple mics and recorded all the scary stuff I was working on at the time. I'm different now than I was then, but I like that kid a lot."

How much tweaking did you have to do to make an old cassette sonically palatable?
"I had heard that old cassette tape can just fall apart, so I was a little nervous when I put this 30-year-old tape in the machine. But it sounded fine, and the guitar playing was even more face melting than I remembered. I sent the audio file to my mastering engineer, Paul Logus, who put a lot more care into his work than I was expecting. It sounded "good enough" from the cassette, but Paul really worked some magic with his gear and ears. I'm excited for people to hear me tearing up the guitar in 1988!"

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HOW TO

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ How to use four of the most important alternate tunings
- ✔ Loads of new chord shapes
- ✔ How to use open E tuning for slide guitar

20 MINUTES TO...

LEARN ALTERED TUNINGS

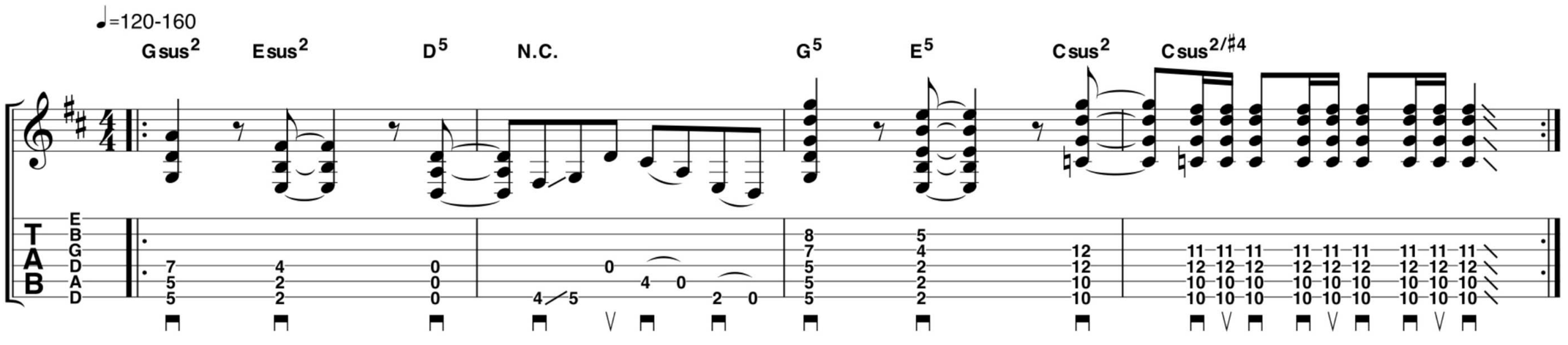
Get to grips with four creative ways to re-tune your guitar with TG's whistle-stop tour of altered tunings

As the first tuning you learn when you start playing the guitar, 'standard' EADGBE tuning should be familiar to most guitarists. Any change to these notes is known as an altered or alternate tuning. There are simply dozens of different tunings to try out, all used primarily as a way to reimagine the fretboard and introduce new sounds and a new way of playing guitar.

In many tunings the notes on the fretboard will seem unfamiliar but what's really fantastic about different tunings is that you can often find new and exciting shapes and sounds purely by accident. Guitarists such as Keith Richards, Kim Thayil and Derek Trucks, amongst many others, use altered tunings to create their unique voice and identity on the guitar.

Your only real concern when using a different tuning is ensuring that your guitar is set up to manage the altered string tension easily. Vibrato systems will make re-tuning really difficult, so a guitar with a fixed bridge is the best option while you experiment.

DROP D POST-GRUNGE RIFF (DADGBE) TRACK 7

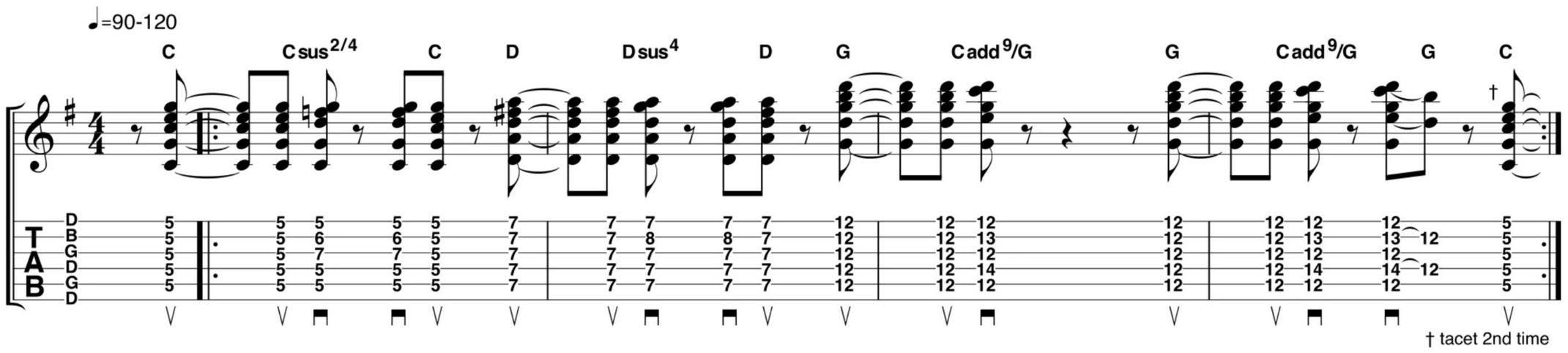


Guitarists often only think of drop D as a way to make easy one-fingered powerchords. As you can see here, a little adjustment on this basic powerchord shape can elicit some interesting intervals such as the sus2 and #4 as well as the almighty two-octave powerchord shown in bar 3, which sounds epic with dollops of distortion.

Guitars and backing: Steve Allsworth

OPEN G STONES STYLE RIFF (DGDGBD)

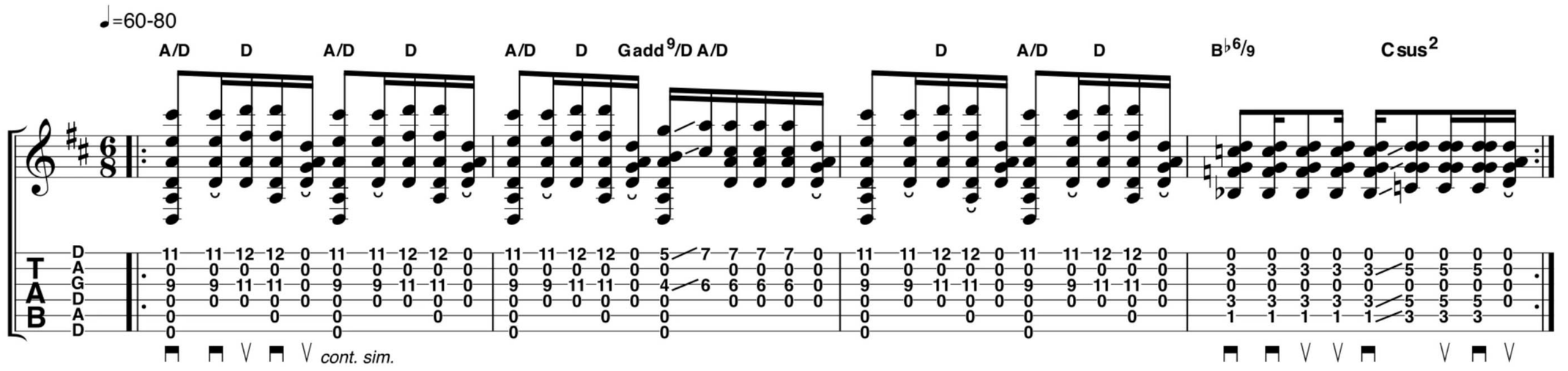
TRACK 8



The classic 'Keef' sound from the Rolling Stones' back catalogue is easy to achieve with this tuning. We've provided a handful of similar chord shapes that sound great as ad libs over major chords. These shapes will work particularly well in a I-IV-V blues progression, but there's nothing to stop you moving them all around the fretboard.

JIMMY PAGE STYLE RIFF (DADGAD)

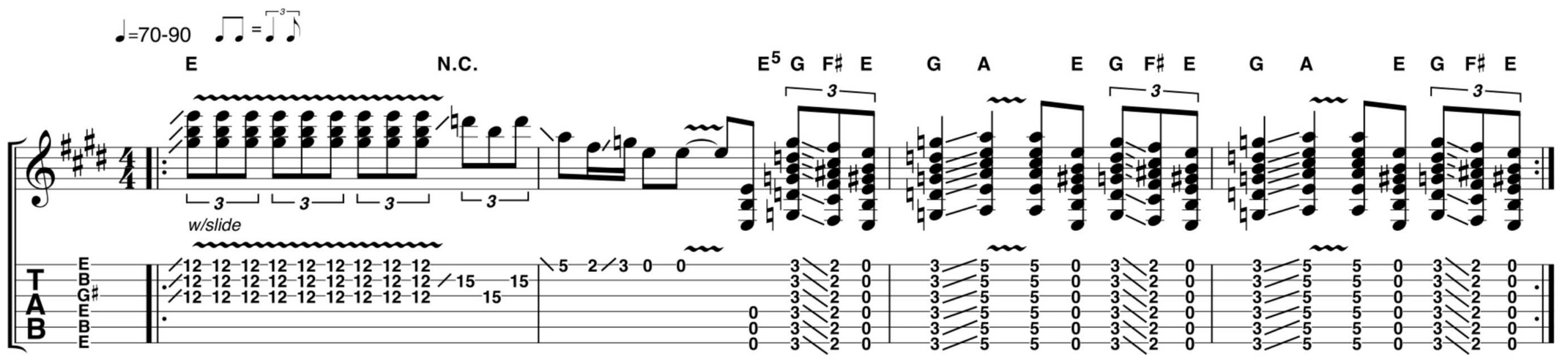
TRACK 9



DADGAD tuning is often associated with fingerstyle folk; Jimmy Page used it in Led Zeppelin's epic *Kashmir* riff. The notes of the tuning form a Dsus4 chord (D G A), and, though it may feel alien at first, its rich, open sound is very rewarding. Notice the semi-circular 'anti-accent' lines under certain chords; these tell you to play more gently.

OPEN E TUNED SLIDE LICK (E B E G# B E)

TRACK 10



Tuning all the strings so that you hear a major chord is ideal for slide guitar. It allows you to place your slide across one fret and pick out any of the six strings. Ideally, place your slide on your third finger, with the first and second fingers sitting on the strings behind the slide to keep string noise to a minimum.

PRACTICE PLAN

1. **One minute: Play through one exercise slowly**
2. **Two minutes: Slow down further and focus on tricky parts such as position shifts**
3. **Two minutes: Gradually build your playing speed**
4. **Try out the other examples**

We recommend using this tutorial's ideas as a springboard for your own ideas in each tuning. Identify chord shapes or short phrases that you like, then try moving them around the neck. There are several different shapes in the DADGAD example that will sound great in other fretboard positions. You could even try the shapes from one tuning in the other tunings! After all, the whole idea of altered tunings is to totally re-order the notes and make you think outside the box!

HOW TO

GETTING STARTED WITH...

THE MAJOR PENTATONIC SCALE

Get your solos on track the easy way with a look at a scale used by countless rock legends

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ Two major pentatonic lead licks
- ✔ A commonly-used scale shape
- ✔ Creative soloing ideas

"I've heard lots of guitarists talk about scales. Why are they important?"
One of the most challenging things about playing the guitar is deciding which notes to play. Now remember, a scale is a run of notes that sound good together, so, by learning a few shapes, you'll take some of the guesswork out of choosing those all-important notes.

"Is it a lead thing or a does it apply to chords?"
Both but working out chords from scales can be quite tough until you've got a handful of shapes under your belt, so we'll stick to soloing here.

"Cool. How do I get started?"
In the boxout on the right you'll see two illustrations of the C major pentatonic scale. The first picture tells you which fingers to use. Play one note at a time starting on the lowest pitched note to get a feel for the scale. The second picture tells you what the notes are.

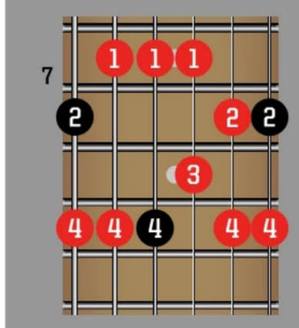
"It's easy enough but it's pretty boring. Does anyone really use it?"
Sure! The scale can be heard extensively in blues-rock with players like Eric Clapton and Jimmy Page making their careers out of pentatonic soloing. The scale's bright feel makes it well suited to major key solos such as Lynyrd Skynyrd's *Sweet Home Alabama*. Pentatonics aren't the preserve of 70s rock, with acts like Pearl Jam, Arctic Monkeys and Rival Sons making use of the vital shapes.

"How do I turn the scale into music?"
Think about creative approaches. Try playing two notes at the same time, or have a go at messing with the timing of the scale notes to inject space and rhythm into your ideas. Or, try 'skipping' over a string or playing longer runs up and down through the scale. Have a look at our tab examples, which explore these ideas.

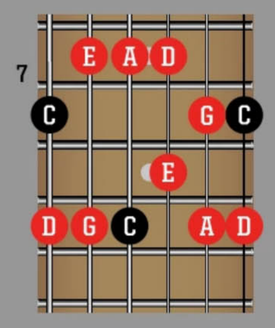
"The tab's great, but does the scale work over any chord progression?"
No! The C major pentatonic scale will always sound good over a C chord or other chords made up of notes from the scale. G major pentatonic sounds great over a G chord, A major pentatonic over A, and so on.

UPSCALED...

All you need to know about this vital scale



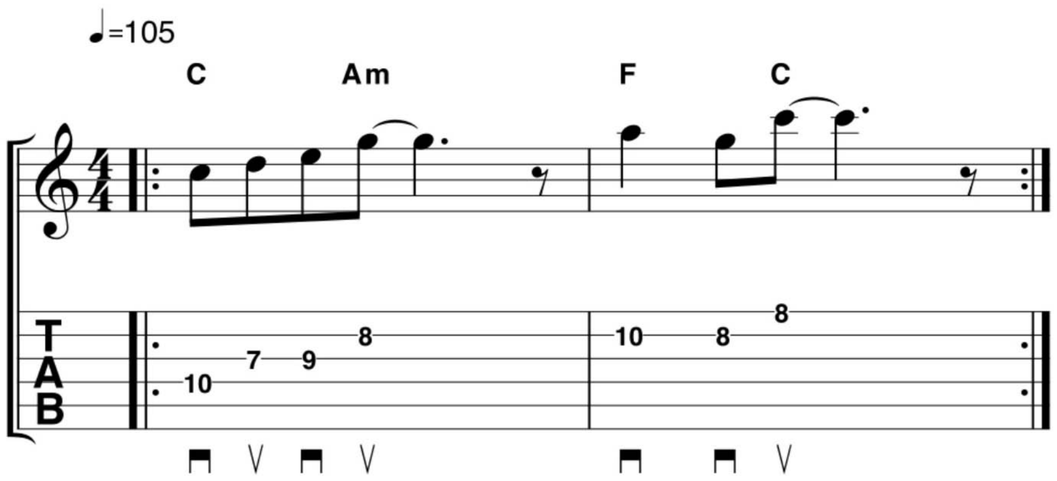
1. USE THE RIGHT FINGERS
The numbers tell you which fretting fingers to use. A '1' refers to your index finger, '4' is your little finger, and '2' and '3' are in between.



2. LEARN THE NOTES
There are five notes: C, D, E, G and A. After the A the scale starts again on another C note. Note that we've coloured the C root notes black.

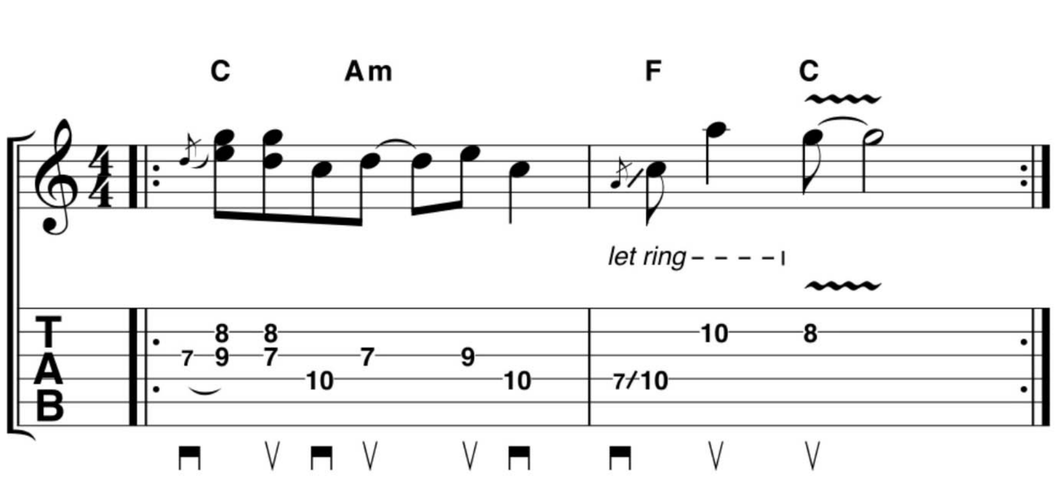
3. WHAT'S IN A NAME?
Just as with chords, 'major' refers to the scale's bright sound. Minor scales have a dark, sad feel. The word 'pentatonic' tells you that there are five (penta-) notes or 'tones' (-tonic), C, D, E, G and A.

1 THINK INSIDE THE BOX — TRACK 11



This lick is a run of notes from the major pentatonic scale. We've timed the notes to help bring each phrase to a natural end on each chord change.

2 CREATIVE IDEAS — TRACKS 12-13



Lots of ideas for you here! Our lick uses two-note shapes, notes played out of the order they appear in the scale and we've even skipped over a string in bar 2.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ How 3/4 time relates to 4/4
- ✔ How to keep time in 3/4
- ✔ Rhythm and lead ideas in 3/4 time

HOW TO

WHAT THE F?

3/4 TIME

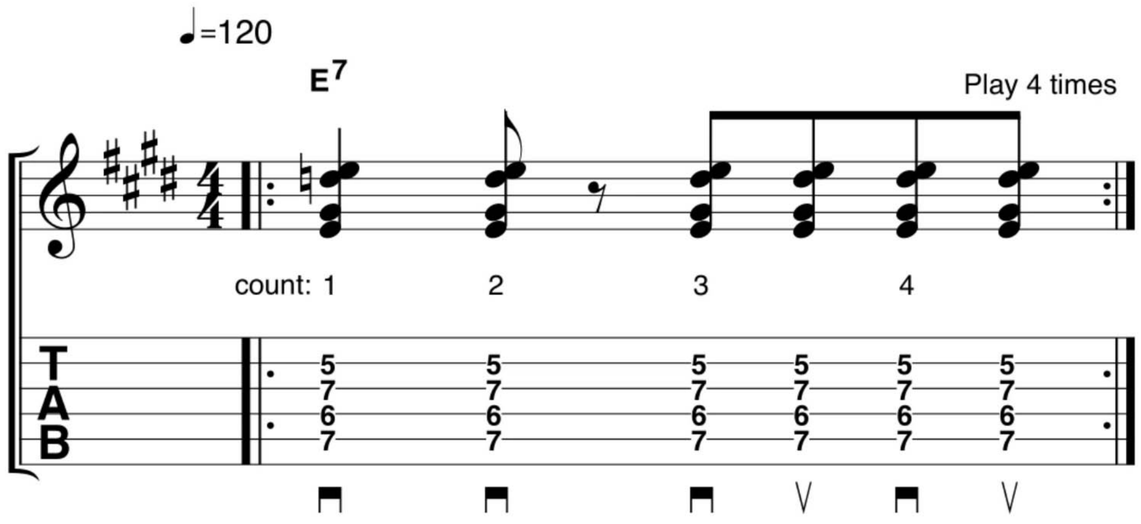
Master the basics of this easy time signature complete with rhythm and lead tab examples

3/4 is a simple time signature – with three pulses in each bar, count to three along with the music to get the timing down. A kick–snare–snare drumbeat outlines the 3/4 feel in Elliott Smith's *Waltz #2*, with chord changes on beat 1 of each bar underpinning the groove. The verse in *Free Me* by Foo Fighters has a similar feel but with an emphasis on beat 3 from a ringing guitar chord. The Beatles' *Norwegian Wood* achieves its 3/4 feel with McCartney and Harrison's guitars accenting bass notes on beat 1 and striking other notes on beats 2 and 3.

1 4/4 TIME

TRACKS 14-15

4/4 is the most common time signature in music. The first '4' tells you there are four beats in every bar of music; the second '4' tells you each beat has a quarter-note rhythm. Unless the music you're playing has lots of stop-start rhythms you should be able to count to four to stay in time. Remember, 4/4 still allows there to be more than four notes or strums – you might need to count '1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &' to include eighth notes for example.

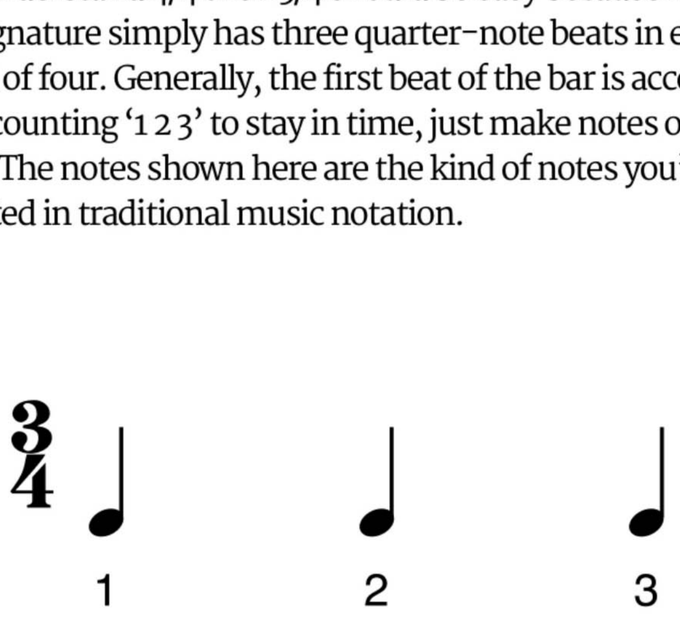


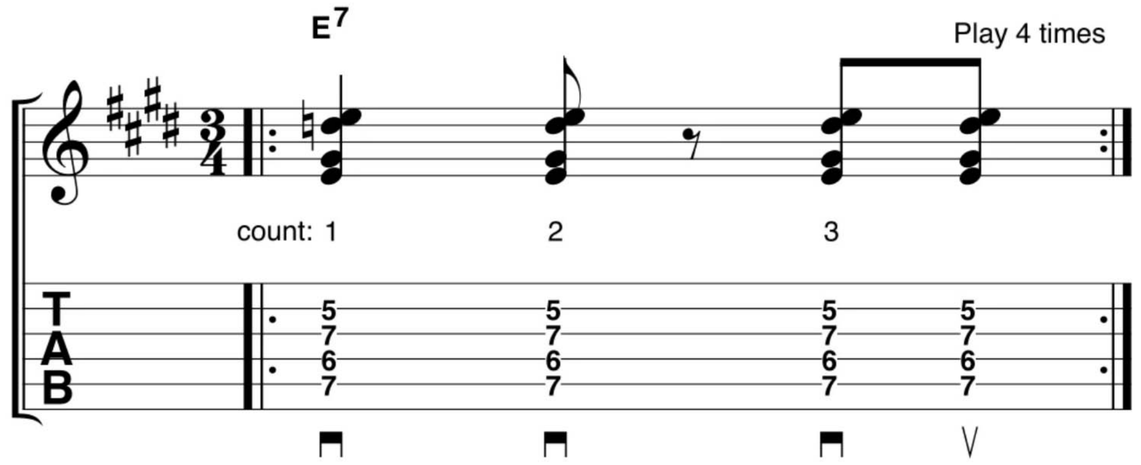
Here's a simple E7 chord played in 4/4 time. Counting to four will help you stay in time; strum downwards on the numbers and upwards in between.

2 3/4 TIME

TRACK 16

If you understand 4/4 then 3/4 should be easy because music in this time signature simply has three quarter-note beats in each bar instead of four. Generally, the first beat of the bar is accented, so, if you're counting '1 2 3' to stay in time, just make notes on the '1' a bit louder. The notes shown here are the kind of notes you'll see presented in traditional music notation.

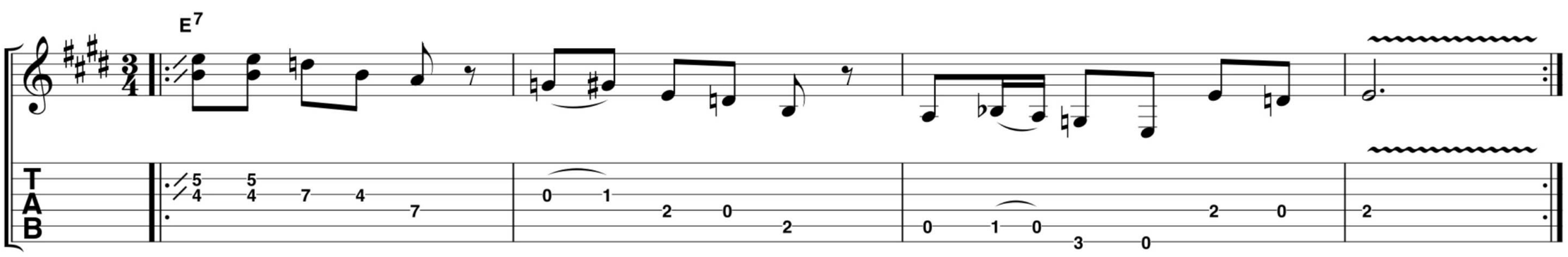




Compare this track to our 4/4 example – it's obvious that there are three beats not four. More important is the feel – the 'kick, snare, snare' drumbeat outlines the groove.

3 LEAD LICK

TRACKS 17-18



There's no such thing as a 'typical' 3/4 lick. Our example has a blue-rock vibe but most time signatures are found in most styles of music. Still, notice how we've phrased our lick to bring out the 3/4 feel. New phrases begin right at the start of bars 1, 2 and 3, emphasising the all-important first beat of the bar.

WORDS
JON BISHOP, CHRIS BIRD, ROB LAING
GUITARS AND BACKING
JON BISHOP
PHOTOGRAPHY
PHIL BARKER

ESSENTIAL BLUES

Improve your playing and upgrade your tone on a budget as TG looks at everything you need to know for better blues

It's fair to say that blues in 2019 has evolved from the styles of the early greats, but just how much has really changed? Though countless contemporary guitarists are writing new material and creating their own styles, many chords, song structures and techniques of the pioneers remain at the heart of modern blues. And that means there's a 'vocabulary' to learn – a thread of essential phrases and tricks that'll get you playing authentically, whether you prefer your blues traditional or bang up to date. With that in mind, here we guide you through all you need to know to be a better blues player. From standard turnarounds, rhythms and lead phrasing to fuzz-fuelled lo-fi riffing and octaver effect lines we've got you covered. And with technique comes the inevitable question of tone as we filter the best budget gear that's guaranteed to give you a boutique boost. Plug in, turn the page and get your mojo working!

GET AUDIO FILES
Head over to **filesilo.co.uk/TG-Annual2020** to download your audio files

GET YOUR MOJO WORKING
Learn the blues basics – from string rakes to classic turnaround tricks

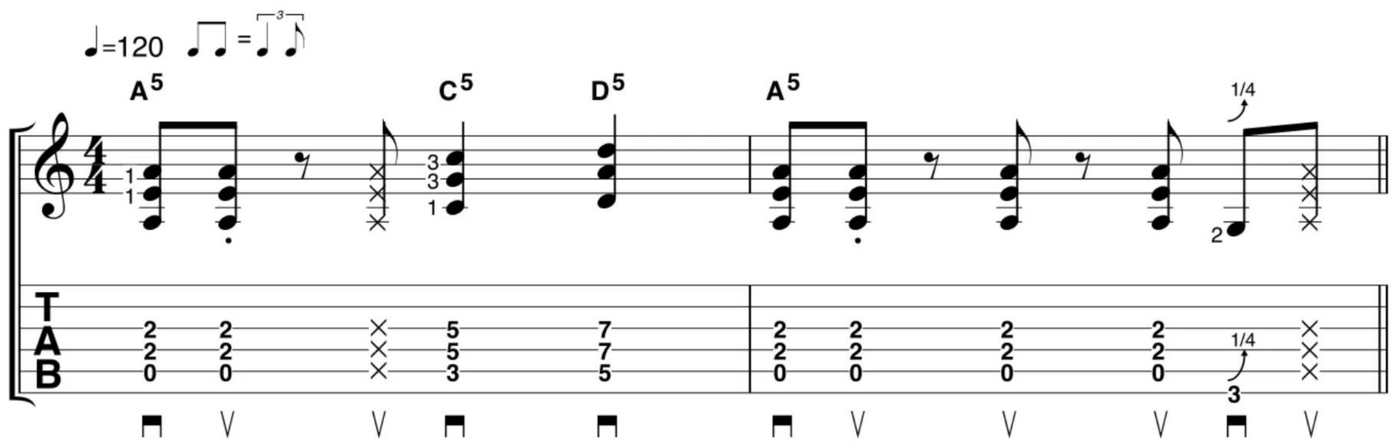
BLUES YOU CAN USE...

The blues guitar skills every player should have

The traditional blues players of the 1920s through to the 60s established many song structures, chords and guitar techniques. It's testament to the quality and enduring popularity of these artists that so much of the identity of their playing can still be heard in today's blues music. Less well known is that blues is at the heart of much of the rock and metal that would emerge from the 70s on – so there's something for everyone to learn. What more reason do you need to follow our lesson on some core blues basics?

01 SIMPLE REPEATING BOOGIE RIFF

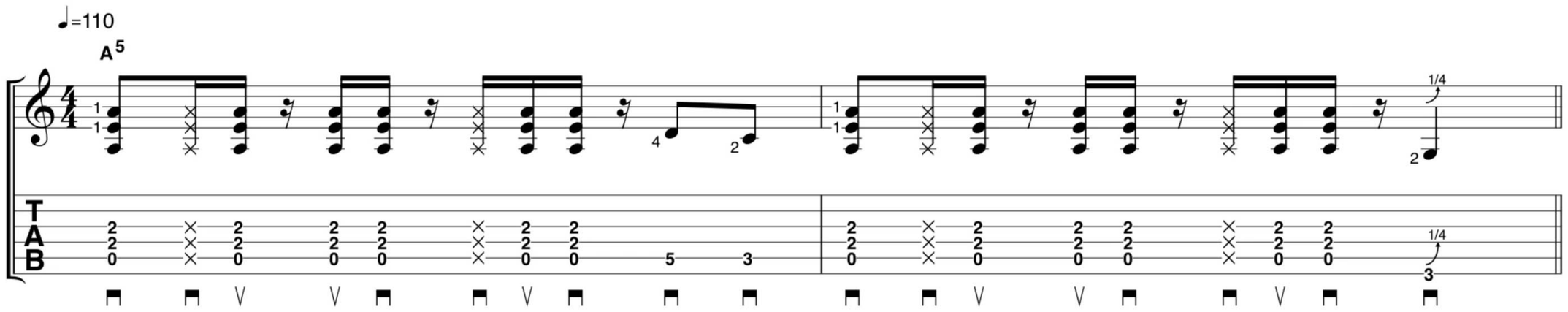
TRACK 16



Get jamming the easy way with this good old-fashioned blues boogie riff in the style of the great John Lee Hooker. Based around an A root note, this line can easily be taken through a standard 12-bar blues progression (A-D-E) by shifting the pattern up one string to a D shape riff and down one string set for the E chord.

02 RHYTHM AND BLUES GROOVE

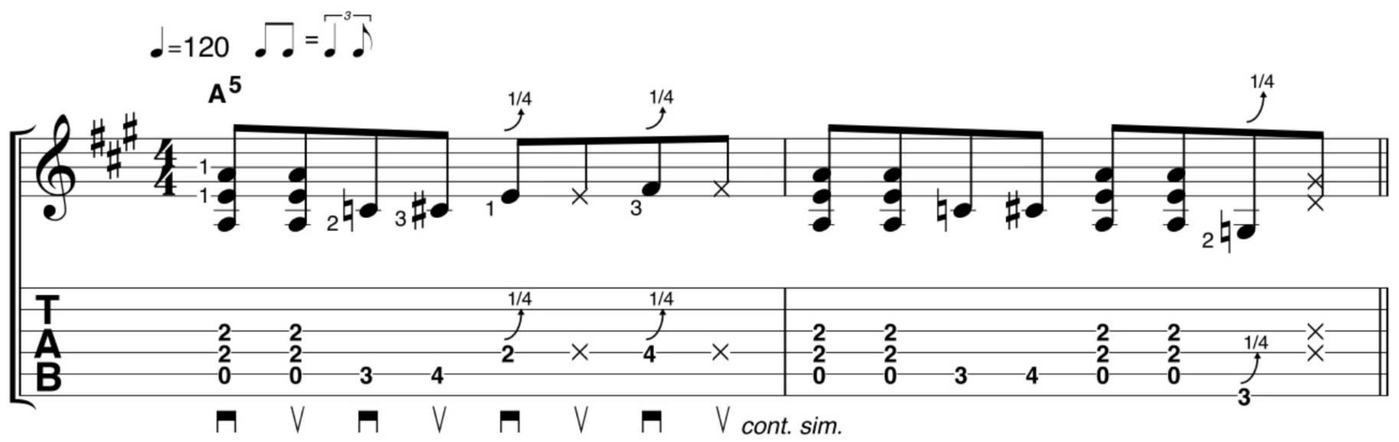
TRACK 17



This rhythm is often associated with blues and rock 'n' roll great Bo Diddley, but it's been adapted by many artists including The Rolling Stones in *Not Fade Away*, Bruce Springsteen in *She's The One* and even George Michael in *Faith*. It's all about the rhythm and timing, so strum slowly at first, then try using some other chords you know.

03 SHUFFLE FEEL BASSLINE

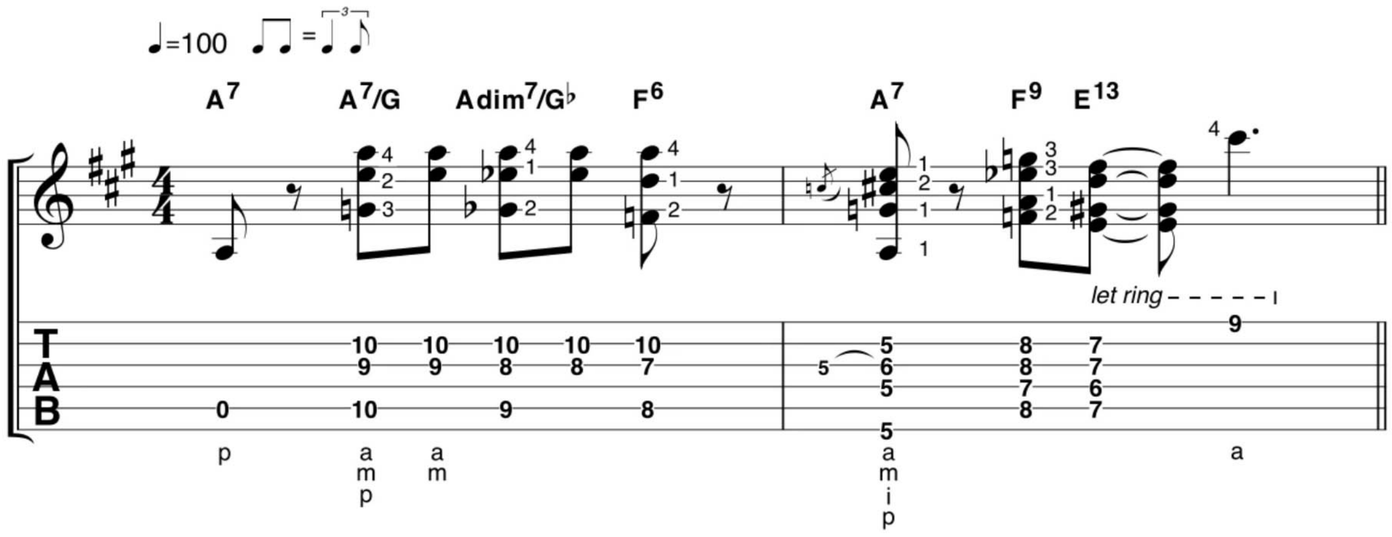
TRACK 18



Stevie Ray Vaughan was famed for the shuffle rhythms and ferocious lead work he'd coax from his 'Number One' Strat. Here, a blues bassline is weaved around some easy powerchords – you get the weight of the chords, while the bassline outlines a more sophisticated harmony. Listen to SRV's *Pride And Joy* and *Rude Mood* for inspiration.

04 BLUES TURNAROUND

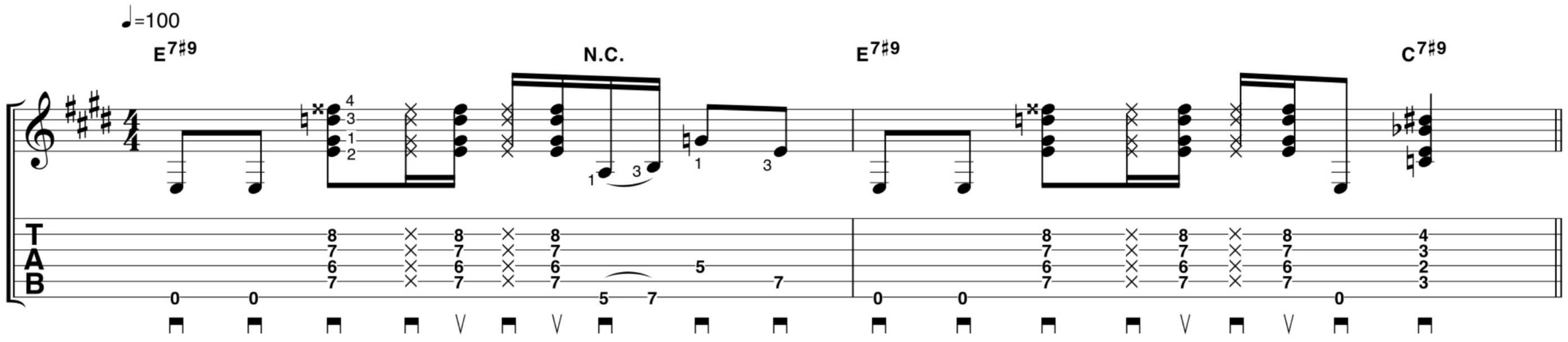
TRACK 19



Our turnaround is in the style of players like Eric Clapton who adapted Robert Johnson-style changes for electric blues. Playing fingerstyle will help all the melody notes and the descending bass notes all ring out clearly.

05 FUNK-ROCK AND BLUES RHYTHMS

TRACK 20



Jimi Hendrix was a master of mixing funky rock and blues ideas. Here, one of his favourite chords (the 7♯9, often dubbed the Hendrix chord) is played in both E and C. In the single-note part of the riff you can pull the 5th fret G note slightly sharp for a dirty bluesier flavour.

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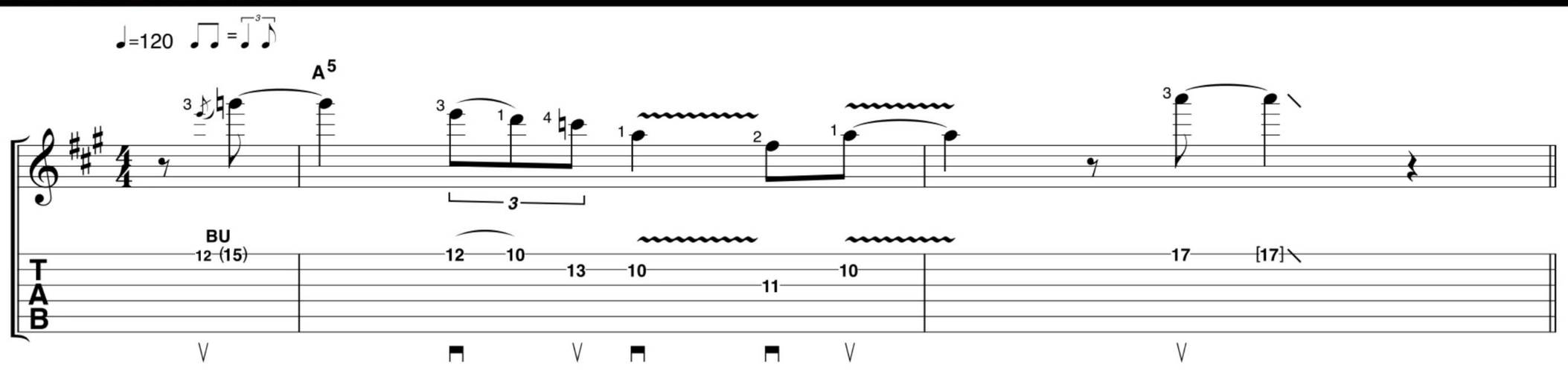
06 BB KING-STYLE VIBRATO

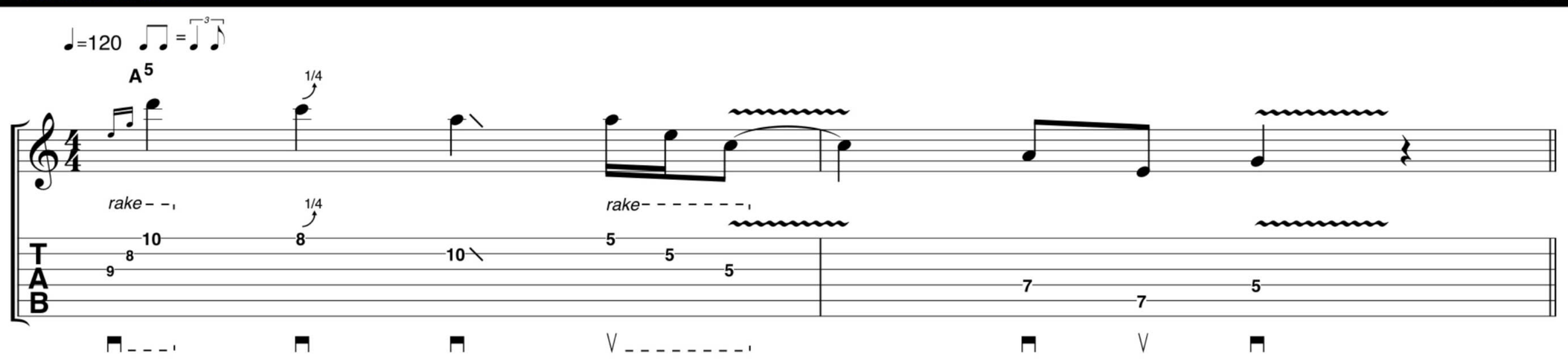
TRACK 21



BB King is famed for his soulful touch and his 'butterfly' vibrato technique. To recreate BB's sound aim for a quick wobble of the string but without too much pitch change. Rest your fretting finger on the side of the fretboard then 'flutter' your hand around this pivot point to create the vibrato. It's easier than using pure finger strength and it's pure BB!

07 STRING RAKES

TRACK 22

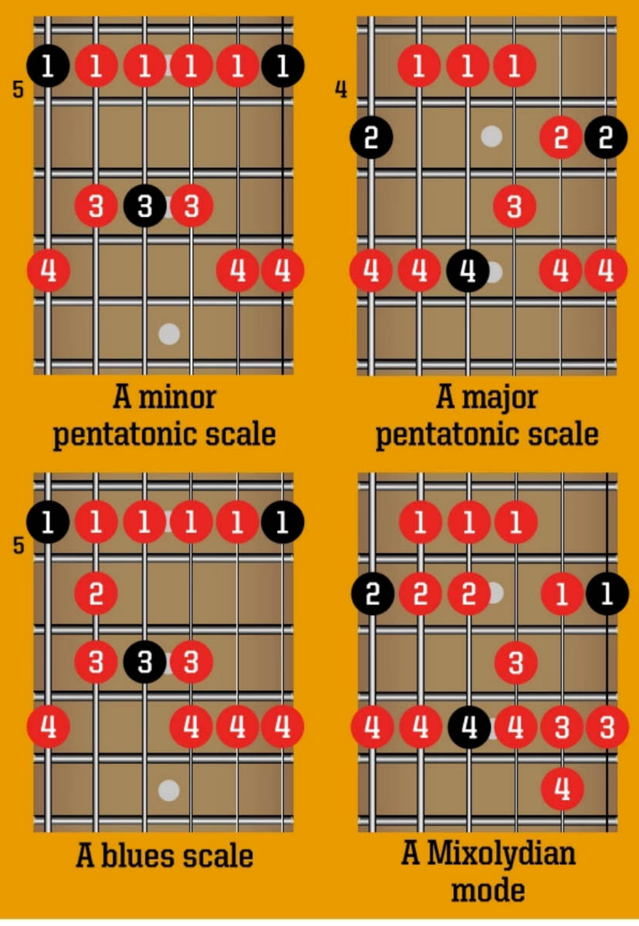


In blues circles, a mini sweep across the strings is referred to as a rake. This drag of the pick is more of an effect so the notes don't need to be perfectly fretted – you can even mute the strings out entirely as you pick. We've written picking directions for the rakes here. Notice how the quarter-tone bend in bar 1 provides a blues edge too.

STILL GOT THE BLUES SCALE...

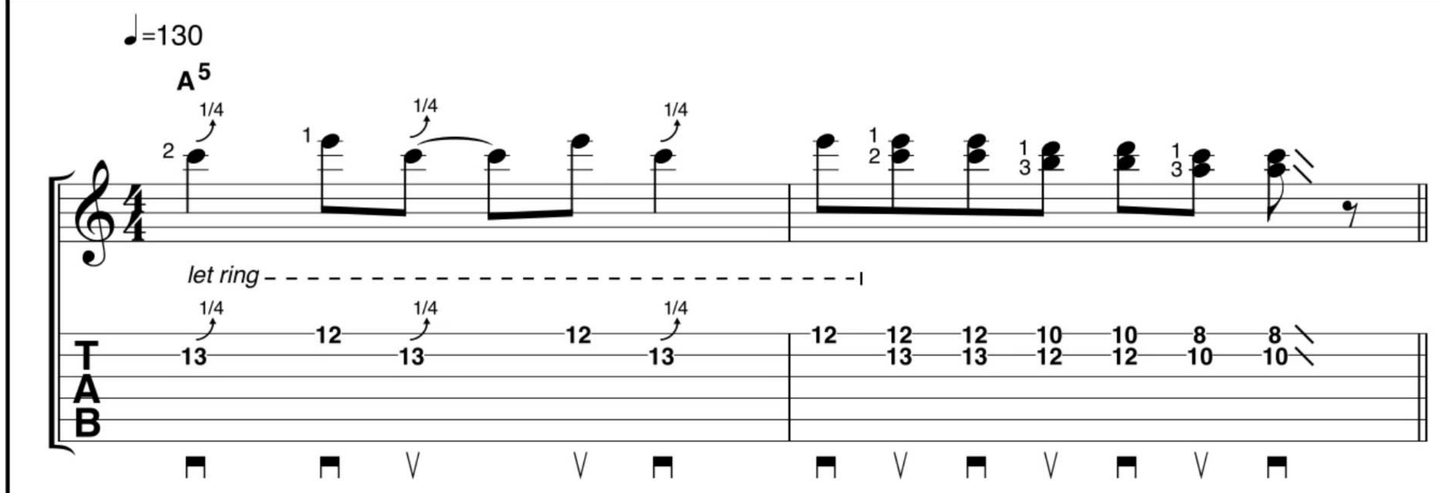
FOUR SHAPES YOU NEED TO KNOW

These scale shapes are essential knowledge for any guitarist looking to expand their arsenal of blues licks. Make sure you know 'em inside out! Once you've learnt the shapes, try playing them all over the fretboard in as many different keys as you can.



08 TWO-NOTE SHAPES IN SOLOS

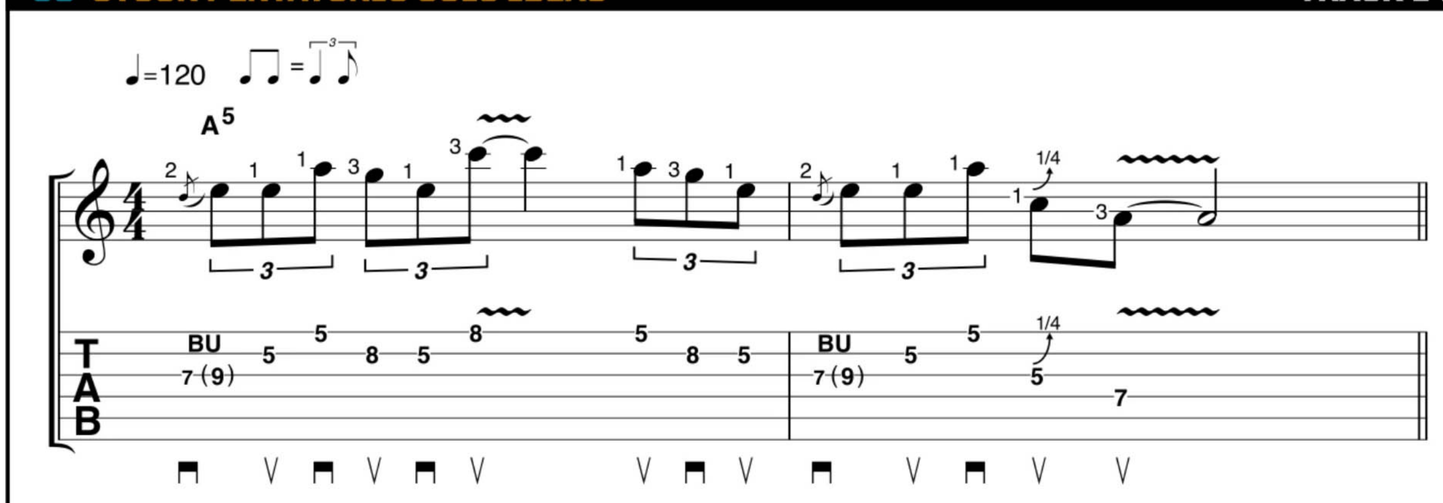
TRACK 23



Playing two notes at once is a great way to thicken up your guitar sound – ideal for the dreaded 'tone dropout' you might experience when soloing in a power trio. Here, inspired by John Mayer, we're playing a line that descends the guitar's two highest strings, firstly, one note at a time, then with two notes together.

09 STOCK PENTATONIC SOLO IDEAS

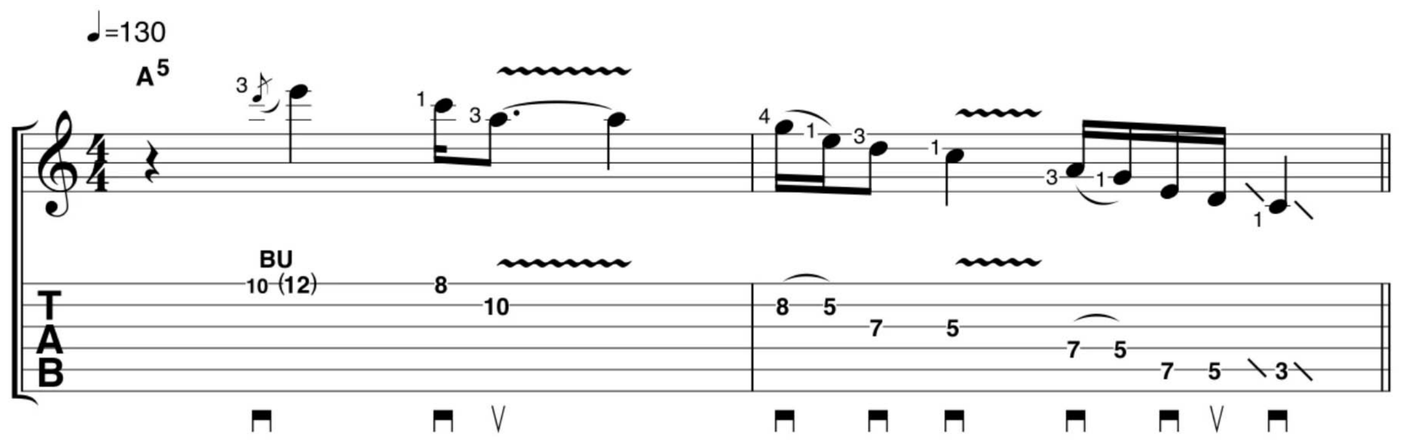
TRACK 24



From Eric Clapton to Joe Bonamassa, blues guitarists seem to have a never-ending vocabulary of stock phrases, yet somehow always sound authentic. The key is to use the minor pentatonic scale and keep your solos simple at first. We're playing part of the A minor pentatonic scale here – ideas that can be reimagined in myriad ways.

10 FAST PENTATONIC FLURRIES

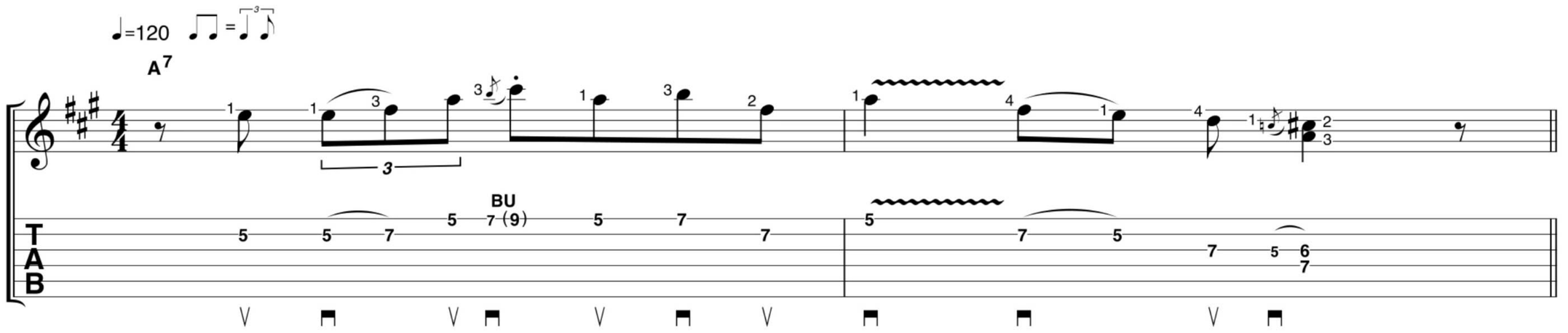
TRACK 25



With some minor pentatonic basics under your belt, think about how to expand your ideas into something more sophisticated. Legendary bluesman Buddy Guy uses fast flurries of notes, often straight from the minor pentatonic scale. That means the shape feels familiar but you'll be delivering more 'angular' phrased licks.

11 MAJOR PENTATONIC MELODIES

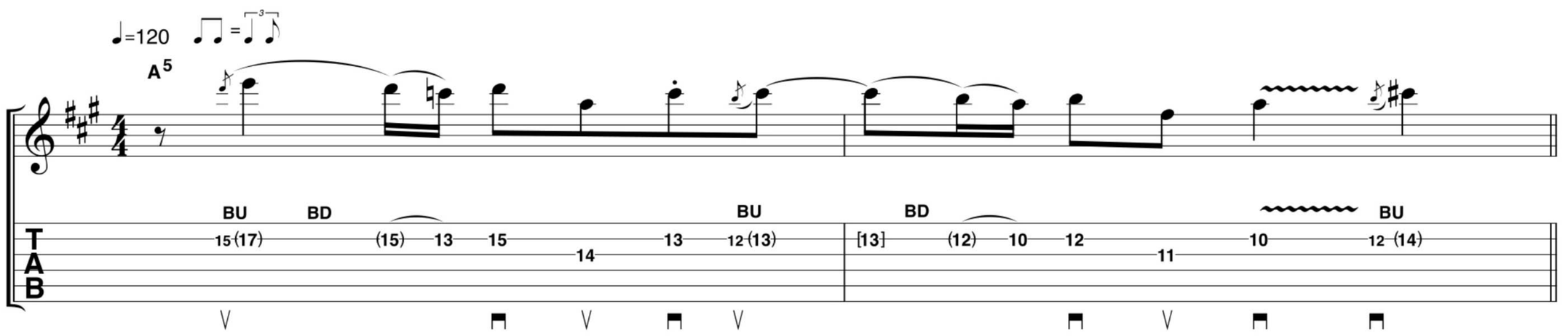
TRACK 26



Blues isn't only about minor keys. Listen to Freddie King's *Hide Away* and Fleetwood Mac's *Need Your Love So Bad* – both use the major pentatonic scale extensively. Our simple lick is designed to help get you started with the major pentatonic scale. Watch out though. There's a bluesy minor note in there too – the 5th fret C right before the last diad.

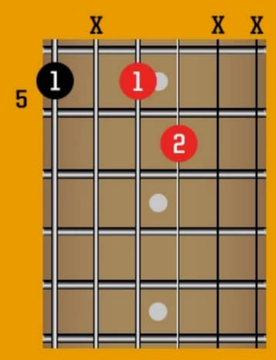
12 MIXING MAJOR AND MINOR PENTATONICS

TRACK 27

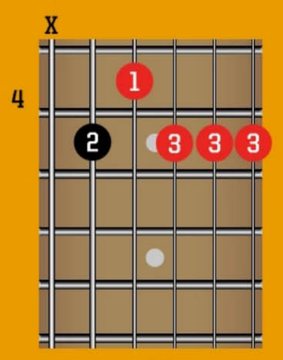


Our previous lick hinted at the idea we're exploring more fully here – mixing up major and minor pentatonic scales in solos. Why bother? Well, the combination of 'happy' major and 'sad' minor scales sounds way more sophisticated than sticking to one or the other. We've kept things simple here but this idea is a key part of blues so experiment.

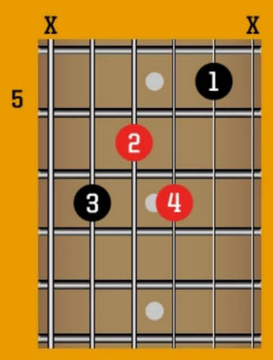
BLUE MOODS... CHORD SHAPES FOR BETTER BLUES JAMS



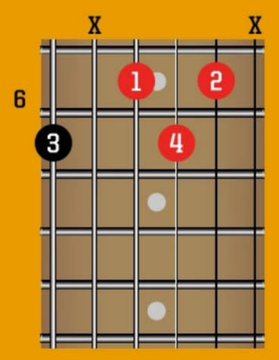
1 This simplified version of an 'E7 shape' barre chord is great for the sparser sounds of jazz-blues.



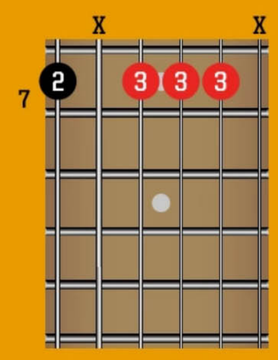
2 The tension in dominant 9th chords makes this shape a great choice for funk grooves and blues jams.



3 This 7th chord shape is frequently found in fingerstyle folk and blues. It sounds great plugged in or acoustic.



4 On its own this diminished 7th chord is pretty out there. As a passing chord between A7 and Bm7 it sounds sophisticated.



5 Another simplified barre chord, this minor 7th voicing has a sparser sound, similar to our A7 chord.

BLUE TONES
Getting the right guitar sound is essential... and you can do it on a budget

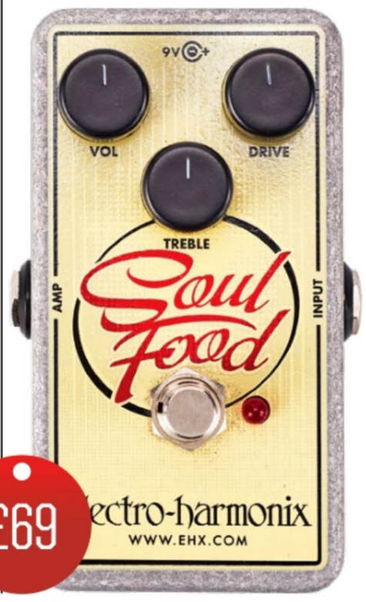
GET BOUTIQUE BLUES TONE... ON A BUDGET

You get what you pay for? Well not in all cases!

The blues and the mystical ways of tone go hand in hand – never mind that Robert Johnson's benchmark recordings and the awe that surrounds Dumble amps and the Klon Centaur overdrives feel lightyears apart.

Getting your tone right for you matters; especially when it comes to blues expression.

A whole industry has been built on it too; from transparent drive pedals to amp sensitivity and dynamic response, there's now an assumption that these things will cost you more. That's not necessarily the case though, and we've filtered the best new gear to add to your arsenal that proves why...



ELECTRO-HARMONIX SOUL FOOD

KLON BUT NOT FORGOTTEN!

The choice of overdrive pedals out there is overwhelming but we think this is the closest one to the hallowed territory of Bill Finnegan's now discontinued Klon and KTR designs you can get under £100. And the hype about those pedals is founded on truth; they are very, very good at what they do. Do they justify their inflated prices on the second-hand market? The Soul Food suggests not, pairing well with a valve amp to offer those desirable touch-sensitive and transparent tones many blues rock players crave – meaning it doesn't steamroll over your guitar and amp's character with its gain.

www.ehx.com

Tip: Dial the drive right down and you've got a clean volume boost – a favourite use for the Klon too that enhances the sensitivity of touch – and you can experiment by adding gain in to get just the right level of punch.

EASTWOOD AIRLINE H78

AUERBACH TO THE FUTURE!

If you really must get close to the three-pickup model Dan Auerbach's holding on the cover of TG issue 320, you're going to have to strike it lucky on the vintage market or opt for this considerably cheaper tribute by Eastwood. Beyond the looks there are key differences; this has a 24 3/4" (628mm) scale length vs Dan's original's 24.25 and these are semi-hollow as opposed to fully hollow. Going modern gets you Gold Foil Argyle pickups, a roller bridge that should offer more tuning stability and the centre block will help to keep that Bigsby tamed. There's volume and tone controls for each pickup and switches turn them either on or off. The non-Bigsby H77 version is also available at £660.

www.eastwoodguitars.com

Tip: Dan will often use this guitar for the parts of the set when the Black Keys play as a duo sans bassist and keyboardist, staying mainly on the bridge pickup.

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SUPRO BLUES KING 12

Finally the comeback king Supro is relatively affordable for the rest of us, and offering serious competition to Fender's massively popular Blues Junior. This lightweight 1 x 12 combo is based on its old 1950s Comet. It's not a complicated affair; a simple valve preamp, pure class A single-ended output stage and a cascaded FET overdrive section. And the extras enhance the inherent quality here.

LEGENDARY TONE FOR LESS!

Adding in the switchable boost and gain, plus traditional reverb and you can go from creamy cleans to fat and crunchy with enough punch for small gigs without being mic'd. It'll look right at home in your house too!
www.suprousa.com

Tip: With this kind of amp P-90 single-coils and brighter PAF-style humbuckers really excel, offering a great balance of bite and girth.

YOU CAN GO FROM CREAMY CLEANS TO FAT AND CRUNCHY

TRANSPARENT VALUE!

JOYO ROLL BOOST

If you like to keep things basic, it really doesn't get much more straightforward than this. Up to 35dB of boost and a single gain knob to get you there. The payoff is an increase in gain for your parts, driving the valves without changing your amp's inherent tone – the very definition of transparency, then.
www.joyoaudio.com

Tip: Fully cranked, a good clean boost should give you the most natural overdrive you'll get from a pedal.

GET YOUR FUZZ FACE ON!

TC ELECTRONIC RUSTY FUZZ

From Gilmour and Hendrix to Jack White and Keef, fuzz is a friend of the blues. Adding edge, filth and sustain, the Rusty Fuzz is a silicon-based bargain that we're seeing for under £30 online – this is part of a TC range that uses Behringer circuits but with more robust metal casing. A great way to try a Fuzz Face-style pedal with true bypass switching, we'd recommend pairing with a mild Tube Screamer-style overdrive to experiment with lead voices and fatter chords. TC's Cinders is a good start as it goes for a similar street price.
www.tcelectronic.com

Tip: Use your guitar's volume to clean up or add in the Rusty Fuzz as required.

£519

FENDER PM-2 PARLOUR NE ALL MAHOGANY

We were sad to say goodbye to the trio of all mahogany Paramount models that passed through our office, and there was something extra special about this one for acoustic blues. Firstly, it looked the part – checkerboard purfling and rosette, vintage-shape tuners with a parlour shape screams vintage 30s style. Factor in all solid mahogany construction with scalloped bracing and you have a powerful mid-heavy voice for blues folk fingerstyle. The included hardcase further sweetens the deal.

www.fender.com

DELTA BLUESER

Tip: Parlour (sometimes called parlor) acoustics can vary in dimensions according to brand. They originated in the late 19th century and ended up being dubbed 'blues boxes' because of their boxier compressed tone. This Fender has a far more open sound than that though.

BOSS 'HOGS
The Fender PM mahogany acoustic range with the PM-2 pictured right

BEHRINGER UV300 ULTRA VIBRATO

As a builder who has always been keen to praise other brands, Joshua Heath Scott from JHS Pedals recently made a vlog investigating Behringer pedals and it reawakened interest for players online – especially as some are very close reproductions of Boss pedals that are no longer available. That was the case with the VB-2 Vibrato, until Boss reissued it through its Waza Craft line. But that pedal is around £165, pricing curious players out. This is very close to the VB-2, but why is this often overlooked pedal good for your blues? Surely vibrato isn't in a stompbox but in your hands! Ah, well hear us out...

The unlatch mode is the key for expression here, allowing you to engage the vibrato effect only when your foot is pressing down, so it becomes instinctive and expressive for specific chords and notes when you need it.

www.behringer.com

£23

AN UNSUNG EFFECT REBORN FOR LESS!

YOUR DAILY DRIVER!

£75

BOSS BD-2 BLUES DRIVER

If you think this is a lazy choice from us you've never tried a Blues Driver. Some things are ubiquitous for a reason and we'd even go as far as to claim every player should have this pedal. It's undoubtedly one of Boss's greatest. Transparent? Yes. Warm and creamy tube-like overdrive? Indeed. Coupled with Boss build quality it'll go the distance with you. Even bass players tell us the Blues Driver has great controllable overdrive for them too.

www.boss.info

Tip: Boss's Waza Craft BD-2W model costs more but offers an additional switch between classic and custom modes – the latter offers more sustain and greater girth.

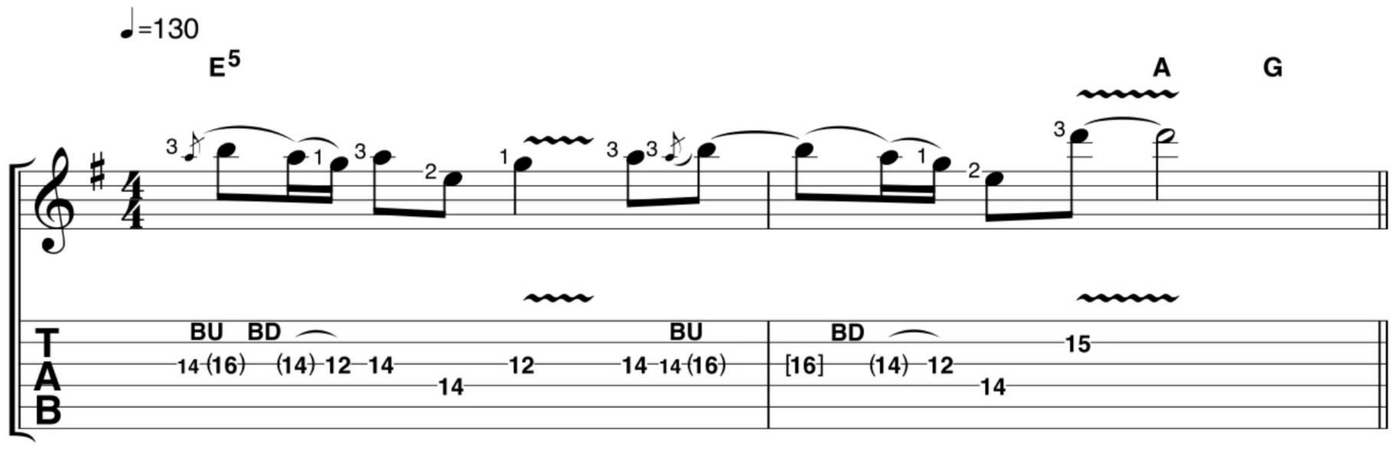
TURN BLUE
Modern players like the Black Keys' Dan Auerbach, are putting their own stamp on the blues

21ST CENTURY BLUES...

Learn the styles and techniques of the current crop of blues guitarists

Whether it's the fuzz-fuelled lo-fi riffing of The White Stripes and The Black Keys or the Zeppelin-like hard rock sensibilities of Rival Sons and Greta Van Fleet, it's fair to say that blues has evolved somewhat in recent years. Though many of the chords and scales owe a debt to earlier forebears, many bands are putting their own stamp on blues with retro-inspired drive tones and tone-bending effects like octavers and wild fuzz distortions. Here we're looking at a few of the tricks and riffing tropes of the current generation of blues players.

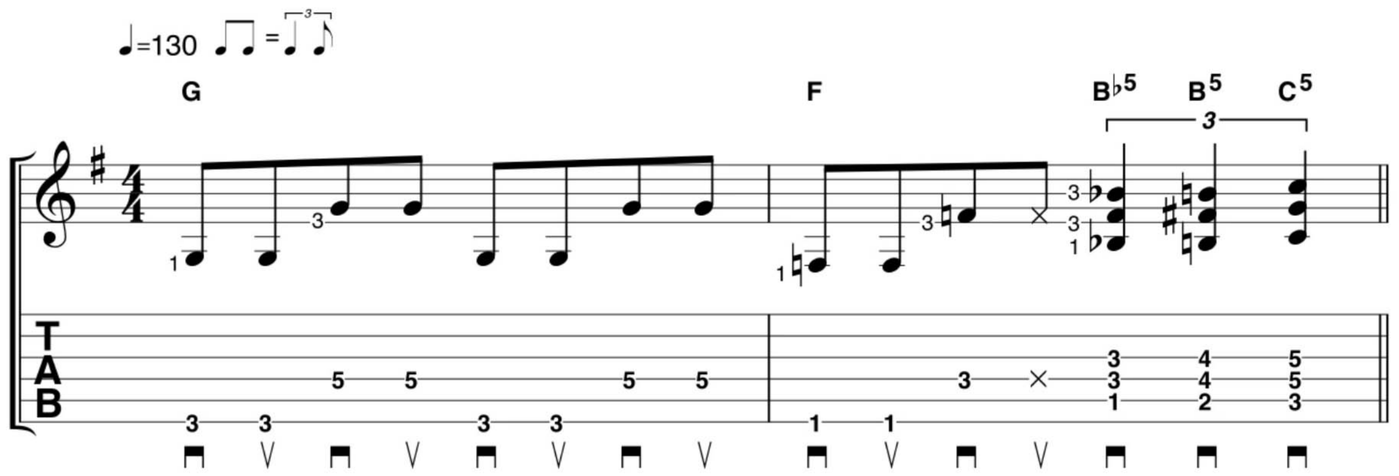
13 OCTAVE-FUZZ LICKS — TRACK 28



Listen to Dan Auerbach's solo in *Lo/Hi* and you'll hear biting fuzz distortion and the thick sound of an octaver effect doubling the notes he plays an octave apart. Like traditional players, modern blues-rock bands use the minor pentatonic scale extensively – this E minor lick will help you hone your blues licks, whichever era you prefer.

Photo: Alysse Gafkjen

14 LO-FI FUZZ TONE RIFFING — TRACK 29

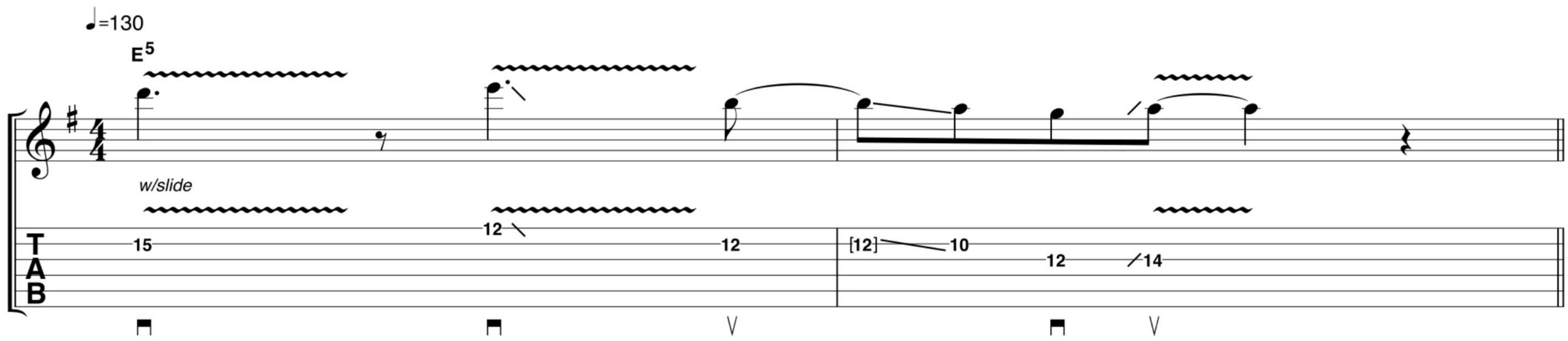


Spiky fuzz distortion tones have been a big part of the retro sound of bands like The Black Keys, Rival Sons, The White Stripes and more. Using a regular drive pedal? Keep the treble high, roll off a little bass and experiment with your amp's EQ and gain too.

DOWNLOAD FROM FileSilo FOLDER 3

15 ELECTRIC SLIDE

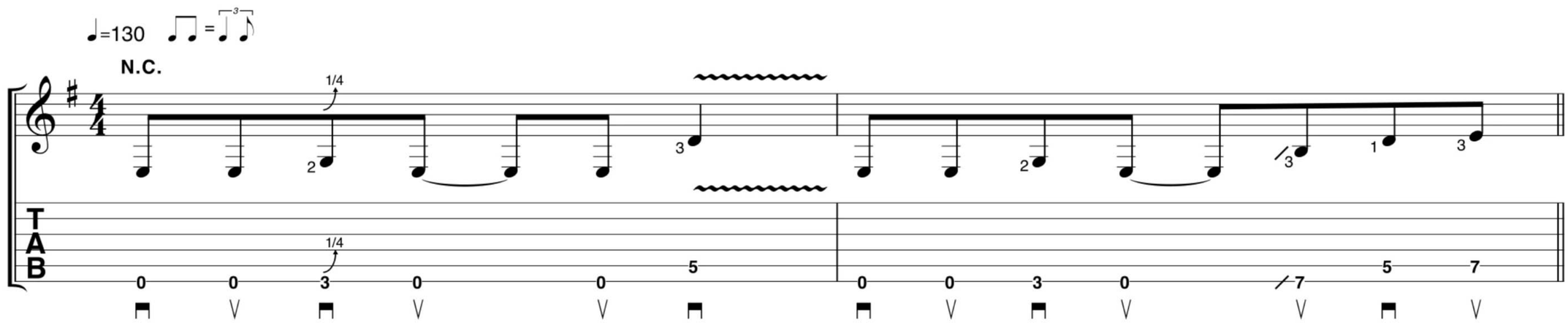
TRACK 30



From Robert Johnson and Elmore James to Derek Trucks, Gary Clark Jr and Dan Auerbach, slide has long been at the heart of blues. Our simple lick will help you develop this tricky technique. Place your slide on your third or fourth finger and aim directly over the fret you're playing (not behind it). Use your first finger to minimise string noise.

16 PENTATONIC RIFFING

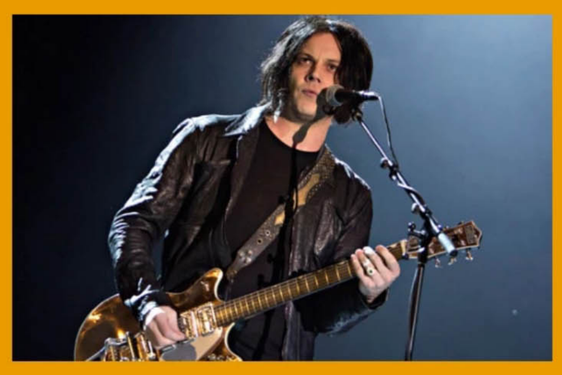
TRACK 31



Contemporary bands' minor pentatonic riffs owe as much to 70s rock as they do to early blues. Our simple riff could easily be a Black Keys tune, a Led Zeppelin line, or you could slow it down and give it a traditional *Hoochie Coochie Man* treatment. It's in E minor so the sixth string can be used as your tonal centre to bounce the other notes off.

OPEN ALL HOURS...

TRY OUT THREE OPEN TUNINGS AS USED BY SOME MODERN SLIDE GUITAR GREATS



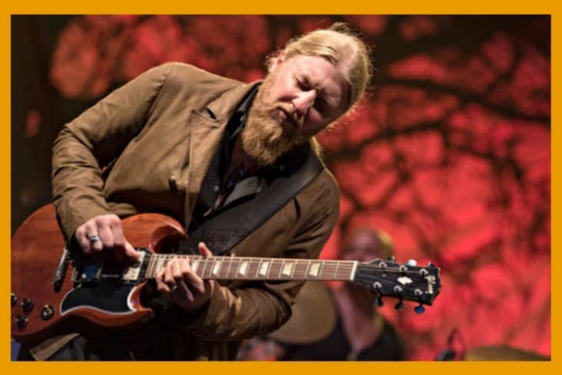
1 JACK WHITE OPEN A TUNING

The White Stripes – *Seven Nation Army*

One of the biggest songs of its time saw guitarist Jack White's guitar tuned to open A. You can play the mega-easy main riff in any tuning, really – it's in the chorus where the open tuning comes into its own. Those slide guitar lines wouldn't be possible in standard.

E A E A C♯ E

Up two semitones | Up two semitones | Up two semitones



2 DEREK TRUCKS OPEN E TUNING

The Derek Trucks Band – *Sweet Inspiration*

Revered as perhaps the finest slide player of his generation, Trucks' go-to tuning is open E – you can hear it on most of his best-known songs. One of Trucks' tricks is to press down with his slide so you effectively fret the notes. He doesn't do it all the time but it's worth experimenting.

E B E G♯ B E

Up two semitones | Up two semitones | Up one semitones

3 DAN AUERBACH OPEN G TUNING

The Black Keys – *Black Door*

A keen slide-man, Dan Auerbach demonstrates once again why open tunings are so vital – it's simply not possible to slide smoothly between chords unless your guitar is tuned to an open voicing of some kind.

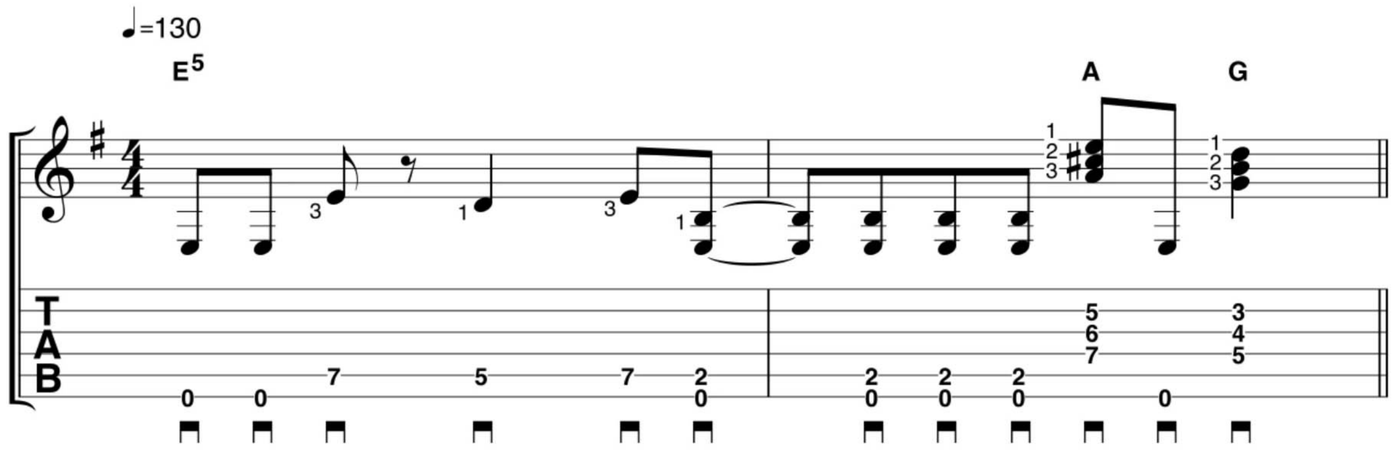
D G D G B D

Down two semitones | Down two semitones | Down two semitones

Photos: Scott Legato, Simone Joyner, Jack Vartoogian / Getty

17 LAYERING 1

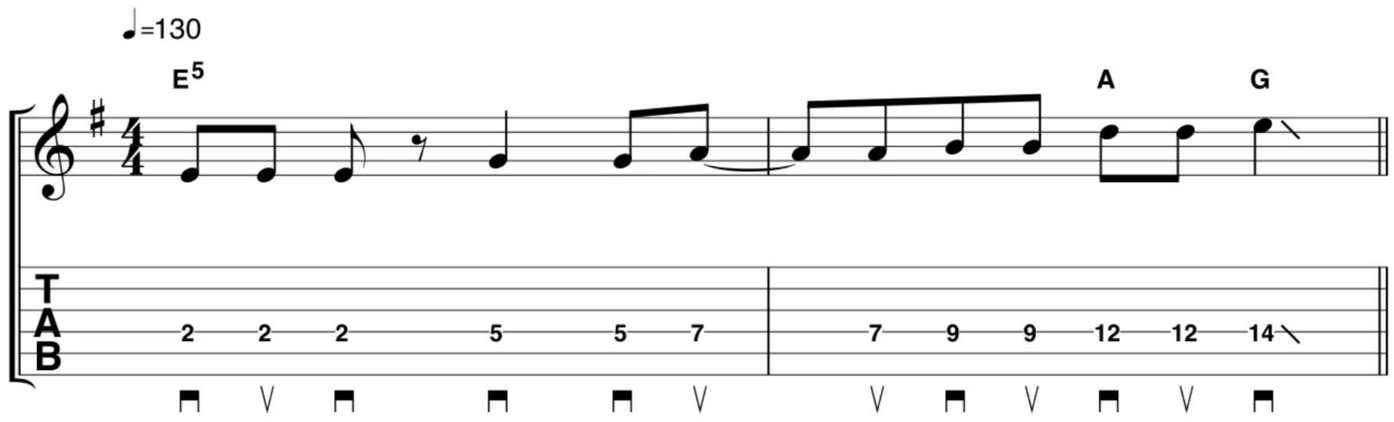
TRACK 32



The advent of multi-track recording in the 70s saw bands double-tracking guitar riffs. In recent years duos like Royal Blood have used switching systems to recreate the effect in live gigs. Our riff is ideal for two guitars.

18 LAYERING 2

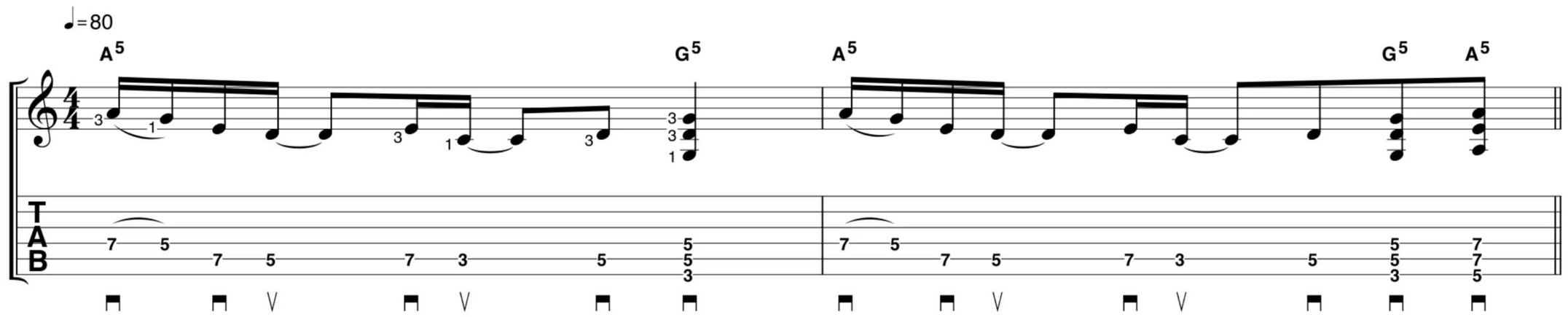
TRACK 33



Here we're playing a simple melodic line on top of our previous riff. To make sure it stays riffy we're following the same rhythm for both lines – no solo widdle here! It's based on the E minor pentatonic scale throughout.

19 RIFFING IN A DUO

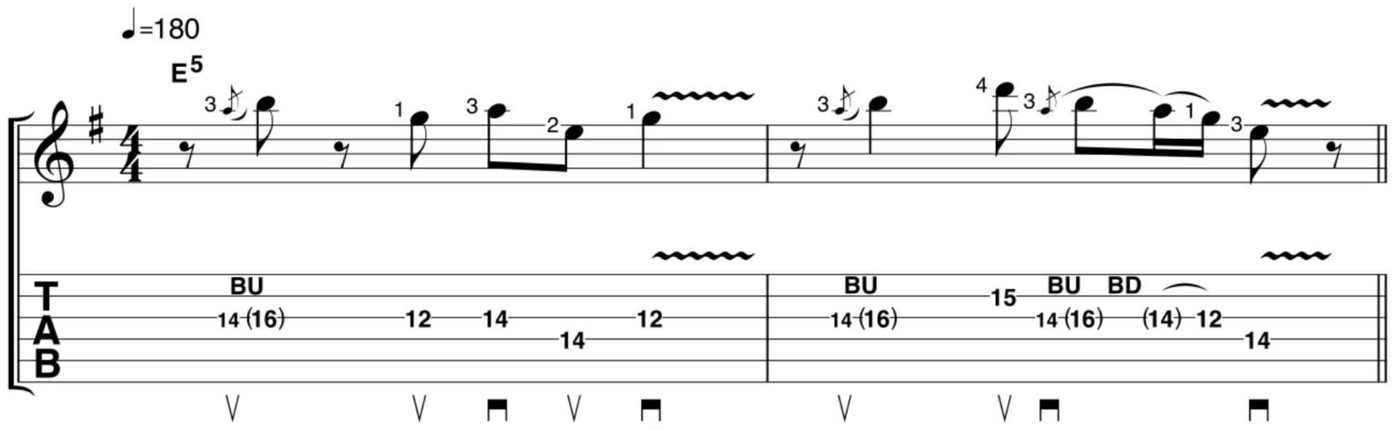
TRACK 34



If you're playing in a duo, White Stripes-style, you'll need to think about ways to fill out your sound. Here, we're covering plenty of notes to provide a full backing sound, then punctuating them with some fat sounding powerchords. For more weight, think about using an octaver effect as Jack White, Dan Auerbach or Mike Kerr might do.

20 TRADITIONAL SOLOING

TRACK 35



On The Black Keys' *Eagle Birds*, Dan Auerbach takes a traditional approach to his solo – using minor pentatonic licks that kick the proverbial rear end but are simple enough to be memorable ear worms. Have a go with our lick.

HOW TO

GETTING STARTED WITH...

DADGAD TUNING

Get some basics covered with TG's lesson on this staple altered tuning

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ How to tune your guitar to DADGAD
- ✔ One easy strummed rhythm part
- ✔ An authentic fingerstyle folk line

"Another altered tuning..."
We're looking at DADGAD here, a fairly easy tuning to understand because, unlike drop D or open G, its name tells you the notes you'll be tuning to – which is pretty handy! You'll be changing your standard tuned guitar's strings (E, A, D, G, B and E notes from the lowest note to the highest) to D, A, D, G, A and D.

"Why not just stick to standard tuning?"
It's all about experimenting. Changing your guitar's tuning means all those chord shapes you spent hours learning have new sounds. Jamming around shapes you already know is an easy route to creative playing, so, if you need inspiration, just give DADGAD a go.

"Do lots of players use DADGAD?"
Sure! The tuning was popularised in the 60s by folk guitarists Davey Graham, Bert Jansch and John Renbourn amongst others. Famous songs by other artists include Led Zeppelin's *Kashmir* and *Black Mountain Side*, Ed Sheeran's *Photograph* and Pink Floyd's *Poles Apart*. Ben Howard used DADGAD on *In Dreams* and more extensively on 2018's *Noonday Dream* album. If you want an authentic folky acoustic sound, DADGAD's for you!

"How do I tune to DADGAD?"
Take a look at the boxout on the right. You'll see that you only need to retune your guitar's first, second and sixth strings, provided you're starting in standard that is. The other three strings are the same in both tunings so you can leave them as they are. You'll need to tune the strings in question down by two semitones.

"I'm getting there, but it's not very accurate. What's the secret?"
Use a tuner. It's not cheating! Even pros need help to tune up accurately, so either buy a hardware device or download a tuner app for your phone. There are countless free ones.

"Got it! Shall we play some music?"
Look at our first tab example. There's just one chord shape here. DADGAD's open strings give a rich sound as you move the chord around the fretboard. It's a typical DADGAD kind of sound.

"How about the second example?"
This is a slow fingerstyle line, designed to help you get to grips with some new shapes. Experimentation is the name of the game so let your fingers run wild and try out new chords and fingerpicking patterns.

DAD-ROCK...
A GUIDE TO RETUNING YOUR GUITAR TO DADGAD

1 STANDARD TUNING NOTES
In standard tuning the open strings are:

EADGBE

2 DADGAD NOTES
In DADGAD tuning the notes are (obvious, right?):

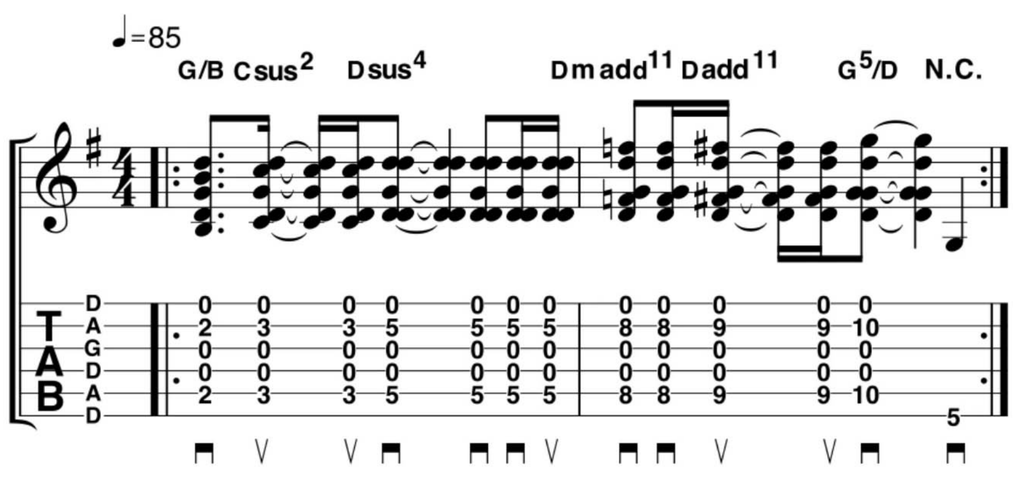
DADGAD

3 ADJUST THE SIXTH, SECOND AND FIRST STRINGS
Three of the notes are the same in both tunings, so there are three strings to retune; all three go down by two semitones.

DadGAD

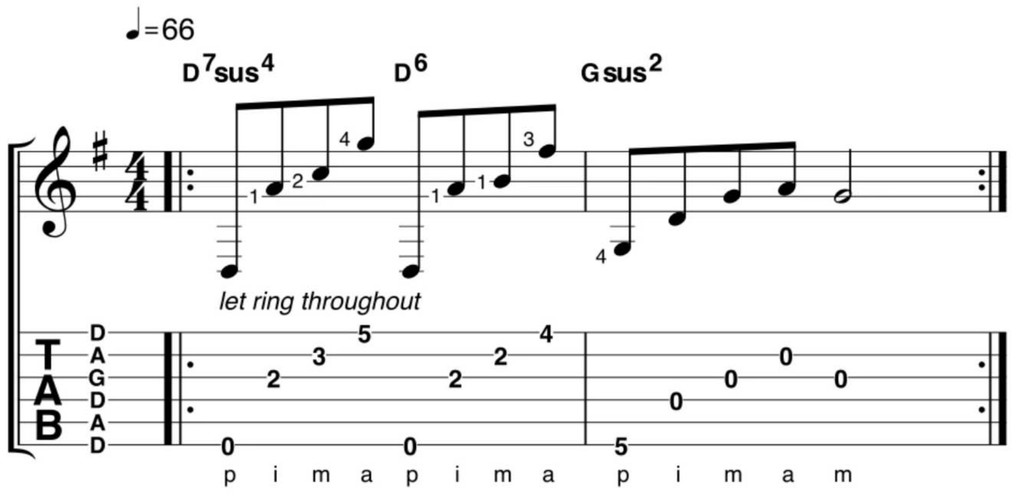
4 TAKE IT EASY...
Gradually ease the tension from your guitar's first, second and sixth string tuners. Each of these strings needs to go down by two semitones – the same as two frets. The third, fourth and fifth strings are the same notes in both standard and DADGAD.

1 STRUMMED CHORDS — TRACKS 07-08



There's only one shape here so practise moving it around the fretboard before you try strumming the rhythm. Play slowly until you get a feel for the music.

2 FOLK FINGERSTYLE — TRACKS 09-10



Learn the chords before attempting to pick the strings. The first four notes held down together make up the D7sus4 chord, the second four notes form the D6.

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WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔The structure of the major scale
- ✔Chords to use to stay 'in key'
- ✔One simple major scale lick

HOW TO

WHAT THE F?

MAJOR KEY SIGNATURES

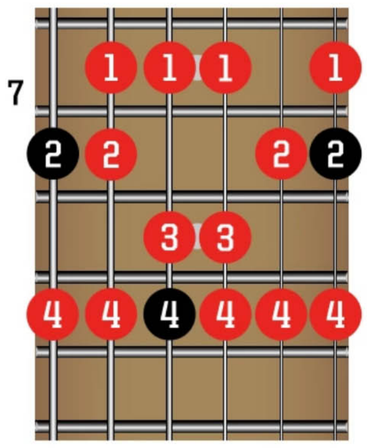
Get the major key basics down before you move out of key to add more colour

Key signatures help musicians by telling us which notes we'll be using in the songs we play. Of course, music is infinitely complex, and many, perhaps most, songs use notes from outside their keys. So 'why bother at all?' you might ask! Well, though rarely painting a full picture, a key signature keeps you focused on things like the song's root note and the chords you might encounter. Think of a key signature as a safe, predictable sound. Then it's up to you to decide how to introduce other more colourful notes from outside the key. Read on and we'll explain more.

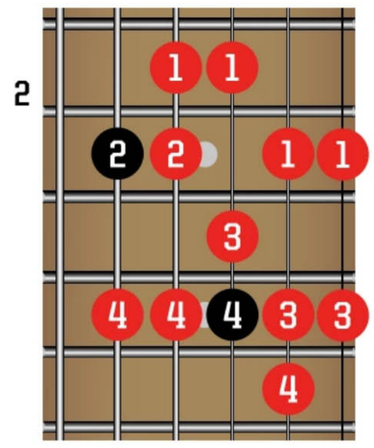
1 C MAJOR SCALE NOTES

With no tricky sharp or flat notes to worry about, C major is the easiest place to start – all the notes in the key signature and the gaps (aka 'intervals') between them are shown here. Simple! If you play *any* other note (say, B♭ or F#) then you're technically outside of the C major key signature and you may be playing a 'mode'.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
	Tone	Tone	Semitone	Tone	Tone	Tone	Semitone



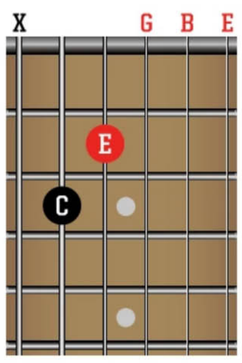
C major scale

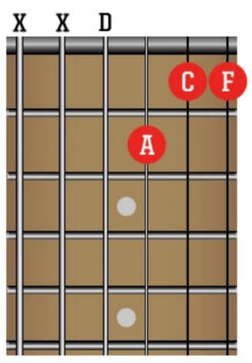


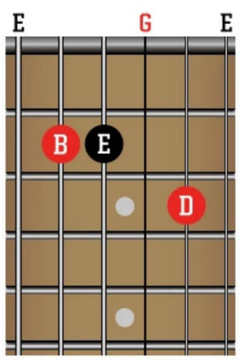
C major scale

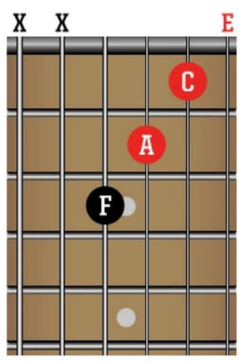
To play in a major key you need to know the major scale – and these two shapes will help you get started. It's fine to use notes from outside the key in your music, but it's best to know how and when you're doing it so you can create the sounds in your mind.

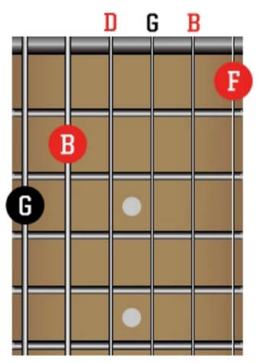
2 CHORDS IN C MAJOR

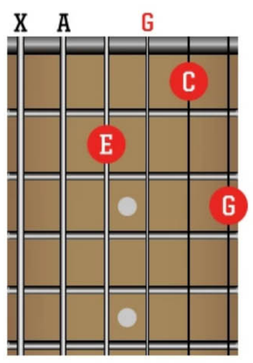

Cmaj7

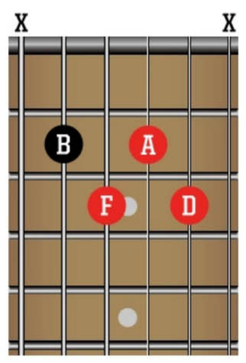

Dm7


Em7


Fmaj7


G7

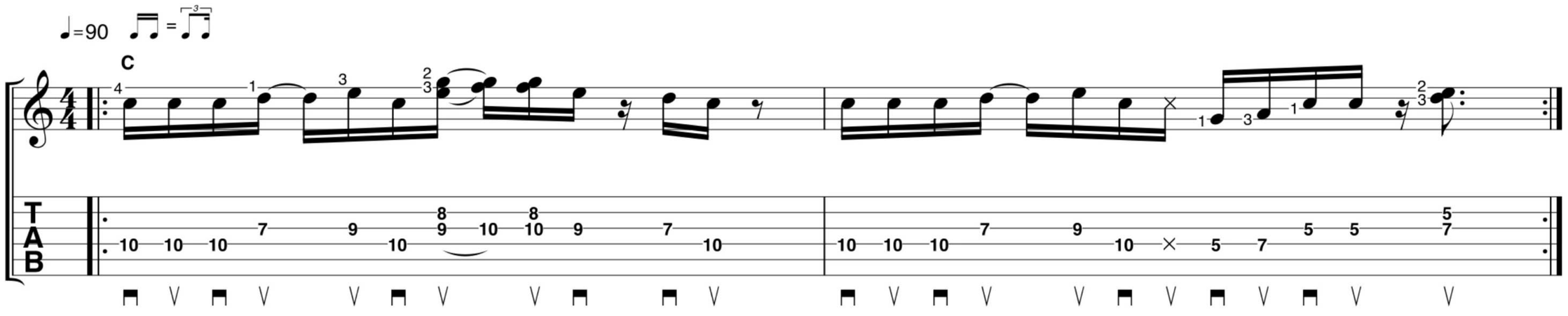

Am7


Bm7♭5

We usually show finger numbers on chord boxes in TG, but, for this lesson, it's more important to see the notes that are used. These chords only use notes from the C major scale, which means you can safely use them and stay 'in key'. Once again, notes from outside the key will add colour, but the art is knowing when to go in and out of key.

3 C MAJOR LICK

TRACKS 11-12



Inspired by The 1975 and staying in C major throughout, this guitar part is backed up by the other instruments – both the bass and synth stick to C major too. It gives you a steady, predictable sound and you could easily jam along to the backing track using the C major scale as the basis for your improvs.

FIX YOUR GUITAR

PICKGUARD PITSTOP

Make use of the Strat's unique design to easily load some pups straight into your guitar with a minimum of fiddling

Words: Jack Ellis

One of the best things about a Stratocaster is that it's a pickguard design – which means that almost all of the serviceable parts are mounted straight onto an easily removable pickguard. This makes switch-ups like this a doddle. Take a look at a Les Paul: to re-wire that you've got to run cables up through the middle of the guitar; put the pickups in the same manner; do what wiring you can out of the guitar; and solder the rest – while not melting the sides of the electronics cavity. We'd rather be in the pit stop crew for team Strat!

There are thousands of upgrade parts for Strats, so choosing is in fact harder than fitting… and watch out for snake oil! The owner of this American Professional Strat has opted for some Klein Epic 1962 pickups as a matching set. He's also supplied us with a partially wired loom, including some nice parts all mounted on a new Fender pickguard. We'll build the pickguard up, solder it and fit it to the guitar.

READY MADE
You can buy a 'loaded' pickguard with pickups already installed: just be careful that the plastic pickguard will actually fit right

WHAT YOU NEED

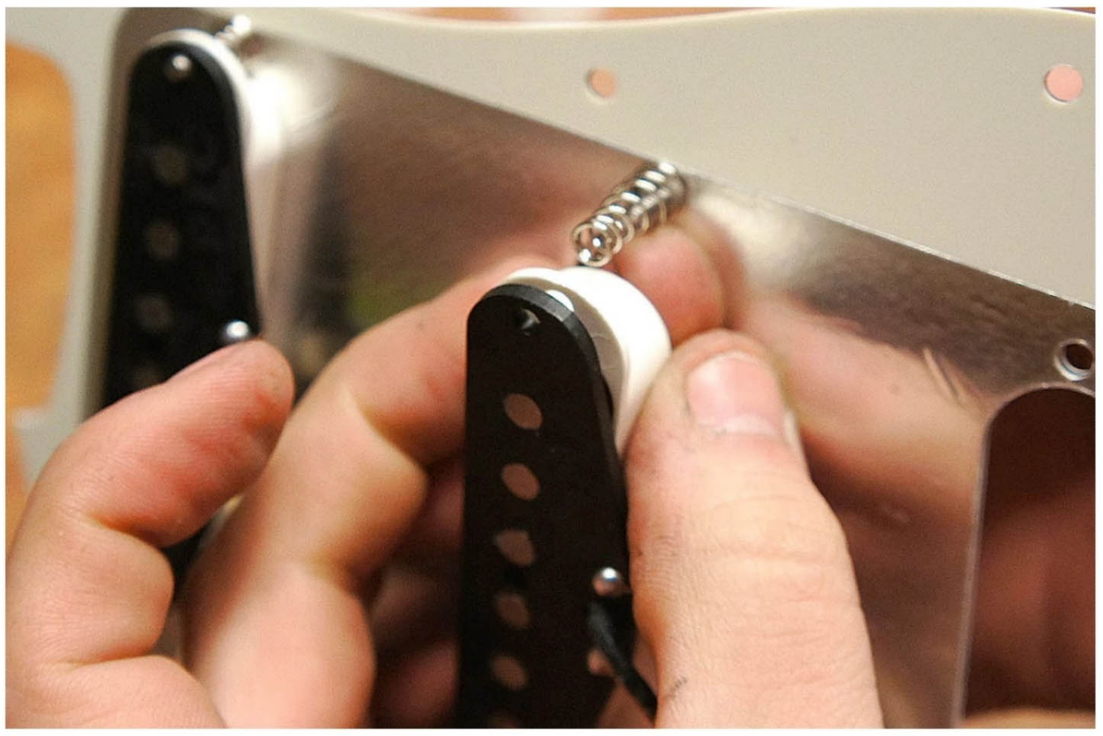
- Flash new pickups
- Pickup mounting screws & springs
- Pickup covers
- New pickguard
- New knobs
- New switch tip
- Wire cutters
- 60/40 solder
- Partially soldered wiring loom
- 40 watt soldering iron
- PH1 and PH2 screwdrivers
- Adjustable spanner
- Wiring diagram

SKILL LEVEL

Intermediate

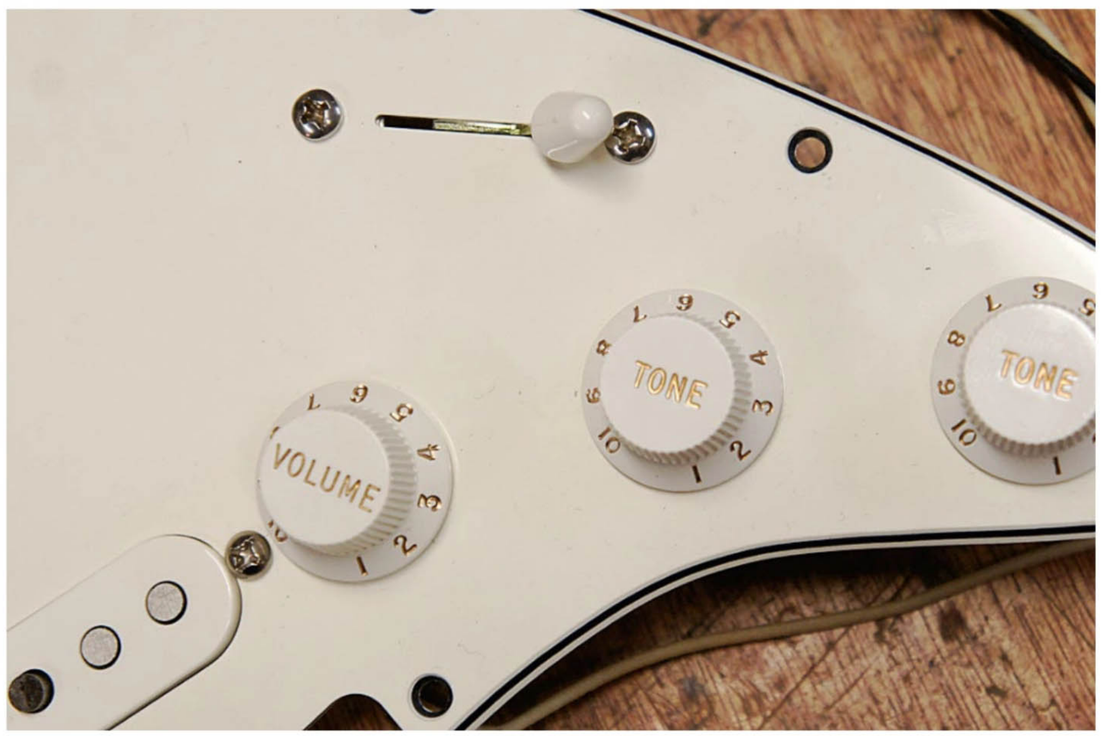
MEET YOUR EXPERT
Jack Ellis runs Jack's Instrument Services from his workshop in Manchester. In his career he has worked on thousands of instruments, from simple fixes and upgrades, to complete rebuilds. For more info, see: jacksinstrument services.com

1 We have a set of nearly identical matched pickups – but which one's which? This brand helpfully tells us on the rear! If you have no clue, you can connect the hookup wires to a multimeter and test the resistance – the one with the highest resistance is likely to be the bridge.



2 Carefully put your new pickups inside their plastic covers. Those fine winds are incredibly delicate – we've seen them break with the help of a screw getting attracted to them many times. The pickup screws go through the guard, through the spring and into the forbon pickup baseplate. Yes, it's fiddly – the spring can fly off.

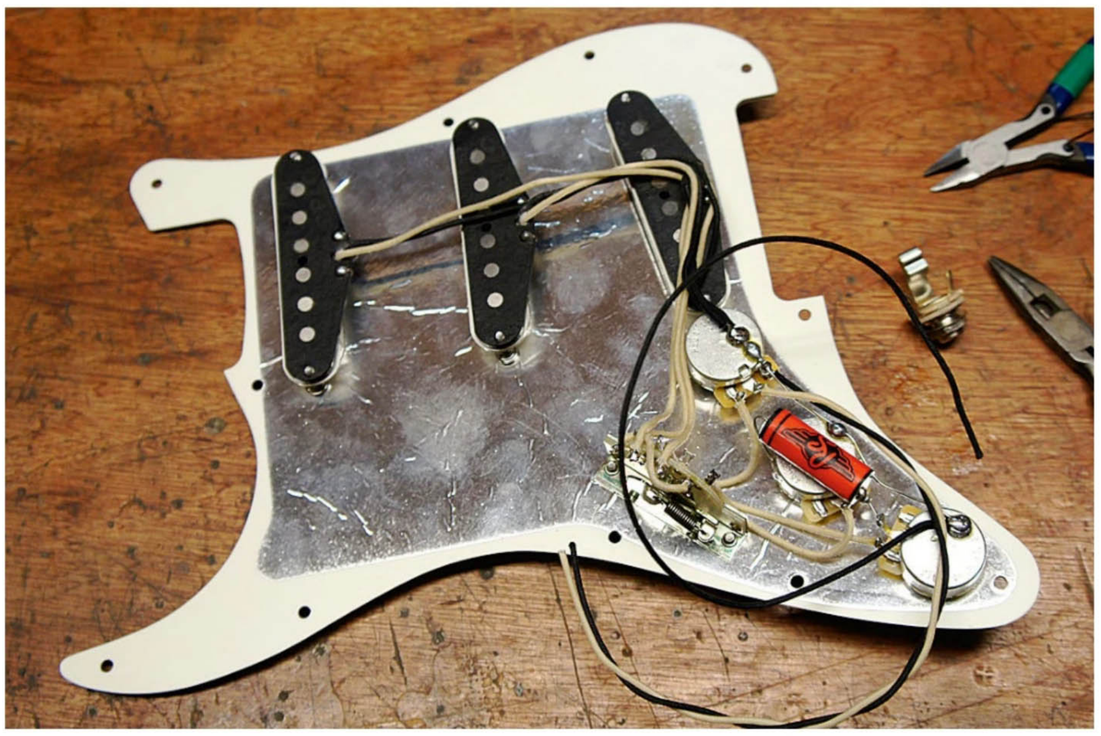
3 Don't worry about setting the pickups' final height yet; that's done when they're strung up. Time to pop the pots through – the star washer goes on the back and helps the pot grab onto the rear of the pickguard. Be very careful not to damage your pickguard though – line the edges of your spanner with masking tape just to be sure.



4 Fit the pickup selector through the slot in the pickguard, and tighten it up. The knobs and the switch tip just push on. These are small details, but this is the 'official' Fender knob alignment! Twist the metal pot shaft all the way to 10, then line up the 10 on the volume knob with the pickup screw. Call us fussy...

5 Flip the 'guard over to complete the circuit. There are six pickup wires that need sending home, but this is an easy task with a wiring diagram. Get the soldering iron on and let it warm up fully (conveniently the time it takes to brew up). Each cable is trimmed to length, wire exposed then tinned, along with the receiving solder lug.

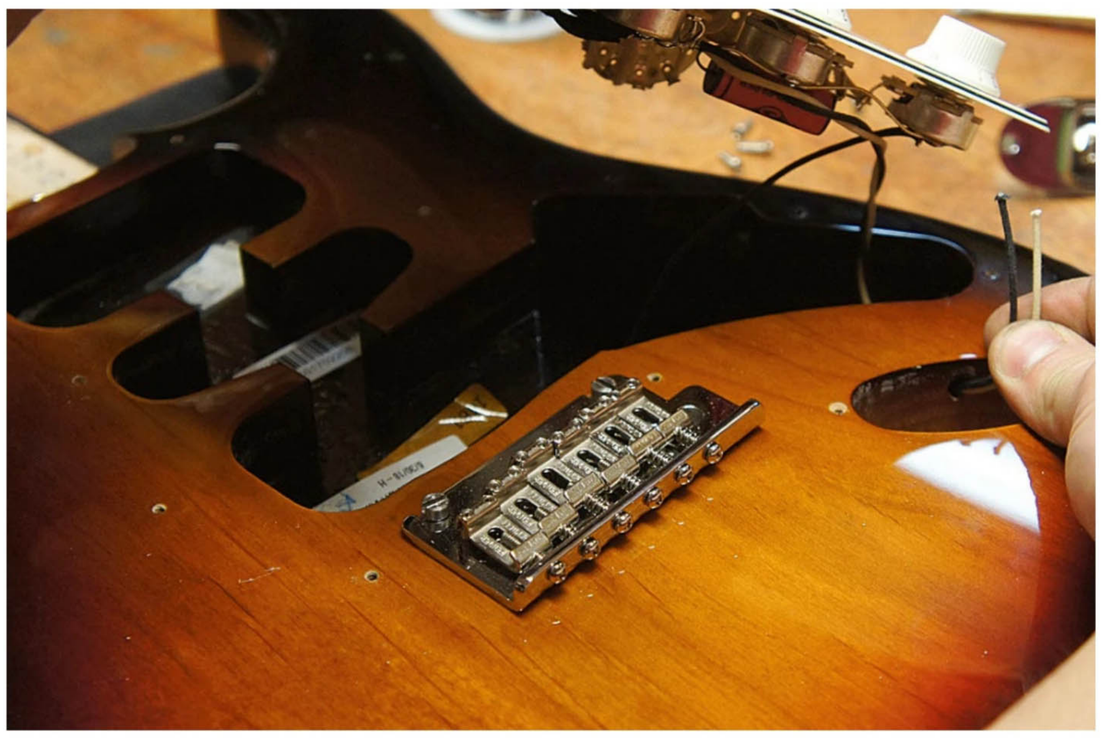
6 With everything in place, it's time to solder. Join up the three white wires to the pickup selector lugs. There should be a medium blob of solder on the volume pot, ready to receive the black ground wires. Twist those three together, and solder them on with plenty of heat.



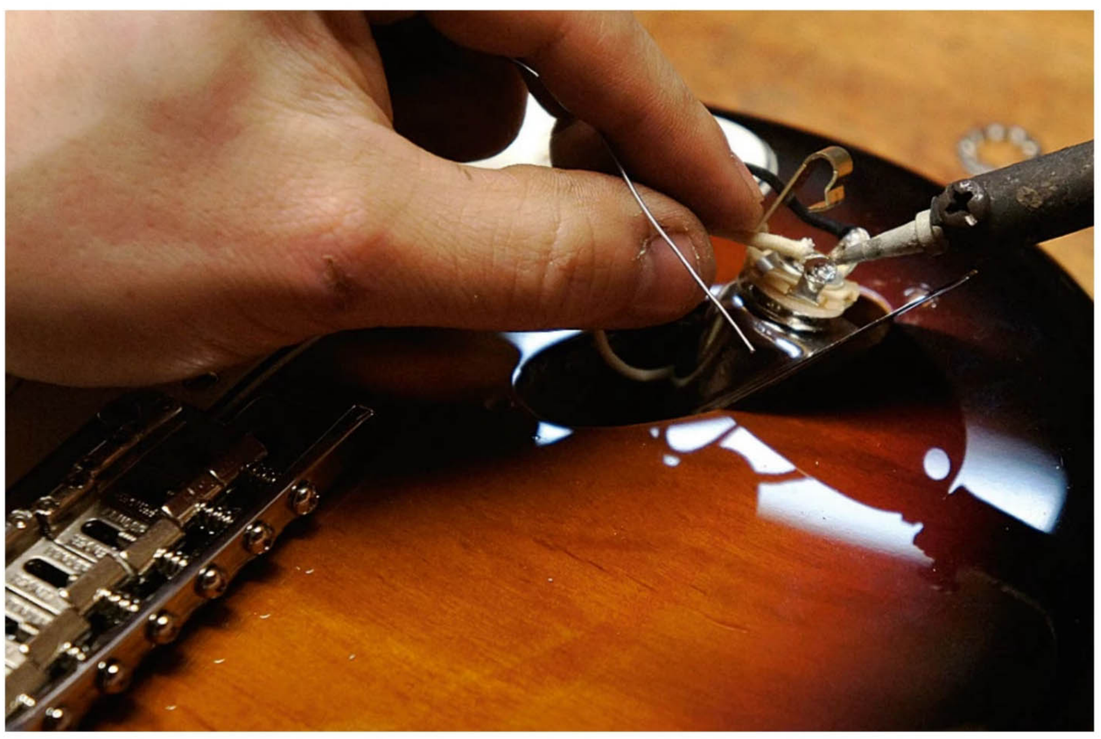
7 Tidy up your cables. We're doing our best, so it may as well look the part too. Can you see the three wires hanging off? They're the hot and ground going to the jack socket, and one more black wire that's just been attached. That's the tremolo claw wire or 'string ground'. We'll solder those on in a moment.

8 Now we've got our lovely new guard ready to go, let's strip down the old one. Loosen off all the parts from the old pickguard and stash all the small screws. Make sure they do not find a way to get stuck to a pickup, as they will break it given half a chance.

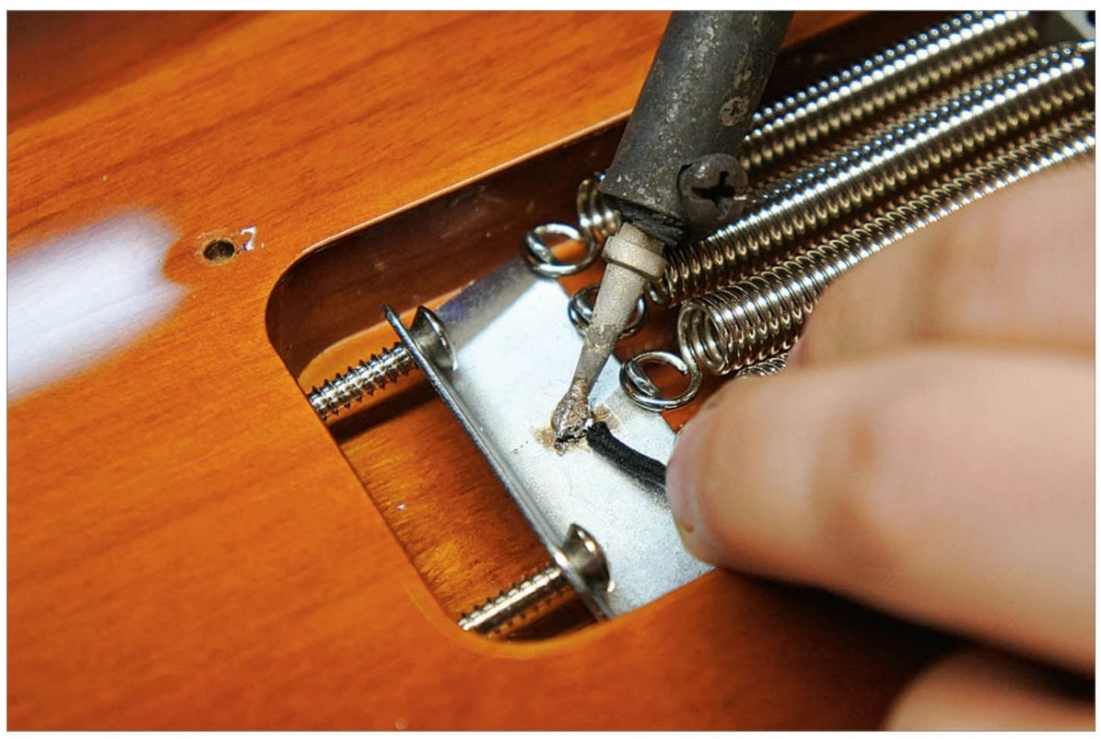
9 With these delightful old guts on show, there are only three wires holding it in place – and those are exactly the three wires that we need to solder when our new ones go in. Remove the jack socket plate and chop the 2 jack wire; chop the tremolo claw wire too.



10 Now it's time to introduce the new guard to the body. Post the jack wires hot and ground through the small opening, sending them to the jack socket rout. The tremolo claw wire needs to be sent through too; this hole is usually harder to find, but it is there!



11 We're using the brand-new Switchcraft jack socket, so that's been tinned and is now getting the two wires soldered on. By the way, this is the correct way to orient the jack socket component – long leg downward. This gives the sprung leg on the jack socket enough room to click in correctly.



12 Due to its size, the tremolo claw saps the heat from your iron, making it difficult to get a good solder joint. An 80-watt soldering iron excels here, but 40 watts will just take longer to reach temperature. Get a decent pool of solder on there to be sure. We're done! Screw on the 'guard and marvel at your handiwork.

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Cory Wong's Funk School

Words Chris Bird / Photography Olly Curtis

THE GUITARIST WITH **VULFPECK** AND **THE FEARLESS FLYERS** TALKS FUNK WITH TG AND PROVIDES YOU WITH SOME AUTHENTIC PLAYING TIPS

Coming to fame playing with modern funk collective Vulfpeck, Cory Wong is forging a career path as a 'rhythm as lead' guitarist. Whether he's playing with the Michigan funksters or working on solo material, for now at least, hooks are in, shred chops are out and solos have to work 'for the song'. In what is primarily instrumental music, Wong's funky Stratocaster cleans take centre stage.

Owing a debt to his love of jazz and jam bands, Cory's funkily fresh songs blend 'worked out' tunes with free improvised sections – pre-planned but not pre-prepared. Listen to his recorded material or check him out live and you'll always hear a group of musicians re-discovering their music and firing off each other's performances. Besides the obvious musicianship, holding it all together is Wong's infectious showmanship and innate, impeccable sense of timing. We sit down with Cory ahead of a gig on his recent UK tour to talk technique.

Do you have any tips to help players who may be new to the style get into playing funk?

Cory: "I think the number one thing is listening. Listen to a lot of funk music and play along with the records and see how your instincts on time are different than what's being played on the records. A lot of times, people who come from a rock background might push time or push the tempo a little more and be a little more driving than some of the funk bands that they really like. So they're used to driving and pushing, but maybe it needs to lay back. Some funk music is very driving and forward, but the biggest thing for me, and the key to it all, the starting point for understanding, is just to listen. And the main listening points that I would give right out of the gate are… listen to the entire Prince catalogue, the entire Earth, Wind And Fire catalogue, Ohio Players and Sly And The Family Stone. Those records would be great starting points for just listening."

What did you learn from listening to those artists?

"I thought I knew at first how to play funk music and really get into it until I really dug in and started listening deeper. I was realising, 'Wow, I'm playing way more notes in my chord voicings than any of these other guys are!'. One of the early tips that I learned and what I like to tell people is you don't need so many notes in your chord voicings like you do in other styles of music – partially because a lot of the instrumentation has to do with horns, or with a keyboard player, or multiple keyboard players. If you're playing very rhythmic funk stuff, and there's a lot of strings that you're hitting and a lot of harmonic information, it can be a little too thick or overwhelming, when you might only need two notes or one note or three notes to accomplish what needs to happen."

Presumably you always have a good idea which notes they should be?

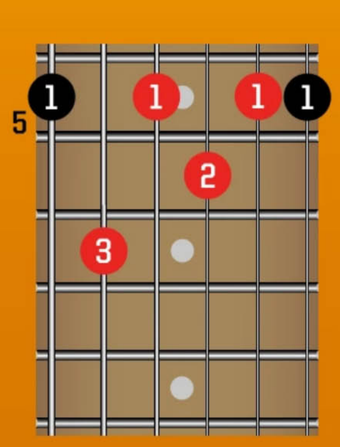
"It totally depends on the range of the song, usually. I'm normally, in a very generic sense, on strings two, three and four. Like 80 per cent of the time on strings two, three and four – the B, G and D strings. Sometimes I'm playing on a higher string. Sometimes I'm playing stuff that's lower if I want to have something that's a little more meaty. But that range of the guitar and those strings, like, I could play an entire record and just use those strings and be fine, you know?

"A lot of the funk music that I play is around dominant harmony or minor harmony and I'll think about a sixth-

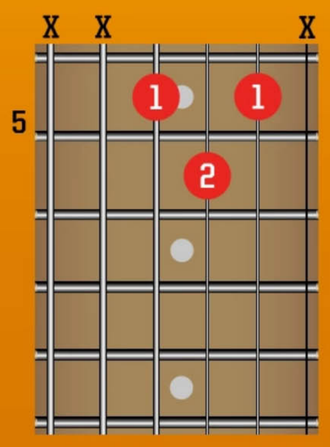
CORY'S CHORDS...

Two shapes. Two ways of playing them, Wong style!

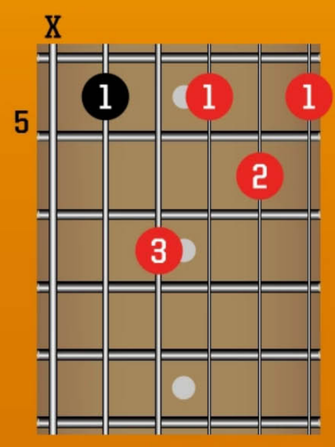
The A7 and Dm7 shapes shown here are typical barre chords used a lot in funk – hopefully you recognise them! When Cory plays them, he'll target two or three strings, giving a lighter sound and making room for other instruments to breathe.



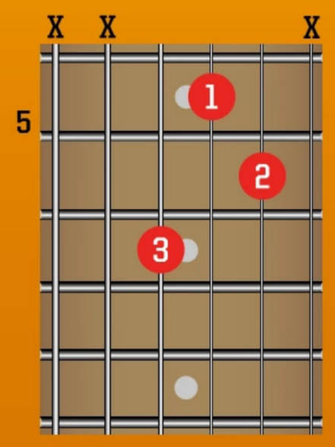
A7



A7 on three strings



Dm7



Dm7 on three strings

string rooted voicing or a fifth-string rooted voicing and I just pick two or three of those notes as the main ones and then mute the other strings, especially if I'm doing something that's really rhythmic.

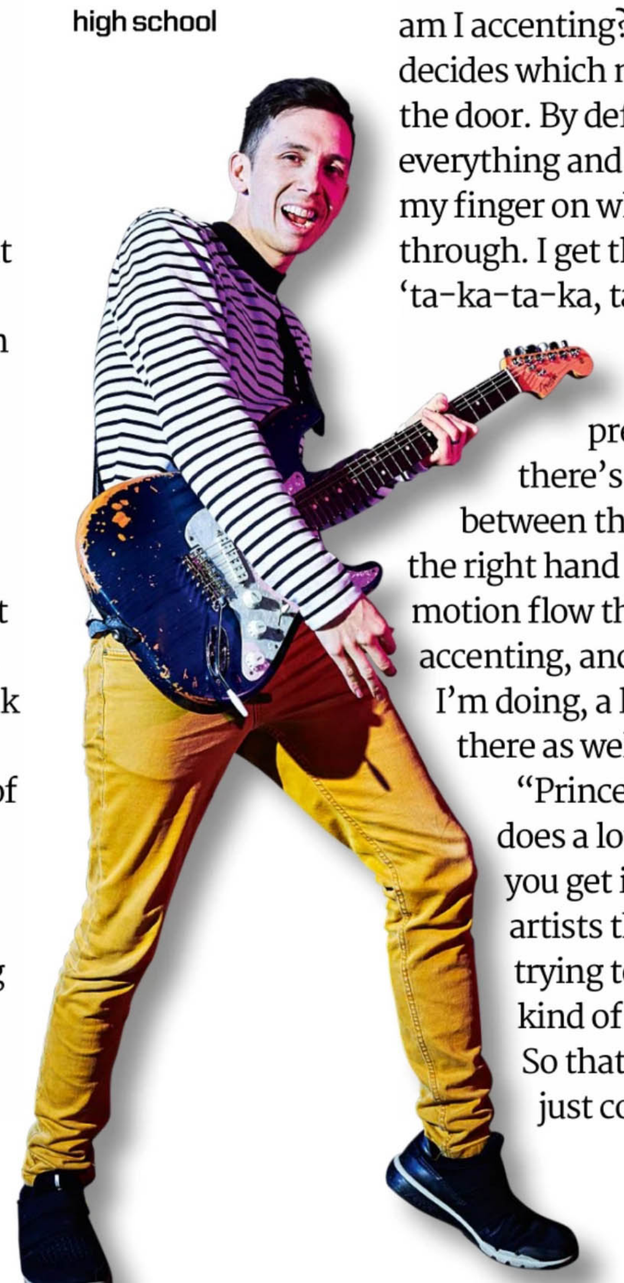
"If I have too many notes in my voicing, it just sounds like a big [mess]; it sounds too big, it sounds cluttered. When I remove all that extra stuff, it just opens up and it has room for the bass to sit and speak. And rhythmically I can drive and [give] some harmonic information. But a lot of the rich harmony usually will come from keyboards or horns or that sort of thing."

How do you incorporate single-note lines around your chords?

"I kind of think of the different roles in that side of it. I think of a percussion section, like bongos and shaker. I also at the same time think of horn stabs or little horn hooks, but just compact horn hooks. You know, just like an orchestra has a string section, brass section, woodwind section, all these different sections that serve a purpose. I kind of think of my parts orchestrated by function. And if I'm thinking of my part more as a percussive thing that needs a little bit of melodic intent, then I'll think of it mostly as a rhythmic thing with a little bit of note action in there to kind of outline the harmony – just to support the harmony.

"Sometimes I think of a single-note line more as a melodic supportive thing or sometimes as a lead thing... like the main accompaniment being the single-note guitar part. But also sometimes it's there just to be this driving force of rhythmic momentum."

OLD-SCHOOL
Cory still plays the trusty Highway One Stratocaster that he's had since high school



How do you keep the chords distinct from the single notes?

"So much of that is in the muting, and, for me, it's a huge relationship with the right hand [picking hand] and left hand [fretting hand] muting. So I do a lot of palm muting when I play and I also do a lot of left-hand muting. So I kind of subscribe to the [method of] constant 16th note alternate picking motion – my hand is always going in 16ths and I'm just choosing when to hit the strings. And then within that, [I'm choosing] 'when do I hit the strings?' and 'when am I accenting?' – then my left hand decides which notes are going to go out the door. By default I'm kind of muting everything and then just pressing down my finger on which notes to let through. I get the rhythmic thing of the 'ta-ka-ta-ka, ta-ka-ta-ka', but then the notes poke through when my left hand presses down. You know, there's a huge relationship between the left and right hand, but the right hand mostly is a constant motion flow thing with some accenting, and, depending on what I'm doing, a little bit of palm muting there as well.

"Prince has certain ways that he does a lot of accents on the 'a'. So you get into the instincts of the artists that you're really into or trying to emulate and then it kind of informs your decisions. So that's a fun thing that I've just constantly worked on.

John Frusciante has certain accent patterns that he does that are different than Al McKay in Earth, Wind And Fire, or Prince or Paul Jackson Jr., or David Williams on those Michael Jackson records. And again that all goes back to listening and emulating by playing along."

So once you've got the 16th note basics down, how do you then take your ideas and turn them into hooks?

"It depends whether I am the lead instrument in the moment or whether I'm a supporting role. Number one, what is my role? What is my function within the song? Am I supposed to be the thing that's out front? Am I the main accompaniment instrument? Or am I just straight up, like, the hook? If that's the case, the information that I'm putting out is going to be much more potent and obvious than if I'm just, like, the thing kind of in the background."

You play a lot of diads and you use them very melodically. Do you tend to play up and down the fretboard or more in scale box shapes?

"I think more horizontal than vertical because also, even as I play that way, it simulates more of the human voice and actually singing a melody. There's something about it that feels less like a real human voice than if I just go straight up the string. I connect to the intervals much more than if I'm just going vertically."

Tell us about your creative approaches to soloing...

"I grew up listening to and playing Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Weezer, and things like that. My favourite record of all time is the Weezer *Blue Album* – there's a guitar solo on every song, you know, and the way that those solos work is... [pauses]... It functions as a guitar solo and is an epic musical moment but it's not this like shred-fest."

It's very different to Clapton and SRV though!

"Yeah. And in a lot of cases, he's just playing the melody on a guitar, which is cool. But it just happens to be a guitar solo, you know, a screaming guitar solo. And then there's also, like, the jam side of things that I was really into. And I listened to a lot of Scofield and that sort of thing. So that's a big part of my upbringing. As far as how it relates in

my music, I mean, I don't really ever play guitar solos in Vulfpeck but in my solo music I do.

"Also, being an instrumental guitar-led band where it's not a shred-fest like some people expect, the blueprint is kind of set for a guitar-led band to be a lot of guitar solos and a lot of shredding. It's a little more of a riddle for me to solve the rhythm section guitar player-led band and not have it be guitar solos all the time. It's fun! So my role on the instrument being one that's still a lead but not always shredding or playing a lot of guitar solos. I mean, I played several guitar solos on my shows and my records but it's not as much like 'the thing,' you know? It's more of an ensemble sort of thing.

"But that being said, what everybody else in the band is playing matters a lot more because it needs to support what I'm doing as the lead thing. And if my lead thing is not as obvious to the average listener on what is supposed to be the focal thing, then what the rest of the band is playing really has to be very purposeful. If I'm just out there, shredding out front, and it's obviously like a lead guitar thing, the band has a lot more leeway on what they can do as a supporting role. So there's a lot more nuance to what I'm doing and what the band is doing that just requires a little more focused planning."

How do you set up your sound for soloing?

"Normally, the way that I run my amps, I can never make them clean enough. I like amps as clean as possible. I run my amp *super* clean. A lot of the times when I record I just record DI. For me, my main cruising gear is just a clean Stratocaster sound in fourth position, which to me is neck-middle. Then the next gear is moving into fifth position, which is just the neck pickup, and that gives me a little more bite; it's a little more aggressive. The next gear that I have is the fourth position with a Steel String [Vertex Steel String – Cory's preferred 'clean' drive pedal] on, and the next gear is the Steel String on in fifth position. Then the Warhorn [Walrus Audio Warhorn overdrive pedal] on in fourth position and the Warhorn on in fifth position. Sometimes I'll turn on both of the drives, but I really think in terms of stair-stepping in my gears in small increments to be able to have nuanced differences from tone to tone."

FUNKMASTER
Among the major influences on his playing style, Cory cites Prince and Earth, Wind And Fire

Do you like to use a compressor?

"I do. Yes. I have an 'always on' compressor. It's always on! It's on everything. When I first started using a compressor, I couldn't tell what it was that I loved about it. It just sounded more pro. It went from sounding good to all of a sudden, like, 'Wow, that sounds like it should be on a record' – that sort of tone. There are certain guitar compressors that kind of tighten it up and make it a little bit thinner. The compressor sounds that I like maybe make it sound a little warmer and thicker. I've had certain compressor pedals that I've used that add a little bit of bite. I don't like that at all. I like the opposite. And I use a blend knob so it's like a parallel compressor like I would do in a studio setting."

"IT'S A RIDDLE TO SOLVE TO NOT HAVE IT BE SOLOS ALL THE TIME"

THE WONG GEAR...

For his 2019 UK tour Cory eschewed his preferred amps and pedals in favour of a simpler rig

GUITARS

1 FENDER HIGHWAY ONE STRATOCASTER

"My main Strat is just a simple Highway One Stratocaster – the guitar that I've had since high school. I have a Seymour Duncan Classic Stack pickup in the neck, a Duckbucker in the middle, which I don't love – it's just fine. I had some guy at a store recommend it. He put it in. Whatever... It's fine! And in the bridge it's a JB Junior. It sounds cool. It's a mini-humbucker. It's a little bit thicker than your average Strat bridge pickup."

2 KITHARA GUITARS CUSTOM

"The other [guitar] I have is one that somebody built for me. There's a builder in Ireland – Kithara Guitars. This guy just hit me up and was like, 'Hey, I want to show you this guitar that I've built.' This guitar is amazing. It's really, really well made, feels great and what's cool is that I don't know what pickups he used but they sound a lot like my Antiquities [Seymour Duncan Antiquities installed on another of Cory's Strats]."

PEDALBOARD

3 LINE 6 HX EFFECTS

"I'm trying something out now. I'm checking out the [Line 6] HX Effects. It's cool. It's harder to navigate than the M9 – I used to use the M9. This one's fine. It's cool. I dialled in the drives to sound good with the amps that I'm using. The HX Effects is cool because it's got it all in one simple [pedal]."

4 WAMPLER EGO COMPRESSOR

"The Ego Compressor adds a warmness and kind of smoothes out the top end of things a little bit and it makes me feel like I have a thicker tone. With that pedal I just use all the knobs at noon, pretty much. It's not a drastic difference in sound, but, if I had to pick one pedal to use the rest of my life, it would be a compressor! Which isn't a lot of fun, but it's just like, well, I don't know, I can get a lot of songs just out of my guitar itself!"

5 LANEY LIONHEART 212

"I use different amps in different settings. For this tour I'm using the Laney Lionheart 212 which is just a nice really clean amp. It's got a lot of clean headroom."

6 DV MARK RAW DAWG

"I also use the DV Mark Raw Dawg, which is a solid state amp. Actually it has been one of my favourite sounds that I've ever had – this combination. The DV Mark is solid state but I love it. Typically what I backline is a Fender Twin or a Fender Super Reverb, but sometimes, those, depending on the one, even on three they start to get tube saturation and breakup – which a lot of people like but I don't because I want clean! I almost want it to sound DI!"

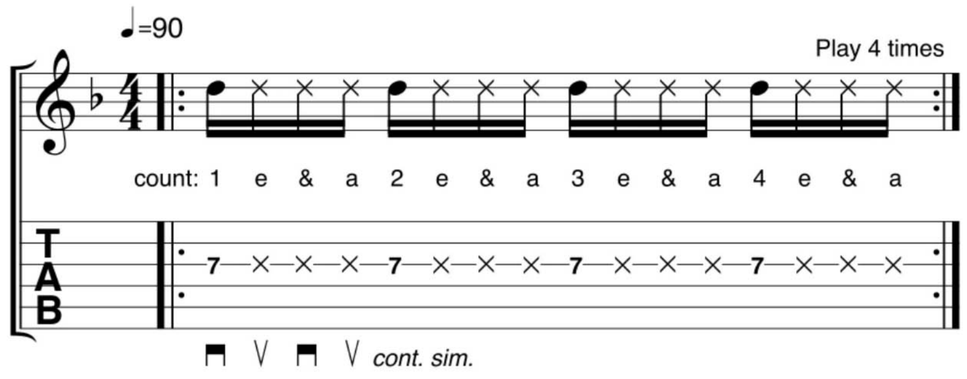
DOING TIME...

Follow Cory's own funky 'helicopter' exercises and improve your picking, timing, muting and accenting skills

"One of the exercises that I love to do is shifting accents on the 16th notes. I do an entire measure of 16th notes with accents on the downbeat. Then I'll do a measure where the accent's on the 'e', then on the '&', then on the 'a'. And if I go back and forth between the downbeat, the 'e', the '&' and the 'a', what it does is: downstroke accents, then it's upstroke accents, then downstroke accents, then upstroke accents.

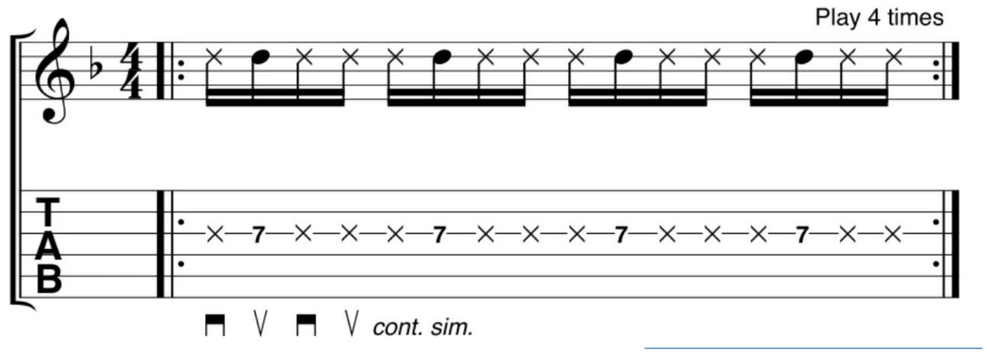
"Then I'll practise two beats of 16ths with the accents on the downbeat, two beats where it's on the 'e', two beats where it's on the '&', two beats where it's on the 'a'. And then I'll do it where it's one beat of each. So it's just shifting the accent along the 16th-note grid to get the execution and the mind focus of it."

DOWNBEAT ACCENTS — TRACK 32



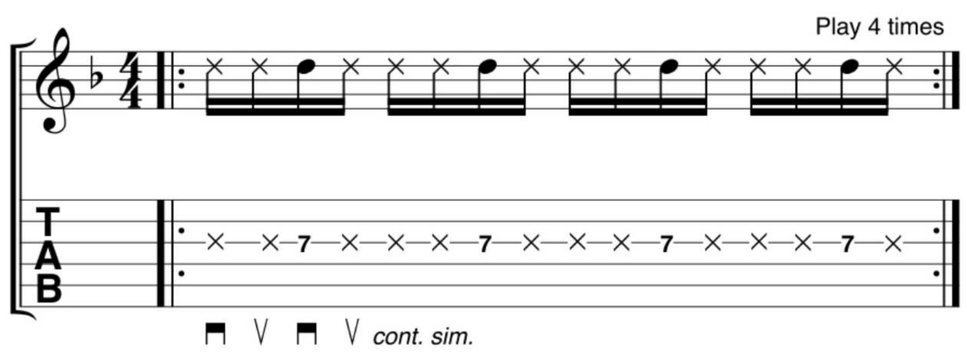
For Cory's downbeat accenting exercise pick 'down up down up' and keep all the notes shown with 'X's muted out – only the downbeats should ring out.

ACCENTS ON THE 'E' — TRACK 33



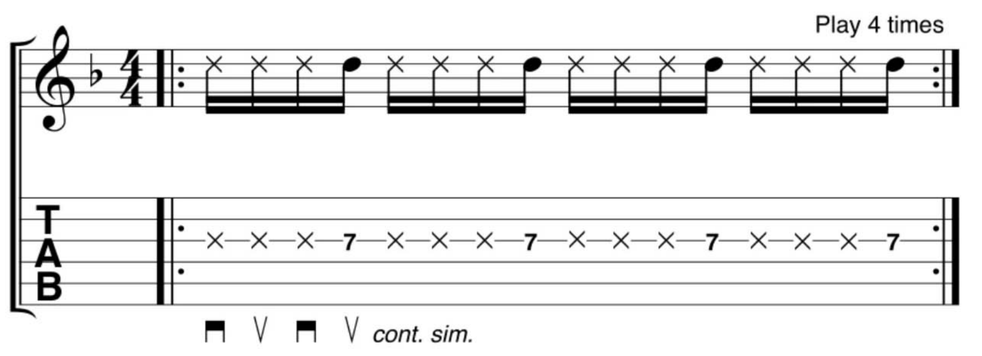
Moving the accent along the grid, now you'll be sounding the second note out of every four – just as Cory describes. Count '1 e & a' to keep time and sound the 'e's.

ACCENTS ON THE '&' — TRACK 34



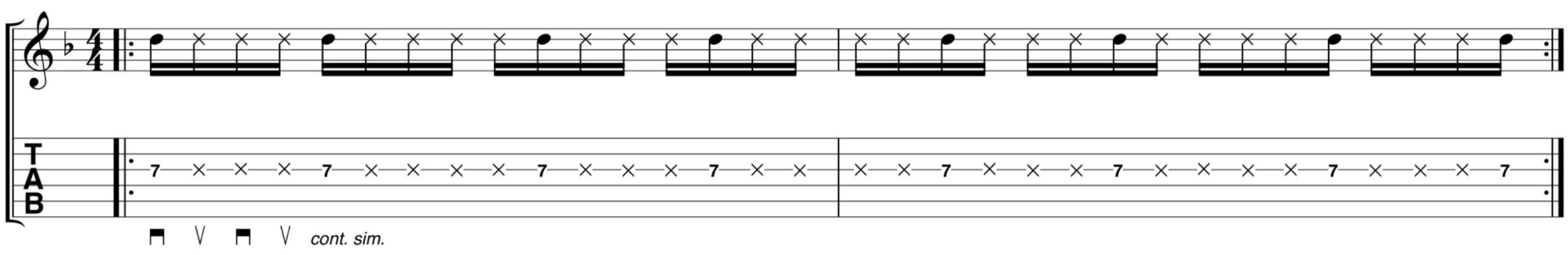
Play a run of straight 16th notes, this time with the accent on the third note out of every four. Using 'down up' style picking, this should be a downstroke.

ACCENTS ON THE 'A' — TRACK 35



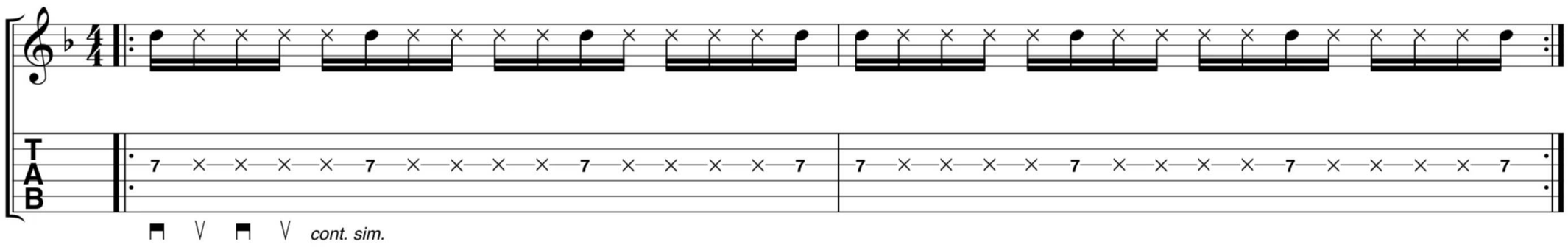
Hopefully you saw this coming! The fourth stage of Cory's funk picking exercise has the accent on the fourth note of each grouping. It should be an upstroke.

TWO BEATS ON EACH PATTERN — TRACK 36



This is where things get tough, so make sure you've practised each element before you get started! As Cory describes, he plays two beats of downbeat accents, then two beats on the 'e', two beats on '&' and two beats on 'a'. The last note of bar 2 and the first note of bar 1 are both accented – so you get two accents in a row on the repeat.

ONE BEAT ON EACH PATTERN — TRACK 37



Finally, this is the hardest part of Cory's funk workout. You'll be moving the accent *every* beat, so there's not much time to get a feel for each four-note group. Make sure to practise slowly and keep in mind whether you should be accenting a downstroke or an upstroke.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ The mechanics of down-picking
- ✔ A heavy metal style down-picked riff
- ✔ A mod revival style punk rock rhythm

GETTING STARTED WITH...

DOWN-PICKING

Get your strumming hand warmed up and get ready for some double time down-picking

"Down-picking then... What do I need to know?"
Well, when you play the guitar you pluck the strings with a pick and you'll either pick downwards or upwards, right? Most rhythm guitar is based on alternating down- and upstrokes – a technique known as strumming. You've probably seen loads of guitarists doing this. However, some music sounds better played using only downstrokes.

"I see. What styles of music use down-picking?"
You'll come across passages and parts that need to be down-picked in all styles of music – it really just depends on the song. That said, various sub-genres of heavy metal include *a lot* of down-picked riffs. Punk too, though the playing is often looser. The technique is used when a guitarist wants a more energetic sound.

"Can you name some well-known songs that are down-picked?"
Sure! Take a look at the boxout on the right where we've given you a handful of songs to get started with. In each case listen out for the upbeat and urgent sound of the down-picked guitar. It wouldn't sound the same with strumming.

"Got it! Let's get playing then."
Take a look at the first tab example. It's a generic chugging powerchord riff that could have come from almost any heavy metal band, Judas Priest, Metallica, Lamb Of God, DevilDriver and so on. Have a listen and play along.

"That last chord is a killer!"
Down-picking makes it tough! If you just want to jam along, either play an upstroke or leave the last chord out all together. However, if you want to hone your downstrokes it's a case of practising slowly and gradually building speed. Remember, compared to strumming you'll be picking at double speed – so slow practice is vital when learning how to down-pick.

"Okay, I'll spend a bit of time on it. What's next?"
Our second tab example is inspired by one of the UK's great rhythm players, Paul Weller. His aggressive delivery was at the heart of the band's new wave, mod-style brand of punk rock. Our riff uses a G chord with a simple variation to turn it into a Gsus4. Have a go!

"I think this might be a bit easier than the metal riff."
If it's easier then why not try playing it both ways? First with down-picking then again using strumming. Hopefully you'll hear how downstrokes give you a more urgent sound, especially at this quite high tempo.

DOWN DOWN DEEPER AND DOWN-PICKING...

Five songs that ditch strumming for downstrokes

1. CHUCK BERRY – JOHNNY B GOODE
APPEARS AT: 0:18
Wait till the verse kicks in and you'll hear Chuck's trademark boogie riffing – all down-picked, of course!

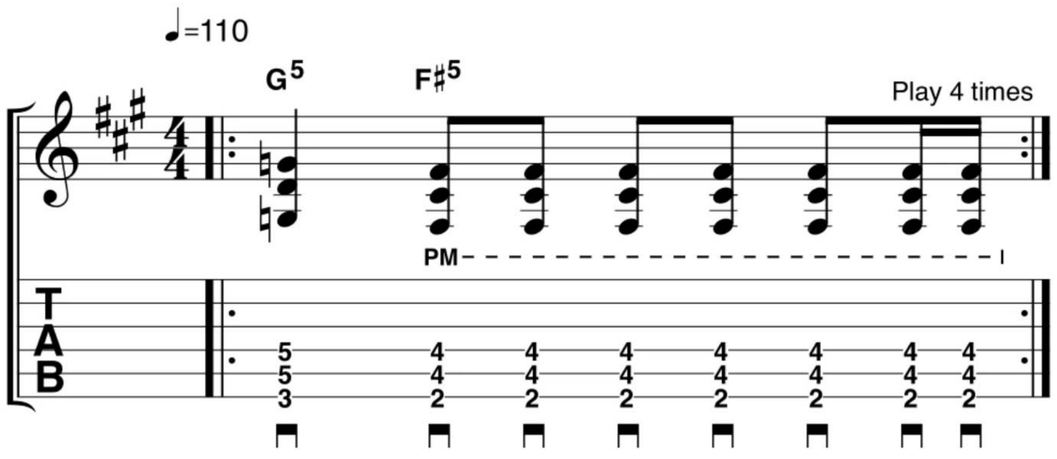
2. FOO FIGHTERS – ALL MY LIFE
APPEARS AT: 0:00
Dave Grohl's syncopated powerchord intro is all down-picked. The other guitars kick in at 0:35 using a down-up approach.

3. TOM PETTY – I WON'T BACK DOWN
APPEARS AT: 0:00
Light palm-muted powerchords kick off proceedings here courtesy of Petty and ex-Beatle George Harrison.

4. METALLICA – ENTER SANDMAN
APPEARS AT: 0:24
Hetfield is widely considered a god of down-picking. Honestly, there are few Metallica songs that don't feature the technique.

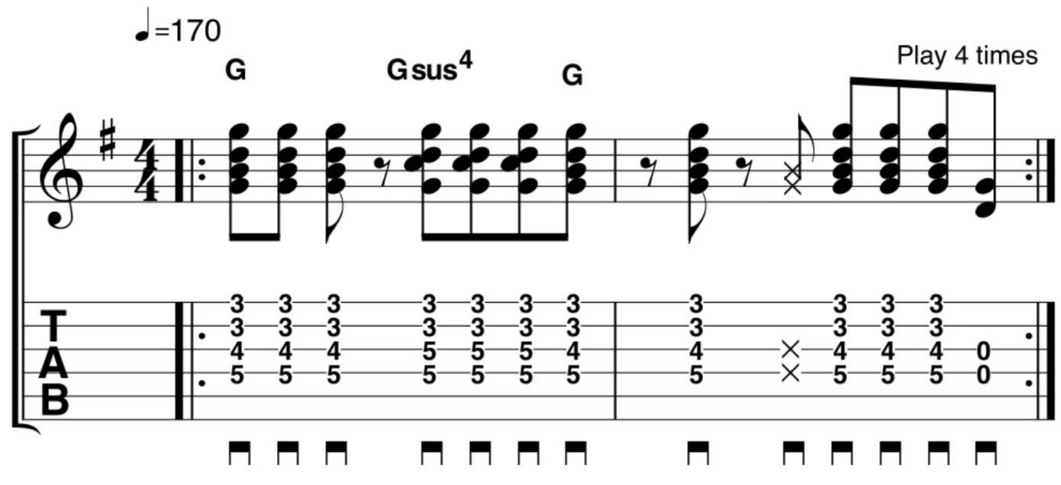
5. RAMONES – BLITZKRIEG BOP
APPEARS AT: 0:00
The intro on this classic US punk tune is all down-picked. Live versions were often played faster than the recording.

1 THRASH IT OUT — TRACKS 7-8



The challenge here comes at the end of the bar. You could play those two chords with a 'down up' move, but down down gives you a more authentic metal vibe.

2 IN A PICKLE — TRACKS 9-10



The tempo is high and the rhythm is quite involved here, so practise slowly at first. The muted notes and open strings provide a counterpoint to the main rhythm.

DOWNLOAD FROM FileSilo FOLDER 4

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ The basics of 5/4 time
- ✔ One easy picking exercise
- ✔ A riff and a lead guitar lick

HOW TO

WHAT THE F?

5/4 TIME

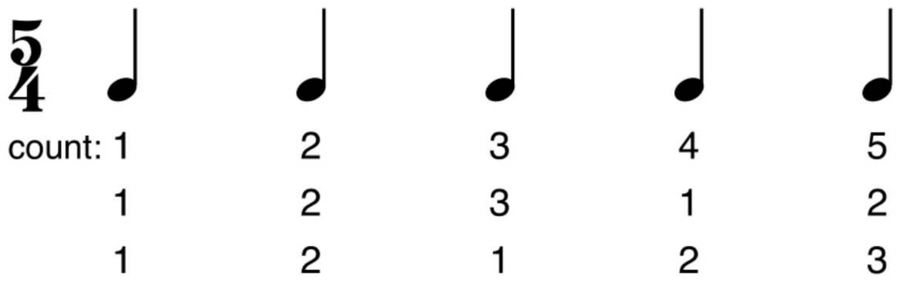
Get to grips with some odd-time signature basics with TG's easy lesson on 5/4

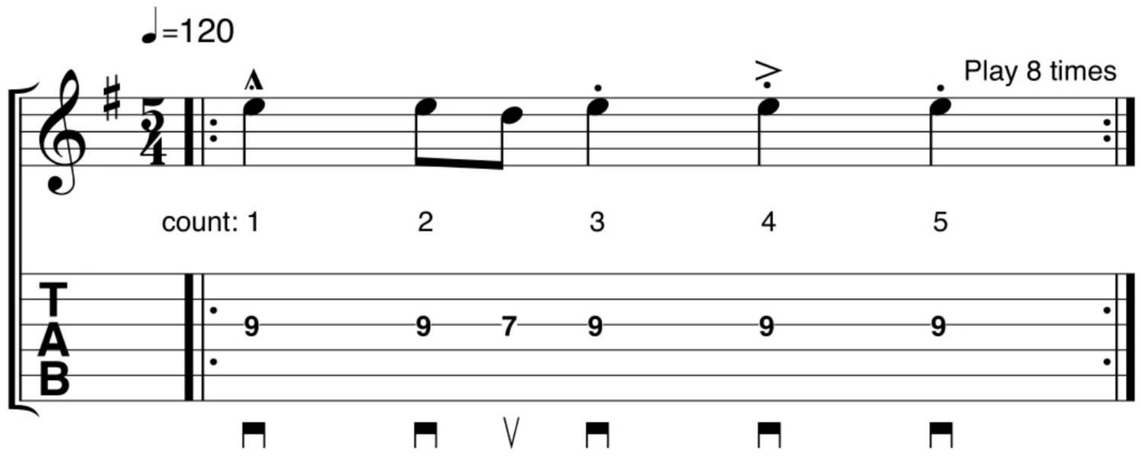
Odd time signatures can sound a bit, er, odd – actually a pretty useful effect if you want an unusual or left field vibe in your music. 5/4 is a fairly simple example. Unlike 4/4 time, where you count to four to get the feel of the music, you'll be counting to five. Confused? Listen to *Seven Days* by Sting, *15 Step* by Radiohead or Jethro Tull's *Living In The Past* and count '1 2 3 4 5' to stay in time. You may prefer a '1 2 3 1 2' count though – this way the rhythmic emphasis is always on the '1's, which tends to feel more natural. Read on and we'll explain all...

1 5/4 TIME EXPLAINED

TRACK 11

Generally, music in 5/4 time has two emphasised pulses in every bar: beat 1 and either beat 3 or 4. Of course, you *can* emphasise any note you like – your music, your rules! But these are the most common approaches. Listen to *5/4* by Gorillaz for a great example of a '1 2 1 2 3' count.



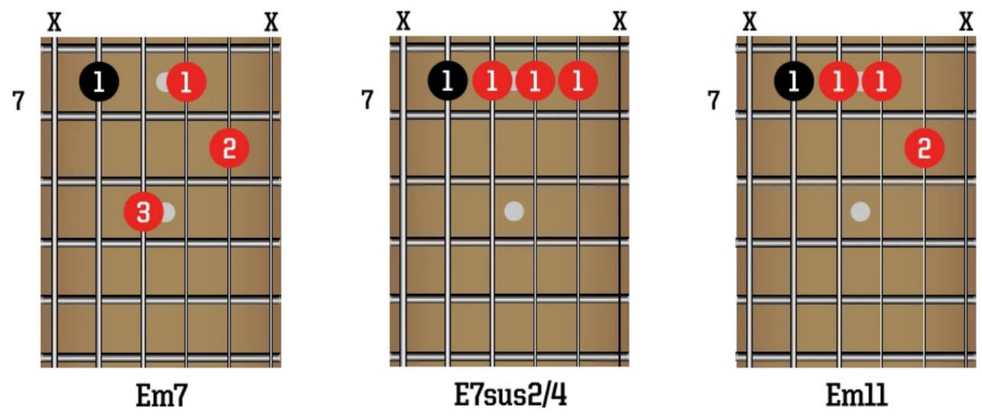


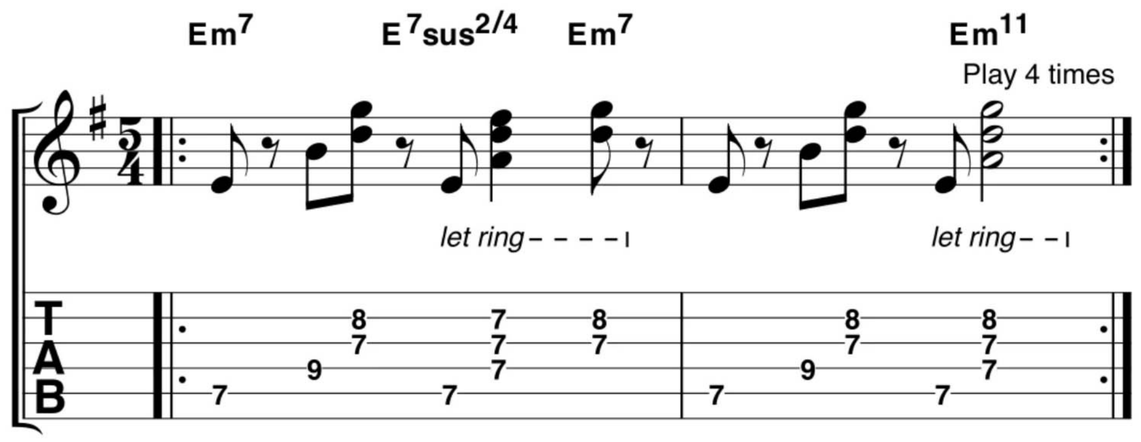
This easy picking exercise will help you get to grips with playing in 5/4. The accents are on beats 1 and 4 so count '1 2 3 1 2' to keep time.

2 CHORDS AND RHYTHM

TRACK 12

Our tab example follows the three chords shown here. Em7 is a commonly-used barre chord. Just take your second and third fingers off the fretboard to play the sus chord and put your second finger back on to play Em11.

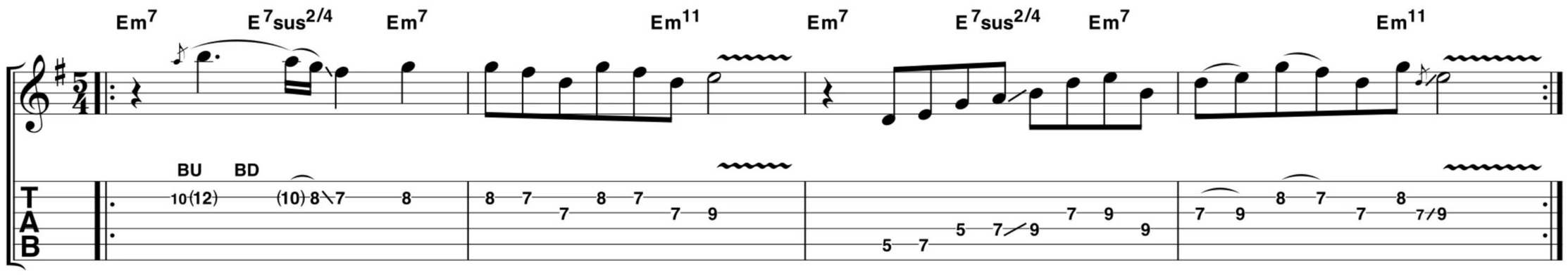




Listen to this rhythm guitar part and try to pick out the 5/4 pulse. Notice that you don't play every note of each chord at once – so fingerstyle is a good option.

3 5/4 LEAD LICK

TRACKS 13-14



This lick brings out the 5/4 feel in a few different ways. First, in bars 1 and 3 we've deliberately not played on beat 1 – de-emphasis is a kind of emphasis after all, drawing the listener's ear to the beat. Bars 2 and 4 have long, clear sounding notes on beat 4 – again, drawing your ear to the emphasised beat.

GO UNPLUGGED

Explore new styles and sounds with us as we show you just how diverse acoustic playing can be with our easy lessons

GUITARS CHRIS BIRD, RICHARD BARRETT
WORDS CHRIS BIRD, RICHARD BARRETT, ROB LAING

GET AUDIO FILES
Head over to **filesilo.co.uk/TG-Annual2020** to download your audio files

In this feature our aim is to not just inspire you to get playing some acoustic guitar but also change your perception of what you can play. Whether you're a seasoned acoustic guitarist or a dedicated electric player with a steel string gathering dust in the house, there's something for everyone. We're kicking off our lessons with some fingerstyle basics before we get stuck in with a mix of style studies. You can even have a bash at percussive guitar with our easy tutorial. Need to plug in? No problem! From preamps and pickups to amps and fx, we've distilled down the best gear on the market in our guide to getting your acoustic guitar rig giggable. Turn the page and let's get started.

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FINGERSTYLE BASICS

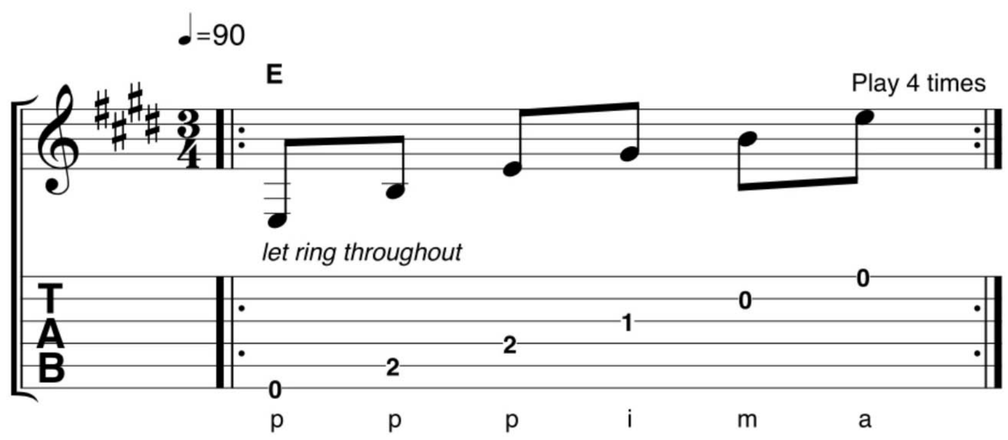
Ditch your pick and get some fingerpicking fundamentals down with this easy primer lesson

Whether you're a regular fingerstyle player or it's a technique you've never tried, we always recommend paying attention to the basics. This short lesson shows you the best ways to approach fingerpicking, but with one vital caveat – these are general 'rules' that you'll often find yourself breaking when you play. Still, get the fundamentals down and you'll be covered for a multitude of playing situations. Read on as we help you get started.

BASIC TECHNIQUE

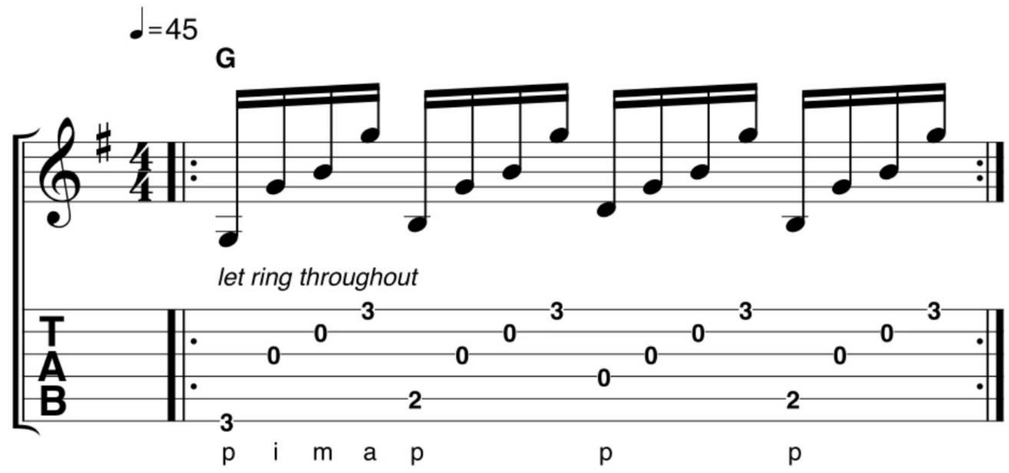
Standard fingerstyle technique is to use your thumb for all three bass strings, while your first, second and third fingers take one treble string each.

01 TAKE IT E-ASY — **TRACK** 13



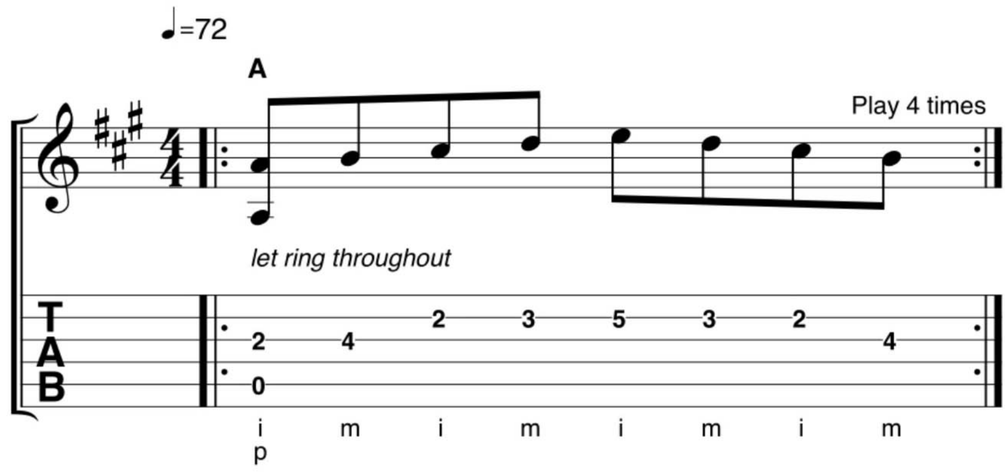
This open E arpeggio is a great way to practise. Play three downstrokes with your thumb, then pick up with your first, second and third fingers.

02 GEE'D UP — **TRACK** 14



With the E chord under your belt try this exercise with G. There's more thumb movement here, so make sure to practise slowly until you get a feel for it.

03 AY UP! — **TRACK** 15



Don't worry too much about the bass note – aim to play the treble-string tune. Alternate between your 'i' and 'm' fingers, but be ready to vary your pattern too.

EASY AS PIMAC... FINGERSTYLE NOTATION EXPLAINED

We use traditional 'PIMAC' fingerstyle directions under our tab – where each letter indicates which finger to pick with. Memorise the info and the tab'll be a bit easier to read.

- **P** Thumb
- **I** Index finger (first finger)
- **M** Middle finger (second)
- **A** Ring finger (third)
- **C** Little finger (fourth)

MELODIC FINGERPICKING

Single-note melodies have a different sound to arpeggios – and this picking approach is ideal. Rest your thumb on a bass string to hold you in place as your first, second and occasionally third fingers outline a melody.

ACOUSTIC STYLES

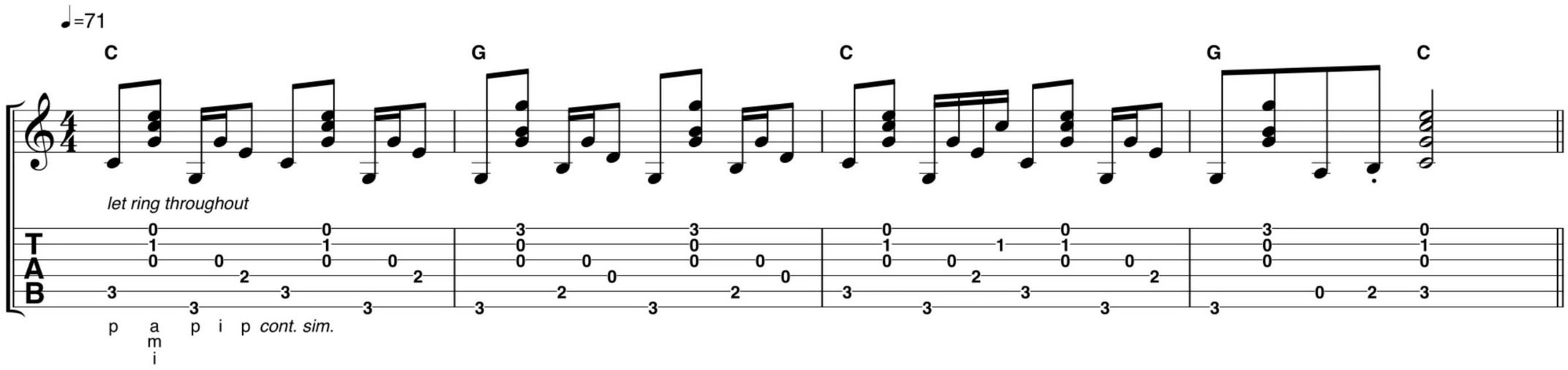
Explore a selection of acoustic guitar styles with TG's tab lessons on some fundamentals

There's much to be gained from trying your hand at different styles of music. Aside from potential improvements to your technique from the challenge of playing new music, you'll be training your ear as you listen to material that might be off your radar. Here, our aim is to help you get to grips with some basic elements of a handful of different styles. It's far from extensive, so treat these as bite-sized ideas that you can develop your own music around.

COUNTRY
Double down on fingerpicking basics for country style alternating basslines

04 COUNTRY GROOVE

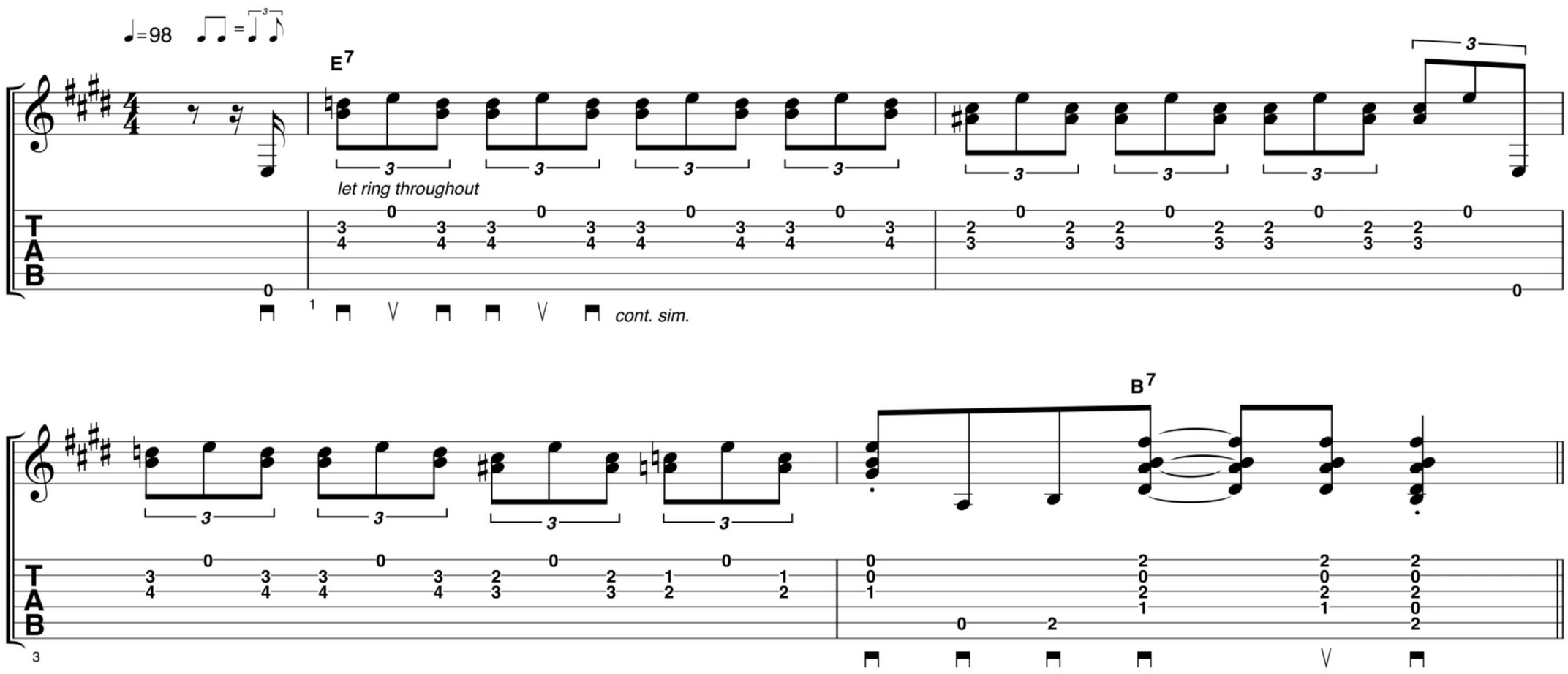
TRACK 16



For things like this, it's important to be organised about which picking hand fingers play which string and develop a routine. Here, the thumb plays the bass notes and the first three fingers of the picking hand are assigned to the three treble strings. As you develop more complex patterns, you might benefit from deviating from this routine slightly, but this is the foundation of fingerstyle – a platform from which to continue to greater things!

05 DELTA BLUES STYLE INTRO

TRACK 17



This Robert Johnson-style intro lick has become such a staple in both electric and acoustic blues since it first appeared on record in the early 20th century. Notice the brief statement of the root note on the sixth string E note before each two-bar phrase, giving a clear context for what follows. This technique allows more complex parts to be played without the need to be constantly holding down a full chord.

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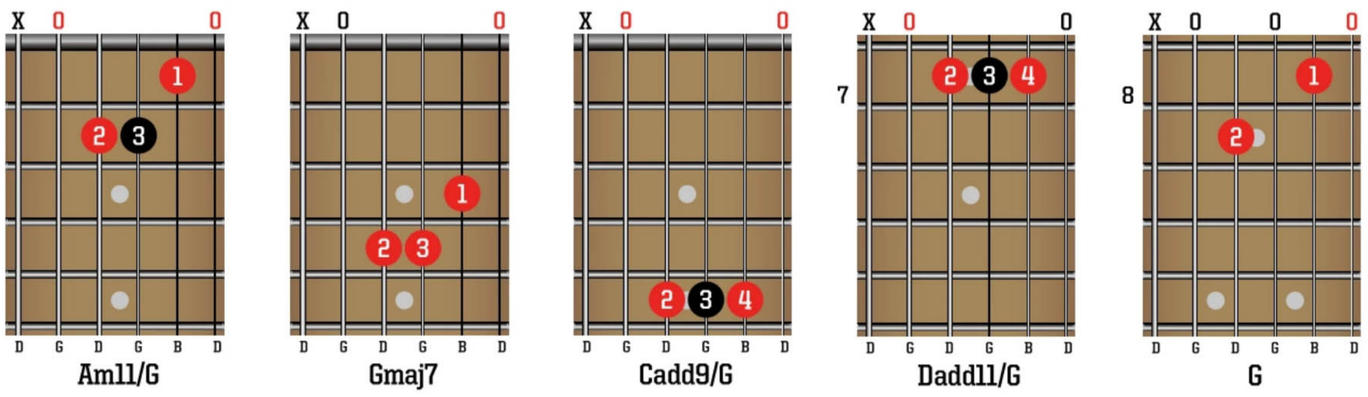
ALTERED TUNINGS

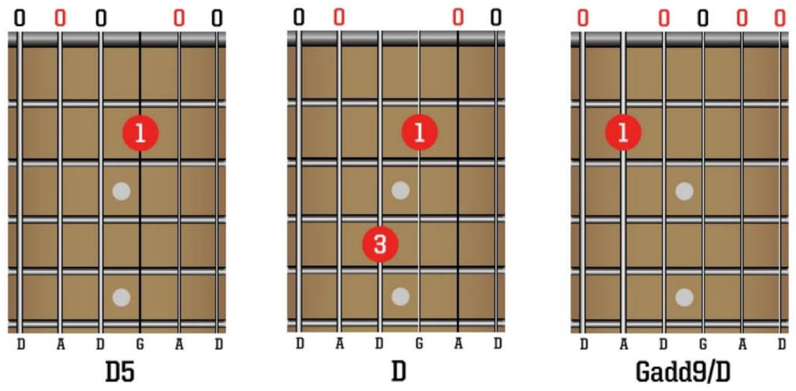
OPEN G TUNING



Functioning as a G major chord when played on the open strings, this tuning is a real staple, used by many Delta blues players like Robert Johnson and Son House. Open G is great for slide playing too – tuning to a G chord means that all the strings form a bright major harmony when you lay your slide across one fret. Anyway, these shapes will give you a taste of the possibilities of open G.

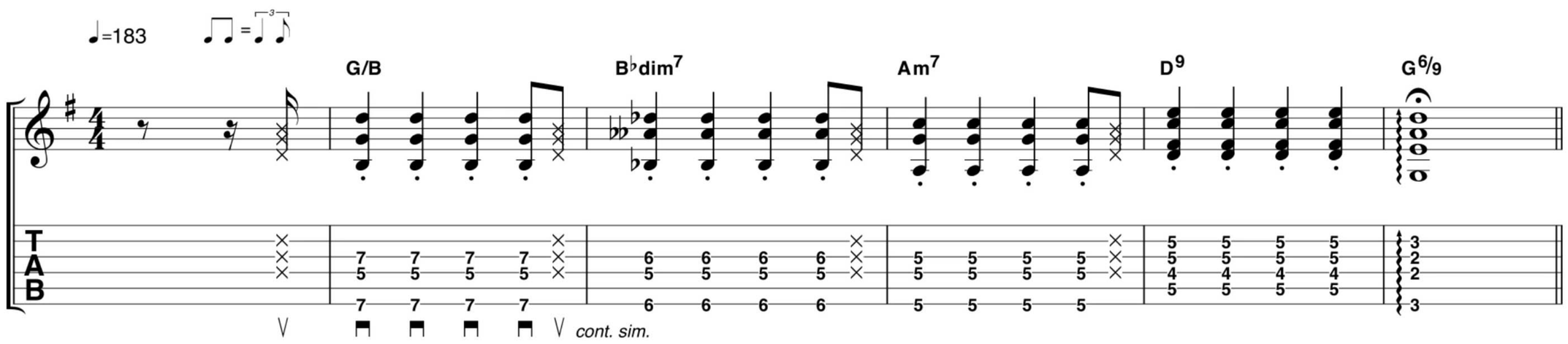
ALTERED TUNINGS

DADGAD TUNING



Popularised by Davey Graham, John Renbourn, Jimmy Page and, in more recent years, Newton Faulkner and Ed Sheeran, DADGAD is a great tuning for acoustic guitar. These chords should give you a good start at figuring out how the tuning works. Though fully fretted chords are possible and well worth exploring, it is ringing open shapes like these that give the most distinctive sound.

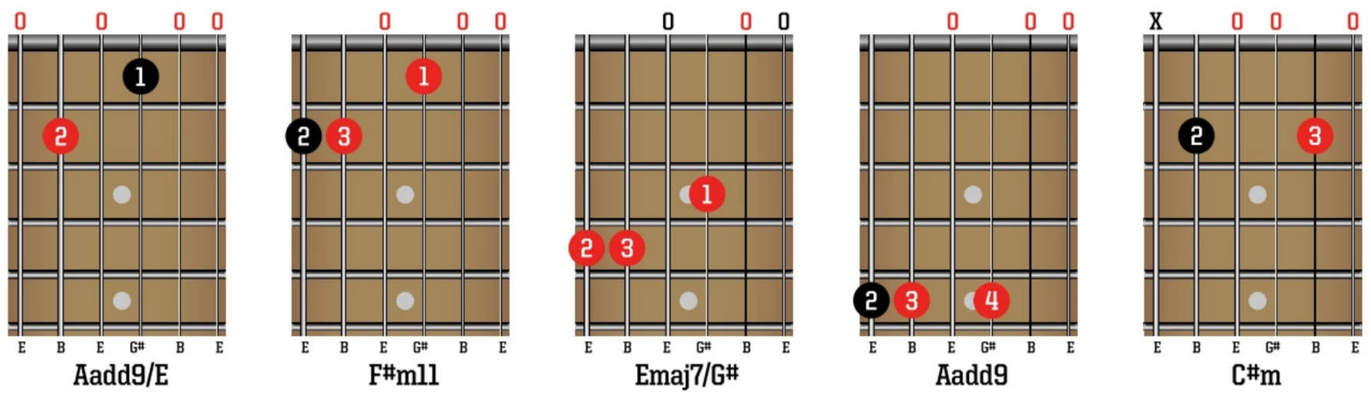
06 GYPSY JAZZ VAMP — **TRACK** 18



This rhythmic chord style is the driving force behind Parisian 'gypsy' style swing jazz. Swing and jazz chords are very different to country, blues and rock. Instead of the open, ringing voicing of these styles, these chords are usually just three or four notes, with any unwanted strings muted out. In this plectrum-strummed example, the fifth string is hardly used at all. Check out Biréli Lagrène, Remi Harris, Jimmy Rosenberg or early pioneer Django Reinhardt for inspiration.

ALTERED TUNINGS

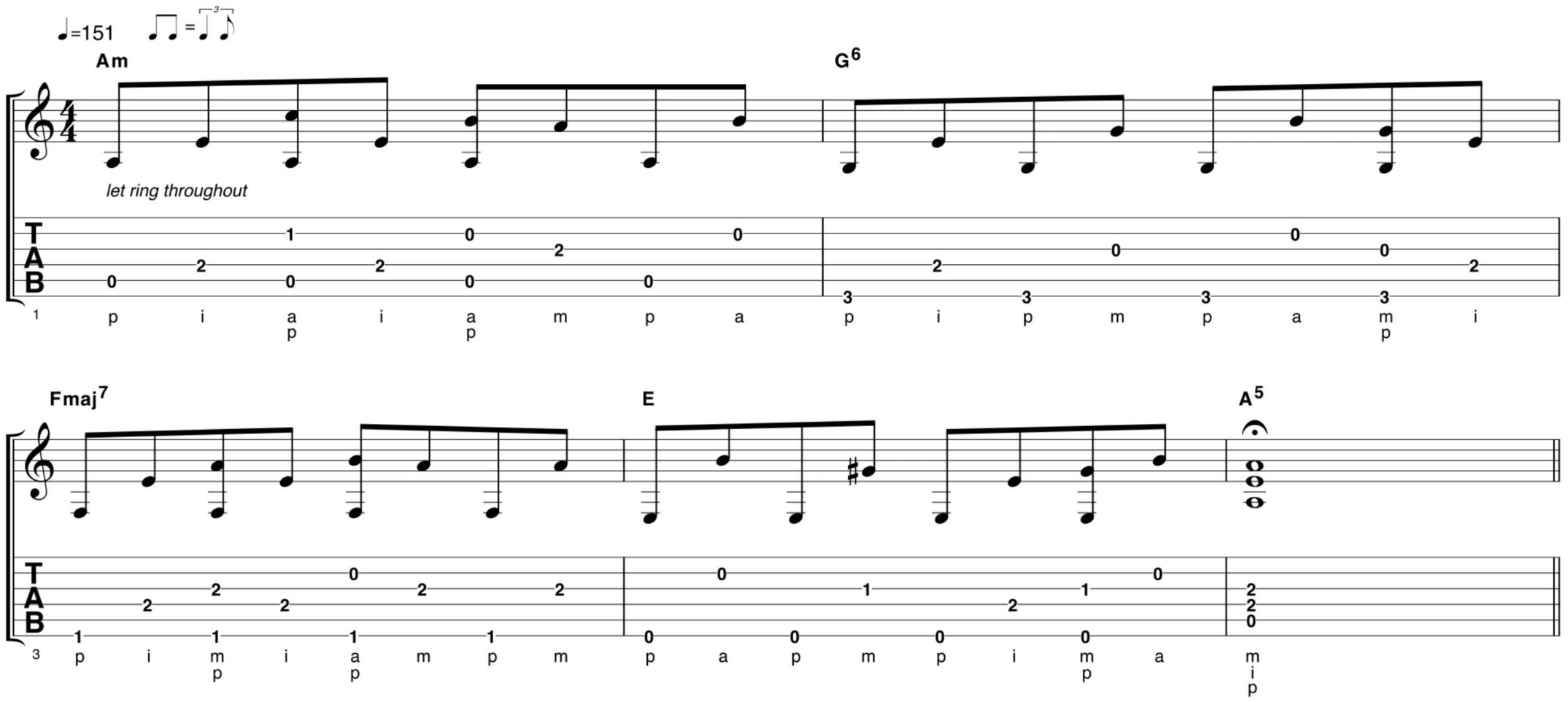
OPEN E TUNING



Another great slide guitar tuning (and a favourite of slide supremo Derek Trucks), open E also gives the possibility of complex and interesting sounding chords without getting your fingers in a twist! As well as the examples here, it's worth experimenting with sliding melodies on a single string, using the other free strings as a 'drone'.

07 BRITISH FOLK

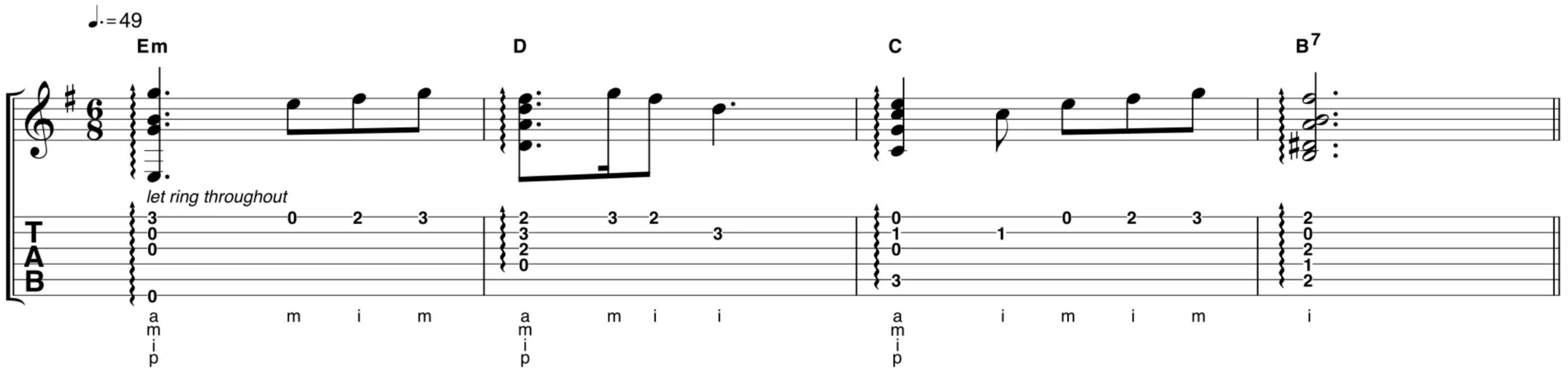
TRACK 19



During the mid/late 1960s, the acoustic guitar played a major part in a folk revival. Players like Bert Jansch took the art of creating self-contained rhythmic and melodic parts to a new level. It might be easiest to view this as a melody with a separate bassline played with the thumb and lightly palm-muted to give extra clarity and 'thump'. Use the first three fingers of your picking hand to play the melody/chords on the second and third strings.

08 MEDIEVAL

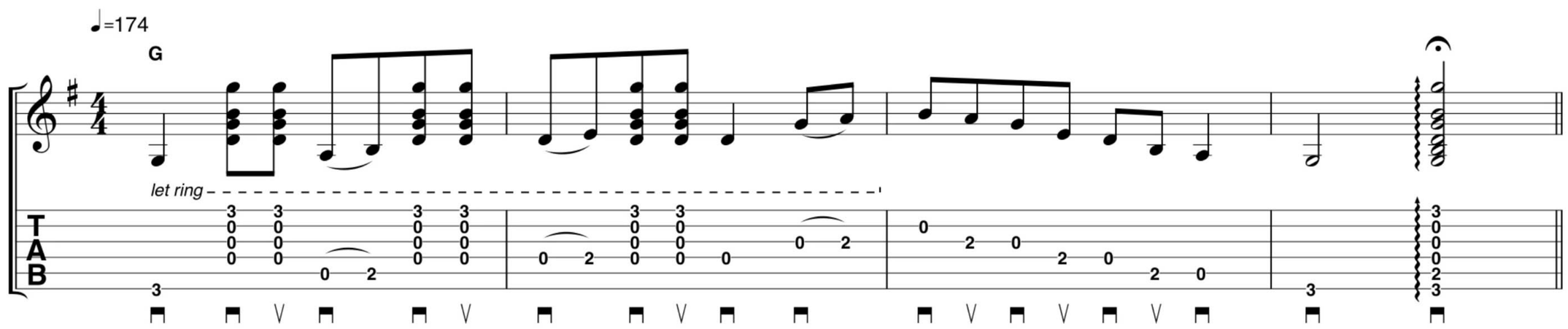
TRACK 20



The acoustic guitar has origins stretching back centuries, and this example is inspired by the lute music of medieval times. Also, by the revival in this style inspired by players such as John Renbourn – though even Ritchie Blackmore and Jimmy Page have been interested in this style. The opening chords in bars 1, 2 and 3 use the thumb and first three fingers in quick succession to spell out the shape. In bar 4, simply strum gently downwards with your first finger.

09 FLAT-PICKED BLUEGRASS

TRACK 21



Using a pick generally gives greater volume and projection, plus opens up greater possibilities for playing rapid-fire runs of notes. The first part of this example plays a melody on the bass notes. Between the bass notes, the pick is used to strum lightly on the treble strings, giving a self-contained musical and rhythmic arrangement. The single note line that finishes the piece is played with alternating down and upstrokes of the pick.

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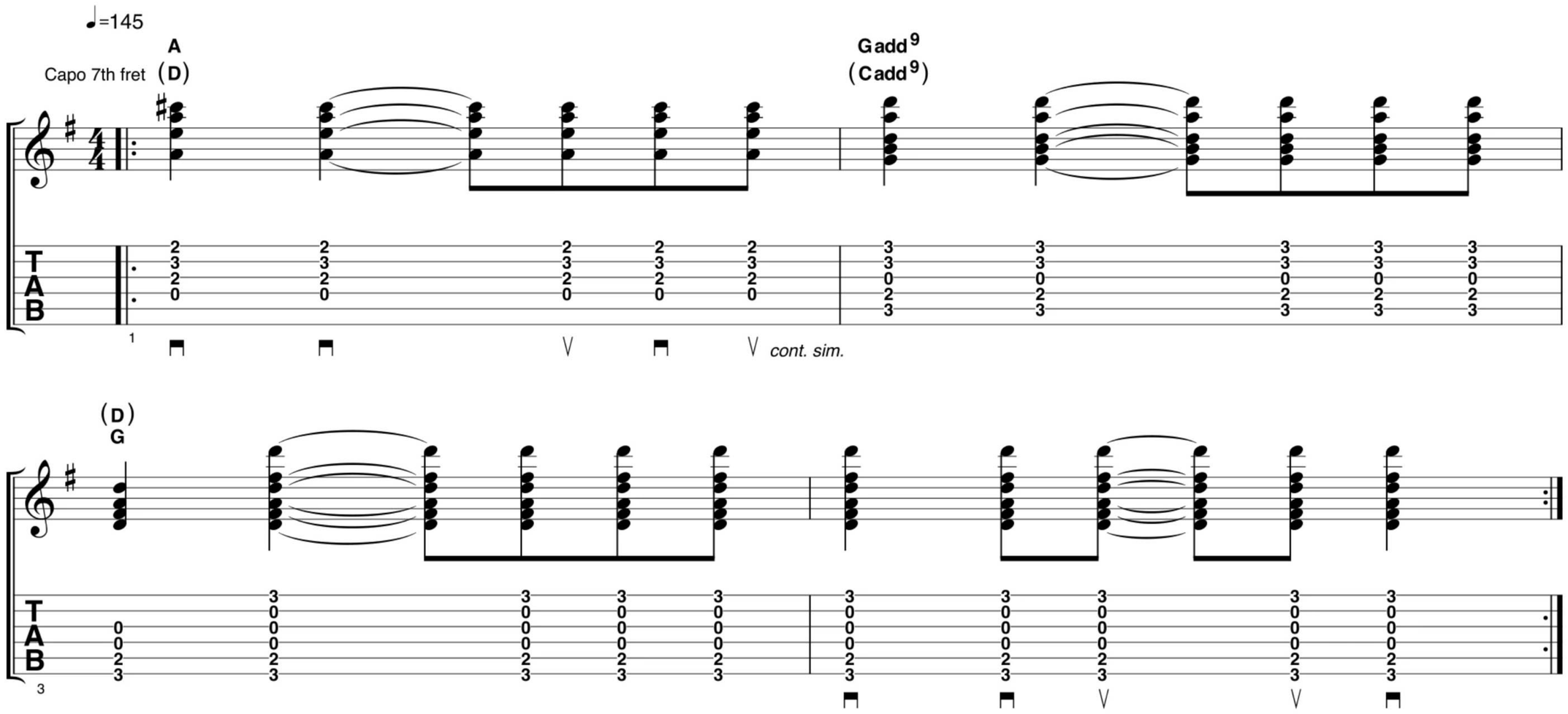
10 MODERN INDIE-FOLK

TRACK 22

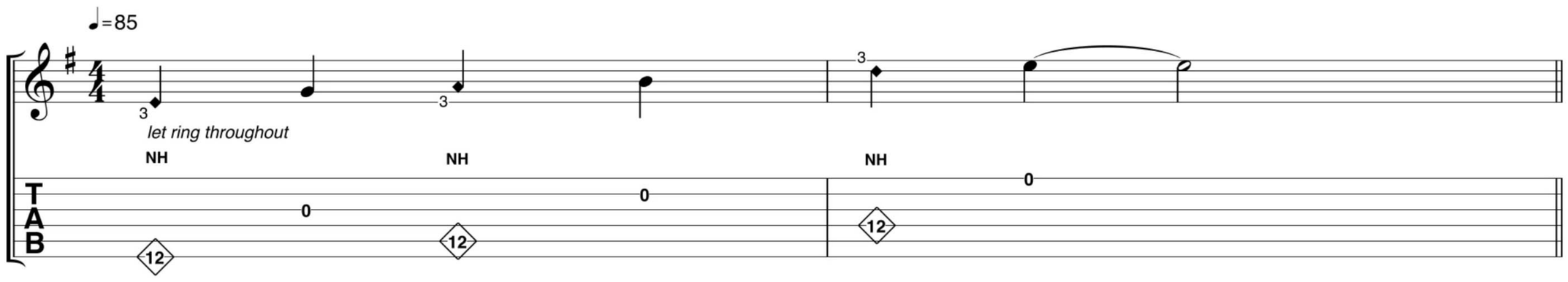


Using a capo at the 7th fret gives an almost ukulele style effect – especially if you confine your playing to the higher pitched strings. This works well on its own (as in our audio example) or as an overdub over another lower-pitched acoustic guitar part, giving a complex 'layered' sound. The regular strumming pattern is also an important ingredient, calling rhythmic ukulele playing to mind. Using a lighter pick can also thin out the tone a little, which is ideal for what we're going for here.

HARMONICS
Harmonics and open strings add richness to arpeggios and melodic playing

11 HARMONICS AND OPEN STRINGS

TRACK 23



This idea, developed to a fine art by virtuosos like Lenny Breau and Tommy Emmanuel, adds richness to arpeggios and melodic playing. You can play the harmonics with a fretting finger, letting them ring out over the open strings; or you can use the index finger of your picking hand to touch the harmonics while picking the string with your thumb or free finger. This takes great skill and a steady hand, but allows you to move anywhere on the fretboard to create artificial harmonics, alongside conventional fretted notes.

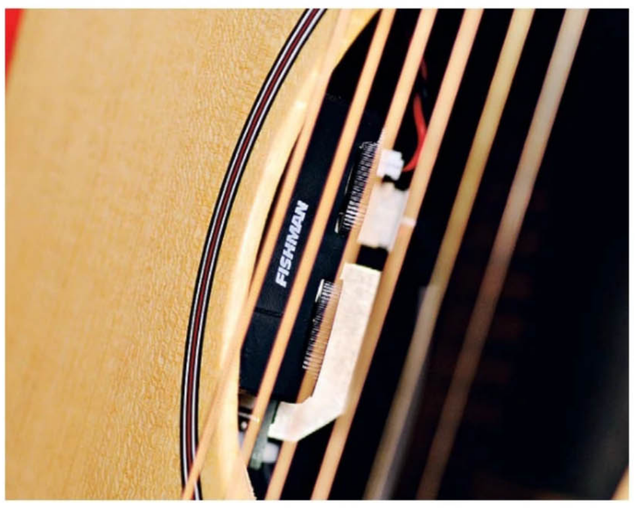
PLUGGING IN

If you want to gig or just amplify your acoustic for jams there are a lot of options out there. Here's our guide to the best, and what they offer

PIEZO PICKUPS

The way your guitar's strings' vibrations are captured and conveyed is vital to your tone... but there are different ways this is done

The most common type of pickup on electro acoustics can usually be found under the bridge saddle, out of sight. They pick up the vibrations of the strings and the guitar's top at the saddle position. Now this is going to sound like something out of Merlin's spellbook but, unlike a traditional pickup with a magnetic field, they use compressed piezoelectric crystals to detect vibrations. A preamp then usually translates them before the guitar's output – though if they're passive there will be no preamp and the output will be lower as a result – often including EQ-shaping options for the player. While piezos are regarded as more 'acoustic' by their very nature, they can often sound much brighter than magnetic pickups (we'll get to those later), especially as they're detecting vibrations where the strings are at their tightest on the guitar. So they're articulate, but not necessarily the 'woodiest' sound after a preamp has boosted and compressed their character. This can lead to the dreaded 'piezo quack' – an overload that leads to a brittle, plastic-y character. They're also tricky to fit if your guitar hasn't already come preloaded with one and it's a job best left to a professional repairer.



TRY

FISHMAN SONITONE

£53

A very common preamp and pickup system found on electro acoustics around the £500 mark. It's low key with hidden volume and tone (treble roll-off) controls and is powered by a 9V battery.

TRY

LR BAGGS ELEMENT

£150

The company claims that the Element is unlike other undersaddle pickups that rely on string compression (the source of quack) to influence their sound and instead reflects the soundboard's movements during playing. Its extremely thin sensor helps to deliver this.

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TRANSDUCER PICKUPS

A soundboard transducer is a popular additional pickup for players who use percussive techniques because it is a piezo-based design that detects vibrations and can be fixed anywhere on or inside the body as required. It'll often need some EQ tweaking to take out boomy bottom end and its more organic nature means it works better for solo performers as it can get lost in a band mix if it's your sole source.

TRY

FISHMAN SBT-C £79

Aimed at classical guitar players but suitable for any acoustics, this soundboard transducer can be mounted on any flat surface of the guitar so you can experiment with positioning.

TRY

K&K SOUND PURE MINI £100

An acclaimed transducer offering good output and a full sound for a passive option with three sensors that are glued to the underside of your guitar's bridge plate (you'll need good light and a mirror).

MAGNETIC SOUNDHOLE PICKUPS

Electric players will recognise this kind of pickup; it uses the magnetic field to capture vibrations and the way the pickup is wound affects how those vibrations are interpreted. Relatively easy to fit on your guitar, they're available in single-coil and humbucker with passive or active options – the latter boosting output. Some magnetic pickups also include sensors that detect vibrations on your guitar's top. And that's good because by their nature they have more of a metallic character, as well as being more prone to feedback issues.

TRY

LR BAGGS M1 ACTIVE £190

The M1 stacked humbucker is a bit of a classic now and also available in a passive model (£150). It offers the fine-tuning of adjustable pole pieces and it's body sensitive too – ingeniously captured by the suspended second coil – to bring in more of your guitar's own character.

TRY

DIMARZIO THE BLACK ANGEL £160

Developed alongside Mike Dawes (pictured) and UK luthier Nick Benjamin, this is a passive pickup with a phase switch built in, which is very helpful if a player is combining it with a transducer too.

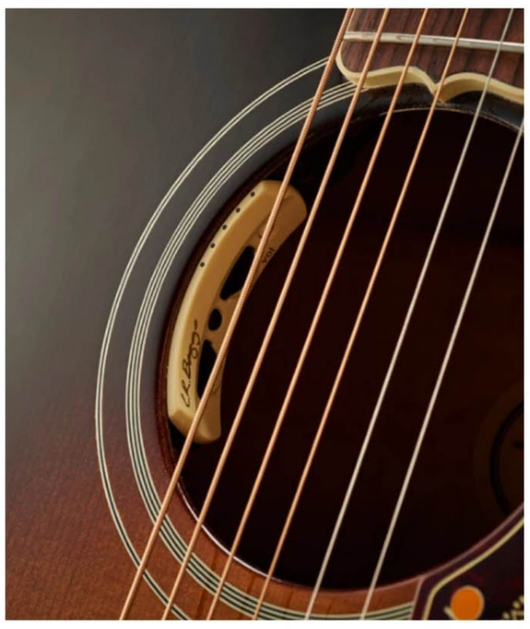
MIC BLEND

While placing a condenser mic in front of an acoustic is the ideal way to capture the detail of your sound for recording, it's not ideal for the stage. But a number of companies have introduced the idea of placing a mic inside the guitar that you can then blend with a piezo or magnetic pickup to create a mix. Using more of the mic tends to work best for solo performance as you may need the zingier nature of magnetic or piezo to be heard alongside a drummer and bassist. But it's great to have the ability to tweak the sound to your needs as they change.

TRY

LR BAGGS ANTHEM £330

It's not cheap but users such as Sturgill Simpson and Brian Fallon will say it's worth it. A noise-cancelling mic is mounted inside the bridge plate closely from the guitar top and mixed with an Element undersaddle transducer handling the lower frequencies for a Tru-Mic system.



TRY

SEYMOUR DUNCAN SA-6 MAG MIC £239

A hum-cancelling Stack magnetic soundhole pickup is mixed with an omni-directional mic here and the two sources can be blended to taste. It's easy to take in and out of the guitar whenever needed too.

PREAMPS

Some pickups and guitar-loaded preamps don't offer the control you will want over your sound in terms of EQ, and even effects. That's where a preamp pedal can make a huge difference to your tone, effectively giving you the role of your own soundman if you're going straight into a PA. Options vary but look for three-band EQ at a minimum, with a phase switch to tackle feedback from the amplified sound reflecting off your acoustic guitar at higher volumes.

TRY

FISHMAN PLATINUM STAGE

£129

A compact solution for players who need more control over their acoustic tone. This packs a lot into a 14 x 8.5cm casing: a four-band EQ with sweep-mid, phase control and volume boost switch, plus XLR balanced DI or 1/4" out.

TRY

LR BAGGS VENUE DI

£299

A do-it-all floor DI solution? LR Baggs' reputation in this field precedes it. The separate low and hi mid controls are especially useful because that's where it matters in a band mix. There's a switchable clean boost too.

COMBO AMPS

If you're going to be gigging regularly, an amp is a sound investment to make. For smaller gigs it can give you the volume you need, but dual input options can allow for vocals too – with independent controls. And for bigger gigs a wedge shape combo means it can be used onstage as your monitor with a DI signal going to the sound desk. The best news is the choice and standard of acoustic combos has really risen in recent years…

TRY

BOSS ACOUSTIC SINGER LIVE

£449

We were really impressed with the functionality on this 60-watter – and as the name suggests, there's an additional vocal channel. Effects include delay, reverb and a looper, with the Acoustic Resonance button helping to breathe new life into your piezo.

TRY

LANEY A-DUO

£232

An 80-watt combo that doubles as a handy stool? Why not! There's tonal value here for a reasonable price with two 8-inch speakers offering a thicker bass response plus reverb and chorus on both its two channels. We especially liked the four preset EQ curves.

EFFECTS

Who says electric players should have all the effects fun? You're only limited by your own imagination when it comes to using stompboxes with your acoustic, as players like John Butler prove. They can really help to give your sound individuality, creativity and also variation – after all, who wants to hear the same strumming tone for an hour?

While there are companies making bespoke units aimed at the acoustic market, there's no reason you can't integrate some of the effects from the electric guitar world into an acoustic rig.

TRY

LR BAGGS ALIGN SERIES

FROM £149

It's Baggs again with some lovely looking wood-effect stompboxes tailored for acoustic frequencies. The Delay and Chorus pictured are the latest in the line-up that also includes an Active DI, Equalizer, Session (saturation and compression) and Chorus.

TRY

TC ELECTRONIC SPARK BOOSTER

£59

Of course you can use overdrive with an acoustic – just remember to bring your Feedback Buster. Boosts, light overdrives… there's a lot to choose from but we've had good experiences here using this on the clean boost setting with our acoustic for lead work and the gain never going past 9 o'clock.

SILENT BUT DEADLY

HAS YAMAHA SOLVED THE ACOUSTIC LIVE PROBLEM?

Playing acoustic guitar live is never going to be the same sound as what drew you to your guitar in the first place – that's a fact you'll have to accept, along with the constant fight against feedback. But Yamaha has come at things from a different angle with its Silent Guitar by starting with electric performance first. Think of your acoustic and its soundhole as a wooden boom box onstage reflecting back amplified sound from speakers and you can see why there are feedback issues. The steel and nylon-string SLG200S & SLG200N Silent Guitar models simply remove the traditional body from the equation. Its SRT-powered pickup system using imaging sounds incredibly 'acoustic' plugged in, and it's collapsible and light as a travel-friendly option.

PERCUSSIVE GUITAR

We're tuning to DADGAD as we look at the body-bashing percussive styles of guitarists such as Jon Gomm, Andy McKee and Newton Faulkner

KNOCK ON WOOD
And an extra dimension to your playing by hitting the guitar body for percussive sounds

Percussive guitar has gained popularity in recent years thanks to hit albums from Newton Faulkner and the rise of players such as Andy McKee and Jon Gomm online. A mixture of bass notes, melodies and strikes on the guitar makes percussive playing quite a challenge. The idea is to think of your instrument as a drum kit and produce sounds that equate to kick drum, snare and hi-hat by bashing the guitar body. Just take care not to damage your guitar. You have been warned!

There are no rules on how to produce these sounds – but keep efficiency of movement at the front of your mind. For our tab examples we're playing kick and snare hits near the soundhole so your pick hand doesn't move far; play the hi-hat with your fret hand. Finally, we recommend plugging your guitar in and using some reverb to enhance the percussive sounds.

1 KICK DRUM

Use the fleshy part where your hand meets your wrist to produce a low thud like a bass drum. We're targeting the guitar body above the strings near the soundhole.

2 SNARE DRUM

You need a cutting sound without too much bass for a snare drum vibe. Jon Gomm and Newton Faulkner will often flick the pick guard area with a middle finger.

3 HI-HAT

For the full drum kit effect you'll need to include a sound in the treble range. Pat the strings down against the frets with your fretting hand for a hi-hat vibe.

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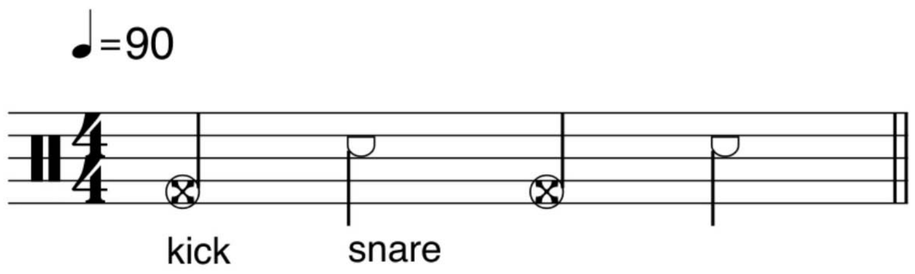
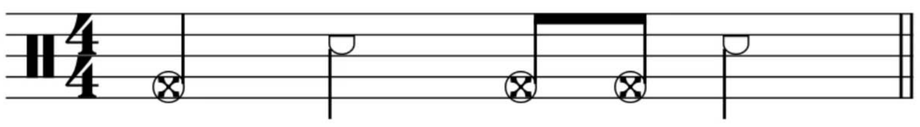
12 KICK & SNARE BACKBEAT — TRACK 24



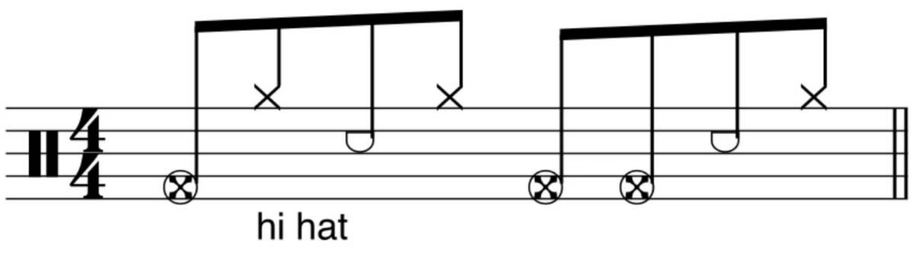
The most basic backbeat rhythm follows a 'kick snare kick snare' pattern, as tabbed here. Count to four to keep time and keep your strikes synced to the numbers.

13 KICK VARIATION — TRACK 25



The backbeat is the rhythmic core of music but it's not limited to a basic 'kick snare' pattern. Here we're playing two bass drum hits on beat 3.

14 KICK, SNARE & HI-HAT — TRACK 26

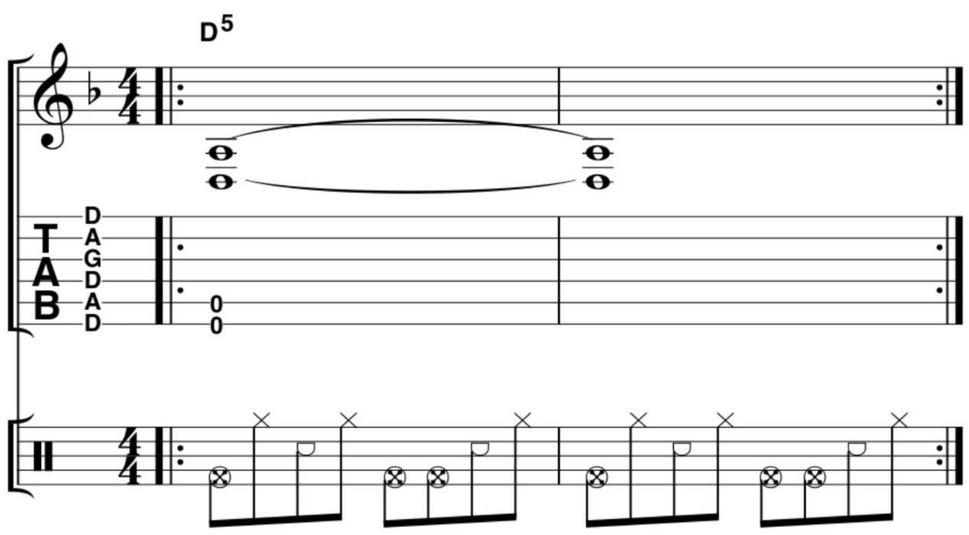


Here we're adding hi-hats into the gaps in the previous example. If you get confident with the percussive approach try playing two hits at the same time.

THE HITMAN
Andy McKee breaks all the classical rules to play percussive guitar

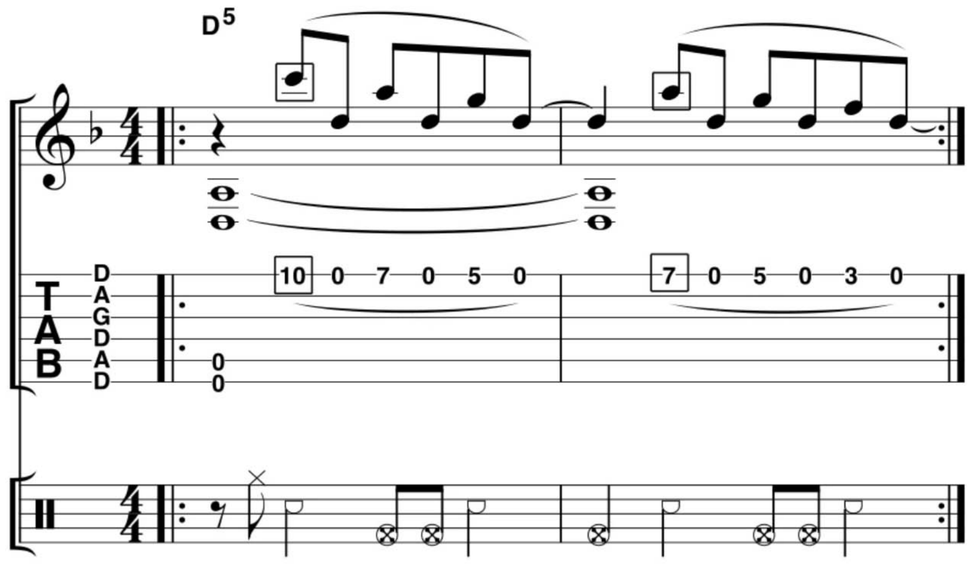
THE IDEA IS TO PRODUCE SOUNDS THAT EQUATE TO KICK DRUM, SNARE AND HI-HAT BY BASHING A GUITAR

15 PERCUSSION & BASS NOTES — TRACK 27



Slap the open fifth and sixth strings with the side of your thumb to produce the bass notes. Leave out the kick drum hit on beat 1 if you can't sync with the notes.

16 MELODY, PERCUSSION & BASS — TRACK 28



Every part here is simple but you'll be playing three lines at once so practise slowly. The first-string melody is played using hammer-ons and pull-offs.

Photo: Startraks Photo/REX/Shutterstock

FIX YOUR GUITAR

REPAIRING A BROKEN HEADSTOCK

Disaster strikes, you're headless. Here's how to repair your neck break like a pro

Words: Jack Ellis

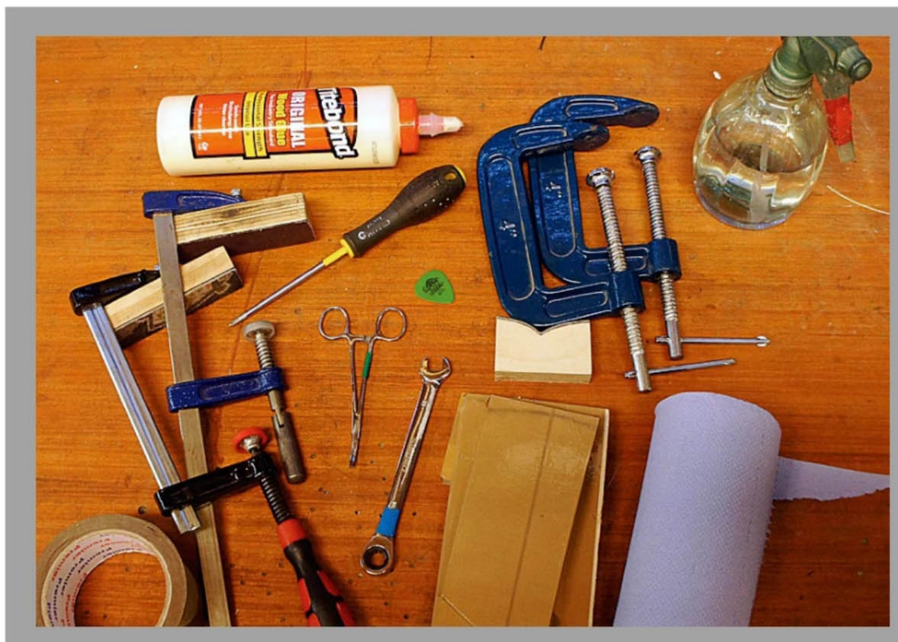
There's never a good time for a headstock to break and it can be surprising just how little impact it can take for it to happen.

The headstock is a weak point on many guitars, particularly ones made from mahogany, and every Gibson owner will be privy to the dangers! But why? The headstock's weakness can be due to a variety of factors: a change in the direction of the timber grain, weakening due to the truss rod access hole, heavy tuners and the fact that mahogany is not that dense can all be to blame. Compared to a maple Fender Strat neck, we have a denser timber, a no-grain direction change and only that small sculpting behind the nut.

Here's the good news though… if it's the first break and no one else has 'had a go' at it before, your guitar can bounce back to full health. Getting its looks back is always challenging so this guide covers the 'honest repair' method.

A word of caution before you begin: absolutely use wood glue only – not No More Nails, epoxy or Super Glue. Nope. You have timber, so use wood glue. Our favourite for all applications is Titebond Original Wood Glue. Right, let's get to work…

TOP TIP!
A well-repaired neck break is as tough as before. But don't tempt fate by throwing it around – it might break somewhere else!



WHAT YOU NEED

- Titebond Original Wood Glue
- G clamps
- F clamps
- Brown parcel tape
- Clamping cauls
- -scrap timber to suit the guitar's shape
- Tweezers
- Damp rags/ blue roll

SKILL LEVEL

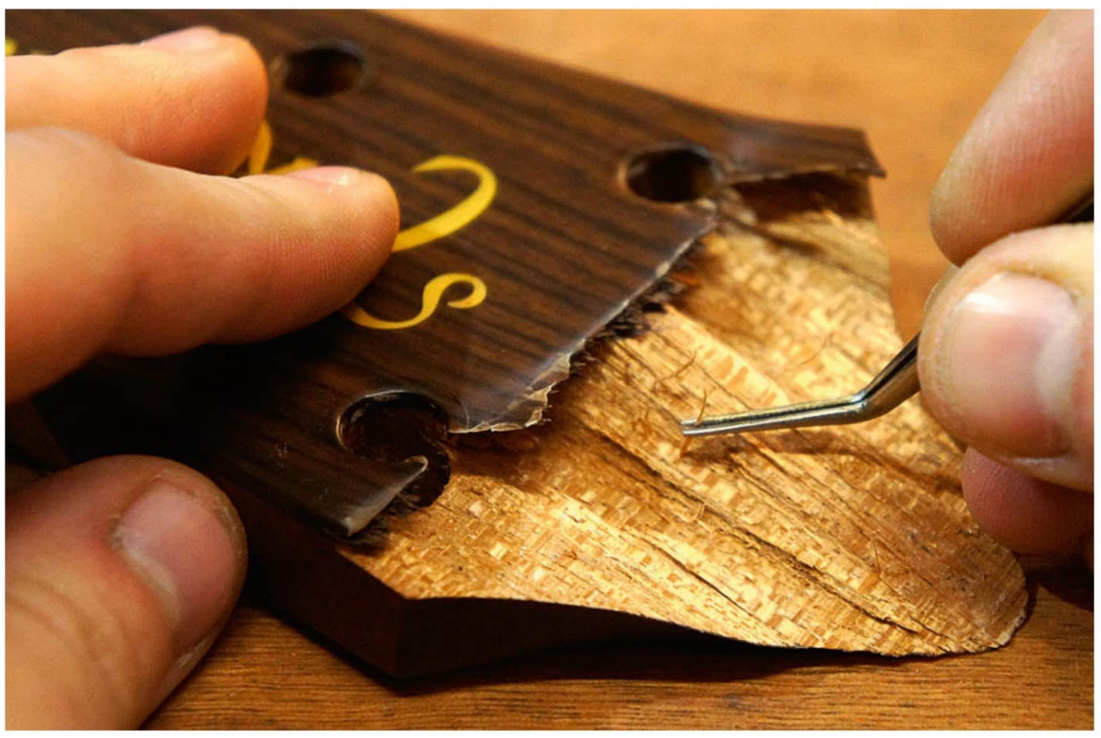
Intermediate

- Water mister
- A guitar pick
- PH1 screwdriver
- 10mm spanner

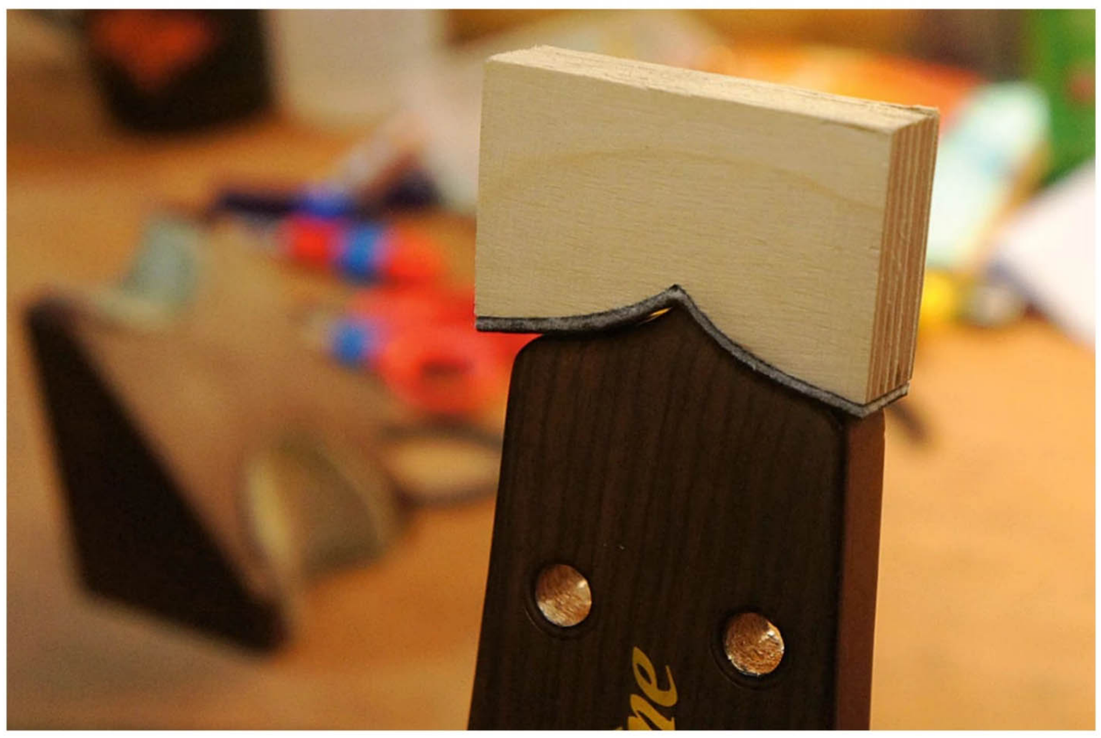
MEET YOUR EXPERT
Jack Ellis runs Jack's Instrument Services from his workshop in Manchester. In his career he has worked on thousands of instruments, from simple fixes and upgrades, to complete rebuilds. For more info, see: jacksinstrument services.com

1 Let's get started – we've got nothing to lose! First, let's strip off the tuners and old strings; they'll just get in the way. Also the tuners' weight can skew the glue job as it's drying. Stash all the parts so they don't get lost, and if the nut will come off easily then take that off too.

2 In our case the guitar headstock was hanging on by a few fibres only! This meant that we've finished the break off to get a clean look at it. Each break will be different of course but, when we tried to close up the gap, the headstock face split apart – nasty. Let's have a look at the surfaces and get prepping.

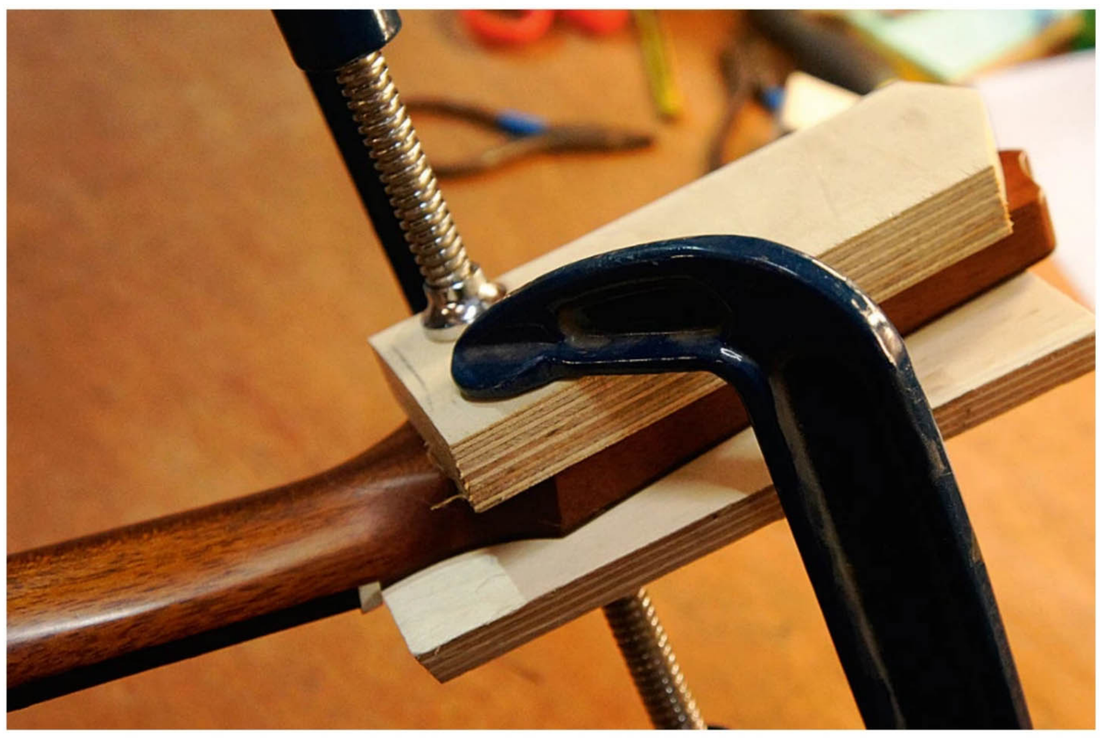


3 We'll need to get the two pieces fitting together as perfectly as possible with no air gap in-between the two rough edges. These splinters are going to get in the way so we'll pull them away with tweezers. Look out for splinters and deformed pieces of timber that will stop this two-piece puzzle going together correctly.



4 This was useful to us in this repair job – a wooden block shaped to the headstock tip and then faced in rubber. This allowed us to knock the headstock with a hammer to test fit the parts together! Be aware that your break might not require a large amount of force, though.

5 Our dry run is working out great. This is a no-glue test run. Running your fingertips over the join means you can inspect how well it's fitted. Be aware that you may have to settle for not-quite-perfect. We have a 0.1mm lip on the edge of the lacquer to deal with but that's fine.

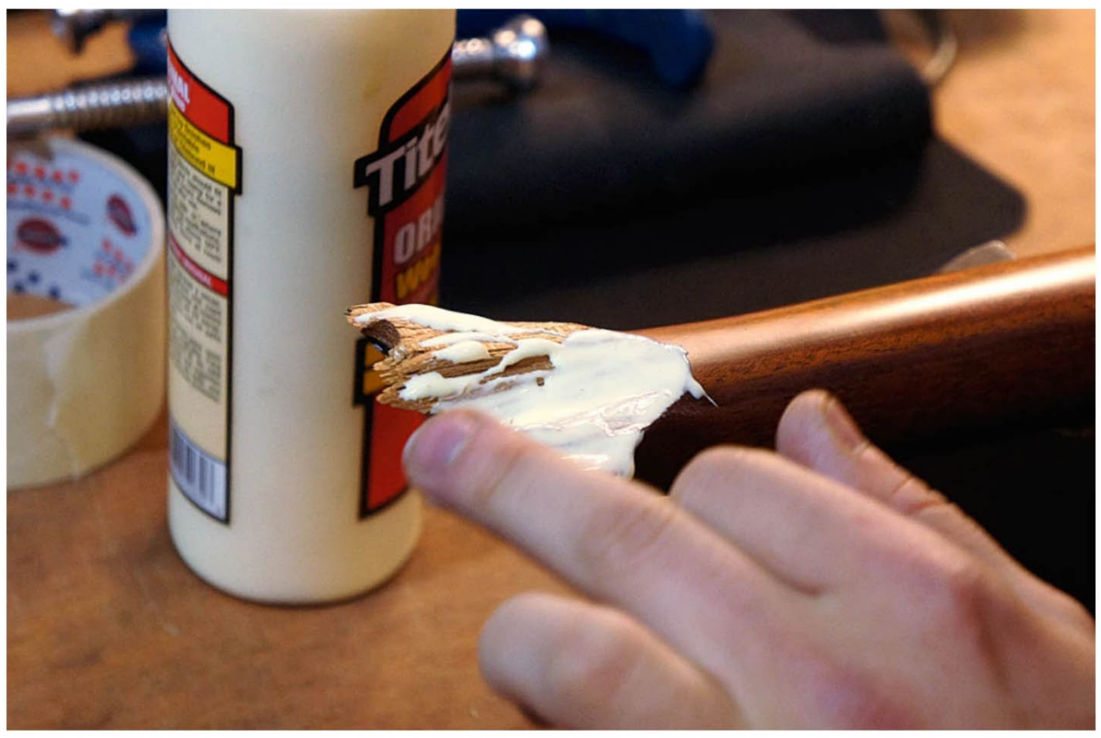


6 Still in the testing and prepping phase, let's get our clamps and cauls organised. We'll be using two G clamps; they offer more than enough pressure for this job. The clamping cauls we're using are nice and thick and faced in brown parcel tape – no glue will stick to those. Check they're the right size and they will work nicely for you.

7 The next stage will involve a small amount of panic and probably swearing so let's try and get ourselves ready! Cauls prepped, clamps selected, damp blue roll pre-squirted for clean up – keep the mister handy. Our weapon of choice is proper wood glue, Titebond Original. Use your finger to apply glue to the two surfaces.

8 As we've prepped everything like crazy, the two parts will go back together just like in the dry run. What you want is a nice fit with plenty of squeeze out glue – this proves that the joints are fully covered and excess glue has been expelled. Wipe away the worst of the squeeze out and check that the edge of the joints is in place.

9 Bear in mind that you're against the clock so work quickly. Cleaning up the joint from extra glue helps get a look at it but you must avoid getting too much water into the glue joint – that will swell the open timber. It's really important that the edges feel good – that's where they'll stay after all.



10 Clamp ahoy. Get those cauls in place and clamp up. Check that the pressure has not made the joint slip and, of course, we'll get more squeeze out hopefully – that's a good thing. Don't go mad with pressure as you can dent the timber. Clamping hard doesn't mean it will be a better joint.

11 Clean up excess glue with more damp rags; a little left on isn't hard to get rid of. Store the guitar somewhere out of harm's way and make sure that the clamps' weight isn't going to become a problem; it can tip your guitar over or worse pull the joint into a funny angle. Leave it a full 48 hours just to be sure before removing the clamps.

12 With the clamps off you can do a clean up now. Flakes of Titebond won't really stick to lacquer so they can be persuaded off with something dull – a guitar pick is perfect. Too stubborn? Try a light misting of water to re-moisten the wood glue then it should come off a treat.

THE BAND THAT MADE METAL A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

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30 GUITAR LESSONS

Photography Olly Curtis Words James Uings, Chris Bird, Rob Laing

Improve your playing the easy way with TG's lesson that's guaranteed to keep you practising all year round

Sometimes the best way to improve is to keep your practice time simple. Focus on the basics and you will reap the benefits. Most songs will have you playing repeatable riffs, steady grooves or strummed rhythms after all. Technical parts are often fleeting moments in solos – and you can improvise those! You can get a lot out of mastering the essential basics, rather than spending time on virtuoso level techniques.

We'll help you improve on some guitar basics with these easy-to-follow lessons. From chords and progressions, practice tips and essential playing techniques, there's something here for everyone.

30 LESSONS

GET AUDIO FILES

Head over to **filesilo.co.uk/TG-Annual2020** to download your audio files

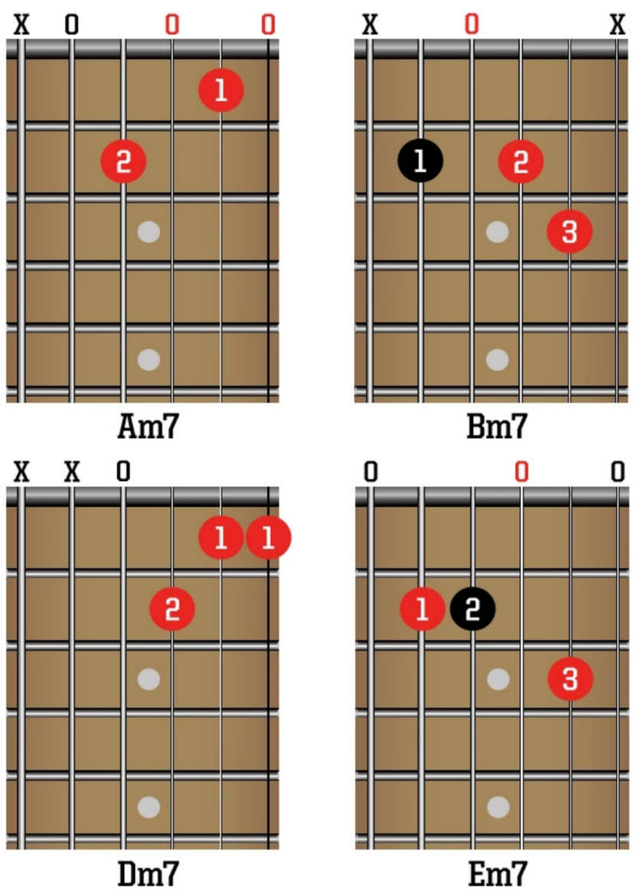
A BEYOND BASIC CHORDS

Get some new shapes sussed as TG looks at a mixture of cool chords

You probably already know more than a few major and minor chords – these are made of three notes: the first, third and fifth notes of a scale. Sure, most guitar chords repeat and re-order certain notes. For example, an open D chord uses D (the root note), A (the 5th), another D and F# (the 3rd), but it's still a D. Here we're adding some extra notes to basic major and minor chords to create more interesting sounds. These shapes are commonplace but why not experiment by adding some new notes to chords you already know?

TRACKS 19-22

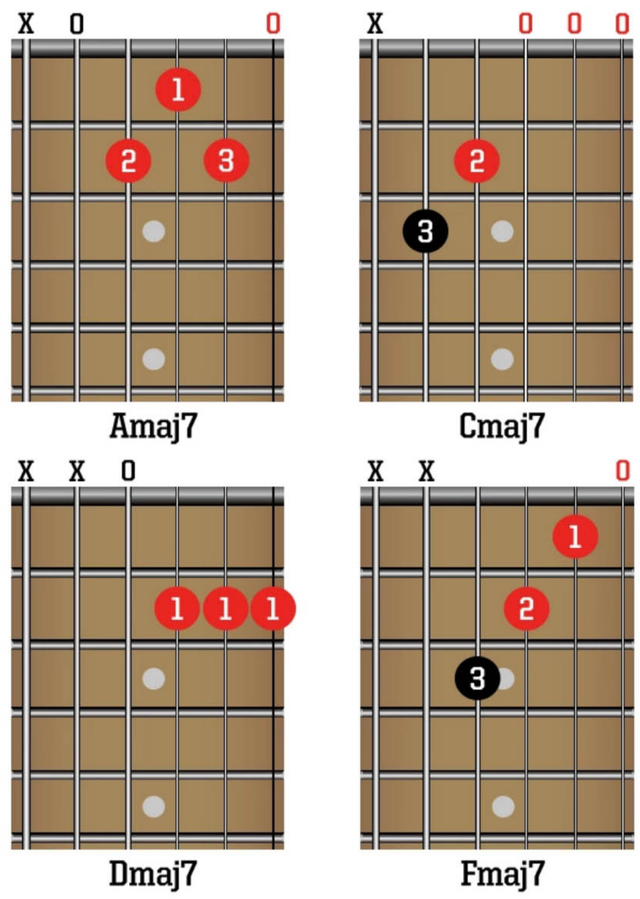
1 MINOR 7TH CHORDS



These minor 7th chords have a darker, more melancholy sound than regular minor chords. Hear Em7 in *Wonderwall* by Oasis and also in *Disarm* by Smashing Pumpkins.

TRACKS 23-26

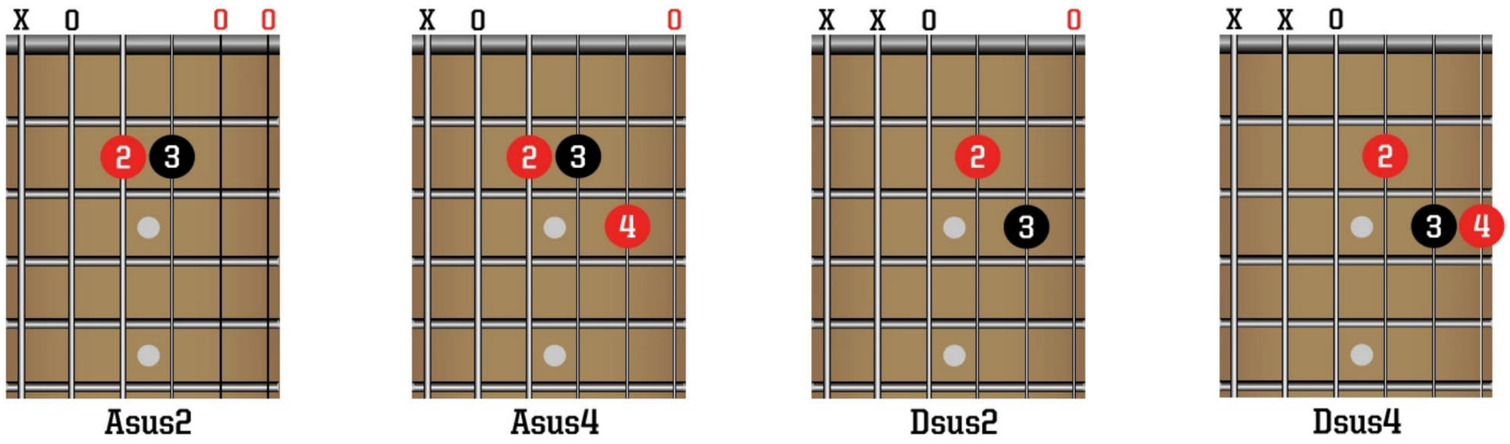
2 MAJOR 7TH CHORDS



Major 7th chords have a floating, laid-back and more reflective sound than regular major chords. *Severed Lips* by Dinosaur Jr. is a great example of the trademark major 7th sound.

TRACKS 27-30

3 SUSPENDED CHORDS



Whereas major and minor chords target the 3rd interval, 'sus' chords use the 2nd or 4th, giving them an open, unresolved sound.

4 CLEANER CHORDS

CHECK YOUR THUMB POSITION
The tip of your thumb should sit in the centre of the neck roughly in line with your second finger.

USE THE TIPS OF YOUR FINGERS
Fret with your fingertips to ensure you don't accidentally mute out notes on adjacent strings.

LOOK FOR COMMON NOTES
Keep your fingers on common notes to speed up chord changes. There's only one finger to move in this C-Am change.

B ESSENTIAL TECHNIQUES

Nail down the foundations of guitar with TG's easy riffs

You can spend a lifetime learning new songs on the guitar. That's the joy of it – there's always something new to learn. Still, you'll get more out of your practice time if you get some essential basics down. We're talking about techniques that you'll be using day in, day out. Try out these exercises and get some essentials covered.

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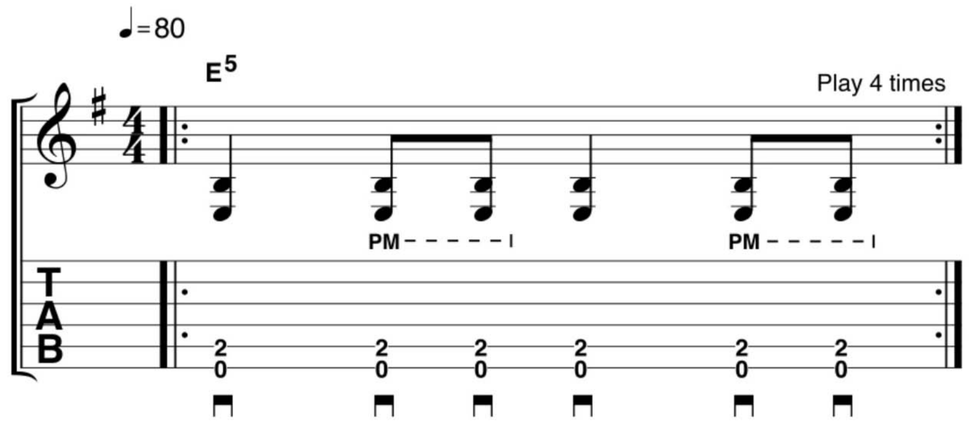
5 PALM-MUTING

Place the outside edge of your pick hand on the bass strings – changing pressure will give different degrees of muting. Be careful not to move your hand too far from the bridge as this may raise the note's pitch.

TRACK 31

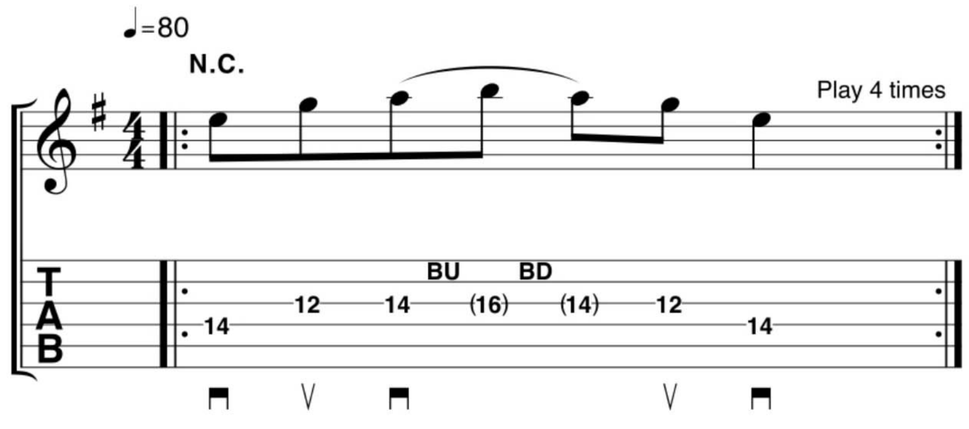


This example alternates between muted and un-muted notes. Practise it slowly and aim to keep your palm close to the bridge when not muting so it's ready for action when needed!

6 STRING BENDING

Hook your thumb over the fretboard to provide additional leverage – particularly on big bends where your thumb will give you extra strength.

TRACK 32

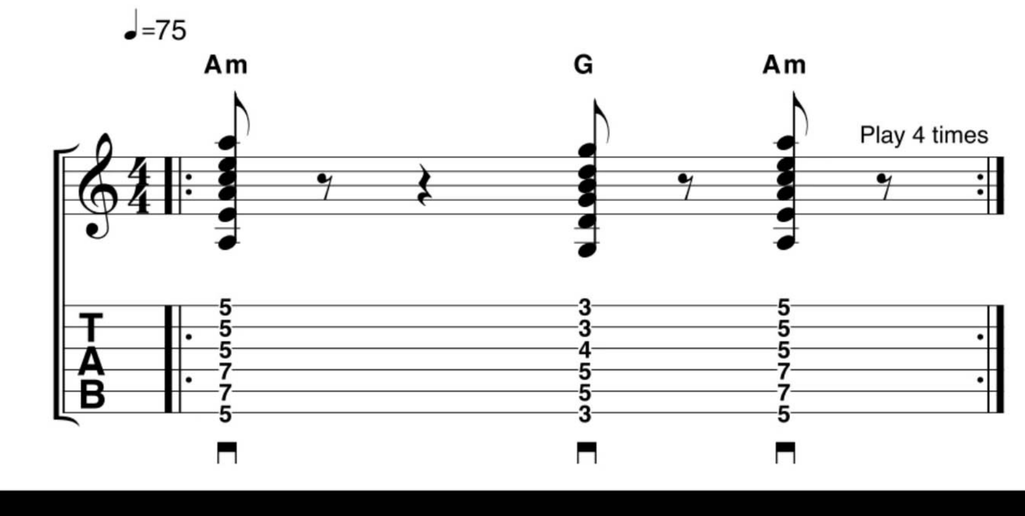


Pushing up or pulling down on the string (aka bending) raises its pitch smoothly – one of a guitarist's most expressive tools. Play the target note (the one in brackets) before you practise the bend – this will help you pitch better.

7 BARRE CHORDS

Move your *whole hand* to the next chord while keeping your fingers locked in the barre chord shape. Don't let your thumb drag behind – you'll lose the all-important grip strength.

TRACK 33

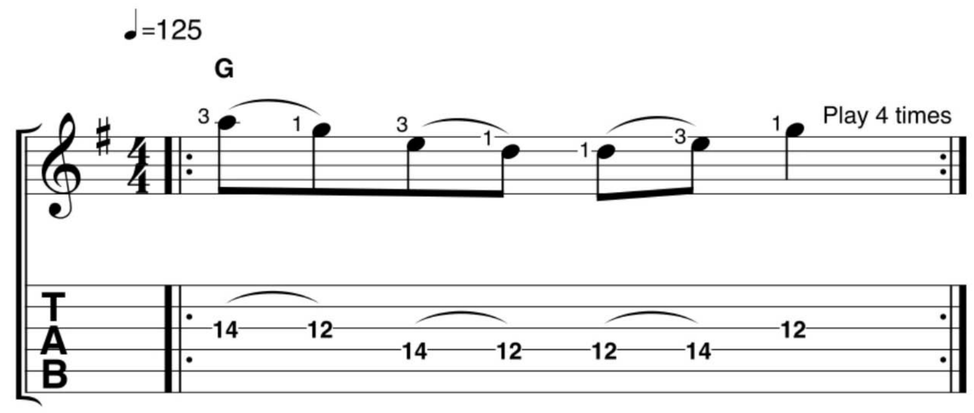


This example gives you plenty of time to change between chords. Look ahead to each change so you're well-prepared and remember to move your hand as a single unit, not one finger at a time.

8 HAMMER-ONS AND PULL-OFFS

Hammer-ons are played by picking one note and then 'hammering' your finger down onto a higher note without re-picking. Pull-offs are the reverse: pull your finger off the string towards the floor in a snapping motion to sound a lower note.

TRACK 34



Many guitarists rush the hammered or pulled note, so make sure both notes in each pair ring for the same amount of time. The order here is: pull-off, pull-off, hammer-on.

9 HOLD YOUR PICK THE RIGHT WAY

These steps will help you hold your pick the right way. You won't have to do this every time you play – after a while, you'll do it automatically.

A Start with your fingers straight and your thumb pointing up.

B Curl your fingers around to make a hook shape.

C Use your other hand to place the pick so the tip is poking out just beyond your fingertip.

D Grip firmly enough to hold the pick in place. Let plenty of the tip show when strumming...

E ...but stay closer to the tip for more accuracy when you are soloing.

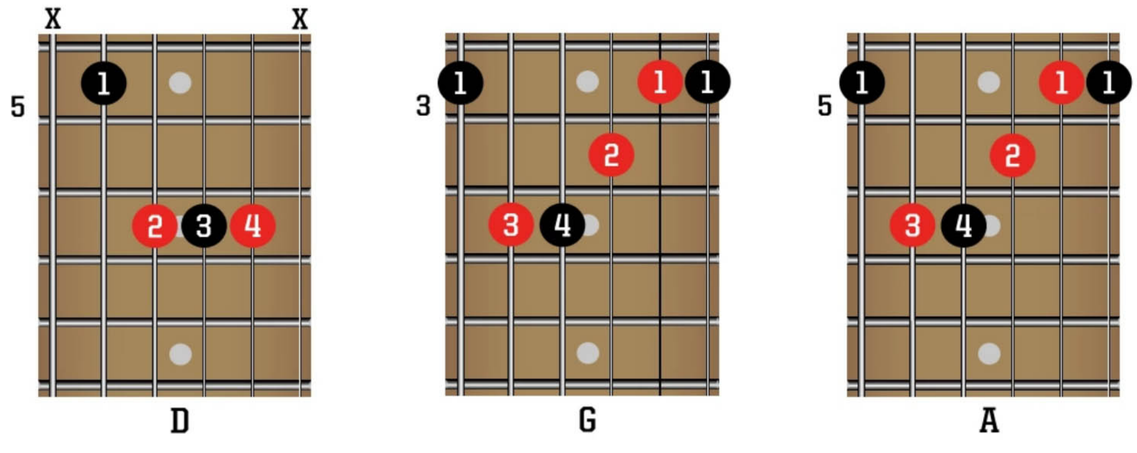
C CLASSIC CHORD PROGRESSIONS

Don't fear the progression! Relax, it's just a formula

Chord progressions are sometimes shown in Roman numerals. It looks scary, but it's just a formula that helps you to transfer chord sequences from one key to another. For example, a I–IV–V ('one–four–five') progression can be played starting on A (A–D–E), from D (D–G–A), or from any starting chord for that matter. The chords change depending on which key you're in but the relationships between them stay the same. This is known as 'transposing'. Jam along to these staple chord progressions and see if you can work them out in different keys.

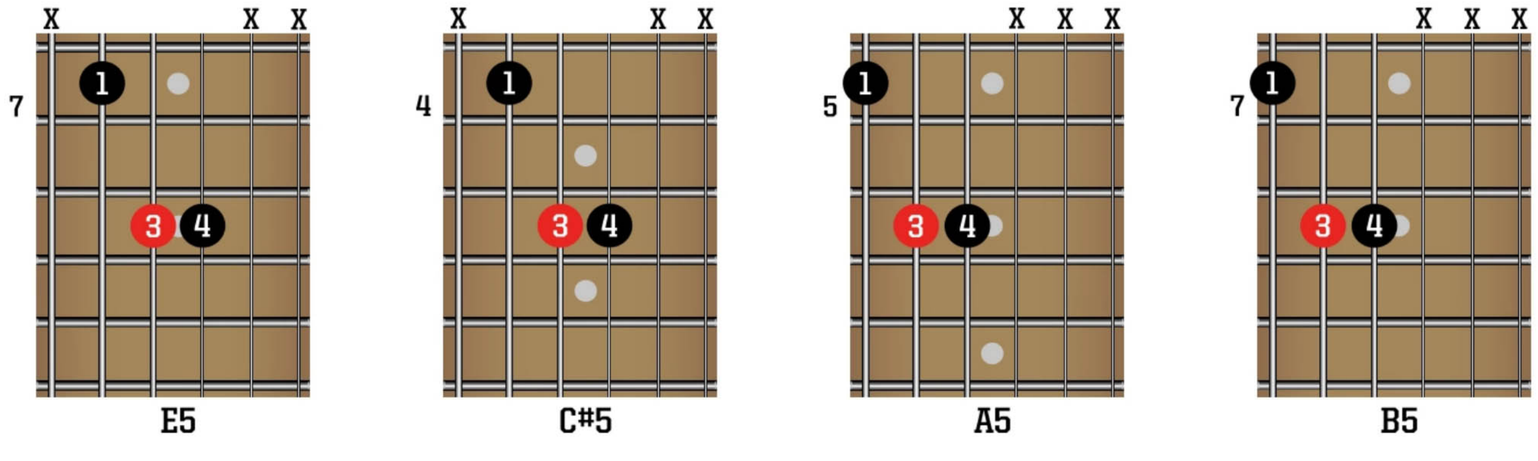
10 THE I-IV-V: D-G-A TRACK 35

This popular progression is used in countless styles from pop to rock to blues. Release pressure on each chord almost as soon as you play each of them to achieve the offbeat choppy sound in our backing track.



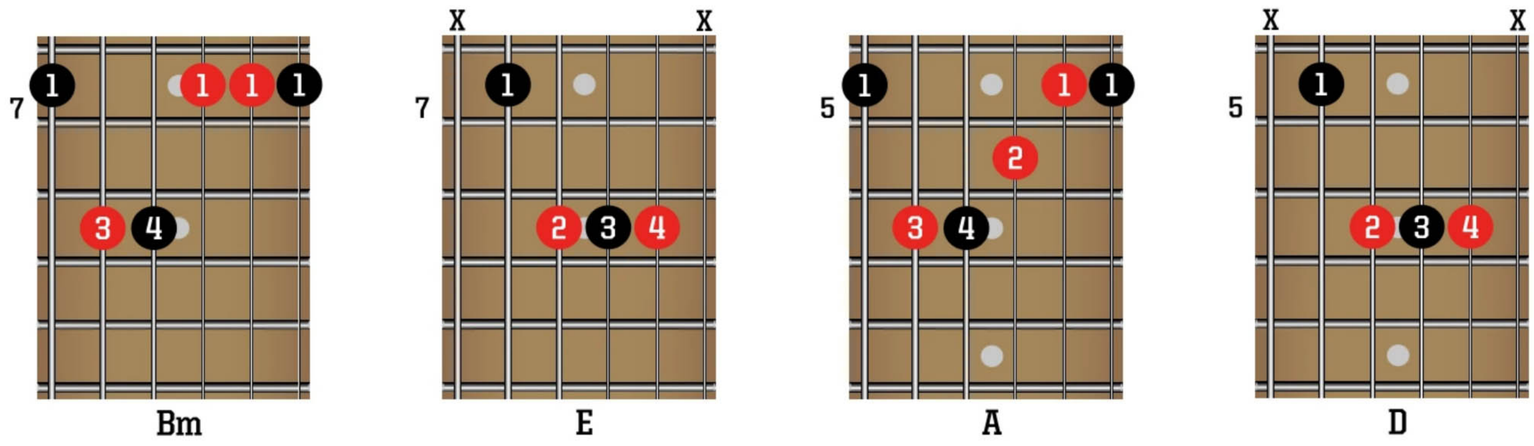
11 THE I-VI-IV-V: E-C#M-A-B TRACK 36

You can hear this progression in The Police's *Every Breath You Take* and in soul classic *Stand By Me*. The VI chord is usually minor but we're using powerchords (which are neither major nor minor) in our pacy pop-punk track.



12 II-V-I-IV: BM-E-A-D TRACK 37

You can hear this progression on loads of songs from acoustic folk to jazz. Our laid-back jazzy track sounds best if you use your thumb to gently strum the chords.

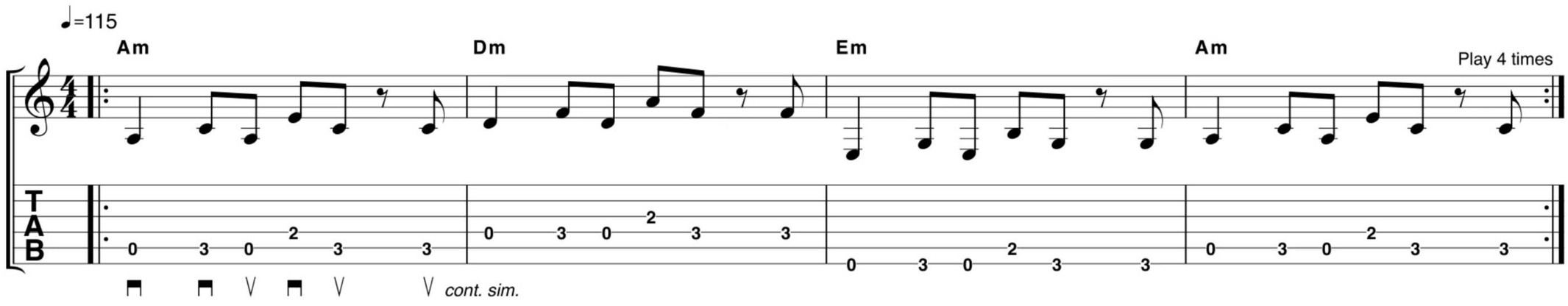


D GROOVES YOU CAN USE...

Get more from the riffs you write by moving them around the fretboard

One of the most enjoyable things about playing the guitar is the simply countless grooves and riffs that can easily be transferred to other chords and keys using the same fretboard patterns. Each of the riffs in the following examples shows you a way to move to another key. You'll either be moving to a new string or a different fretboard position.

13 MOVE TO ANOTHER STRING TRACK 38



This Arctic Monkeys-style riff uses a pattern that's played on the fourth and fifth strings in bar 1 before moving to other strings in subsequent bars. Practise the changes slowly before playing with the backing track. Once you've worked through the example, try changing a few notes to create your own riffs.

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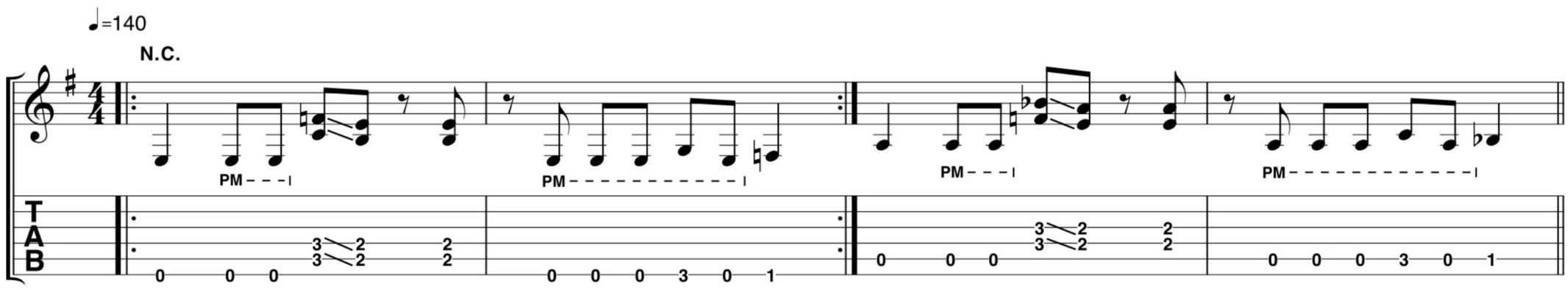
14 MOVE UP THE FRETBOARD

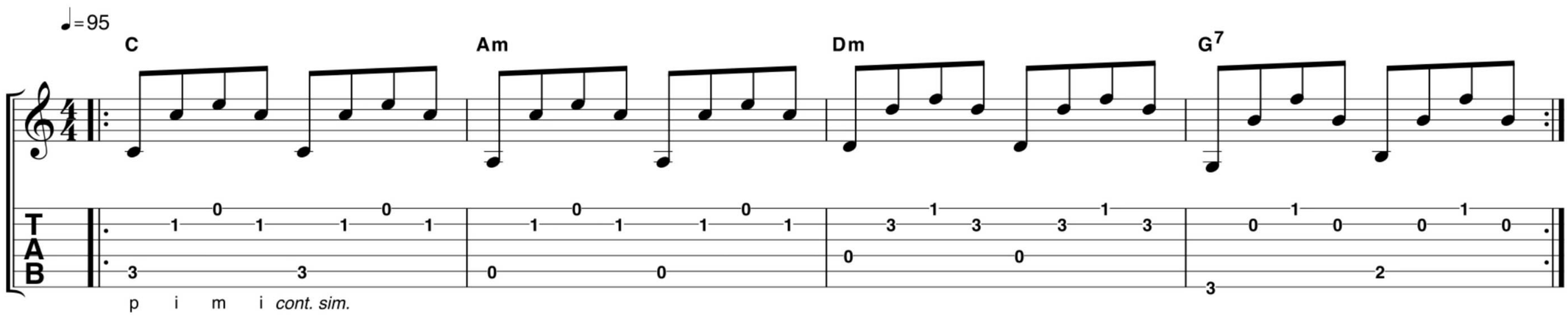
TRACK 39



This metal riff uses an exotic scale called the Phrygian mode to create a discordant sound. It's a key part of the sound of bands like Metallica, Slayer and Megadeth. To move this riff to another key try moving every note one fret higher up the fretboard – the open strings will need to be fretted so practise slowly as you move the riff.

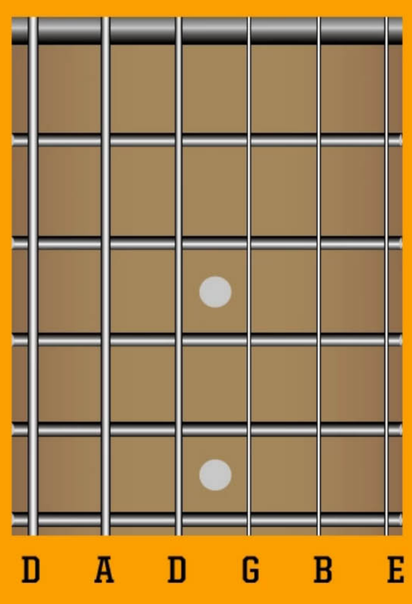
15 PLAY FINGERSTYLE IN ANY KEY

TRACK 40



This simple fingerpicking pattern can be applied to a huge number of chords – and that means you don't really need to learn a special way to transpose what you're playing. Simply use your thumb to pick the notes on the three lowest-sounding strings and your first and second fingers to play the higher strings.

16 DROP D TUNING



Retuning your guitar is an easy way to create new chords and sounds using shapes you're already familiar with. The simplest tuning is 'drop D'. As the name suggests, you drop the sixth string (an E note) down to D. What's really great about it is that you can play powerchords with one finger!

There are dozens of different tunings to try and countless new chords to discover. Start with drop D – one of the easiest tunings, achieved by dropping the sixth string down to D

E

GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PRACTICE TIME

Enhance your precious practice sessions with these top tips

17 PRACTISE FOR ACCURACY

A DON'T PRACTISE YOUR MISTAKES

If you catch yourself making a mistake, stop and correct yourself. Don't keep making the mistake or you'll struggle to 'unlearn' it.

B RECORD YOURSELF

We're not talking about recording a six-minute prog epic here! Listening back to your playing will help you to identify areas that need more practice.

C PRACTISE WITHOUT LOOKING AT YOUR HANDS

Sure, you'll need to look at your hands at times, but playing without looking is a good test of just how well you've learned a piece of music.

18 PRACTISE FOR SPEED

A PRACTISE SLOWLY

We mean it! Whether you're a budding shredder or just trying to get a new song up to tempo, slow practice is the key to building up your playing speed.

B BREAK IT DOWN

Short phrases are easier to remember, practise and ultimately get up to speed. Even the briefest of licks can be broken down and practised note by note.

C IDENTIFY TRICKY POINTS

It could be a position shift, a stretch or just a technique you struggle with. Isolate tricky points and repeat the bits that challenge you the most.

19 PLAY AND SING OVER RIFFS

We think playing and singing is the most overlooked skill in guitar. Whether you're singing lead or backing vocals, your voice is a huge asset in enhancing your role as a musician. Learning to play and sing at the same time is actually quite a straightforward process where rhythmic chord playing is concerned; you take your time, start slow and build from there. When riffs are involved it can feel more complicated and very much a 'rubbing your belly and tapping your head' scenario. We've found a handy three-step way of getting to grips with singing over riffs or even leads.

A GUITAR FIRST

Thoroughly learn the riff part you'll be singing over before you introduce any vocal. You need to have this down confidently first.

B ALPHABET

Once you have the guitar side covered, try singing the alphabet over it while you play. Start quietly and build in volume as you become more confident. Yes, you might feel silly but who cares? You'll soon be amazing yourself with your double-duty skills.

C RIFF REPEAT

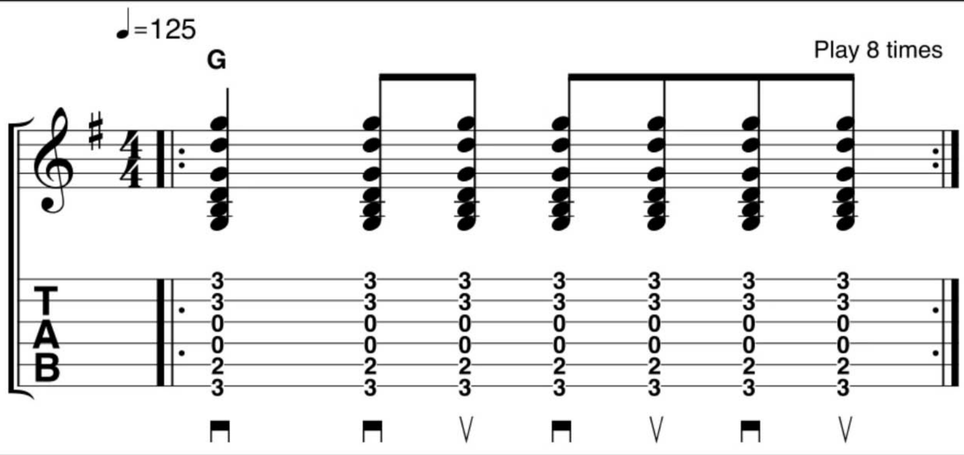
Repetition is key; we cannot stress this enough. Once you're confidently saying the alphabet over your riff with clarity and consistent speed, it's time to replace it with the actual vocal melody part. Don't worry if it feels like a step back at first after the alphabet stage, try humming the melody to ease in. Trust yourself and the process; if you keep repeating it, your muscle memory will not let you down.

RHYTHM GUITAR SKILLS

Divide the beat and refine your rhythm chops

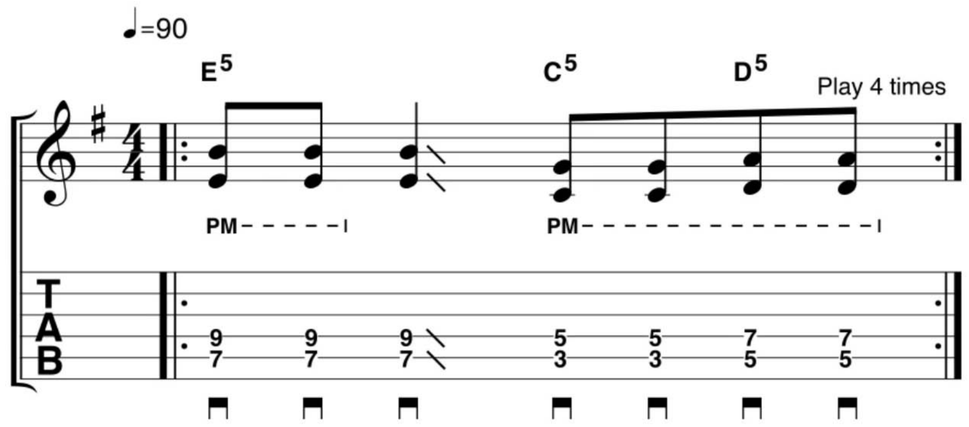
The 'beat' is the regular pulse in music that you tap your foot to – and beats are grouped together into bars. Most music has four beats in a bar, which is why people count '1 2 3 4' before a song starts. Beats are most commonly divided into two or four, giving a potential eight or 16 notes per bar. This way of dividing up the beat is the foundation of rhythm playing. Try out the following examples to understand the process and hone your chops.

20 EIGHTH-NOTE STRUMMING — TRACK 41



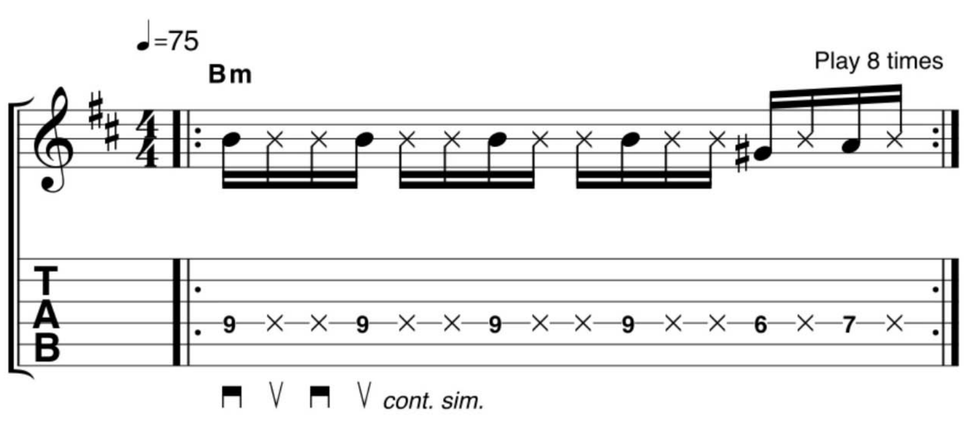
Move your hand in a down-up motion, counting '1&2&3&4&' to maintain an 'eighth note' timing. Simply miss the strings on the '&' after beat 1 – this creates a more interesting rhythm.

21 EIGHTH-NOTE DOWNSTROKES — TRACK 42



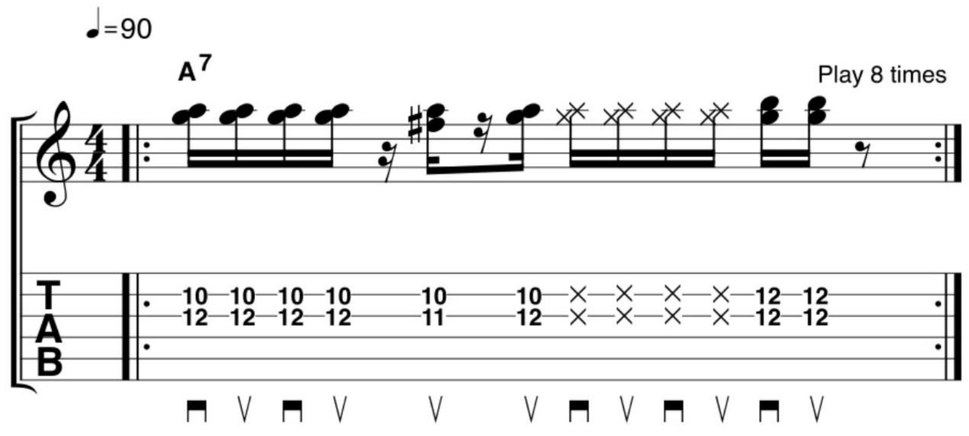
Upstrokes can feel softer than downstrokes so, if you're playing heavier styles of music like metal or hard rock, playing downstrokes is the solution. We're still using eighth notes – just down-picked.

22 SINGLE-NOTE 16THS — TRACK 43



This example uses four notes per beat. Pick with a down-up motion and keep a finger touching the string to produce the muted 'X' notes. Simply press down at the right time on the notated frets.

23 16TH-NOTE PARTIAL CHORDS — TRACK 44



This example expands the 16th-note picking to a strumming action across two strings. You won't hit the strings on every note but make sure to keep a constant down-up strumming movement going.

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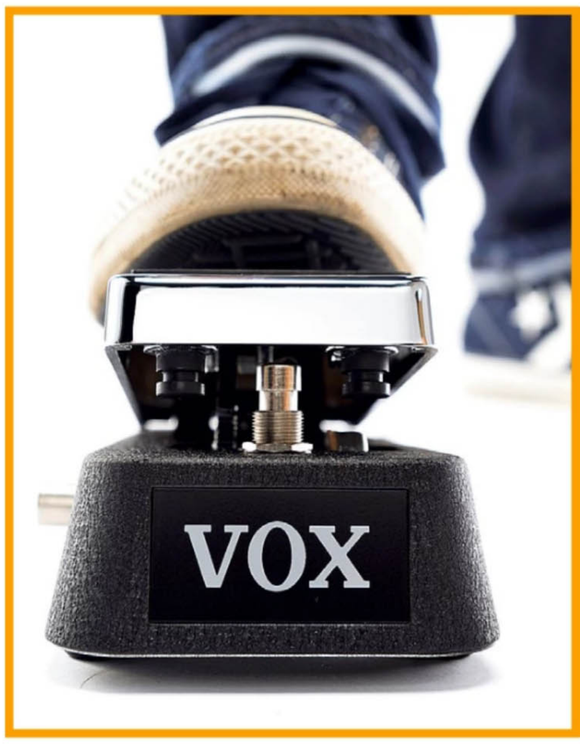


24 GO FAR WITH WAH

You think a wah pedal is only about percussive wacka wacka funkateering? Have we got news for you...

A SWEET SPOT
Mick Ronson loved it, Michael Schenker still does and even Paradise Lost's Greg Mackintosh is partial to a cocked wah. Oooh-er! Simply position the wah with your foot until it's enhancing your midrange in a sweet spot – bingo! You've got a distinctive tone that's great for leads.

B SLOW SWEEP
The wah doesn't have to be used in an intense flurry of notes to be impactful; slowly pressing down on the treadle with your foot as you play a riff with gain is highly effective for intros or breakdown parts as it gradually allows more high-end frequencies to filter in.

C OPENING CHORDS
Similar to our slow sweeps, pressing down as you play a chord opens its higher frequencies to accent it – reggae guitarists do this a lot and Bob Marley's *Stir It Up* is a case in point.

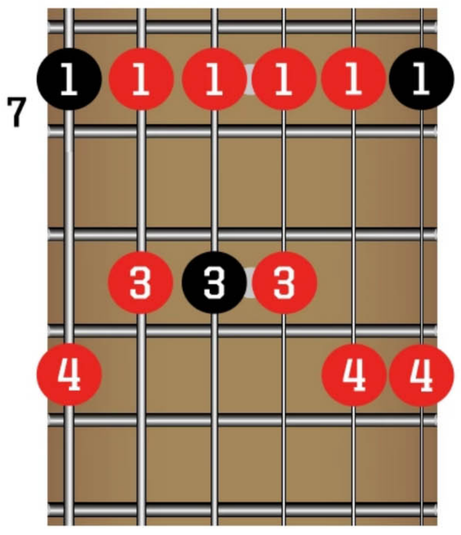
G LEAD GUITAR

Take the lead and enjoy the limelight

Lead guitar is a lifelong pursuit. No matter what level you're at there's always room to develop your playing. Nevertheless, with so much to learn, it's easy to get bogged down and not really achieve much. Fortunately for us guitarists, a few simple guidelines and basic techniques will take you a long way into your journey as a lead guitarist.

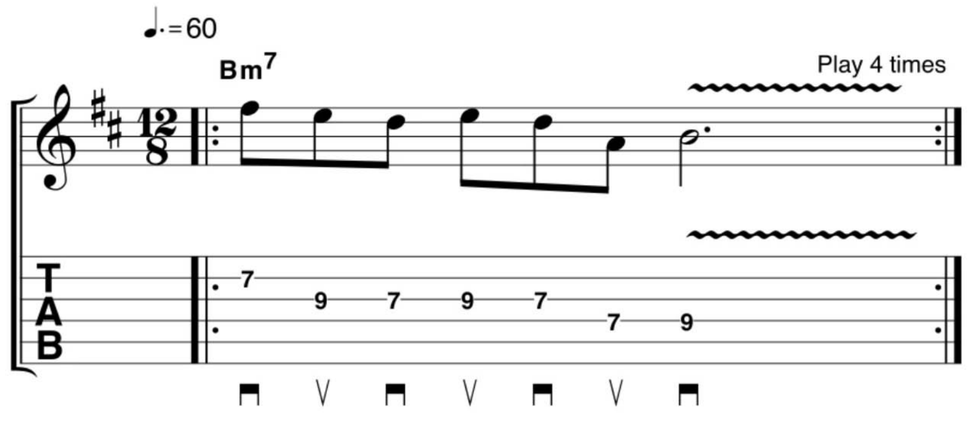
25 CHOOSE THE RIGHT SCALE: MINOR SCALES WITH MINOR CHORDS

Keep straight ahead with minor and minor



B minor pentatonic scale

TRACK 45



As a general rule, if the root chord in a progression is minor then the minor pentatonic scale will work. Our lick will work over any minor chord – just make sure to transpose to the key you're in. For example, E minor pentatonic over Em7.

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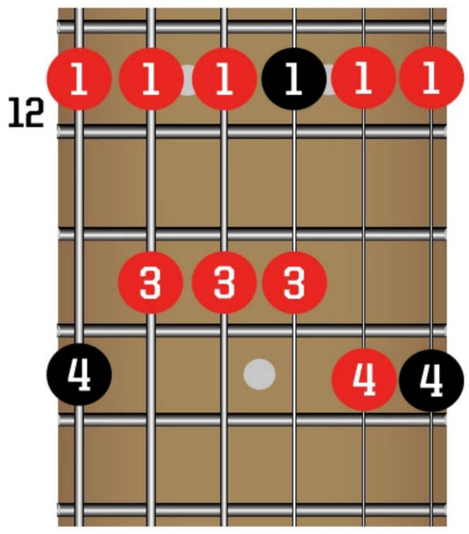
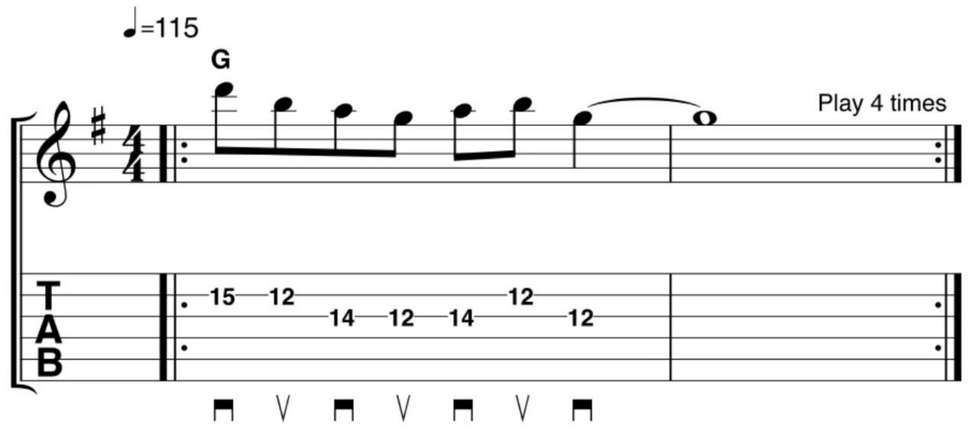
26 CHOOSE THE RIGHT SCALE: MAJOR SCALES WITH MAJOR CHORDS

Crossing over into major and major



G major pentatonic scale

TRACK 46

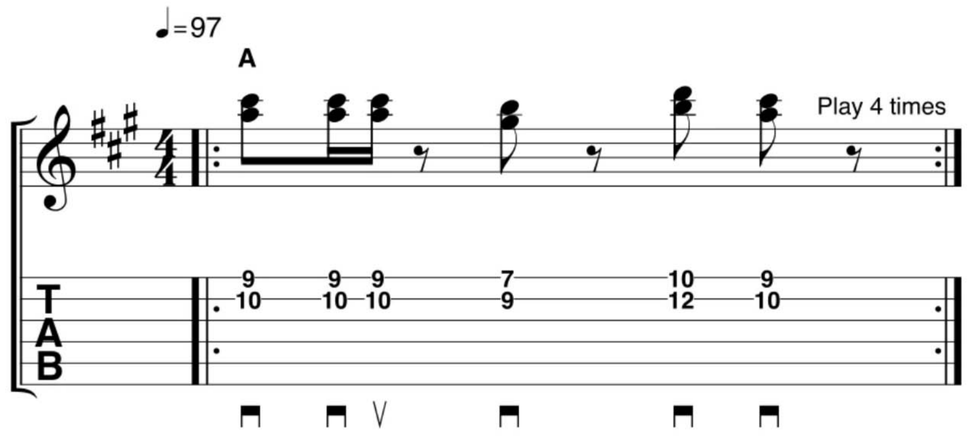


The major pentatonic scale is a great choice when a progression's root chord is major. Notice how this scale sounds super-bright compared to the minor pentatonic's darker feel.

27 USE TWO NOTES FOR A FATTER SOUND

Double up and add a little beef to your tone

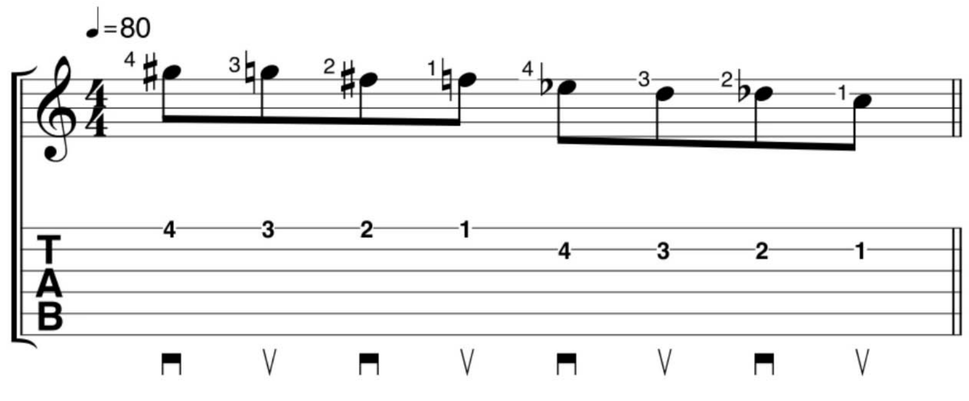
TRACK 47



Playing two notes at a time (doublestops) is a great way to make your lead parts fatter. Our example uses doublestops to create a bright melody to accompany the rock 'n' roll backing.

28 FINGER DEXTERITY WITH THE SPIDER EXERCISE

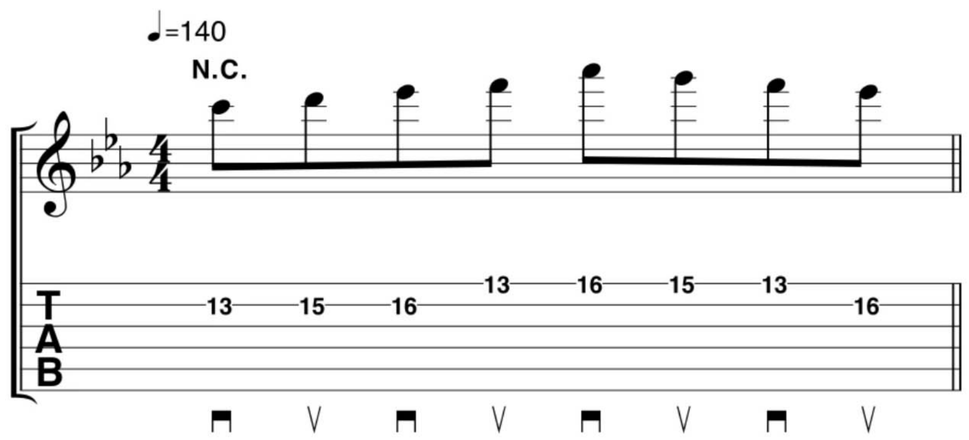
TRACK 48



The world-famous spider exercise is a great way to train your fingers to go in the right place. We've played it on two strings, but you can extend the pattern over all six strings in any fretboard position.

29 ALTERNATE PICKING FOR BETTER TIMING

TRACK 49



Many default to downstrokes to play lead, but alternate picking (down and upstrokes) is more efficient and will help you play in time and at higher tempos. Use both techniques and see how much more motion is needed for all-downstrokes.

30 UNLEASH YOUR GUITAR'S TONAL POTENTIAL

Ready to create a monster sound? Tune in to our tips and release the beast!

We know how it is; you turn your guitar's knobs to max and leave them there. No hassle. But what if we told you that you're missing out on a world of tone control at your fingertips? Try these three ways to get a new sound in seconds just by changing the tone and volume controls on your guitar:

A SEMI-ACOUSTIC TONE
It's not the real thing but it could be useful for songs where a strummier tonality is needed; select the neck pickup and dial your tone down. Keeping things clean and adding some reverb will do wonders too.

B CONTROL GAIN
First you need to turn your guitar's volume up to full, now turn your amp up to the maximum gain you'll need. Then it's a case of dialling back and forth on your guitar volume to clean up or dirty your tone on-the-fly as required.

C VOLUME SWELLS
There are two ways to create volume swells: buy a volume pedal and do it with your foot or the (much cheaper) original method; rolling the volume on with your little finger as you play a note or chord.

CLASSIC ROCK'S DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO QUEEN

After more than 45 years, Queen remain one of the biggest names in rock. Packed with exclusive interviews and retrospectives, this special edition is your ultimate guide to the music and legacy of Mercury, May, Deacon and Taylor.

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GUITARS AND BACKING CHARLIE GRIFFITHS
WORDS CHARLIE GRIFFITHS & CHRIS BIRD

Melodic Masters

TG profiles some of rock's greatest guitarists as we aim to help you improve that oft-overlooked yet vital element of soloing... the melody!

Guitar solos. We all want to play them, right? And we probably all wish we were better players too. Yet, exactly what makes a better player and soloist is highly debatable. Should you shred, or do you aim for something simpler? Do you opt for familiar pentatonic scales, or would something more tuneful be better suited to the music? In this feature we've produced a selection of lessons that will help you write more melodic solos and develop your feel. By taking a look at the styles of some of rock's finest feel players we'll help you take a more thoughtful and tuneful approach to your solos. Turn the page to get started.

Photo: Jorgen Angel/Getty

ROCK ROYALTY
Brian May: a master of solos with his signature pre-bends and vibrato

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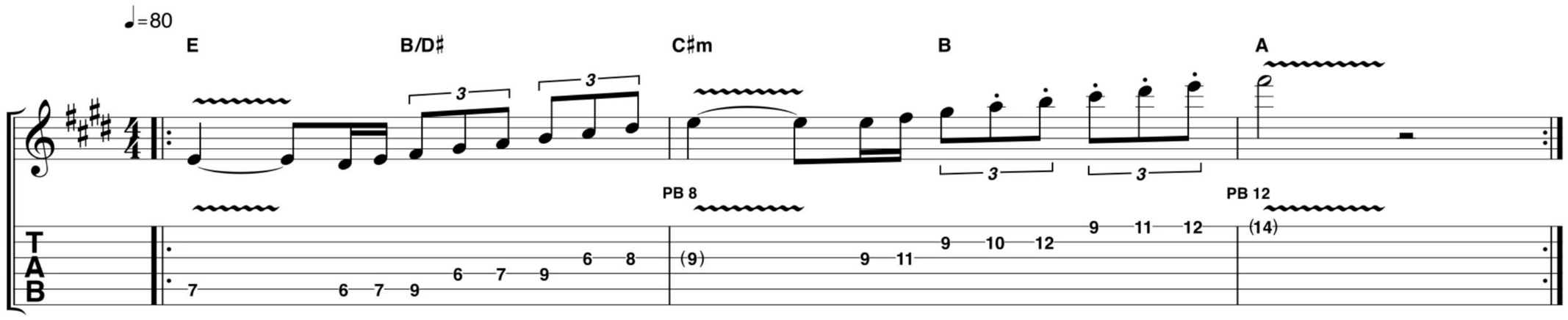
> I DON'T PHYSICALLY SING [A SOLO WHEN WRITING], BUT I WOULD SING IT IN MY HEAD LONG BEFORE I WOULD PLAY IT. THE MOMENTS WHEN I'M REDUCED TO MAKING SHAPES ON THE GUITAR ARE THE WORST MOMENTS OF MY LIFE. IF I'M TIRED OR STRESSED OR THE SOUND IS REALLY HORRIBLE, I LOSE THAT SORT OF SINGING SENSATION AND I'M JUST TRYING TO MAKE THE GUITAR SOUND GOOD WITH MY FINGERS. THOSE ARE THE MOMENTS YOU LOSE YOUR SOUL, LIKE A CHILD OF THREE TRYING TO PLAY, AND I HATE THAT FEELING
>
> BRIAN MAY

01 BRIAN MAY

Start your journey to tasteful, tuneful soloing with a look at the signature style of Queen great, Brian May

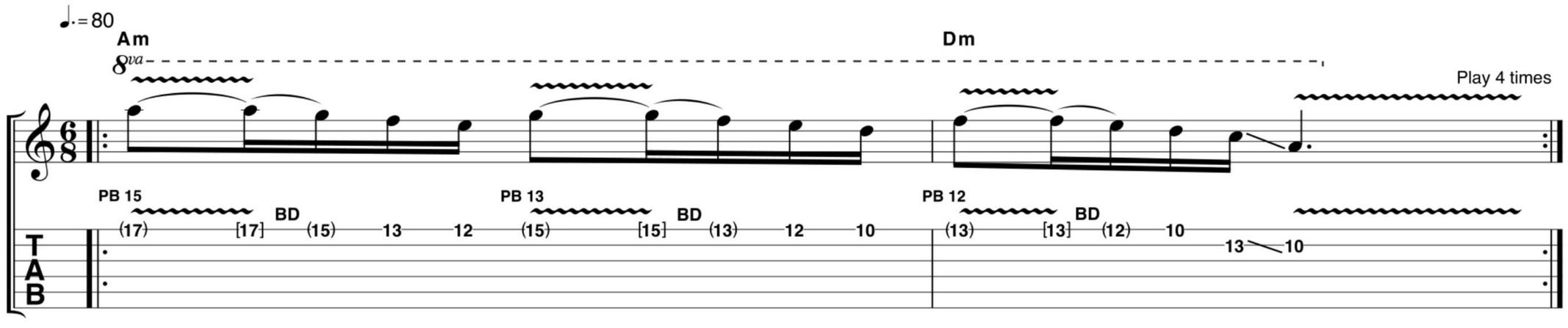
Famed for playing his own home-designed and built guitar, it's perhaps unsurprising Brian May's tone seems to be so hard to reproduce. Tonal challenges aside, any player can learn from Brian's style. Pre-bends are one of his secret weapons. Bending up to pitch before you pick may not sound remarkable, but it allows you to add vibrato *below* the pitch of the note you're playing – not possible with a standard fretted note, where vibrato raises the pitch. Brian's virtuosity allows him to play long, winding scale runs. We're looking at both of these aspects of his guitar style here.

1 SCALE RUNS — TRACK 20



Our first lick is inspired by Queen classics like *Bohemian Rhapsody* and *Bicycle Race* – tracks that feature long, winding scale runs. You'll need to learn some scale shapes to take the idea further, but this lick will get you started. It'll also help you improve your finger dexterity and you'll develop your ear too.

2 GET EXPRESSIVE WITH PRE-BENDS — TRACK 21



Brian May's playing can be incredibly emotive, as you can hear in tracks like *Who Wants to Live Forever*, *These Are The Days Of Our Lives* or *Bijou*. Try using pre-bends to recreate Brian's magic. All you have to do is bend up to the note shown in brackets *before* you pick the string. The PB marking tells you which fret to place your finger on.

Photos: Richard E. Aaron/Getty

WILD CHILD
Despite his party reputation, Slash always took his chops seriously

> MY FIRST INTUITION ALWAYS SEEMS TO BE THE BEST ONE BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT I AUTOMATICALLY HEAR; FROM AN EMOTIONAL POINT OF VIEW THAT'S WHERE MY EAR GOES. SO I JUST FOLLOW THAT AND THAT'S THE BASIC STRUCTURE AND NOTE ARRANGEMENT. THEN THE MORE I REHEARSE, YOU DO A LOT OF PREPRODUCTION AND THEN YOU GET TO THAT SOLO SECTION AND YOU END UP PLAYING THE SONG 20 OR MORE DIFFERENT TIMES AND THE SOLO STARTS TO COME TOGETHER... SO BY THE TIME YOU GO INTO THE STUDIO, YOU KNOW WHAT THE BEGINNING IS, YOU KNOW WHAT THE END IS AND THERE'S A PLACE IN THE MIDDLE... IT ALL CONNECTS SOMEHOW
>
> SLASH

02 SLASH

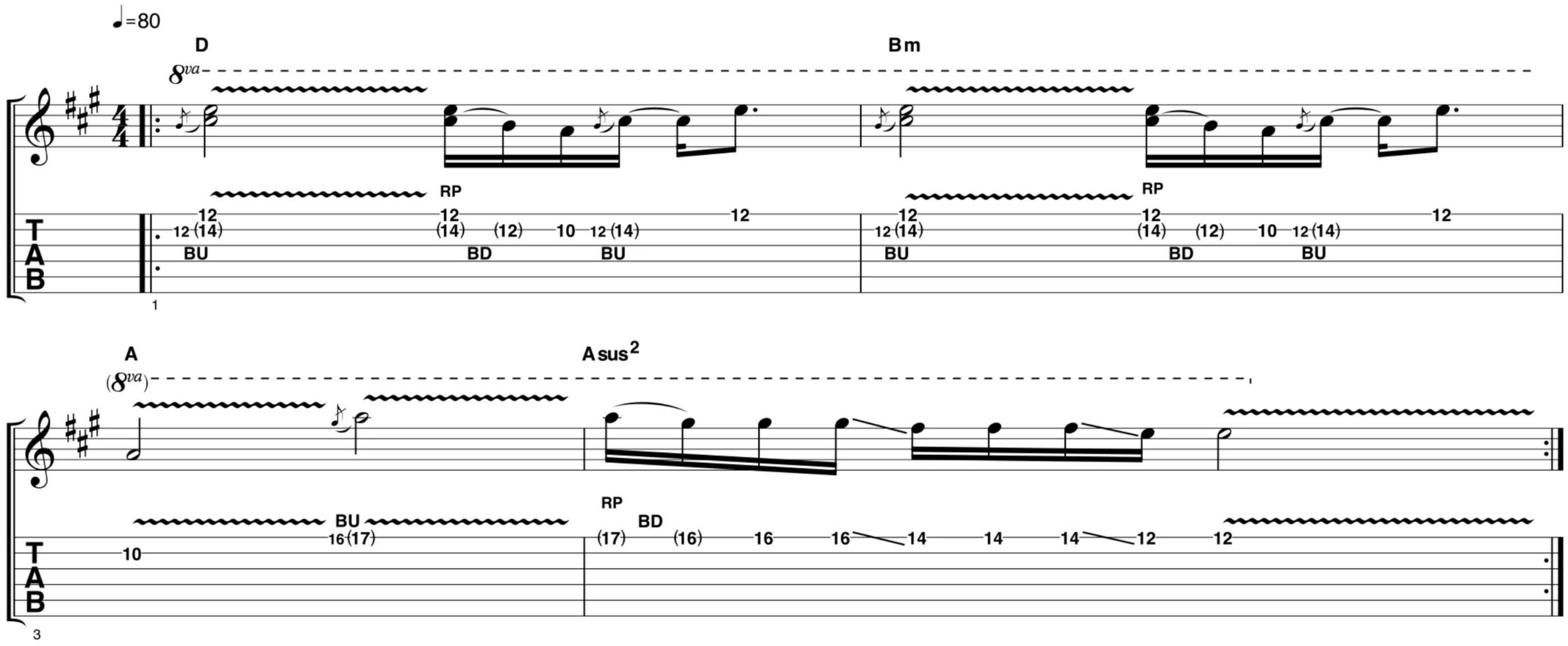
Guns N' Roses' Les Paul-toting lick-meister knows a thing or two about melodic soloing

Guns N' Roses shook up the 80s LA rock scene with their 1987 debut *Appetite For Destruction*. With its raw punky vibe, the album stuck two fingers up to the over-produced sound of some of the band's contemporaries. And at the core of the band was Slash – the Les Paul-wielding, JD-sipping wild man, who, despite indulging in the excesses of rock 'n' roll, always brought serious guitar chops to the party.

Where the rhythm section was aggressive and funky, Slash brought a loose swagger with his solos, yet somehow it would all fit together into this album.

If you're looking at Slash's more melodic style you'll need to focus on his string bend technique and his note choice.

1 DRAWN-OUT STRING BENDS TRACK 22



Slash's soloing in tracks like *Sweet Child O' Mine* and *November Rain* is full of memorable melodies and rousing bends. Our lick features a doublestop at the 12th fret played with the third and fourth fingers. Pick the notes together, then bend the second string. Take your time, allowing the notes to fight one another until you reach the peak of the bend.

Photo: John Shearer/Getty

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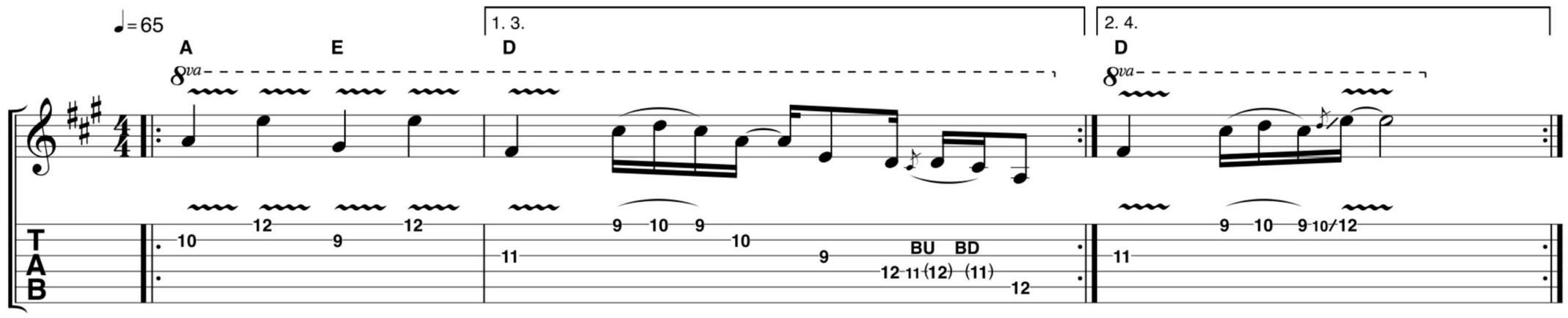
2 USING NOTES FROM BACKING CHORDS TRACK 23



The solo in *Knocking On Heaven's Door* has an epic, melodic sound, thanks to Slash closely following the chords. The idea is that instead of selecting a scale and letting your fingers choose where to go, you'll achieve more musical results by playing notes from the chords. Our lick is in A major, but the chord tones give the lick more shape.

03

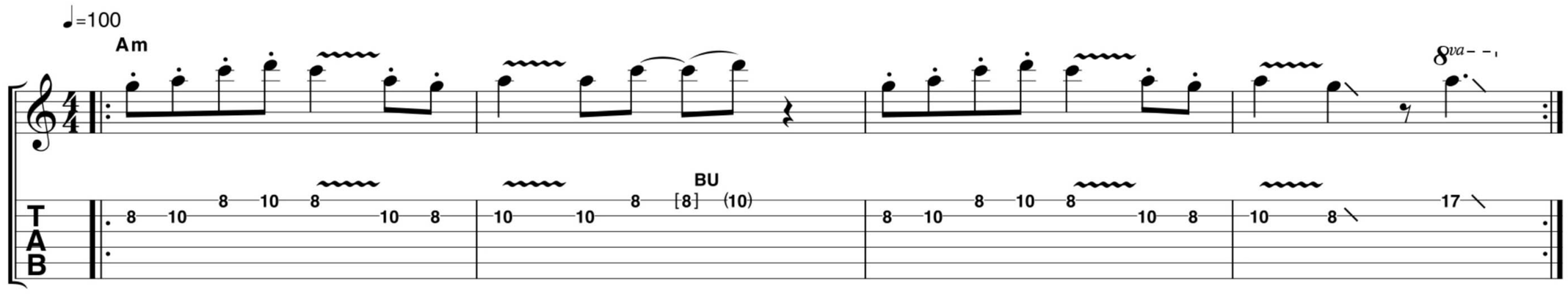
BB KING

Try your hand at the simple lead lines and blues soul of the undisputed king of the blues, BB King

> YOU'D HEAR THOSE HAWAIIANS PLAY AND SING – THEY HAD A QUIVER IN THEIR VOICE. IT WAS SO MELLOW, SO GOOD TO YOUR EARS. AND EVERY TIME I'D PICK UP A GUITAR I'D TRILL MY HAND LIKE THIS [IMITATES THE WIDE BB VIBRATO IN MID-AIR] AND THAT BECAME A HABIT. IT GOT SO WHENEVER I PLAYED, I'D ALWAYS DO THAT FIRST... ALL THE GUYS WOULD SAY, 'HOW DO YOU DO THAT?' AND I WOULD SAY, 'LIKE THIS...' [IMITATES VIBRATO]. AND THAT'S ABOUT IT
>
> BB KING

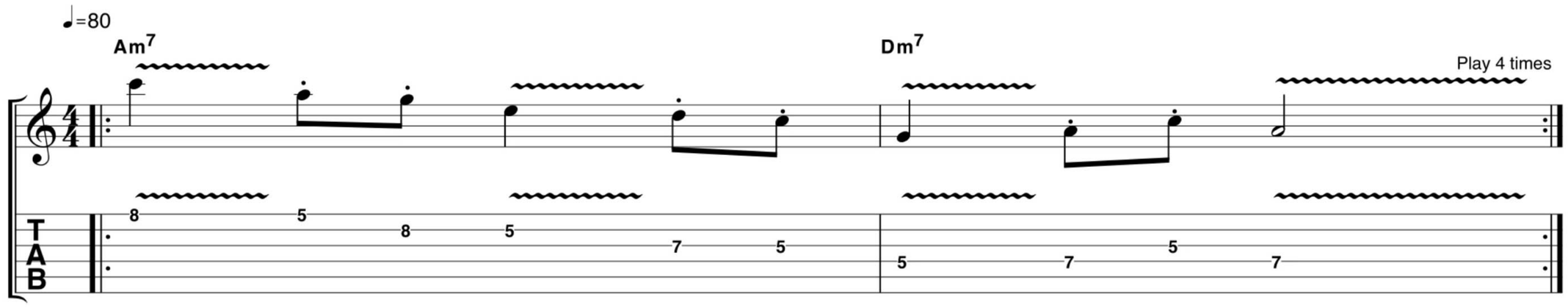
'Less is more' is at the heart of the BB King philosophy. With a style based heavily in just the major and minor pentatonic scales, and armed only with his Gibson 'Lucille' ES-335, the man known to most as the 'king of the blues' was one of the most expressive players of all time. The secret to getting so much from so little is BB's use of dynamics and phrasing. At its most basic, dynamics refers to how loud you play – and BB's picking would vary greatly between loud and soft. There are other nuances to consider. Staccato lines can really punch out of a mix and BB's signature vibrato is key to his style.

1 BLUES Q&A TRACK 24



This lick uses only four different notes, but is structured in a 'question and answer' format to create a musically satisfying result. Bars 1 and 2 are the 'question', which sets up your ear for the responses in bars 3 and 4. Try it out in blues, rock and jazz, and experiment any time you're improvising a solo.

2 VIBRATO AND STACCATO TRACK 25



This lick, reminiscent of *The Thrill Is Gone*, brings simple phrases to life with nuances, such as staccato and vibrato. Staccato means you cut the note short; vibrato is a wobble. BB's vibrato is quick with not too much pitch bend. Use a turning motion from the wrist to make the note 'flutter' and take your thumb off the neck if you need more freedom.

BECK 'N' CALL
Jeff Beck found his own sound when he started playing a Strat

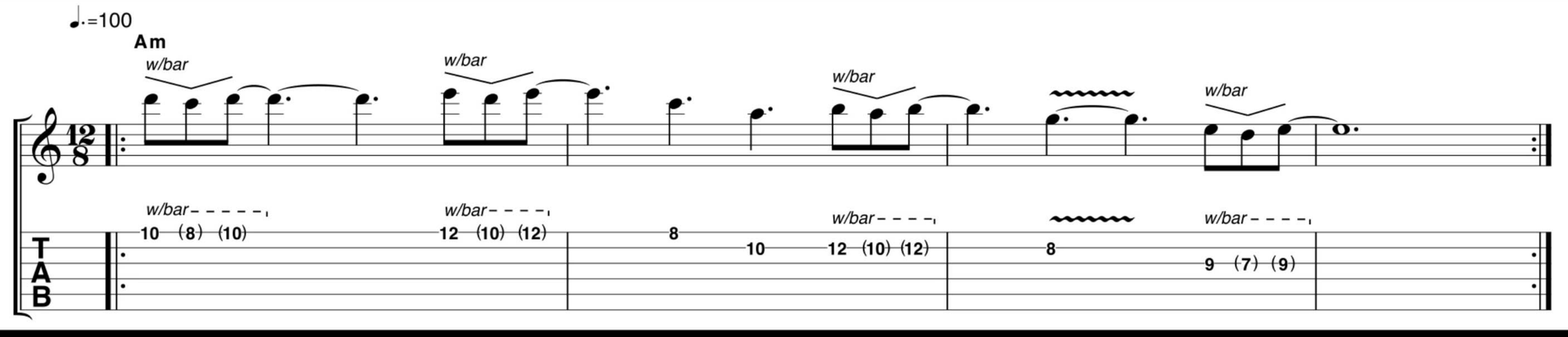
04 JEFF BECK

Master the pitch bend magic of the quintessential guitarist's guitarist

In the 80s Jeff Beck would make a change in his playing, which would give him his own unique sound – an instantly recognisable calling card. By ditching his pick and opting to play little else other than a Fender Strat, the guitar hero's guitar hero forged his own style. Mixing fingerstyle, whammy bar-tinged melodies, a sprinkling of harmonics, an already impressive legato technique and, for the final touch, volume swells, Beck creates some of *the* most expressive sounds. We're focusing on his whammy bar phrasing. Dial in an overdrive tone with plenty of sustain and make sure to play fingerstyle.

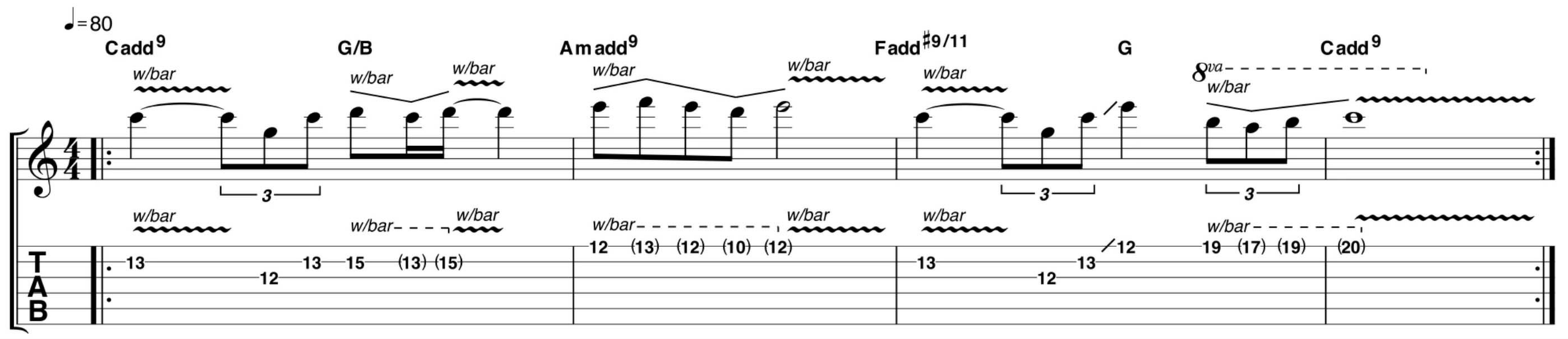
> YOU'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO THE FENDER STRAT, BECAUSE THERE ARE SONGS IN [THAT GUITAR]. IT'S A TOOL OF GREAT INSPIRATION AND TORTURE AT THE SAME TIME BECAUSE IT'S FOREVER SITTING THERE CHALLENGING YOU TO FIND SOMETHING ELSE IN IT, BUT IT IS THERE IF YOU REALLY SEARCH. IT DOES RESPOND TO TOUCH AND THE TONAL VARIATION IS UNLIMITED, ESPECIALLY WITH THE WHAMMY BAR. I HAVE IT SET UP SO IT BECOMES ALMOST LIKE A PEDAL STEEL. MY STRAT IS ANOTHER ARM, IT'S PART OF ME. IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE A GUITAR AT ALL. IT'S AN IMPLEMENT, WHICH IS MY VOICE
>
> JEFF BECK

1 WHAMMY BAR NOTE CHANGES — TRACK 26



This lick shows Beck's whammy technique in the hard-rock setting of tracks like *Hammerhead*. Push down on your bar so each bend is a tone below the fretted note. To get the bends to sound in tune you will need to practise a few times slowly and listen intently to the pitch bend until your muscle memory and your ear match up.

2 FRETTING AND WHAMMY BAR TOGETHER — TRACK 27



This lick is at the ballad end of the spectrum and brings to mind tracks like *Where Were You*. The melody uses a mixture of standard fretted notes and whammy bar pitch bends. The effect should be a seamless, smooth melody so make your movements smooth and natural. One way of doing this is to hold the bar loosely in your hand throughout.

Photo: Jeff Hahne/Getty

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THE GODFATHER
Dave Gilmour's double bends, phrasing and scale choice make him a melodic master

05

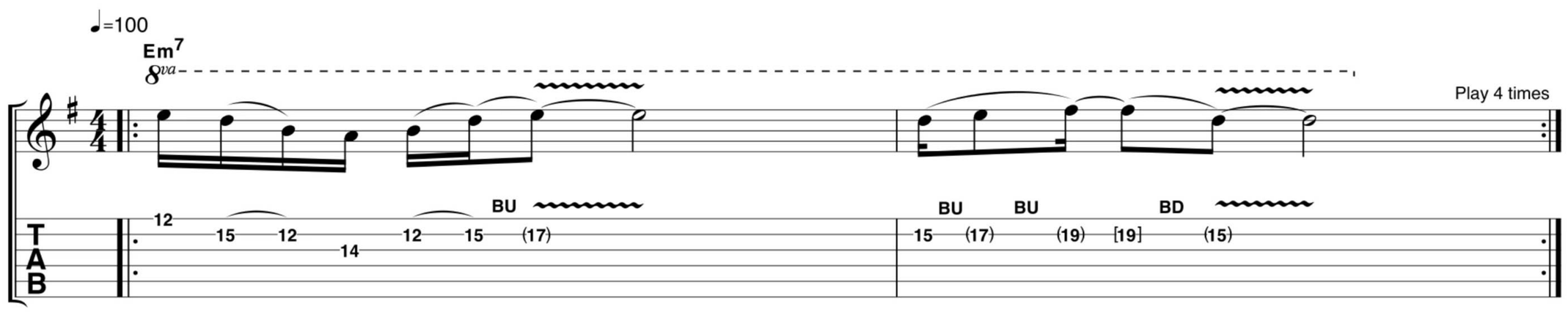
DAVID GILMOUR

Surely the godfather of melodic lead guitar playing, everyone can learn something from the solos of Pink Floyd legend David Gilmour

Perhaps more than any other player, David Gilmour is the epitome of the lead guitarist who plays melodically and 'for the song'. Though primarily a player with blues sensibilities, Pink Floyd's progressive nature would see the younger Gilmour become an experimenter both sonically and melodically. Listen to Floyd's recorded output, particularly from 1973's *Dark Side Of The Moon*, nary a note is misplaced, every note counts and every phrase has a purpose. And, though none of us has Gilmour's musical ear, we can all learn from the way he approaches playing the guitar and writing songs. From his signature double bends to his note choice and phrasing there's plenty in our lesson for you to try out.

1 BLUES PHRASING AND DOUBLE BENDS

TRACK 28

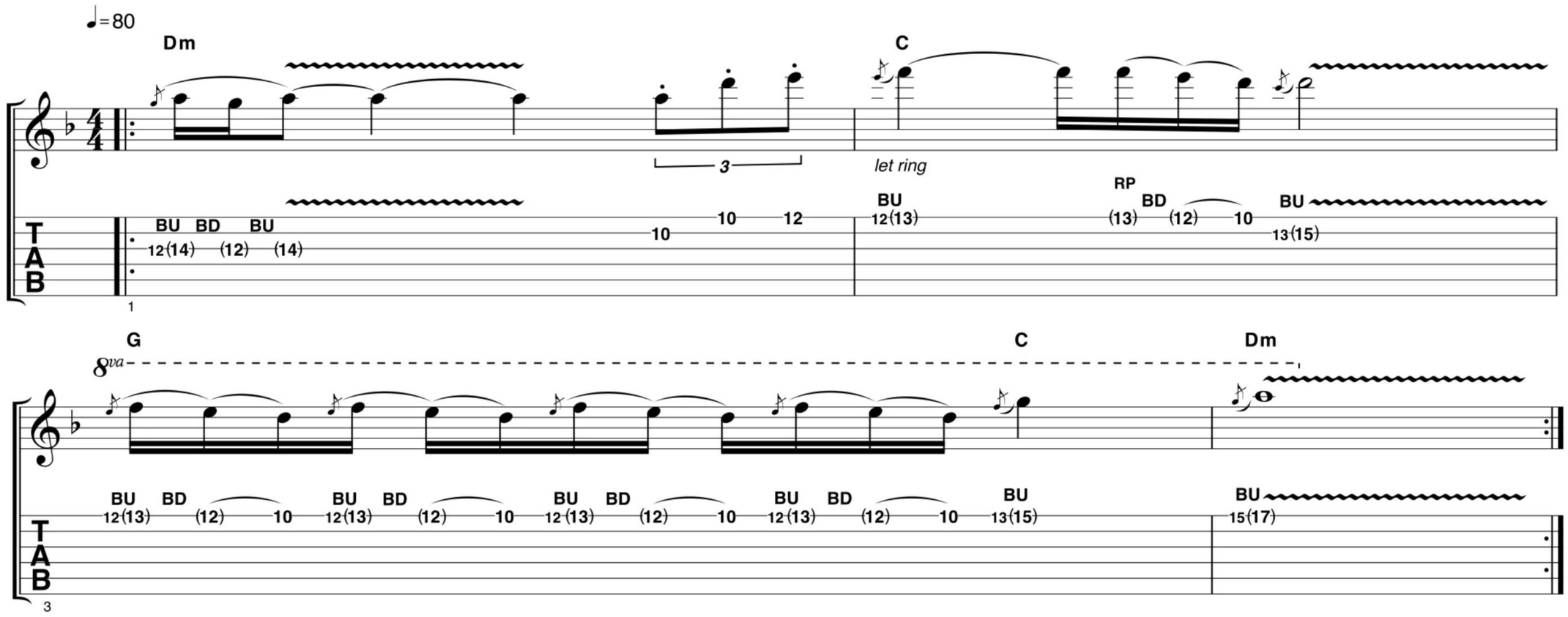


This E minor pentatonic (E G A B D) lick is inspired by Gilmour's *Another Brick In The Wall, (Part 2)* solo, so we're opening with a blues-based lick – the kind that might be at home on an Albert King or Chuck Berry tune. This sets up the more idiosyncratic double bend, which is a Gilmour trademark. Simply bend up two frets, then, again, another two frets.

Photo: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty

2 EPIC SOLOING

TRACK 29

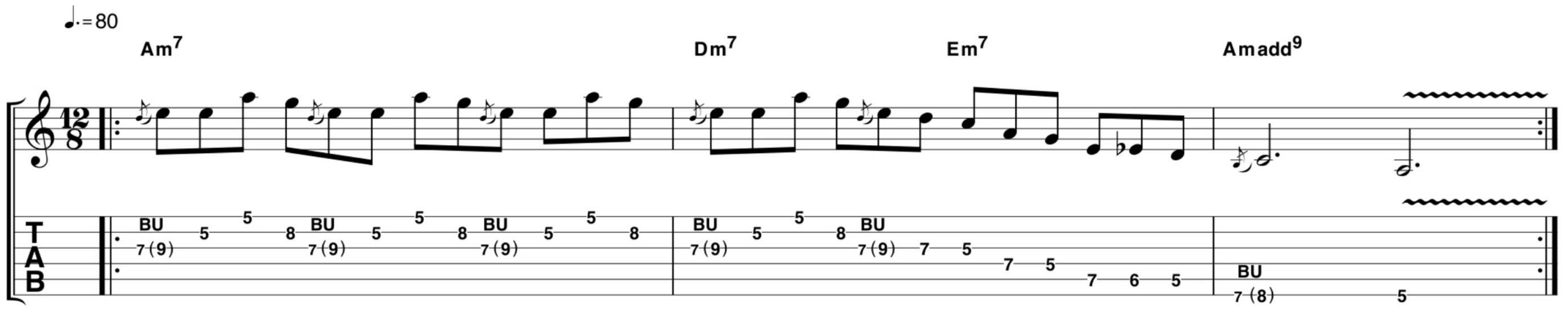


This lick represents the epic side of Gilmour's playing, as heard on tracks like *Comfortably Numb*. A mix of fluid string bends and longer held notes gives our lick its uplifting vibe. Notice that the pattern in bar 3 is a three-note phrase, which goes against the four-note structure of the 16th notes – an effective way of building tension in your solos.

> WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I SAT DOWN AND LEARNED MANY OF THE CLASSIC BLUES SOLOS BY ERIC [CLAPTON] AND HENDRIX, AS WELL AS STUDYING OLD HOWLIN' WOLF RECORDS. BUT I DON'T CONSCIOUSLY DELVE INTO THAT AREA NOW. BLUES LINES AS SUCH ARE FAIRLY SPECIFIC... YOU'VE GOT A SERIES OF THINGS THAT YOU CAN PUT TOGETHER IN DIFFERENT COMBINATIONS BUT THERE AREN'T THAT MANY MOVES YOU CAN MAKE. INSTEAD, I TRY TO APPROACH THINGS, GIVEN MY LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS, FROM A MORE MELODIC STANDPOINT AND JUST WORK ON IT UNTIL IT SOUNDS... NICE. I DON'T REALLY HAVE ANY PLAN... I TRY NOT TO BE TOO TIED DOWN BY RULES AND REGULATIONS. SO THE BLUES INFLUENCE MAY COME OUT AT TIMES BUT I COME AT IT FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE
>
> DAVID GILMOUR

3 REPETITION AND RHYTHM

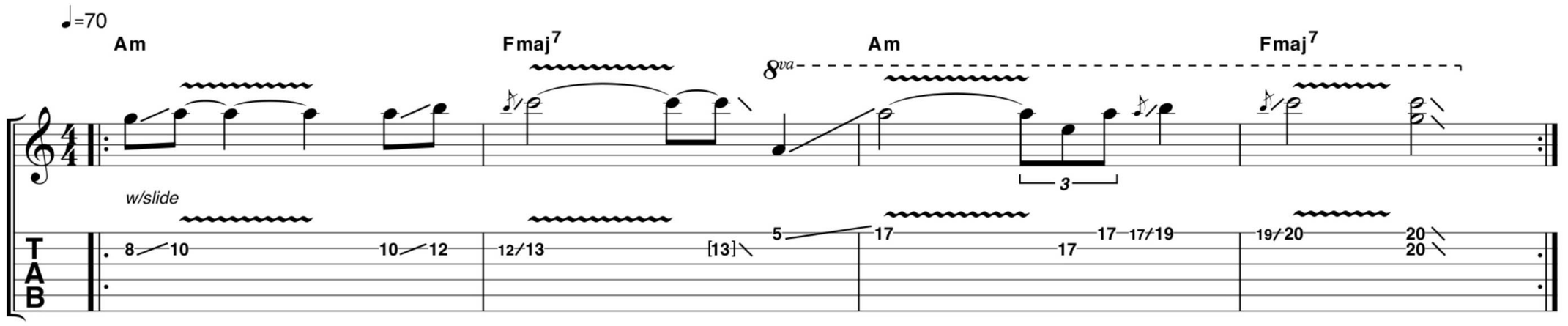
TRACK 30



As with lick 2, this lick features rhythmic phrasing as a tool to build drama and tension. Here, there's a 12/8 groove, which has a triplet structure, but the melody has a repeating four-note pattern, before reverting back to a more regular arrangement in bar 2. Try it in your own improvs – even repeating ideas can give creative results.

4 SLIDING

TRACK 31



David also plays slide guitar, as you can hear in tracks like *High Hopes*. And, though he often opts for a lap steel guitar, you can use your own instrument. So why use a slide? The huge amount of sustain means you can really milk longer notes and play drawn-out slides too. Just remember to aim your slide directly over the frets for accurate pitching.

UNCHAINED MELODY
Cantrell: king of the hard rocking melody

> I DO APPROACH IT AS A WRITER IN THE BAND, I KIND OF APPROACH SOLOS IN THE SAME WAY; I WRITE THEM. I'LL DO IT IN THE SAME WAY I'LL DO VOCALS AND LYRICS; A LOT OF TIMES I'LL HUM STUFF AND THEN START PLAYING IT. SO A LOT OF MY SOLOS WILL START WITH MY MOUTH, THEY WON'T START WITH THE GUITAR. I'LL BE SINGING – IT'S LIKE HORN RUNS OR SOMETHING. THEN I'LL START REPLICATING THEM ON GUITAR, DO A BUNCH OF SHIT AND THEN PICK OUT THE BEST BITS AND CONSTRUCT THEM
>
> JERRY CANTRELL

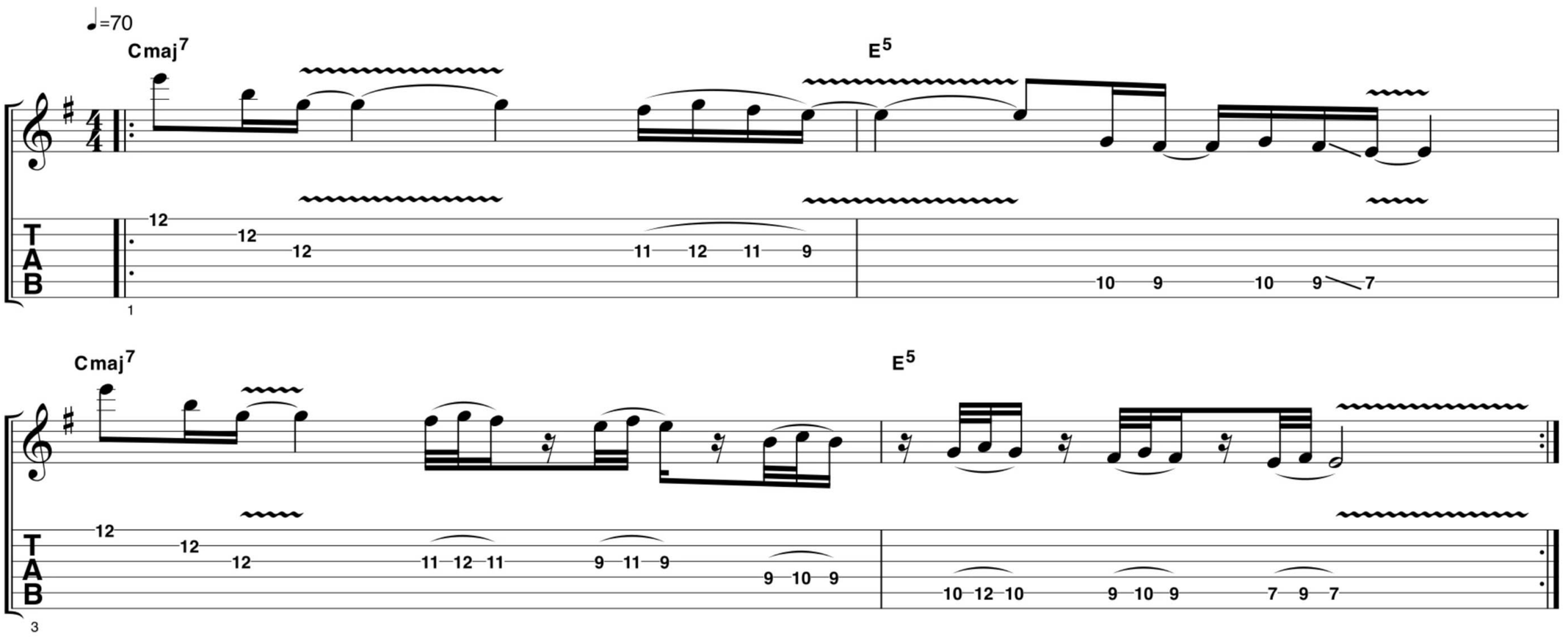
06 JERRY CANTRELL

The Gilmour of his generation? TG thinks so! Learn the soloing methods of Alice In Chains' melodic master

Jerry Cantrell is one of the most melodic hard rock players out there and his heartfelt playing elevates Alice In Chains' brand of alt-metal to an emotional level that few of his contemporaries can match.

You'll hear some of his most stirring solos on 1994's stripped back, acoustic-heavy EP *Jar Of Flies* and, perhaps inevitably, on Alice In Chain's dark take on a power ballad, *Down In A Hole* from 1992's *Dirt*. Strong melodies are at the heart of every solo Jerry Cantrell plays, so read on and try these examples and get some of his trademark techniques into your own playing style.

1 HOP FROM STRING TO STRING — TRACK 32



This lick is inspired by Jerry's beautiful playing on *Nutshell*. The most striking thing here is the use of wide interval skips. Instead of playing up and down through a scale shape, hopping from string to string and skipping over strings can guide your creativity into new directions.

Photos: Richard E. Aaron / Paul Natkin / Jorgen Angel / Getty

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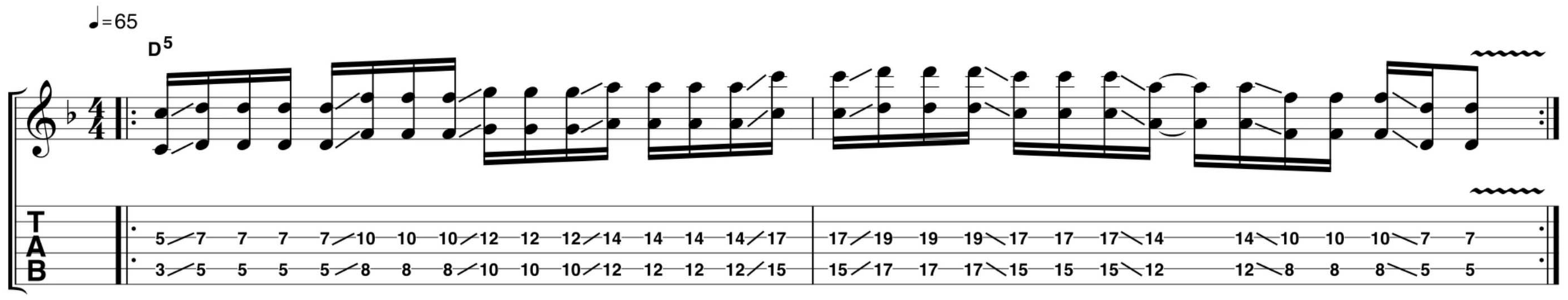
2 THICK SOUNDING OCTAVE SHAPES TRACK 33



This part uses octave shapes – Jerry used this approach on tracks like *Dirt* to thicken up the sound. As our melody moves through the D natural minor scale (D E F G A B♭ C) it is useful to know where the notes appear along the length of each string. Guitar players tend to practise scales in one fretboard position, so this is a vital skill.

07 MARK KNOPFLER

Touch, tone and a trademark fingerstyle technique are all part of the Dire Straits guitarist's melodic style. Let's take a closer look...

PLAYING STRAIT
Money for... quite a lot actually when you consider Knopfler's influence as a guitarist

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If you take only one thing from Mark Knopfler's playing style it must surely be his fingerstyle technique. Though his pick hand position might appear unusual, Mark is able to control every nuance of his sumptuous light overdrive tones and Strat cleans with a beautifully sensitive touch. Fingerstyle offers a number of unique phrasing options too; the 'thumb, pull-off, thumb, first finger' picking pattern of *that* lick in *Sultans Of Swing* can't really be played any other way – at least not if you want Mark's feel. Take a look at our tab examples for a taster of Mark's uptempo licks and his more expressive, country-tinged approach.

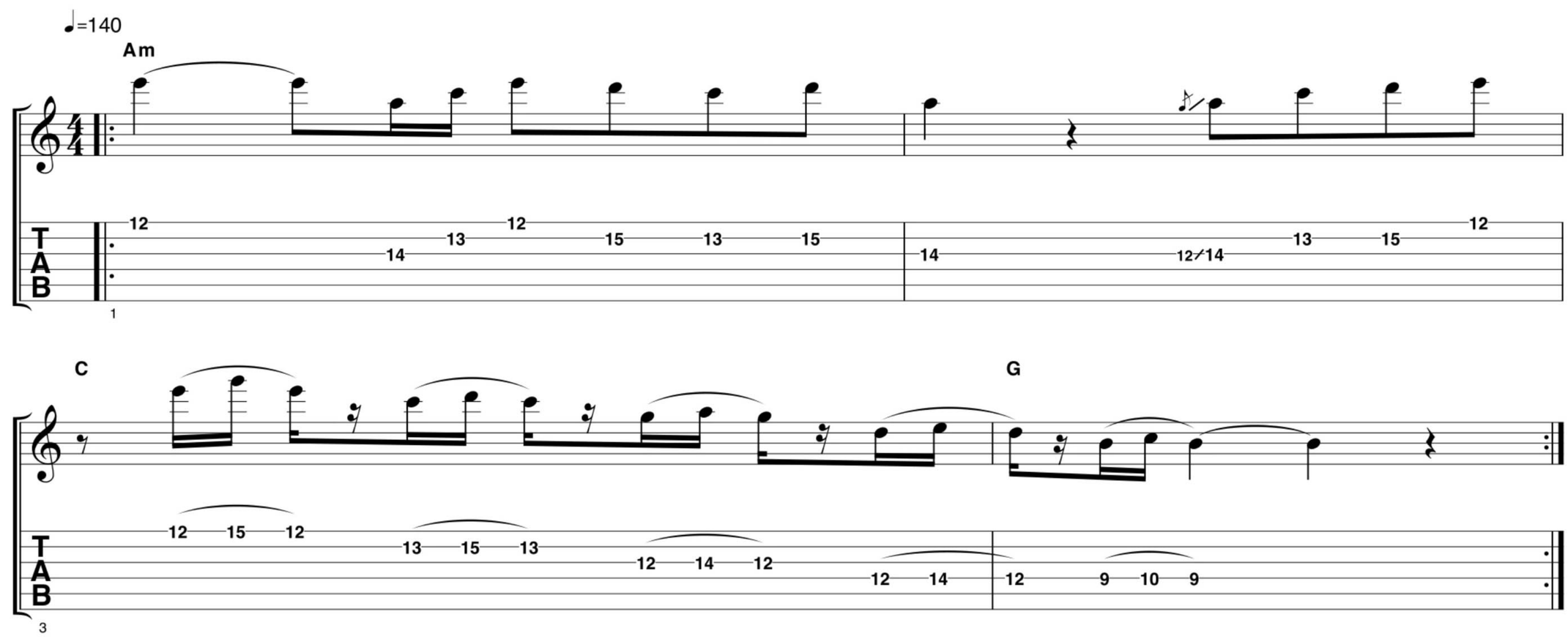
ALL FINGERS AND THUMBS... FINER FINGERPICKING

Obviously, your thumb picks down and your fingers move up. Simple enough, but your thumb and fingers may collide, particularly if you're attempting fast Knopfler-esque licks like *Lady Writer* or *Sultans Of Swing*. Classical guitarists are taught to keep their thumb to one side to avoid this problem and Knopfler does this too.

> WITH ME THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO IT. MOST OF THE TIME I JUST USE THE GUITAR AS SOMETHING TO HELP THE SONGWRITING. IT TENDS TO BE NOT PARTICULARLY DEMANDING. BUT EVERY NOW AND AGAIN IF I'M SITTING DOWN AND TRYING TO LEARN SOMETHING, MOVING IT FORWARD A LITTLE BIT, YOU REALISE THE DEPTH OF THE THING – BUT THAT IS MORE TO DO WITH BEING A MUSICIAN. IT'S A WHOLE DIFFERENT THING BEING A MUSICIAN FROM BEING A 'GUITAR PLAYER'
>
> MARK KNOPFLER

1 'THREE NOTES, THEN REST' PHRASING

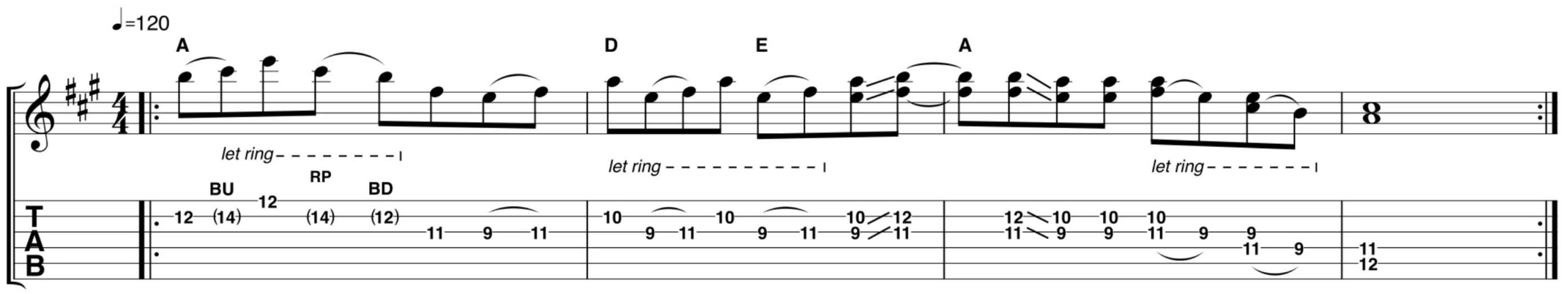
TRACK 34



Inspired by the incredible solo in *Sultans Of Swing*, our lick uses some cool Knopfler-style tricks. Following the opening melody, the second half of the lick descends through the A minor pentatonic scale with 'three notes, then rest' style phrasing. The broken up feel goes against what you might expect to hear but it sounds great.

2 COUNTRY STYLE BENDS AND DIADS

TRACK 35



Mark is a country-influenced player – listen to *Angel Of Mercy* or *Portobello Belle*. He also plays fingerstyle, which opens up many phrasing options. You can play our lick with a pick, but fingerstyle gives you Mark's feel. The opening bends, the ringing notes in bar 2 and the final diads are typical country fare, but work in Stones-style rock 'n' roll too.

08 JOHN MAYER

A 21st century guitarist who can truly claim to be a pop, funk, rock and blues great. Does John Mayer have it all?

I THINK I'VE STAYED TRUE TO WHAT MY SOUND SHOULD BE. I STILL AGGRAVATE THE HELL OUT OF PEOPLE BY NOT COMMITTING TO BEING A BLUES GUITAR PLAYER OR A POP MUSICIAN, BUT I LIKE 'EM BOTH AND I THINK I'VE PROVEN WITH *CONTINUUM* [ACCLAIMED 2006 STUDIO ALBUM] THAT IT'S AT LEAST POSSIBLE TO GET PEOPLE TO BOP THEIR HEADS ALONG TO SOMETHING THAT CONTAINS GUITAR PLAYING AND POP MELODIES

JOHN MAYER

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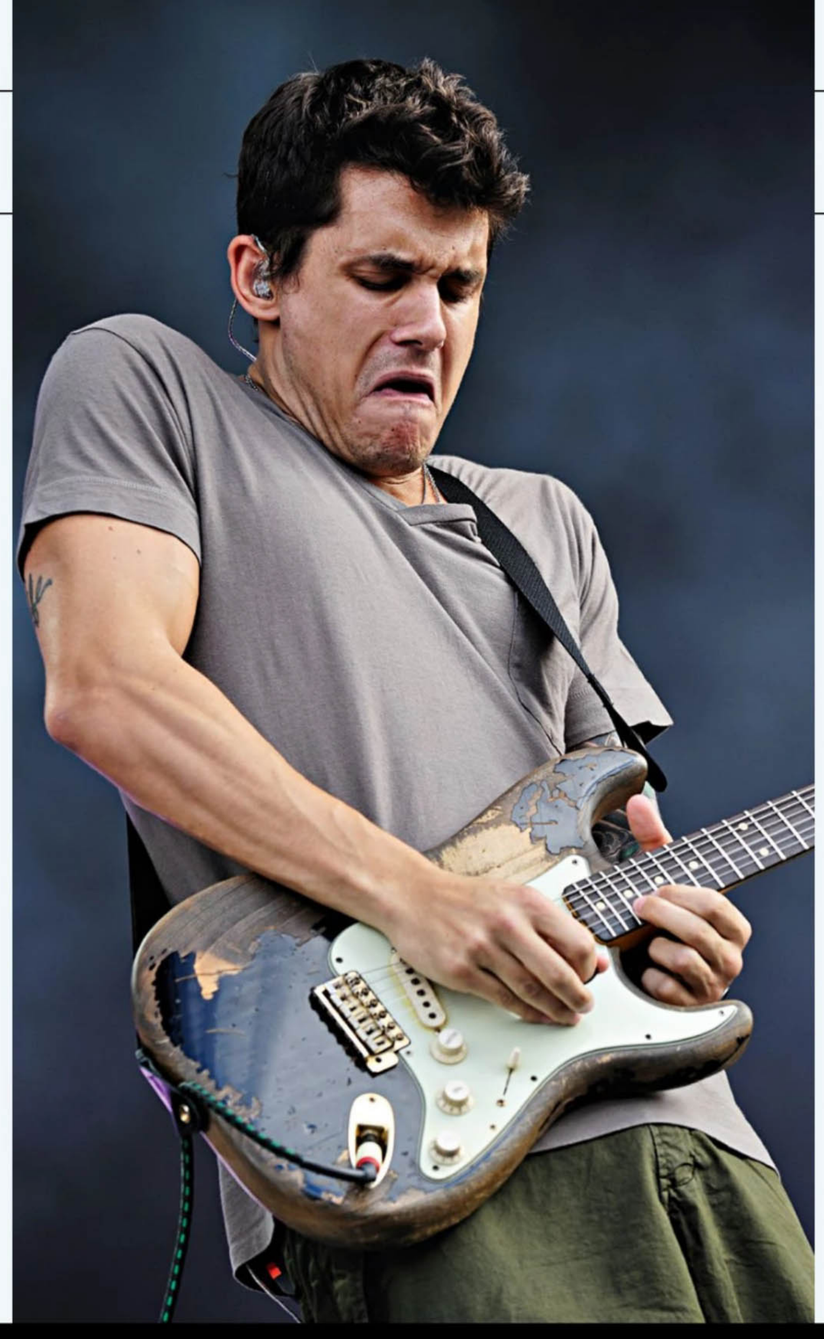
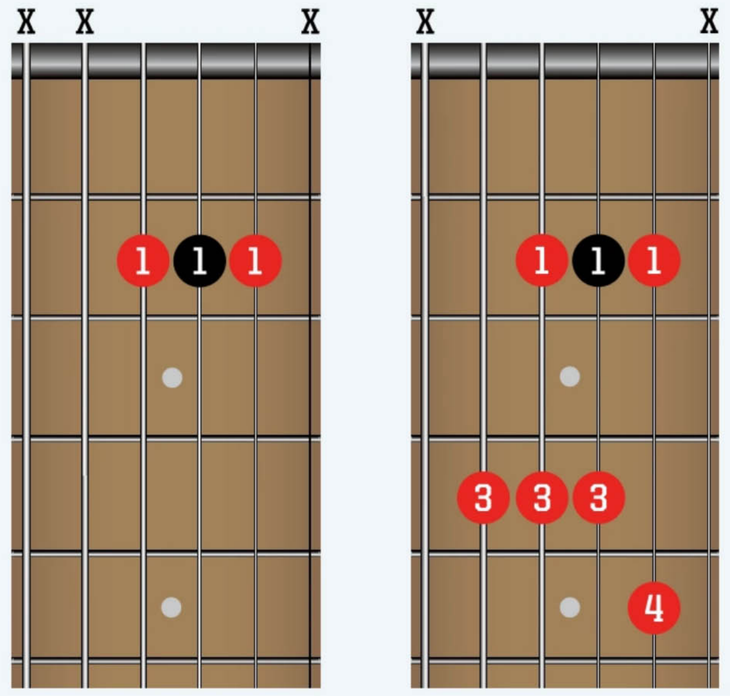
If you're going to talk about 21st century guitar megastars then you're going to be in somewhat rarefied air. Sure, you can argue a case for Dave Grohl, Matt Bellamy – even Ed Sheeran – yet none of these players can be held up as an exemplar of feel, melody and technique quite like the stadium-filling genre blending guitarist John Mayer. A master of blues, funk, pop, you name it, John Mayer's even gigged Van Halen's *Panama*, so he has the requisite rock guitar hero chops too.

We are, of course, looking at the melodic side of the reluctant blues-rocker, taking in his ballad lead style in songs like *Gravity*, as well as his funkier side.



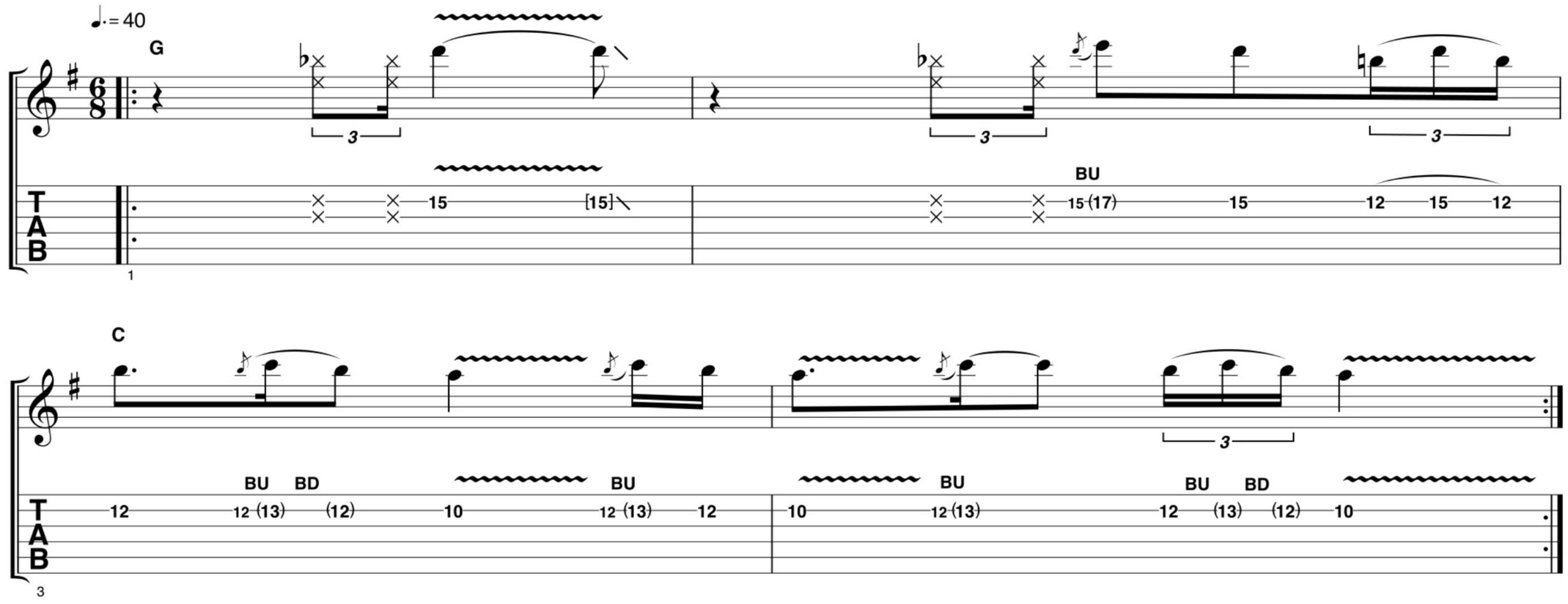


TOP JIMI... MAYER'S TIP OF THE HAT TO HENDRIX

This simple chord trick has been used by countless greats – Mayer and Hendrix are two of the best known. Play the first-finger barre chord shown on the left. This leaves you free to embellish with some extra notes, which you can play with your third and fourth fingers. Hammer-ons and pull-offs will sound great.

1 LAY BACK AND LEAVE SPACE

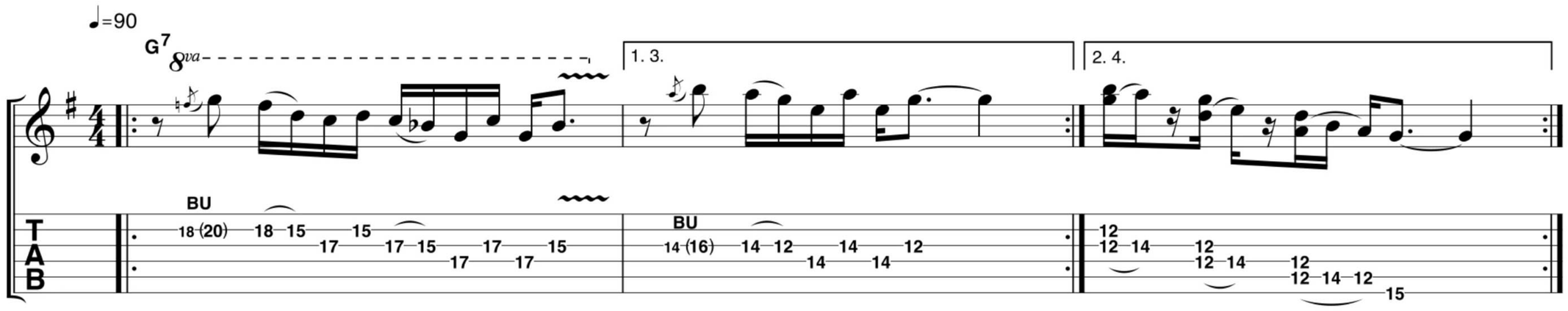
TRACK 36



To achieve the laid-back ballad style approach of songs like *Gravity*, you need to be comfortable leaving space in your solos. For example, rather than starting on the first downbeat, our lick waits a while before getting started. After playing just one note, we wait again before building on the note. The ending uses just three notes.

2 FUNK, BLUES AND POP LICK

TRACK 37



Here we're getting funkier, but John's genius is how he can play a lick like this in blues, rock and pop styles too. Part of what makes this happen is the G7 chord; both major and minor pentatonic scales sound good over this type of chord, which makes it easy to improvise over and versatile enough to create a mix of different moods.

TOP TIP!
Keep a clean work area, a range of tools and a fresh brew handy when it's time to reinstall your new wiring – it can get tricky!

REWIRING A HOLLOWBODY GUITAR

How to ace the dreaded task of re-wiring a 335 without easy access

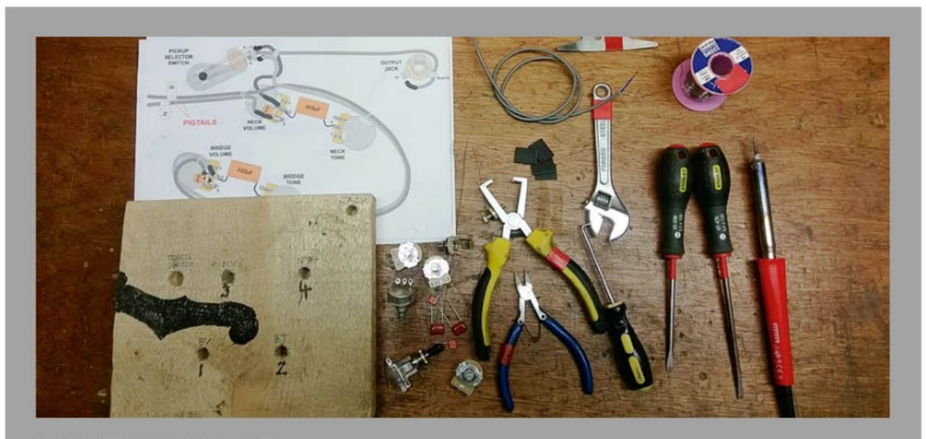
Words: Jack Ellis

Whilst they're lovely to look at and play, the ES-335, Casino, Riviera, Sheraton, Dot and a whole host of Jazz boxes are a right pain to re-wire. Even though it's often the same circuit as a Gibson Les Paul, the lack of a rear access panel makes it harder to install or repair.

There are two unique features that need to be catered for to do a professional job on a hollowbody guitar. Firstly, the wiring needs to be screened so that no humming can enter the circuit. Secondly, no wires should cross the F-hole spoiling the look. Easy… right?

To repair this circuit it's often best to take out the whole kit and caboodle – without scratching the paint job, of course. So, with the help of some hair-brained techniques and pre-planning we'll show you how to do this.

Our patient today for keyhole surgery is a rare Maya 335 copy (complete with mad tremolo) whose vital organs are showing only signs of life from one pickup.



WHAT YOU NEED

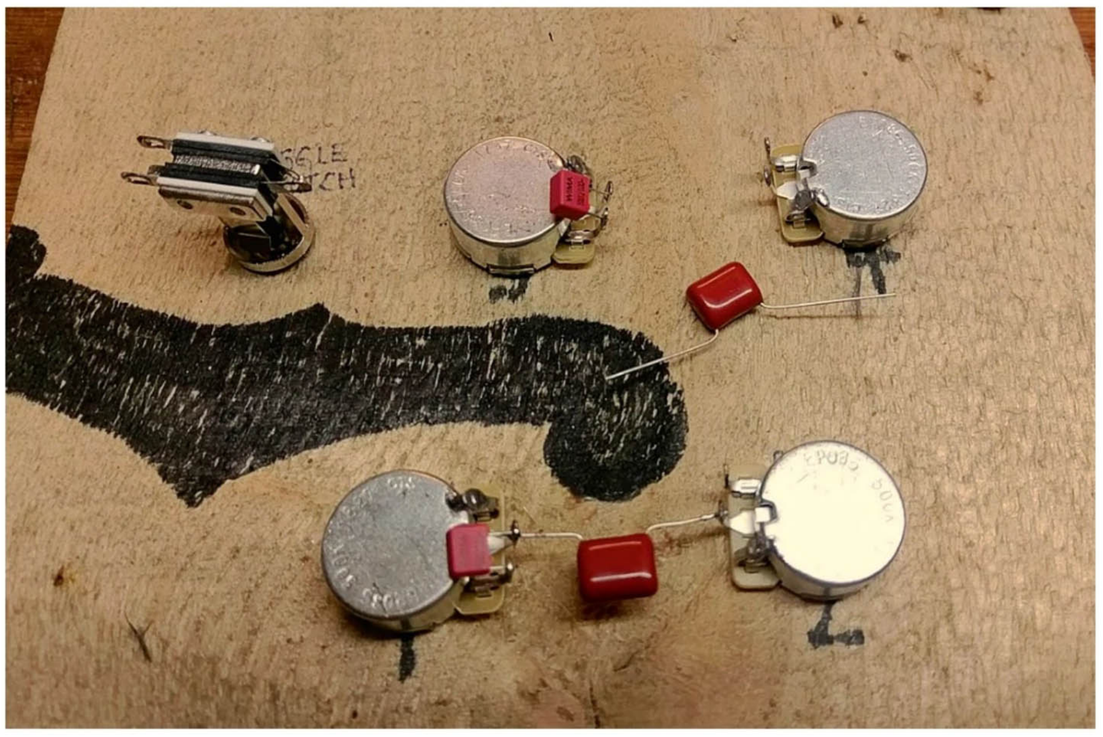
- Wiring diagram
- Assembly board (wooden block or stiff card)
- 40W soldering iron
- 60/40 solder
- Screened cable/ braided cable
- Shrink tubing
- Lighter
- Wire strippers
- Wire cutters
- Flat head screwdrivers selection
- Hook and pick set
- Adjustable spanner
- Steady hands
- Patience

SKILL LEVEL

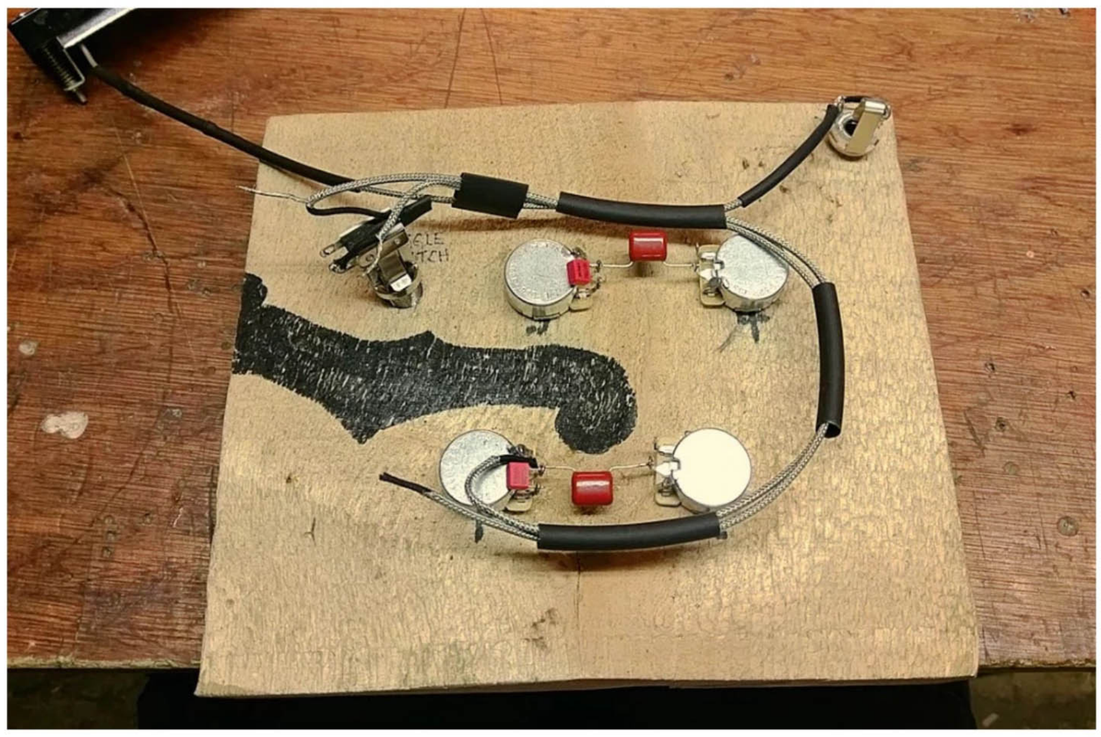
Intermediate

MEET YOUR EXPERT
Jack Ellis runs Jack's Instrument Services from his workshop in Manchester. In his career he has worked on thousands of instruments, from simple fixes and upgrades, to complete rebuilds. For more info, see: www.jacksinstrument services.co.uk

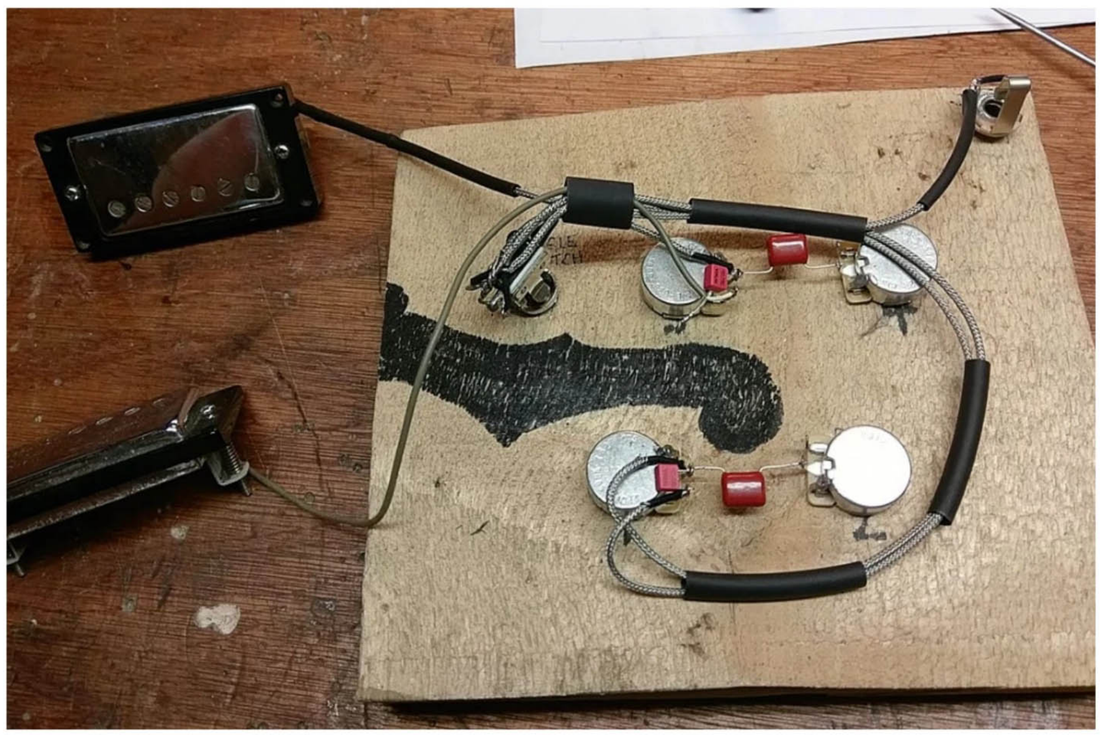
1 As only the bridge pickup was giving output, let's pull out all the old guts. To do this you must undo all the nuts hiding underneath the knobs, the pickup selector switch and jack socket. There's one wire left inside which is the bridge earth wire – attached to the bridge or tailpiece, snip that fella off at the pot.



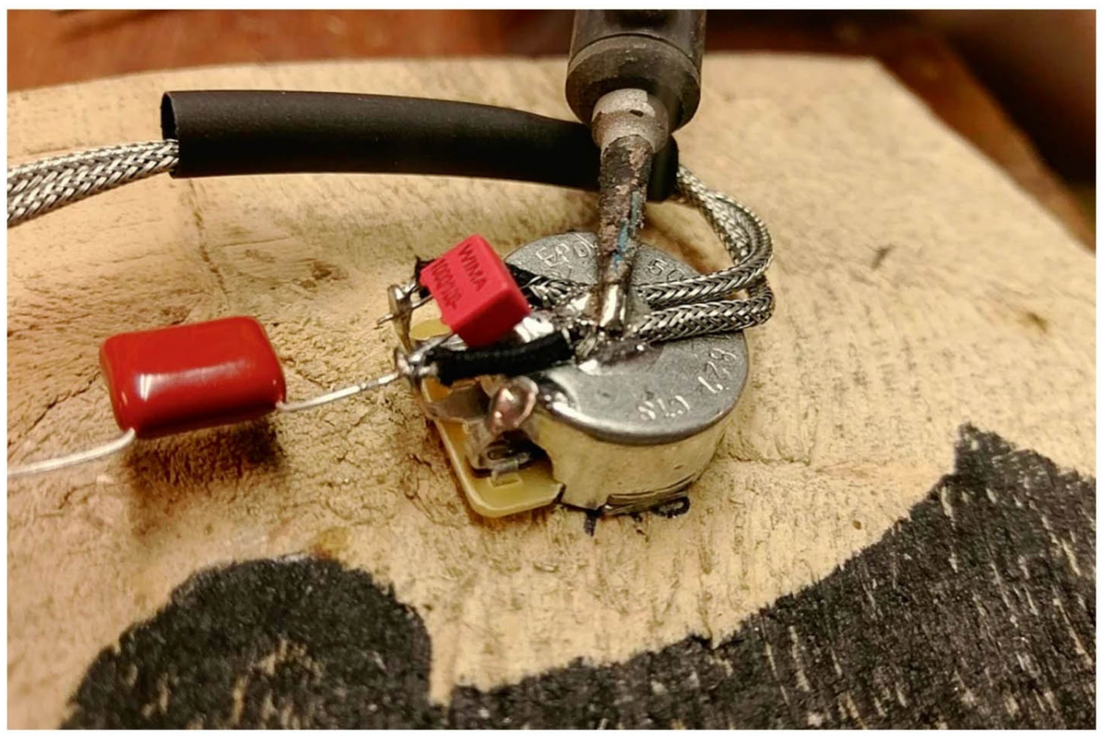
2 This soldering template is handy; we recommend making one out of wood or card. It's the exact spacing of the guitar and mirror-imaged – we're soldering it upside down. The F-Hole has been drawn on too so we know not to cross it with a cable. Pop in your components, add your capacitors and solder the earth legs to ground.



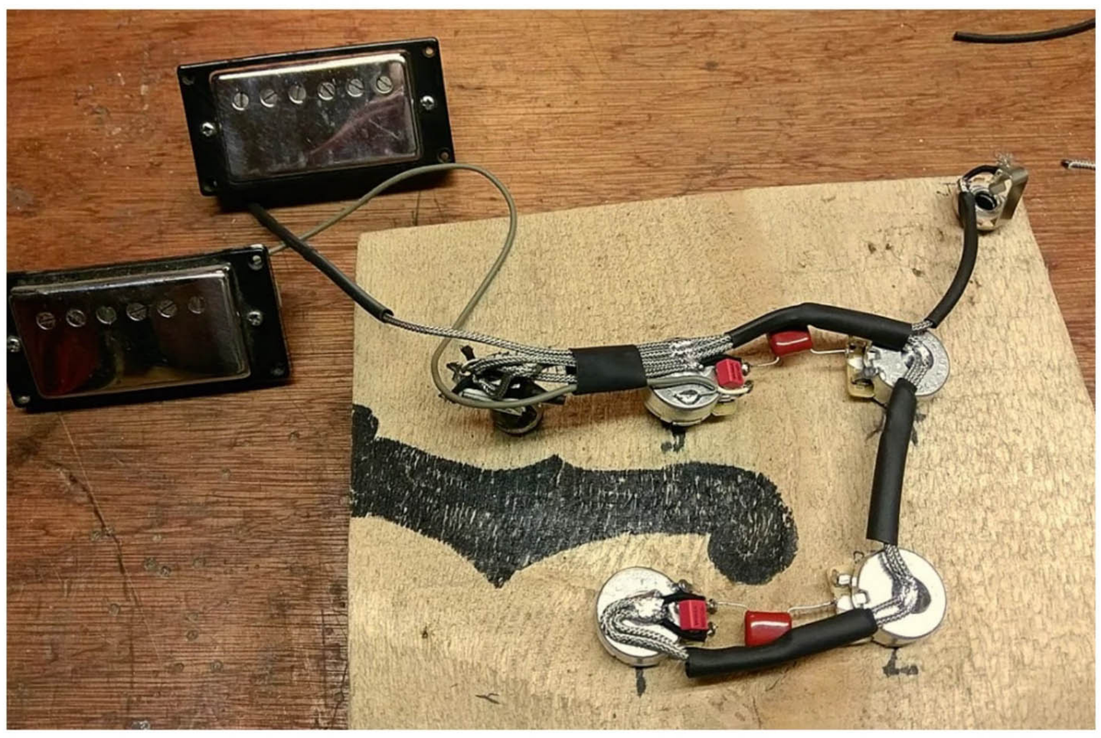
3 We're avoiding the F-hole because we don't want any wires on show when we're done. The black tubing is heat-shrink and helps to hold the cables in the right shape and also offers insulation. The bare braided wire often needs insulating in case it short circuits something. We're opting not to solder any grounds on yet.



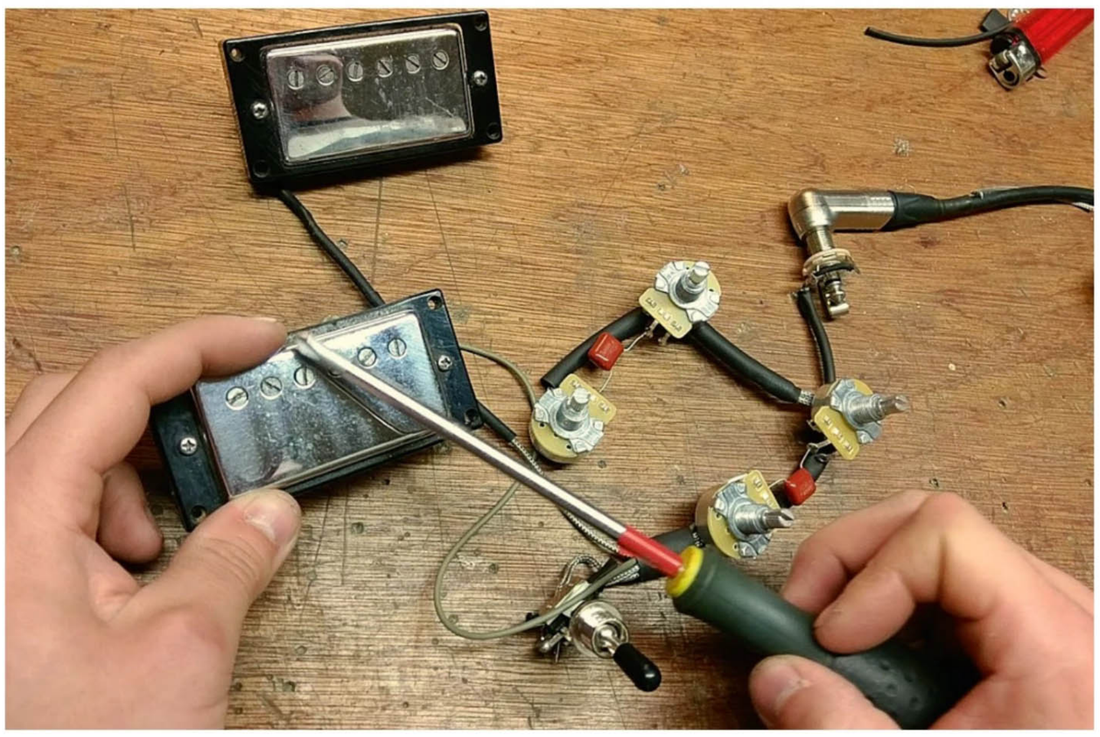
4 That's the whole circuit in place apart from the ground connections. Can you see we've used exactly the right amount of cabling so that the wires will install easily? The circuit gets a little stiffer the more cables you add. One of the pickup wires uses a plastic jacketed wire which has been kept separate so it doesn't melt.



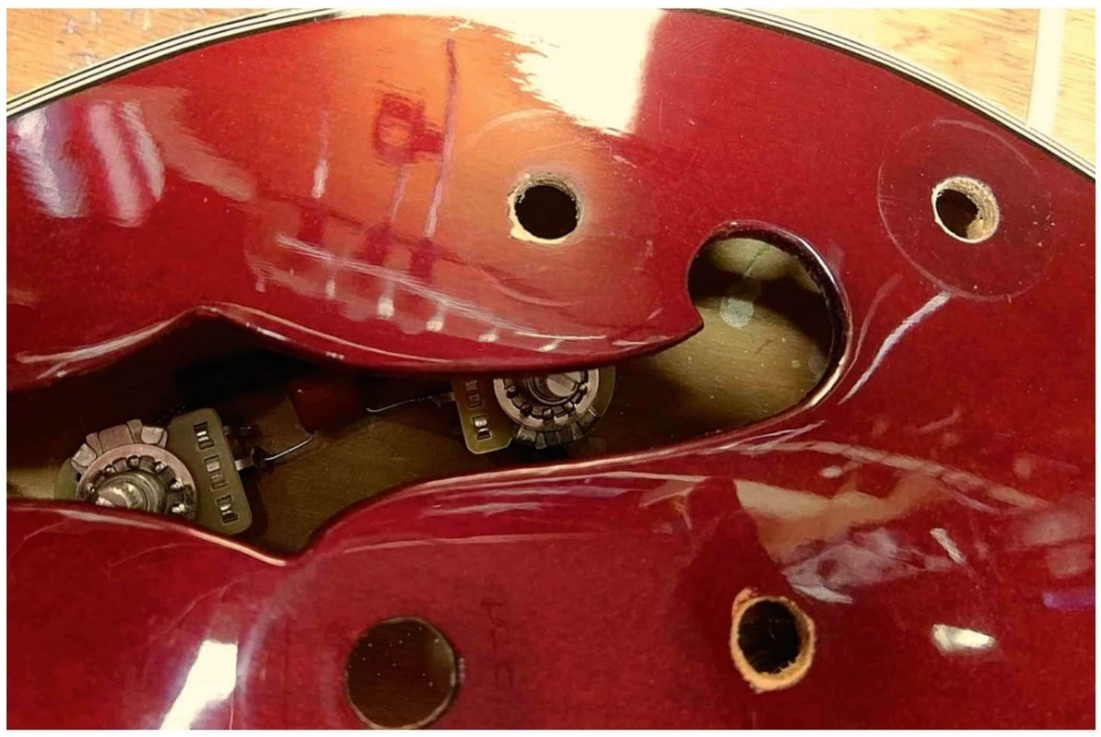
5 This is a step unique to the bare braided wire – it has a cloth-covered wire inside which will not melt. This is how Gibson solders theirs on. It takes a bit of time and quite a lot of solder to get these looking nice. Be careful as the whole pot gets very hot at this stage.



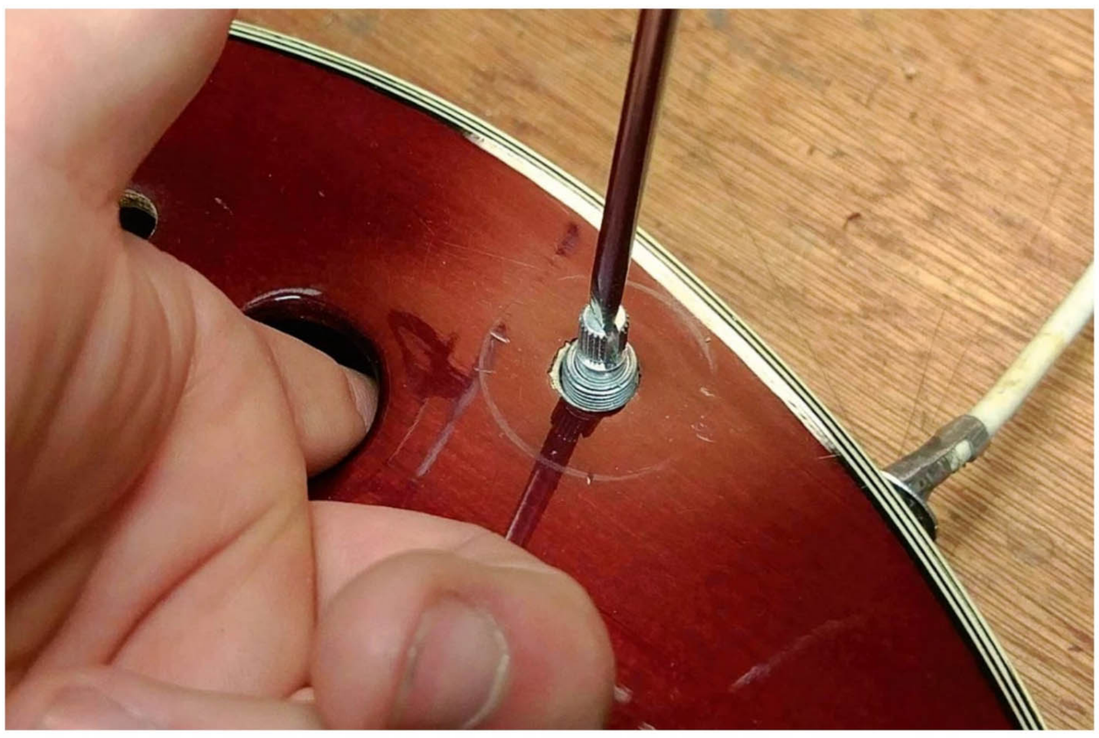
6 Soldering the braids on gives the final shape and structure to the wiring as well as of course completing the circuit! The shrink tubing can now be shrunk by heating it up with a lighter. There's one more thing left to solder, so keep the soldering iron on.



7 We'd be mad not to test it at this stage! Plug into an amp and check the functions by tapping gently on your pickups with something magnetic. You can test the function of the volume and tone pots. Test potential short circuits from the braided wire – make sure it's not able to touch parts of the switch, jack socket or pot legs.

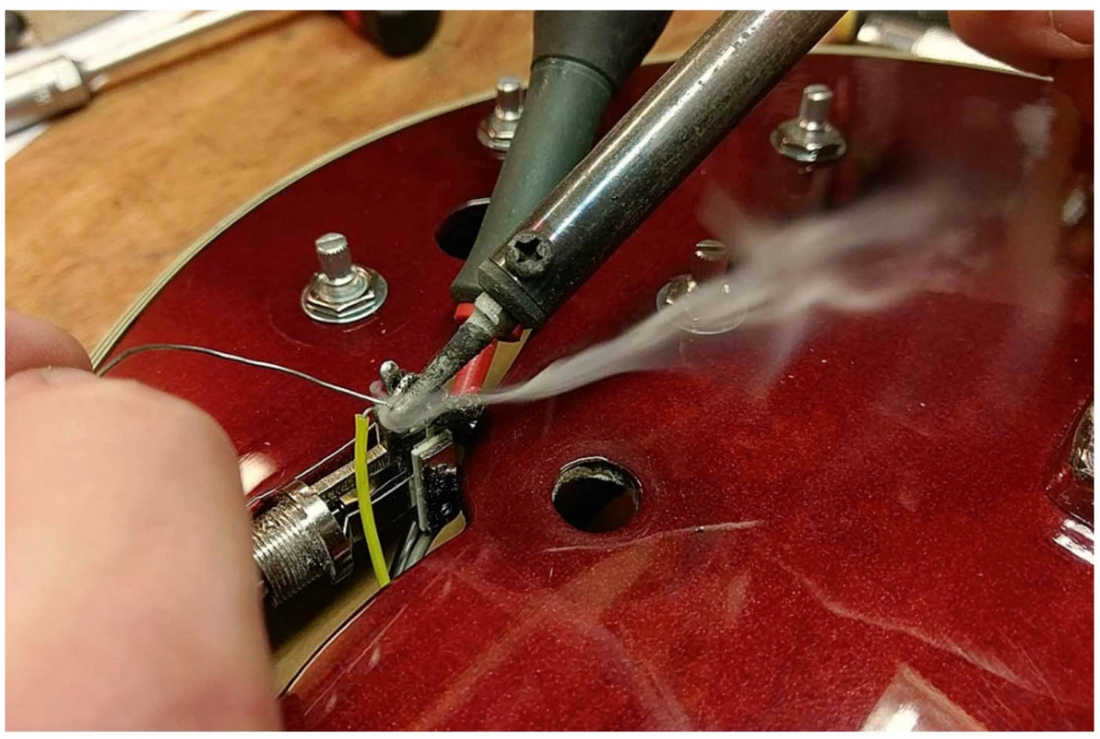


8 Because your soldering board was made with great care, it means installing the wiring loom will be easier... still challenging, but easier. Feed in your circuit through the bridge pickup rout keeping tabs on what pot is what. Keeping the pots the correct way up, it's now time to put on the pots' star washers.



9 Start with the bridge tone pot, the easiest one to install. This can be done with a finger and a little help from a screwdriver. You can hold the pot in place with your finger whilst you add the washer and nut. Fiddly hey? Makes you wish they just had an access panel on the back.

10 At this stage only fasten finger tight. Here's our technique: with the pot below a pot hole, use a flat head screwdriver to gently jab in between the tabs of the pot shaft. Lift directly up. Use a finger to push it to the side to jam it while you get the washer and nut on with the other hand. Don't drop it!



11 Now the last bit of soldering then you can turn the iron off. This is that bridge ground wire. The easiest place to install it is the pickup selector switch; join it onto ground there making sure that it cannot touch any of the live parts. We found it handy to hold it in place by wedging the switch upwards with a screwdriver.

12 Test it again by tapping the pickups. Hopefully nothing's snapped off or short circuited... you'd have to go back if it has. If you passed the test then tighten up the nuts whilst supporting the pots as best you can. If you just crank them round the pots inside may spin causing problems. That's it – fit your knobs and away you go!

HOW TO

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔Three licks using different scales
- ✔How to move in and out of key
- ✔Targeting notes to create new chords

WHAT THE F?

MAJOR KEYS AND MODES

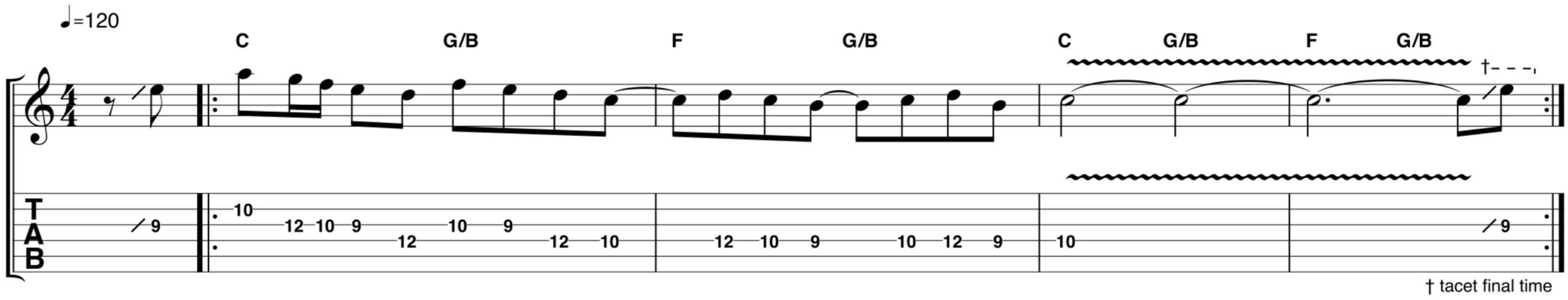
Branch out from the basic sounds of major keys with a handful of simple note changes and new chords

Hopefully, having looked at the subject on page 78, you'll remember that major key notes come from the major scale – they're essentially the same thing. Simple enough, but, let's face it, none of us really wants to feel like we have to stick to one particular scale or key when we play. And a vital part of music is knowing how to use notes from outside the key signature.

In this lesson we're looking at a couple of ways to do just that. We've recorded a lick three different ways. First based in the major scale, then twice more, adapting the lick each time by targeting notes outside the key.

1 C MAJOR LICK

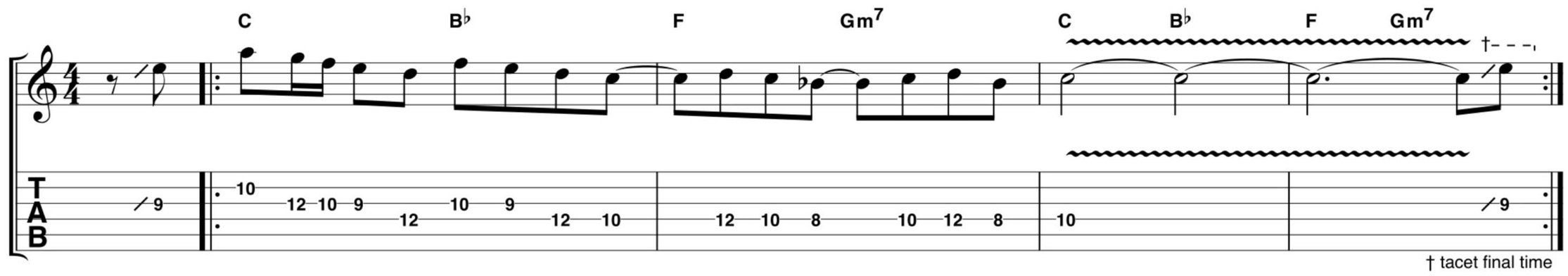
TRACKS 10-11



We're in the key of C major (C D E F G A B) here. All the notes in our lick come from C major, as do the notes that make up the chords. Unsurprisingly, the sound is bright, predictable and perhaps a little bit twee – often the way with major key music.

2 MIXOLYDIAN MODE: CHANGING B TO B♭

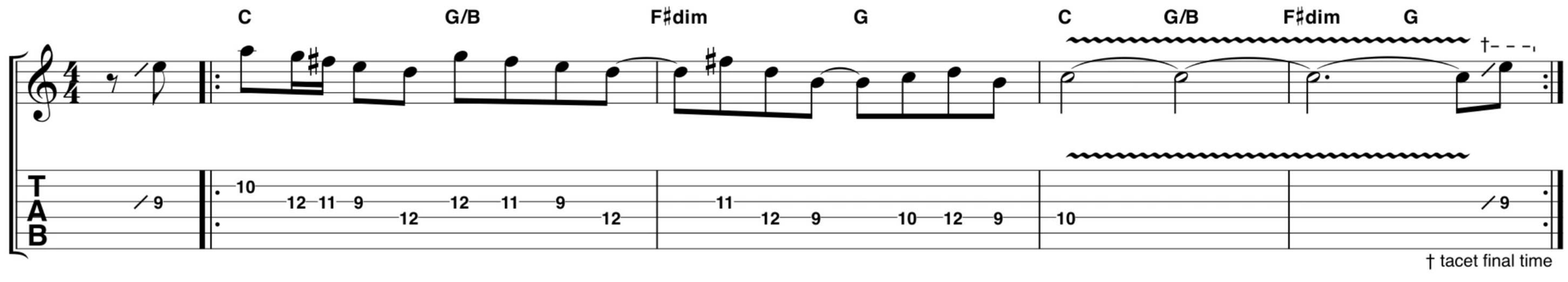
TRACKS 12-13



Playing through our lick again, we're targeting a B♭ note in bar 2 for an edgier feel. This new note puts the music in C Mixolydian (C D E F G A B♭) instead of C major and it also gives us B♭ (B♭ D F) and Gm7 (G B♭ D F) chords. It's a simple change that introduces lots of new flavours.

3 LYDIAN MODE: CHANGING F TO F♯

TRACKS 14-15



Again, this line is similar to our first lick, but we've used F♯ notes instead of F, putting us in C Lydian (C D E F♯ G A B) and giving us an F♯dim chord (F♯ A C). Why not branch out further though? F♯ also gives you D7 (D F♯ A C), Bm7 (B D F♯ A), Am6 (A C E F♯) and more. It's all about experimenting with new notes from outside of the key.

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GETTING STARTED WITH...

STRUMMED RHYTHMS

Get this essential technique sorted and play along with TG's tab and audio

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ Eighth note strumming
- ✔ Double speed 16th notes
- ✔ Two easy rhythm examples

"Strumming is fairly simple, right? Is there really that much to learn?"
Well, for the uninitiated, let's explain what strumming is first. When you play the guitar you pluck the strings with a pick and you'll either strike downwards or upwards. Strumming just means you'll be using a mixture of downstrokes and upstrokes, striking several strings at once.

"So it's pretty easy then..."
Generally, yes! If you're just starting out on the guitar, practise strumming a chord using steady, regular downstrokes. If you're playing an open E chord or a G then strum all six strings. If you're playing a D chord strum only the top four strings (the thinnest, highest pitched ones). There's a bit of a knack to targeting the right strings, so expect to make gradual progress.

"I'm already used to strumming. How do I take my technique to the next level?"
Once you've got the basics down, your next aim is to start to sync your pick strokes with the rhythm of the music. You're probably doing this already, so let's make sure you understand how and why it works so you'll always play in time.

"Okay. How do I start practising?"
Have a go at the exercises in the boxout on the right and see how you get on.

"Down up down up – it's easy isn't it?"
It's not just about the pick strokes – the idea is that you'll be synchronising with any music you're playing over. So, as long as the music has a four count, you'll be playing a downstroke on the numbered pulse (aka playing on the beat) and your upstrokes will fall in between. It's not the only way to strum, but it's used *a lot* in all styles of guitar music.

"I get it. It's as much about the music as the strumming itself."
That's right! Have a look at our first tab example and you'll see how the strumming 'interlocks' with the music. Even though you don't strum every down- or upstroke, you can keep your picking motion going so that you stay in time. Just make sure to strike the strings at the right time.

"How do I tackle the second tab example?"
This one is at double speed so you'll play four pick strokes (down up down up) for every musical pulse. It's much more energetic, so make sure to practise slowly at first.

STRUMMER LOVING...

LEARN THE INS AND OUTS OF DOWN AND UP STYLE STRUMMING

1 COUNT TO FOUR

1 2 3 4

Most music has a rhythmic pulse which you can count or clap along with to keep time. The most common pulse is a four count.

2 STRUM ALONG TO YOUR COUNT

1 2 3 4

⊓ ⊓ ⊓ ⊓

Fret a chord you know, count to four and play a downstroke on each number. The ⊓ is the musical sign telling you to play a downstroke.

3 ADD UPSTROKES

1 2 3 4

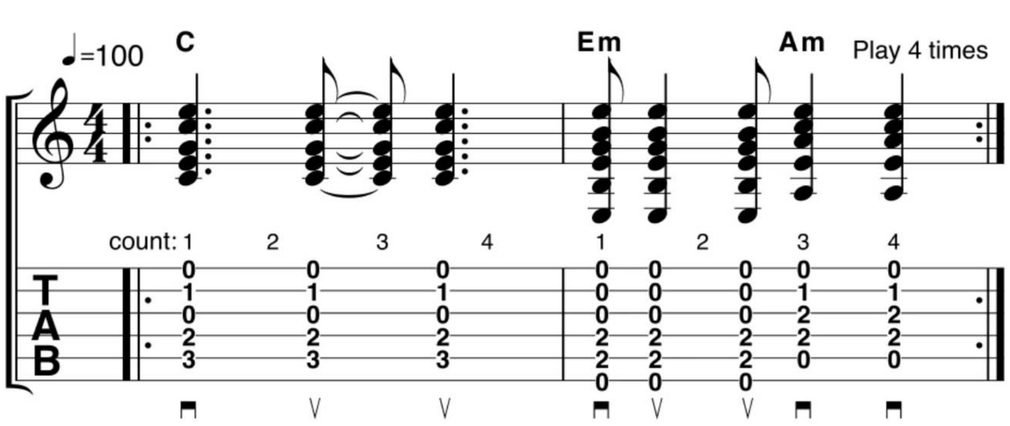
⊓ ∨ ⊓ ∨ ⊓ ∨ ⊓ ∨

Keep your four-count and downstrokes going then introduce upstrokes (shown with a ∨ symbol) in between for a steady strummed rhythm.

4 DOUBLE SPEED

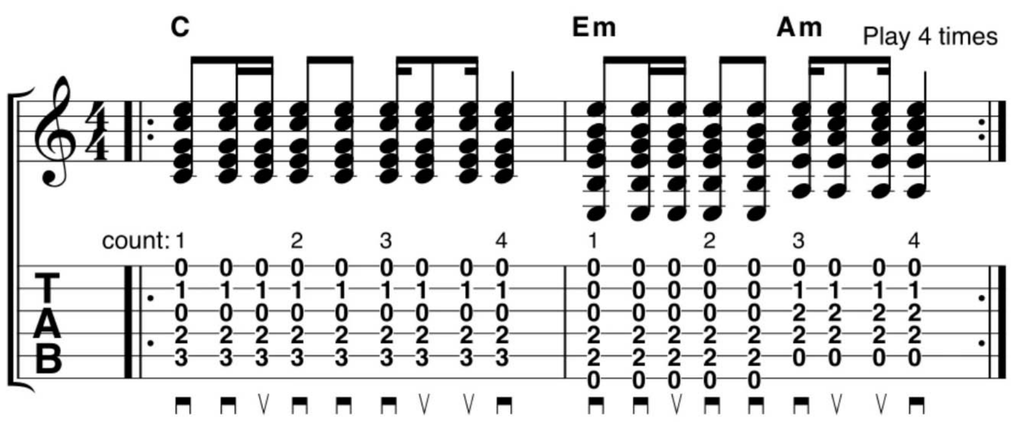
If you're feeling brave try playing at double speed! That means you'll be playing 'down up down up' on every number.

1 EASY STRUMMING — TRACK 07



Although you only strum three times in bar 1, try to keep your strumming arm moving constantly – it'll help you stay in time.

2 DOUBLE SPEED — TRACKS 08-09



Here we're strumming twice as fast. If you keep a constant strumming motion going you should play 16 strokes in each bar of music.

Words Jon Bishop / Chris Bird / Rob Laing
Photography Olly Curtis Guitars and backing Jon Bishop / Chris Bird

SOUNDS OF 1969

Five albums, one incredible year in rock music and all the inspiration you need to improve your playing! Learn the sounds and styles of the sounds of '69

1969 was an incredible year for guitar music, marking debuts from blues-rockers Led Zeppelin and Free, the Latin rock legend Carlos Santana, prog giants King Crimson and influential proto-punks The Stooges and MC5. Established acts were making waves too, with David Bowie's *Space Oddity* capturing the space race zeitgeist, rock supergroup Cream bidding farewell with their aptly-titled *Goodbye* album, and The Beatles reaching a creative peak on *Abbey Road*.

With so much to choose from, we've decided to mark the 50th anniversary of this momentous year with a look at the guitar playing on five legendary albums from '69. There's plenty for you to learn and, as ever, we've produced backing audio for all our tab examples, which you can jam along with. Plug in and let's get started!

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ROCK ON TOMMY

The Who's acoustic-heavy opus defined the rock opera concept

The Who: Tommy

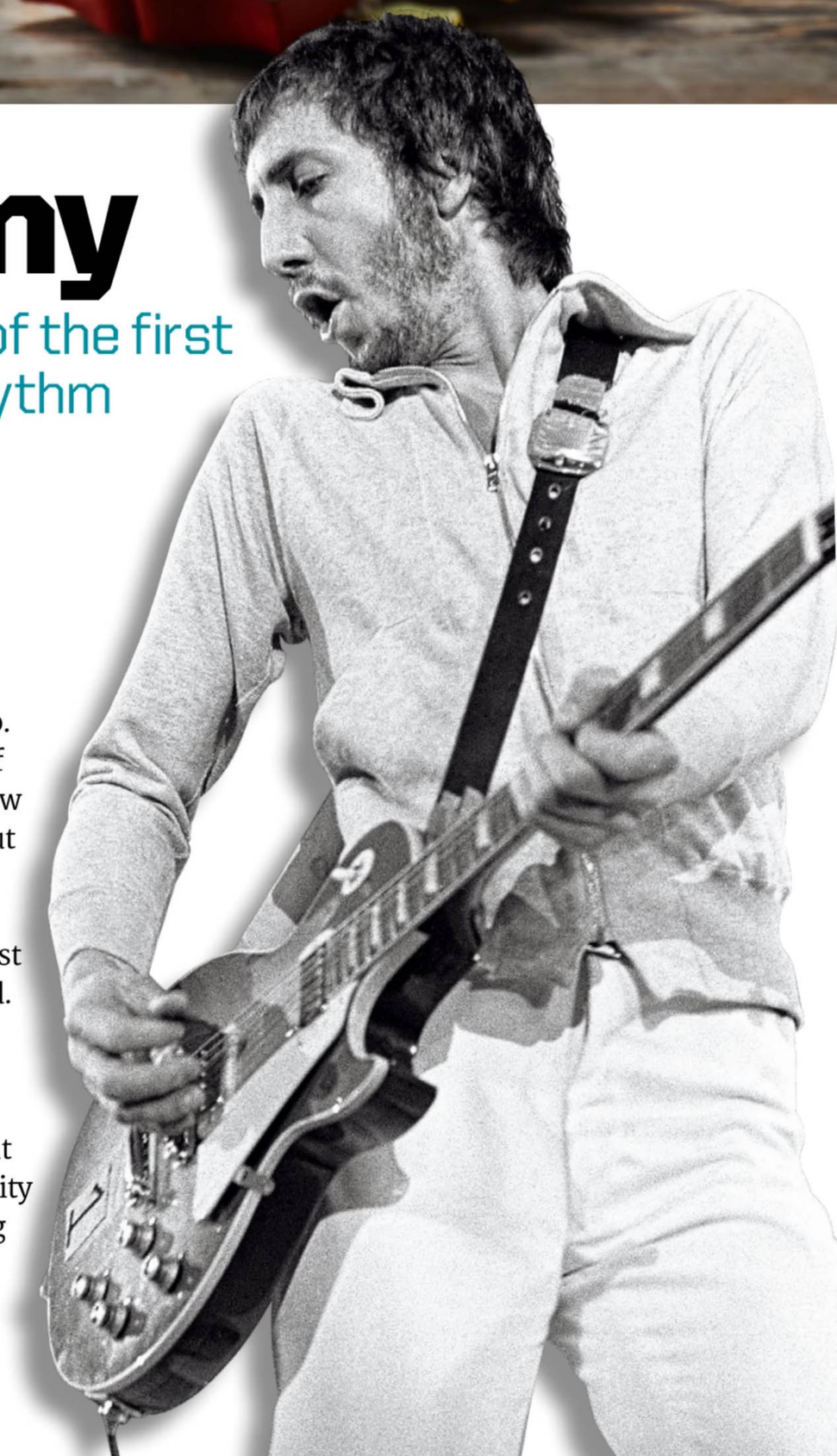
Time-travel back to '69 with a look at one of the first rock opera concept albums courtesy of rhythm guitar legend Pete Townshend and co

Acoustic guitars and plenty of clean electric tones dominate this album, giving The Who's *Tommy* a lighter feel than a number of their other recordings to date. That's unsurprising, given that their fourth album is a pioneering early example of a rock opera, written to outline the ebb and flow of a dramatic story rather than simply act as another chapter in the band's hard rock manifesto.

Still, legendary guitarist Pete Townshend is one of the greats of rock rhythm and many of his signature playing techniques are in full flow here. Though *Tommy* is an acoustic-heavy work, Townshend's trademark aggressive strumming technique, pin-sharp timing and authoritative delivery are all present and correct, combined with a few harmonic and textural approaches to learn from too.

Start off with a look at the basics of sus chords. You probably already know about these commonplace chords, but they're a much under-appreciated songwriting tool. Just insert a sus chord where you can to make the most of a change to a major or minor chord.

We're also looking at the kind of arpeggios you'll hear peppered throughout *Tommy*. Again, it's a technique you probably know well but Townshend displays a level of virtuosity on tracks like *1921* where he's playing straight 16ths. Read on and get some of his essential techniques down.



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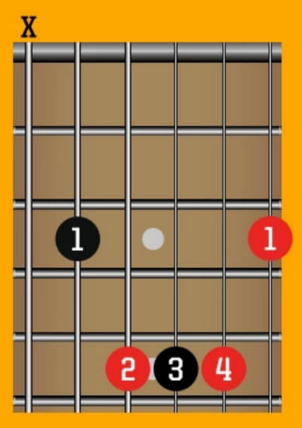
SUSSING IT OUT...

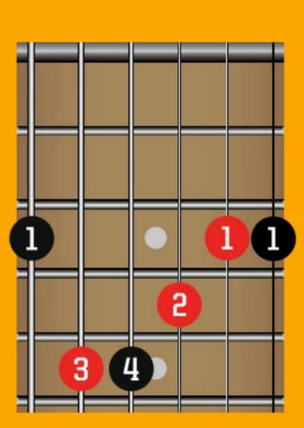
How the humble sus chord can inject a creative edge in your chord changes

Tommy's Pinball Wizard features a classic example of the major to sus4 chord change. Townshend's simple shift from B to Bsus4 outlines the main riff, but it's also a handy songwriting trick used subtly throughout the album to add flourishes to other more basic chord changes. Try it out with the sus4 chord then take things a step further with our easy sus2 chord change.

1. C – G

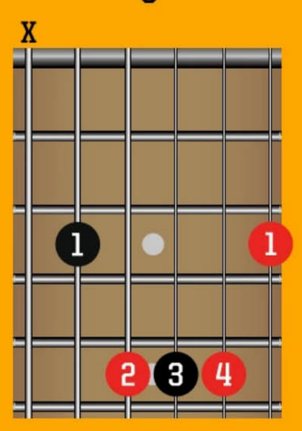
This change from a C barre chord to a G can sound pretty simple, and maybe even a bit boring. Try it out.

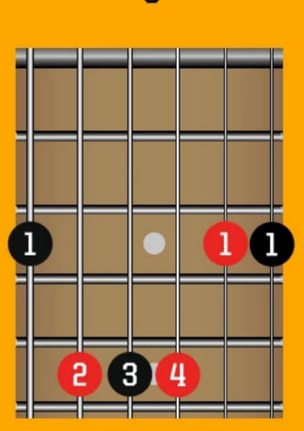


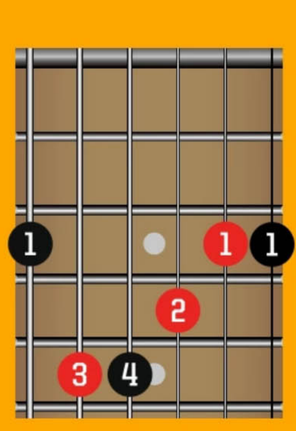


2. C – GSUS4 – G

Now, start on C, end on G, but this time play a Gsus4 in the middle to make more of the change. Simple!

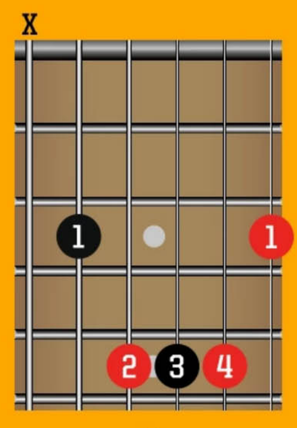


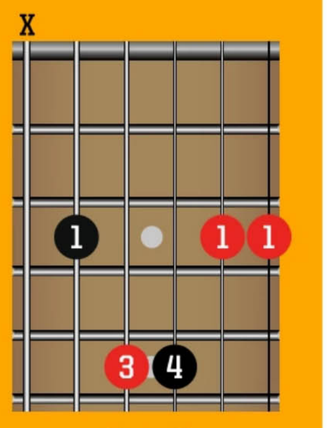


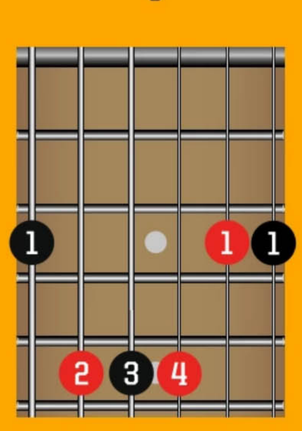


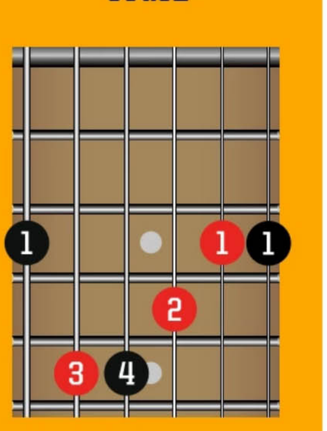
3. C – CSUS2 – GSUS4 – G

This time we're adding in a Csus2 chord. The D note in Csus2 also appears in the G and Gsus4 chords, tying them all nicely together.

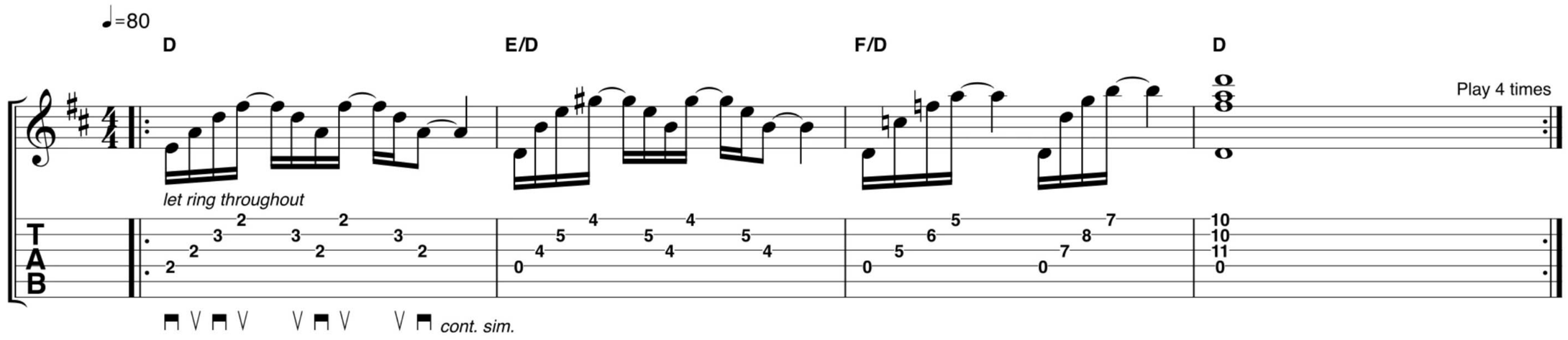






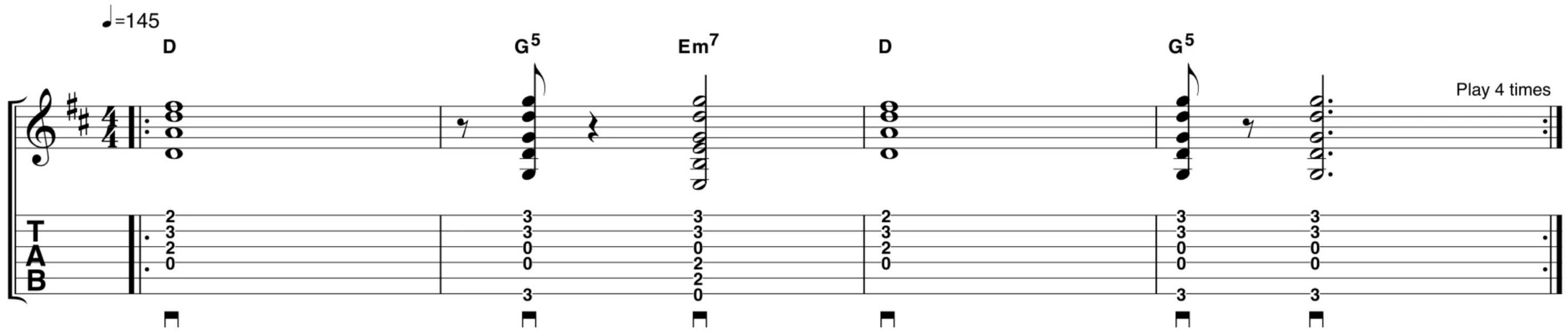


1 ARPEGGIOS — TRACK 14



You'll find arpeggios like these peppered throughout the album on tracks such as *1921*, *The Acid Queen* and *Sensation*. Townshend would often play simple chords like these D shapes over a repeating bass note (a musical device known as a pedal tone); listen to *Underture* or the intro to *Pinball Wizard* for some great examples.

2 AGGRESSIVE DOWNSTROKES — TRACK 15



Overture and *Pinball Wizard* are great examples of Pete's down-up style strumming, but we're taking inspiration from the aggressive downstrokes in *Amazing Journey*. Perhaps surprisingly, the devil is in the detail; fret every note cleanly and make sure to keep the idle strings silent or you'll risk a heavy downstroke on a wrong note. Yikes!

KEEP ON WALKIN'
The Beatles' *Abbey Road* was a seminal album that also signalled the end of the band

The Beatles: Abbey Road

Try your hand at the most expressive and accomplished playing George Harrison would ever commit to tape...

Despite tensions that would see John Lennon leaving and the band's eventual split a few months later, the recording sessions for 1969's *Abbey Road* saw The Beatles at a creative peak. A mix of rock, pop, blues and prog, the album's musical influences are diverse and there's inspiration aplenty for all budding guitarists even now, 50 years on.

George Harrison's lead work on *Come Together* and *Something* is considered some of his most expressive and melodic playing, and *Sun King* takes influence from Brit blues legend Peter Green's instrumental work in Fleetwood Mac's classic *Albatross*. George's Leslie-driven Telecaster tones on *Something* are without doubt a major part of *Abbey Road*'s sonic trademark as are the double-tracked arpeggios on *I Want You (She's So Heavy)*.

All of this means there's plenty of material for us guitarists to learn from – and 'less is more' is the overriding lesson. Aim for understated lead lines that could stand on their own as vocal melodies and you'll be on the right track.

We're also looking at a cool Beatles chord trick. All the info you need is across the page, but it's also worth thinking about how to solo over parallel changes – we recommend targeting notes from the chords. For example, if you're changing from D to Dm, the only note that changes is F# in the D chord and F in the Dm, so make sure to land on these in your leads.

TAKING THE LEAD
George Harrison's performances on *Come Together* and *Something* are two of his finest moments

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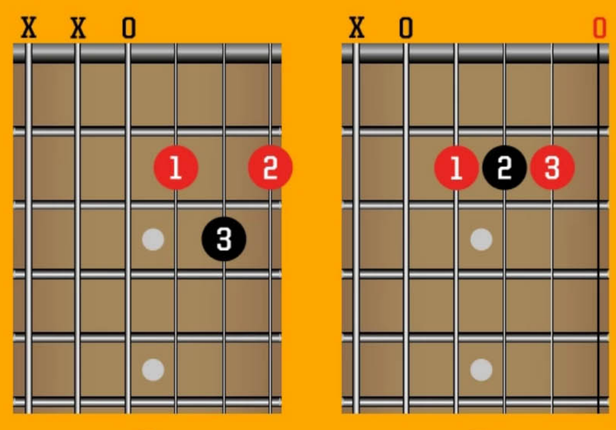
PARALLEL CHORDS...

A sideways look at a chord change that'll give your progressions a Beatles-y vibe

Don't worry about the weird name. 'Parallel' just means you'll be switching from a major key to a minor key using one root chord. It'll sound much more mysterious than staying in one key and it's a great way to freshen up any chord sequence. Here's how it works...

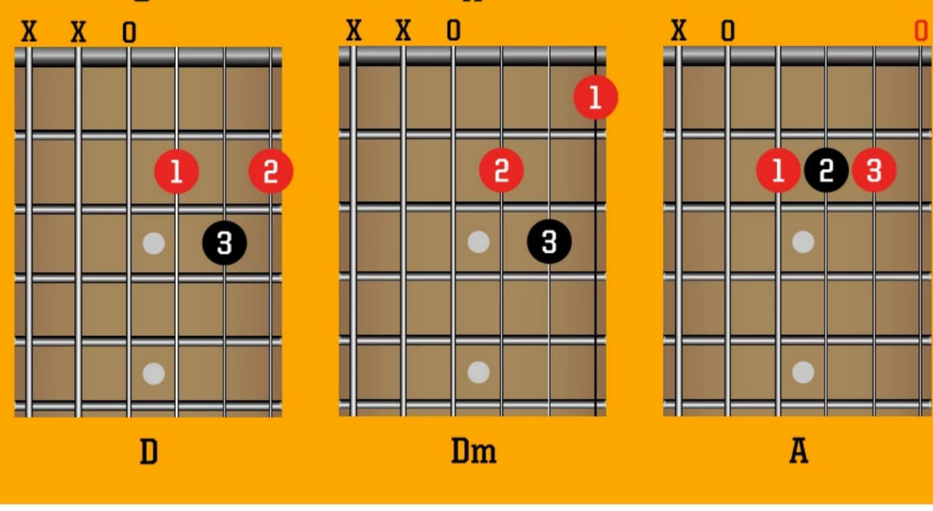
1. D – A

Start by playing a D chord followed by an A. Easy, right? It's a basic change that's ripe for improving upon.



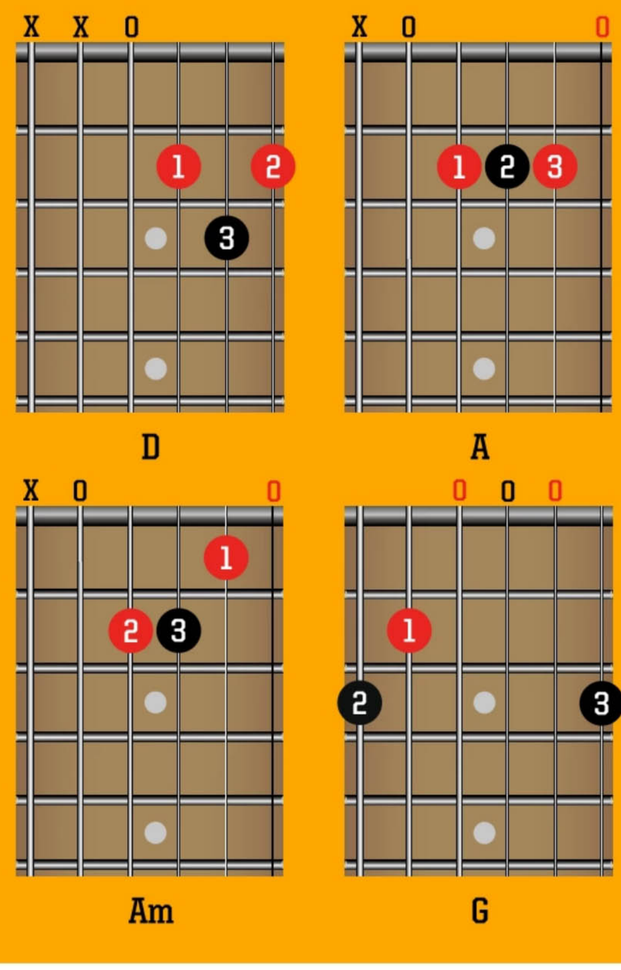
2. D – DM – A

This time play a Dm chord after D. D and Dm can't be in the same key – they're said to be 'parallel' because they are a major and minor pair of chords built on the same root note.



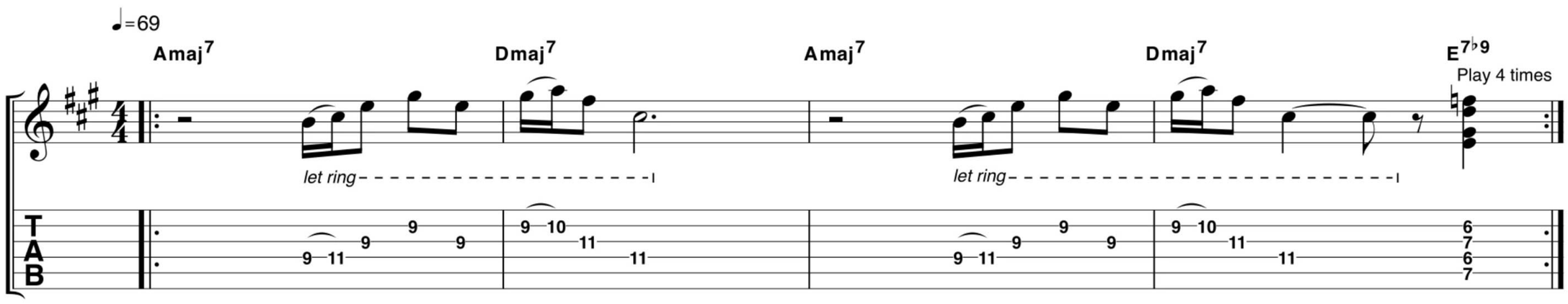
3. D – A – AM – G

Try it wherever you like. Here we've used a parallel change from A to Am before heading off to a G chord. Instant Beatles, we'd say!



1 ARPEGGIOS WITH MODULATION EFFECT

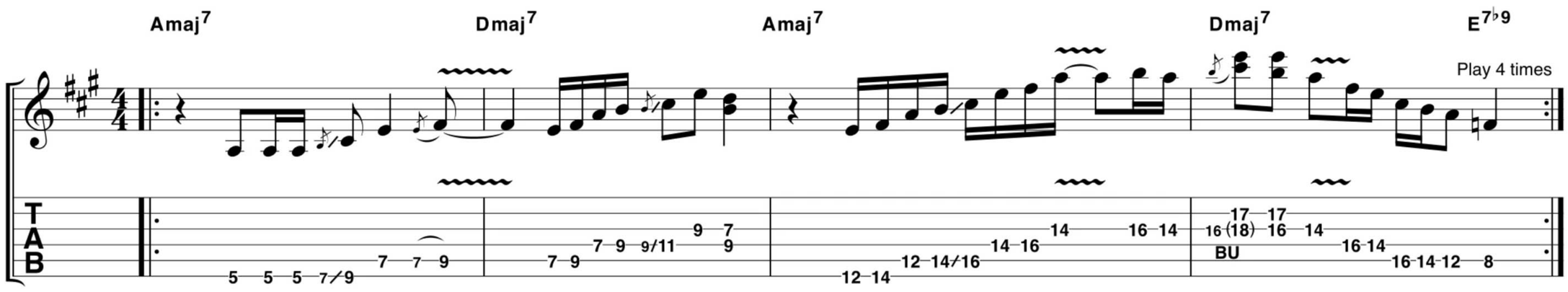
TRACK 16



Simple arpeggios like these can be heard throughout *Abbey Road*, notably on tracks like *Something*, *Sun King* and *Octopus's Garden*. The line in bar 1 could easily be developed into a lead idea – it's almost the same shape as the C♯ minor pentatonic scale after all. The altered chord at the end is pure Beatles!

2 MELODIC LEAD

TRACK 17



Abbey Road features some of George Harrison's finest playing and songwriting. This lick focuses on his use of the major pentatonic scale to create cool melodies and motifs. The finger slide between notes is a handy way to move from the 5th position up as high as the 17th fret. A neck pickup and spring reverb give authentic ambience.

HIGH FLYERS
This behemoth album landed in 1969 and rock has never looked the same since

Led Zeppelin: Led Zeppelin

A supergroup is formed from the ashes of the Yardbirds. Learn the blues style from Zep's first offering...

In 1968 the Yardbirds disbanded, leaving guitarist Jimmy Page as the band's sole remaining member and facing contractual obligations to perform further gigs. Recruiting Robert Plant, John Paul Jones and John Bonham to play as the New Yardbirds, the foursome would soon become the band we know as Led Zeppelin. The rest, as they say, is history.

The band's self-titled debut would land in early '69 – a rootsy mix of folk, rock and a hefty slice of traditional blues influences, without so much of the epic riff-athons for which they would soon be known.

We're taking a look at Jimmy's soloing on tracks like *I Can't Quit You Baby* and more rock-focused tunes such as *How Many More Times* and *Communication Breakdown*. Though these songs have a hard rock edge, blues is the stronger influence in the solos, so minor pentatonic and blues scales rule here!

TURNING TO PAGE
Jimmy Page's dovetailing of the rock and blues came to fruition in the band's debut album

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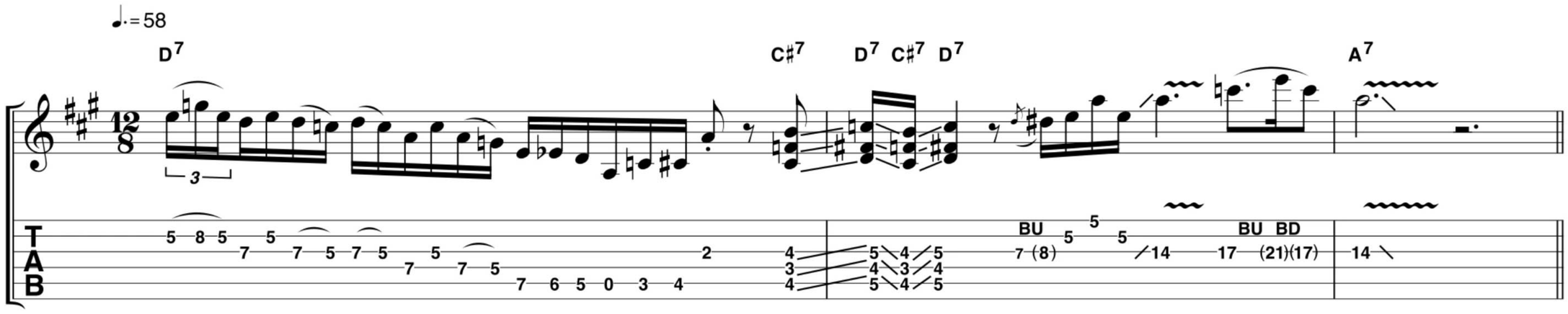
1 TIMING AND BENDING

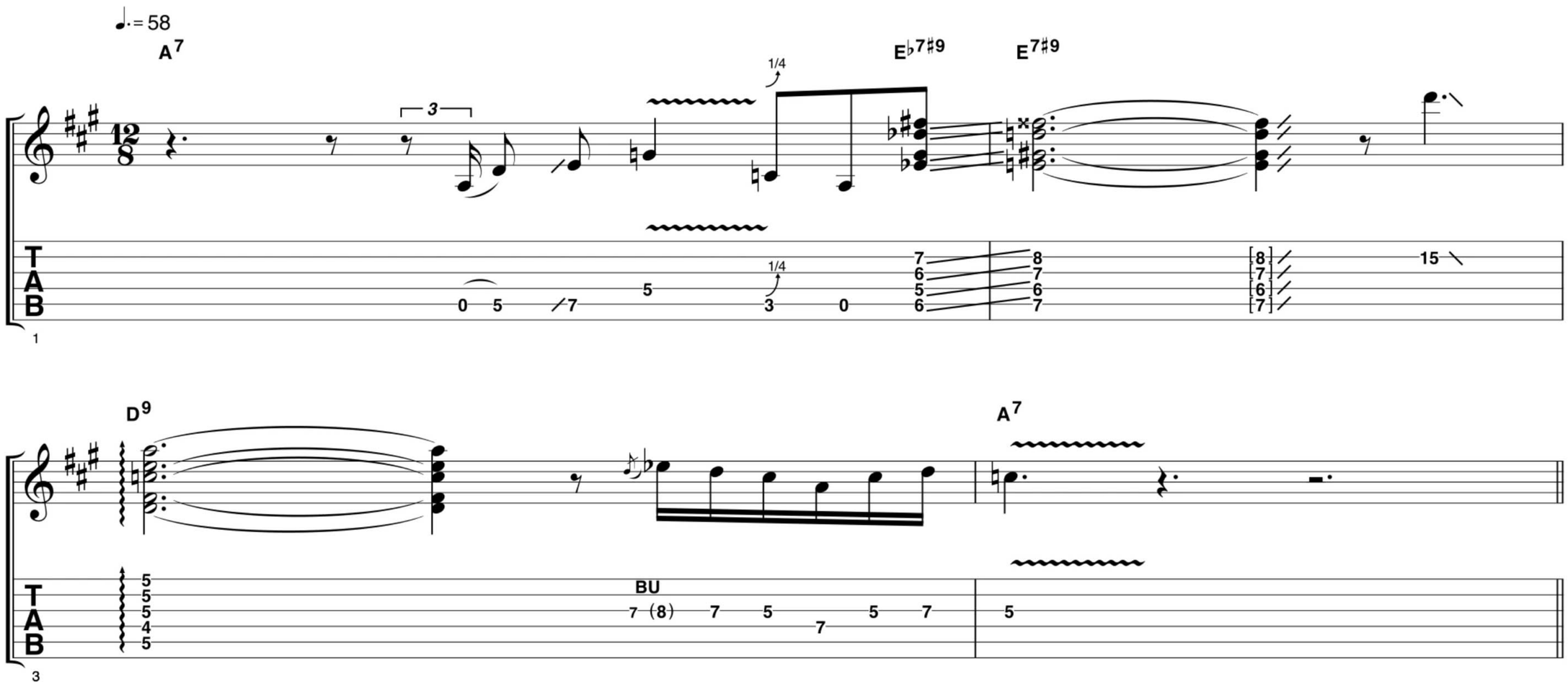
TRACK 18



Jimmy would sometimes play with technical precision; other times he'd be loose as hell, so experiment with the timing and feel of the opening line. Try picking every note or using hammer-ons and pull-offs. The four-fret bend at the end of the lick is another blues-style Page phrase. In general these are easiest to play on the third string.

2 USING THE WHOLE FRETBOARD

TRACK 19

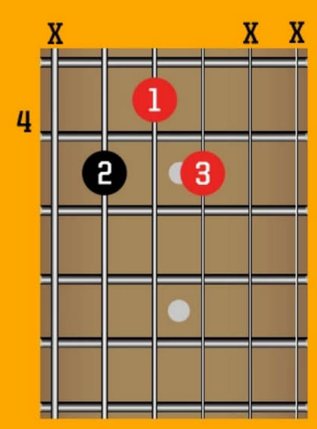


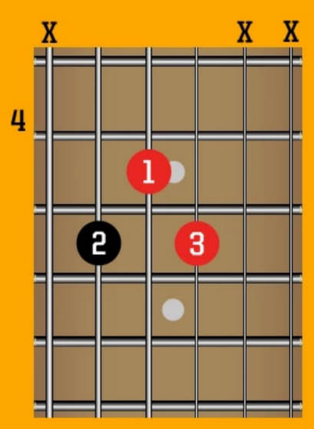
This lick shows Jimmy's ability to cover a wide range of notes across the fretboard – a vital skill when you need to fill a lot of sonic 'space'. As with our previous example, we're sliding between chords here; Jimmy would often add vibrato too. You'll need a light touch for the last note in bar 2 as you really milk the slide down the string.

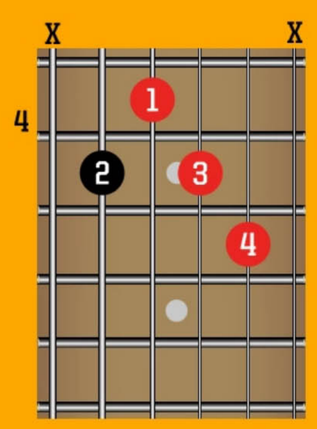
ZEP SLIDING AWAY

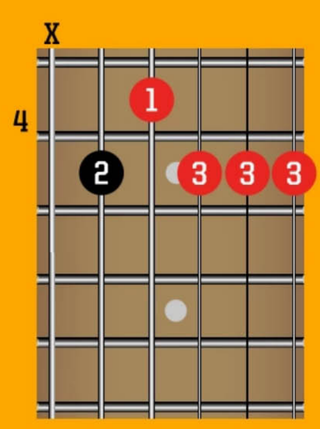
Try out this easy chord move and give your guitar playing an early Zeppelin vibe

Presumably in an effort to fill out the sound, Jimmy Page would often slide one chord into another in the early days of Zep. Try it with the D7 and D♯7 shapes shown here then move on and try the 7♯9 and 9th chords. It's a super easy and bluesy trick.









TONE TRAVELLING

Tap into a golden era of sonics with these seven essential pieces of gear

WHOLE LOTTA LED
Fender's Dragon Tele range also includes a model based on the earlier white Yardbirds iteration that Page stuck eight circular mirrors to

FENDER JIMMY PAGE TELECASTER

£1,259

By the time Jimmy Page came to form Led Zeppelin, the 1959 Telecaster Jeff Beck had given him two years before was a very different beast. The guitarist and former art student had stripped the white finish, painting his own dragon swirl motif on the body. This was the Dragon he used to track Zeppelin's debut in 1968; released at the beginning of the following year. Within the year the follow-up had been tracked and released but signalled a switch; adding a '58 and then a modified '59 Gibson Les Paul to the armoury, the latter purchased from Joe Walsh for a reported $500. A savvy investment indeed. But for his most iconic solo on *Stairway To Heaven* two years later, Page returned to the Dragon. This represents the most affordable model in Fender's new Page Tele roster. The Jimmy Page Custom Tele pickups represent a recreation of his '59 originals.

fender.com

MARSHALL STUDIO VINTAGE

FROM £875

Marshall is celebrating its heritage with the new Studio line, and the Vintage is slap bang in its early heyday; the 1959SLP aka The Plexi. The 1968 iteration was rolled out with EL34 power valves to deliver the stage volume Townshend, Hendrix and Clapton demanded. This new iteration, now available in combo and head form, has some consideration for the neighbourhood at least with a lower 20-watt volume offering more realistic gig volumes for us mere mortals. A 5W reduced power option further adds to its versatility for the home.

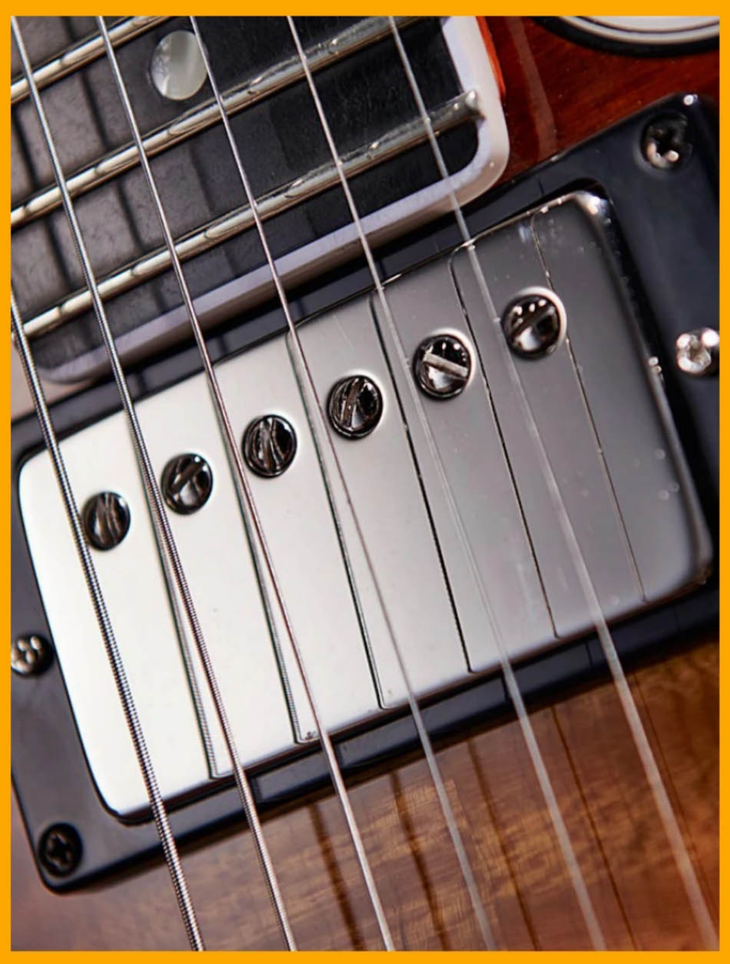
marshall.com

BARE KNUCKLE MULE

FROM £129

Can't stump up for a '59 Les Paul? Yeah, we know the feeling. Gibson engineer Seth Lover applied for the patent for his humbucking pickup design in 1955 and it wasn't granted until 1959 – hence the PAF moniker for that four-year period of 'buckers that many manufacturers seek to recreate now. The Bare Knuckle boys from Cornwall do the vintage correct magic better than most and can get you the expressive character of PAF-style tonality with the Mule. And with plenty of options to boot like custom covers plus six-, seven- and eight-string models.

bareknucklepickups.co.uk



FENDER THE PINWHEEL

£199

There were two key Leslie speaker moments released in 1969 – and both involved George Harrison to varying degrees. Cream's *Badge* found Clapton using the rotating speaker for the song's arpeggiated bridge with Harrison helping him write it for the supergroup's *Goodbye* album. The Beatle even contributed rhythm guitar (Ringo also offered the verse lyric about the swans in the park). The second piece of Leslie magic came via Harrison's watery rhythm guitar sound on his *Abbey Road* love song *Something*, a strong candidate for his greatest contribution to the Fab Four. While Slowhand and Harrison had to rely on the cumbersome real thing, there's a number of excellent Leslie emulation pedals out there. Fender's newcomer has the interesting feature of separate drive, level and tone controls for its emulation of a Leslie's power amp.

fender.com

BLACK BEAUTY
Both Keef and Page favoured the three-humbucker Black Beauty in different periods

EPIPHONE LES PAUL CUSTOM BLACK BEAUTY

£539

Keef flitted between guitars in the Stones' heyday – some had a habit of wandering off, or in the case of the Maton Supreme Electric 777 he ended up using on *Gimme Shelter* during *Let It Bleed*'s sessions, falling apart in his hands. He had at least one three-pickup Black Beauty and it seems a '57/'58 may well have been used on the album tracking too. Jimmy Page even had a 1960 model fitted with a Bigsby back in his early session playing days - he was reunited with it a few years ago after its theft in 1970.

epiphone.com

EPIPHONE EJ-200CE

£349

Tommy is The Who's most acoustic-heavy work, adding a continuity to the cinematic soundtrack. Townshend leaned heavily on his Gibson J-200 during the writing process too – directly inspiring *Pinball Wizard*, and Gibson even recognised his loyalty with a Townshend Custom Shop model. This isn't it; the CS model fetches 6k+ used, but you can tap into that vein of super jumbo-sized goodness here, with the bonus of being stage-ready thanks to Shadow NanoFlex and NanoMag pickups and Epiphone's eSonic 2 stereo preamp.

epiphone.com

GO TO TOWN
Okay, so it's not the Custom Shop model clocking in at 6k but this is as near as dammit

TONE CITY GOLDEN PLEXI

£40

Not everyone can or wants to shell out for a whole new amp to get some Plexi time, so let's go in completely the other direction here; a mini pedal at a bargain price. The Golden Plexi doesn't really have any right in sounding as good as it does for its pricepoint but let's be grateful. Setting the gain around 10 o'clock and tone at midday is a real sweet spot for rich gain girth – and a nice place to stay for blues rock licks. All in all, a great way of adding a Plexi-style flavour to your pedal palette.

tonecityaudio.com

SO GOOD THEY NAMED IT TWICE...
Led Zep's second album of '69 went heavier

Led Zeppelin: Led Zeppelin II

Zep's second album of '69 takes a rock turn and marks the appearance of a Gibson Les Paul in the hands of guitarist Jimmy Page

With the rock-oriented sound of *II* came heavy riffs. Lots of them! And, though *Whole Lotta Love* and *Heartbreaker* are the bona fide classics, even deeper cuts like *Living Loving Maid (She's Just A Woman)*, *Ramble On*, *Moby Dick* and *Bring It On Home* rocked hard and influenced many.

Of course, we're looking at some of the vital elements of Jimmy Page's burgeoning love affair with the guitar riff as well as a typical solo lick. Suffice to say, the minor pentatonic scale is at the heart of much of Page's work, so learn this vital scale across the whole fretboard.

Today, it's perhaps no surprise that powerchords, palm muting, pentatonics and maxxed out amps are at the core of the sound. In '69, though, this was influencing a generation of hard rock bands that would follow. Testament to Led Zeppelin and indeed to Jimmy Page's own lasting legacy in rock music.

SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED
Jimmy Page's playing and producer's vision for soundscapes stepped up a gear on *Led Zeppelin II*

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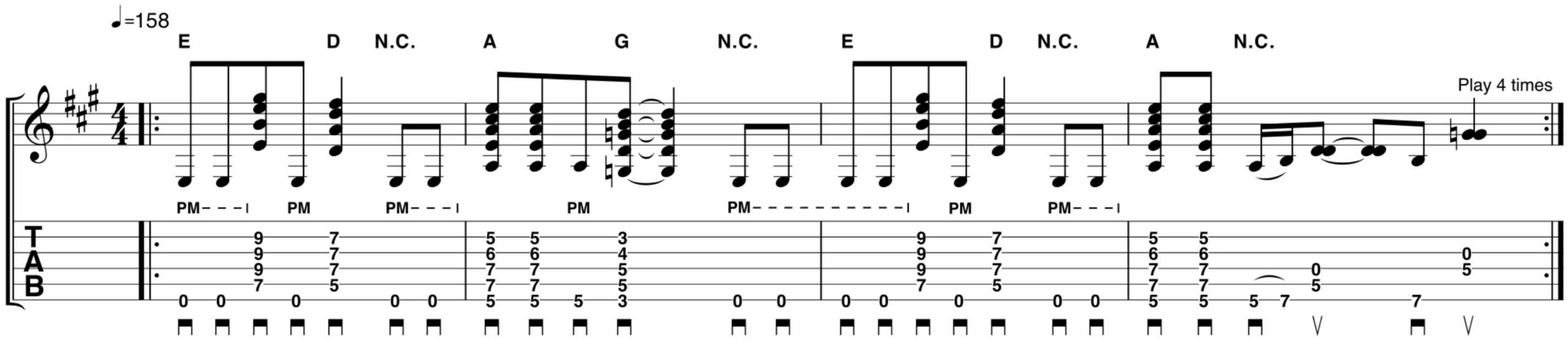
1 HEAVY RIFFING

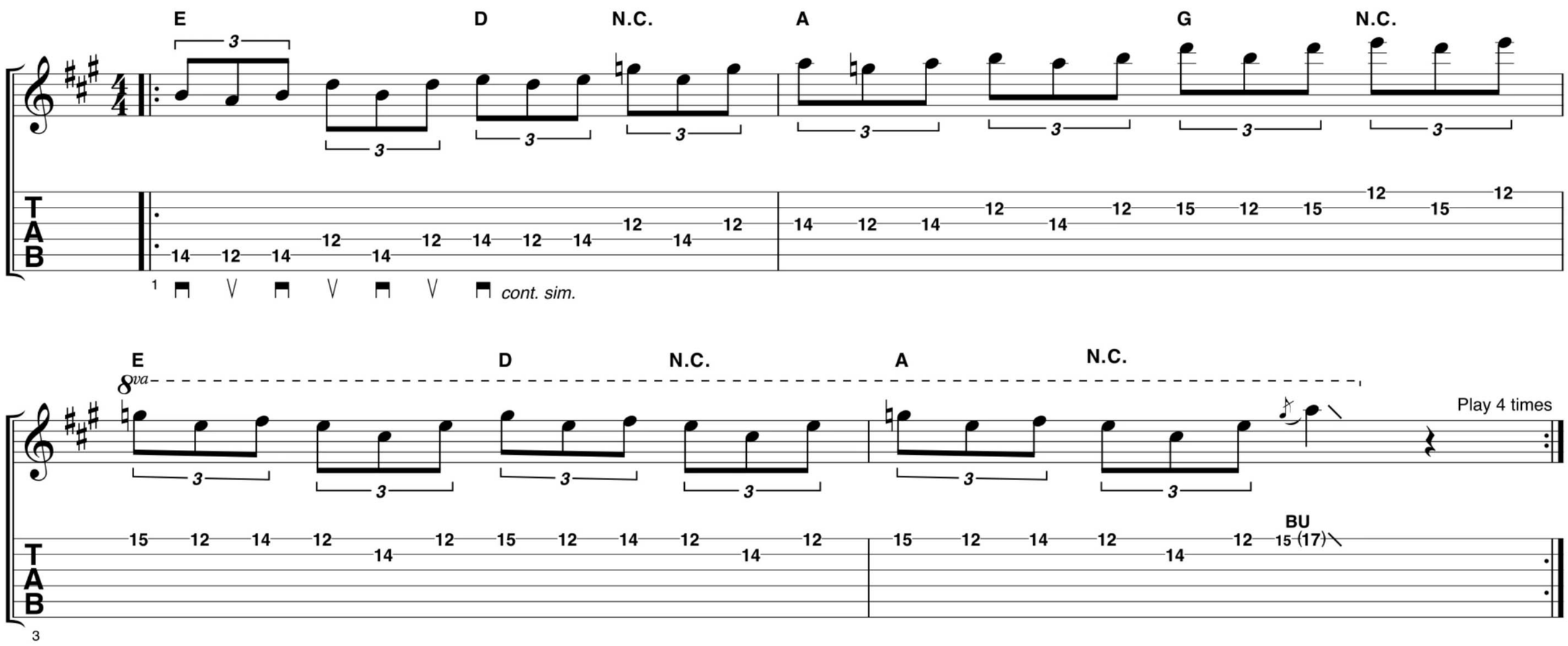
TRACK 20



Inspired by tracks like *Whole Lotta Love*, *Heartbreaker* and *Ramble On*, we're showcasing a few of Page's heavy riffing tricks here. The open sixth string is palm muted for a thicker, drier sound. The chords are played as accents in between by lifting the palm mute momentarily. Select a bridge humbucker with a medium overdrive tone.

2 SHORT PENTATONIC PHRASES IN SOLOS

TRACK 21

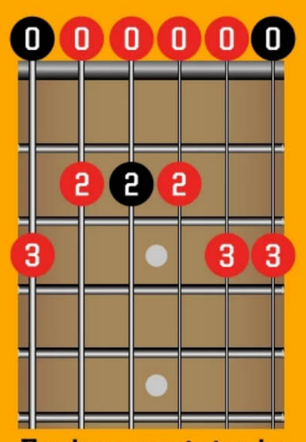


This lick takes bite-sized minor pentatonic phrases and repeats them as you ascend or descend the scale – one of Page's trademarks in the years that would follow. Listen carefully and you can hear the early development of this approach in Jimmy's leads in *Heartbreaker*, *Ramble On* and even drum-led epic *Moby Dick*.

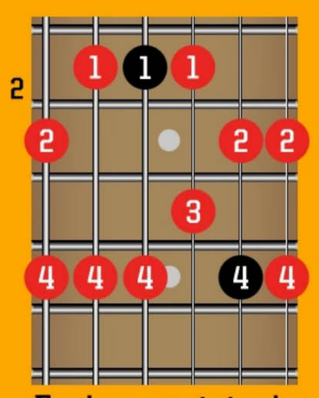
THE SCALE REMAINS THE SAME

Play across the whole fretboard with five different shapes... but just one scale

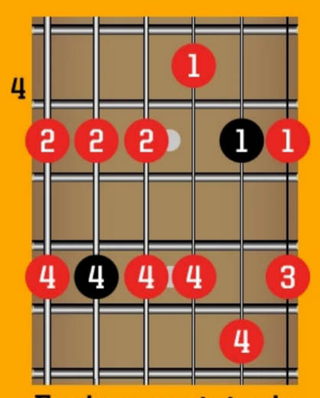
These five shapes all outline the E minor pentatonic scale. How so? Well, you probably know that most notes on the guitar can be played at more than one fret – and this simple fact means you can play entire scales all over the neck. Each shape sacrifices some higher and lower notes compared to its neighbour, but that doesn't matter. Start shifting from shape to shape in your next E minor solo.



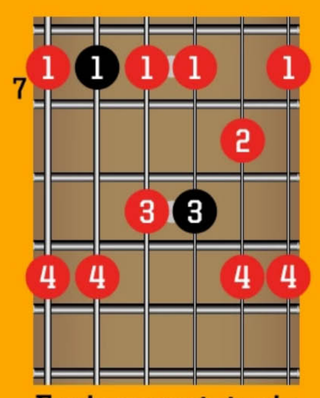
E minor pentatonic scale (shape 1)



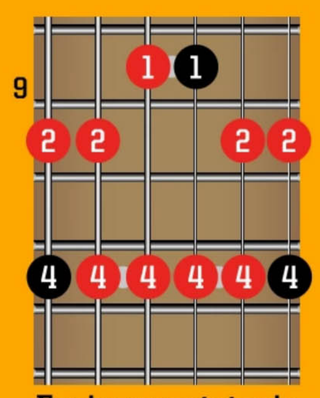
E minor pentatonic scale (shape 2)



E minor pentatonic scale (shape 3)



E minor pentatonic scale (shape 4)



E minor pentatonic scale (shape 5)

HONKY TONK '69
Keef's boogie riffing rhythm grooves led the way on the Stones' classic album

The Rolling Stones: Let It Bleed

We're wrapping up our examination of the sounds of '69 with a look at the style of Keith Richards on the Stones' classic 10th album

All was not well in the Stones camp during sessions for the band's 10th studio album. Founder member, guitarist Brian Jones was fired from the band, playing on only two tracks and new boy Mick Taylor would only join in time to record a couple of songs. Yet, despite a couple of oddities (the needless *Country Honk* is a loosely jammed country style version of *Honky Tonk Women*), *Let It Bleed* delivers in spades on nearly every track.

If you want to get a general feel for Keith Richards' rhythm style you'll need to get his boogie riffing rhythm grooves down – just listen to *Gimme Shelter*, *Monkey Man* and *Live With Me* for some good examples. *Let It Bleed* is also peppered with slide guitar (generally Brian Jones' field of expertise and often delegated to Ronnie Wood these days). In fact, there's slide guitar on most tracks so it's an essential technique to learn if you want to get the Stones' bluesy sound of '69 down.

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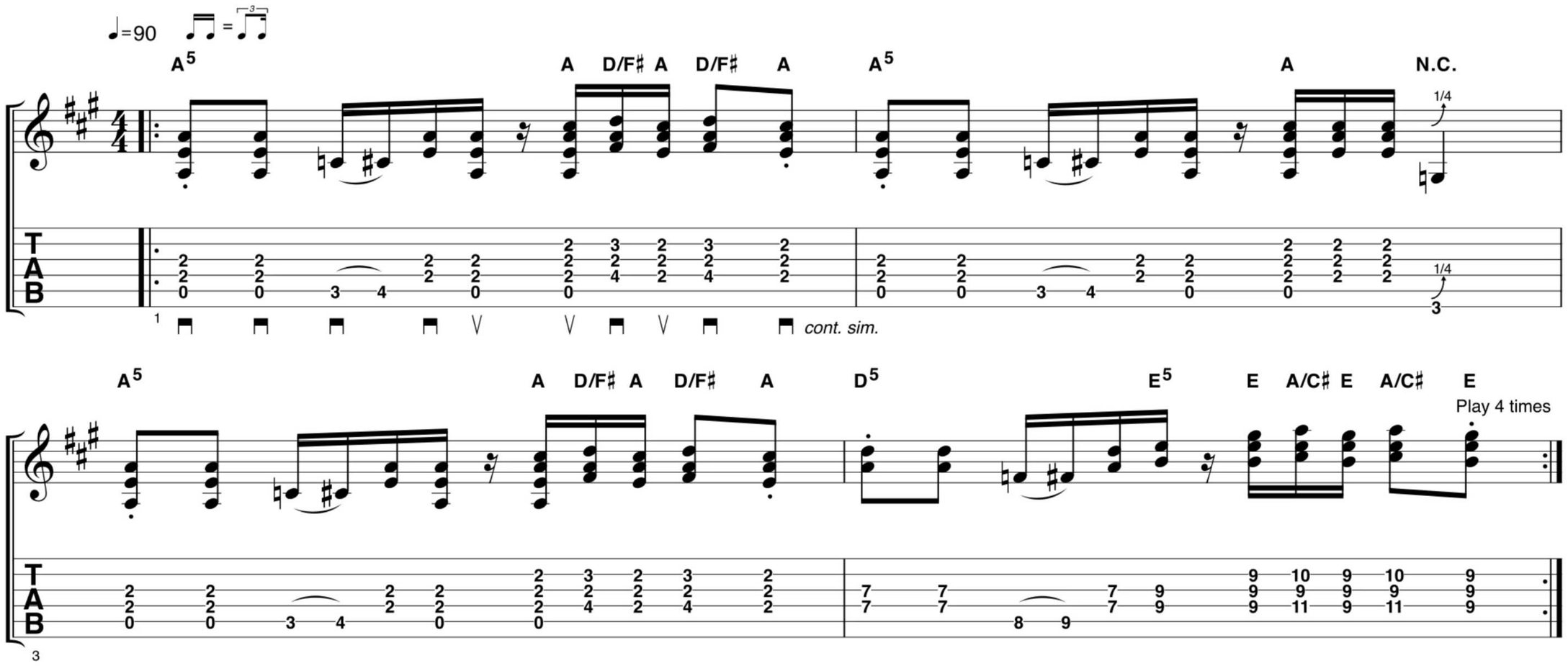
1 BOOGIE RIFFING

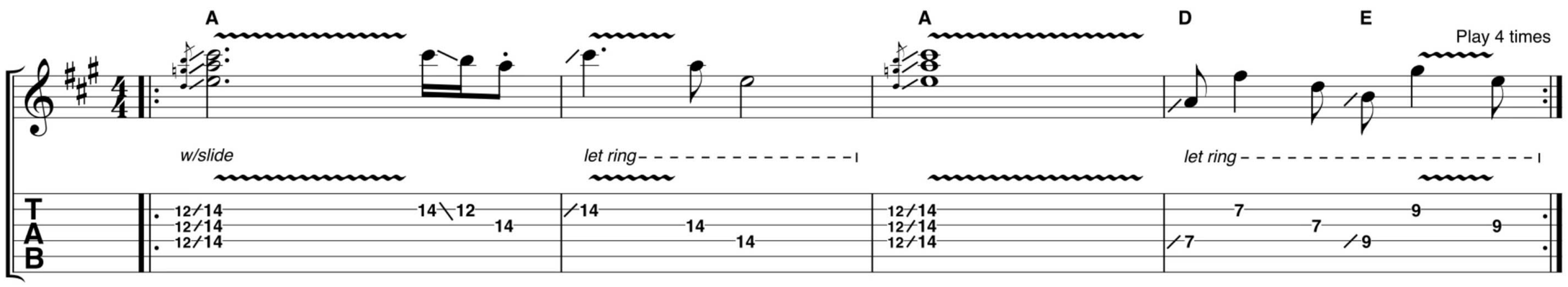
TRACK 22



With a return to the Stones' earlier blues-based style on the cards, it's no surprise to see Keith's trademark boogie riffing in songs like *Monkey Man*, *Midnight Gambler* and *Live With Me*. The D/F♯ and A/C♯ chords are classic Richards fare. Aim for a good feel, but don't be too fussy about consistency. Experimentation is the name of the game.

2 SLIDE GUITAR LEAD

TRACK 23



You'll hear slide guitar on *Let It Bleed*, *Midnight Rambler*, *Monkey Man* and other tracks too. Though often played using open tunings, we've opted for standard tuning for convenience here. Make sure to position your slide directly above the fret in question to ensure good intonation.

SLIP SLIDING AWAY...

Cover the basics and take your Stones style slide technique up a level

1 CHOOSE A FINGER

Generally, your third finger is best for slide. You'll have a free finger on either side of your slide for regular fretting duties.

2 SMACK YOUR PITCH UP

Accurate pitch is key. The frets are where the right notes are, so target your slide directly above the fret of the notes you're playing.

3 MUTE POINT

Use your first and second fingers to touch the strings behind the slide to prevent excess noise and keep your licks sounding pristine.

Monica Schipper/Getty Images

A NEW REALITY

Matt Bellamy tells us what 21st century guitar means to him and breaking free of the genre traps on Muse's cinematic and escapist *Simulation Theory*

There's always been a certain otherworldliness inherent in Muse's interstellar stadium-prog rock, whether they're conjuring the sound of rampaging apocalyptic armies in *Knights Of Cydonia*, from 2006's *Black Holes And Revelations*, or crafting billowing tufts of symphonic grandeur with the three-part *Exogenesis* suite from 2009's *The Resistance*. But when it came to the British trio's new and eighth studio album, *Simulation Theory*, singer and guitarist Matt Bellamy opted to leave this world behind entirely, immersing himself and his music in a sort of virtual reality. "I'm talking about things like gaming and living in an imaginary world online on the album," he tells us. "This idea of going into a nostalgic sort of dream-type land that's outside of this time."

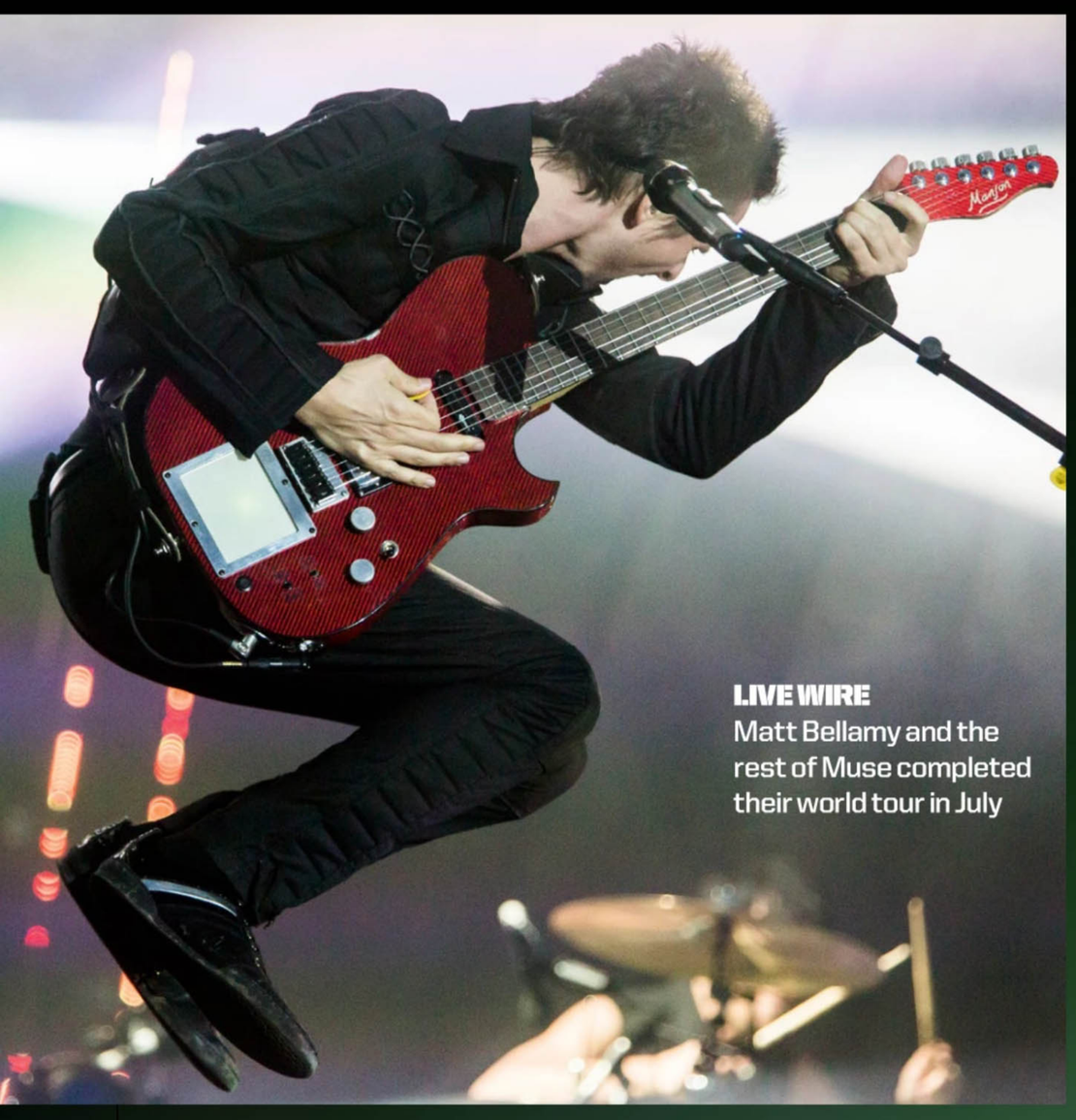
Words Richard Bienstock

And, really, can you blame him for looking for an escape hatch? "It was an aesthetic choice, but I guess you could also say it was partly political," Bellamy admits. "We live in complicated times, and wanting to get away from them is probably a natural thing."

But that aesthetic choice to, as Bellamy puts it, "distort reality," also had genuine musical ends: "It made us go into a place that isn't the traditional Muse sound," he says.

True to Bellamy's word, *Simulation Theory* is far from the traditional Muse sound – which is saying something, given how untraditional Muse's music is to begin with. But on *Simulation Theory* the band – which also includes bassist Chris Wolstenholme and drummer Dominic Howard – find a way to build upon what is already a remarkably singular sound. There's plenty of Muse-isms in the throttling grooves of *Pressure*, the celestial rock of *Blockades* and the epic sweep of opener *Algorithm*. But there's also an R&B and funk edge to tracks like *Break It To Me* and *Thought Contagion*, an overt global pop influence on *Something Human* and *Get Up And Fight* and a full-on electro-Prince pastiche, *Propaganda* (which also features – because why not? – an acoustic slide solo).

And while *Simulation Theory* is far from the band's most guitar-centric record – there's no aggro-riffing along the lines of, say, *Stockholm Syndrome* – there's still plenty of enthralling playing to be found in the album's 11 tracks, with Bellamy continuing to display the blend of virtuosity and idiosyncratic creativity that has led him to become one of the 21st century's few true guitar heroes. This time, you just have to be a bit more patient in waiting for those moments. But, Bellamy says: "When the guitar



LIVE WIRE
Matt Bellamy and the rest of Muse completed their world tour in July

is there, it's there because it has to be there. It's there because it's doing something that is being featured."

The bottom line, he says, is that "there are no rules anymore about what defines a genre or a particular style of music. And I think that's great". And with *Simulation Theory*, Bellamy continues, "we're embracing the freedom that defines the times we're in".

How did *Simulation Theory* come together?

"It was quite a gradual and sporadic process. It wasn't like most albums, where we just go into the studio for a couple months. This one was done in bits and pieces here and there, and spread over the last year or so. A lot of it we approached one song at a time, and I quite enjoyed that because it broke up the process and we weren't worried about any sort of deadline. It felt less pressured and a bit more free.

"But our general approach on the album was that most of the songs were written and demoed in one form and then ended up being produced in a very, very different way to that. The first song we did, which was *Something Human*, was originally very much a stripped-down, acoustic-only type song. But in the end we tried our best to make it more synthetic sounding, adding lots of layers of synthesizers and unusual instruments to take it away from sounding too organic. And we took the same approach with the next song, *Dig Down*, which, if you listen to it on the deluxe version of the album, you'll hear it originally had a gospel feel. But again, we produced it very differently using synthesizers and programmed drums and stuff like that to end up in a very different place. Then when we got to the next song, which was *Thought Contagion*, that was originally a mellow piano tune that ended up being a much more epic-sounding rock song. And at that point I started to develop the concept for the album, this idea of simulation and taking yourself outside of reality and going into an alternate universe of some kind."

Generally speaking, rock bands usually tend to be concerned with making their music sound more, not less organic. It's interesting that you were motivated by a sort of opposing force.

"Yes. Although I feel like Muse has always sort of occupied that space. Although on our last album, [2015's] *Drones*, we very much went away from that otherworldly, synthetic kind of thing and toward a more rock approach, focusing primarily on guitar, bass and drums as the main instrumentation for every song. Because we were trying to get these raw, organic, live performances. But this time we wanted to return to where I think Muse is at their best, which is a convergence between the organic and the synthetic."

You mentioned the song *Thought Contagion*. That one is interesting in that, in addition to transforming it from a piano tune into an electric rock song, you also bring in an R&B vibe. It sounds like you used 808-style drums for the rhythm.

"That's exactly what it is! That's an authentic 808 drum machine in the verses. It's not a plug-in version. It's the real thing."

EMBRACING THE DARK SIDE

Matt Bellamy's world of effects

"I've got an effects rack that I use on tour that consists of a Fractal [Axe-Fx] system. But in the studio I tend to use a selection of pedals. I used an interesting reverb on a couple of songs, including *The Dark Side*, that belonged to Rich Costey, who also produced that song. It was a black Space Echo type of pedal. And something else that was quite interesting was the Korg SDD [Korg SDD-3000 digital delay]. It has the same circuit board as the original Korg delay from the early 80s, which the Edge uses. And they brought out a pedal version of that. Another thing I used on this album was guitar synth. It features a fair bit, especially on *The Dark Side* guitar solo and also the *Break It To Me* solo. I had a Fishman pickup on my guitar, which attached to a synthesizer. We managed to get all the parameters of my playing – dynamics, note bending, picking style, everything – and then basically translate it into MIDI information, which we could then send to any synthesizer we wanted. So, for example, the guitar solo on *The Dark Side* is actually my guitar going into an amp, probably the Marshall, plus it's going into a Prophet V. And whatever I was playing, the synth would respond accurately to that. The technology has been around for a while, but it's much more cutting-edge. So it's very exciting."

Adam Gasson

What led you to want to bring in all these different sounds, and in a very overt way?

"In some ways it's embracing the times we're living in. As a rock band in this decade, there's no reason that, from a production aspect, we have to restrict ourselves to the instruments that we're mostly trained to use, which are guitar, bass and drums, and maybe piano. Another thing is that we live in this streaming music world now where everybody, or most people at least, listen to lots of different genres. We're no longer in an age where people identify themselves purely with one genre of music, like how the 20th century was the rock and pop culture. Now, people just love the music they love. And I find that quite exciting because that reflects the way I've always been about music."

As far as acknowledging the changing times, we recall a recent interview where you discussed the fact that, in this decade, the guitar isn't used so much as a lead textural accompaniment...

"I did say that. But, actually, I wouldn't mind rephrasing that quote. I think maybe using the word 'lead' was misleading. Because, if anything, the only kind of guitar that is relevant, or at least still useful, nowadays, is guitar that is showcased as being a guitar. And by that I mean the guitar is no longer heard just strumming away in the background and creating a sort of pad-like sound. In the 90s, powerchords were this sort of defining thing. They were a way of saying, 'Oh, we're a rock band.' Whereas in this decade the guitar is not usually the dominant sound in a song. But it is still a lead instrument in that when it's featured, it's featured. And that's kind of the way I treat the guitar on this album."

BACK TO BASICS
With *Drones* "we were trying to get these raw, organic, live performances"

Whereas some guitar players might fight against the changing role of the instrument in rock, and yearn for a return to the big riffs and epic solos template of the 1970s, you seem to be pretty comfortable with where things are heading...

"Yeah, for sure. Maybe that's because I

"MUSE AT THEIR BEST ARE A KIND OF CONVERGENCE BETWEEN THE ORGANIC AND THE SYNTHETIC"

Scott Dudelson/Getty

play other instruments too. So I've never totally identified myself as just a guitar player or piano player or a singer. If anything, I identify myself as a sort of music creator. Also, rock music as a genre is shifting, and it has to shift. It's no longer a dominant force on the pop charts or anything like that. So I think finding ways to incorporate other instrumentation into Muse has been a sort of passion of ours, and it's something we're sticking to."

What was your main gear setup on *Simulation Theory*?

"Amp-wise I have a [Marshall] JTM45, a vintage one from the early 60s. I also used a Vox AC30 quite a lot, as well as a Diezel. Across those three amps is where I got most of my sounds. And then I put in a few direct sounds on this album, where I'd just DI the guitar through, for example, a [Neve] 1073 mic preamp and crank up the gain on that quite a lot in order to get more of a fuzz feeling."

What would be an example of a DI guitar sound on the record?

"The guitar riff in *Break It To Me* is definitely a DI sound as well as an amp sound. *Get Up And Fight* is partially a DI sound, as is the guitar solo in *Dig Down*. Sometimes DI sounds, especially when played with interesting fuzzes, feel a bit more contemporary than mic'ing up an amp, you know? They cut through a little bit differently."

How about guitars?

"I pretty much used my main black Manson [signature] guitar for everything. I've got a few of them that I use on tour, but it's essentially a standard black Manson. It's one that I designed a few years ago, and it's sort of between a Fender Telecaster and maybe a Gibson SG in terms of body consistency and shape and weight and sound. And then there are two songs on this album – *Propaganda* and *Something Human* – where I play acoustic, and for those songs I used a Manson that I had built for this album."

NONE MORE BLACK
Matt predominantly uses his black Manson signature guitar on tour

You tend to gravitate towards very tweaked, extreme guitar sounds, whether it's through employing a guitar synth or incorporating effects into the circuitry of your guitars. What do you find appealing about those types of sounds?

"I like the idea of creating something

"ROCK MUSIC AS A GENRE IS SHIFTING... IT HAS TO SHIFT"

Jeff Kravitz/Getty

that differentiates me from the history of the guitar. I'm looking to try to create my own sound and my own take on the instrument. Because for me personally, when I pick up a Fender Stratocaster, I tend to immediately start going bluesy. Before you know it, I'm playing Hendrix and Clapton riffs.

"It's a similar thing when I play a Les Paul. I don't know what it is about the shape of an instrument or the type of sound that it produces, but certain instruments have such a history attached to them, and such a connection to legendary players. It's almost like I don't want to be in their shadows. I'd rather just create a new instrument or a new sound, and therefore create my own identity. And that's something that I felt from an early age. In order to make the guitar exciting to me I needed to do something new with it and play it in a way that wasn't just an homage to somebody else."

Is there anything that you still want to explore on the guitar?

"Well recently, I've been quite interested in what Ed Sheeran does with the looping systems. That's something that I've never really dabbled in, but actually I'd like to. Especially now, with the access I have to synth sounds coming from the guitar. So although I haven't really begun to play with it yet, I will at some point. I really like the idea of experimenting more with getting some looping sounds going and exploring that side of it."

From the very earliest days of the band, it's been a hallmark of the Muse sound to push out on the standard rock parameters. Which, I imagine, is one of the things your fans really appreciate about your music. At the same time, however, they sometimes complain when you stray too far outside the lines, such as with the more pop-influenced songs on this album, like *Dig Down* and *Something Human*. Are people too rigid in terms of their expectations?

"Well, I think underneath that rigidness is often a buried compliment, in that some people fall in love so much with a certain song or a particular album that you did that they don't really like the idea of you changing in any way. If anything, it's just symbolic of a moment in time where they really connected with your music. And I mean, you really can't expect somebody to absorb all eight albums that we've done in the same way and to love them all equally. Everybody's going to like certain things more than others."

So you're okay with your fans not necessarily loving everything that you do?

"The way I see it is that we have this big body of work now – eight albums, plus all the B-sides and live stuff as well. And I think it's quite exciting – and in some ways liberating as an artist – to be able to say, 'Look, go on a streaming service, and all of our music is there. And just take from it what you want. Take what you love from what we do, and you don't have to listen to anything else that you don't want to.' And, hopefully, maybe with one or two of these songs we're adding to a big body of work that will end up becoming loved by those people as well."

LIKE NO OTHER
"I'd rather create a new instrument or sound and therefore create my own identity"

***Simulation Theory* is out now on Warner Records. For more information or to learn about upcoming shows visit muse.mu/tour**

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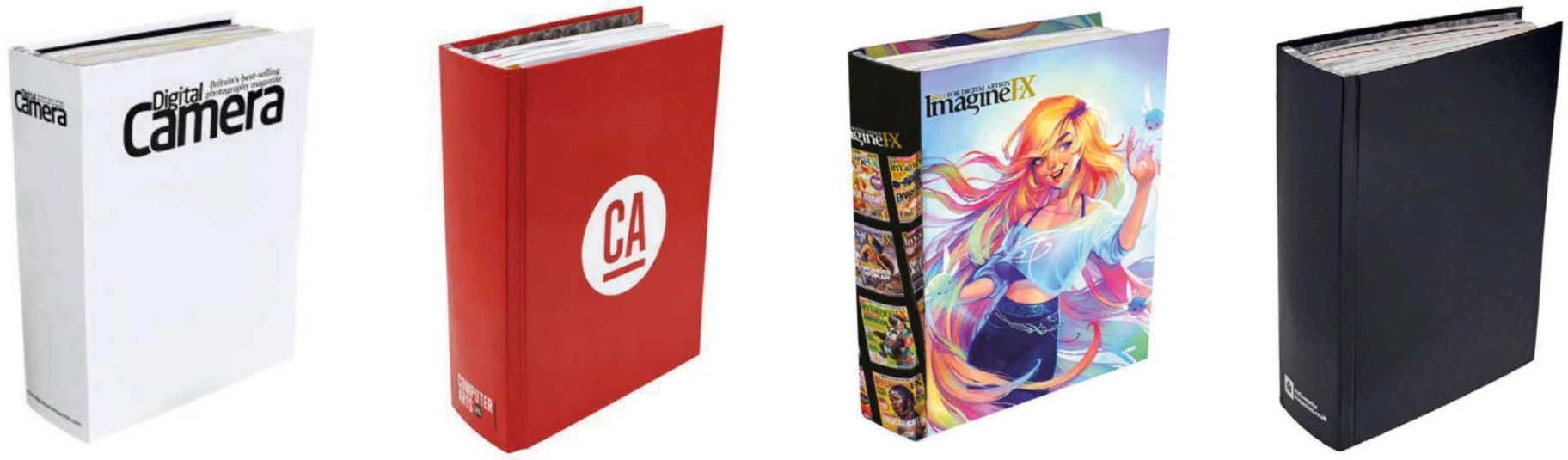

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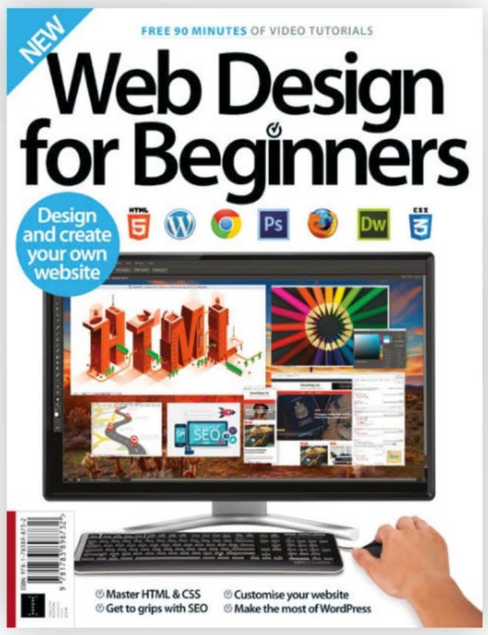

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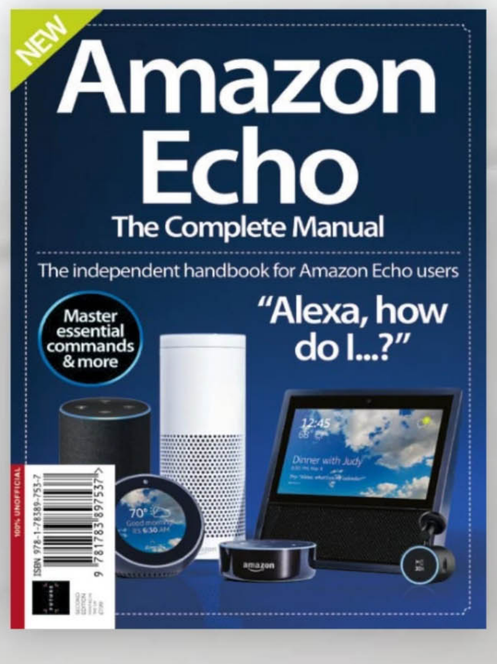

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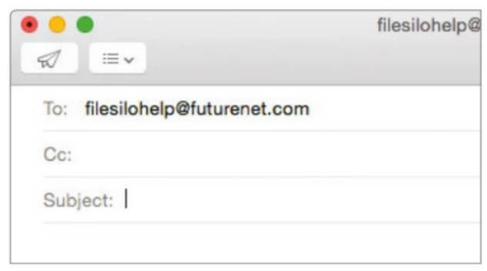

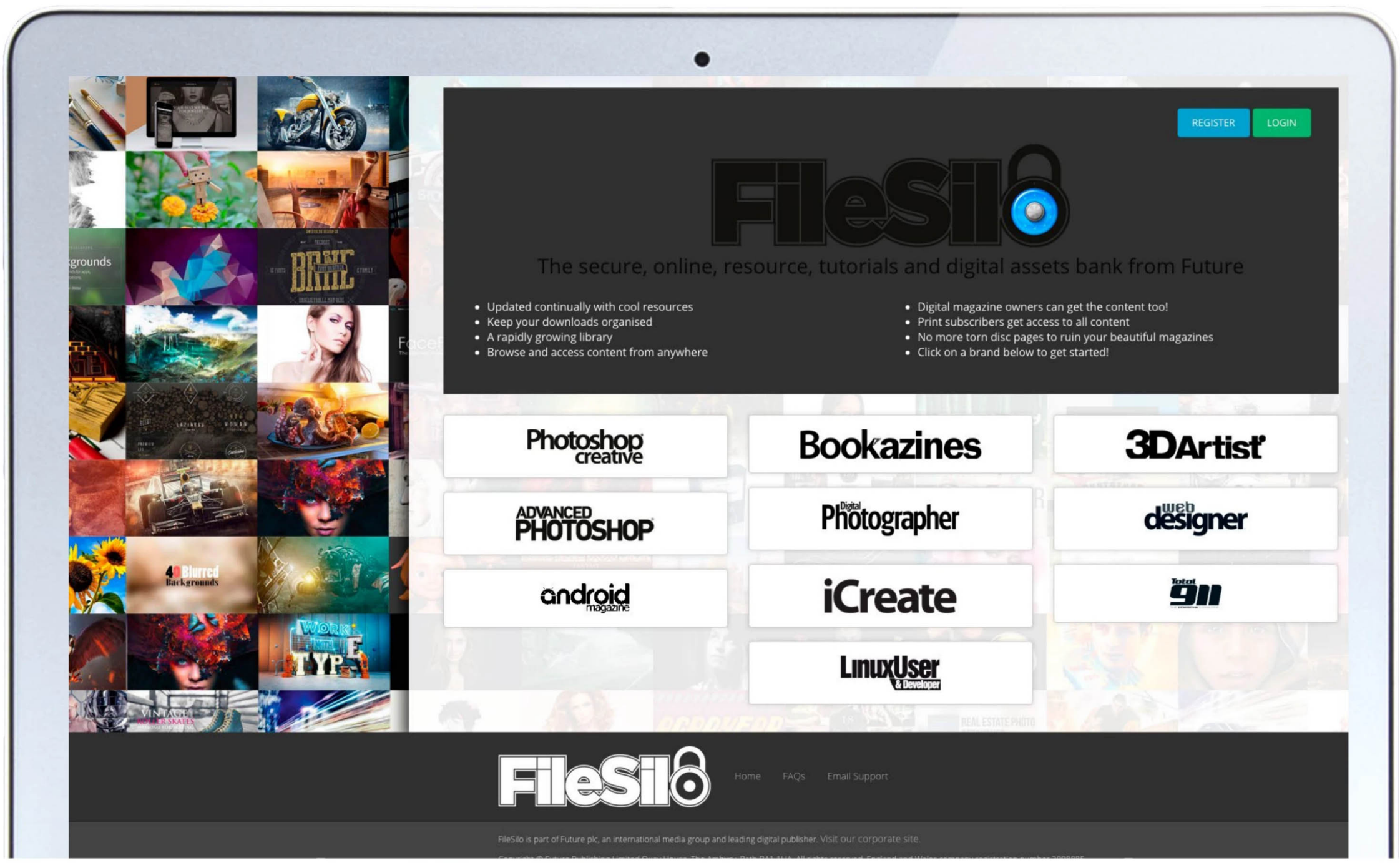

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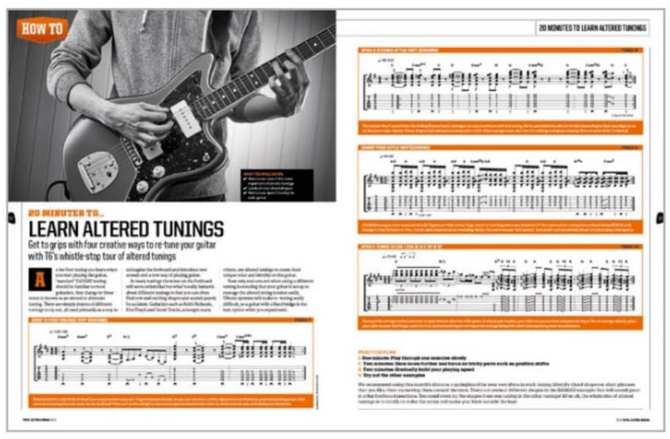

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