

# Bluegrass and Flatpicking Guitar Workshop

By Dan Geib

- **The Pick.**
- **Holding the Pick and Hand Placement**
- **Picking Exercises with Metronome**
- **Intro to Rhythm**
- **Rhythm Samples with Metronome**
- **Major Scales**
- **Song demo with Major Scale Solos with Metronome**
- **Pentatonic & Blues Scales**
- **From Melody to Solo**
- **Song Demo with Pentatonic and Blues Scales Solos with Metronome**
- **Open Discussion**

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1. **Using the Pick and hand position**  
**“To Anchor Or Not To Anchor?”**
  - . Floating
  - . Posting
  - . Gliding**“Start Slow to go Fast”**



**The Metronome.**



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- Picking Exercises:
- Alternate Pick Stroke
- Open String Exercise
- Straight Eights Vs Bounce

A musical score for guitar in C major, 4/4 time. The top staff is a treble clef with a common time signature. Above the first two measures are the letters 'P V P V' indicating alternate picking. The melody consists of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with a 'C' time signature. It shows fret numbers 0-0-0-0 for the first four measures and 0-0-0-0 for the last two measures, corresponding to the notes in the treble staff.

- Alternate Pick Stroke
- Closed String Exercise
- Straight Eights Vs Bounce

A guitar tablature for a closed string exercise. The strings are labeled E, B, G, D, A, E from top to bottom. The exercise consists of eighth notes on the A string, with fret numbers 3, 4, 5, 6. The notes are grouped in pairs: (3, 4), (5, 6), (3, 4), (5, 6), (3, 4), (5, 6), (3, 4), (5, 6), (3, 4), (5, 6), (3, 4), (5, 6). The strings B, G, D, and E are not played.

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### Playing Rhythm

The most important role of the guitar in Bluegrass is a rhythm instrument. In the early Bluegrass recordings, the guitar often never took a lead break at all. Just a few bass runs, and the rest was rhythm. Today it's common for guitarists to take lead breaks in bands, but even then the guitarist is playing rhythm 80% or more of the time.

### Rhythm Guitar Roles

As a rhythm instrument in bluegrass, the guitar serves several roles:

1. It acts like a metronome to keep the tempo constant. In most situations, the rhythm guitarist will place the emphasis on the off beat rather than the down beat. In a tune that is 4/4 time that means that the guitar is emphasizing beats 2 and 4.
2. It fills the tune with notes besides the main melody. While the lead instrument is playing a single note melody, the guitar is adding the other notes in the chords of the song.
3. It adds ornamentation to rests and turnarounds. The guitar can add short phrases when there are rest measures in a song. The most common place that you will hear this is in turnarounds, where the guitarist might add a lick like the famous G-run.

### Playing rhythm requires you to:

- Learn the basic chord shapes in several keys (C, G, and D are the important ones)
- Develop a rock-solid sense of timing to keep the beat (metronomes help)
- Learn how to vary your rhythm patterns with different time signatures and tempo
- Learn how to play bass runs to transition between chords
- Always remember that you're part of a band, and develop an awareness of how your playing is contributing to the whole sound

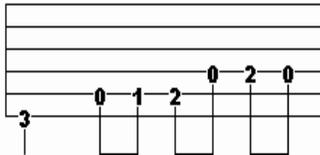
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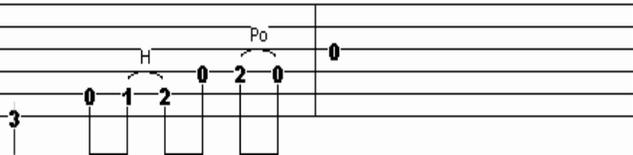
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### Playing Rhythm The G-Run

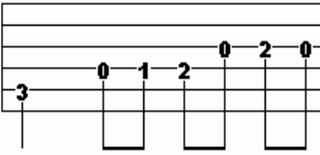
Standard G Run



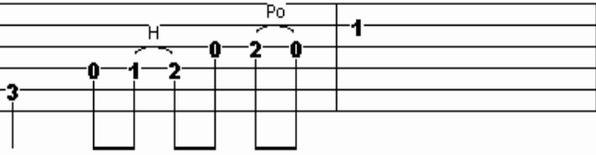
Standard G Run with Hammer On and Pull Off



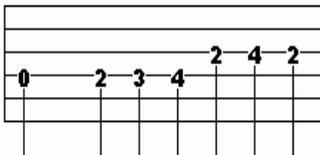
Standard G Run in C



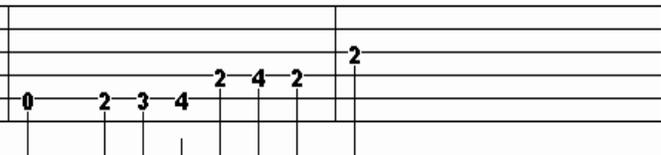
Standard G Run in C



Standard G Run in D



Standard G Run in A



Standard G Run in E





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## Add an Eight Note Hammer-on to One Quarter – Two Eighth Notes

The tablature is divided into two systems. The first system starts with a G chord and contains two measures. The first measure has a quarter note on the 2nd fret (hammer-on) and two eighth notes on the 3rd fret. The second measure has a quarter note on the 2nd fret (hammer-on) and two eighth notes on the 3rd fret. The second system starts with a C chord and contains two measures. The first measure has a quarter note on the 3rd fret and two eighth notes on the 2nd fret. The second measure has a quarter note on the 3rd fret and two eighth notes on the 2nd fret.

## One Quarter – 6 Eighth Notes with Some Passing Tones

The tablature is divided into two systems. The first system starts with a G chord and contains two measures. The first measure has a quarter note on the 3rd fret and six eighth notes on the 2nd fret. The second measure has a quarter note on the 3rd fret and six eighth notes on the 2nd fret. The second system starts with a C chord and contains two measures. The first measure has a quarter note on the 3rd fret and six eighth notes on the 2nd fret. The second measure has a quarter note on the 3rd fret and six eighth notes on the 2nd fret.

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## The Standard Bluegrass Rhythm

A guitar tab for the 'Standard Bluegrass Rhythm' in G, C, and C chords. The tab is written on a six-line staff. The G chord section (measures 1-2) features a bass line with a triplet of 3s and a treble line with a triplet of 3s and a triplet of 0s. The C chord section (measures 3-4) features a bass line with a triplet of 2s and a treble line with a triplet of 1s and a triplet of 0s. The C chord section (measures 5-6) features a bass line with a triplet of 2s and a treble line with a triplet of 1s and a triplet of 0s. The rhythm is indicated by a series of down and up strokes.

A guitar tab for 'The Standard Bluegrass Rhythm with Cross Picking' in D and G chords. The tab is written on a six-line staff. The D chord section (measures 1-2) features a bass line with a triplet of 2s and a treble line with a triplet of 2s and a triplet of 0s. The G chord section (measures 3-4) features a bass line with a triplet of 2s and a treble line with a triplet of 3s and a triplet of 0s. The G chord section (measures 5-6) features a bass line with a triplet of 2s and a treble line with a triplet of 3s and a triplet of 0s. The rhythm is indicated by a series of down and up strokes.

## The Standard Bluegrass Rhythm with Cross Picking

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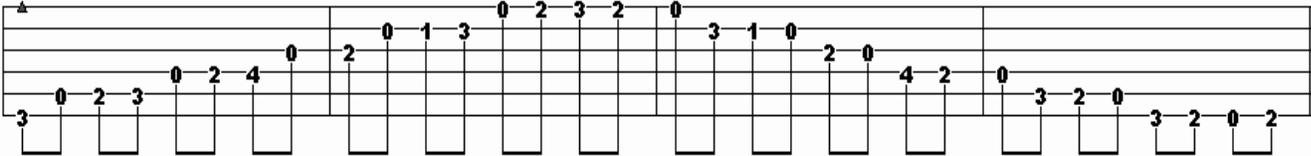
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## Major Scales

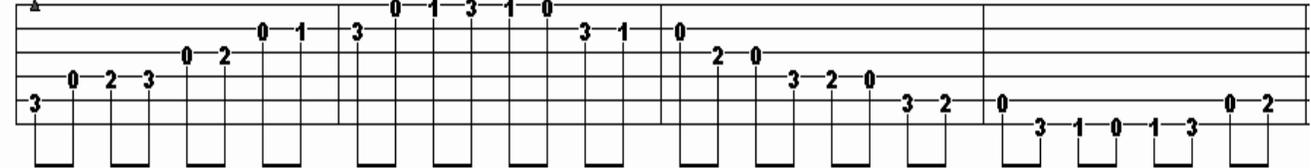
G SCALE

2 3 4 5



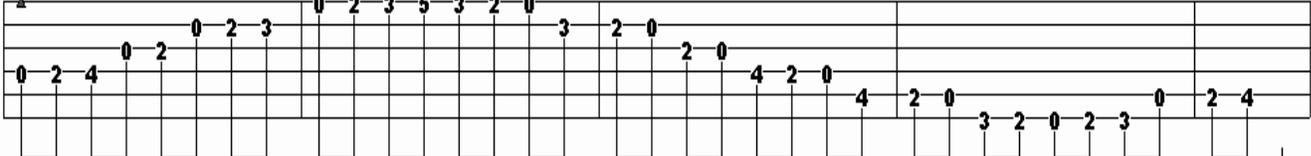
A guitar tab for the G major scale. The first line (treble clef) contains the notes G (0), A (2), B (3), C (0), D (2), E (3), F# (2), G (0). The second line (bass clef) contains the notes G (3), F# (2), E (4), D (2), C (0), B (2), A (3), G (0). The tab is divided into four measures by vertical lines, with measure numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5 above the staff.

C SCALE



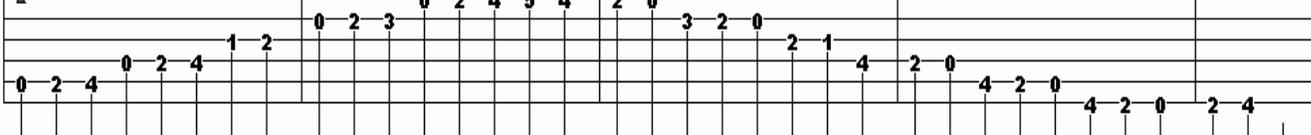
A guitar tab for the C major scale. The first line (treble clef) contains the notes C (0), D (2), E (3), F (1), G (0), A (2), B (3), C (0). The second line (bass clef) contains the notes C (3), B (2), A (0), G (2), F (3), E (1), D (0), C (0). The tab is divided into four measures by vertical lines.

D SCALE



A guitar tab for the D major scale. The first line (treble clef) contains the notes D (0), E (2), F# (3), G (5), A (3), B (2), C# (0), D (0). The second line (bass clef) contains the notes D (3), C# (2), B (4), A (2), G (0), F# (2), E (3), D (0). The tab is divided into four measures by vertical lines.

A SCALE



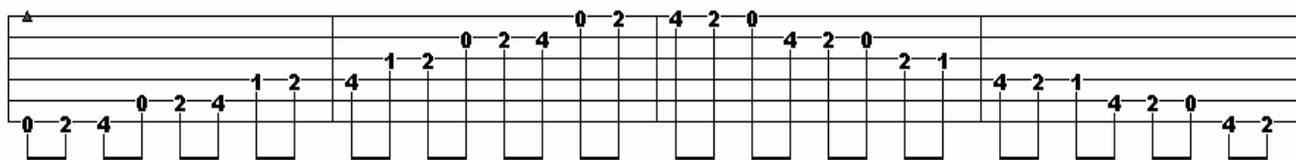
A guitar tab for the A major scale. The first line (treble clef) contains the notes A (0), B (2), C# (4), D (5), E (4), F# (2), G# (0), A (0). The second line (bass clef) contains the notes A (3), G# (2), F# (4), E (2), D (0), C# (2), B (3), A (0). The tab is divided into four measures by vertical lines.

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E SCALE



## Minor Pentatonic Scales and the Blues Scale

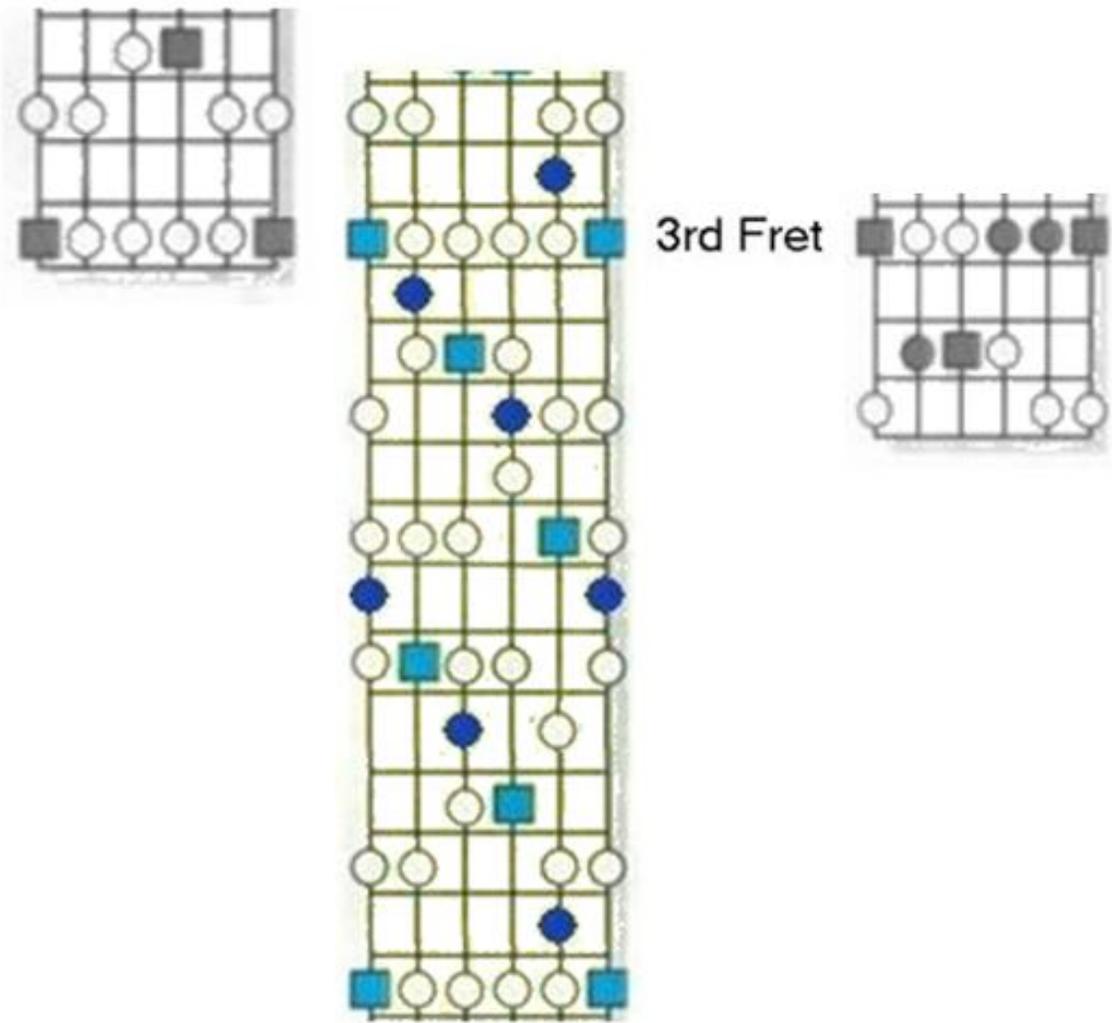
using scale tones 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7 of the [natural minor scale](#).<sup>1</sup>

The blues scale is very closely related to the minor pentatonic scale, and is used unsurprisingly in blues. The blues players often add an additional passing note to the pentatonic scale which is technically known as a flattened 5th - that means an extra note in between notes 3 and 4 of the pentatonic scale. This note is called the blue note, and when you add it to the minor pentatonic scale you get the blues scale.

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