

# ULTRABASS

**BASS GUITAR PACK**



English

# **BEHRINGER's**

# **Bass Guitar Method**



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## BASS PACK CONTENTS

**High-quality electric bass guitar**



**Padded gig bag**



**High-quality lead (approx. 3 m)**



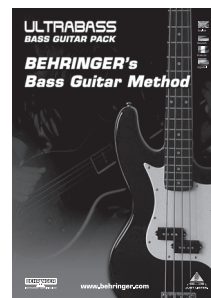
**Adjustable bass guitar strap**



**3 plectrums**



**Beginners book for the bass guitar**



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## THE PARTS OF THE BASS

Regardless of the type of bass guitar you play, the basic component parts are always the same. The following illustration shows you what the parts are called. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with them.

### Head

Tuning/  
machine heads

Nut

### Neck/Fingerboard

Fret spaces

Frets

Strings

### Body

Pickup

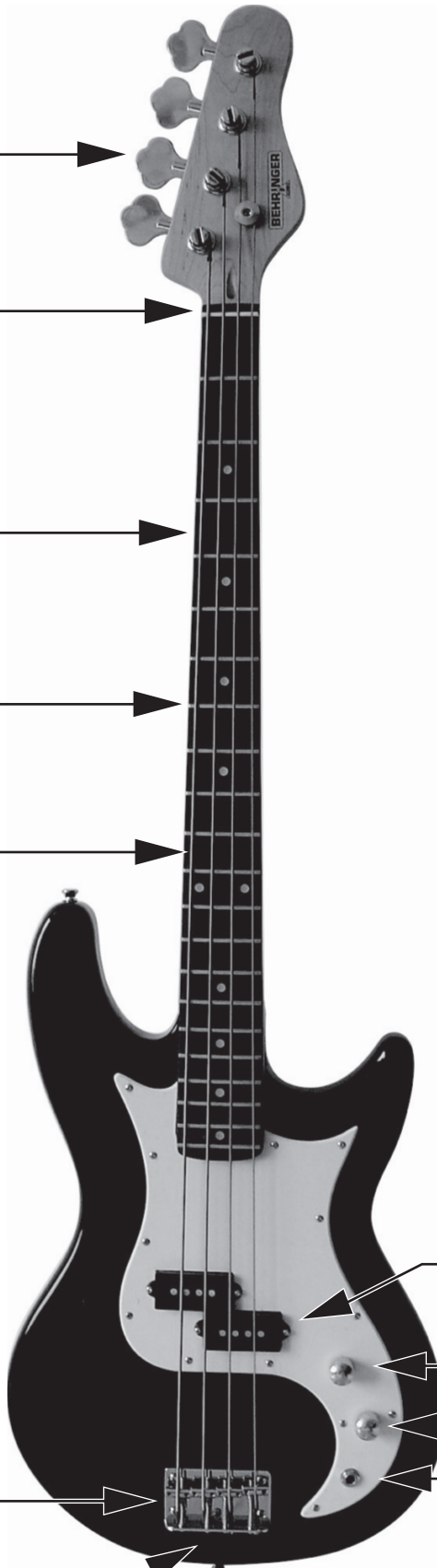
Volume control

Tone control

Output jack

Saddles

Bridge



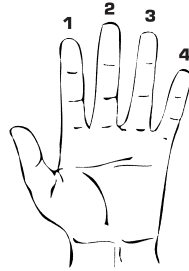
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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the BEHRINGER family! This beginners' book for the bass guitar will show you how much fun you can have playing a musical instrument. First we want to make you acquainted with the important basics about your instrument, various playing techniques and some other things. Then we're going to show you some examples of styles, rhythm exercises and scales that will make it easy for you to start playing the bass. Don't let all this information put you off, even if it does seem like a lot at first. Take a relaxed approach and you'll soon see that you're making progress. Have fun!

### Left hand

The fingers of the left hand are numbered from 1 to 4, beginning with the index finger. Always press down the strings with your fingertips. Tip: You'll find it a lot easier with short fingernails.



### Holding the bass properly

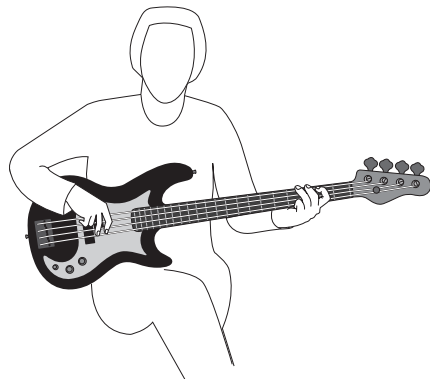
Rest the bass on your right thigh and hold it between your chest and your right arm. But don't forget to relax while you do so! Use your body—not your hands—to stabilize the position of the bass. The neck of the guitar should be pointing slightly upwards. If you cross your legs you can hold the neck higher, which makes playing easier.

A few general tips:

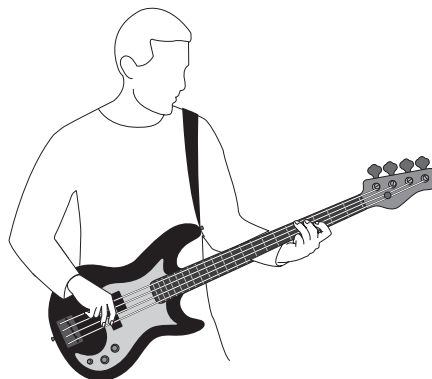
- \* Check your posture and the position of your arms and legs at regular intervals to avoid tenseness.
- \* Experiment with your posture until you feel comfortable.
- \* Try to keep your head straight; otherwise you will develop tenseness in your back.

If your bass is hanging too low when you're playing standing up, it might put too much strain on your left wrist. Or it might put too much strain on your right hand when you strike or pluck the strings. Adjust the strap to give yourself a comfortable posture, enabling your hands to remain completely relaxed in their playing positions.

### SITTING POSTURE



### STANDING POSTURE



## TUNING THE BASS

Tuning the bass means precisely adjusting the tone of each string. There are various methods you can use to tune your bass, but first you have to know what notes the four bass strings are:

String 1:	G (the thinnest, bottom string)
String 2:	D
String 3:	A
String 4:	E (the thickest, topmost string)

### Electronic tuning device

You can buy electronic tuning devices at any music store. They offer you the simplest method for tuning your bass. A tuning device analyzes the pitch of each string when it is played individually. A display shows you if the note played is too high or too low. You can find a virtual tuning device on our website ([www.behringer.com](http://www.behringer.com)). Go and get it!

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## Relative tuning method

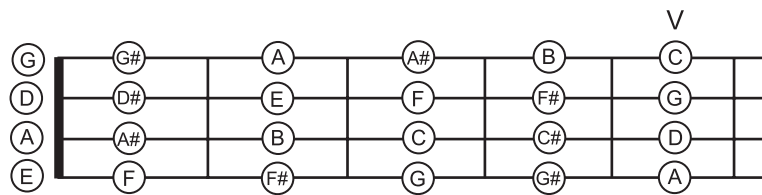
The relative tuning method is the most independent, and is one you can use any time and anywhere. The only thing you need is a reference note (e.g. from another instrument or a tuning fork). As long as one string is tuned correctly, all the other strings can be tuned in relation to it. In the following example, the fourth string (E) is the starting point.

1. Tune the open 4<sup>th</sup> string (E) with the aid of a reference note (e.g. tuning fork).
2. Hold the 4<sup>th</sup> string down at the 5<sup>th</sup> fret. This produces the note to which the open 3<sup>rd</sup> string (A) has to be tuned. Now play the fretted 4<sup>th</sup> string and the open 3<sup>rd</sup> string and adjust the 3<sup>rd</sup> until the two notes are the same.
3. Now use the same method to tune the remaining strings. The reference note is always the string with the higher number than the neighboring string to be tuned.

We've summarized this for you as follows:

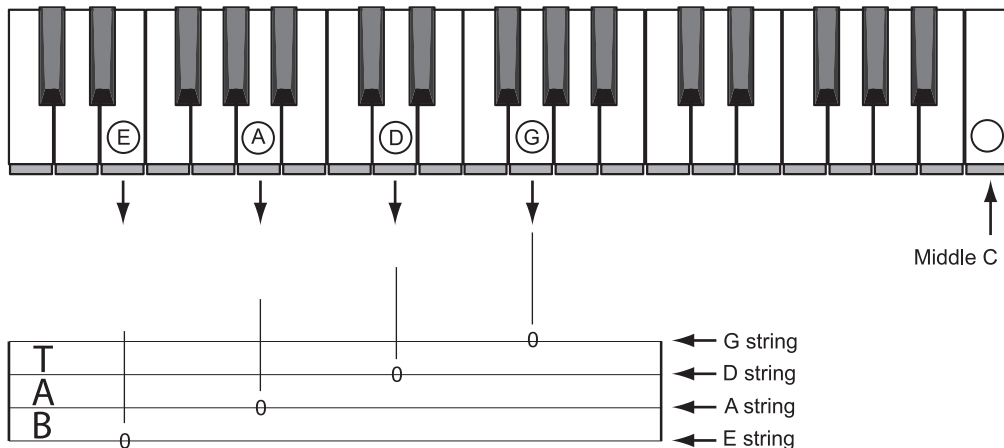
4. string, 5<sup>th</sup> fret = open 3<sup>rd</sup> string
3. string, 5<sup>th</sup> fret = open 2<sup>nd</sup> string
2. string, 5<sup>th</sup> fret = open 1<sup>st</sup> string

Simply keep to the following diagram.



## Keyboard instruments

You can also tune your bass using a piano or a keyboard. The only thing you need to know is which keys on the keyboard correspond to the bass strings. To find out, look at the following illustration:



To tune your bass proceed as follows:

1. Sit down comfortably with your bass.
2. Make sure the keyboard is within arm's length.
3. Play the E on the keyboard and adjust the pitch of the E string (topmost string) to it by turning the corresponding machine head.
4. Repeat this procedure for the A, D and G strings in conjunction with the corresponding notes on the keyboard.

If you find it difficult to tune all four strings using the keyboard, use this procedure only for one string and tune the others using the "relative" tuning method.



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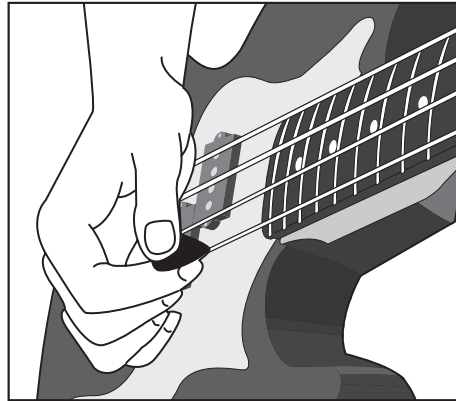
## PLAYING TECHNIQUES

### Picks

Hold the pick (plectrum) firmly between your thumb and index finger. Your BASS GUITAR PACK contains three picks. Most bass players start with a thin pick and use thicker ones when they have improved their playing technique.

### Playing with a pick

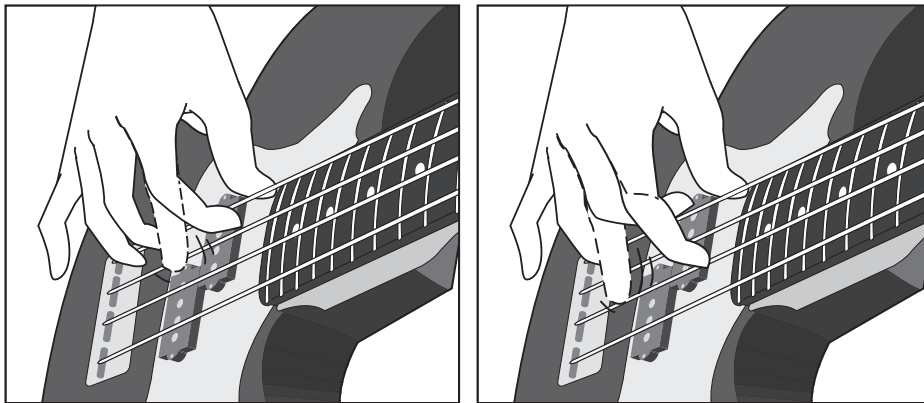
Here you can see the correct way for the pick to strike the strings. Relax and don't constantly think about what you're doing. This will help you to feel comfortable while you play.



You can use the pick to strike the strings on your bass in two ways: striking down from above (downstroke) and striking up from below (upstroke) Simply try striking one string alternately from above and from below (*alternate picking*) at a steady pace. You might find a metronome very helpful here, so that you can achieve a constant rhythm and evenness of playing. Start off at a very slow tempo and strike the string in time with the metronome (one stroke to one tick of the metronome). Once you feel confident playing at this tempo, you can begin to increase your speed gradually.

### Playing with your fingers

Many bass players prefer to pick the strings with their fingers. In this case you should use the index and middle fingers of your right hand and pick the string alternating from one finger to the other.



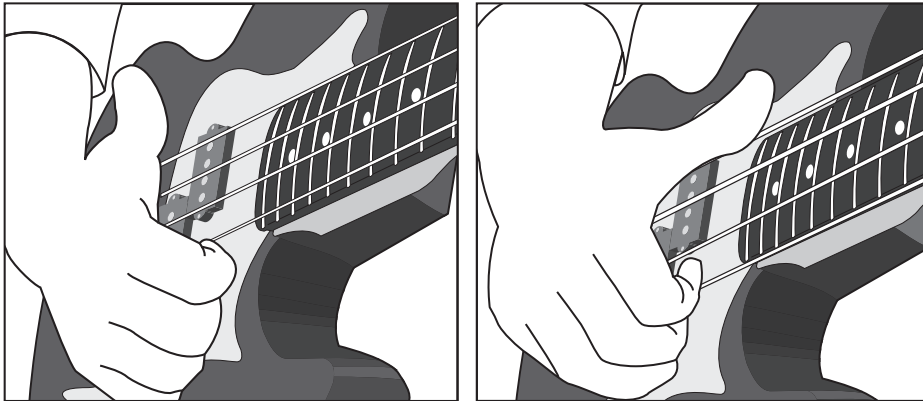
To do this, rest your thumb on the E string (topmost string) and pluck the A string below it with the tip of your index finger in such a way that your index finger finishes up resting on the E string above it. Now pluck the A string the same way using your middle finger. As soon as your middle finger comes to rest on the E string, lift your index finger and pick the A string again, and so on. Try to play all the four strings on your bass this way, again using a metronome, if possible, to achieve a steady rhythm. Just remember that you have to lift your thumb off the E string when you want to play it. In this case you should rest your thumb on the body of the guitar.

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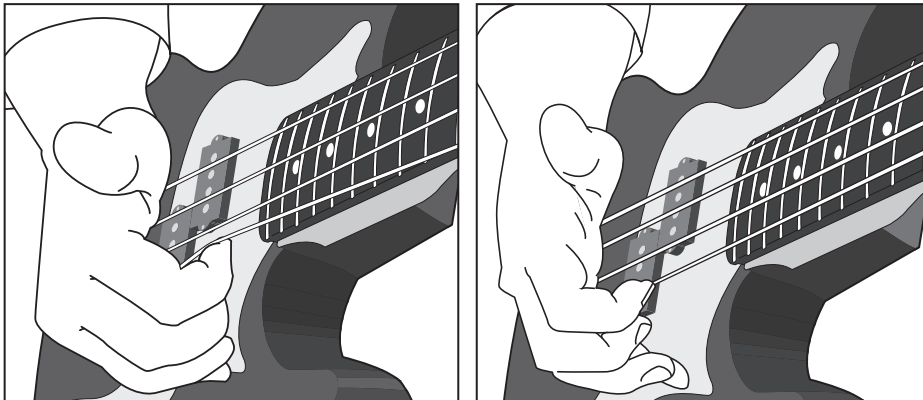
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## Slap bass technique

A well-established technique for playing the bass is known as “slapping”. This technique involves striking the strings on your bass with your thumb. Slapping often alternates with “popping” a higher string (i.e. releasing it with a snap). For example, first you slap the E string with your thumb and then you pop the D string with your index or middle finger.



First stretch your thumb and strike the (topmost) E string with the joint of your thumb, somewhere near the end of the fingerboard. Your other fingers should be curled near the (bottom) G string. You can use your little finger here to rest your hand on the body of the guitar.



Then pick one of the two bottom strings (but not both at the same time) with your index or middle finger by slipping your fingertip under the G or D string and plucking it upwards with as little contact as possible and without exerting too much force.

**Warning:** If you use too much force here, the string may break.

When you use this playing technique, try to maintain a relaxed and natural wrist action. Your arm should be resting as motionless as possible against the body of the bass.

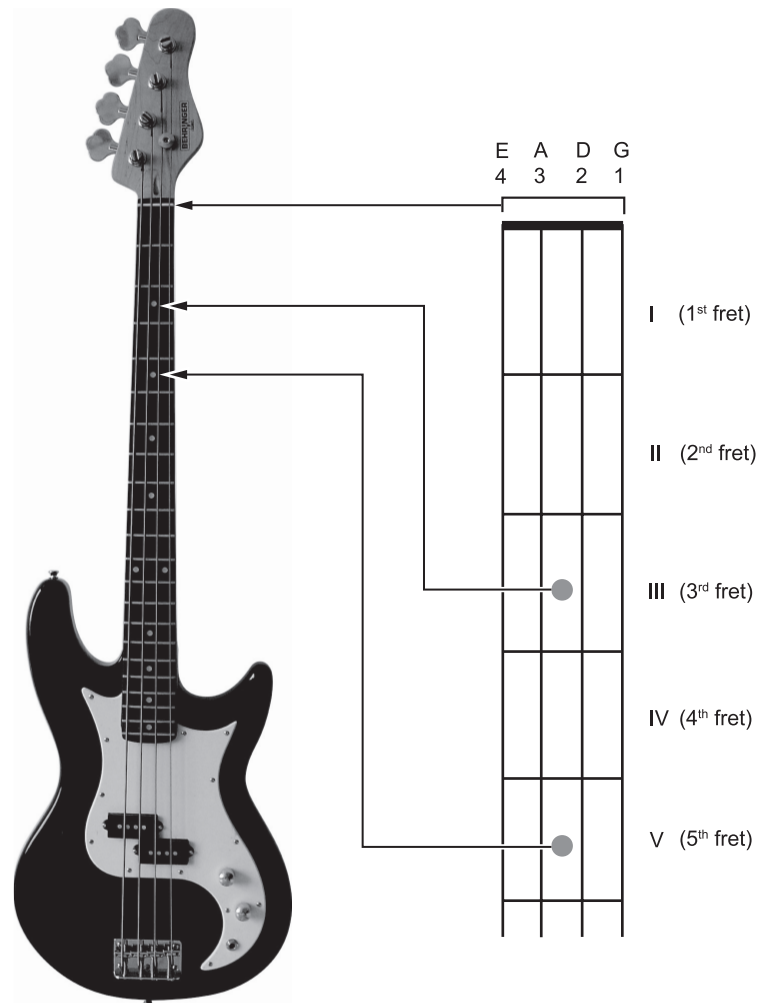


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## NOTATION

### Fingering diagrams

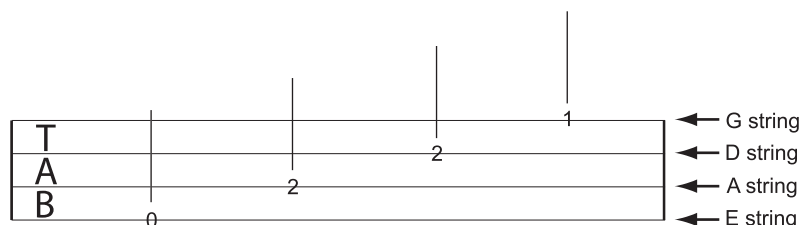
Fingering diagrams show you which notes to play and which strings to pick. The following illustration shows you exactly how the fingering diagram corresponds to the fingerboard on your bass.



### Tablature

There are various ways to write down music, such as standard notation, which requires a certain amount of practice before you know where the notes as they are written are to be found on the fingerboard. Another problem presented by standard notation in connection with playing string instruments is that the same note can be played in different positions and on different strings. Standard notation, however, does not specify where the note should actually be played. This has to be marked separately.

In this book we will be using a diagrammatic form of notation known as tablature in the following exercises (apart from the rhythm exercises in the chapter titled "RHYTHM"). The tablature for the bass guitar consists of four lines, with the bottom line representing the E string and the lines above it representing the A, D and G strings. As in a fingering diagram, the tablature shows a view of the fingerboard.



In order to provide a time sequence, the tablature is divided into measures—as in standard notation. The notes within the measures are shown by means of numbers which are written on the strings to be played. The numbers signify the fret at which the corresponding string is to be played. The length of the individual notes is also indicated, as it is in standard notation (see Ch. "Note values").

	1 <sup>st</sup> measure	2 <sup>nd</sup> measure	3 <sup>rd</sup> measure	4 <sup>th</sup> measure
T				
A				
B				

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## EXAMPLES OF MUSICAL STYLES

In this chapter you will find some examples of different styles of music. We will be using tablature here, as this makes it easier for beginners. It's best to use a metronome so that you can achieve an steady rythm. Please remember to play the notes cleanly, keeping your left hand relaxed and free of unnecessary strain.

### Blues

This standard blues pattern consists of 16 measures and only uses quarter notes.

Blues guitar tablature consisting of four systems of three strings (T, A, B) each. The first two systems use the 5th fret (5 5 5 5). The third system uses the 7th fret (7 7 7 7). The fourth system uses the 5th fret (5 5 5 5) for the first two measures, followed by the 7th fret (7 7 7 7) for the last two measures. The piece ends with a double bar line.

### Fast Rock

This example is made up only of eighth notes and therefore has 8 beats per measure. Picking is therefore twice as fast as in the previous blues. Reduce the tempo if you have any problems with the speed to begin with.

Fast Rock guitar tablature consisting of three systems of three strings (T, A, B) each. The first system uses the 5th fret (5 5 5 5) for the first two measures, followed by the 0th fret (0 3) for the last two measures. The second system uses the 5th fret (5 5 5 5) for the first two measures, followed by the 0th fret (0 3) for the last two measures. The third system uses the 7th fret (7 7 7 7) for the first two measures, followed by the 5th fret (5 5 5 5) for the last two measures. The piece ends with a double bar line.

### Shuffle Blues

This is a blues with a ternary rhythm. For further information about this, read the chapter titled "RHYTHM". Start with a slow tempo here too so that you achieve a steady rhythm and get used to the shuffle playing technique. If it doesn't work out straight away, just play this piece in eighth-note triplets without rests to begin with. Once you've mastered that, you can try leaving out the second note in each triplet.

Shuffle Blues guitar tablature consisting of two systems of three strings (T, A, B) each. The first system uses the 5th fret (5 5) for the first two measures, followed by the 5th fret (5 5) for the last two measures. The second system uses the 7th fret (7 7) for the first two measures, followed by the 5th fret (5 5) for the last two measures. The piece ends with a double bar line.

### Slap Blues

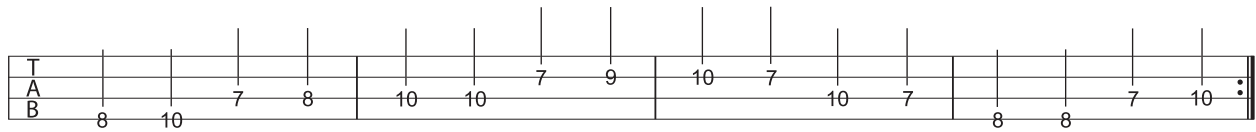
The following blues in E major is played using the slapping technique, which means striking the low notes on the E and A strings with your thumb (slapping) and plucking the high notes on the D and G strings (popping).

Slap Blues guitar tablature consisting of two systems of three strings (T, A, B) each. The first system uses the 0th fret (0 0 0 0) for the first two measures, followed by the 0th fret (0 0 0 0) for the last two measures. The second system uses the 7th fret (7 7) for the first two measures, followed by the 0th fret (0 0 0 0) for the last two measures. The piece ends with a double bar line.

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## Walking Bass

This example shows you a typical blues, rhythm & blues and jazz style. As in the first example, it consists solely of quarter notes. Make sure that you don't leave any breaks between the individual notes, so that they flow into each other.



## RHYTHM

As a bassist, you are largely responsible for the rhythm and the groove. Basically, you are the link between the rhythm instruments (drums, percussion, etc.) and the melodic instruments (e.g. guitar, keyboard or vocals) and it's your job to bring it all together—so a good sense of rhythm is essential. This chapter is intended to give you an outline of the wide range of rhythms and to help you to start using them. In this chapter we will be using standard notation to illustrate note values and in the following rhythm exercises.

### Note values

Pieces of music can be broken down into measures containing a certain number of beats. The best-known is undoubtedly the 4/4 measure. In this case each measure has four beats and if you were to play all four beats on your bass you would be playing four quarter notes per measure. Hence the term 4/4 measure.

There are, of course, many ways to fill a measure with beats of all kinds of length in order to create interesting rhythmic patterns. To do this you have to know the different note values into which a measure can be divided.

If a 4/4 measure contains only one note that covers the entire length of the measure (four beats), then that note is known as a **whole note**. It is four quarter notes long:



If you play two equally long notes in a 4/4 measure (one of them beginning on the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter beat and the other beginning on the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter beat), then you are playing two **half notes**. Each of these notes has the same length as two quarter notes:



If you play one note on each of the four beats, the measure contains four **quarter notes**—as mentioned above:



A quarter note can also be divided into shorter note values. For example, the length of one quarter note is equal to that of two **eighth notes**. If you play two eighth notes of equal length on each of the four beats, there are eight strokes in the measure:



If you play four notes on each of the four quarter beats, you are playing what we call **sixteenth notes**. A 4/4 measure would then contain sixteen strokes:



### Dotted notes

A dot after a note indicates that the value of the respective note is increased by one half of its original value. For example, a dotted quarter note has a length of one quarter note plus one eighth note, a dotted half note is one half note plus one quarter note, etc.



In the following rhythm exercise there are dotted quarter notes in three places. When you play these notes, remember to extend each of them by one eighth note.

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## Rhythm exercise 1:

This exercise combines the various note values in the course of eight 4/4 measures. To begin with, try playing each bar individually at a slow tempo – ideally with the aid of a metronome. Sometimes it helps to count the quarter beats out loud or tap them with your foot while you play. Once you have mastered each of the measures individually, you can try joining them together. When you get to the end of the 8th bar, it's best to start again from the beginning. Once you feel confident playing this exercise, try gradually increasing the tempo. In the following exercises all the notes are played on the open A string. You can, of course, practice on each of the other strings, too.

## Triplets

If a note is divided not into two parts equal in time value (e.g. a quarter note into two eighth notes) but into three, the result is what is known as a *triplet*. This is indicated in standard notation or in tablature by the addition of a 3 above or below each group.

If a whole note is divided not into two but into three half notes, the result is what is known as a **half triplet**. A 4/4 measure would therefore contain a half triplet (or three separate half notes):

If a half note is divided into three quarter notes, the result is known as **quarter triplets**. In this case, a 4/4 measure would contain two quarter triplets (or six separate quarter notes):

If a quarter note is divided not into two but three eighth notes, the result is known as **eighth triplets**. In this case, a 4/4 measure would contain four eighth triplets, i.e. twelve eighth notes:

Eighth notes can also be divided according to the same principle into three sixteenth notes, or **sixteenth triplets**. In this case, a 4/4 measure would contain eight sixteenth triplets (24 single sixteenth notes):

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## Rhythm exercise 2:

This exercise now combines the different types of triplets in the course of eight 4/4 measures. Try to learn it in the same way as you learned the first exercise. You may find it rather difficult at first to get the feel for playing triplets, so try playing each bar separately at a slow pace, keeping a regular interval between the individual triplets.

## Rests

Music contains not only notes but also rests, whose importance should not be underestimated. Rests have to be played correctly, too. Used intelligently, they are an important stylistic tool for effective grooves and rhythm patterns.

Just as with note values, there is also the **whole-note rest** (equal in length to a whole note):  $\text{—} = \text{○}$

the **half-note rest** (equal in length to a half note):  $\text{—} = \text{♩}$

the **quarter-note rest** (equal in length to a quarter note):  $\text{}$  =  $\text{♩}$

the **eighth-note rest** (equal in length to an eighth note):  $\text{γ}$  =  $\text{♩}$

and the **sixteenth-note rest** (equal in length to a sixteenth note):  $\text{γ}$  =  $\text{♩}$

There are, of course, even shorter rests, just as there are even shorter note values. However, we don't intend to go that far in this instruction book, as it involves playing at a considerable speed and may be too complicated for beginners.

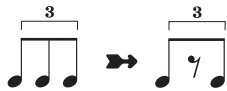
## Rhythm exercise 3:

Finally, here's another exercise combining the two preceding examples and adding some rests. This will show the contrast between the different rhythms very clearly. Make sure you really stop the string during the rests. The preceding notes must not sound at these points.

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## Shuffle

If you play a piece of music with a triplet feel (e.g. in eighth triplets) and you leave out the second note in each triplet (e.g. eighth-note rest), the result is a driving, lively rhythm—what is known as a ternary rhythm, or *shuffle*.



By comparison, the binary rhythm (without triplets) sounds somewhat more static and less vibrant. Rhythm example 3 shows this playing style in a few passages, and you can find a shuffle blues in the chapter titled “EXAMPLES OF MUSICAL STYLES”.

## SCALES

Scales are simply sequences of individual notes that (in most cases) can be assigned to a certain key. They can be used to accompany pieces of music written in the respective key. Probably the best-known scales are called the **major scale** and the **minor scale**. The difference between these scales depends on the order of half-tone and whole-tone steps, which is what produces the individual characters of the scales.

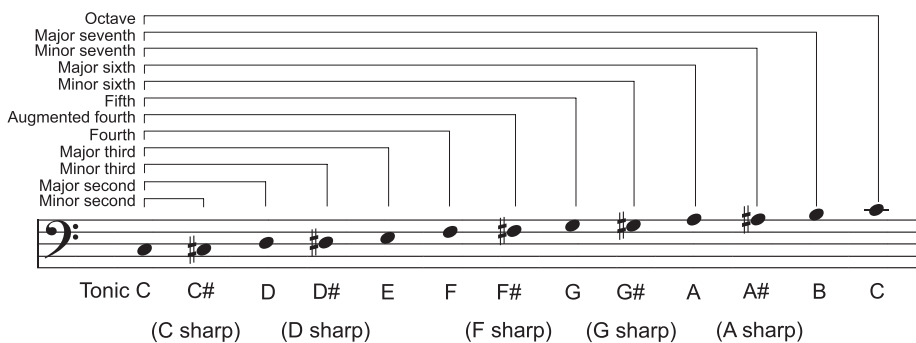
### Explanation:

A **half-tone step** is the shift from one fret to the next fret up (or the next fret down): e.g. the shift from E (D string, 2<sup>nd</sup> fret) to F (D string, 3<sup>rd</sup> fret) or vice versa. This interval is known as a **minor second**.

A **whole-tone step**, on the other hand, describes the shift from one fret to the next-but-one fret up (or down): e.g. the shift from F (D string, 3<sup>rd</sup> fret) to G (D string, 5<sup>th</sup> fret) or vice versa. This interval is known as a **major second**.

## Intervals

At this point we would like to explain what intervals are, so that you don't have any difficulties with certain terms in the chapters that follow. An interval indicates the difference in pitch between one note and another. There are many different intervals, as there are also many different notes. The following illustration always shows the interval between the individual note and the keynote C (tonic).

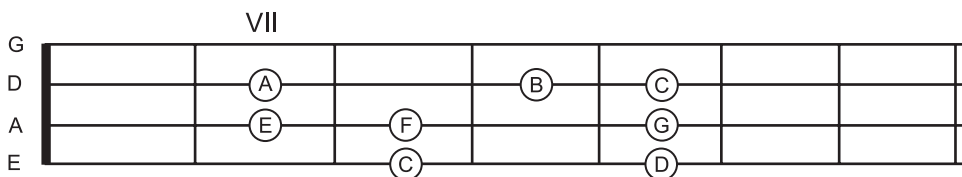


## Major and minor

What is the actual difference between a major scale and a minor scale? The deciding factor is the interval between the first note (keynote) and the third note (third) in the scale. If this interval equals four half-tone steps (or two whole-tone steps), it is called a **major third**. This is characteristic of a major scale, which, as a rule, has a bright, happy expression. If the interval consists of only three half-tone steps (or one half-tone and one whole-tone step), however, it is what is called a **minor third**, which is characteristic of a minor scale. Minor scales generally sound more melancholy and sadder than major scales.

## The major scale

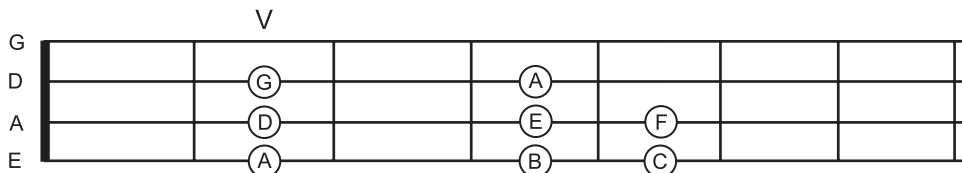
The following illustration shows you the fingering diagram for the **C major scale**. This scale consists of a series of seven consecutive notes, with the scale beginning again one octave higher on the eighth note (C): C - D - E - F - G - A - B - (C). What is characteristic of the major scale is that the half-tone steps are from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> notes (E to F) and from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> notes (B to C)). The Roman numerals in all the following fingering diagrams are for orientation purposes and indicate the fret you are playing at. In the following example the fret indicated is the 7<sup>th</sup> (VII).



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## The minor scale

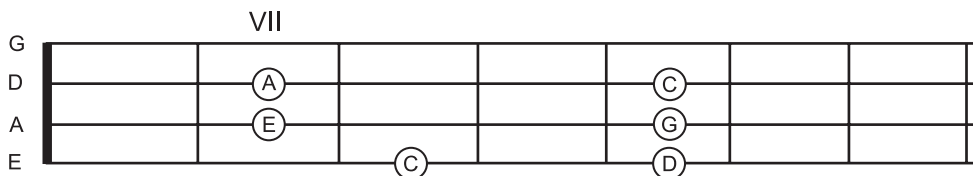
This illustration shows you the **A minor scale**. It also consists of a series of seven consecutive notes. Here, too, the scale begins again one octave higher on the eighth note (A): A - B - C - D - E - F - G - (A). The difference to the major scale is that the half-tones are different steps: from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> notes (from B to C) and from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> notes (E to F). This scale begins at the 5<sup>th</sup> fret (V).



You have probably noticed that the A minor scale basically consists of the same notes as the C major scale. Therefore, the half-tone steps are also between the same notes (from B to C and from E to F). The scales actually only begin on different notes, which shifts the half-tone step to different positions in the scale. It is also said that A minor is the *parallel key* to C major.

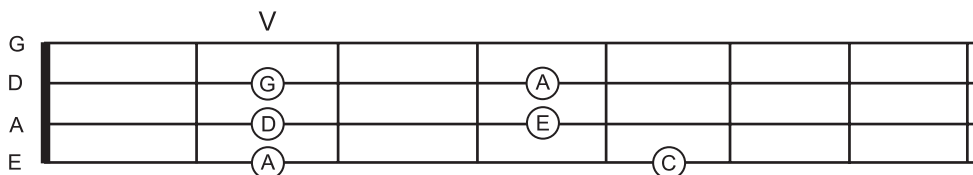
## The major pentatonic scale

“Penta” is a Greek word meaning “five” and “tonic” stands for tone or note. Pentatonic scales comprise five notes per octave. The major pentatonic scale is a major scale without the fourth and seventh notes, which means that it does not contain any half-tone steps. The illustration below shows the **C major pentatonic scale** with the following notes: C - D - E - G - A - (C). If you compare these notes with those of the C major scale you will see that F and B are missing. Here it is the sixth note (C) on which the scale starts again one octave higher.



## The minor pentatonic scale

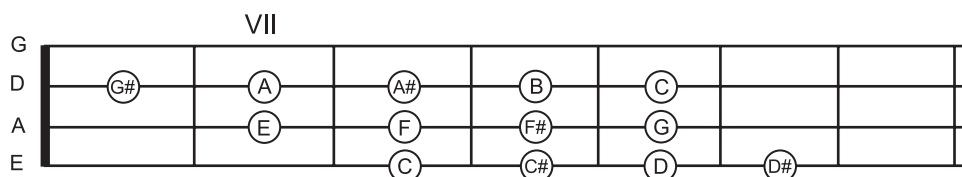
The **A minor pentatonic scale** also comprises five notes derived from the A minor scale, whereby the second and sixth notes (B and F) have been removed. A - C - D - E - G - (A). The scale begins again one octave higher on the sixth note (A).



Use the notes in the major and minor pentatonic scales for playing simple bass lines, for example.

## The chromatic scale

The chromatic scale consists solely of half tone steps and thus comprises all the twelve notes: C - C# - D - D# - E - F - F# - G - G# - A - A# - B - (C). This scale also begins again one octave higher on the thirteenth note (C).



As this scale only contains half-tone steps, it cannot be classified according to mode (major or minor) and sounds less harmonious.

## Positioning the left hand

With the exception of the chromatic scale, the individual notes of the scales are always within a range of four frets. Make sure that each of the fingers of your left hand is responsible for one of these frets.

In the case of the C major scale/C major pentatonic scale (7<sup>th</sup> position), that means:

- 7<sup>th</sup> fret (VII): 1<sup>st</sup> finger (index finger)
- 8<sup>th</sup> fret (VIII): 2<sup>nd</sup> finger (middle finger)
- 9<sup>th</sup> fret (IX): 3<sup>rd</sup> finger (ring finger)
- 10<sup>th</sup> fret (X): 4<sup>th</sup> finger (little finger)

...and for the A minor scale/A minor pentatonic scale (5<sup>th</sup> position):

- 5<sup>th</sup> fret (V): 1<sup>st</sup> finger (index finger)
- 6<sup>th</sup> fret (VI): 2<sup>nd</sup> finger (middle finger)
- 7<sup>th</sup> fret (VII): 3<sup>rd</sup> finger (ring finger)
- 8<sup>th</sup> fret (VIII): 4<sup>th</sup> finger (little finger)



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The chromatic scale is an exception. As soon as you move to the next string, you have to shift the position by one fret. In addition, on the D string there are not four but five notes, of which both of the last two are played with the little finger. To do this, at the end of the scale you have to slide your little finger from the 9<sup>th</sup> fret (IX) to the 10<sup>th</sup> fret (X). If you start the scale on C, it will look like this:

**E string:** 1<sup>st</sup> finger (VIII) — 2<sup>nd</sup> finger (IX) — 3<sup>rd</sup> finger (X) — 4<sup>th</sup> finger (XI)

**A string:** 1<sup>st</sup> finger (VII) — 2<sup>nd</sup> finger (VIII) — 3<sup>rd</sup> finger (IX) — 4<sup>th</sup> finger (X)

**D string:** 1<sup>st</sup> finger (VI) — 2<sup>nd</sup> finger (VII) — 3<sup>rd</sup> finger (VIII) — 4<sup>th</sup> finger (IX) — 4<sup>th</sup> finger (X)

Hold your hand as straight as you can while you play and try to keep it relaxed and not let it become cramped.

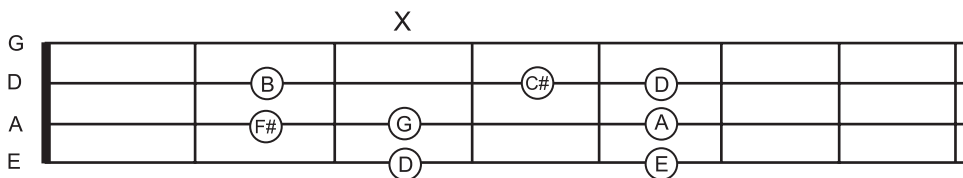
## Scale exercise 1:

Try playing each scale up and down at a speed you feel comfortable with (ideally with the aid of a metronome). If you're using a pick, try to use the technique of alternate picking that we mentioned at the beginning, i.e. beginning with a downstroke on the first note and then alternately playing the subsequent notes with upstrokes and downstrokes. Make absolutely sure that you constantly alternate between upstrokes and downstrokes and that you maintain a constant tempo so that you can achieve evenness in your playing. Try playing the scales the other way, too, beginning with an upstroke. That way, you can train your right hand to be independent.

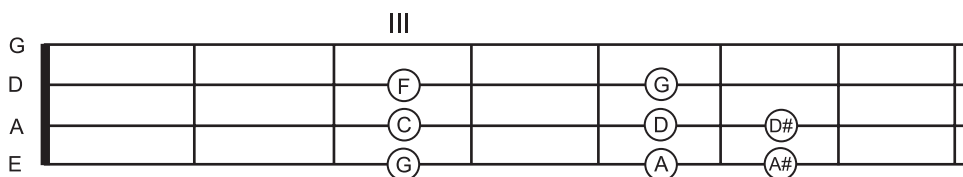
## Scale exercise 2:

Shift the scales on the fingerboard so that you begin with different notes. That way, you will learn to play the scales confidently in different positions. As soon as you change the position, and with it the keynote, you change key. For example, if you shift the C major scale two frets upwards, the first note in the scale is at the 10<sup>th</sup> fret on the E string (D). The scale thus becomes the D major scale. If you shift the A minor scale two frets down, for example, the first note will be at the 3<sup>rd</sup> fret on the E string (G) and the scale becomes the G minor scale.

### D major scale



### G minor scale



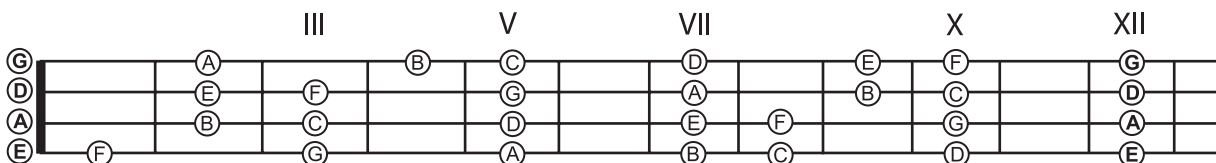
## Scale exercise 3:

The following illustration shows you the C major scale again. This time, however, it is played over two octaves and has a range of ten frets. This is intended to give you an idea of how the notes in a scale can ultimately be played over the entire fingerboard.



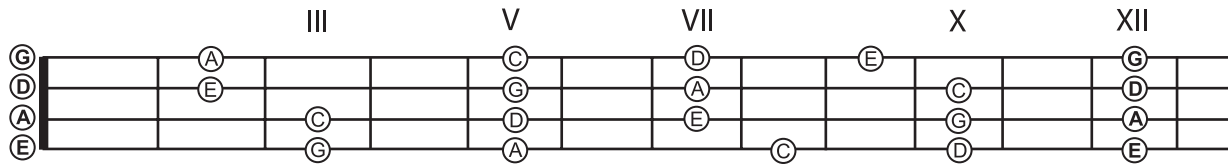
## Scale exercise 4:

The following illustration shows you how the notes in the C major (or A minor) scale are spread over the entire fingerboard. At the 12<sup>th</sup> fret (XII) you come to the octave on each string and the fingerboard basically starts again from the beginning. Try to memorize these progressions and to develop your own bass lines, melodies and riffs containing these notes. You should also try playing the scale with different starting notes in different positions (e.g. in the 2<sup>nd</sup> position starting with G). That way, you get a lot of new scales based on the C major scale.



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If you were then to take out every B and every F from these scales, you would be left with the notes of the C major (or A minor) pentatonic scale spread over the entire fingerboard. Practise this the same way as you did the C major scale.



## CHORDS

Although bassists tend to have rather less to do with chords than guitarists, for example, we would still like to give you at least a brief introduction to what chords are and to what different kinds of chords there are.

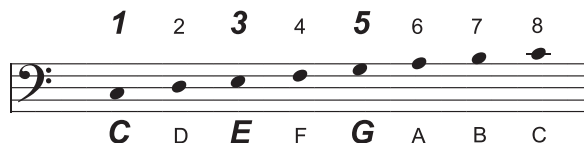
A chord always consists of at least three different notes: the **tonic** (keynote), the **third** (i.e. the 3<sup>rd</sup> note in the scale) and the **fifth** (i.e. the 5<sup>th</sup> note in the scale). This is also known as a **verticalization of thirds**, meaning that there is an interval of one third between each of the three notes. The type of chord is determined by the order of the different thirds (major and minor thirds). If a chord contains a major third followed by a minor third, it is a major chord. If a chord begins with a minor third followed by a major third, it is a minor chord. This means that there are the following combinations for major and minor chords:

**Major chord: tonic, major third, fifth**

**Minor chord: tonic, minor third, fifth**

In the following example, let's take the familiar C major scale and try to form a chord starting on each of the seven notes in the scale.

We'll start with the C as the tonic. Now, if we look for the third above the tonic among the other notes in the scale we come to the E, the 3<sup>rd</sup> note. This is a major third (because it involves two whole-tone steps). Now we have to look for the next third above the E. We find it one half and one whole tone (a minor third) above the E on the G; it is the fifth above the tonic C. This order of thirds—first a major third and then a minor third—means that this is a major chord. We therefore have all the three notes in the **C major** chord (C, E, G). The abbreviation for this chord is simply "**C**".



Now, if we take the D, the next note in the C major scale, and look for the notes in the chord in the same way, we get D, F and A. This chord is **D minor**, because the thirds are arranged with a minor third first, followed by a major third. The abbreviation for this chord is "**Dm**".

If you form a triad on each of the notes in a scale according to the same principle, you produce the following chords based on the scale.

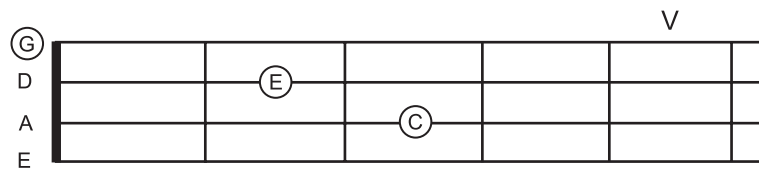
	Key note	Third	Fifth	Chord
1 <sup>st</sup> degree	C	E	G	C
2 <sup>nd</sup> degree	D	F	A	Dm
3 <sup>rd</sup> degree	E	G	B	Em
4 <sup>th</sup> degree	F	A	C	F
5 <sup>th</sup> degree	G	B	D	G
6 <sup>th</sup> degree	A	C	E	Am
7 <sup>th</sup> degree	B	D	F	Bm <sup>5</sup>

The Bm<sup>5</sup> chord (B minor diminished) on the 7<sup>th</sup> degree is an exception here among the other major and minor chords. In this case, two minor thirds are verticalized, resulting in a *diminished fifth* (or an *augmented fourth*)—from the tonic B to the F. All the other chords contain *perfect fifths*, consisting of one major and one minor third.

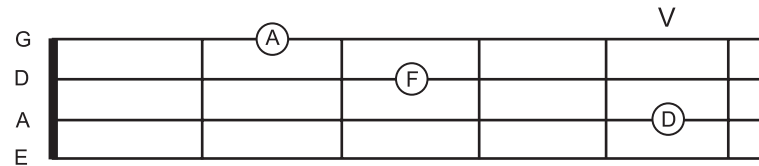
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In the following example you will find seven fingering diagrams showing you one way you can play these chords.

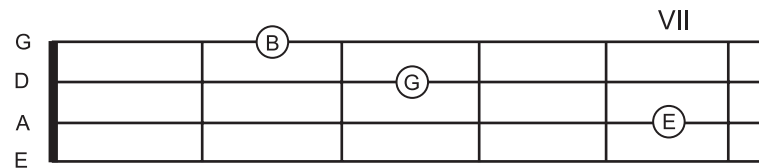
## C major (C)



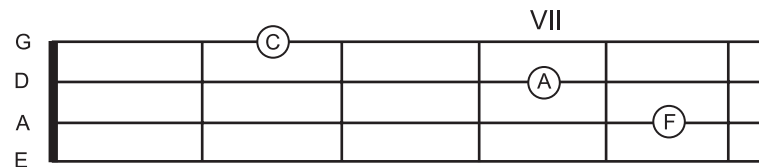
## D minor (Dm)



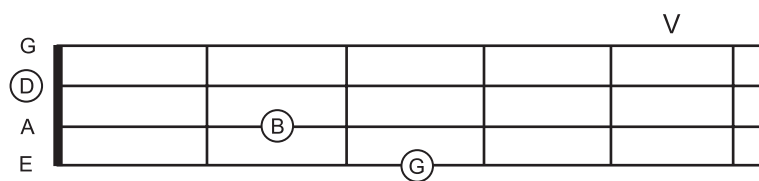
## E minor (Em)



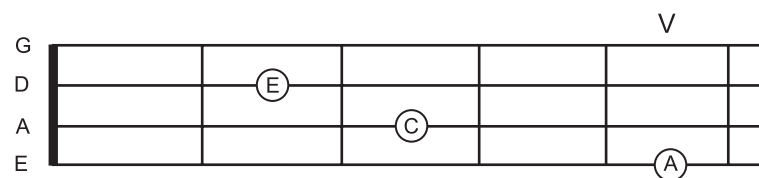
## F major (F)



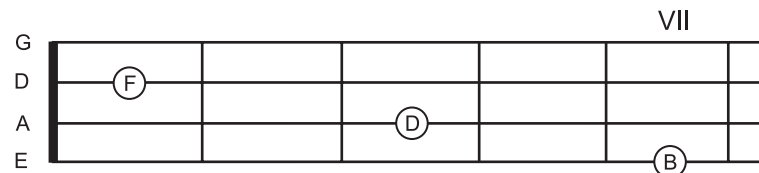
## G major (G)



## A minor (Am)



## B minor diminished (Bm<sup>5</sup>)



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## CARE AND MAINTENANCE

### **Cleaning your bass**

When you finish playing, wipe the strings clean with a soft, dry cloth. The sweat from your hands can cause the strings to rust! Regular cleaning can prolong the life of your strings.

Polish your bass from time to time with high-quality instrument polish containing a small proportion of silicon-free wax.

To care for your fingerboard you can rub lemon oil on the wood with a cloth. This will prevent the wood from drying out.

### **Taking care of your bass**

Do not lean your bass against the wall—somebody might bump into it, causing it to fall over.

Don't leave your bass lying on the floor or on your bed—somebody might stand or sit on it and damage it.

Don't leave your bass in the trunk of your car in extremely hot or cold weather. Extreme temperatures can cause instruments to warp. If you do leave your bass in your car for a prolonged period, loosen the strings and wait until the instrument has acclimatized to room temperature before you tune it again.

### **Changing strings**

You can get bass guitar strings in any music store. They can also give you detailed instructions on stringing your bass.

Replace your strings regularly, because they lose their brilliance with time. How often you have to change them depends on the type and gauging of the strings. Rule of thumb: If your bass sounds dull, it's time to change the strings.

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