

“BANJO NOTES”

or

'How to play the 5 string banjo'

“We stood outside the pawnshop window, whilst she picked her teeth and I picked a banjo” Will Lankstead.

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HOW TO PLAY THE 5 STRING BANJO BY Will Lankstead

A comprehensive guide on all aspects of becoming a a banjo player.

This book is dedicated to my good friend and fellow banjo player

Tony 'Banjo' Kensall

Topics include: choosing and buying.

How to tune your banjo.

The formation of chords.

Left hand finger-picking patterns.

Banjo parts.

History of the Banjo.

Chord charts.

Care of your instrument.

Capos.

Cases.

Stands.

Strings.

Picks.

Skins.

Straps.

Tablature versus Music notation.

Left hand techniques.

Picking Styles.

Some famous Banjo Players.

A collection of some of the most famous bluegrass songs.

BANJO INTRODUCTION.

The 5 string banjo is mainly an instrument used in Bluegrass music. It can ofcourse be used in folk, and sometimes even in Pop music.

The best style of music to listen to in order to learn the 5 string banjo is ofcourse Bluegrass. Bluegrass music without the predominant driving rolls created by the 5 string banjo generally sounds empty and lacking drive and energy. It can ofcourse, still be played using instruments such as the Mandolin, acoustic guitar, fiddle and string bass but, but you will feel there is somehow something still missing.

Bluegrass banjo has all of the sounds and techniques that make the style possible to play.

It can be played as a lead instrument or backup.

The banjo is played with steel finger picks and a plastic or steel thumbpick for volume and clarity. Don't be put off about using picks. At first, it is easier to feel the string with your fingertips. But, you won't get the volume required to be heard over the other instruments in a bluegrass band. Only use the metal thumb and fingerpicks when you feel you are ready for them. You need a plastic thumb pick and metal finger picks for your first [index] and middle fingers. It is a good idea to experiment with different types and guages [thicknesses] to see what you like best. Once you have found a set of picks that suit you, don't loan them out. It is NOT being anti-social but you have found picks that suit your fingers and no-one else. The tips are bent over the tips of your fingers and the metal band which holds the picks on your fingers and thumb are special to YOU! Other banjo pickers never loan their picks out to anybody else. If you do, someone will bend them out of shape and they will no longer fit you.

Will I ever learn to pick so fast with one hand? If you are right handed your right hand does seem to do all of the work, doesn't it? The left hand fingers [frets] the strings and is used to administrate such techniques as 'slides', ' pull-offs' 'hammers-on' and 'choking' [bending] the strings.

People that play like that are not just randomly striking the strings with the right hand willy-nilly but, following particular patterns.

These patterns include forward rolls, backward rolls, alternating thumb etc. The melody [tune] is actually contained within the rolls. I remember when I first started learning the 5 string banjo way back in the mid 1970's, I couldn't for the life of me distinguish the tune from it's accompanying rolls! It just seemed to be 'lost' in there somewhere! What helped me was playing with an acoustic guitarist who played simple chords such as G major, C major, D major and E minor.

It slowly all began to make sense,

These are the four chords of the G major family.

In musical terminology the 'Root ' chord. In this case G, the sub-dominant chord of C major, the dominant chord of D major and finally a chord that often pops up in this sequence, but NOT always is E minor. Fortunately MOST songs in the Bluegrass repertoire consist of these three or four chords.

The 5 string banjo is actually tuned to an open G chord.

In other words, no fingers of the left hand are required to press down on the strings. [fretted].

What you have to aim for is to play in order and in rhythm. Speed will develop over time.

DON'T rush it, it will only sound cluttered, unclear notes and probably out of time. Ofcourse, your enthusiasm and willingness to learn to play fast has to be controlled. In the long run, patience and practice can and will only benefit your playing. Don't forget, even the banjo maestros started exactly the same way as you! Above all, make sure it is FUN! If you're not enjoying playing or feel it's something you are forcing yourself to do, it will affect your playing.

How to tune the five string banjo?

If you are not already a musician, say a guitar or mandolin player and DO NOT have access to a piano or electronic keyboard, or even a friend who plays any of these instruments you are going to require something that can give you a note or notes that you need to tune to. You can use an electronic tuner for guitar which as well as having a Jack Lead input, also has a built in microphone; because of the huge increase in electronics such Digital tuners can be very cheap to buy. You can get one from your local music shop or shop online on ebay, Amazon etc.

The first string which is nearest to your knee when you're holding the banjo in playing position will give you an 'open-string' [not fretted] note of D.

You count the strings towards your chest, so the second 'open-string' [not fretted] gives you the note B.

The next string, third or middle string on the 5 string banjo moving towards your chest, 'open-string'

[not fretted] gives you the note G.

The next string towards your chest, the 4th string and the thickest gives you the note D.

This note is the same pitch as a 4th string on Guitar, or the fourth setting on your Digital tuner.

It also sounds exactly the same as your First string D but an Octave lower; in other words, the difference between a girl's voice and a young man when singing the D note.

The final string is the Fifth string, also known as the G string. This is usually the thinnest string.

Basically, it is a drone string and not usually fretted. It only begins on the 5th Fret on the banjo neck.

BASIC CHORD CHART

The top line represents the **nut** which your strings pass over going to the **peg head**.

The horizontal lines indicate the **frets**.

The vertical lines indicate the **strings**. 4th on the left, 1st on the right.

A dot indicates where your fingers are placed.

(CD 1 - TRACK 26)

The numbers over the strings indicate which finger is used to fret that string.

An "X" over a string means it is not played.

Unmarked strings are sounded "open".

C Major

G Major

A very easy chord!

D Major

D7

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©2003 Bradley Laird

The notes will sound the same for example on:

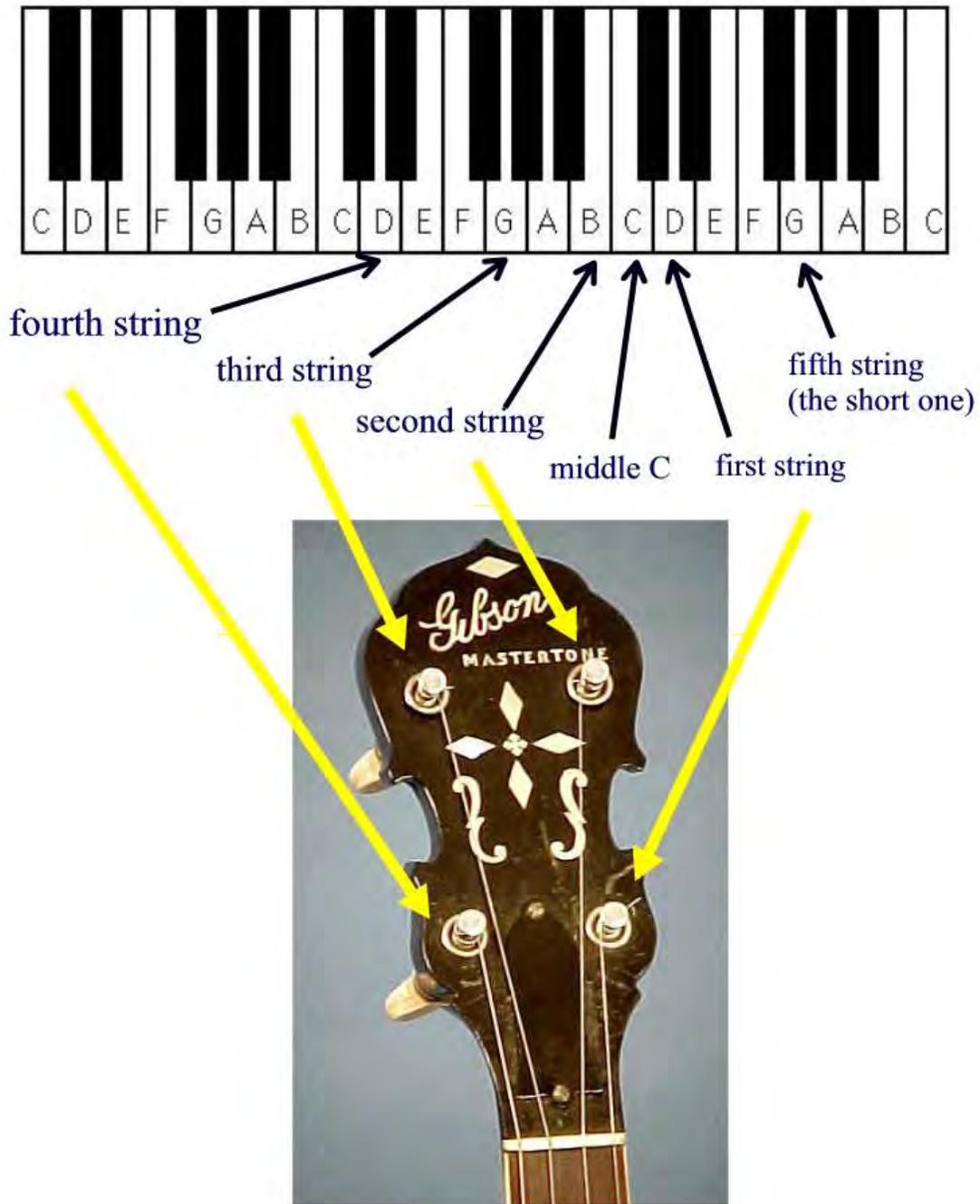
Pressing the 2nd string on the 3rd fret will sound the same as the 'open' 1st.

Pressing the 3rd string on the 4th fret will sound the same as an 'open' 2nd string.

Pressing the 4th string on the 5th fret will sound the same as an open 3rd string.

The 'open' 5th string should sound the same as the 1st string pressed on the 5th fret.

Tuning the banjo using a piano or electronic keyboard.



Other methods of tuning your banjo: PITCH PIPES



Tuning fork



Electronic Tuner

Electronic Tuner Clip on neck model



PLAYING THE BANJO IN OTHER KEYS:

If you need to play in a different key than G major, but using the same finger patterns necessary for that tune you can use what is called a Capo.

This is short for Capodistira and is a clamp fastened across all the strings of a fretted musical instrument to raise their tuning.

There are many different makes and styles of Capos:



4 string Capo



5th String Capo

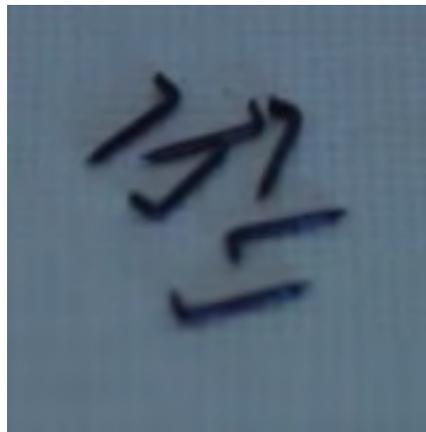


5th String Capo



5th String Capo

You can also use Model Railway tacks for a 5th string Capo.



Railway tacks

Ofcourse, songs and tunes depend entirely on what key a song is in; this is usually determined by what key the Vocalist chooses, but generally the keys of G C and D major are all compatible with guitars, mandolins, fiddles and string bass. All predominantly bluegrass instruments.

BANJO MAKERS



The Deering Models



EPIPHONE



An electric Banjo....heavy rock?



A Gibson Mastertone....the best make of banjo.



A Martin Vega



Fender 5 string banjo



Gold Tone

There are many, many more banjo makers to choose from; even imports from China, Japan and South Korea. It all depends on your budget.

You get what you pay for unfortunately, but a lot of the cheaper makes are pretty good.

SOME THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR:

A must is to make sure that it stays in tune.

What's the action like which is the height of the strings over the fretboard?

Do the tuning pegs [machine heads] work properly and

keep tension on the strings? Does anything rattle on the resonator?

Do any of the strings buzz when fretted?

Are the frets well fitted or stick up too much or out over the edges of the neck, are they sharp to the touch?

What is the overall finish like?

What does it sound like?

Is it comfortable to play or are you constantly having to fight the thing?!

It should be as comfortable and easy to play when sitting or standing.

Some banjos can be very heavy and will put a strain on your neck and shoulders.

You can buy a banjo from new or get a decent second hand one.

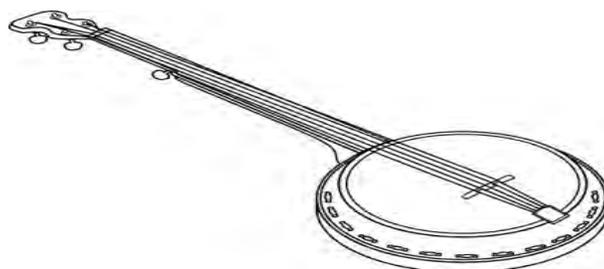
If the seller is a player, it's probably been set up to be easy to play.

Your local music shop should be able to adjust the action for you by adjusting the truss rod, lowering the bridge or nut.

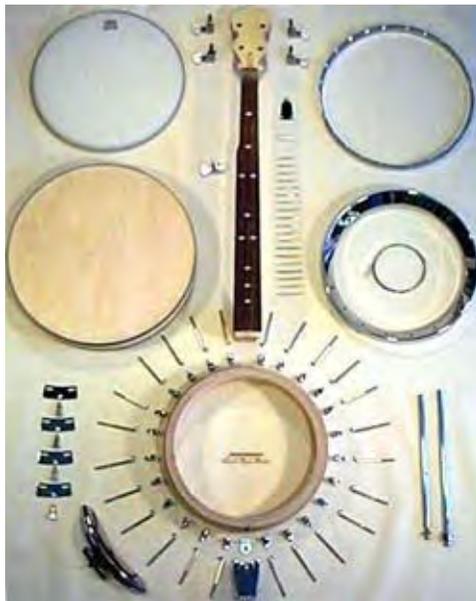
It is NOT something to be attempted by a beginner player, or perhaps even intermediate as you can completely ruin what set up it had previously, or even damage the instrument.

Most musical instruments bought off the rack from a music shop have NOT been set up; many of the factory makers don't do it, All the instruments are sent out with standard configurations. To get the best from it for YOU, it needs to be setup to your requirements.

Most instruments can and do give a pretty good response when bought straight off the rack, but do generally need some fine adjustments.



PARTS OF THE 5 STRING BANJO:



1. Head
2. Neck
3. Nut
4. Machine heads
5. Truss rod cover
6. Fretboard
7. Mother of Pearl fret inlay markers
8. Banjo skin
9. Drum ring
10. Resonator
11. Drumshell
12. Bolts to hold banjo drum
13. Armrest
14. Two truss rods
15. Tailpiece
16. 5th string nut

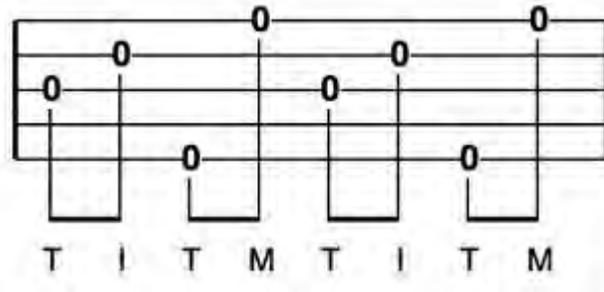
HISTORY OF THE FIVE STRING BANJO

The banjo was first brought to America, mainly to the Southern states, by African slaves, during the slave trade. It developed over the centuries as the foremost American instrument. Its early, somewhat simple construction was refined and expanded upon over the years. Today the banjo's instantly recognisable signature sound is heard in country, bluegrass and folk music. Either as a solo instrument or in groups and musical ensembles.

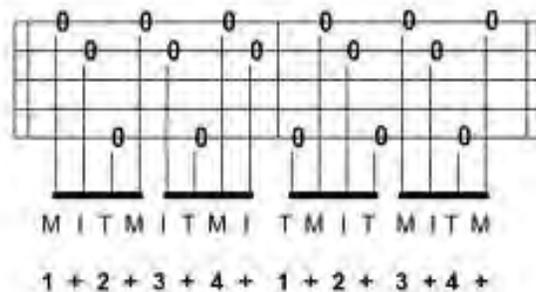
Earliest forms of the banjo were made from tanned skins or gourds, and connected to strips of wood. Gut, hemp and even twine was used to make the strings. The name for the instrument comes originally from several different African cultures. It was previously called the bangie, banza and banzer before becoming commonly known as the banjo. It was played in the early 1600s by slaves, and in the 1800s, whites musicians were beginning to use it when performing in 'blackface' otherwise known as minstrel shows. An early pioneer of the banjo, still then only a four string instrument which still survives to this day in Minstrel bands and Irish Traditional music, was a travelling musician called Joel Walker Sweeney. He was predominant in the early 1800's. A fifth string was added and it was Sweeney who is accredited with popularizing the five-string banjo. Some claim that he even invented the instrument. *The five-string banjo was not only becoming a standard instrument of minstrel shows, it also was played widely in New York bars, hotels, parlors and at race tracks. Banjo playing contests became popular in the mid 1800s. Around 1857 metal strings began to replace the traditional gut strings. During the Civil War, soldiers formed banjo groups and spread the knowledge of the instrument to all areas of the country. By 1866, there were some 10,000 banjos in the city of Boston alone. The banjo thrived during the Ragtime era, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries . While African-Americans and southern whites always were playing the five string banjo, elsewhere, five string banjo playing declined until the arrival of bluegrass. The banjo became very popular once again with the explosion of bluegrass around 1945, right after WWII, according to the International Bluegrass Music Association. The banjo was also a big part of folk music, which began in the 1950s, and continued through the 1960s, right up till today. The banjo

remains a very popular instrument and appears to have a permanent home in bluegrass and country music.*

BANJO PICKING STYLES: Earl Scruggs ROLLS.



Alternating thumb



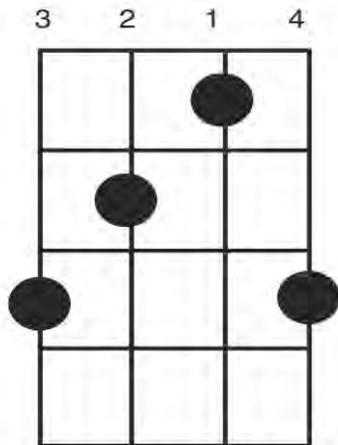
Backward Roll

Forward Roll

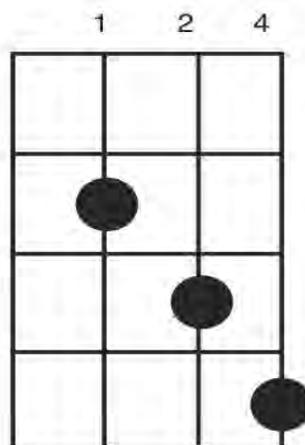
2nd Forward Roll

Tablature for fretting the strings

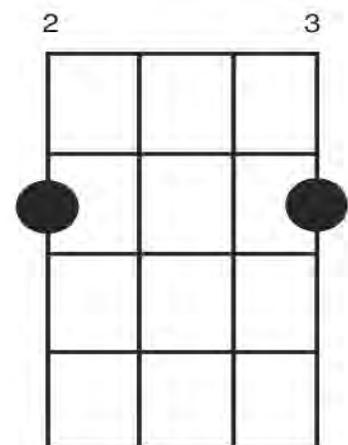
SOME MORE CHORDS FOR THE 5 STRING BANJO



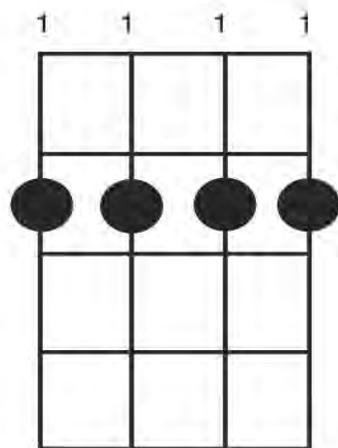
F Major



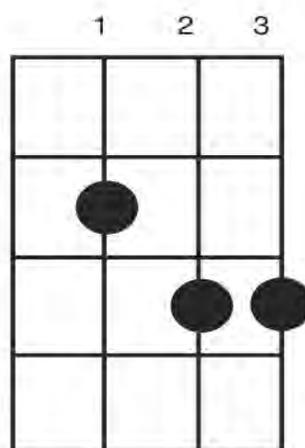
D Major



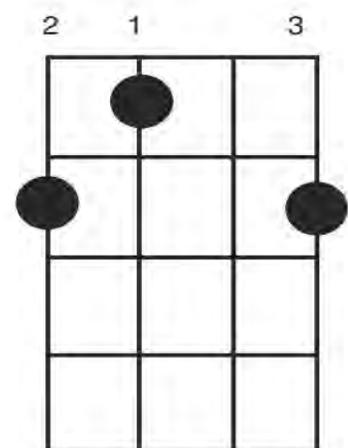
E Minor



A Major



D Minor



E Major

THE BLACK DOTS REPRESENT FINGERS ON EACH PARTICULAR FRET.

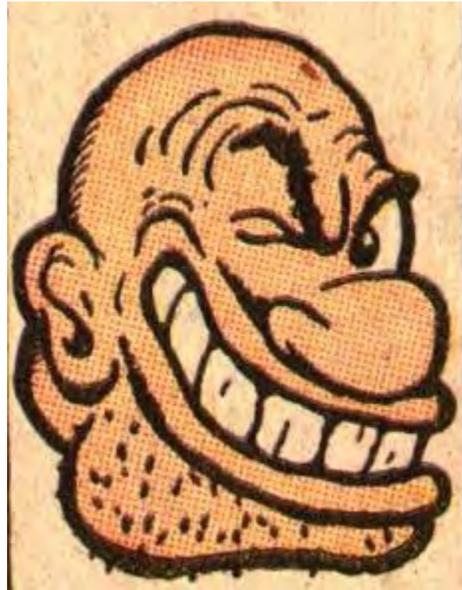
FIGURES 1 2 3 4 REPRESENT WHICH FINGERS OF THE LEFT HAND PRESS THOSE STRINGS DOWN.

'0' MEANS AN 'OPEN' STRING, NOT FRETTED BUT STILL PART OF THAT CHORD.

Protecting your banjo:

If you want to keep your banjo in good condition, it's a good idea to buy a case for it. These mainly come in three types. Are you a:

THE HARDCASE



OR

A BIG SOFTEE



OR

An In-betweener



A Banjo Hardcase gives the most protection to your instrument and can also be locked. Great for gigging on the road or international trips.



A Soft case will provide some protection but usually doesn't guard against damp or rough handling.



A padded gig-bag gives you more protection than a soft case and is usually lighter in weight to carry. It has added padding for protection.

Various types of stands



A Frame stand

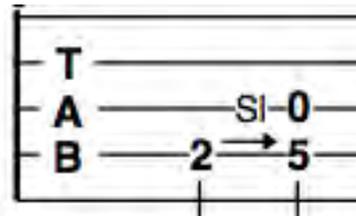


A simpler type of stand

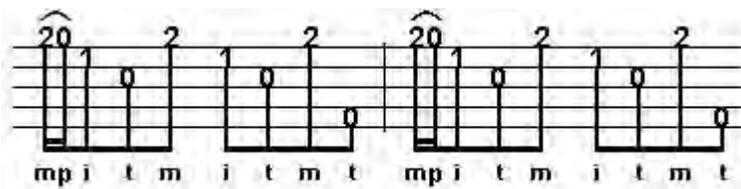
A Wall Hanger for indoor use



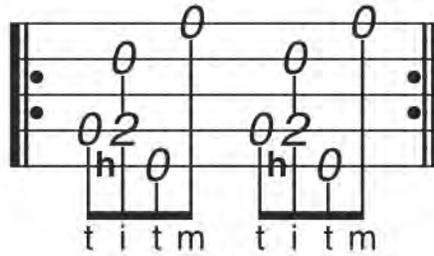
A Study of Left hand Techniques:
Slides, pulloffs, hammers-on and choking



The first note is played and then slid up from 2nd to 5th fret.

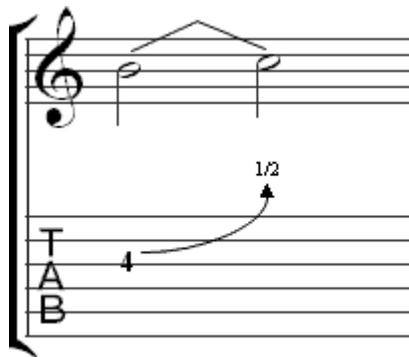


The note is played and then the finger 'pulls off' the string to sound the next note.



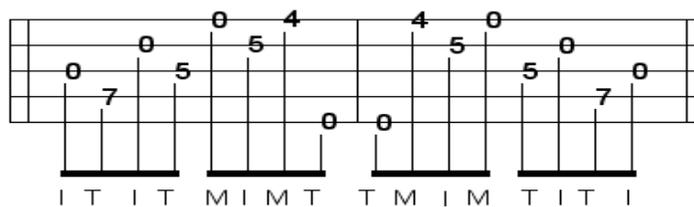
Hammer on: where the note is played and the finger strikes the string on the numbered fret; in the above case it's on the 2nd fret.

Choking [bending]



Choking or bending means to assert pressure on the string and push upwards or pull down to 'bend' the string and create another note.

Melodic Banjo Style



This style is NOT based on rolls as Scruggs-style is, but is achieved by playing the melody in a note for note based style, as opposed to where the rolls are syncopated

which doesn't always allow you to play on the melody. Melodic style works a lot like a fiddle player or guitar flatpicker who stays solely on the melody. With Melodic playing you generally play a note on one string and get the next note on another string which differs from playing the melody on a single string where you can get as many notes in a row on the same string as you need. Makes sense?! I'd recommend studying banjo players who specialise in Melodic banjo such as Tony Trishka and Bill Keith.

FRAILING STYLE

As opposed to striking the strings with a flat pick[plectrum]; or picking upward on the strings with the finger tips,[clawhammer] or metal picks, Frailing involves striking downward on the strings with the back of the fingers or nails of the left hand.

This can be applied to either single or several strings.

The Index and middle fingers are the most commonly used.

The thumb is used on the off-beats by plucking the 5th or Drone string.

This will produce a 4 beat rhythm of 1 2+3 4+

“Dum-chinger Dum-chinger”

By adding eighth notes into the open half beats after the 1st and third quarter notes and by using the thumb to pick a string other than the fifth, the technique can be developed further. This is often referred to as 'double' or 'drop-thumbng'.

Many banjo players favour this style such as Pete Seeger, Billy Connolly, Bill Whelan and Frank Murphy.

The style creates a very 'bouncy ' tick-tock rhythm especially in the time signatures of 2/4 or 4/4.

On the next page I have included the Tablature for Clawhammer/Frailing banjo courtesy of ezfolk.com. The tune was arranged by Richard Hefner. You should be able to see and hear the difference between Frailing and Sruggs styles. Enjoy! Decide which style suits you best.

Big Rock Candy Mountain

Clawhammer Banjo - Key of G - Level 1

Arranged by Richard Hefner
<http://www.ezFolk.com>



Musical notation for measures 1-4. The staff shows a 4/4 time signature. The notes are: G (open), B (open), D (open), G (open).



Musical notation for measures 5-8. The staff shows notes: G (open), G (open).



Musical notation for measures 9-12. The staff shows notes: G (open), G (open).



Musical notation for measures 13-16. The staff shows notes: G (open), G (open).



A who's who of famous 5 string banjo players.



EARL SCRUGGS:

- Earl Eugene Scruggs, musician, born 6 January 1924; died 28 March 2012.

The youngest of five, Scruggs was born in rural Cleveland County, North Carolina, and started playing banjo as a child, perhaps absorbing ideas from local banjoists such as Mack Woolbright, Smith Hammett and Snuffy Jenkins. In his mid-teens he played with the then popular Morris Brothers, but soon returned home to be with his long-widowed mother and was employed in a local textile mill.

Scruggs, played with Monroe for three momentous years in the late 1940s. He devised a picking method in which the thumb and two fingers of the right hand are used to pick the strings. It was a very different style to the 'old-timey' banjo playing style that had preceded it. Scruggs was often referred to as the Segovia of the five-string banjo, or the Paganini of bluegrass.

In 1945, he joined Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys, not long after the singer and guitarist Lester Flatt, who was to become his long term future musical partner. In 1948, Flatt and Scruggs set out on their own, jointly leading the Foggy Mountain Boys. The group made now famous recordings such as Flint Hill Special, named after Scruggs's home town; Randy Lynn Rag, Foggy Mountain Breakdown, which was used in the film Bonnie and Clyde (1967) and The ballad of Jed Clampett, the theme tune of the popular TV show The Beverly Hillbillies which became a No 1 on the country music chart in 1962.

He published an instruction book In 1968; which went on to sell more than a million copies. After 20 years", in 1969 he broke with Flatt and formed the Earl Scruggs Revue with his sons Gary and Randy, and later Steve. They experimented with drums and amplified instruments embracing different musical styles which lost him some of his fan base, but the college campuses of the 1970s became a new stomping ground. He played on the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's album called in 1972 known as Will the Circle be Unbroken which opened the ears of many rock fans in 1972 to Bluegrass music.

In 1975, he celebrated 25 years at Columbia Records with an album to mark the quarter century anniversary. He was joined by Leonard Cohen, Billy Joel and dozens of other musicians. He left a long lasting legacy.



BELA FLECK

His full name is Béla Anton Leos Fleck. He was born on July 10, 1958. He is a well renowned American banjo player who is widely regarded as one of the World's greatest technically proficient and innovative of today's players. He is best known for his work with the bands Bela Fleck and the Flecktones and New Grass Revival.

BILL KEITH.



Bill Keith was born on December 20, 1939. He is a five-string banjoist who made a significant contribution to the stylistic development of the instrument. In the 1960s he introduced a variation on the popular 'Earl Scruggs ' style by creating and developing his own known as Melodic banjo. He too played with Bill Monroe's Bluegrass Boys.

He made a mechanical contribution to the banjo, by designing a specialized type of banjo tuning peg that facilitated changing quickly from one open tuning to another, whilst still continuing to play. Earl Scruggs had also earlier altered the machine heads so that they became geared allowing for de-tuning with ease and precision.

TONY TRISCHKA



Tony Trischka was born on January 16th 1949 in Syracuse, New York State. He plays a melodic banjo style.

ERIC WEISSBERG

He was born on August 16, 1939. He is a **banjo** player and multi-instrumentalist. He is best known for playing the theme from the movie Deliverance known as "Duelling Banjos". He was later involved in a lawsuit with the tune's original composer as permission wasn't given for its use in the movie.

He gained a reputation as a talented session musician and played on albums by Bob Dylan, Loudon Wainwright, Art Garfunkel, Talking Heads, John Denver and many others.

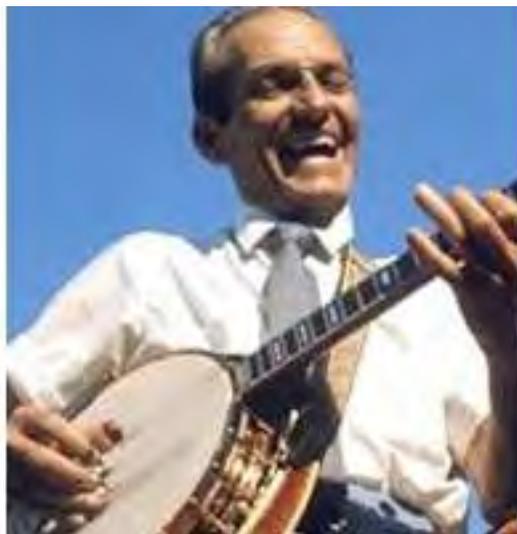


DON RENO



Don Wesley Reno was born on February 21, 1927. He died on October 16, 1984. He was a bluegrass and country musician best known for his association with the musicians Red Smiley and Bill Harrell. He was to record the earlier recording of “Duelling Banjos”, then known as Fuedin' Banjos.

SNUFFY JENKINS



DeWitt "Snuffy" Jenkins was born on October 27, 1908. He died on April 29, 1990. He was an old time banjo player and an early proponent of the three-finger banjo style, later made famous and popular by Earl Scruggs.

J.D. CROWE



GRANDPA JONES



PETE SEEGER



Other banjo players to watch out for are Kermit the Frog! Billy Connolly, the actor and comedian Steve Martin.

Watch out for Banjo videos on You Tube for tips tricks and lessons.

And finally, last but not least:

TONY KENSALL

A multi-instrumentalist well known on the local scene around his native Wales. He plays both 4 & 5 string banjos, mandolin, mandola, guitar to name a few. A main contributor and supporter of the folk music of the British Isles, Ireland and America. For many years he was heavily involved with Folk Clubs and Theatre Clwyd in Wales. He is a musician, performer and sound engineer.



TONY 'BANJO' KENSALL

A selection of tablature for some of the most well known, loved and played Bluegrass tunes and songs.

Cripple Creek, Boil the Cabbage Down, Buffalo Gals, Tom Dooley, Long Journey Home, John Henry, Red River Valley, Blackberry Blossom, My Old Kentucky Home, Old Time Religion, You are my sunshine, Foggy Mountain Breakdown, Sourwood mountain and more.



BANJO NOTES

TURTLE DOVE

Tablature for the song "Turtle Dove". The notation is arranged in three systems, each with five lines representing the strings (D, B, G, E, G from top to bottom). The first system includes a dynamic marking 'p' (piano) below the first measure. The second system includes a slur over the first measure of the G string. The third system ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

D	0	0	0	0	2	2
B	0	0	0	0	1-1	1-1
G	0-0	0-2	0	0-0	2	0
E		2-0	0		0	0
G	0		0	0	0	0
p						
D	0-0	0-2-0	0	0	0	0
B	0		0-0	0	1	0-0
G	0		0-0	0-0	2-2	2-0
E					0	0-0
G	0		0	0	0	0
D	0	0	0			
B	1	0	0	0		
G	2-2	2	0-0	0-0		
E						
G	0		0	0		

FRAILING STYLE.

Give me that Old Time Religion

G m m 0 0 0 m 0 0 0 D7 ml m 0 0 G m 0 m 0

TIT TIMT MTMT | ITMT | TMTI TMTI | TMTI TMTI | TMTI TMTI | TMTI TMTI | TMTI TMTI

C m 0 m 0 ml 0 0 m 0 D7 0 r l 0 l G 0 m

TIT MTIT MT | TMTMT ITMT | TMTI TMTI | TMTI TMTI | TMTI TMTI | TMTI TMTI | TMTI TMTI

m 0 m m D7 m m G m 0 0 0

TITMT ITI TIT | TITMT ITMT | TITMT ITMT

l m m C ml m D7 r l l G m m

TMTI MTIM | TMTMT ITMT | TMTI TMTI | TMTI TMTI | TMTI TMTI | TMTI TMTI | TMTI TMTI

0

0

T MT

CRIPPLE CREEK

G C G D G

G C G D G

BILE DEM CABBAGE DOWN

G C G D7 G

G C G D G

First Banjo Break (Part A)

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a banjo break. Each system consists of a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature and a bass line with fingerings. The first system includes a double bar line and is marked with 'G' and 'F' chords. The second system is marked with 'G' and 'F' chords. The third system is marked with 'G' and 'D' chords. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 and '0' for open strings. The bass line includes letters 'h', 'p', and 's' for hammer-ons, pull-offs, and slides.

BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN

MURPHY'S CRAIC BAND



The Author with fellow band members Phil and Robbie

	d	g	b	d
1	d#	g#	c	d#
2	e	a	c#	e
3	f	a#	d	f
4	f#	b	d#	f#
5	g	g	c	e
6	g#	g#	c#	f
7	a	a	d	f#
8	a#	a#	d#	g
9	b	b	e	g#
10	c	c	f	a
11	c#	c#	f#	a#
12	d	d	g	b
13	d#	d#	g#	c
14	e	e	a	c#
15	f	f	a#	d
16	f#	f#	b	d#
17	g	g	c	e
18	g#	g#	c#	f
19	a	a	d	f#
20	a#	a#	d#	g

5 STRING BANJO FINGERBOARD

WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN?

The image displays a musical score for the song "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?". It consists of five systems of guitar tablature, each with a corresponding fretting diagram below it. The score is written in a 4/4 time signature and includes various chords and techniques such as slides, bends, and triplets. The chords indicated are G, C, G, Em, D, and G. The fretting diagrams show the fingerings for each note, with letters T, I, M, and M representing the thumb, index, middle, and ring fingers respectively. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 1, 5, 9, 13, and 17 marked at the beginning of their respective systems.

That's all Folks!! Check out tabs online or buy the songbooks. Happy Plucking!!!

I've given you some suggestions of songs and tunes to try out. Don't just stick with the Scruggs or Reno style of playing; try Melodic style like Bill Keith and Tony Trischka, or Frailing just like Billy Connolly. Don't limit yourself. Listen to as many styles as you can. Go to live concerts, or even better, Jam Sessions where you can try out your newly-learned licks. Don't forget! We ALL started at the same level as you!! And finally.....Some Banjo jokes about players and their instruments. "What's the difference between a banjo and an onion?"

No-one cries when you cut up a banjo.

“What's the difference between a banjo and a trampoline?”

You have to take your boots off to jump on a trampoline.

“What's the difference between a banjo and a radio?”

You can fine tune a radio.

“How many banjo players does it take to change a lightbulb?”

Six. One to do it and the other five to complain that it's electric

“What's the difference between a rat runover on the road and a banjo player?”

There's skidmarks in front of the rat!

“What does it mean to have perfect pitch?”

You're able to throw the banjo into the bin without hitting the sides!

“How do banjo players know the difference between the songs they're playing?”

By their names, they all sound the bloody same!

“Is a banjo better than a guitar?”

Yes ofcourse. They burn longer and give off more heat!

“What's the best song to play on a banjo?”

Alone again, naturally.

“How do I know if there's a banjo player at my door?”

He can't find his key, the doorbell speeds up and he never comes in when asked to do so!

“Where and when is it best to hear a group of banjo players?”

In a galaxy, far, far away.....

“What should you do in the unlikely event of running over a banjo player?”

Reverse ofcourse!

“When does a bluegrass 'session' sound it's best?”

When it's finished!

“Why have research Labs switched from using rats to banjo players?”

There's some things even the rats won't do!

A young woman found herself pregnant. Her boyfriend was a banjo player.

The girl's parents refused to let them marry, stating that it was better to have a bastard in the family than a banjo player!

Think of the shame!

“What's the difference between a prison warder and a banjo player?”

At least the Warder knows when to change keys!

“What's the difference between seeing the Abominable snowman and a good banjo player?”

At least there have been some sightings of the Abominable Snowman!

“What's the difference between a Terrorist and a banjo player?”

At least the Terrorist will have some sympathisers!

“It is said that lightning is like a banjo players fingers.”

They never strike twice in the same place!

“What do you mean you'll need a key to come in,” said the Banjo players wife.

It's never stopped you before!

“Playing the banjo is like pissing in a swimming pool.”

It gives you a warm feeling and no-one else notices!

“What's the definition of a truly understanding, consciencous, caring man?”

He can play the banjo but won't!

“How can you tell when a banjo player is well hung?”

When you no longer have to still swing on his legs!

A banjo player was sadly told that he only had six months to live!

“That's terrible Doctor, “ he said, “Is there anything I can do?” he asked.

'Yes,' the Doctor replied, 'You could learn to sing and play every verse to Kum Bye Yi. That way it'll seem as if time itself has stood still!

At least for everyone else that is!

“What's the difference between a fish processing factory and a banjo?”

You can tuna fish!

Attributed to William Shakespeare: [oh yeah?!]

“There once was a picker named Bruno,
Who said, "There's one thing that I do know.
Guitars they are fine,
And mandolins simply divine,
But banjos are numero uno!"

“How is a banjo players repertoire like a harrowing murder trial?”

Everyone is glad when the case is finally closed!

“What's the definition of an ultimate optimist?”

The Banjo player always has his mobile switched on!

An advert spotted on Ebay:

A 5 string banjo for free! No strings attached!

“What's the difference between owning a banjo and a lawnmower?”

Your wife cries if your neighbour borrows your lawnmower and fails to return it!

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I would like to thank the many, many musicians and friends I have played with over the last thirty-seven years or more: James, Ray [Rory], Greg, Kenny, Phil, Tony, Robbie, John, Tom, Brian, Nico and Eric to name just a few. I thank you all for many good times....some bad, but hey! That's the life of a musician!



Will Lankstead



WARNING!!!
PLAYING THE BANJO CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH
