RICK PAYNE'S FINGERSTYLE BLUES

10 lessons in the art of Fingerstyle Blues

acousticguitarworkshop.com

Welcome to the Fingerstyle Blues - 10 lessons in the art of Acoustic Blues

Here is a resume of the course. Just click the lesson titles to get to the lesson. Please note: this is also a listening art. You should listen to as much of the kind of material you are trying to master as possible. Click here for our free mp3 download page where you will find lots of examples of this type of playing

LESSON 1 - EM BLUES

A piece to demonstrate thumb and finger independence in a blues instrumental and be aware of simple two note chords for effective improvisation.

LESSON 2 - DAMPENING THE STRINGS

The use of dampened stings, demonstrated in the tune “Please don’t go”. Also, to use this tune as further study of thumb and finger independence.

LESSON 3 - IMPROVISING THE BLUES

By using blues scales in E the student can begin to improvise around the constant bass exercises of the previous session and to put this into practice by playing the two prepared examples - Fingerpicking Blues 1 & 2.

LESSON 4 - CHICAGO SHUFFLE

Enables the student to play a more contemporary fingerstyle blues. The bass line remains constant while at the same time a nother bass line is introduced to provide an interesting harmony to the melody line.

LESSON 5 - MOVING BASS

Demonstrates how the rhythmic feel of the previous sessions works just as well if the bass line is allowed to move around. This can be played in the moving bass instrumental and gives the impression of a boogie woogie style - in the classic tradition of Leadbelly.

LESSON 6 - GUITAR BOOGIE

In this more advanced instrumental the student will discover how a melody line is introduced over a moving bass pattern for more effective fingerstyle playing. When this is acheived it becomes simple to introduce own ideas from the blues patterns in the previous session.

LESSON 7 - INTERNET BLUES

Using ideas from the earlier examples the student can combine the use of bluesy two note chords over a moving bass pattern.

LESSON 8 - BLUES FOR BRUSGARD

In this instrumental, all the previous ideas are combined into one. The student can recognise how by using these techniques a formidable fingerstyle can be achieved.

LESSON 9 - GUITAR SHUFFLE

An introduction to ragtime blues, using the fingerstyle techniques in previous sessions. Different chord changes are used to create this distinctive Big Bill Broonzy style of picking. Also, some improvisational tricks are demonstrated to develop the shuffle.

LESSON 10 - FISHING BLUES

A more demanding ragtime blues tune than the Shuffle, but again an interesting combination of the all the exercises the student has learned.

FINGERSTYLE RESOURCES

LESSON 1 - Em Blues

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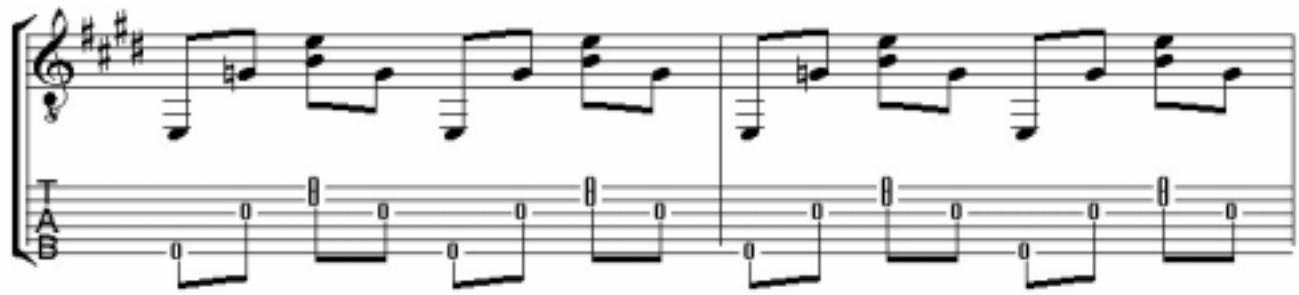
Audio Support:

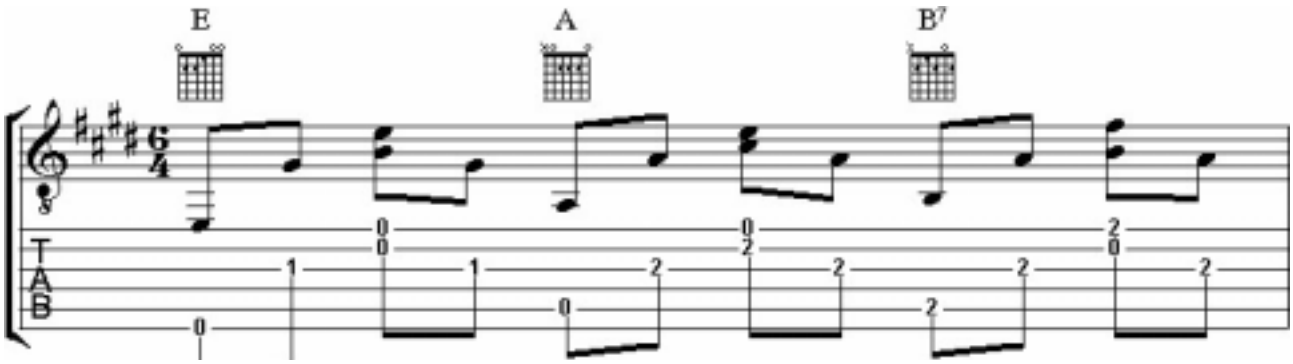
Click here to listen to spoken commentary and music.
Please select **"Session 1"** from the menu

Basic Blues Arpeggio

Try this simple blues arpeggio using the open strings first::



Now try it with these chords:

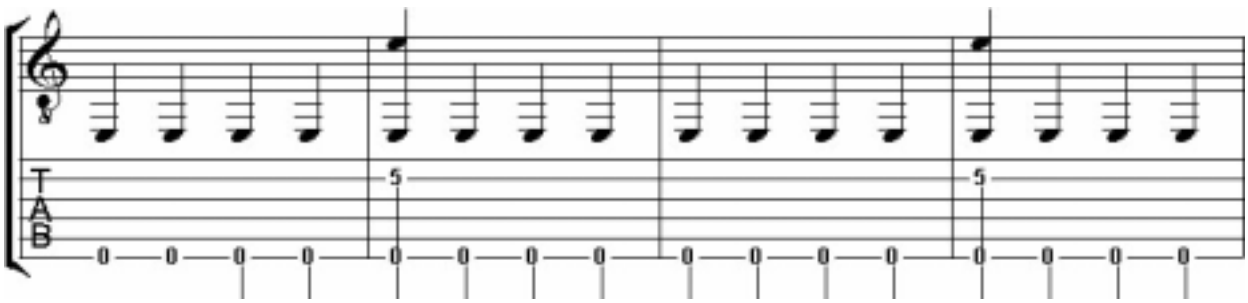


Thumb and finger independence

These exercises will help you develop a strong finger style. The thumb and finger do not play the normal arpeggio roll but work separately and begin to simulate the left and right hand independence found in piano playing - the thumb provides the strong backing rhythm and the fingers play the melody.

Play through each exercise slowly and then try building up speed.

Exercise 1 Start with a steady four beat pattern and begin to build.

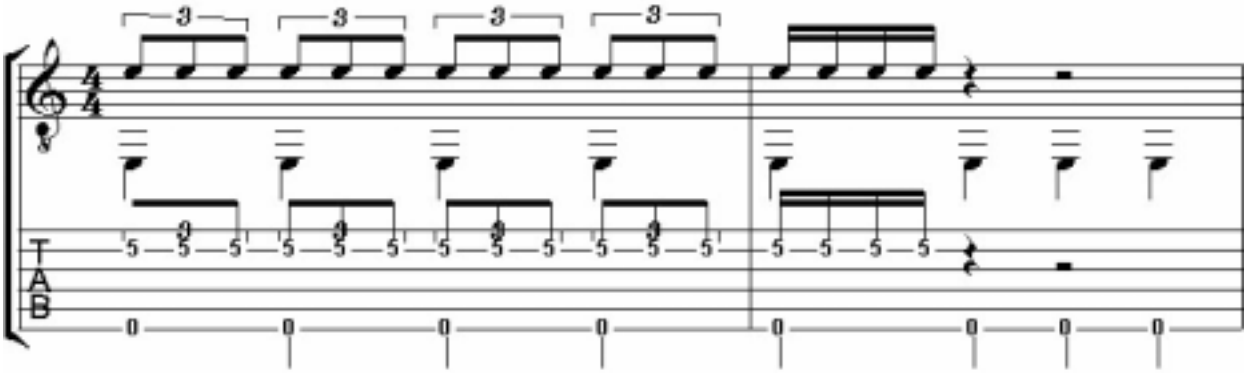


Continue Lesson 1

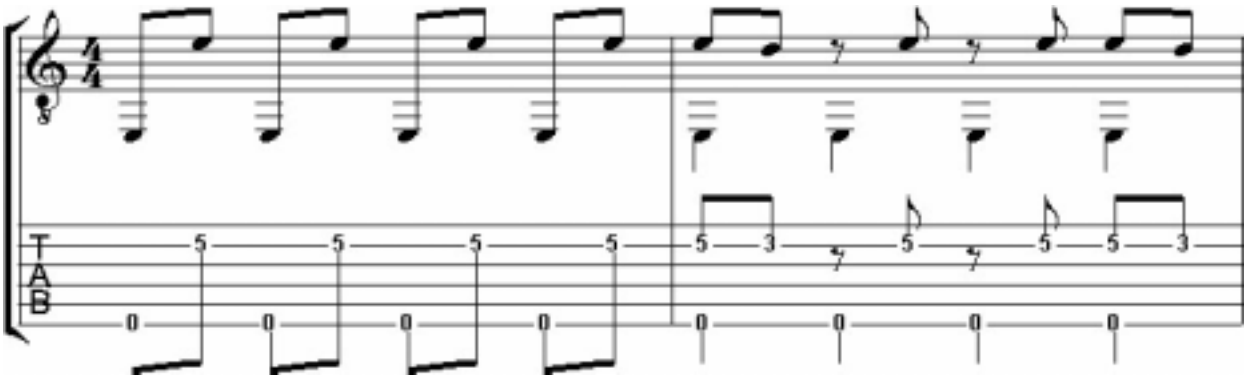
LESSON 1 - Em Blues Continued

Exercise 2 The bass line still remains constant but now the top line introduces a simply melody.

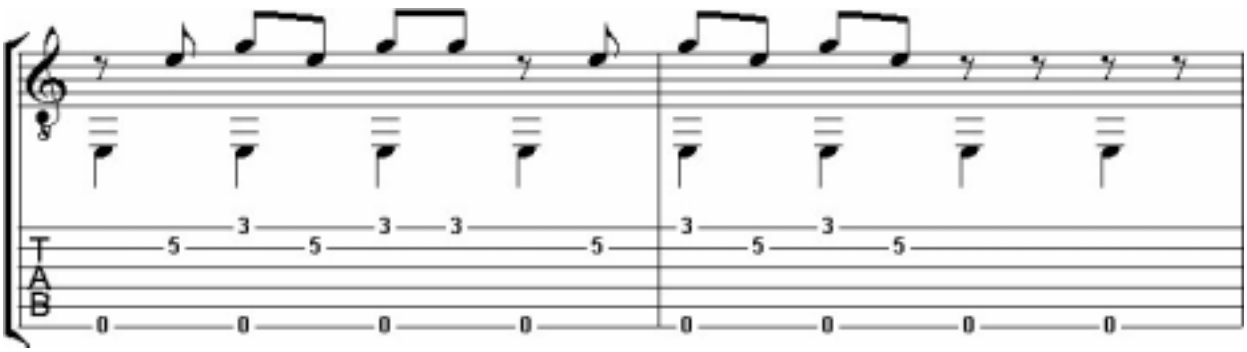
Exercise 3 Try increasing the rhythm of the top line, first with triplets and then with eighth note patterns.



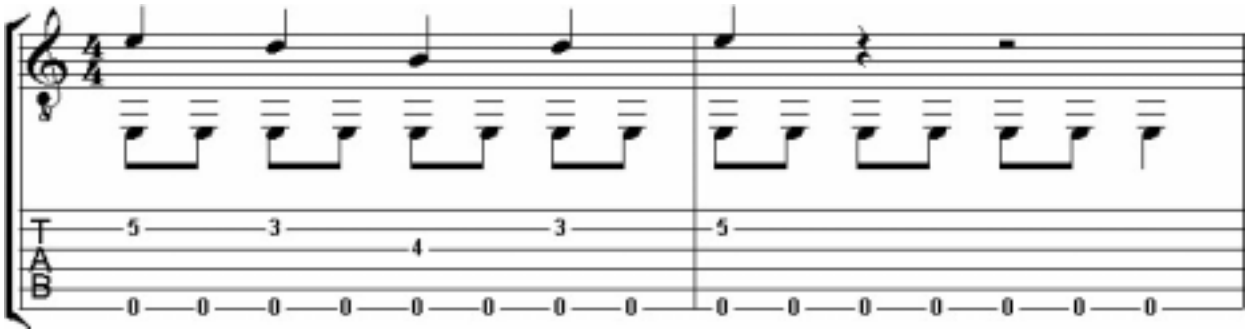
Exercise 4 This exercise starts with open bass and treble couplets, then uses a combination of both closed and open. This begins to introduce the feel of independence between thumb and fingers.



Exercise 5 By using the above ideas you can now play a bluesy type pattern. This time the left hand holds down a two note Em chord as shown on the chord window. Keep repeating the line until you feel confident with the constant bass and changing top line.

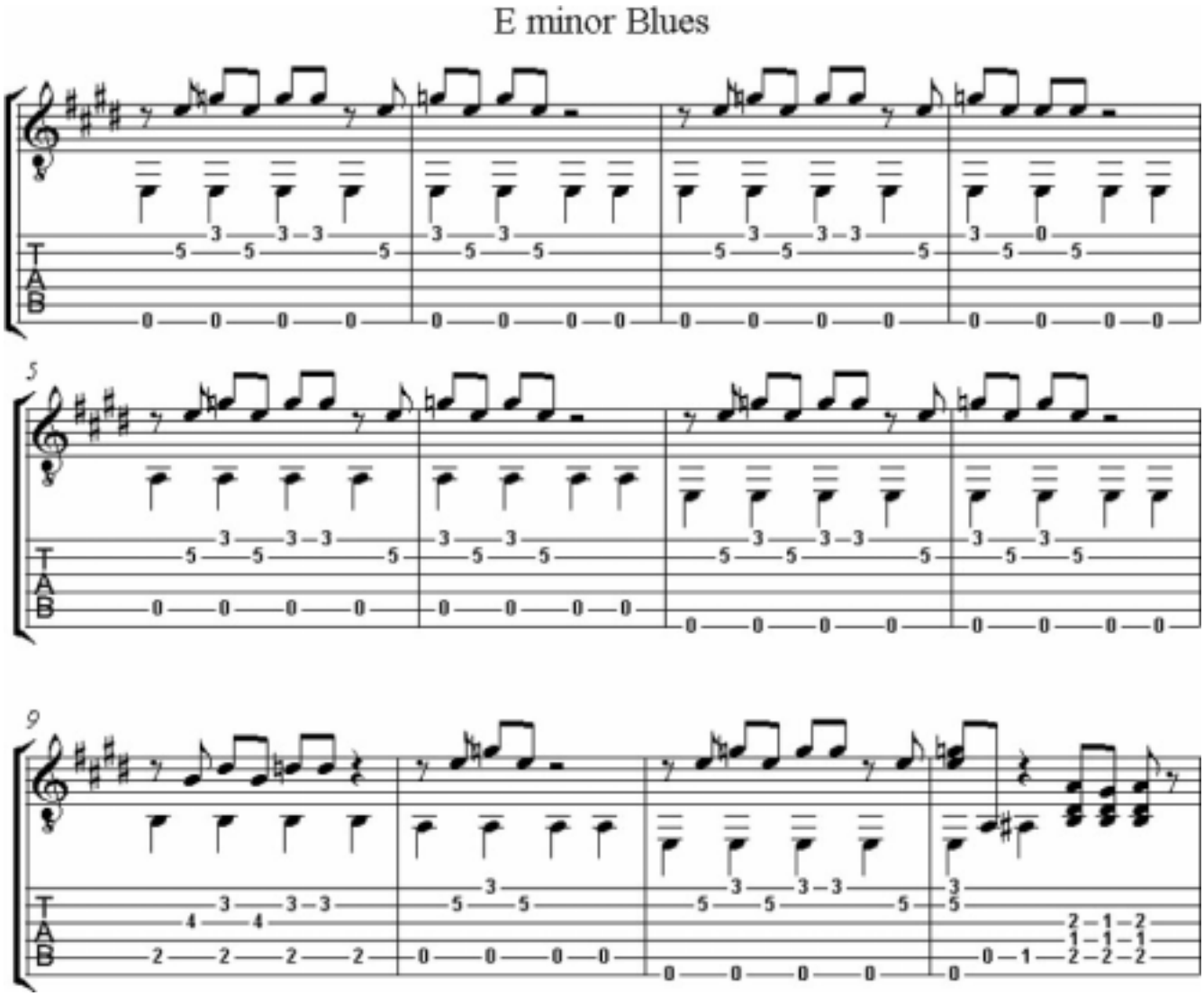


Exercise 6 By doubling the timing of the bass line you can produce an even more rhythmic effect, whilst playing a blues melody on the top line.



Em Blues

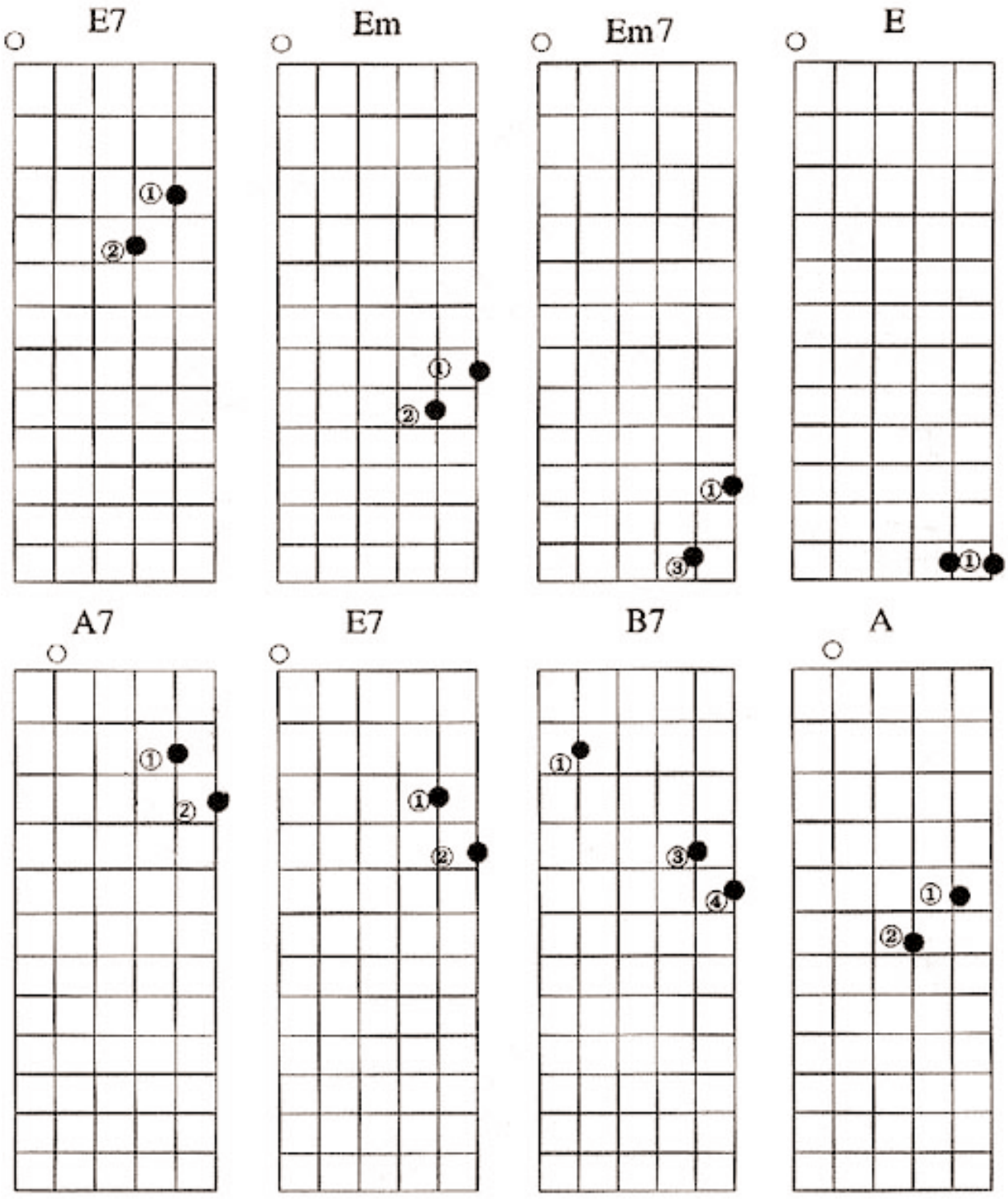
This blues in Em uses a two note Em chord we can play a 12 bar blues, simply by changing the bass note from E to A.



Start Improvising

It's worth pointing out here that Blues guitar is an improvisational art, and while we're giving you tab here, you shouldn't necessarily stick to it rigidly.

Try using the same pick as Blues in Em, but this time use some of the two note chords listed below to form your own blues.



LESSON 2 - Dampening the strings

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Please select **"Session 2"** from the menu

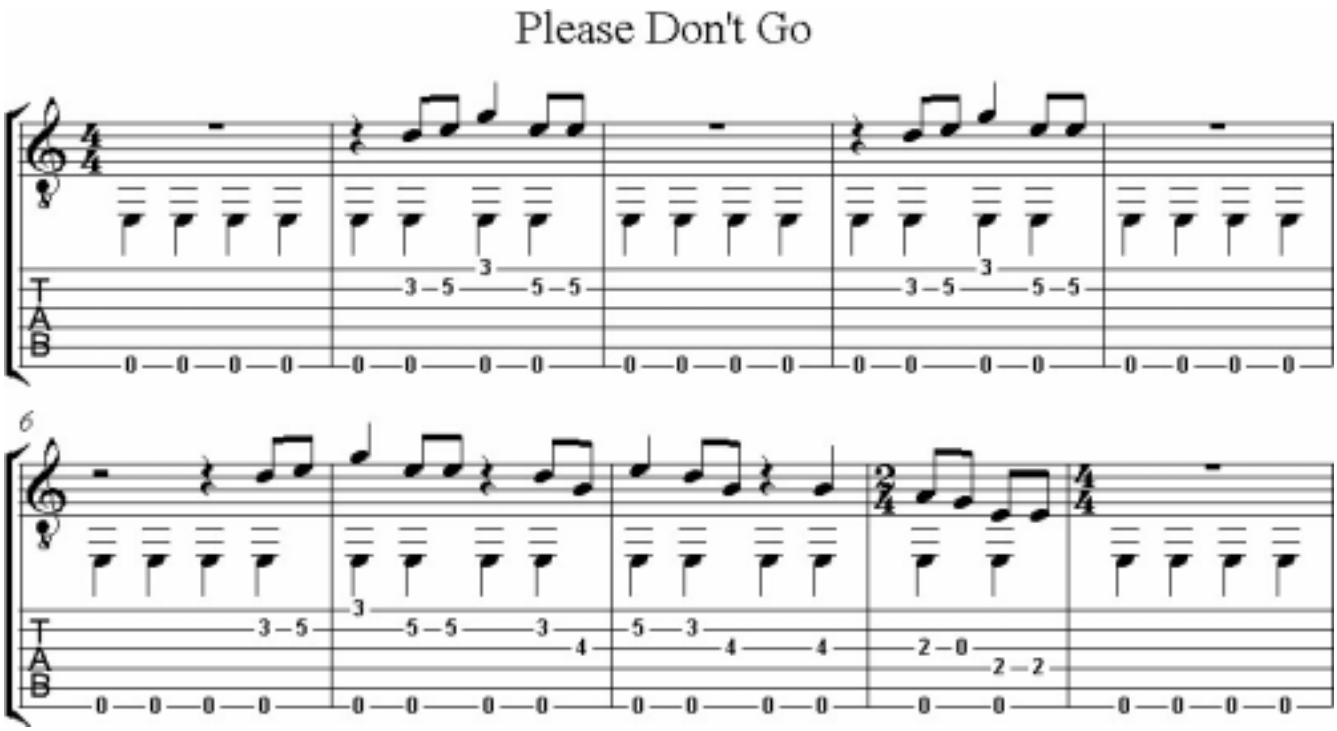
String dampening

The examples in Lesson 1 can be played with a dampened bass effect. Tilt your right hand towards the bridge and use the fleshy part of your hand (the bit that bulges below the little finger!) and let it rest lightly on the 6th and 5th strings, allowing them to just sound and not die completely.

This enables the bass strings to be controlled more smoothly and helps to bring out the sound of the melody on the top strings. Of course this is an optional effect, you can always play with the normal open bass.

"Please Don't Go"

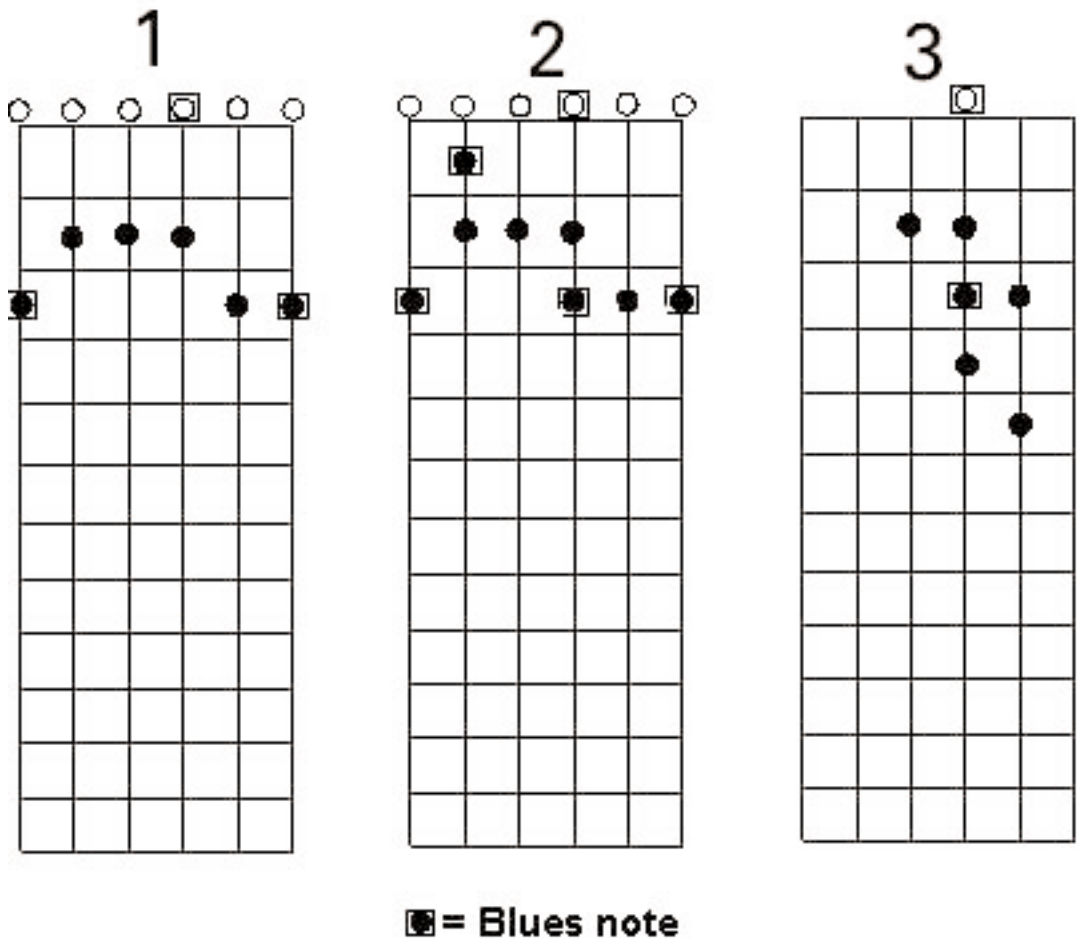
Big Bill Broonzy did a version of this tune. It uses a constant bass line. Try dampening the bass strings, or play them normally if you prefer.



Continue Lesson 2

Improvising The Blues

Now that you have begun to play fingerstyle blues, it is a good idea to become familiar with some of the blues scale patterns. These will help you improvise around the constant bass ideas. Play each note separately from top to bottom, and then in any order that sounds good to use. Paterns 1 and 2 alternate between the fretted notes and the open strings.

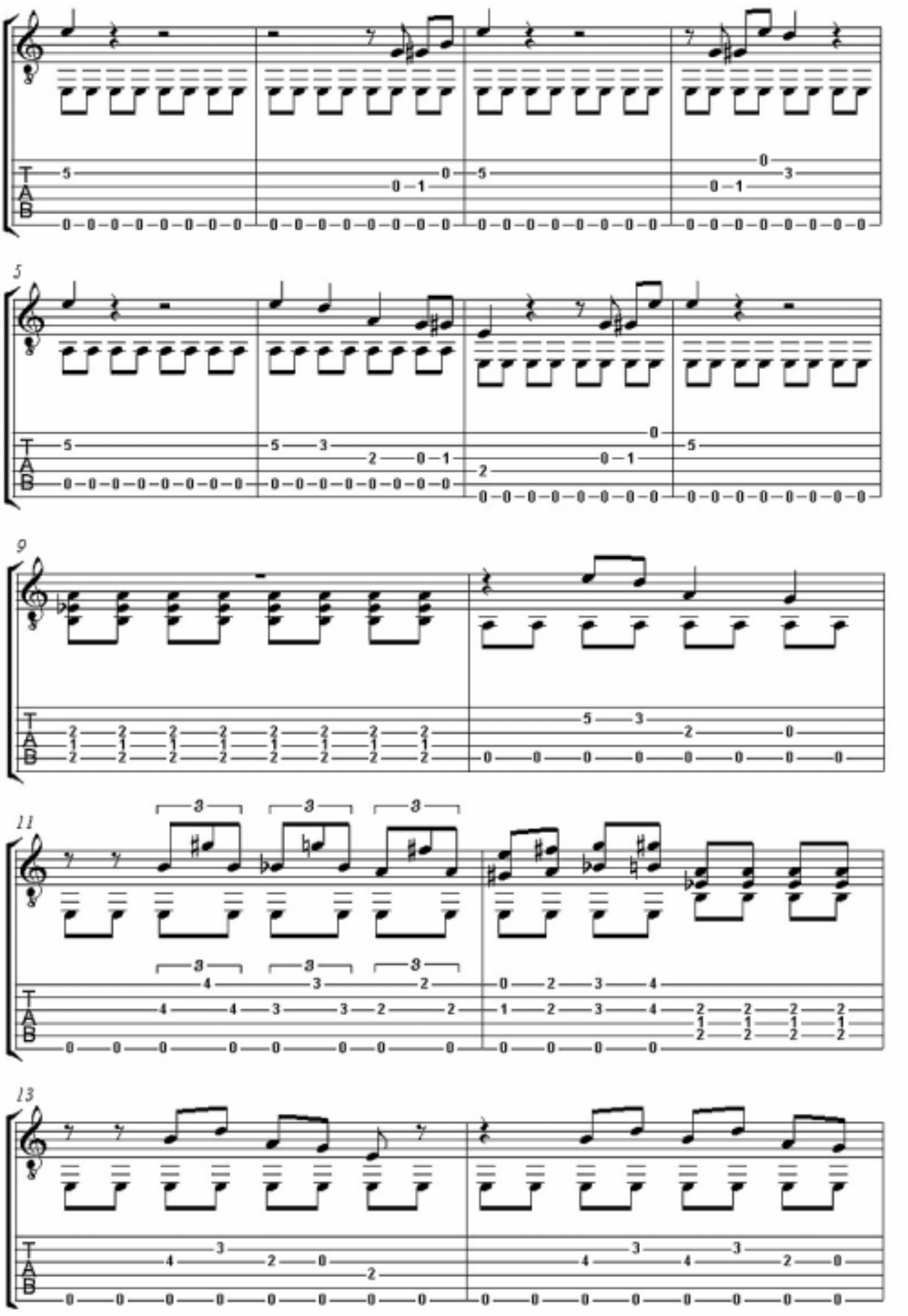


Fingerpicking Blues 1

On the next page there is an instrumental for you to try. This demonstrate how you can begin to use some of the notes in these scales and improvise around the bass.

Continue Lesson 2

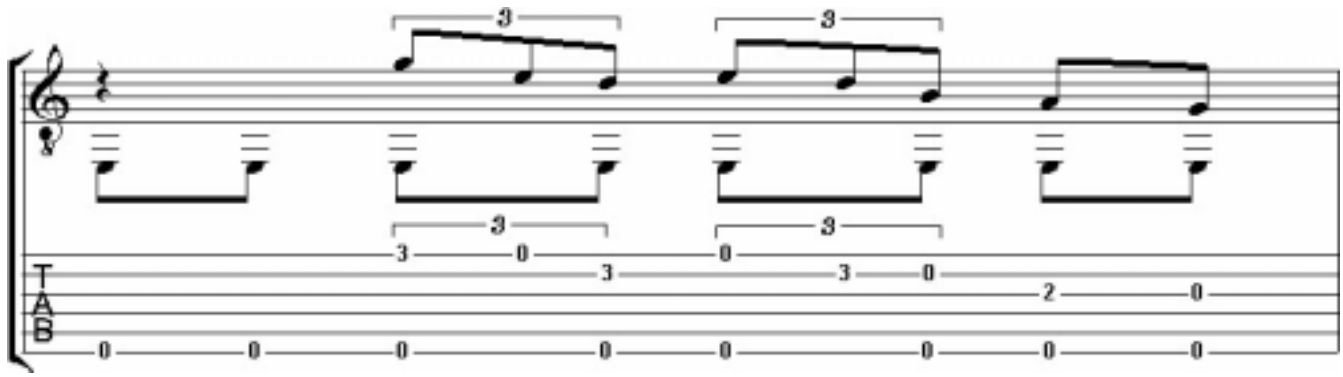
LESSON 2 Continued - Fingerpicking Blues 1



Continue Lesson 2

LESSON 2 Continued - Fingerpicking Blues 1

Use this variation for the A7 chord bars:



Continue to Lesson 3

LESSON 3 - Improvising the blues

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Audio Support:

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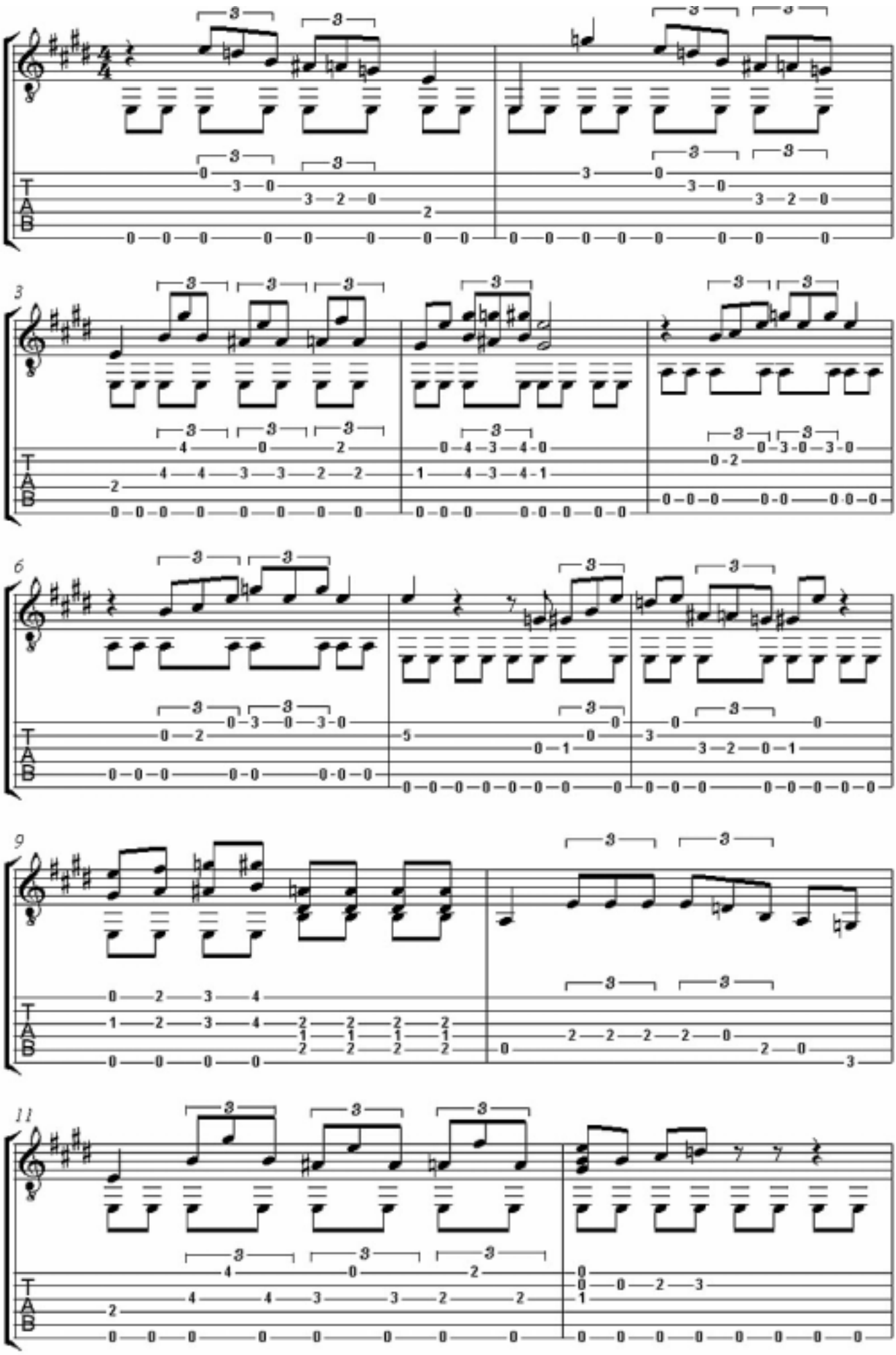
Please select **"Session 3"** from the menu

Following on from Lesson 2, the next instrumental you will attempt (Fingerpicking Blues 2) uses a more complex run of triplets over the constant E bass but forms some great riffs to use in your improvisation.

When you listen to the mp3 of this lesson, you can hear Rick bending the top note in the second bar. This is easy to do, just push the string up slightly as you play it, until you are ready to play the next note, then simply release it.

Tab and notation for Fingerpicking Blues 2 is on the next page.

Continue Lesson 3



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LESSON 4 - Chicago Shuffle

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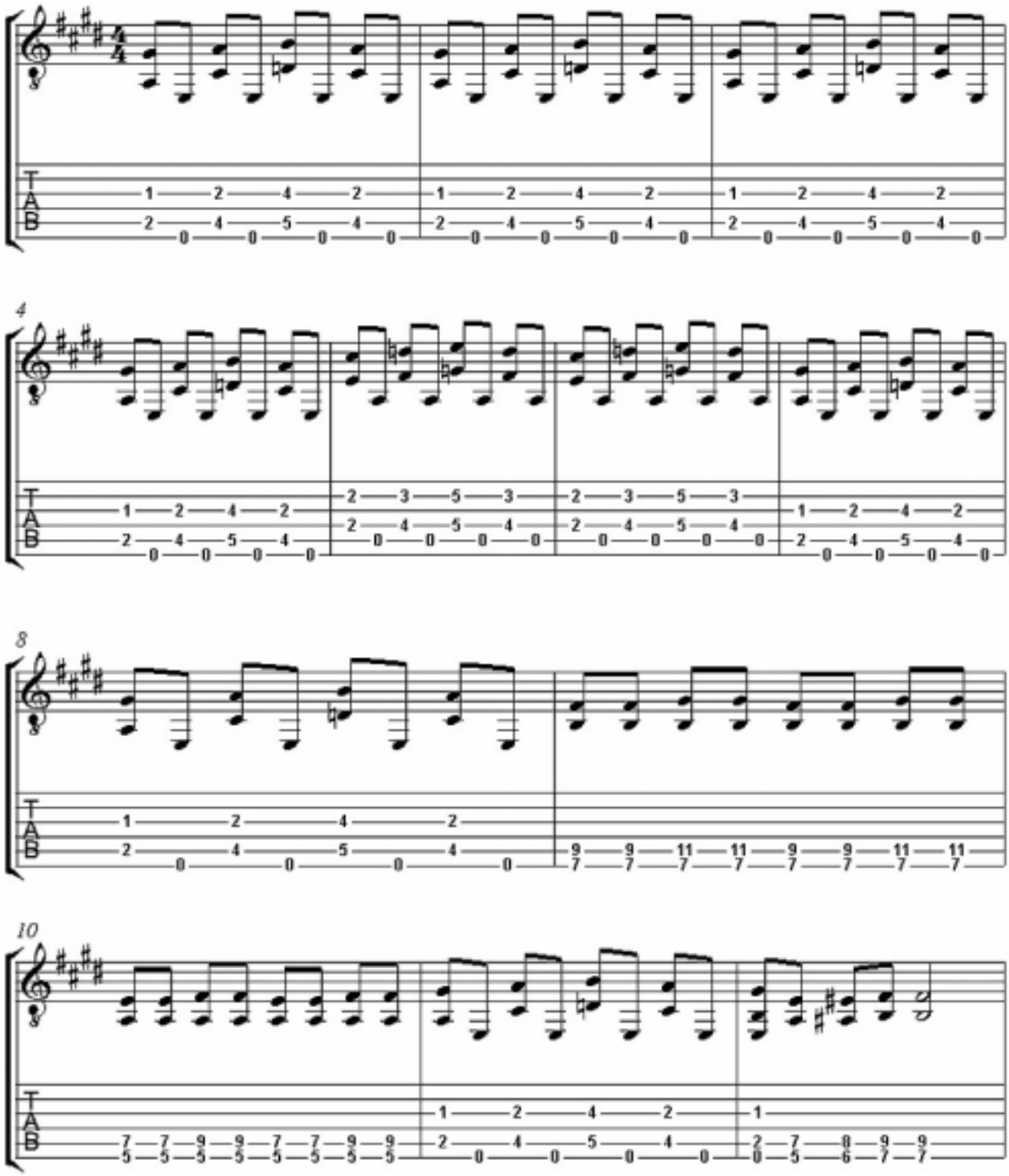
Please select **"Session 4"** from the menu

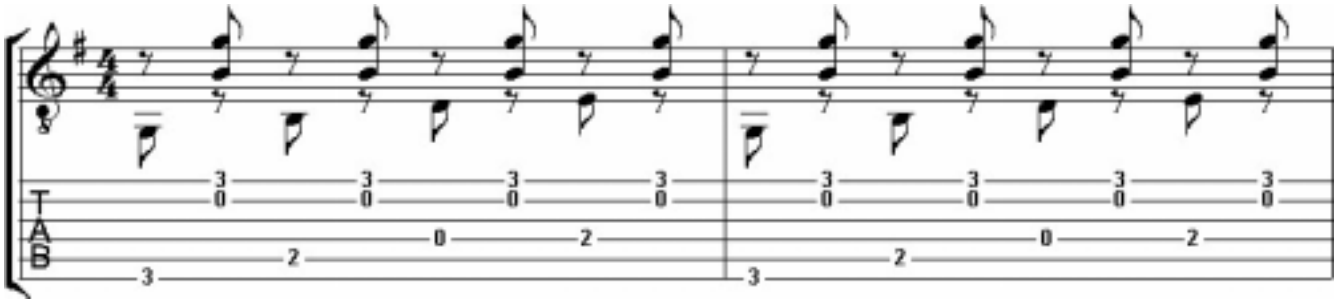
Here is an example of a more contemporary fingerstyle blues. It maintains the constant bass, but this time the bassline follows the finger-picked melody. Pay close attention to the left hand fingering and keep the chord changes smooth. Right hand thumb and index finger can be used throughout, at least to the B and A bars which can be strummed.



Continue Lesson 4

LESSON 4 - Chicago Shuffle Continued

For a variation to the sound have a go at this pick and strum technique. The index finger can be used to strum up across the two top strings to replace the constant bass E:



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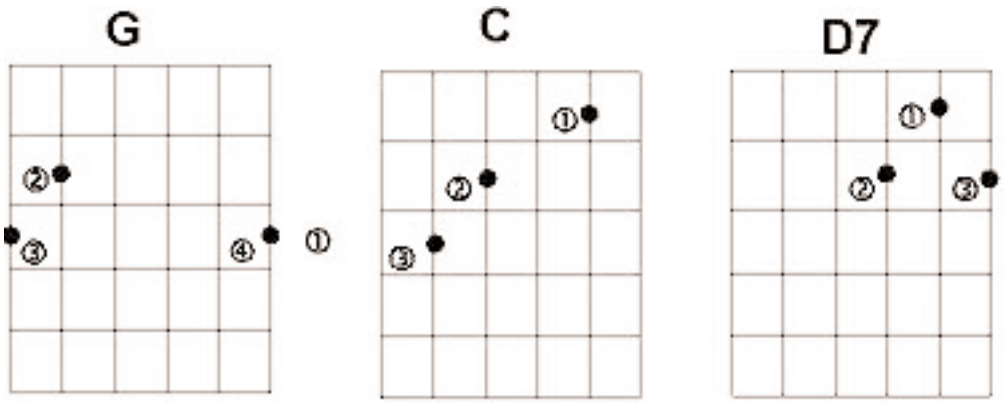
Please select **"Session 5"** from the menu

Walking the bass

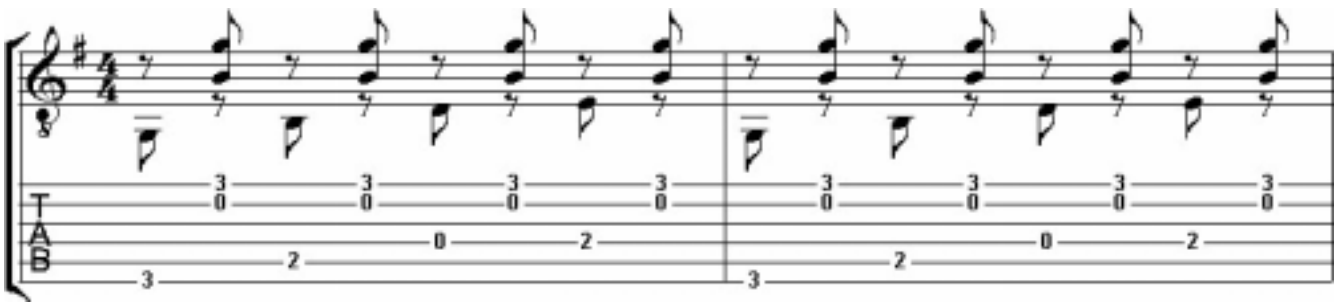
So far in our exercises we have kept the bassline fairly straight and let the melody line move freely on top. The next tune (on the next page) shows you how the rhythmic effect works just as well if the bassline is allowed to move around. This time the bassline rolls along in a kind of piano boogie pattern and the top line stays constant.

Keep the bassline steady and let the top strings ring out. Don't be too rigid with the rhythm. Aim for a swing feel. Again it's a good idea to dampen the bottom strings for a tight sounding bass.

The chords used in this exercise revolve around these shapes.

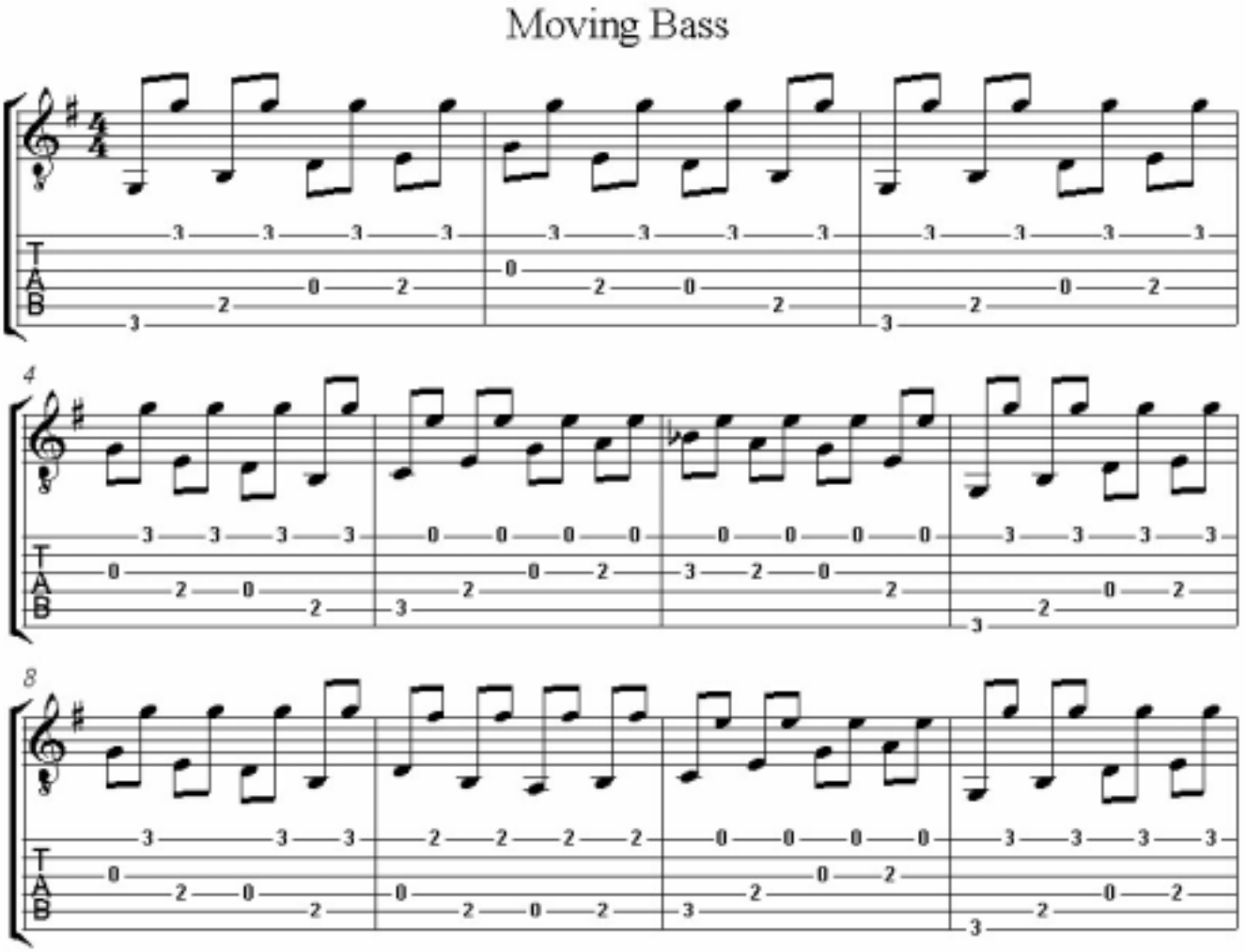


Again you can use the pick and strum technique for more variety and a more open sound. Leadbelly used this kind of pick and strum in his song, "Good Morning Blues".

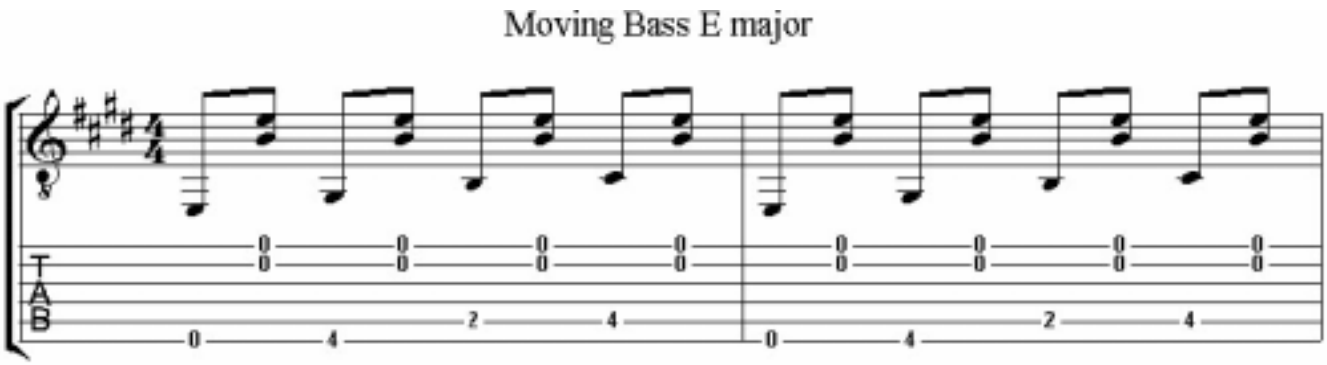


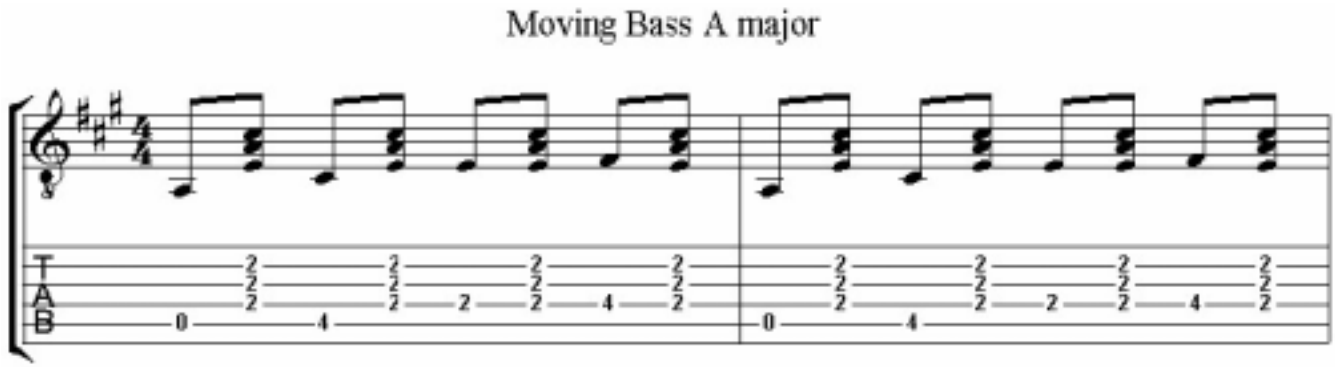
Continue Lesson 5

LESSON 5 - Moving Bass Continued



Try these other examples of moving basslines against these chords and then experiment with other chords.





Continue to Lesson 6

LESSON 6 - Guitar Boogie

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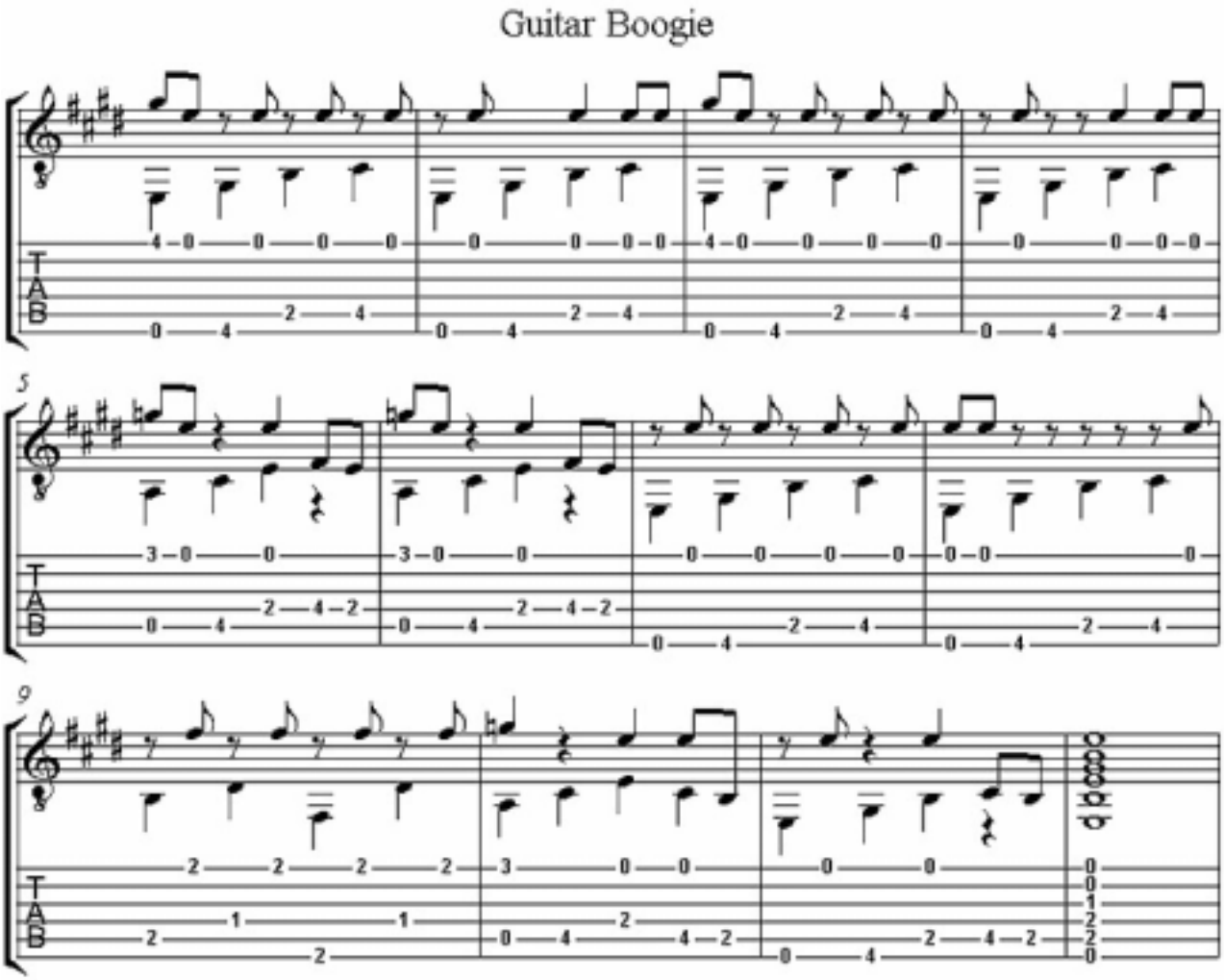
Please select **"Session 6"** from the menu

This 12 bar in E opens up the melody line now but carries on with the moving bass ideas discussed in the previous chapter. The top line is kept simple using a couple of notes derived from the open blues patterns we tried earlier.

Let the left hand 3rd and 4th fingers alternate to produce the melody. Don't forget to try improvising your own riffs across the changing bassline.



Continue to Lesson 7

LESSON 7 - Internet Blues

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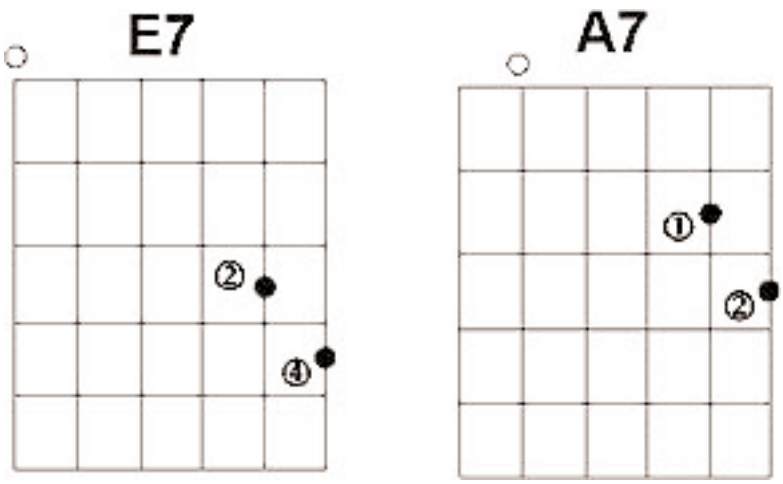
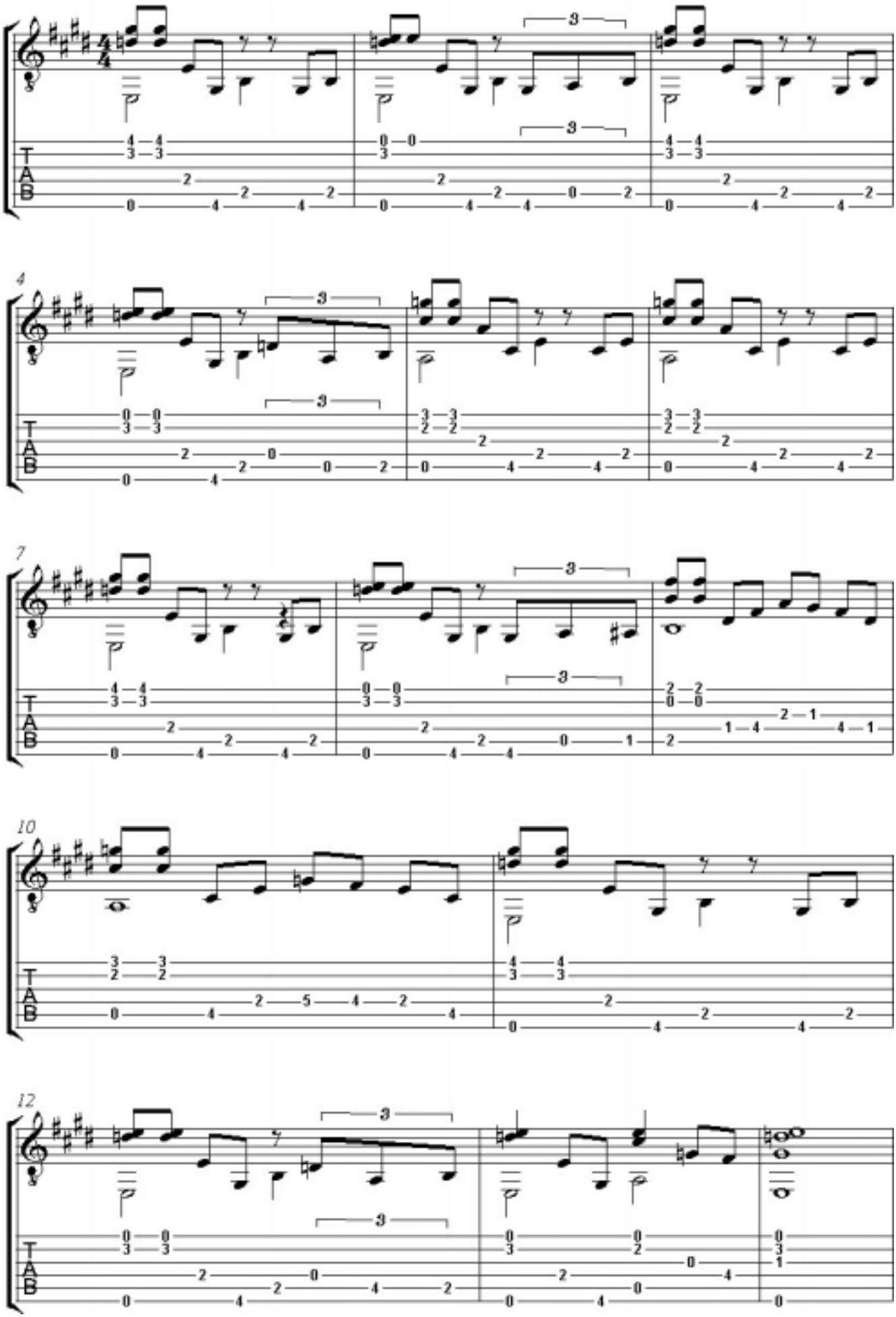
Again we are using a system of two note chords to play a blues this time in E major. Tab and notation for The Internet Blues is on the next page.



Continue Lesson 7

LESSON 7 Continued - Internet Blues



Continue to Lesson 8

LESSON 8 - Blues For Brusgard

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Audio Support:

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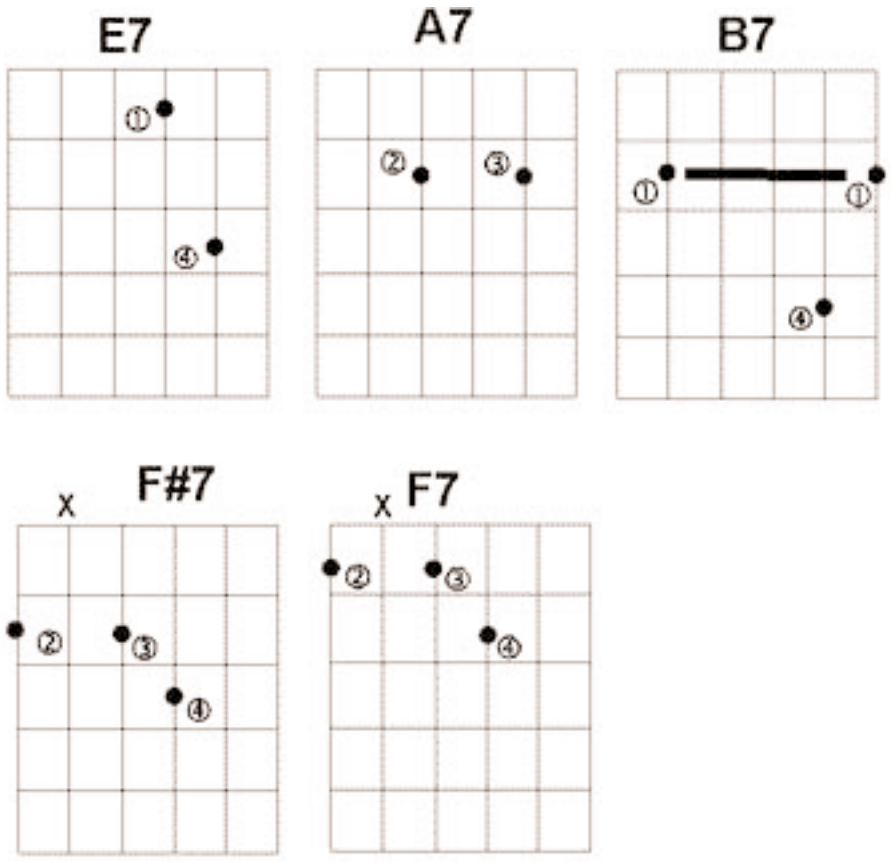
Please select **"Session 8"** from the menu

If we put all the previous ideas into one exercise, we should come up with some quite formidable picking in the blues style. This is what we have done in "Blues for Brusgard". Tab and notation are on the next page.

There's a lot going on here so listen to the mp3 carefully and follow the tab before attempting to play it. All the fingering is there to help you and it's worth sticking to it if you want to play the tune well. This is a difficult tune and it may take you some time to master it, but keep at it and you will succeed.

The chords used in this exercise are based on the following:



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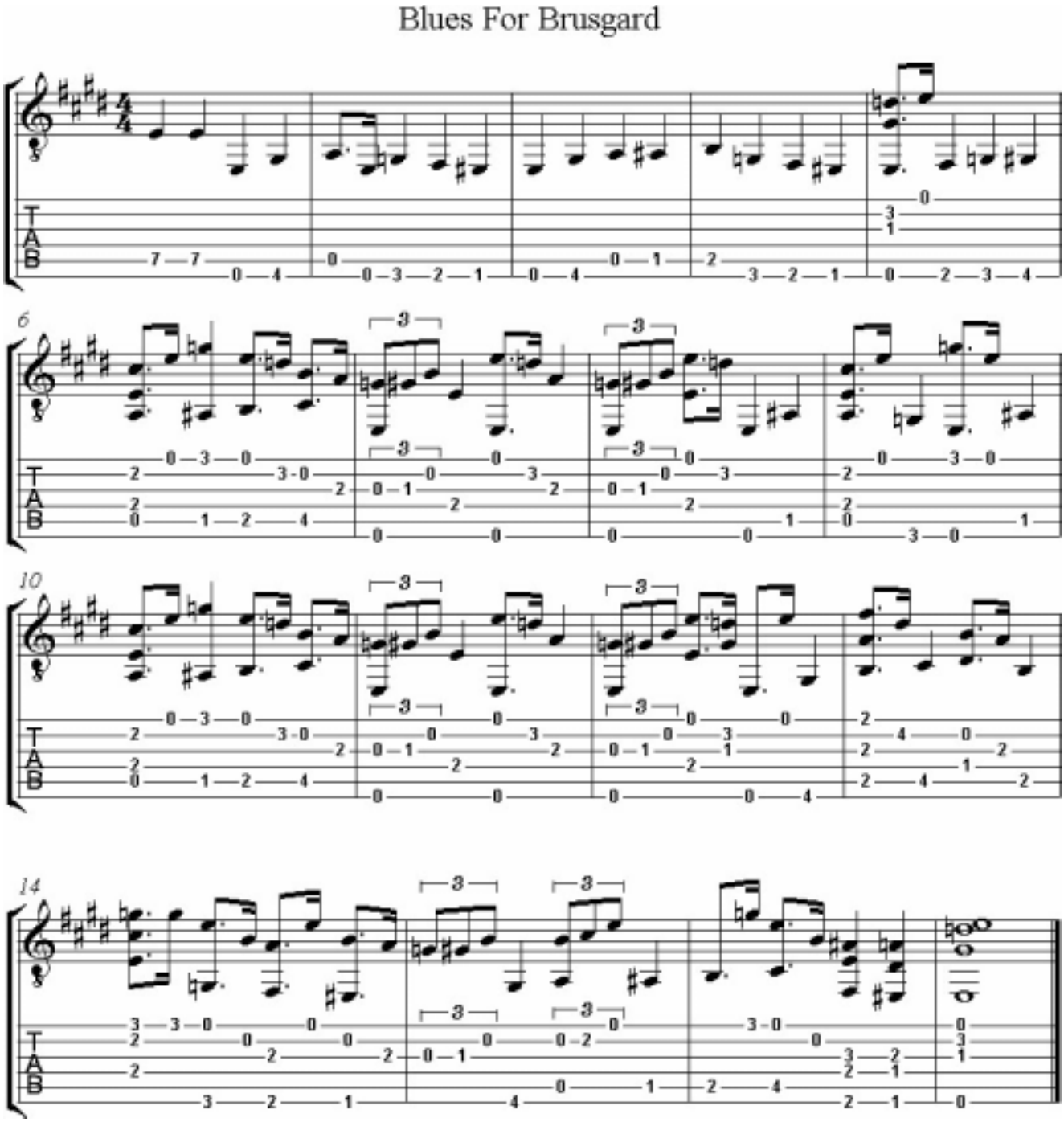

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LESSON 9 - Shuffle Rag

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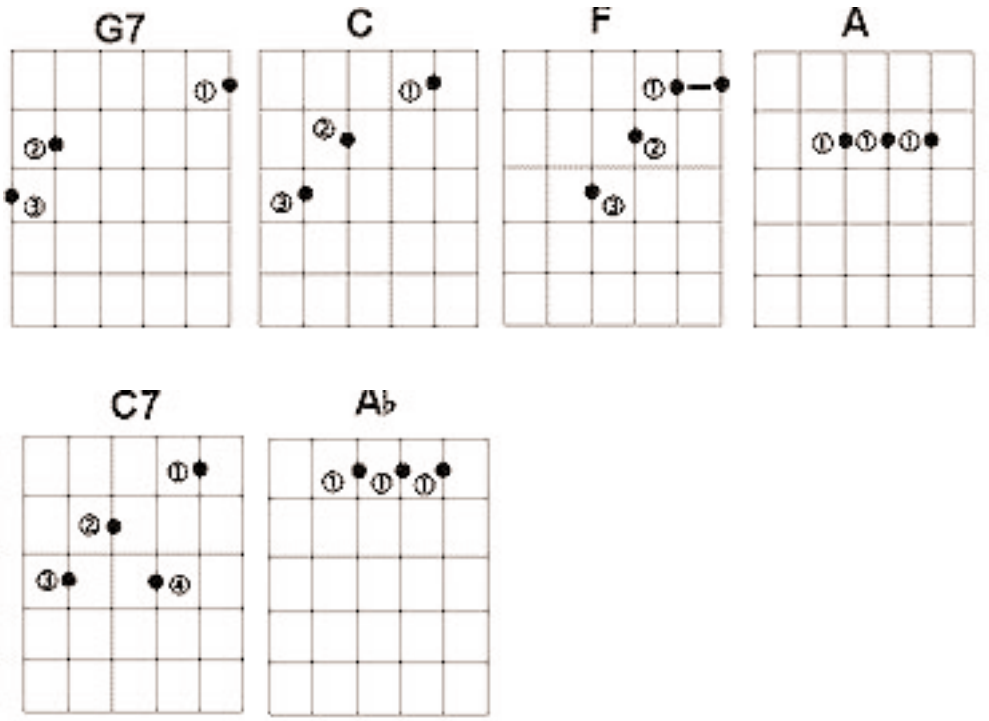
Audio Support:

Click here to listen to spoken commentary and music.
Please select **"Session 9"** from the menu

This tune changes the style now, with some Ragtime Blues based on an old Big Bill Broonzy tune (tab and notation on next page). Although the chord changes are different to the regular blues we have been doing so far, the picking is very similar to the one we used in Lesson 5. If you find this difficult, go back and revise!

Only parts of the chords are used on the tab, but they are based on these chords.:



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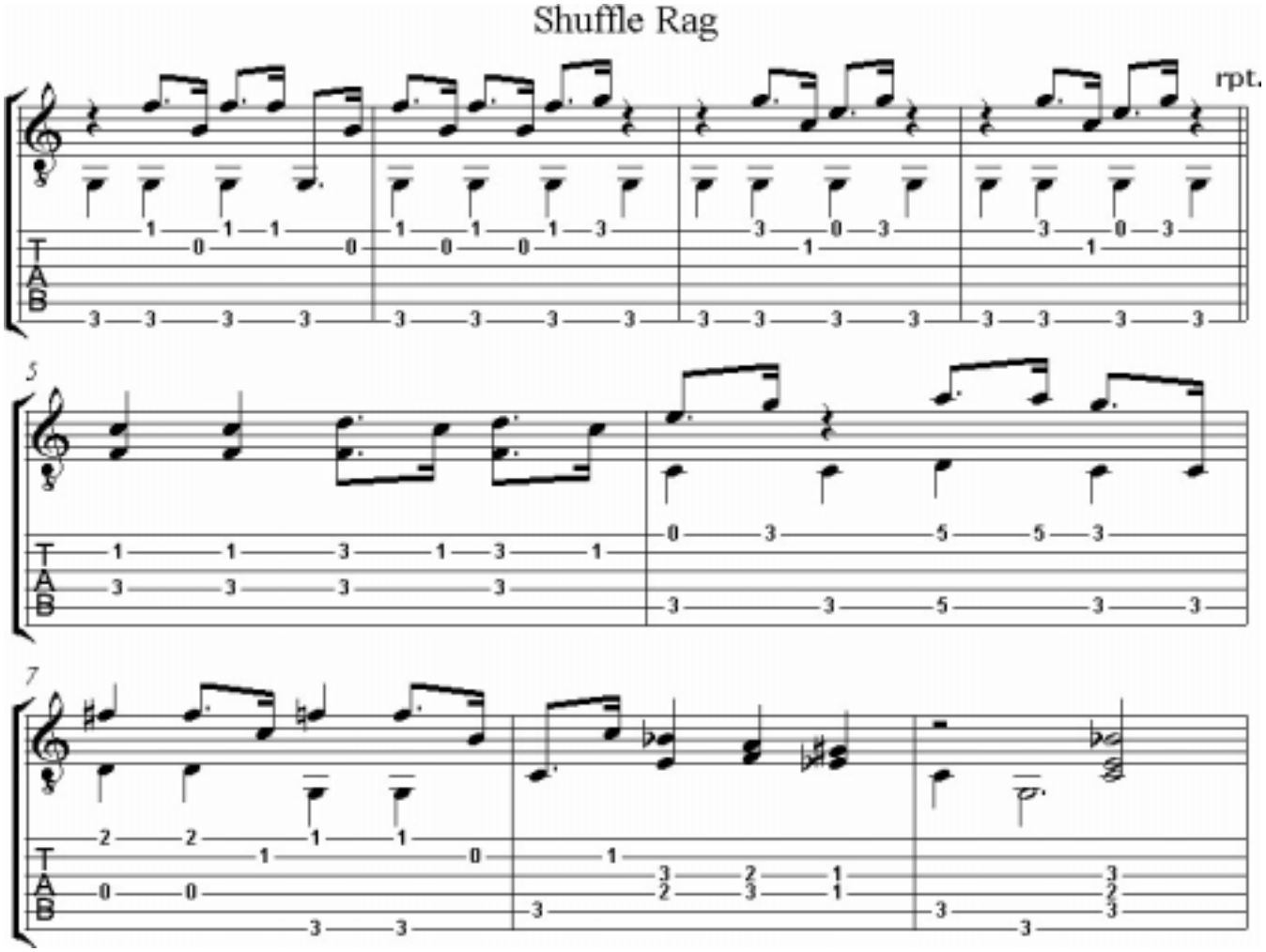

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LESSON 10 - Fishing Blues

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Audio Support:

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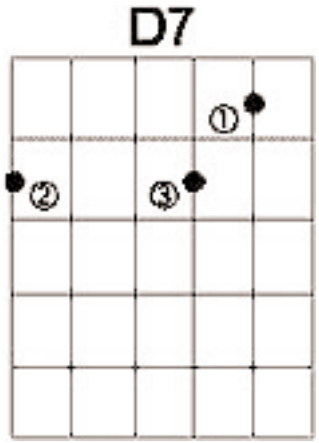
Please select **"Session 10"** from the menu

The final exercise! By now your fingers should be well oiled and be ready to tackle another example of Ragtime Blues picking. This is not easy. It may take you a while to master. But have patience and you will succeed. The base and melody lines are really moving about, so the trick again is to become familiar with the chord changes and pay close attention to the left hand fingering.

It will help you through bar 7 to hold down this particular shape for D7:



Tab and notation for "Fishing Blues" is on the next page. Good luck! And keep up the picking.

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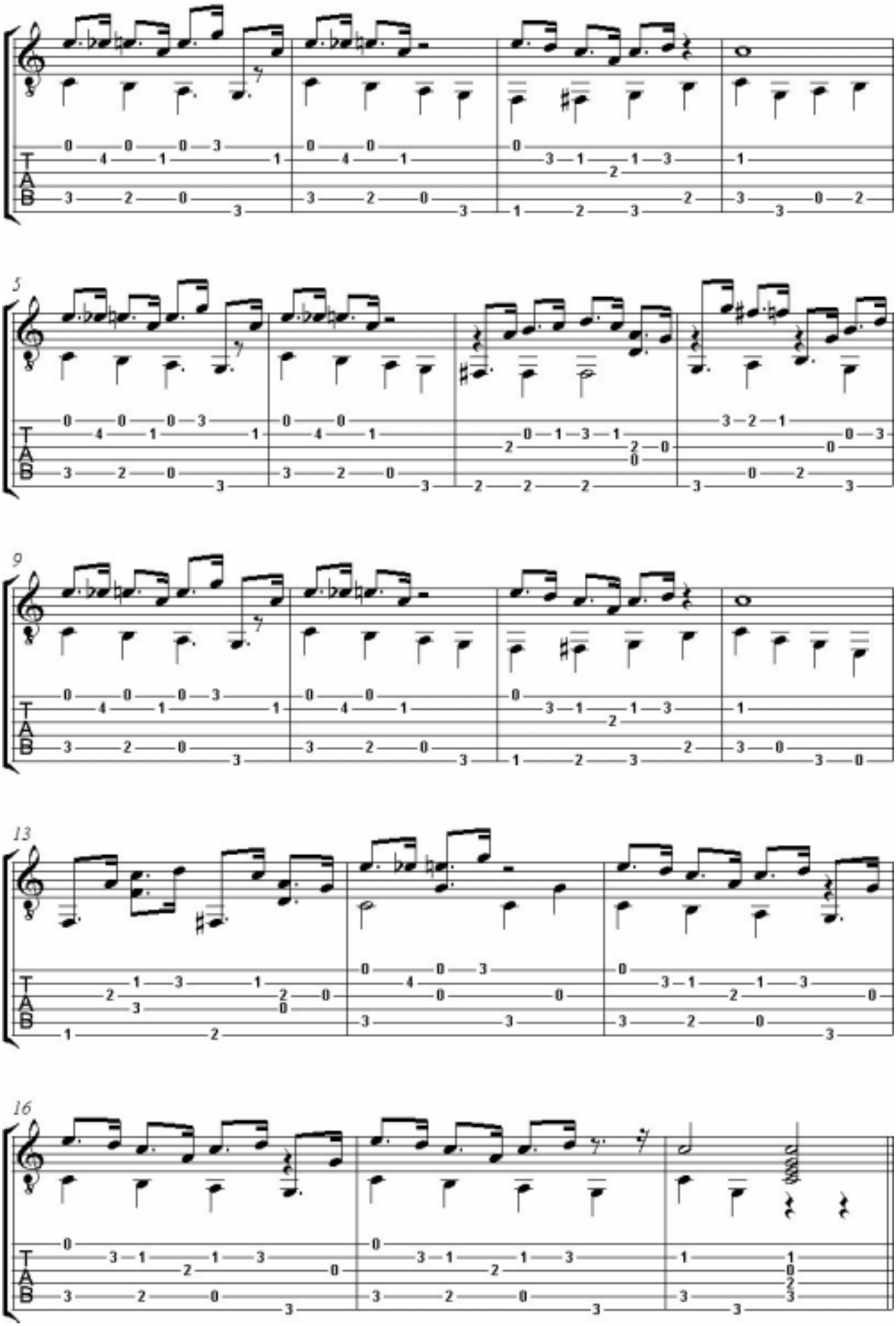

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