

- Keep in mind that if you feel the metronome is a nuisance and annoying like some of my students have in the past, remind yourself that playing out of time can be extremely annoying to the listener.
- Learn to play these next exercises well and with the metronome, and I flat out guarantee it will help every aspect of your playing, including your overall enjoyment.

Timing Exercises Using a Metronome



1. 1 2 3 + 4 +

T M T I T M

1 2 + 3 4 +

4. 1 2 3 4 +

T M T T M

1 + 2 + 3 + 4

7. 1 + 2 + 3 4 +

T I M T I T M

1 2 + 3 + 4

2. 1 2 + 3 4

T T M T T M

1 + 2 + 3 4

5. 1 + 2 + 3 4

T I T M T I T

1 + 2 + 3 4

8. 1 + 2 + 3 4

T T I M T M

1 + 2 + 3 4

3. 1 2 3 + 4 +

T I M T I T

1 2 3 + 4 +

6. 1 2 + 3 + 4

T I M T I M T

1 2 + 3 + 4

9. 1 2 + 3 + 4

T I M I T M T

1 2 + 3 + 4

10. 1 2 3 + 4 + 1 2 + 3 + 4

Now try this descending G scale pattern. It drops four notes and then does it again starting from the next note down the scale. Remember: accuracy, not speed!

Now play it going up. Do you have it memorized? Just checking!

Now lets try the same pattern on the second, third, and fourth strings.

Left-Hand Exercises Using Thirds

Learning these thirds exercises can be useful not only in developing left-hand coordination but in many aspects of your overall playing. Knowing your thirds and being able to switch easily between them will help you in improvising, backup, and playing up the neck.

0	2	4	5	12	11	10	9
0	1	4	5	12	11	10	8
M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
	③	③	③	③	③	③	③
	①	②	②	②	②	②	①

0	2	4	5	7	9	10	12	14	16	17	19	21
0	1	3	5	7	8	10	12	13	15	17	19	20

M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
	③	③	③	③	③	③	③	③	③	③	③	③
	①	①	②	②	①	②	②	①	①	②	②	②

0	1	3	5	7	8	10	12	13	15	17	19	20
0	2	4	5	7	9	11	12	14	16	17	19	21

I	I	I	I	③	①	①	③	①	①	③	③	①
T	T	T	T	②	②	②	②	②	②	②	②	②
	①	①	③									
	②	②	②									

0	0	2	4	5	7	9	11	12	14	16	17	19
0	2	4	5	7	9	10	12	14	16	17	19	21

I	I	I	I	①	①	①	①	①	①	①	①	①
T	T	T	T	③	③	②	②	③	③	②	③	③
	②	①	①									
		③	②									

0	2	4	5	7	9	10	12	14	16	17	19	21
0	0	2	4	5	7	9	11	12	14	16	17	19

M	M	M	M	④	④	③	③	③	③	③	③	③
T	T	T	T	①	①	①	①	①	①	①	①	①
	③	④	③									
		①	①									

Sailors' Hornpipe



Key of G

G Part A

A

5 7 0 0 5 0 5 7 9 10 7 7 0

① ③ T T ① ③ ① ② ③ ② ② ③

D G D G C

7 0 7 0 5 4 4 5 0 5 0 0 0 5 0 5 0 0

① ③ ① ① ② ① ② ② ① ③ I M T I

G D G 1st ending G 2nd ending

H 0 2 4 0 7 5 7 0 0 0 5 7 0 0 0 0

① ② ③ ① ③ C I T T A

G Part B C A

0 0 0 0 0 0 5 0 0 0 0 6 5 7 5 6 5 7 0

D I M T M G D G C

4 5 0 0 5 4 4 5 0 5 0 0 0 5 0 7 5 0 0

① ② ③ ② ① ① ② ② ① ③ ① ③

G D G 1st ending G 2nd ending T I M

H 0 2 4 0 7 5 7 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

T T I T M I T

Turkey In The Straw



Key of G

G Part A

9 10 11 10 0 0 5 5 0 0 10 9 9 9 10 10

0 0 0 5 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

④ ② T I T I ④ ② M M

③ ②

D G

9 9 9 0 0 0 0 0 10 9 12 12 12 10

10 10 10 11 10 0 5 5 0 0 10 0 0

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

② I M M

D 1st End G

D 2nd End G

G Part B

9 7 0 9 10 9 7 0 0 12 12 12 12 12

10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

I ② I ② M I M I T M I

C

G

D

14 14 14 H 17 17 17 17 H 0 10 10

13 13 13 15 17 17 15 15 15 15 11 12 10 10

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

④ ③ ④ ② ③ ④ ③ ④ ④ ④ ④ ② ② ②

G

D 1st End G

D 2nd End

G

9 12 12 12 10 9 7 0 0 9 7 0 9 10

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

④ ③ ③ ② ② ② ② ② ② ② ② ② ②

John Hardy

“John Hardy” is a good example of a song traditionally played in more of a Scruggs’ Style and which we’ll use to illustrate how we can adapt the melodic style to this type of song. The version I have written for you is very scale based and uses a lot of eighth notes. In the Scruggs’ Style, too many eighth notes with no pauses in the music can sound undefined and monotonous. In contrast, using the steady run of eighth notes in the melodic style can sound exciting and very rhythmic.



c John Hardy

Key of G

First system of musical notation for the first staff. It consists of a five-line staff with a treble clef and a common time signature 'c'. The notes are: 0, 2, 0, 1, 1, 0, 5, 0, 5, 3, 7, 3, 0, 5, 5. Below the staff are the following fretting instructions: T, T, T, T, T, M, I, M, I, M, T, M, I, M, T, I.

G

C

Second system of musical notation. It consists of a five-line staff with a treble clef and a common time signature 'c'. The notes are: 0, 5, 0, 0, 5, 0, 7, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 5, 3, 5, 3. Below the staff are the following fretting instructions: M, T, I, M, T, T, T, T, T, T, T, T, T, M, I, M, I, M. There is a 'sl' (slide) marking over the 2nd and 3rd notes of the 11th measure.

G

Third system of musical notation. It consists of a five-line staff with a treble clef and a common time signature 'c'. The notes are: 0, 0, 0, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 9, 10, 9, 10, 6, 0. Below the staff are the following fretting instructions: T, M, T, I, M, I, M, T, M, I, T, M, I, M, I, I.

C

G

Fourth system of musical notation. It consists of a five-line staff with a treble clef and a common time signature 'c'. The notes are: 5, 8, 6, 5, 6, 8, 3, 5, 0, 5, 3, 5, 0, 5, 0, 7. Below the staff are the following fretting instructions: I, M, T, I, T, I, T, I, M, T, I, M, T, I, T, T.

She'll Be Coming Around The Mountain

Lower neck version



Key of G

G

T T I M I T M

D

T T T T I T I C

G

T I M T

D

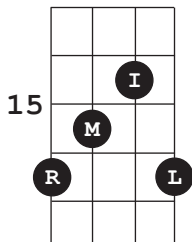
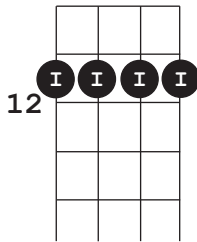
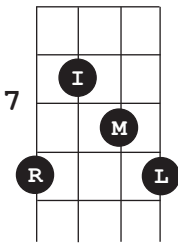
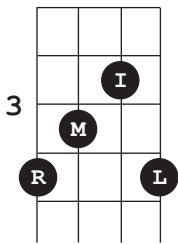
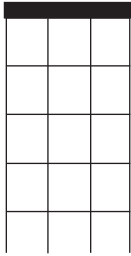
T T T I T

G

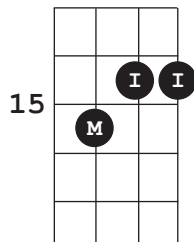
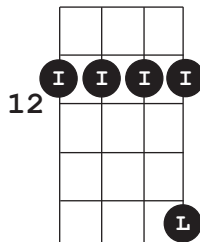
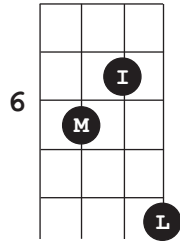
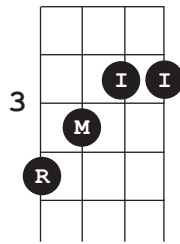
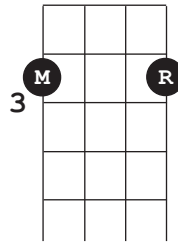
T T I M T T T T

Chord Inversions for G, G7, and Gm

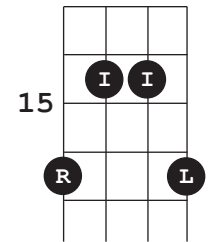
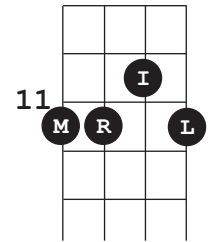
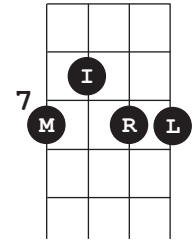
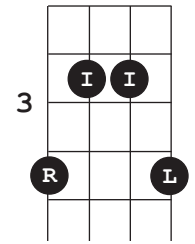
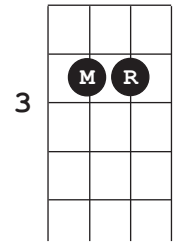
G



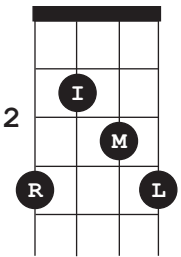
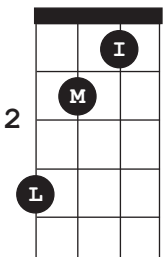
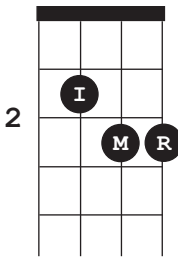
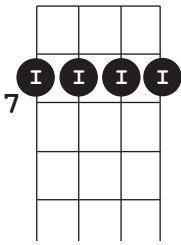
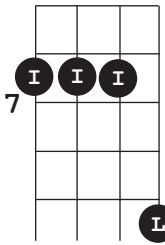
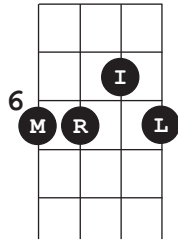
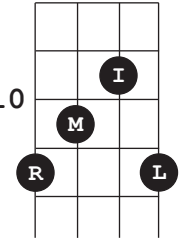
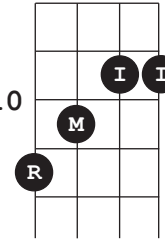
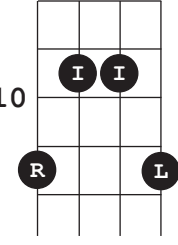
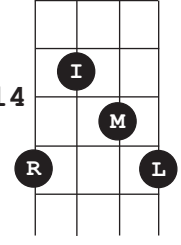
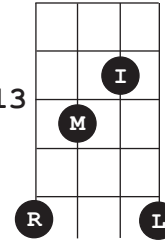
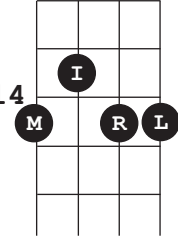
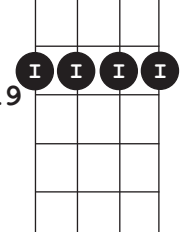
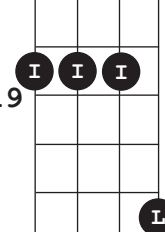
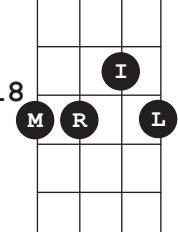
G 7



Gm



Chord Inversions for D, D7, and Dm

D	D 7	Dm
		
		
		
		
		

Chord Progressions for Practice

Use three different chord progressions (series of chords we will use to play a fictitious practice song) as practice tools for learning these chords. These examples will give you the opportunity to try all the positions in context. The chord progressions are identical in each key, only the key changes.

Practice by playing each chord below for two measures. As you learn the chord positions, it is okay to start by strumming or using the three-finger pinch as you locate each chord.

Key of G	Key of D	Key of A	Key of C
G D F C	D A C G	A E G D	C G B ^f F
G E7 A D	D B7 E A	A F ^{s7} B E	C A7 D G
G Em Am D	D Bm Em A	A F sm Bm E	C Am Dm G

Augmented and Diminished Chords

Augmented Chords

Augmented chords may be useful in some of the songs you will be playing. They are used often in place of the V chord (see Chapter 14 for more on V chords) or by splitting two measures with a V chord. For instance, in the key of G, when turning the verse around, you would play the D chord for one measure and the D aug. for one measure before returning to G.

The same shape is used for every augmented chord. Use the form graphic and the accompanying chart to find any augmented chord in these keys.

Diminished Chords

The diminished chords work in much the same way as the augmented. The same shape or chord position is used for every diminished chord. I have two diminished shapes, but, if you look carefully, the only difference between the two shapes is where you put your fingers. The actual notes are the same.

An Exercise Using Bass Run Passing Tones

Put some bass runs in context with an exercise passing between the G, C, and D chords. Listen to the CD to get some of the syncopation and accents, and it may help you to hear how to mute the strings better.



Bass Run Passing Tone Exercise With Chords

	G >	>	>	>	>	>	C >	>					
T	T	T	③ T	④ ① ②	③ T	③ T	③ T	③ T	③ ④ ① ②				
>	>	>	G >	>	>	>	>	D >	>				
③ T	③ T		③ T	④ ② ①	③ T	③ T	③ T	③ ④ ① ②					
>	>	>	G >	>	>	>	>	C >	>				
③ T	③ T	T	T	T	I	M	T	③ T	③ T	T			
>	>	>	G >	>	>	>	>	D >	>	>	>	G >	>
③ T	③ T	T	③ T	① T	T	④ ② ①	T	T	③ T	③ T	④ ② ①		
>	>												
T	I	M	T	M	I	T							

Four Examples of Playing Backup

In the next section, I am going to present four examples of playing backup that are used often. Learning these techniques of playing backup will go a long way in making you more versatile and ready to back up most types of bluegrass songs.

Backup Example For Verse and Chorus

Start by learning a backup part that would be used when you are backing up a verse and chorus which is like many of the bluegrass songs you will be playing. Keep in mind, as always, you are learning a technique to play backup, not a song. Study what you are doing and how it relates to filling spaces, complimenting the singer, and supporting the music being played.

Song Example for Verse and Chorus Backup



The musical score consists of four systems of five-line staves. Each system represents a measure of music. The notes are indicated by fret numbers (0-5) on the lines. Rhythmic patterns are shown with 'T' (triplet) and 'I' (quarter) markings below the staves. Chord symbols (G, C, D, Po) are placed above the staves. The first system includes a 'sl' (slide) marking. The second system includes a 'Po' (pull-off) marking. The third system includes a 'Po' marking. The fourth system is a short fragment. The score is divided into four measures per system, with various rhythmic patterns and chord changes.

The next four kickoff examples are for the key of D. The left hand will be a little more complex on these. Try not to further complicate matters by not executing the left and right-hand fingering correctly. It's best to study it and to run through it a little, especially with the left hand, before even attempting or expecting to play it correctly.

Next are some standard kickoff licks in G. They are all used often. As you learn these, you will notice how some of the kickoff variations lead into either a G, B, or a D note. These are the notes in a G chord. Very often, the first melody note of a song is one of these notes. This is one of the ways you decide which kickoff to use--by the first melody note of the song you are beginning.

This example would be used to start a song when the first melody note is B at the 4th fret, 3rd string. Be sure to time the hammer on in the intro measure correctly.

This one would be used when the first melody note is D. Follow the accent marks in the tab to get the emphasis correct, and be sure you use the thumb on the right hand correctly.

Here is a tricky single-string kickoff. You may need to practice this one over and over to gain proficiency and smoothness.

“Pig In A Pen” is an example of a kickoff to a standard bluegrass song that you can use to learn more about kicking off songs on the banjo. I recommend following the accents in the music and listening to the CD to better understand the inflections.



Pig In A Pen

Key of G

The tablature for "Pig In A Pen" is written in G major and consists of eight staves of music. The notation includes various fret numbers (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), accidentals (sharps, naturals), and technique markings such as accents (>), slurs, and specific techniques like "SI" (slur), "H" (hammer-on), "Po" (pull-off), and "T" (thumb). The key signature is G major, and the piece is in 3/4 time. The music is a single melodic line for the banjo.

Don't This Road Look Rough and Rocky



Key of D
tune 5th String to A

Chord progression: D G D A D G

Tablature details:
Line 1: D chord. Notes: 3, 3, 4, 3, 2, 3, 4, 5, 3, 5, 4, 3, 3, 4, 4. Fingering: T, 2, 4, 2, 1, 2, 4, 4, 2, 4, 4, 0, 0, 2, 4. Accents: > above 3, 4, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 3, 4, 4.
Line 2: A chord. Notes: 3, 4, 4, 3, 4, 3, 4, 5, 7, 7, 7, 7, 5, 5, 5, 7, 5, 7. Fingering: 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0. Accents: > above 3, 4, 3, 4, 5, 7, 7, 7, 5, 5, 5, 7, 5, 7.
Line 3: D chord. Notes: 7, 7, 4, 4, 2, 4, 4, 5, 5, 4, 3, 3, 4, 4. Fingering: 6, 5, 6, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 4. Accents: > above 7, 7, 4, 4, 2, 4, 4, 5, 5, 4, 3, 3, 4, 4.
Line 4: A chord. Notes: 3, 4, 0, 3, 5, 7, 5, 7, 7, 7, 5, 5, 4, 0, 2. Fingering: 0, 0, 0, 3, 5, 7, 5, 7, 7, 7, 5, 5, 4, 0, 2. Accents: > above 3, 4, 3, 5, 7, 5, 7, 7, 7, 5, 5, 4, 0, 2. Slur: si above 3-5.
Line 5: D chord. Notes: 0, 0, 0, 2, 2, 3, 4, 0, 0, 2, 2, 0, 5, 5, 7, 9, 7, 5. Fingering: 0, 2, 2, 3, 4, 0, 0, 2, 2, 0, 5, 3, 5, 7, 9, 7, 5. Accents: > above 0, 0, 0, 2, 2, 5, 5, 7, 9, 7, 5. Hammer-on: h above 3-4.
Line 6: D chord. Notes: 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0. Fingering: 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0. Accents: > above 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0.

Don't This Road Look Rough and Rocky

D **Key of D**

A **D** **G**

D **A**

D

T