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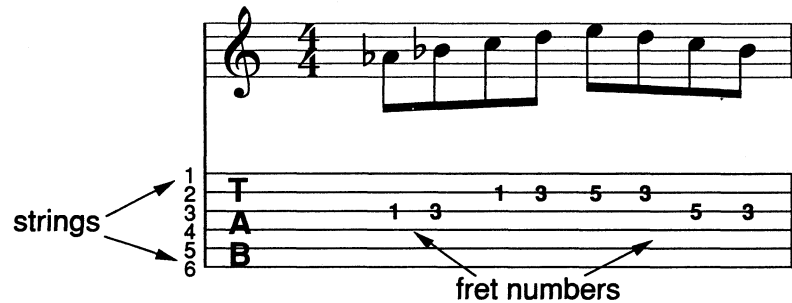
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Reading Tablature and Chord Boxes

Tablature

Many examples appear throughout the book. These examples are illustrated using a graphic way of representing pitches on the fingerboard called TAB, which is short for tablature. In TAB, each line represents a string on the guitar. The top line represents the 1st string and the bottom line the 6th string. The numbers which appear on these various lines indicate which frets to play the notes on. The rhythms for these notes are indicated in the treble clef above the TAB staff.



Even though you don't have to be able to read standard music notation to use TAB, you do need to understand how rhythms work. (Rhythms are not covered in this book, but any beginning book on notation will give you the information you need to get started with reading music on the guitar.)

Chord and Finger Boxes

In the chord boxes, black dots always indicate the chord root. This is the "1" or tonic of the chord. The other circles represent other chord tones. The numbers next to all of these circles indicate which fingers to use to fret these notes. These fingerings are suggestions only. You may find better fingerings. The letter "T" may appear next to a note on the 6th string. This indicates the use of the thumb to play this string. If you're not used to using the thumb, work out a different fingering. The numbers which appear under each chord box indicate the voicing of the chord - these are the notes which make up the chord and their location in a chord shape, from the lowest to the highest pitch. (The subject of chord voicing is covered in detail later in the book.) An X above any string means that that string should be muted if you're strumming the chord or just not plucked if you're using individual fingers to sound the notes, as a classical guitarist would. Any note which is shaded in, represents an assumed root note. This note is not to be played, but is shown as a way of letting you know where the root of a chord would be. (Some chord forms will not have a root.)

The major 3rd shapes have the sound of a major chord and the minor 3rd shapes the sound of a minor chord. In this sense, they function like miniature chords even though most chords normally have more than two notes. But the interesting use of these shapes comes in using them up and down the fingerboard. Here's an example played over an E major chord:

E

All of these shapes will work over an E major chord. Some will sound more like an E major chord than others. Let your ears pick out the shapes to hang on and those to pass over. (Try droning the low E on the 6th string when playing these shapes. Or hit strings 1 and 2 as open sounds while moving the 3rd's up and down the fingerboard.)

These same shapes will sound great over minor chords too. Here's how to use them over an Em sound:

Em

The inversion of the 3rd is the 6th. It too is heard frequently in nearly all styles of music. The shapes for the 6th are a little different than the 3rd. You can make the 6th by taking the lower note of the 3rd and transposing it up one octave.

