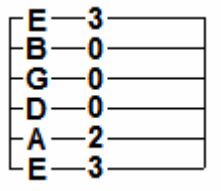
APPENDIX -- TIPS ON READING GUITAR TABLATURE

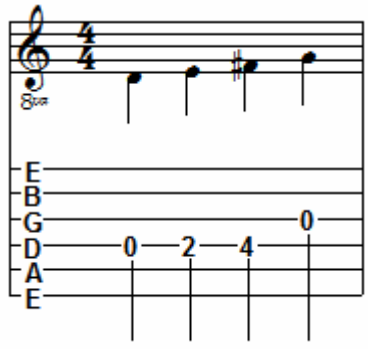
The transcriptions in this book are written in guitar tablature (tab) and standard musical notation using a software program called TablEdit. I've included both formats so that guitarists who read notation but not tablature can use the book and so that it might be useful for fiddlers and mandolin players who want to play the tunes. Also, chords are included for each of the tunes and are located above the tablature. For those who are new to tablature or to the symbols used by TablEdit, below is a brief introduction to reading guitar tablature in TablEdit format.

Each line of tablature represents a guitar string, with the bass strings at the bottom and the treble strings at the top (just as they appear when the player is looking down at the fingerboard). To assist you, TablEdit provides the names of the strings at the left side of the tab for each piece. (All the tunes in this book are played in standard tuning.) Each number represents the fret where the string is pressed down with the left hand fingers or thumb. A zero represents an open string. This is a standard G chord:

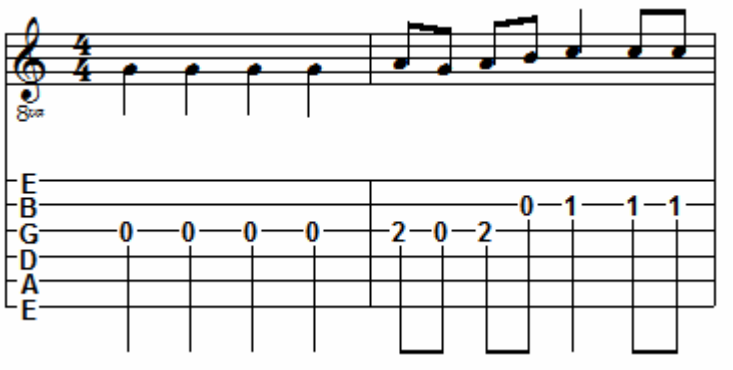


TablEdit provides vertical lines under the notes that help indicate where the notes fall against the beats. This piece is in 4/4 time (four beats to a measure), with a note falling on each beat:

- Open 4th string
- 2nd fret, 4th string
- 4th fret, 4th string
- Open 3rd string

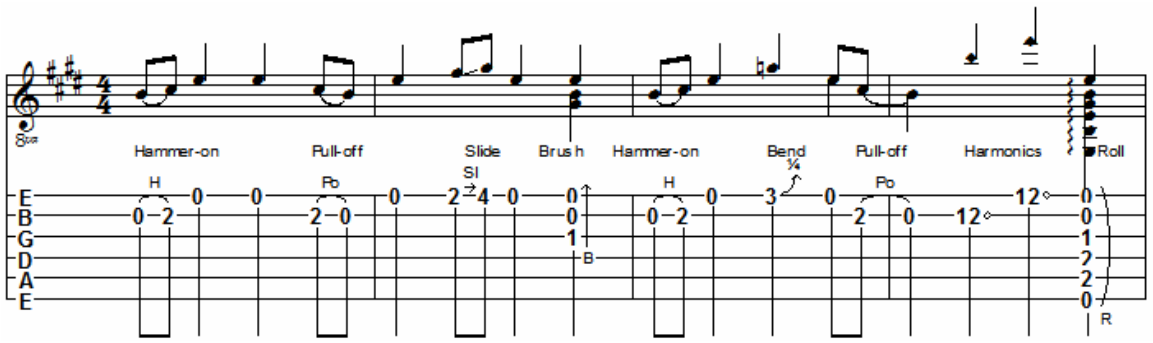


This simplified version of a phrase from Salt Creek shows how quarter notes (one per beat in 4/4) and eighth notes (two per beat in 4/4) appear in tablature:

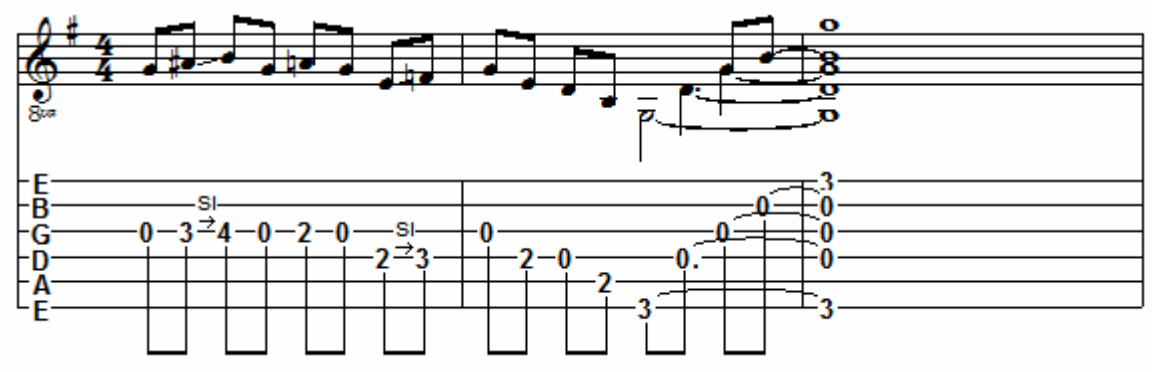


Here's a short example to show how six common techniques are designated in tab:

- Hammer-on from the open 2nd string to the 2nd fret
- Pull-off from the 2nd fret of the 2nd string to the open string
- Slide from the 2nd fret of the 1st string to the 4th fret
- Strum or brush down on the top three strings
- Bend a note played on the 1st string, 3rd fret
- Play an arpeggio or "roll" on an E chord



When notes are sustained across the bar line between measures, the notes reappear in the second measure as being "tied" to those in the previous measure. Be sure to hold the notes rather than playing them a second time. This excerpt from "John Hardy" shows that the tune ends on an arpeggiated G chord, with the first four notes held over into the next measure, where the high G is played.



In fingerstyle playing, the thumb and fingers often play different notes at the same time. Below is an excerpt from a simplified version of A.P. Carter's Cannonball Blues. (Note that in this example, as in the rest of the book, the rhythm chord is shown between the tab and notation staffs.) The bass alternates between the 5th string and the 3rd string. Those notes are designated with a "T" for "thumb" under the tab. In the first two measures the melody notes line up with the bass notes; in the last two measures some of the melody notes fall between the bass notes in more of a syncopated fashion.