

Learn To Play Guitar Songs For Free

by Ricky Sharples

You will find many tips and tutorials for guitar players of all levels at [Learn How To Play A Guitar For Free](#), a continuously updated directory of free guitar lessons, videos, chord charts and lots of useful guitar stuff.

Contents

Learning Beginner Guitar Songs From Tabs	2
Easy to Learn Guitar Tabs For Peter Gunn	3
Lead Guitar Solos and the Guitarists Who Played Them	4
Computer Guitar Lessons	5

Learning Beginner Guitar Songs From Tabs

When you get your first guitar and take some lessons, the first thing you want to do is learn to play a song or two. You are painfully aware of your status as a beginner guitar player but you want to learn a song or a riff or a tune that sounds really cool.

Maybe you're up to learning your first chord. You are feeling a little bit shaky getting your fingers around the first chord but you are looking forward to introducing it to your second. A beginner guitar tutor always helps but if you are going to make some progress, you will have to start learning some songs.

Guitar songs are songs that highlight the guitar in some way and they are often quite easy to learn. When you start guitar lessons the pressure is on from friends and relatives to "play something" so let's look at what's available.

Many songs by The Grateful Dead are great for beginners to learn. Some of their songs carry heavy bluegrass overtones. Give American Beauty a try. Or Workingman's Dead. Whether you are learning electric or acoustic guitar, these are ideal beginner guitar songs.

The Ramones recorded songs that a beginner guitar player could learn and so did Nirvana. Get some tabs for Smells Like Teen Spirit. Whatever you choose you will find that learning songs is the way to go if you don't need to go too far into the theory and mechanics of guitar music. If you are working on a song that you enjoy, the chord fingerings and the strumming patterns will get into your fingers all the more quickly.

One recommendation from an amateur guitar player I heard recently was to buy the Nirvana Unplugged DVD and the tabs for the album. You've got your intro to the world of guitar in one package. Psycho Killer by Talking Heads uses the chords Am, G, F and C and the strumming is easy. If you decide to learn to play songs from tabs, rather than just accepting the tab as being correct, play the tab along with the song and try and pick any bits where the tab varies from the CD. Or look for places where you can change the music to make the song your own.

Finally, let's depart a little from guitar songs and take in a reminder that power chords consist of just two or three notes that can be played up and down the fretboard. You can play any song using power chords even though it isn't a permanent solution.

Easy to Learn Guitar Tabs For Peter Gunn

It is easy to learn guitar tabs. Only one basic idea needs to be understood, the rest falls into place. To illustrate this idea I will be using tabs for a simple piece of music called Peter Gunn. Guitar tabs are seen by learning guitar players as an easy way to start playing guitar right away. That is true but it is wrong to think that guitar tablature just needs to be read. Like all languages it needs to be understood. So if you have an idea that you would like to become a guitar player and tabs would be a great way to sidestep any difficult learning, there are a couple of things you need to get straight.

For somebody who just wants to play along with the singing around a campfire, it must look like a fairly easy job to play the guitar. Lots of people can do it and many of them are idiots. But when you look at a piece of guitar tab it looks kind of scary. Well, look again. It is just a picture of a guitar. Visualize it in your imagination. The tuning end of the guitar is to your left, the body of the guitar is to your right. The thinnest string is on the top, the thickest string is on the bottom. Nothing scary about that.

Moving on, we see numbers on the guitar tab. What are they? The numbers running down the left side are the notes sounded when you play the open strings, the numbers that run along the strings represent frets. Frets are the metal strips on the neck of the guitar. You put your fingers a fraction behind the frets to alter the length of the string, so that when it is plucked, strummed or picked the sound is higher or lower depending on how far up the fingerboard you are. So the number one, for example, indicates that one of your fingers must be placed behind the first fret of the guitar. This is the fret closest to the tuning gear on the end of the neck.

Now let us look at a section of guitar tab. This is a short riff from a piece of music called Peter Gunn. It was written by Henry Mancini who probably wrote most of the orchestral music that most of us have ever heard, and it has been recorded by many artists, notably The Blues Brothers, Jimi Hendrix and Emerson, Lake And Palmer. The first recording of it was a hit for electric guitar pioneer, Duane Eddy.

All the notes are played on the sixth string - the thickest string, remember? If you play the piano, try it out, the notes are E E F# E G E A G# played as one bar in 4/4 time.

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e-----  
B-----  
G-----  
D-----  
A-----  
E--0--0--2--0--3--0--5--4--
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To play the tabs use down strokes with the pick or your thumb. Once you have played the notes once, go back to the start and play them again until you are tired. Congratulations, now you know first hand that it is easy to learn guitar tabs. Really you have all you need to go on and learn your favorite songs. Not many songs have not been put into tab form, so it is just a matter of searching on the net. As your technique gets better, you will find that there are symbols that represent any left hand guitar technique you will learn. If you find tabs for a song that you like, and it contains symbols you do not understand, the tab often has an explanatory key at the top or the bottom. Or you can just look on the popular tab sites for explanations of any symbols you do not know.

Lead Guitar Solos and the Guitarists Who Played Them

In the early hours of the morning have you ever wondered where the great lead guitar solos came from and how did the guitar solo get firmly wedged into today's popular music? Did it all start with Chuck Berry in the nineteen fifties or with The Yardbirds or The Rolling Stones in the sixties? Or did it all start with the guitar solo in Rock Around The Clock by Bill Haley And The Comets?

Of course before rock and roll took off as a musical force, Les Paul who was one of the earliest electric guitar players. The team of Les Paul and his wife Mary Ford made many records and had their own TV series, and most of the songs included a guitar solo in some form. But I don't think I have ever read of any lead guitarist being inspired by the solos of Les Paul.

You could change the question to "who was the first guitar player to make his lead guitar solos stand out noticeably?" Chuck Berry and Carl Perkins certainly made their own distinctive impressions during the early years of rock and roll but the nineteen sixties really brought the electric guitar into its own as a solo instrument through performers like The Shadows, The Ventures and Dick Dale. There were also the simple but exciting instrumentals of Link Wray and Duane Eddy. Probably a contributing factor to the age of the guitar instrumental was that, apart from Hank Marvin of The Shadows, none of these guitar players could sing. The era of the guitar instrumental filled the three or four years before The Beatles and The Stones changed the face of music entirely.

By the time Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page, Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton emerged as the original guitar heroes, the instrumental groups had come and gone but they were very real influence on the guitarists of the late sixties.

George Harrison's guitar solos with The Beatles were always very tuneful but a lot of people say that George himself was not very good at composing solos and he just played what Lennon and McCartney suggested to him. The riffs on Day Tripper and Ticket To Ride are said to be the work of John Lennon.

The element of rock and roll that we refer to as the riff has been around for many years. The guitar was brought out of the jazz band rhythm section by men like Charlie Christian and Django Reinhardt.

Once Jimi Hendrix had arrived on the scene it seemed as though every rock and roll guitar player had the world's permission to create lead guitar solos. And they are still doing it.

Computer Guitar Lessons

Maybe you have thought about computer guitar lessons. If you could order your own tailor-made guitar lesson course for your computer, what would you request? It might help to think about the basic requirements of computer guitar lessons. Basically your lessons need to show you how to hold and play the guitar, how to read guitar tabs, sheet music or both, and some way of checking your progress. So let us look at some of the computer guitar lessons out there and see how they fulfill our requirements.

[Learn And Master Guitar](#) has a one-hundred page book, twenty DVDs, five CDs featuring backing tracks plus they offer free support. The structure of this course follows the basic principles of all computer guitar lessons: you have your learning material that you get from the book and from the DVDs, and you practice what you have learned using the backing tracks as a guide and reality check on your emerging guitar skills.

Another computer guitar course is called [Amazing Guitar Secrets](#). Once again you have a book and DVDs containing your guitar lessons and backing tracks to play along with. You can track how you are progressing using a section of the book which allows you to have a visual record of what you have learnt.

If you have been looking around for computer guitar lessons you have probably come across [Jamorama](#). Jamorama is for the guy who does not take music particularly seriously but thinks it might be cool to be able to play some songs and riffs on the guitar. Not that there's anything wrong with that. To be fair, Jamorama does give you plenty of substantial material in the books, audio and video which you download to make you a "real" guitar player should you so desire.

The three guitar lesson courses I have mentioned are meant to be shipped to you in printed form and on discs or downloaded and kept on your computer. There is another alternative: the membership site. The most comprehensive and so far the most successful is [Jamplay](#). With Jamplay you get access to a number of guitar teachers who are experts in their own style of music. These teachers are videoed giving lessons illustrating techniques and how to play particular songs. The lessons cover all stages of guitar learning. So with Amazing Guitar Secrets, Jamorama and Learn And Master Guitar you get to keep all the guitar lessons at your house, your Jamplay membership gets you access to any improvements, revisions and updates that occur. Jamplay also has progress reports, a forum and support through video answers to your questions. Jamplay is probably the most economical option as you can pay by the month, and your fees drop drastically if you pay by the quarter or annually.

I should mention that none of the above computer guitar lesson courses lack for quality. The printed material, downloadable audio and video, CDs and DVDs are all first class. The difference between the methods is the varying approaches to the guitar.