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Building A Rock Groove (Using Quarter Notes)



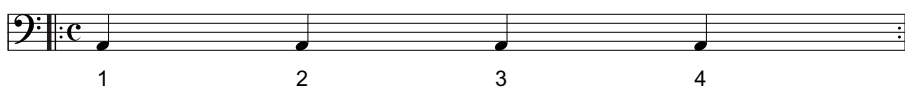
Understanding Quarter Notes

To understand how to play a **rock groove**, we need to understand that music is ordered into **bars**. The most common bar of music is divided into 4 **beats**, and we feel that quite naturally. Because it is the most commonly used bar, it is called **common time**.

In a bar of common time there are four beats. In the example below you will see that for each beat there is a **note**. You will see that because there are four notes, the bar is divided into 4. These notes are accordingly called **quarter notes**.

Look at the example below. This shows a bar of common time containing 4 quarter notes. The symbol for common time is the 'C' at the front of the bar.

Example 1 – Quarter notes on a musical staff.



Introducing the note of 'A', with an 'Open' string

To help us understand quarter notes we can use them to play a rock groove. The first stage is to count out loud the 4 quarter note beats in the bar and play a bass note on each one. The bass note we will play is **A**. The note of **A** is found in the bottom space on the musical **stave**, as shown above.

We can find this note on the third string of the bass guitar. Take a look at the picture of the bass guitar and you will see that we have named and numbered each string on the right hand side.

You do not need to use your left hand at all for this exercise. You simply play the third string with your index finger of your right hand. Playing a string without using the **fretboard** is called playing an **open string**, as it is not closed by the left hand. The note played using an open string, is the name of the string. So, if you play the strings of the bass without fretting them, each string will produce the following notes.

Lesson Objectives

- Understand and be able to count **quarter notes**.
- Understand **root bass notes**.
- Introduce the bass notes of **A** and **G** played on both **fretted** and on **open strings**.
- Play a **rock groove**.





Figure 1: **Open A** on String 3, the **A** string.



Playing an Open A

Now we are going to play our first exercise written below.

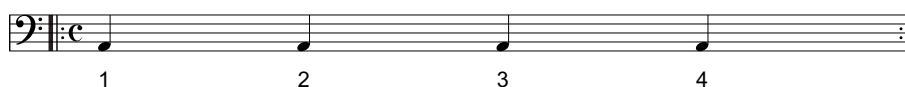
For each exercise throughout the course you have **multimedia clips**. These will help you understand the exercises and give you an opportunity to play along with them as well. There are **video** and **play-along files**, so you can, see, hear and play along with the exercises.

Watch the video for the exercise first by clicking on the video icon, so you can see what to do. You can then listen and play along to the play along file using your BassXtractor, using the Xtractor icon – the one with the Gigajam G.

NOTE There are 4 clicks at the beginning of each exercise to count into the exercise.

Exercise 1: Playing an Open A

lesson001.ibsbrg.openA.01



Playing the note of 'A' on a different string

You will find that you can play the same notes on different parts of the bass guitar. For example, you can play the note of **A** at the 5th fret of the 'E' string, 4th string. However, you need to use your left hand as well as your right this time.

Put your first finger (index) on the 'E' string at the 5th fret. Look at your bass and you will see that the 5th fret has a dot on it. The 5th fret is the second dot along the neck.

If you look at the picture below you will see that the **frets** are counted from the **head stock** of the bass guitar rising in number as they approach the body of the bass guitar. For ease, we have positioned a red dot on the picture to show you where your fretting finger goes on the neck.

Now that we are playing by placing our finger on the **fretboard**, we are playing what is called a **fretted string**. Use the accompanying multimedia files to again see and hear what the next exercise is asking you to do.



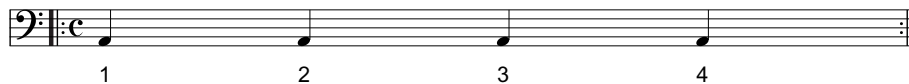
Playing an A on the E string at the 5th Fret



Figure 2: A on the E string at the 5th Fret

Exercise 2: Playing an A on the E string at the 5th fret

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Understanding 'Root' notes

The **A** bass note is the **root** note of the **chord** of **A**. Chords are made up from a number of notes played together and when the guitar or keyboard plays a different chord, the bass generally plays the root note of that chord.

Let's have a look at finding and playing some more notes...



Playing a G on the E string at the 3rd Fret

Introducing the note of 'G'

We are going to just look at two notes in this lesson. The second note to learn is called **G**.

To play the **G** note you need to fret the note by using your left hand, placing your first (index) finger on the 'E' string at the 3rd fret. Look at the picture below.

The 3rd fret is the first dot along the neck. Again, we have placed a red dot on our picture.

You play the 'E' string again with your right hand as we did when we played the **A** using the 4th string. Again watch the video clip and then play along once you are happy you know what you are doing.

Play the **G** bass note on each of the 4 quarter notes in the bar, in the same way we have done with our 'A' notes.

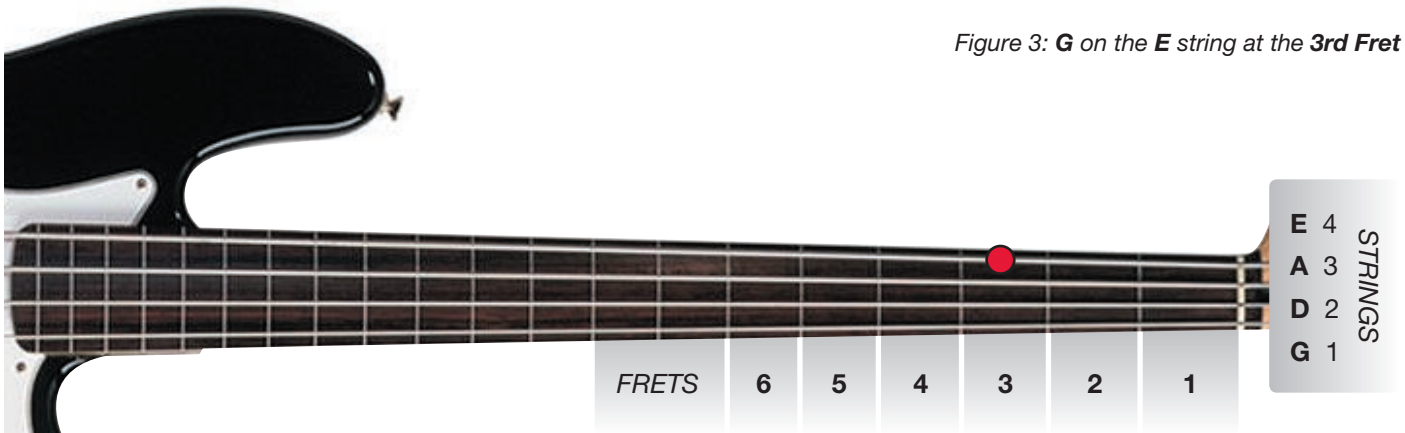
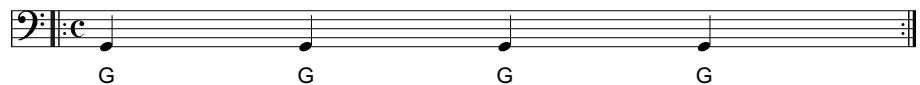


Figure 3: **G** on the **E** string at the **3rd Fret**

Exercise 3: Playing a G on the E string at the 3rd fret

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Developing your bass playing by changing notes

Now that you know where the notes of **A** and **G** are, we need to start to develop your ability to change between them. Music is often made up of many different notes and we need to be fluent at changing between them.

Below are three more exercises that require you to change between the notes of **A** and **G** at different times. These will help you practise your changes.

Underneath each note we have noted the beat the notes are on, so that you can count and change to the next note on the right part of the bar. We have also provided play along media files, so that you can set your BassXtractor to play the music at a comfortable pace and cycle around and around to give you lots of practise.

Remember that there are video files for each exercise if you are at all unsure as to what you are doing.

Exercise 4: One bar of A and a bar of G

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A 1 A 2 A 3 A 4 G 1 G 2 G 3 G 4

Exercise 5: Two beats of A and two beats of G

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A 1 A 2 G 3 G 4 A 1 A 2 G 3 G 4

Exercise 6: Three beats of A and one beat of G

lesson001.ibsbrg.05

A 1 A 2 A 3 G 4 A 1 A 2 A 3 G 4

Anatomy of the Modern Electric Bass Guitar

The modern bass guitar has three main parts joined together.

1. The Body.
2. The Head Stock.
3. The Neck.

We have added a few brief descriptions to help you understand your instrument's construction.

Machine Heads

The machine heads can be tightened and loosened to tune the guitar strings. Tightening them sharpens the sound and loosening flattens the sound.

Frets

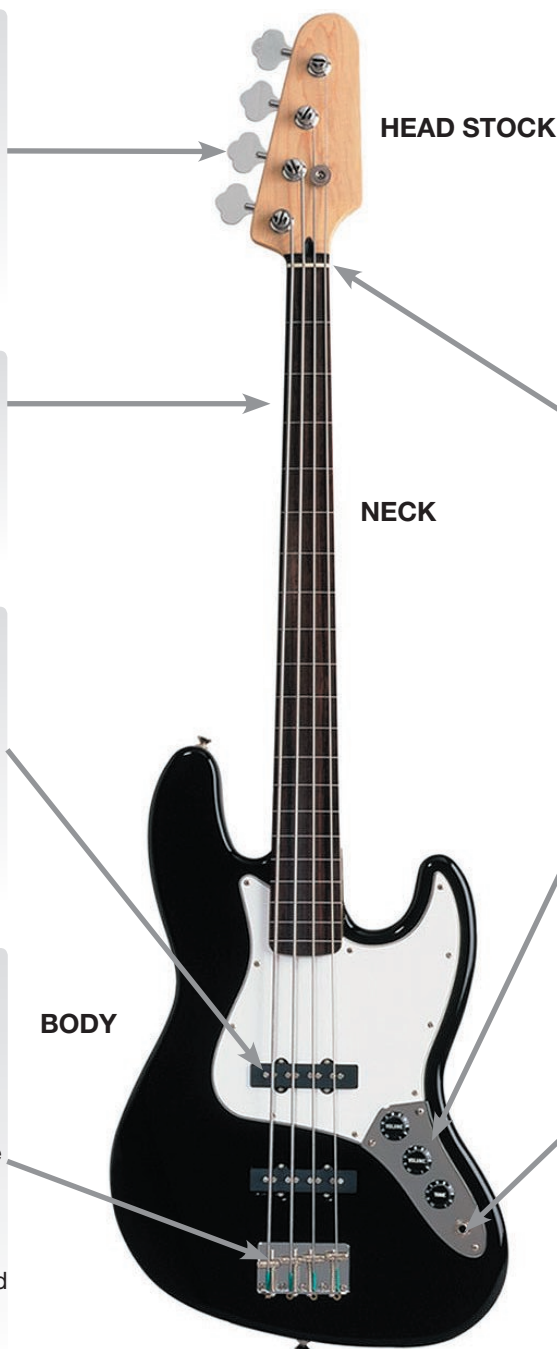
Each fret creates a different note. The nearer the fret to the body, the higher the sound.

Pick-ups

The pick ups, 'pick up' the sound of the strings and act like a microphone sending the sound down the cable from the jack input to an amplifier.

Bridge

The strings are connected from the bridge of the bass to the machine heads. You can adjust the height of the bridge to make the strings lower or higher on the bass neck, according to how you want the bass to sound and feel to play.



Nut

Separates and gives height to the strings at the top of the fretboard.

Volume and Tone controls

You control the volume of your bass on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being loudest.

The tone is controlled in the same way with 10 being the brightest.

Jack input

This is where you plug one end of your guitar lead into. The sound comes through here into the cable from the pick ups and with the other end of your cable connected to your amplifier, you now have sound.