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Developing Rock Grooves (Part 1)



Rock Grooves

So far we have learned to play rock grooves on the E and A strings.

Now it is time to learn to play bass notes on the D string as well as the G string.

Introducing the D and G strings

The open strings on the bass guitar are E, A, D and G. Have a look at our picture below.

We have already learned to play the notes of A, G, C, D on the E and A strings. It is also possible to play these notes on the D and G strings. Although they have the same note names the new notes sound higher.

Playing G on the D string

In *Lesson 1* we learned to play a G note on the E string. We are now going to look at playing a G note on the D string at the 5th fret.

Have a look at *Figure 2* and follow these instructions. Place your 4th finger of your left hand on the 5th fret of the D string. This will produce a G note, but will be higher in pitch to the G played on the E string. Work through the next few exercises and then compare the sound of the different G notes.

Remember to use the media files so you can see where you need to place your left hand on the fingerboard, then practise playing along with your BassXtractor.

Lesson Objectives

- Develop our understanding and performance of quarter note and eighth note patterns.
- Introduce the D and G strings.
- Develop further control of string crossing using octave shapes.
- Introduce visualisation of shapes (Octaves).
- Introducing the bass clef.



Figure 1. The bass guitar's strings.



Figure 2: **G** on the **D** string, at the **5th** fret.

Exercise 1

lesson006.ibsdrgr.01

1 2

FINGER 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

Comparing G notes across E string and D string

Now you can play two different G bass notes, one low and one high. This next exercise enables you to compare the sound of the two different G notes.

Take a look at *Figure 3* and follow these instructions. Try playing this second exercise by playing the G on the E string at the 3rd fret with your index finger and the G on the D string with your 4th finger at the 5th fret as we did in *Exercise 1*.

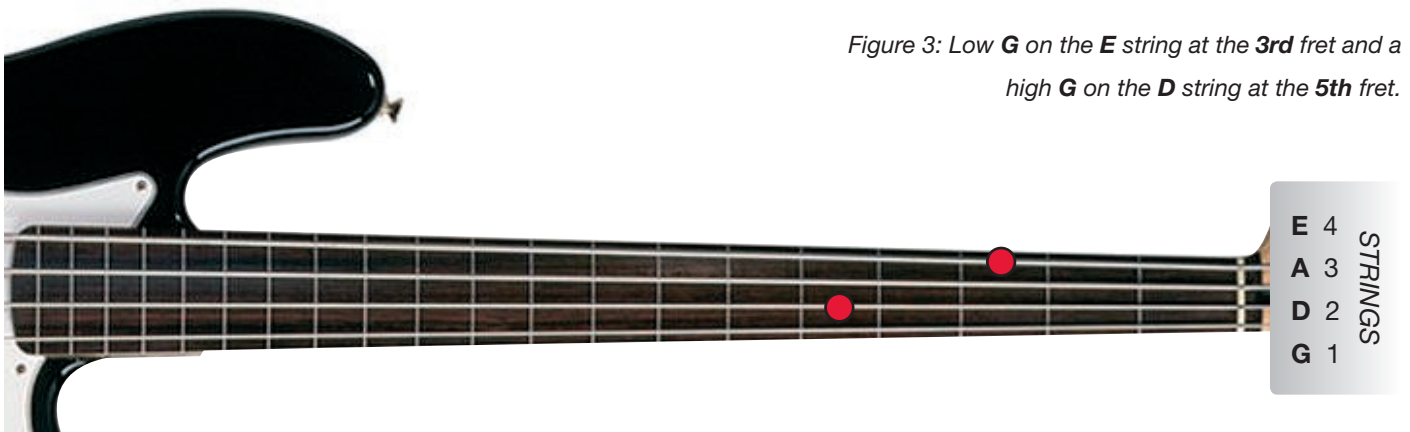


Figure 3: Low **G** on the **E** string at the **3rd** fret and a high **G** on the **D** string at the **5th** fret.

Once you are comfortable with your fingers and their positions, use the multimedia to check you are right and then practise with the play-along files.

Exercise 2

lesson006.ibsdrgr.02

1 2

FINGER 1 4 1 4 2 4 1 4

Visualising the Octave Shape on the Fingerboard

We can use these two different G notes to help us understand how to visualise the fingerboard. Allow me to explain with the aid of *Figure 4* below.

Look at our picture of the bass fingerboard and look at the shape between the low and the high G notes.

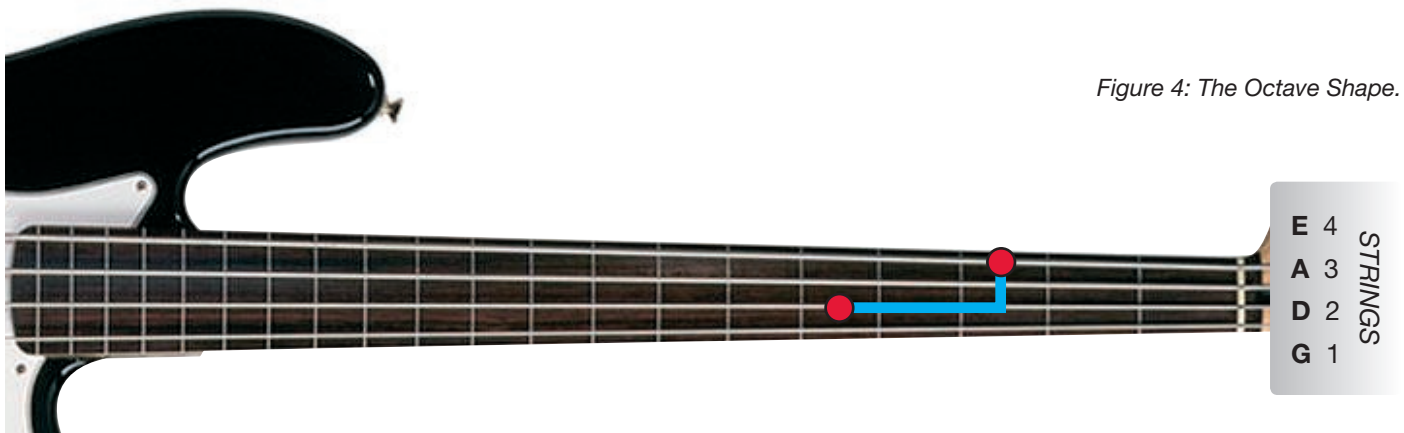


Figure 4: The Octave Shape.

Figure 5: the octave shape

**Glossary: Octave**

An **octave** is an interval of 8 notes, including the top note and the bottom note.

The note name is the same at the top as it is at the bottom ie. G Octave.

Gabcdef**G**

The Octave Shape

This is called the octave shape and *Figure 4* is showing that by moving along two frets and across two strings connects your low note with your higher note. This is a very important connection for you to understand because:

1. It is the shape of an **octave**.
2. It is a shape that works for all notes.

The connection between low and high notes enables us to create more rock grooves by combining the lower and higher notes to create an interesting sound with the use of octave bass lines.

We will use this knowledge to develop our rock grooves across all notes, but firstly we should become comfortable with our G octave.

I am sure that you have now made the connection, but we have in *Figure 6* below shown the **octave shape for G** as it will appear on your musical staff.

Figure 6: The octave shape for G



String Crossing using the Octave Shape G

We have written a short exercise that will help you develop your use of the G octave. In *Bar 1* you play low to high G octave using quarter notes and then in *Bar 2* you play the same G octave but this time with eighth notes. As always, watch, listen and then play along with the multimedia files.

Exercise 3

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Our next exercise is a classic bass groove and uses the octave shape perfectly as an example of how to apply this new skill in a practical way.

Exercise 4

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1

FINGER 1 1 4 4 1 4 1 4

2

FINGER 1 4 1 4 1 1 4

3

FINGER 1 1 4 4 1 4 1 4

4

FINGER 1 4 1 4 1 1 4 4

5

FINGER 4 4 4 4 4 1 4 4 4 4 4 1

6

FINGER 4 4 4 4 4 1 4 4 4 4 4 1

7

FINGER 4 4 4 4 4 1 4 4 4 4 4 1

8

FINGER 4 4 4 4 4 1 4 4 4 4 4 1

The Stave and the position of Bass notes

This is very much a performance based course and accordingly we have deliberately not tackled the question of note positions on the stave and have left it for you to recognise the notes by the fact that you have been looking at the exercises.

However, with octaves now rapidly expanding the notes on the stave this seems to be a good time to tell you where all the notes are on the stave and briefly introduce **clefs**.

Introducing the bass clef (notation for pitch – understanding the bass clef)

Music for the bass guitar is written on the musical staff. You have seen the staff used all the way through the course so far and you will know it as the 5 lines and 4 spaces upon which we have written your musical exercises.

Specifically, your musical exercises are written in the **bass clef**, as the notes you play on the bass are of a low pitch. Notes of a higher pitch are written in **treble clef**.

The electric guitar course is written in the treble clef and the keyboard course is written in both clefs, as the keyboard has a range of notes that covers both clefs from very high to very low.

If you look below you will see two figures numbered 7 and 8. In *Figure 7*, we have written on the staff the bass notes that fall in the spaces. In *Figure 8*, you have the remaining notes that fall on the lines.

You will see both treble and bass clefs written together and you can distinguish them by the different symbols at the beginning of our example bars of music.

Please feel free to return to this page, or even print it out and pin it on the wall. This will enable you to refer to it easily.

Figure 7: Bass Clef. Notes that fall in the spaces on the bass staff

Figure 7 shows two staves: Treble Clef and Bass Clef. The Treble Clef staff has four whole rests. The Bass Clef staff has four whole notes in the spaces, labeled A, C, E, and G from left to right.

Figure 8: Bass Clef. Notes that fall on the lines on the bass staff

Figure 8 shows two staves: Treble Clef and Bass Clef. The Treble Clef staff has five whole rests. The Bass Clef staff has five whole notes on the lines, labeled G, B, D, F, and A from left to right.