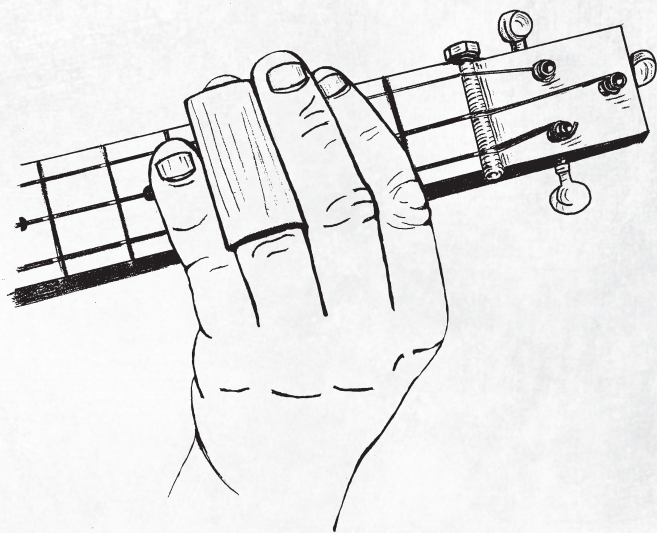


YOU CAN PLAY
—•—
BLUES BOX
◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇ *Slide* ◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇
GUITAR
—•—



Nick Bryant

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Published by Hinkler Books Pty Ltd
45-55 Fairchild Street
Heatherton Victoria 3202 Australia
www.hinkler.com.au

Hinkler Books Pty Ltd 2015

Text © Nick Bryant
Blues box name © Nick Bryant and IP International
Layout and design © Hinkler Books Pty Ltd

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Packaging and cover design: Sam Grimmer
Typesetting: MPS Limited

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ISBN: 978 1 4889 2459 0

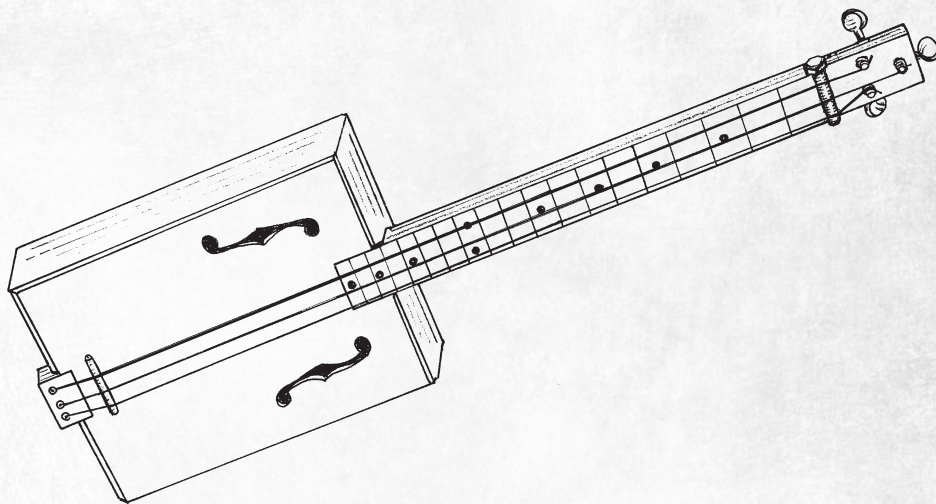
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Introduction

Congratulations! You now have your very own Blues Box Guitar! Learning to play music is a fun, very rewarding, lifelong journey. If you've never played guitar before, the Blues Box Guitar is an excellent choice to start with. There are no complicated chords or finger patterns to learn, so you will be playing in no time!

Listen to Track 1 on the CD. This track demonstrates how the Blues Box Guitar sounds through an amplifier, with and without effects and playing in different styles. There's some drum and bass backing in this track, but all of the guitar parts are played on the Blues Box Guitar.

Based on the classic cigar-box guitar design, the Blues Box Guitar is a great alternative to building your own or buying the more expensive handmade versions. Experienced guitarists who have never played a fretless slide guitar will take to it like a duck to water. Once they pick one up, they just cannot put it down! Hopefully, you will agree as you begin your Blues Box Guitar experience.

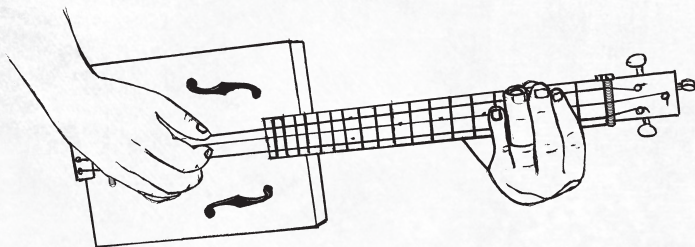


A Brief History of the Cigar Box Guitar

Cigar box instruments date back to the mid-19th century, when cigars first became available in the compact wooden boxes we know today. Back then, musical instruments were too expensive for most people to buy because such crafted items were not mass produced. Each instrument was carefully handmade by a luthier. Eager and aspiring musicians who couldn't afford a professionally crafted instrument used their ingenuity and resourcefulness to create cigar box instruments, such as guitars, banjos, violins and thumb pianos.

The timbre of these instruments became an integral part of the blues sound in general and, more specifically, the famous Delta blues sound. This sound is quite difficult to achieve with a standard guitar, but easy with a Blues Box Guitar.

Blues legends such as Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, Lightnin' Hopkins, Carl Perkins and Jimi Hendrix began their careers playing cigar box guitars. Over the last decade, there has been a resurgence of and renewed interest in all things homemade, and a groundswell in cigar box instruments is now occurring. Artists such as Tom Waits and PJ Harvey have recently dabbled in cigar box guitars and even Paul McCartney has been seen playing a four-string, fretted model.



About the Blues Box Guitar

The Blues Box Guitar is a three-string, short-scale, fretless, acoustic/electric slide guitar. Like a lap-steel guitar, it has no raised metal frets and can only be played effectively with a slide. The guitar works well acoustically, but when plugged into an amplifier, it really sings! Guitar-effects pedals also work with the Blues Box Guitar. A distortion or overdrive pedal is recommended for truly gritty blues sounds, but many guitar amplifiers have built-in effects so you may not even need a pedal.

The compact nature of the Blues Box Guitar makes it an ideal knock-around guitar. Throw it in the car or take it camping; you will always have a guitar on hand to pluck out a few tunes. Just don't forget to pack your slide!

THE SLIDE

The first guitar slides were most likely broken-off bottle-necks with the sharp edges sanded down. A trimmed piece of metal pipe also did the trick. Today, slides are available in many different shapes, sizes and materials, including brass, steel, glass, ceramic, bone, wood and even acrylic models of varying lengths and wall thicknesses, each with their own particular sound.

The Blues Box Guitar kit comes complete with a glass slide. As everybody has different-sized fingers, no one slide will suit all, so check out the variety of slides available at your local music shop. You might like the harsher sound of a brass or steel slide or the mellow sound of a ceramic one. A golden rule in music is to trust your own ears and let them decide what sound you like best.

Parts of the Blues Box Guitar

1. **Tuning Heads**

The strings wind around the tuning heads, which are turned to tune the strings.

2. **Headstock**

Holds the nut and the tuning heads; it is lower than the fretboard so that the strings are pulled tightly over the nut.

3. **Nut**

Spaces the strings, lifting them above the fretboard to line up with the bridge. The nut is also used to create a string guide to the tuning heads.

4. **Neck and Fretboard**

Move a slide up and down the fretboard to create music. The fret markings and dots indicate where to hold the slide and the best notes to play.

5. **Strings**

The strings vibrate at a frequency that is, hopefully, pleasant!

6. **F-holes/Sound Holes**

Allow soundwaves to exit the body.

7. **Soundboard and Body**

Where the sound is acoustically amplified as it bounces from the soundboard and around the inside of the body.

8. **Bridge**

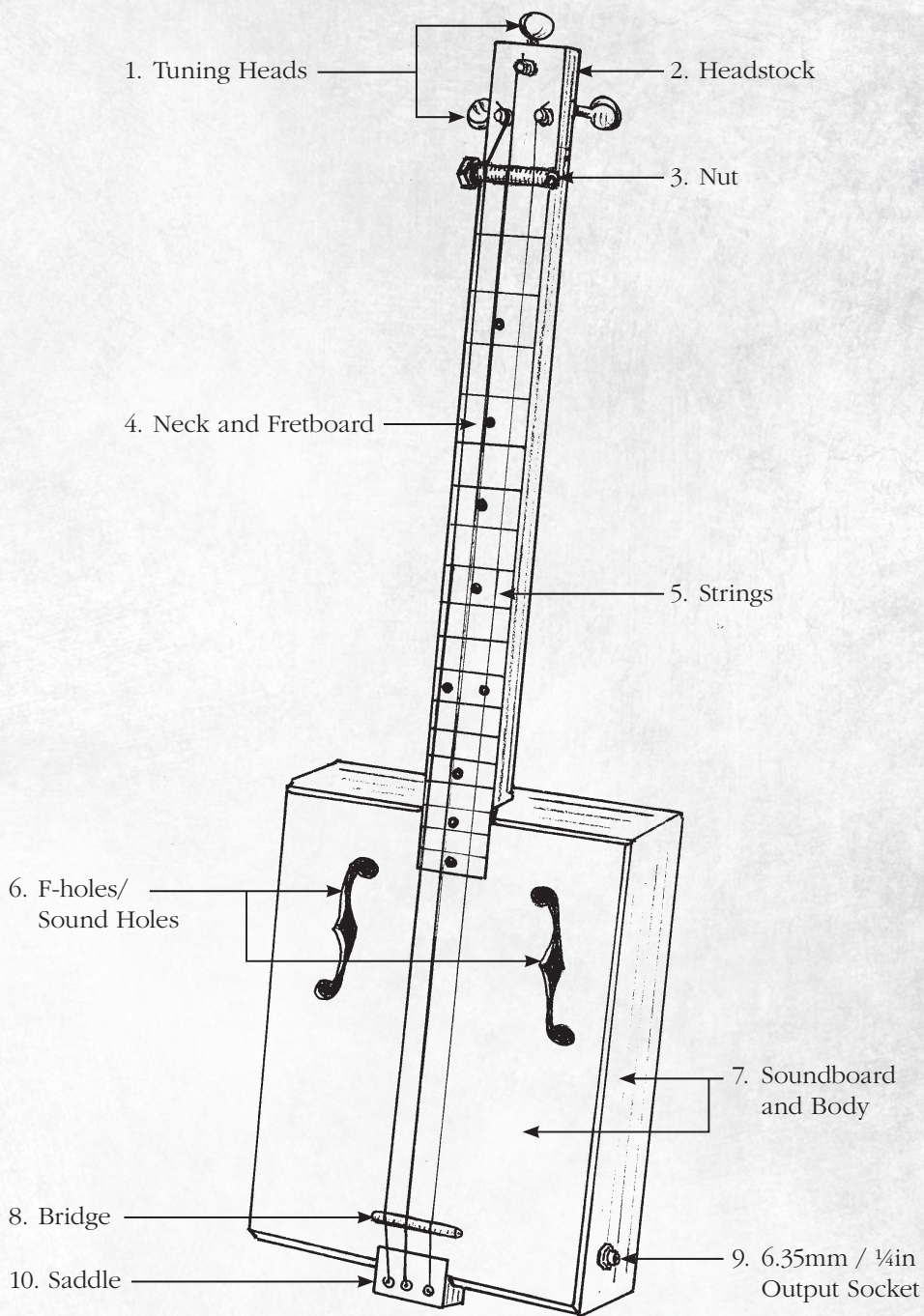
Sits on the soundboard and transfers the vibration of the strings to the body. The bridge is held in place by the tension of the strings and can be adjusted.

9. **6.35mm / ¼in Output Socket**

Where you take a plug from the guitar to an amplifier for more volume.

10. **Saddle**

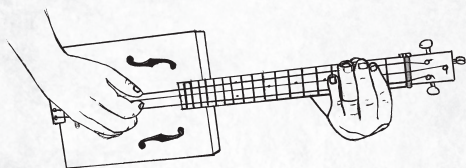
The short protrusion at the bottom of guitar tightly holds the strings. The six ferrules (small rivets) on the front and back keep the strings from digging into the wood.



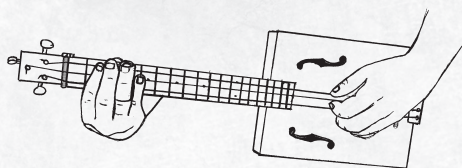
Preparing the Guitar

A note for left-handers: The instructions in this book are for right-handed guitar players. If you wish to play left-handed, swap the positions of the highest and lowest strings. Many left-handers prefer to play the guitar right-handed, so if you are left-handed and haven't played before, you might be quite comfortable playing right-handed. Try holding the guitar *before* you string it. Put the slide on your left ring finger and see how it feels to hold the neck of the instrument with the slide on the fretboard. Now change to the other hand to see if that feels more or less comfortable.

Right handed:



Left handed:



STRINGING THE GUITAR

The Blues Box Guitar uses standard bronze phosphor acoustic strings, normally found on a steel string guitar. At one end you will see a small metal ring known as a 'ball end', which is used to securely hold the string at the saddle of the guitar.

The strings supplied with the kit are the third, fourth and fifth strings from a light gauge set. For replacement strings, ask for this gauge at a music shop. You might have to buy a whole pack of six strings, but the spares can be used to replace broken strings on a standard guitar.

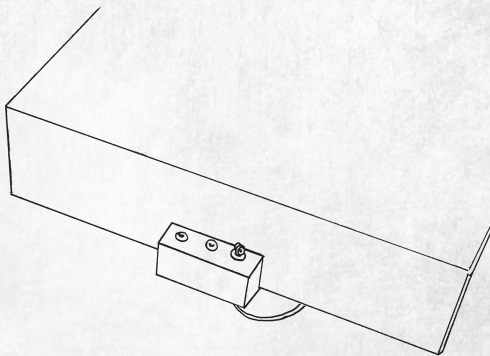
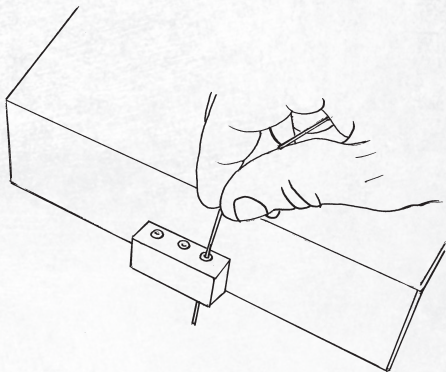
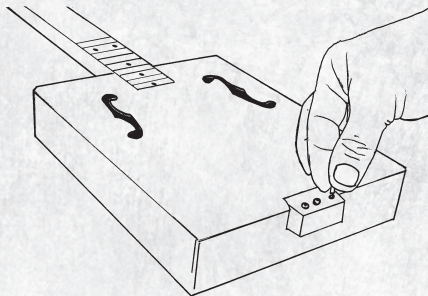
If you can purchase strings separately, ask for the closest to the following sizes:

- Third string (G): 0.025in, tuned to G
- Fourth string (D): 0.032in, tuned to D
- Fifth string (A): 0.042in, tuned to G

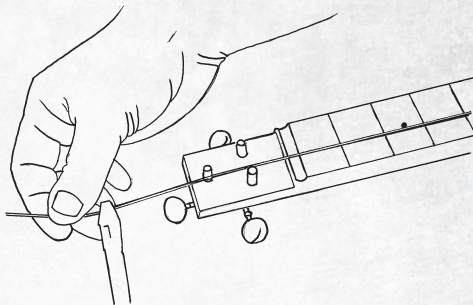
Note that the only string not tuned to its original designation is the fifth string (A), which is tuned down one tone to a G for the Blues Box Guitar.

Find a solid bench or table on which to work. Lay down an old towel or some newspaper pages so you don't damage the surface.

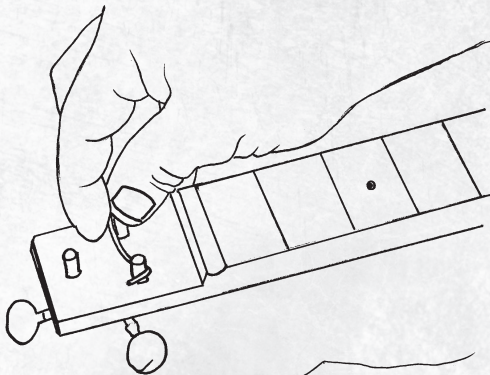
1. Take three ferrules and push them into the holes in the front of the saddle. If they are too hard to push in, you may need to gently tap them with a hammer or use something hard and flat like a butter knife to help push them right in. Insert the other three ferrules into the holes at the back of the saddle.
2. Take the thickest string from the bag marked '5th' and slip it through the top hole at the back of the saddle until the little ball end stops it against the ferrule.



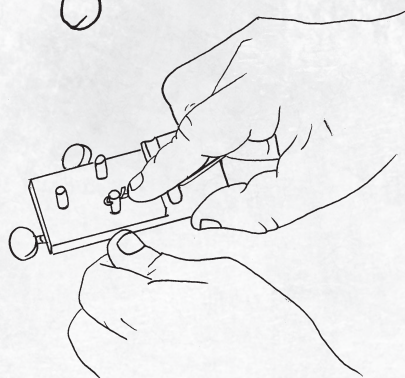
3. Lay the string along the neck past the first tuning head. Cut the string with a pair of side cutters or pliers, leaving about 10cm / 4in of string after the tuning head. This will leave enough slack to wind the string around the tuning head a few times.



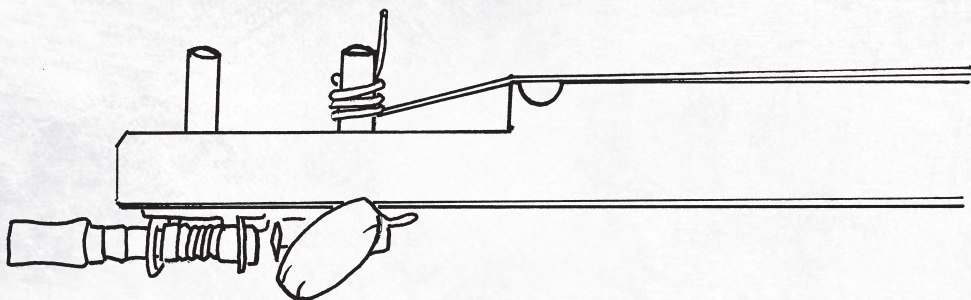
4. Push the string through the hole in the tuning head so there is about 10–15mm / ½in poking out the other side. Bend the excess string at a right angle to stop it slipping back out.



5. Turn the tuning head anti-clockwise until the string is tight. The string should travel inside of the two parallel tuning heads.



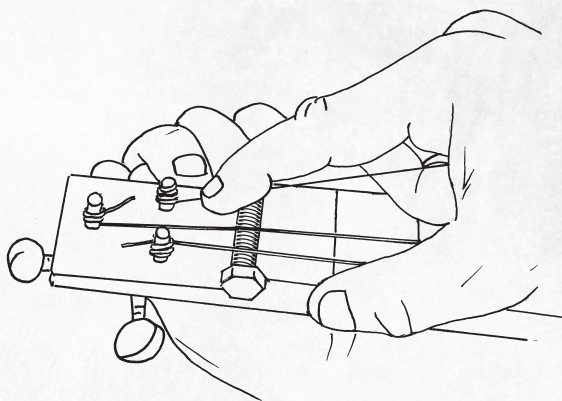
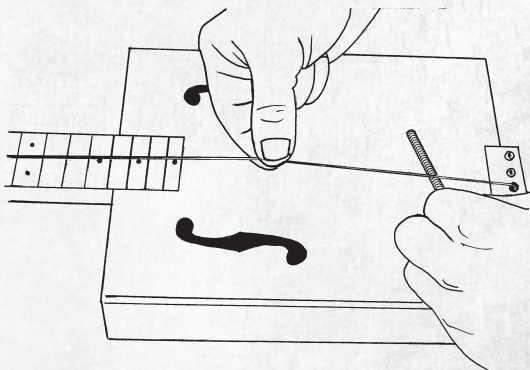
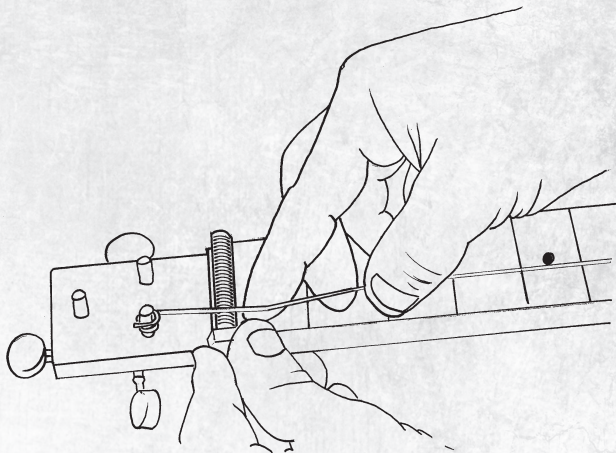
6. Make sure the string winds down the tuning heads. This will ensure the string presses tightly onto the nut, so it doesn't buzz.



7. While the first string is still slack, take the nut (the 50mm / 2in bolt with the hexagonal head) and slip it into the notch at the beginning of the fretboard.

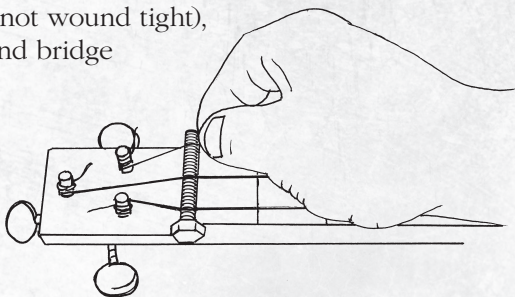
8. Take the bridge (the piece of threaded rod), and slip it under the string at the other end, centred over the cross to cover the words 'BRIDGE & BRIDGE'.

9. Repeat the stringing process with the 4th string to the middle tuning head that sticks out at the top of the headstock and finally the 3rd string. Ensure that these strings travel over the nut and to the tuning heads from the middle of the neck as in the final diagram on page 12.

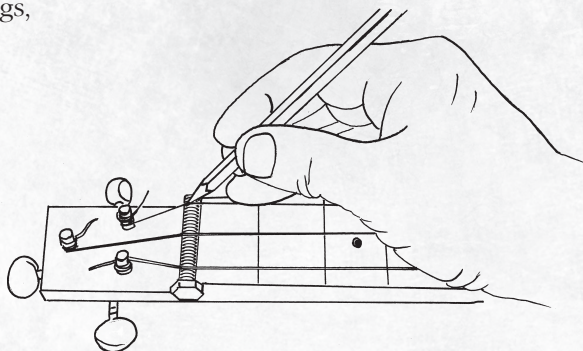


10. After the strings are strung (but not wound tight), adjust their position in the nut and bridge so they are evenly spaced.

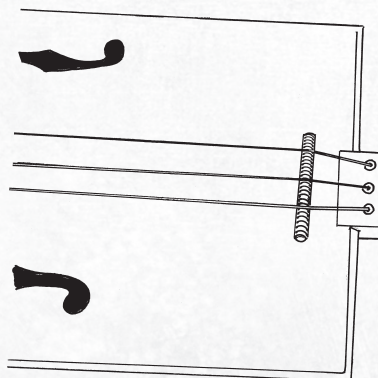
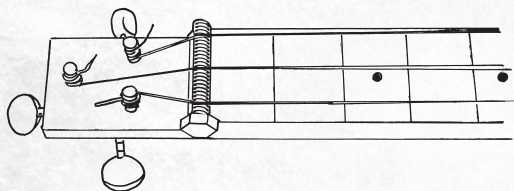
The space between the strings can be wider than a standard guitar: up to 15mm (a little over $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch), but this can always be adjusted later. Note how the strings splay in above the nut towards the tuning heads.



11. Before you tighten the strings, take a graphite pencil and draw on the corresponding grooves where the strings pass over the nut and bridge. This will act as lubrication, so the strings will slide easily over the nut and bridge. This will also work with any standard steel-string guitar or electric guitar.



Here are diagrams showing the headstock and the bridge of the strung guitar.



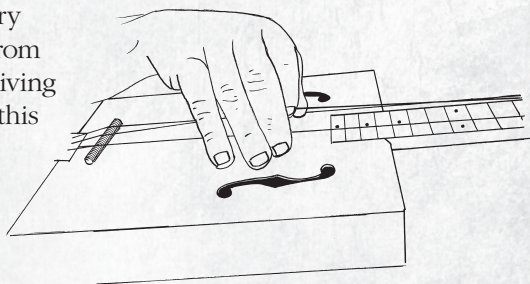
Although stringing can be fiddly, it is well worth getting right because you will forever know how to string any guitar correctly.

Tuning the Guitar

Tuning is usually done by tuning the thickest string and moving to the thinnest. To begin, go to Track 2 on the Tuning track – G, D, G. Starting with the low G, each string will be played four times to allow you to get the pitch. If you are close to the correct pitch but not quite there, you will hear a ‘wobble’ as the string vibrates out of synch. When you are in tune, the note will sound ‘pure’ and vibrate in unison with the tuning track.

A guitar will hold its tuning better if you tune up to the note. If you tune down to the right pitch, it can create slack between the tuning head and the nut, making the guitar likely to drop out of tune almost immediately. If you go too high, turn the tuning head back and then up to the note again. A tip: when you are getting close to the note, use much smaller turns of the tuning head.

If your pitch is just a little high (sharp), try stretching the string by pulling it away from the middle of the fretboard a little and giving it a wiggle. With new strings especially, this will drop the pitch slightly without you having to touch the tuning head.



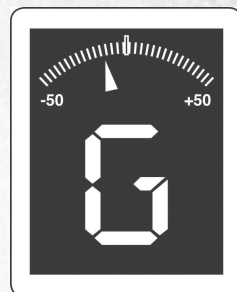
New strings will take a few tunings before they hold the correct pitch. Tune up, strum a bit and then tune again. Stretching all the strings will speed up this process. Remember that the highest string is the same note as the lowest but an octave higher; so it is possible to tune one from the other.

Tuning takes a little practice, so don't be concerned if you find this difficult at first. If you are finding it too difficult, try using an electronic tuner.

ELECTRONIC TUNERS

Electronic tuners can make tuning a breeze, and some even clip straight onto the headstock. Tuning apps for your smart phone or tablet are also available, and many are free.

The name of the note you are playing is usually displayed in the middle of the tuning screen. An indicator needle shows if the pitch of the note is too high or too low.



Playing the Guitar

NOTES AND CHORDS

A chord can be defined as playing more than one note at the same time. The Blues Box Guitar is open tuned to the notes G–D–G. In other words, the open strings played together make a chord that you can strum without touching the neck. This is an open G chord, and the note ‘G’ is called the ‘root note’. It is the default key, and it’s your friend! Always ground your riffs to this chord. It is your start and end point. Sliding up or down to a note or chord, then lifting the slide off to strum the open strings allows you time to reposition the slide on another fret. When in doubt, go open.

MUSICALITY

Playing slide blues guitar is all about feel. Try to put that feel into every note you play. A note can be short or long, loud or soft. It can be pedalled, which means hitting the same note a number of times in succession, or it can be a lonely note with ‘space’ or ‘air’ around it. Effects such as overdrive or distortion can make pedalled notes sound positively rocking, while reverb effects can make lonely notes sound heartbreaking. The idea is to make every note count, and generally, less is more. You don’t need to play a million notes a minute to make good music.

TIMING

Timing is as important as pitch. If you don’t play a tune in time, it will be as unrecognisable as if you were playing the wrong notes. Using a metronome or drum machine will help you to develop the habit of playing in time while also building your own solid rhythm in your head. If you learn good timing from the start, it will be second nature when you begin playing with a drummer or percussionist (which is highly recommended at every opportunity).

Many organs and keyboards have a built-in drum machine that you can use as a metronome or drum backing. There are also many free metronome and drum machine apps available. All you need to begin with is a steady ‘click’ at a comfortable tempo suited to the style you are playing.

To help explain timing in music, we use the term ‘beats’ to describe the steady rhythm of the tempo. A set of four beats makes up one bar of 4/4 time. As 4/4 is the most common timing in popular music, it is also known as ‘common time’.

MUSCLE MEMORY

Don't be discouraged if you can't play everything straightaway. It gets easier as your muscles and fingers learn and remember what to do. Muscle memory is the term for being able to perform a particular task without conscious effort and is the perfect term to describe musicianship. Your movement of the slide and your plucking technique will become second nature. Hammering a nail or riding a bike get easier the more you do them, and so it is with playing music.

The best thing about the Blues Box Guitar is that you'll be playing fun riffs within a very short time, and they sound so cool that it won't feel like you're practising!

TECHNIQUES FOR LEARNING

A golden rule in music is that if you have a riff that is too difficult to play, slow it down. Set your drum machine or metronome to a slower tempo. Make it slow enough to play the riff in time, meaning that although it is much slower than you intend, you will be able to hit each note at the right point. You can gradually speed up the tempo until you are playing at the desired speed.

Another helpful technique is practising a tune in your mind by visualisation. We all have the ability to practice tasks requiring motor skill coordination in our heads to improve these skills in the physical world. Choose a specific riff where you know the notes but are finding it difficult to play. Play it in your head while imagining what your left and right hands should be doing. This technique will be most helpful once you are familiar with the fretboard and your right-hand technique.

Remember that in music there is always more to learn. It has been said that a musician doesn't reach their peak until their mid-sixties! This is one of the beautiful things about the arts: you can keep on improving throughout your life. There are many generous people out there who spend a lot of time and effort to create lessons and information about cigar box guitars. Many will be in the key of 'G' or they will tell you what tuning to use. Spend some time searching, and you will find a plethora of riffs, songs and lessons. For more information, scour the internet, ask musicians, read books and learn as much as you can.

STRUMMING AND PICKING TECHNIQUES

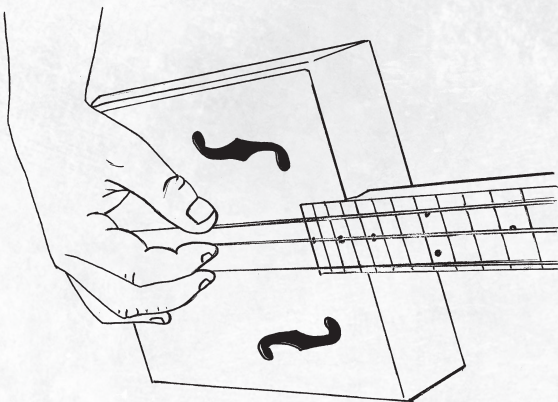
A note for left-handers: these are instructions for playing the guitar right-handed. If you wish to play left-handed, simply swap the word 'right' for 'left'.

Try the following techniques with just the open strings. Strum the open strings of the tuned guitar to hear the open G chord. If it doesn't sound right, tune up again.

THREE FINGERS (RECOMMENDED)

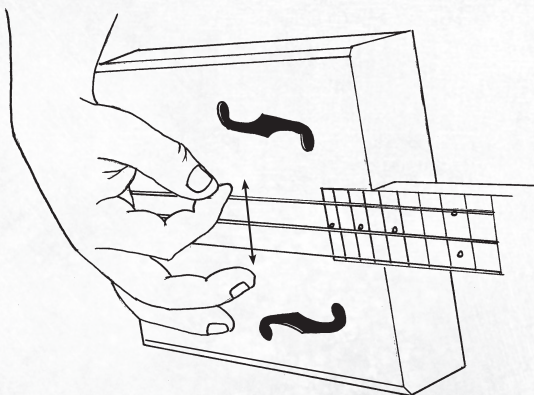
This is one of the most common finger picking techniques for cigar box guitars. Your thumb plays the low string (the thickest), your forefinger plays the middle string and your middle finger plays the highest string.

Once you are comfortable with this, you can dampen the strings in between notes to avoid unwanted buzzing and make for a cleaner sound. Drop your plucking fingers back down onto the string when you want the note to stop.



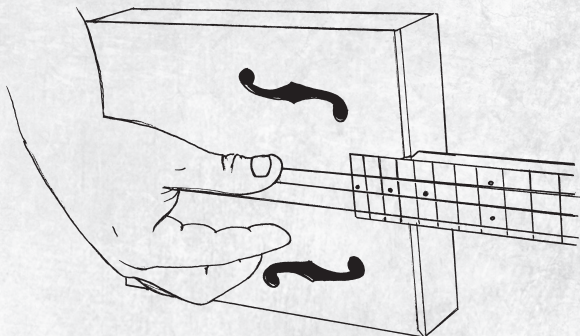
FINGER STRUM

Your forefinger does all the work with this technique. Strum with your fingernail on the down stroke and the pad on the upstroke. You can also use a combination of the finger strum and the three-finger technique. Use the finger strum when you want to add more energy or lift to the sound, such as a louder chorus.



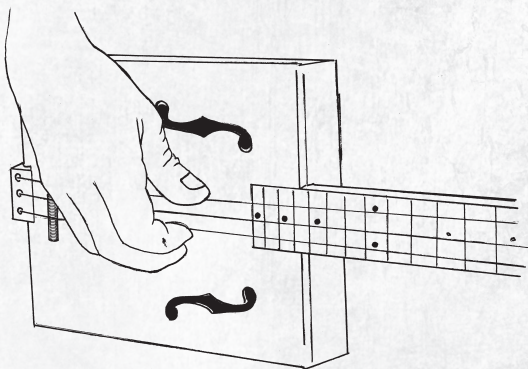
THUMB STRUM OR PICK

This was a common technique for the original blues men. The thumb does all the work: just pick or strum downwards with the side of your thumb near the thumbnail. This can be helpful for a beginner to get used to the feel of playing before graduating to the three-finger technique.



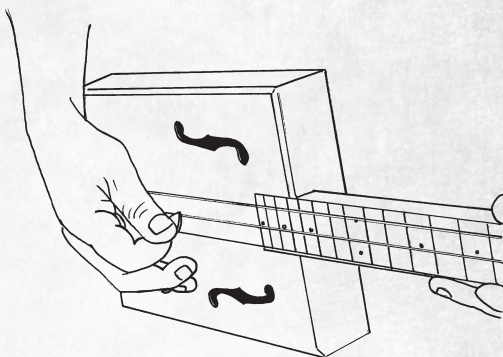
TWO-FINGER OCTAVE

Instead of playing a melody on one string, use your forefinger on the highest string and your thumb on the lowest string and pluck them at the same time. These two notes are the same but an octave apart, and will give you a thicker sound.



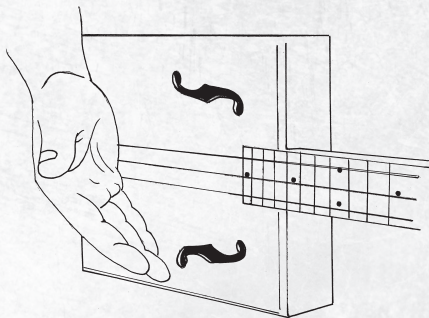
PLECTRUM/GUITAR PICK

This is the standard way to play rock guitar: strum the strings or pick out some notes. A plectrum will increase the acoustic volume considerably. To use one, hold it between your thumb and the first knuckle of your index finger of your right hand.



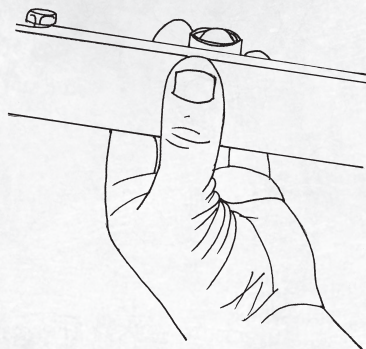
MUTING

Muting is an important right-hand guitar technique. It allows you to control how long the strings ring out. Use the outside edge of your right hand or your palm to stop the strings sounding. This is handy when you want a clean gap between chords or an abrupt stop before a signature riff or chorus.



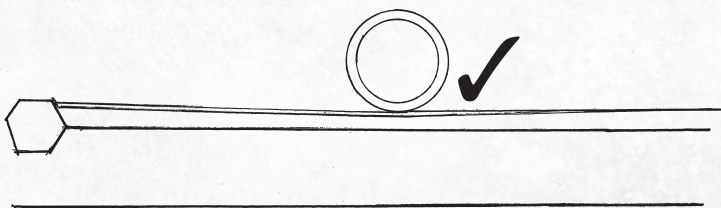
SLIDE TECHNIQUES

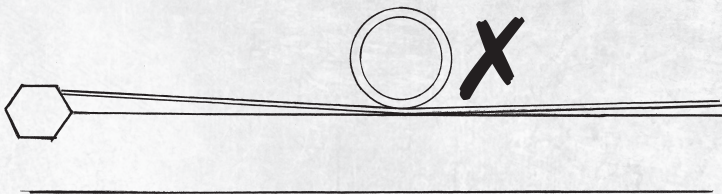
Place a slide on your left ring finger. The slide should not pass your second knuckle so you are able to bend the finger to bring it parallel to the fretboard. Use the fingers on either side to stabilise the slide by keeping all of them together like a salute. Many players use their little finger for the slide leaving the other fingers available to fret notes, but this is not an issue with fretless playing as you will only be using the slide.



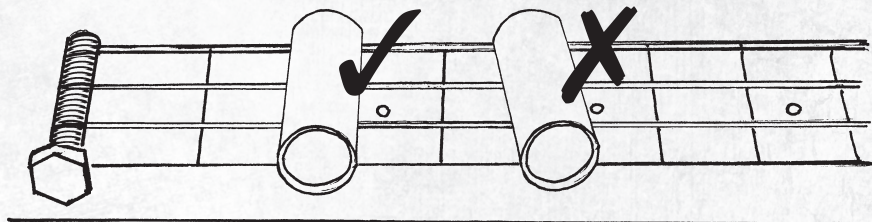
Your thumb should press lightly on the back of neck parallel to your middle finger. This is also the correct thumb position for standard guitar playing.

Keep your hand relaxed. Push down lightly on the strings, just enough to stop them buzzing against the slide. Don't push right down to the fretboard or bend the strings too much, as this will change the pitch of the note and make you sound out of tune. Don't force it, feel it!





To get the correct note, the slide should be right over the fret line, not over the dots between the frets. Most importantly, keep the slide vertical.



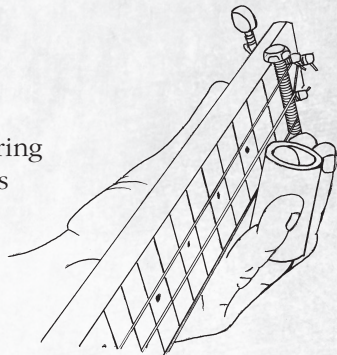
As you play, there will be buzzy sounds when you move positions. This adds character and a bit of down-home 'dirt' to the sound. Try different pressure on the strings or alter your plucking technique to minimise unwanted buzzing.

Remember, the open chord is usually the start point and end point for your tunes. When moving between the other frets, you can often 'bounce' to and from the open chord or note to give you time to change the position of the slide for the next chord or note.

PLAYING ONE STRING

When playing only one string, use the thumb, the plectrum or the three-finger technique to hit the string you desire. Find different patterns across the strings and the fretboard.

When playing just the high string, you may find tilting the slide away from you helpful, as it won't sound the other strings by accident.



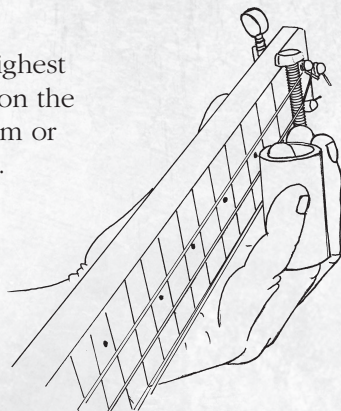
PLAYING TWO STRINGS

When playing only two strings, use just the two highest strings. To avoid sounding the lowest string, position the slide so that it only touches these two strings. Strum or pluck them with your forefinger and middle finger.

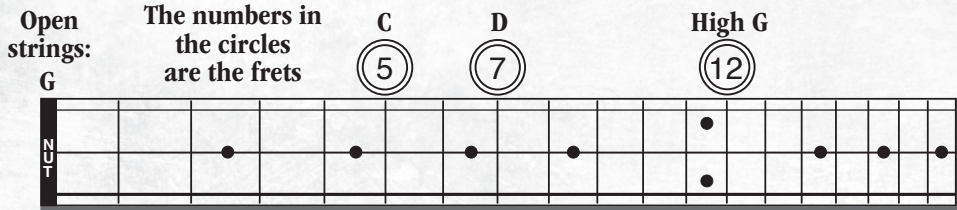
PLAYING ALL STRINGS (CHORDS)

More often than not, a strumming technique is used to play all of the strings at once.

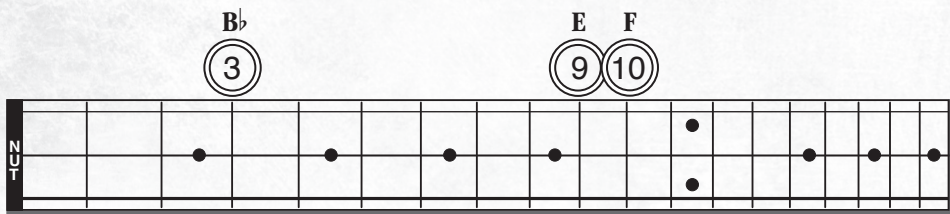
Alternatively, use the three-finger technique and pluck each string in unison for a staccato effect (meaning a short, sharp chord or note). Play the chord and then place your fingers straight back down to mute the strings in between plucks.



You have most likely heard that most songs consist of only three chords: the first, the fourth and the fifth chord of the scale. On the Blues Box Guitar, these chords are G (open and twelfth fret), C (fifth fret) and D (seventh fret). The white circles indicate you play all the strings at once on that fret.



Other chords to use are B \flat (third fret), F sharp (ninth fret) and F (tenth fret).

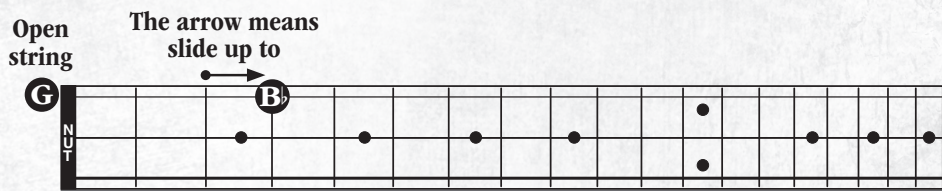


Exercises

There are seven exercise tracks on the CD provided to help you get started. You will find corresponding videos on the Hinkler Publishing Blues Box Guitar YouTube channel.

EXERCISE 1: TWO-NOTE RIFF

The first riff is probably the most common change in blues (and rock for that matter). It is played on just the high G string. The black circles indicate that you play a single note.



1. Play the open high G.
2. Put the slide on the second fret and play the string again, but move the slide up to the third fret almost immediately.
3. Lift off the slide and play the open high G string again.

CD TRACK 3 - TWO-NOTE RIFF

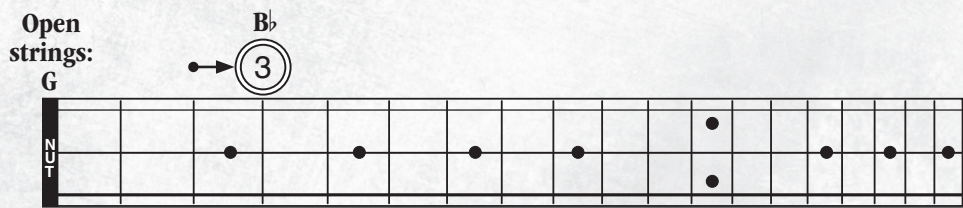
Play along with this track eight times using the riff above. Note that there is a click on this track with a four beat count-in before you start playing, to count you in.

CD TRACK 4 - TWO-NOTE RIFF ALTERNATE

Now play the same riff again, but repeat step two by sliding up to the third fret from the second fret twice before going back to the open string. Play this along with the track eight times after the four beat count-in.

EXERCISE 2: TWO-CHORD RIFF

This exercise is similar to the previous exercise, but is played as a chord with all of the strings. Use the finger-strum or thumb-strum technique, but just use the down direction for each strum at this stage.



1. Strum all of the open strings once.
2. Put the slide on the second fret and strum again, but move the slide up to the third fret almost immediately after strumming.
3. Lift off the slide and strum the open strings again.

CD TRACK 5 - TWO-CHORD RIFF

Play along with the track eight times after the four beat count-in.

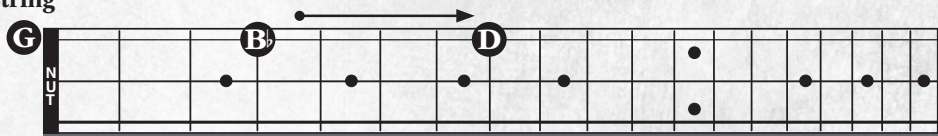
CD TRACK 6 - TWO-CHORD RIFF ALTERNATE

Now play the same riff again, but repeat Step 2 by sliding up to the third fret from the second fret twice before going back to the open strings. Play this along with the track 8 times after the four beat count-in.

EXERCISE 3: THREE-NOTE RIFF

This riff uses **just the highest string** and consists of three notes.

Open
string



1. Play the open note.
2. Slide up to the seventh fret.
3. Play the third fret.
4. Play the open string.

CD TRACK 7 - THREE-NOTE RIFF

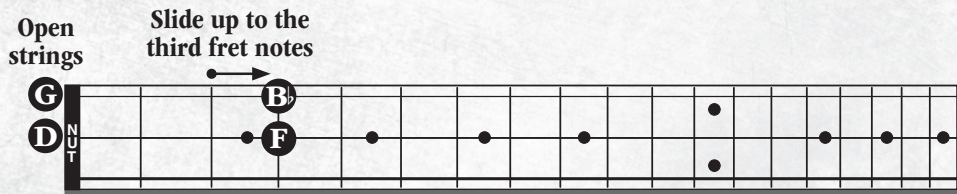
Play this along with the track 8 times after the four beat count-in.

CD TRACK 8 - THREE-NOTE RIFF ALTERNATE

Now play the same riff again, but play the open high G again after Step 2 before playing the third fret. Play this along with the track eight times after the four beat count-in.

EXERCISE 4: FOUR-NOTE RIFF

This riff uses **just the two highest strings** and consists of four notes.



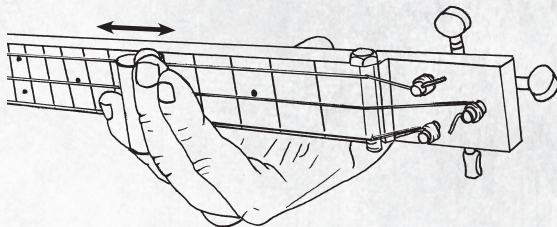
1. The first note is the third fret of the middle string. Slide up to the third fret line from the dot.
2. Play the open highest string.
3. Still on the highest string, slide up to the third fret from the dot.
4. Play the open highest string again.
5. After the first time, play the open middle string just before beginning the riff again.

CD TRACK 9 - FOUR-NOTE RIFF

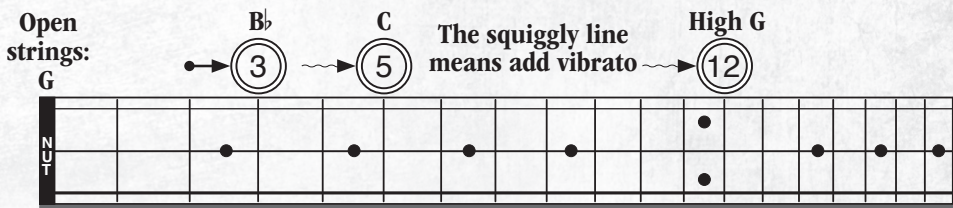
Play this along with the track 8 times after the four beat count-in.

EXERCISE 5: VIBRATO

Add interest to slide playing with vibrato, which is a lot easier to do with a slide. Quickly move the slide left and right over a note, but don't move it more than 5mm / 0.25in. Remember to keep the slide vertical as you move it.



Place the slide on the fifth fret and practise some vibrato before continuing with the exercise. Now practise it on the seventh and twelfth frets.



1. Strum the open strings.
2. Slide to the third fret line starting on the dot.
3. Strum the open strings again.
4. Put the slide on the third fret and slide it up to the fifth fret immediately and add vibrato.

CD TRACK 10 - VIBRATO

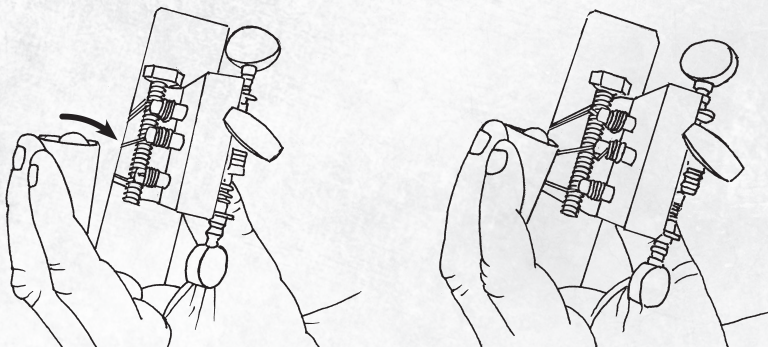
Play this along with the track 8 times after the four beat count-in.

CD TRACK 11 - VIBRATO ALTERNATE

Now listen to this track for an alternate version. It begins with the same riff as Track 10 played twice but then goes: Open, third fret, open and to the twelfth fret with vibrato twice. This whole progression is repeated four times.

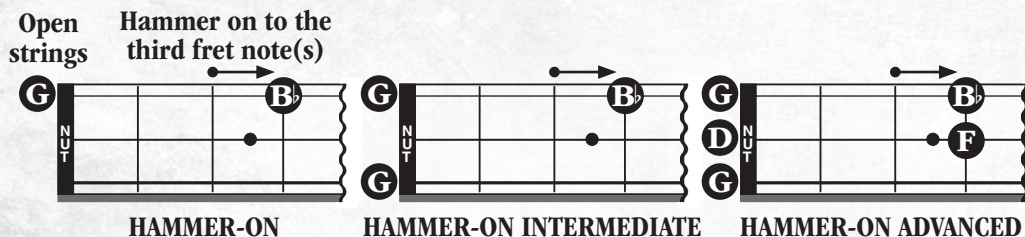
EXERCISE 6: HAMMER-ONS

This common lead guitar technique lets you speed up your melodies and scales by sounding the notes without having to pick or pluck them. This is also used in slide playing. Pluck an open string with your right hand and then drop the slide onto the third fret. You will hear the new note sounding.



CD TRACK 12 - HAMMER-ON

1. Pluck the open high G twice.
2. Straight after the second note, drop the slide onto the same string just below the third fret to hammer-on and slide up to the third fret.
3. Play the open high G again. Play along with the CD track eight times.



CD TRACK 13 - HAMMER-ON INTERMEDIATE

This exercise is similar to the last except for step one where you hit the low G once only before hitting the high G once only.

CD TRACK 14 - HAMMER-ON ADVANCED

This exercise adds a hammer-on to the middle string, third fret after the high G hammer-on but is otherwise the same as the last track.

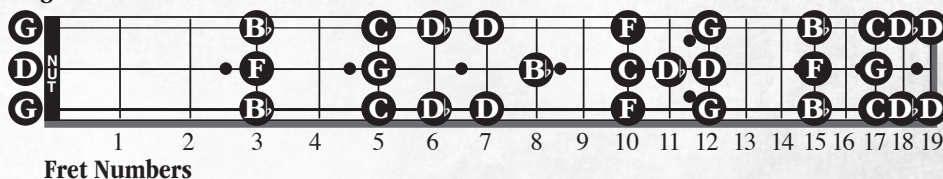
EXERCISE 7: THE BLUES SCALE

On a standard guitar, you need to know musical scales for every key. Because the Blues Box Guitar is open tuned to the key of G, you will only need to know the blues scale in this key. Here are the notes of the blues scale in G.

1. **G:** Root note.
2. **B \flat :** Flattened third or minor third.
3. **C:** First change in 12 bar blues.
4. **D \flat :** Flattened fifth or 'blue' note. A very bluesy sound when added into a run or scale as a passing note, which is a note you don't sit on for long.
5. **D:** Last change in 12 bar blues.
6. **F:** Can add tension to a progression especially when played before going to the C chord. This note and the ninth fret are used a lot in blues bass lines.

There are only six notes in the blues scale, but it is one of the most versatile scales in music. It is the basis of not only blues music, but also jazz, rock and popular music in many of its forms. The dots on the Blues Box Guitar are in the same positions as a standard guitar and indicate the main notes in the blues scale. Here is a diagram of the blues scale on the Blues Box Guitar.

Open
strings



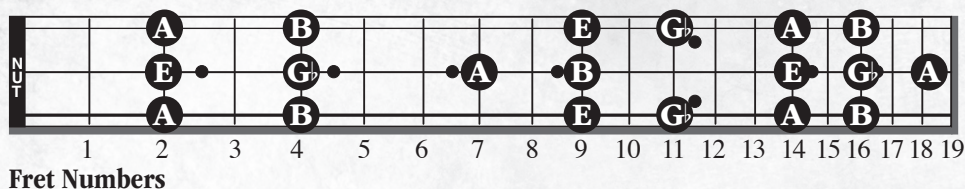
CD TRACK 15 - THE BLUES SCALE

Listen to Track 15 on the CD to hear the blues scale played up and down the neck twice on just the high-G string. Play along to get a feel for the notes.

Other Notes to Use

Here are three other notes you can use that are not officially part of the blues scale. These notes are usually used as passing notes: ones that you don't hang on for long but use as stepping stones to the main notes.

1. **A:** Has a 'minor' key sound to it when played before or after the Bb.
2. **B:** Can be used as a passing note, especially in the turnaround part at the end of the 12-bar blues on the way back to G after the D.
3. **E:** Sounds good played with single notes sliding up to the F and down to the E before returning to the open chord.
4. **G \flat :** Can sound interesting when used as a passing note between F and G.



Practising the Blues Scale

Using the diagram on the previous page as a reference, slowly practise playing the blues scale up and down the neck on each string. Try playing the open string between each slide note to allow you time to reposition the slide on another fret line.

Familiarise yourself with the blues scale, and you will find an almost limitless amount of combinations of notes and riffs. Repetition will ingrain the scale in your mind, and after a while, you won't need to think about which fret is which. Later, you will find that if you change up the timing and the tempo, you can get a completely different sound and feel with the same set of notes.

Play-Along Tracks

The final eight tracks on the CD are examples of 12-bar and 8-bar blues progressions. Each example includes the suggested Blues Box Guitar part and the play-along track has only the drum and bass backing with a four beat count-in so you can jam along with them.

You can choose to copy the suggested guitar track or make up your own using the blues scale. The chords used are:

1. The open G chord and the twelfth fret G chord.
2. The fifth fret (a C chord).
3. The seventh fret (a D chord).
4. The third fret (a B \flat chord). The third fret should only be played in passing such as on the way back down to the open G chord.

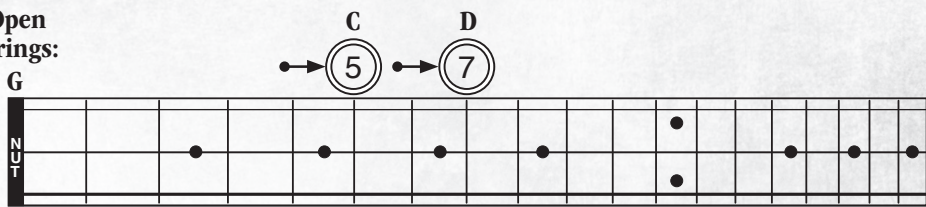
CD TRACKS 16 AND 17 - 12-BAR BLUES BASIC: EXAMPLE AND PLAY-ALONG TRACK

Play just the chords using all of the strings to help you get used to the 12-bar blues progression. The whole progression is played four times.

Chords Used

Open strings:

G



The chords are played in the following order. Note that if you add up all of the bars, there are 12.

Open G chord: 16 beats/4 bars

Fifth fret C chord: 8 beats/2 bars

Open G chord: 8 beats/2 bars

Seventh fret D chord: 4 beats/1 bar

Fifth fret C chord: 4 beats/1 bar

Open G chord: 4 beats/1 bar

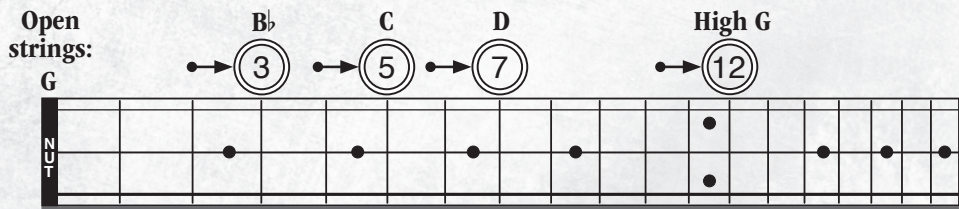
Seventh fret D chord: 4 beats/1 bar

After this, go back to the beginning.

CD TRACKS 18 AND 19: 12-BAR BLUES INTERMEDIATE - EXAMPLE AND PLAY-ALONG TRACK

The guitar adds interest over the G parts by sliding right up to the twelfth fret G chord every second bar. Remember to use vibrato on the twelfth fret G chord.

Chords Used

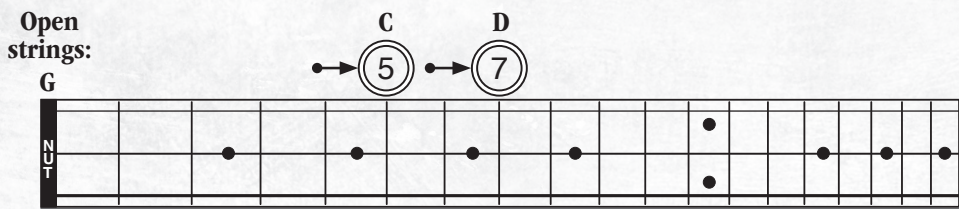


The chords are played in the same order as the previous 12-bar blues track.

CD TRACKS 20 AND 21: 8-BAR BLUES BASIC - EXAMPLE AND PLAY-ALONG TRACK

Play only chords to help you get used to the structure. Note that if you add up all of the bars, there are eight.

Chords Used



The chords are played in this order:

Open G chord: 4 beats/1 bar

Fifth fret C chord: 4 beats/1 bar

Open G chord: 4 beats/1 bar

Seventh fret D chord: 4 beats/1 bar

Open G chord: 4 beats/1 bar

Fifth fret C chord: 4 beats/1 bar

Open G chord: 2 beats/half bar

Seventh fret D chord: 2 beats/half bar

Open G chord: 2 beats/half bar

Seventh fret D chord: 2 beats/half bar

CD TRACK 22 AND 23: 8-BAR BLUES INTERMEDIATE - EXAMPLE AND PLAY-ALONG TRACK

The guitar plays a riff over the G parts and chords only for the C and D parts.

Chords Used

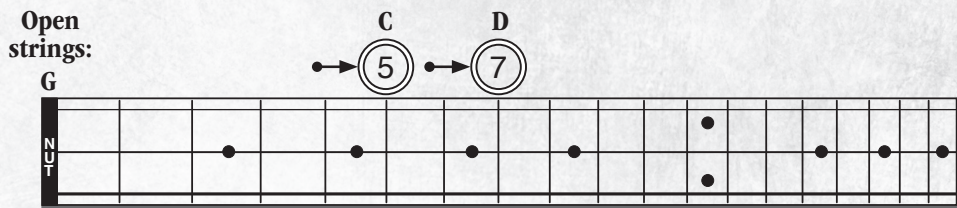
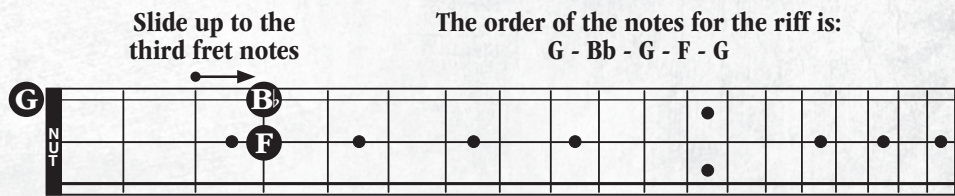


Diagram of notes used for G riff



When you are familiar with all of these progressions, experiment by jamming over the play-along versions, using various combinations of the notes from the blues scale. Begin sparsely with just a couple of notes, and gradually build up to using the whole scale. Try incorporating the riffs and techniques from all of the exercises. You can try soloing over just the G chord parts and only play the chords on the fifth and seventh frets. You can also add interest by picking separate notes when you are only playing chords. Use your ear to decide what combinations you like best.

Amplification Options

The Blues Box Guitar has a mono guitar jack built into the body so it can be amplified like any electric guitar. When unplugging the jack, remember to support the body of the guitar around the jack with one hand, while unplugging it with the other hand. This will avoid damage to the socket, body and jack. Here are a few alternative options for amplification.

GUITAR AMP

Guitar amps of different types and prices are available at electronic retailers and music shops. You will need a guitar lead to connect to it. If you are lucky enough to own a guitar amp, you should also have a guitar lead. Plug in the Blues Box Guitar and explore the different settings on the amp. Many guitar amps and most practice amps have a headphone input so you can rock some loud riffs without bothering the neighbours.

SMART PHONE OR TABLET APPLICATION WITH CONNECTORS

There have been amazing leaps forward in amp modelling software, and now you can have a variety of virtual amps on your smart phone or tablet. You will need the right connectors for your particular device.

Conclusion

We hope you enjoyed this brief introduction to the Blues Box Guitar. Remember to check out the Hinkler Publishing Blues Box Guitar YouTube channel and other cigar box guitar lessons on the internet to further your understanding of slide playing. The more you play, the more you'll learn, because music, like all of the arts, will give back what you put in.

Play whenever you have the chance, and most important of all, enjoy doing it! Music is not only a lifelong journey of learning and discovery, but it's fun too. There's a reason we call it 'playing' music!