How To Play The 3-String Cigar Box Guitar

With Rick McKeon

Right and Left Hand Techniques
  The Steady Bass
  Using The Slide
  The Ten Mile Stomp
Playing Blues Licks And Creating A 12-Bar Solo
Applying All This In A 12-Bar Jam Session

© Rick McKeon 2014
Table of Contents

Welcome

Lesson 1: Tuning The 3-String CBG
  ✓ Figure 1: Tuning The 3-String Guitar ····························· page 3

Lesson 2: How To Read The Tab
  ✓ Figure 2: Steady Bass ··············································· page 5

Lesson 3: Steady Bass
  ✓ Figure 2: Steady Bass ··············································· page 5

Lesson 4: Licks For The 3-String
  ✓ Figure 3: Licks ··························································· page 7

Lesson 5: Ten Mile Stomp
  ✓ Tab: Ten Mile Stomp ················································· page 9

Lesson 6: 12-Bar Blues Introduction
  ✓ 12-Bar Blues Chord Progression ····································· page 11
  ✓ Stranger Blues Lyrics ················································· page 12
  ✓ Figure 4: I IV and V Chords ··········································· page 13
  ✓ Figure 5: 12-Bar Licks ················································· page 14

Lesson 7: Blues Licks
  ✓ Figure 6: The Major Scale ············································· page 15
  ✓ Figure 7: The Blues Scale ············································· page 16
  ✓ Figure 8: Blues Licks ················································· page 17

Lesson 8: 12-Bar Solo
  ✓ Figure 9: 12-Bar Solo ················································· page 18

Lesson 9: 12-Bar Jam

Closing Comments
Figure 1: Tuning The 3-String Guitar (1 5 1)

Standard Tuning For The 6-String Guitar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 5 1 Tunings for the 3-String CBG
Using Different Strings From a Standard Set

E Tuning
Using Strings 6 5 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G Tuning
Using Strings 5 4 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E Major Scale

G Major Scale

Notes:

1. Guitar strings are designed to have a certain amount of tension in standard tuning.
2. Too loose and they will be sloppy. They will buzz and not project well.
3. Too tight and they will break or put too much tension on the neck.
4. Therefore, we choose the strings and tuning somewhere near standard tuning. You can tune them up or down a whole step without problems.
This page left blank to avoid page turning on the Figures
Figure 2: Steady Bass

Lick #1 Steady Bass

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lick #2 Pinch On One

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lick #3 Add A Syncopated Note

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2 &amp; 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 &amp; 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lick #4 Rag Lick

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2 &amp; 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 &amp; 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lick #5 Hammer On Lick

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2 &amp; 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 &amp; 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2: Steady Bass (cont.)

Lick #6 Banjo Roll

11

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0
\end{array}
\]

Lick 7: Ten Mile Stomp Lick

13

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\
4 & [5] & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 \\
4 & [1] & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5 & 5
\end{array}
\]
Figure 3: Licks

Lick #1

Lick #2

Lick #3

Lick #4
Figure 3: Licks (cont.)

Lick #4:

11:

13:

15:

17:
Ten Mile Stomp

Part 1

Part 2
12-Bar Blues Chord Progression

The 12-bar blues is 12 measures arranged in three sets of four measures each. The following is a typical 12-bar progression (keep in mind there are plenty of variations on this theme):

\[
\begin{align*}
&I IV I I & E A E E \\
&IV IV I I & A A E E \\
&V IV I V & B A E B \\
\end{align*}
\]

E major scale = E F# G# A B C# D# E

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1

The following example is in the “call-response” format where the lyrics call out in the first two measures and the guitar responds in the next two measures. The second line is a repeat of the first. The first two bars of the third line are the conclusion, and the last two bars are the turnaround.

**Stranger Blues** (Elmore James)

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{E} & \text{A} & \text{E} & \text{E} \\
&I'm a stranger here, & just blowed into your & town. \\
&\text{\textlangle} \text{Verse = “call” \textrangle} & \text{\textlangle Response = fill \textrangle} \\
&\text{A} & \text{A} & \text{E} & \text{B} \\
&I'm a stranger here, & just blowed into your & town. \\
&\text{\textlangle Repeat verse = “call” \textrangle} & \text{\textlangle Response = fill \textrangle} \\
&\text{B} & \text{A} & \text{E} & \text{B} \\
&I ask you for a favor, & please don’t turn me & down. \\
&\text{\textlangle Conclusion \textrangle} & \text{\textlangle Turnaround \textrangle} \\
\end{align*}
\]
Stranger Blues
(Elmore James)

E                        A                                 E
1. I'm a stranger here, I just blowed into your town.
2. Well, I wrote to my mama, send me some railroad fare.
3. Does my good gal know, does she know I'm here?
4. Well I wonder, why people treat a stranger so.

A                                                           E
1. I'm a stranger here, I just blowed into your town.
2. I wrote to my mama, send me some railroad fare.
3. Does my good gal know, does she know I'm here?
4. Yes I wonder, why people treat a stranger so.

B                              A                               E             B
1. If I ask you for a favor, please don't turn me down.
2. But if my mama don't send it, I don't mind walking there.
3. Well, if she does, She sure don't seem to care.
4. They're gonna' find out, You reap just what you sew.
Figure 4: I IV and V Chords

I = Open Guitar
IV = Bar at 5th Fret
V = Bar at 7th Fret
I = Bar at 12th Fret
Figure 5: 12-Bar Licks

Lick #1

Lick #2

Lick #3

Lick #4
Figure 6: The Major Scale

\[1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4 \ 5 \ 6 \ 7 \ 1\]

Tuning = E B E (1 5 1)

\[\text{\(\blacklozenge\) = Root}\]
Figure 7: The Blues Scale

1 b3 4 (b5) 5 b7 1

Tuning = E B E (1 5 1)

\[ \begin{align*}
1 & \quad b3 \\
5 & \quad b7 \\
7 & \quad b5 \\
9 & \quad b5 \\
12 & \quad b5 \\
15 & \quad b5 \\
17 & \quad b5 \\
19 & \quad b5 \\
21 & \quad b3 \\
\end{align*} \]

\[ \begin{align*}
= & \quad \text{Root} \\
\text{b5} & \quad \text{Blue Note} \\
\end{align*} \]
Figure 8: Blues Licks

Lick #1 Major Sound

Lick #2 Minor Sound

Lick #3 (Lick #2 an octave higher)

Lick #4
Figure 9: 12-Bar Solo

E (I)  A (IV)

3

E (I)  E (I)

5

A (IV)  A (IV)

7

E (I)  E (I)

9

B (V)  A (IV)

11

E (I)  E (I)