

Slap Technique

This book will help you develop your slap technique. These suggestions will help you maintain an even overall sound:

1. Be precise with thumb attacks.
2. Only hit the string you want to sound.
3. Muting strings is critical.
4. Muted thumb attacks should be struck with the same intensity as sounded notes.
5. Pull attacks should not be louder or more intense than thumb attacks.

In this book, slap techniques are labeled as follows:

- T Thumb attack
- X Dead note (String attacked as indicated, but not allowed to ring. These are notated using the open string on which they are attacked.)
- U Thumb-up stroke (thumb pulls up from under the string)
- S Slide
- H Hammer on (no attack with slapping hand)
- P Pull string with first or second finger
- L Lift finger from previous note to the note with the L above it

Slurs \frown show when notes are sounded without a right-hand attack, as in hammers, slides, and lifts. Only the first note of a slurred group is articulated with the right hand.

LESSON 1: ONE-CHORD SLAP GROOVES

These examples are basic slap grooves. Listen closely to your attacks and your overall sound. One of the most challenging aspects of playing slap bass is maintaining an even, full, clear sound. Of course, you can do some experimenting with the sound by adjusting the control knobs on your bass and your amp, but a good sound always starts with your hands.

This lesson will use eighth-note grooves, focusing on the root and octave of the given chord. To hear more of this type of bass playing, listen to artists such as Sly & the Family Stone and Larry Graham.

THUMB, PULL, AND MUTED NOTES

- T Thumb slap. Use a down-stroke attack with your thumb. These are generally the lower notes of a slap-bass line.
- P Pull. Use your index finger to pull up on the string and sound the note. Pulled notes are generally the higher notes of the slap line.
- X Muted. Use your left hand to mute or “choke” the note. These are notated on any of the open strings. You can play a muted note with regular fingering, or with a thumb slap, pull, or hammer.

1 Example 1

Tuning Notes: E, A, D, and G strings, each played twice.

Musical notation for Example 1. The top staff is a bass clef with a treble clef below it. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a treble clef below it. The notation shows a sequence of notes on the top staff and open strings (0) on the bottom staff. The notes on the top staff are: E2, A1, D2, G1, E2, A1, D2, G1. The notes on the bottom staff are: 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0.

2 Example 2

E-7

Musical notation for Example 2. The top staff is a bass clef with a treble clef below it. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a treble clef below it. The notation shows a sequence of notes on the top staff and open strings (0) and fretted notes (2) on the bottom staff. The notes on the top staff are: E2, A1, D2, G1, E2, A1, D2, G1, E2, A1, D2, G1. The notes on the bottom staff are: 0, 0, 2, 0, 2, 0, 2, 0, 2, 0, 2, 0. Above the top staff, the notes are labeled with T (Thumb slap) and P (Pull).

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3 Example 3

E-7

T T T T T T T T T T T T

T
A
B

0 X X 0 X X 0 X X 0 X X

4 Example 4

G7sus4

T P T T T P T T T P T T T P T T

T
A
B

3 5 X 3 3 5 X 3 3 X 0 3 X 3

5 Example 5

F

T T P T T P T T T P T T P T T P

T
A
B

1 1 3 1 1 3 1 1 3 1 1 3 1 1

6 Example 6

E-

T T T T T P T T T T T T P T T T

T
A
B

0 0 0 0 7 9 X X 0 0 0 0 7 9 X X

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7 Example 7

G7

T T P T T T T P T T T P

8 Example 8

C-6

T P T T T P T T T T P T T T

9 Example 9

Hammer on the muted notes in this example.

D7sus4/E

T H T H T H T T H T H T H T P T

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WRITE YOUR OWN

In the following blank measures, write your own bass grooves for the chord indicated. Remember, the goal is to outline the chord; start with the root, fifth, and octave. Model your own rhythms after those used in the examples.

1.

E-7

Exercise 1: E-7 chord in 4/4 time. The notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature staff with a 'T' above the first line and a 'B' below the first line, indicating the starting fret position.

2.

D-7

Exercise 2: D-7 chord in 4/4 time. The notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature staff with a 'T' above the first line and a 'B' below the first line, indicating the starting fret position.

3.

G7

Exercise 3: G7 chord in 4/4 time. The notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature staff with a 'T' above the first line and a 'B' below the first line, indicating the starting fret position.

4.

A-7

Exercise 4: A-7 chord in 4/4 time. The notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature staff with a 'T' above the first line and a 'B' below the first line, indicating the starting fret position.

10 Song 1

EASY DOES IT

E-7

T T P T T P P P T P P T T T P T T P

TAB: 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0

P P T P P T T T P T T P P P T P P T

TAB: 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0

C

T T P T P T T T T P T T P T T T T T P T P T T T

TAB: 3 3 3 3 X X | 3 3 3 3 X X | 3 3 3 3 X X

T P T T P T T T T T P T P T T T T P T T P T T T

TAB: 3 3 3 3 X X | 3 3 3 3 X X | 3 3 3 3 X X