



CREATIVE TAPPING

FOR ELECTRIC BASS

CHARLES BERTHOUD

COURSE BOOK

SCOTTSBASSLESSONS.COM

01

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01

Introduction

Creative Tapping for Electric Bass is a three-part series led by YouTube bass sensation, Charles Berthoud. Part 01 has been designed as an entry point for anyone who wants to get started learning the technique.

A casual YouTube search will turn up many examples of bass players who use tapping in their playing, including the likes of Billy Sheehan, John Myung, Victor Wooten and Stu Hamm. It's an unconventional technique, but in the correct hands it can be a valuable musical tool.

Here, Charles Berthoud guides you through various exercises that involve "hammering-on" notes directly onto the fretboard, playing chromatic patterns across each string, and building strength in your fingers, which will be a huge help when it comes to tackling more complex solo pieces later on.

In this course, you're going to learn:

- The mechanics of two-hand tapping.
- How to develop your finger strength and coordination.
- How to play chordal and contrapuntal lines with both hands.
- How to widen the scope of your technique.
- And much more.

Nomenclature

These lessons use a notational style that may be new or unfamiliar to some players. Please see below for a quick guide to “untraditional” notation techniques. For a right-handed player, the fretting hand is the left hand; the plucking hand is the right hand.

Note: If you’re a “lefty,” simply substitute *left* for *right*, and *right* for *left*, as appropriate.

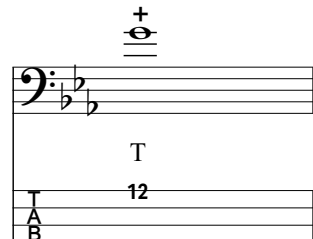
HAMMER-ON FROM NOWHERE:

Hammer (“tap”) the indicated fret with the *fretting hand* to sound the note, without plucking the string. Indicated with a half slur:



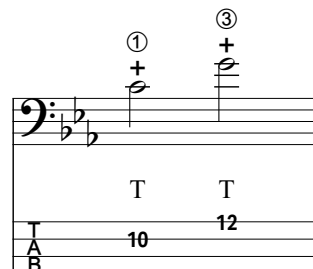
TAPPING:

Hammer (“tap”) the indicated fret with the *plucking hand* finger(s) to sound the note. Indicated by a small “T” over the tab number and a “+” over the notation:



TAPPING HAND FINGERINGS:

Numbers that appear in circles above the notation indicate which of your plucking-hand fingers to use to execute the tap:



Lesson 01

Basic Technique

This starting exercise gives you the basic tapping movement, broken into three parts. First is the tap and pull-off. Next, the hammer-on technique using two fretting-hand fingers. Then, we'll combine the two moves.



Plucking Hand

Keep the thumb of your plucking hand against the neck, and arch or curve your fingers over the fretboard. Push directly downward on the fret to sound the note:



"It's kind of like you're playing a piano, actually. But it's sideways. On a bass."

A very common technique when tapping is to pull off of the note you just tapped. For example:

Example 01 Tap and Pull-off

Tapping Hand

continued →

LESSON 1 (continued)

Fretting Hand

When performing a tapping piece, your fretting hand position is very similar to just fretting the notes traditionally. However, apply more pressure than you normally would on the fretboard to sound the notes. Try this simple example to get your fingers working:

Example 02 Fretting-Hand Hammer-ons

Fretting Hand

Coordinating Your Hands

All that's left is to combine both techniques into a fluid motion. Each note should sound at the same volume level and be crisp and clear:

Example 03 Both Hands Together

Combined

Lesson 02

Crossing Strings I

Next, we're going to practice a slight variation of the pattern in Lesson 01, using a basic hammer-on-and-pull-off technique, but we'll move across the strings one by one. This is the first step in mastering the two-handed technique. As with all exercises, start at your own pace until you're comfortable and have the notes sounding smooth and clear, then gradually increase the tempo as you go.

Example 01 String-Crossing Exercise

G String

♩ = 85, 100, 110

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. The score is written for a bass line and a guitar line. The bass line is in 4/4 time and features a repeating eighth-note pattern. The guitar line is in 4/4 time and features a repeating eighth-note pattern. The score includes a key signature change from C major to D major and a time signature change from 4/4 to 3/4.

continued →

LESSON 2 (continued)

Example 01 String-Crossing Exercise (continued)

D String

9

① ① ① ① ② ② ② ②

T T T T T T T T

12 0 5 0 12 0 5 0 12 0 5 0 12 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0

13

③ ③ ③ ③ ② ② ② ②

T T T T T T T T

14 0 5 0 14 0 5 0 14 0 5 0 14 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13

A String

17

① ① ① ① ② ② ② ②

T T T T T T T T

12 0 5 0 12 0 5 0 12 0 5 0 12 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0

21

③ ③ ③ ③ ② ② ② ②

T T T T T T T T

14 0 5 0 14 0 5 0 14 0 5 0 14 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13

continued →

LESSON 2 (continued)

Example 01 String-Crossing Exercise (continued)

E String

25

1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2

12 0 5 0 12 0 5 0 12 0 5 0 12 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0

29

3 3 3 3 2 2 2 2

14 0 5 0 14 0 5 0 14 0 5 0 14 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0 13 0 5 0



"A really good thing to start doing early on is use three fingers [to tap with your plucking hand]—try not to use just one finger. It's a good idea to get into the habit of using [more than one] finger, so that when you're playing more complex stuff later on it's not too challenging."

"Keep your motions small and efficient. If you keep doing that throughout your whole practice session, that's gonna really help when you get to the more advanced stuff."

Lesson 03

Crossing Strings II

Our exercise in Lesson 03 is similar to that in Lesson 02, but a little more complex. As before, note the use of multiple plucking-hand fingers to tap the strings:

Example 01 String-Crossing Exercise No. 2

G String

♩ = 85, 100, 115

③ + ③ + ③ + ② + ② + ② + ② +

T T T T T T T T

17 0 9 12 17 0 9 12 17 0 9 12 17 0 9 12 16 0 9 12 16 0 9 12 16 0 9 12 16 0 9 12

① + ① + ① + ① + ① + ① + ① +

5 T T T T T T T T

15 0 9 12 15 0 9 12 15 0 9 12 15 0 9 12 14 0 9 12 14 0 9 12 14 0 9 12 14

continued →

LESSON 3 (continued)

Example 01 String-Crossing Exercise No. 2 (continued)

D String

9

13

A String

17

21

continued →

LESSON 3 (continued)

Example 01 String-Crossing Exercise No. 2 (continued)

E String

25

29



"One thing you can focus on as you're playing this is to try to get a pretty even sound as you play. It can be easy with tapping to sometimes have the notes be at completely different volumes. It's nice to have it smooth-sounding, which can be tricky at first. But with enough practice, you'll get it."

Lesson 04

Crossing Strings III

Here's an etude that's based on a classic tapping pattern—inspired by the famous guitar part in the song “Eruption” by Van Halen, and also by the guitar solo in “One” by Metallica.

Example 01 String-Crossing Exercise No. 3

G String

♩ = 70, 80, 95

Measures 1-8 of the G String exercise. The notation is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. Measures 1-4 feature a triplet of eighth notes on the G string (fret 12) with a tapping finger (1) indicated above. Measures 5-8 feature a triplet of eighth notes on the G string (fret 13) with a tapping finger (2) indicated above. The fretboard diagram below shows the fretting hand positions for each measure, with tapping fingers (T) indicated above the notes.

D String

Measures 9-16 of the D String exercise. The notation is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. Measures 9-12 feature a triplet of eighth notes on the D string (fret 12) with a tapping finger (3) indicated above. Measures 13-16 feature a triplet of eighth notes on the D string (fret 13) with a tapping finger (2) indicated above. The fretboard diagram below shows the fretting hand positions for each measure, with tapping fingers (T) indicated above the notes.

continued →

LESSON 4 (continued)

Example 01 String-Crossing Exercise No. 3 (continued)

A String

9

12 5 8 12 5 8 12 5 8 12 5 8 13 5 8 13 5 8 13 5 8 13 5 8

11

14 5 8 14 5 8 14 5 8 14 5 8 13 5 8 13 5 8 13 5 8 13

E String

13

12 5 8 12 5 8 12 5 8 12 5 8 13 5 8 13 5 8 13 5 8 13 5 8

15

14 5 8 14 5 8 14 5 8 14 5 8 13 5 8 13 5 8 13 5 8 13

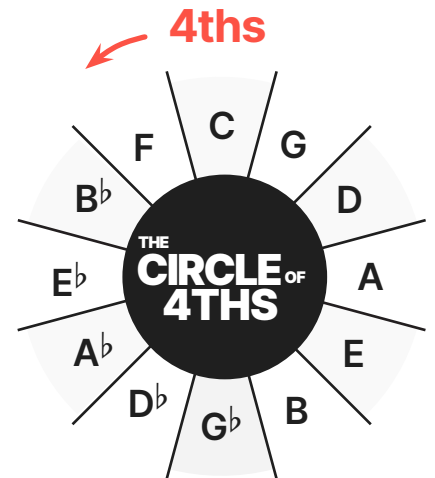


"You want to be slowly increasing the tempo...so that you can start developing better and better technique, and have the option of playing faster when you want to."

Lesson 05

Cycle of 4ths

Next, we're going to begin using the Cycle, or Circle, of 4ths as a practice system—it's a structured way to play a phrase in all 12 keys on the bass. The **Cycle of 4ths** goes through every key by moving from one root note to the next in intervals of 4ths. The cycle is shown on the right-hand side of the page.



In our first example, we'll play root notes around the cycle. Notice that when playing on a single string, the next 4th in the sequence is either five frets *up*, or seven frets *down*:



"It's a good idea to [practice] in every key so that you're not gonna get surprised in a band situation, or any situation that you'll be playing."

Example 01 Roots Over the Cycle of 4ths

Part 1

♩ = 80

9

17

LESSON 5 (continued)

Adding Octaves with the Plucking Hand

In this next exercise, we'll add to the previous by introducing the plucking hand, tapping one octave above the hammered-on note of the fretting hand. We'll again work through the Cycle of 4ths, and this time limit our playing to the bottom two strings:

Example 02 Octaves with the Plucking Hand

Part 2

♩ = 80

26

T T T T T T T T

15 8 15 8 20 13 20 13 13 6 13 6 18 11 18 11

34

T T T T T T T T

11 4 11 4 16 9 16 9 9 2 9 2 14 7 14 7

42

T T T T T T T T T

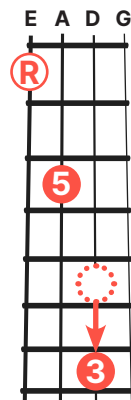
19 12 19 12 12 5 12 5 17 10 17 10 10 3 10 3 15 8

LESSON 5 (continued)

Major Triads

Let's now look at playing triads using both hands (hammering on and tapping), and also adding in a slide from the tapped to the major 3rd:

Example 03 Major Triad Shape



Part 3

♩ = 80, 90, 105

C

51

let ring ----- let ring ----- sim.

T

8 10 12/14 8 10 12/14 13 15 17/19 13 15 17/19

B $\flat$

55

T

6 8 10/12 6 8 10/12 11 13 15/17 11 13 15/17

A $\flat$

59

T

4 6 8/10 4 6 8/10 9 11 13/15 9 11 13/15

E $\flat$

D $\flat$

continued →

LESSON 5 (continued)

Example 03 Major Triad Shape (continued)

63

G^b B

T T T T

2 4 6 8 2 4 6 8 7 9 11 13 7 9 11 13

67

E A

T T T T

12 14 16 18 12 14 16 18 5 7 9 11 5 7 9 11

71

D G C

T T T T

10 12 14 16 10 12 14 16 3 5 7 9 3 5 7 9 8



"With this exercise, hopefully you can start to see that there are some pretty great possibilities with tapping to play things you wouldn't be able to play with fingerstyle or other techniques. And using the Cycle of 4ths, you'll get a lot of fluency all over the fretboard."

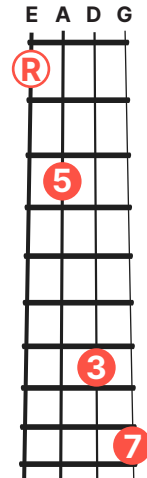
Lesson 06

Major 7ths

This tapping example has us playing a major 7th chord shape and moving it around the Cycle of 4ths. This is also the first time in the course where we'll be using all four strings of the (4-string) bass to play a chord.

The **Major 7th chord** consists of the Root–3rd–5th–7th degrees of the major scale, and when played using tapping, creates an inviting, open sound.

Example 01 Major 7th Shape



♩ = 75, 85, 100

Cmaj7 **Fmaj7**

let chords ring throughout

Bbmaj7 **Ebmaj7**

5

T - | T - | T - | T - | T - | T - | T - | T - |

8 10 14 16 8 10 14 16 8 10 14 16 13 15 19 21 13 15 19 21 13 15 19 21

6 8 12 14 6 8 12 14 6 8 12 14 11 13 17 19 11 13 17 19 11 13 17 19

continued →

*You'll notice that the range of this exercise extends all the way up to the twenty-first fret in Bars 3 and 4. These frets aren't available on some basses—like a P-bass, for example. Don't let it deter you from practicing the rest, though. If you own a shorter range instrument, simply play the notes you do have in those two bars.

LESSON 6 (continued)

Example 01 Major 7th Shape (continued)

Abmaj7 Dbmaj7

9

T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - -

12 12 12 12 17 17 17 17

4 6 4 6 9 11 9 11

Gbmaj7 Bbmaj7

13

T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - -

10 10 10 10 15 15 15 15

2 4 2 4 7 9 7 9

Emaj7 Amaj7

17

T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - -

20 20 20 20 13 13 13 13

12 14 12 14 5 7 5 7

Dmaj7 Gmaj7 Cmaj7

21

T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - - T - - -

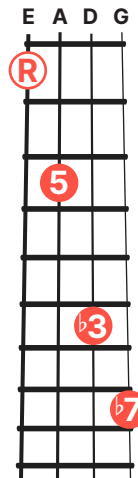
18 18 18 18 11 11 11 11

10 12 10 12 3 5 3 5

Lesson 07

Minor 7ths

We'll continue to build on what we've been playing by adding the minor 7th chord shape to our vocabulary, and moving it around the Cycle of 4ths. The **Minor 7th chord** differs from the major 7th chord in that both the 3rd and 7th degrees are flattened, meaning we simply move the notes we tap with our plucking hand down one fret (see diagram):



"Try to remember as you're doing these exercises to be deliberate about using efficient technique, because if you do that a lot now, then when we start getting to the more advance courses it'll be so much easier."

Example 01 Minor 7th Shape

♩ = 75, 85, 100

Cm7 **Fm7**

let chords ring throughout

Bbm7 **Ebm7**

continued →

LESSON 7 (continued)

Example 01 Minor 7th Shape (continued)

Abm7 C#m7

9

T - - - | T - - | T - - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - -

11 11 11 11 16 16 16 16

4 6 9 4 6 9 4 6 9 9 11 14 9 11 14 9 11 14

F#m7 Bm7

13

T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - -

9 9 9 9 14 14 14 14

2 4 7 2 4 7 2 4 7 7 9 12 7 9 12 7 9 12

Em7 Am7

17

T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - -

19 19 19 19 12 12 12 12

12 14 17 12 14 17 12 14 17 5 7 10 5 7 10 5 7 10

Dm7 Gm7 Cm7

21

T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - -

17 17 17 17 10 10 10 10

10 12 15 10 12 15 10 12 15 3 5 8 3 5 8 3 5 8

LESSON 7 (continued)

Mixing Major and Minor 7ths Shapes

Something else you'll want to try is to mix the major and minor 7th shapes. Let's look at a pattern that alternates between two major and two minor chord shapes as we move across the Cycle of 4ths:

Example 02 Mixing Major and Minor 7th Shapes

♩ = 85

Cmaj7

Fmaj7

let chords ring throughout

Bbm7

Ebm7

5

The musical notation is written in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as 85 bpm. The piece consists of two systems of four measures each. The first system starts with Cmaj7 and Fmaj7, and the second system starts with Bbm7 and Ebm7. Each measure contains a tapping pattern with specific fingerings and fret numbers. The tapping symbols are 'T' followed by a plus sign, indicating a tap. The fret numbers are written below the tapping symbols. The sequence of chords is Cmaj7, Fmaj7, Bbm7, and Ebm7, which are related by the Cycle of 4ths.

continued →

LESSON 7 (continued)

Example 02 Mixing Major and Minor 7th Shapes (continued)

A $\flat$ maj7 **D $\flat$ maj7**

9

T - - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - -

4 6 10 12 4 6 10 12 9 11 15 17 9 11 15 17 9 11 15 17

F $\sharp$ m7 **Bm7**

13

T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - -

2 4 7 9 2 4 7 9 7 9 12 14 7 9 12 14 7 9 12 14

E $\natural$ m7 **A $\natural$ m7**

17

T - - - | T - - | T - - - | T - - | T - - - | T - - | T - - - | T - -

12 14 18 20 12 14 18 20 5 7 11 13 5 7 11 13 5 7 11 13

Dm7 **Gm7** **C $\natural$ m7**

21

T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - - | T - -

10 12 15 17 10 12 15 17 3 5 8 10 3 5 8 10 3 5 8 10 8 10 14 16

Lesson 08

Étude

Finally, let's put everything together and look at an étude composed for this course by Charles that incorporates all the techniques from the previous lessons into an actual *piece of music*:

LESSON 08 Example 01 Étude

A
Freely ♩ = 74, 90

Amaj7

Dmaj7

let chords ring throughout

B

F#m7

Amaj7

F#m7

Amaj7

Bm7

Amaj7

