

# Introduction

“ A good player can make any guitar sound good. ”

*Michael Bloomfield*

This book is intended to get you started with the business of playing probably the most versatile instrument there is: the guitar. The basics are more or less the same across the range of modern styles so whatever your musical taste, this book contains all you need to get going. Although I would always recommend that you find a good teacher, this tutor has been carefully written so that you can work through it alone, with the aid of the CD. The aim is to give you the background knowledge you'll need if you want to make use of the wealth of material around in more advanced tutor books, songbooks and guitar magazines. Learning to read guitar music (which comes in far more types than for other instruments) really isn't hard, and opens up the world of printed music.

## Which type of guitar is for me?

If you don't already own a guitar, here are some basic pointers to help you decide which type is for you.

### ***Electric***

This is probably the best bet. Electric guitars tend to be easy to play without hurting your fingers; almost any electric guitar can be used for a vast range of styles, especially when used with a versatile amplifier or effects unit to produce distortion when required. Though you may think of it as loud (and this is of course part of its appeal), the electric guitar can also be virtually silent when unplugged or used with headphones – very useful for practising late into the night.

### ***Acoustic***

(‘Acoustic’ generally refers to the steel-strung acoustic guitar, though the classical guitar is also an acoustic instrument.)

This is still a popular, though less versatile choice for beginners. If you already gravitate towards acoustic styles, you may prefer one of these. Be warned, though, that your fingertips may take longer to toughen enough to play acoustic guitar without discomfort; also, many rock techniques (we'll look at some later in the book) will be difficult or impossible unless you switch to an electric instrument.

### ***Classical (also called ‘Spanish’)***

In simple terms this is a nylon-strung acoustic instrument used mainly for playing classical guitar music and related styles such as Flamenco. This used to be the most popular choice for beginners but is actually very limiting as it never sounds convincing in most modern styles; also, the neck is rather wide, so some chord shapes can be difficult for beginners with small hands. Like the acoustic, the classical guitar is unsuited to many advanced techniques. Unless you are already specifically interested in playing only classical guitar music (which is in any case outside the scope of this book), this type of instrument is best avoided.

### ***Size***

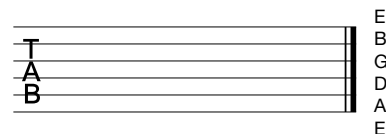
All types of guitar are available in various smaller sizes as well as the standard size. For most adults and children over about twelve, a full size guitar is the best option. Smaller instruments, while useful for younger children, tend to be of inferior quality and sound.



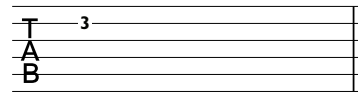
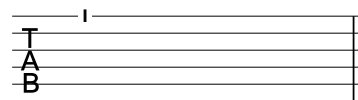
# Unit 2 Introducing tablature and single notes

## The basics

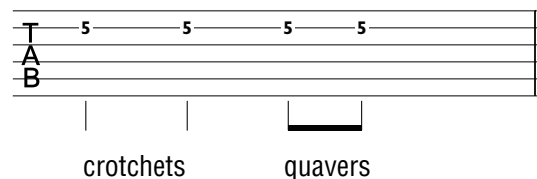
Now that we've learnt some chords, it's time to move on to melodic or lead playing. As we have seen on page 7, there are many ways to notate guitar music. Tablature is one of the oldest forms; it's usually combined with standard musical notation, but it can also be used to convey simple melodies and patterns on its own. The tablature stave is essentially like a chord box on its side. Each line represents a guitar string.



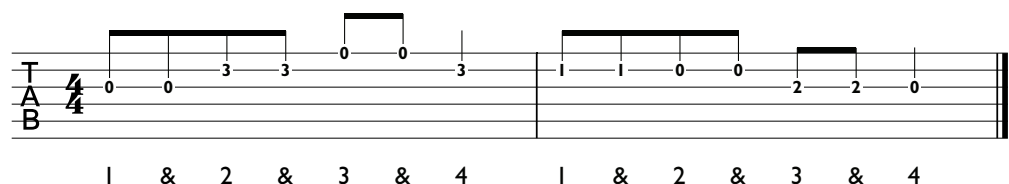
The numbers represent fret numbers. For example, the number 1 on the top line means: play the first fret on the top E string. The number 3 on the second line means: play the third fret on the B string.



Tablature only makes sense on its own with the addition of rhythm. Crotchets and quavers in tablature look like this:



Each of the tunes below can be played in the lowest frets – this is called **first position**. For simple melodic playing in first position, notes at the first fret are always played by the first finger; the second fret is played by the second finger, and so on: no finger numbers are given here as they are the same as the fret numbers. Remember, open strings are notated as zeros – no-left hand fingers needed! All notes are played with the plectrum (down-strokes only for now). This is a very well known tune. If you don't recognise it, you're probably doing something wrong.



# 39 Everybody Hurts R.E.M.

Words and Music by William Berry, Michael Stipe,  
Peter Buck and Michael Mills



## Intro

D G

let ring- - - - - cont. sim. throughout

TAB: 0 2 3 2 3 2 | 0 2 3 2 3 2 | 0 0 3 3 0 | 0 0 3 3 0

## Verse

5 D G

When the day is long, — and the

TAB: 0 2 3 2 3 2 | 0 2 3 2 3 2 | 0 0 3 3 0 | 0 0 3 3 0

9 D (continue pattern) G

night, the night is — yours a - lone.

13 D G

When you're sure you've — had e - nough of this

## recommended listening

R.E.M. – *In Time: The Best Of R.E.M. 1988–2003*

Manic Street Preachers – *Everything Must Go*

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