



sampler

hot banjo licks

**BY DAVE RUSSELL
& SHERRI CHEKAL**

BOOK OF TAB AND MUSIC FILES ON CD

HOT G LICKS
VOLUME ONE

hot banjo licks

G Licks - Volume 1

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HOT G LICKS VOLUME ONE

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Welcome to Hot Banjo Licks in G, Volume One...

We are pleased that you purchased this volume of Hot Banjo Licks. In the volumes we've put together we have covered everything from kick-offs/intros to fill-in licks, tags, and endings. While there are many good publications available to teach beginning students how to play the banjo, that is not the purpose of the material we are offering. The Hot Licks Banjo series presupposes that you have already learned the fundamentals of five string bluegrass banjo playing, and possess the ability to read tablature.

There is an ongoing debate as to whether it's better to learn with or without tablature and there are great arguments on both sides of the issue. Many anti-tablature people believe that it's best to learn by ear because you then can "feel" the music better. There is some truth to the notion if you "only" rely on tablature you'll fail to develop your ear. I have seen this happen before with students who immediately pull out their songbook when you ask them to play a song. This is when tablature can become a crutch rather than a tool to help you along the path to better playing.

When I started playing the banjo back in 1975, I started with the Scruggs banjo book, and also Pete Wernick's Bluegrass Banjo book. Fortunately, I was quickly able to pick songs out by ear and the need to rely on tablature was greatly reduced. I eventually began slowing down LPs (anyone remember those?) and learned to identify the roll patterns despite the fact that the strings weren't the exact pitch. Today we have technology that will slow down the song at the same pitch.

Let me encourage you to use these licks as a resource for unleashing your own creative abilities. Your long term goal should be in developing your ear to the point where you won't need to rely on tablature.

It's entirely possible to learn from tablature and also gain the ability to hear and feel the music. It's really up to the student to take the necessary steps to learn how to hear the music and develop a feel for it. Most of the professional banjo players I've spoken to have said that they play by feel, and that is a skill that simply cannot be taught. Much of this comes from a devotion to serious listening to the music, playing with other solid musicians who can keep strong rhythm and punchy timing, and the willingness to work hard with a metronome or rhythm machine. You just have to keep at it and stay focused on the areas where you may have weaknesses. It's a good habit to record yourself playing (preferably with a metronome or rhythm machine) and then isolate those areas where you're rushing, dragging, or perhaps playing sloppy. Those are the areas you need to focus on rather than running through a litany of memorized songs. Remember, play "slowly" as you are learning. You need to properly space out the notes.

The licks included in this series are designed to help you add ammunition to your arsenal of previously learned songs or licks from other sources. You'll find .wav and .mp3 recordings to accompany the tablature so you can hear how the lick actually sounds. We've also include examples of where some of these licks most appropriately fit within a song.

We hope you'll gain more skill and savvy from our Hot Banjo Licks series. We believe that there is no substitute for plain and simple hard work, and these licks are designed to give you the work out you need help you gain more skill and command of the banjo.



John Hunley and Dave Russell
Greenfield Village Bluegrass Festival - Summer 1980



Sherri Chekal at the Bluegrass Junction in
Shalersville, Ohio, - Spring 2005

How to Use Our Program



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Listen to the Music Files

We offer the learn-along music files as .WAV recordings. These should play easily on most modern computers and CD players. It doesn't matter if you own a Windows based computer or a Macintosh, .WAV files are quite universal. You can easily include these files on your personal music devices such as an IPOD or other MP3 players. What's nice is that you can look at the licks on the following pages and listen to the cd recording. This is a great way to hear the timing and emphasis of the lick. If you have purchased the download file, you will need to place the files into your computer player such as Windows Media Player or iTunes for the Mac or Window computers. Also included is a folder with Mp3 files of each lick, too!



Read, Listen & Learn the Licks

We suggest that you take one lick, and set your computer media player or CD player to repeat the track over and over as you practice. We did not include a spoken voice identifying the lick so that you can listen over and over without waiting. By hearing the lick over and over, you will train your ear to hear the timing and emphasis of the lick. After you work on getting it nice and smooth, you can then begin to insert the lick into your regular banjo breaks or wherever it best suits your playing. Have fun! Learn a lick a week!



How to Read Tab

There are many good books out there that can teach you how to read banjo tabs. We hope that you have mastered the art of reading and using tab, however, here is a brief refresher course for our program's tab.

1st String 0

2nd String 0

3rd String 2- 3

4th String 0

5th String 2- 5

Annotations:

- Play these three notes together, as a pinch or strum
- This is a rest sign, it tells you to not play anything for one beat or more.
- This represents the right hand finger to use. i = index, m = middle, t = thumb
- Some of the special techniques you will encounter are the slide (SL), the hammer (H), the pinch (PO), the choke (CH) and others. They are clearly marked in the tab.

Refer to a instruction book for how to do these techniques.

There are many excellent books on beginning banjo and learning to read tab for the banjo. We hope that you will have mastered the basic skills of reading tab and can play your banjo with a comfortable level of skill. If you have purchased our Hot Banjo Licks courses and are just beginning the banjo, you may still find many of the licks within your skill level and can continue to grow and learn with the licks in each volume. However, you may find some licks that are a bit more advanced than you are ready for. One of the advantages of our learning course is that even one or two new licks a week will spice up your playing at jams and with friends and also give you a valuable resource as your playing skill advances!

Licks in the Key of G

Volume 1

Let's Get Started!

The number of licks one can come up with are unending, but for the newer banjo student it seems like the most basic ones are ever so difficult. As with the "Kick-off" volume licks are subject to the same potential repetition. The licks contained in this volume are more or less another interpretation of previously existing licks, yet what I have attempted to do is bring out key melody notes in ways I think add flavor.

Earl Scruggs is the master of the banjo lick, and his style of playing is what banjo players world wide strive to master. You can hear his influence in lick after lick from any place bluegrass music is heard.

A banjo lick diagram consisting of four measures. Above the staff, the notes are 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0. The first measure contains a 0 on the top line, a 2-3 on the second line, and a 0 on the third line. The second measure contains a 0 on the top line, a 3-2 on the second line, and a 0 on the third line. The third measure contains a 0 on the top line, a 0 on the second line, and a 0 on the third line. The fourth measure contains a 0 on the top line, a 2-3 on the second line, a 0 on the third line, and a 2 on the fourth line.

The same lick can also be played with a different kind of flavor, yet with an obvious reference point in the Scruggs style.

A banjo lick diagram consisting of four measures. Above the staff, the notes are 3, 0, 0, 0. The first measure contains a 1 on the top line, a 0 on the second line, and a 0 on the third line. The second measure contains a 1 on the top line, a 3 on the second line, and a 0 on the third line. The third measure contains a 0 on the top line, a 0 on the second line, and a 0 on the third line. The fourth measure contains a 0 on the top line, a 0 on the second line, a 3-2 on the third line, and a 2 on the fourth line.

What I hope you get out of this volume of G licks is a frame of reference upon which to build your own repertoire of licks. We've already mentioned that there is nothing new under the sun when it comes to kick-offs, leads, fill-ins, and licks in every key, but there is still a way of taking the various styles, learning from them, and interpreting them in a way that adds new dimensions. Sometimes It's as simple as changing one note.

Again, let me encourage you to use these licks as information for you to build your own catalog of licks.



Meet the Editor

David L. Russell

Dave Russell, the company's president, has been playing bluegrass music since he was a kid, and started playing banjo at age 15. He has professionally played and toured with the likes of John Hunley and the Kentuckians, Wendy Smith and Blue Velvet, Frank Wakefield and the Mike Adams Band. He is currently playing the banjo for Lare Williams and the New Direction band. He is an instructor, and songwriter and holds a PhD in History from Michigan State University. He is the editor of the popular newspaper, the Bluegrass Journal, that serves over 10,000 readers in the states of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Pennsylvania and Illinois. He is enamored with the study of history and is a life-long journaler and writer. More than anything he loves being a dad to four wonderful children.



Meet the Art Director

Sherri Chekal

Sherri Chekal is the art director at Westvon Publishing and she started on the 5 string banjo as a student of Dave's many years ago as a 16 year old kid. After dabbling with many other instruments as a child, such as the violin, piano, flute and guitar, it was the 5 string banjo that caught her attention and stuck. Tagging along with Dave to numerous festivals, shows and jams taught her to love the music and now as an adult, she is devoted to the music in many ways. She is the editor of the popular BuckeyeBluegrass.com and MichiganBluegrass.com websites, as well as offering her graphic talents to several bands through websites, promotion and writing talents. She is the Art Director of the popular Bluegrass Journal newspaper. She plays with the Fulton County Bluegrass band in Ohio. She homeschools her two daughters and is quite the Renaissance woman of talents and



HotBanjoLicks.com provides the banjo player with economical CDs and PDF e-books of the licks you want to learn and incorporate into your own style of playing.

Different volumes include:

**G Licks • Kick-offs • Endings
Back Up Licks • Tag Licks • Melodic Licks**

Hot Banjo Licks are designed for the intermediate banjo player that is looking to spice up their playing with more creative sounds to help develop their own style. Buying lots of tab books just to get that great kick-off or a tag lick can be expensive. Each of our Hot Banjo Licks collections offer you 50 great licks with an e-book of the tabbed lick as well as audio recordings of each lick played cleanly and at a medium rate for practice. All for one great low price!

Mix and match the different collections, buy just the ones that you WANT! If you only want endings, then buy just the endings volume that suits you!

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Be sure to sign up for our Lick of the Month newsletter! It's free! You'll get a new lick and audio recording as well as tips and information on playing the banjo! Check out the website for more information.

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