

Right Hand Exercises Lurk Everywhere!

If you have read my books you have seen some right hand exercises that I devised. Let me recap a couple of ideas which are probably obvious to you.

1. Working on right hand exercises, with all open strings, allows you to concentrate on just one hand without the mental interference of thinking about the left hand.

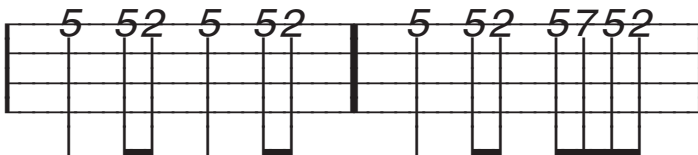
2. Since such a huge proportion of your overall timing is a result of what the right hand does, focusing solely on right hand movements can be very beneficial. (I don't mean to imply that the left hand is not important. It is. But, that is for another article on another day.

If you have played some of the exercises for the right hand that I included in the books(s) you will no doubt have found some of them beneficial. Let me suggest another way to create VERY useful right hand exercises. And it is very easy to do.

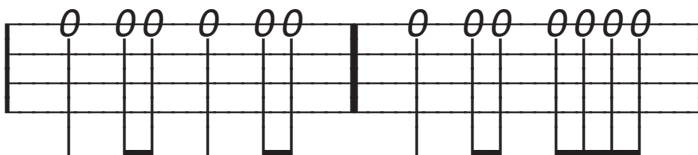
Take a section of a song you are practicing and tab it out. Now, make a second copy of the section and simply change all the fret numbers to zeros!!

You have now removed the left hand from the picture. This will allow you to focus on the right hand pick movements while holding your moonshine jug in the left hand. Or a Diet Coke. Your choice of poison is your own personal preference. Seriously though, by taking the left hand considerations out of the picture you can practice the right hand pick direction and string changing movements to the fullest possible extent. And, as I always say, use the metronome. (See my books for full-fledged browbeating on that subject.)

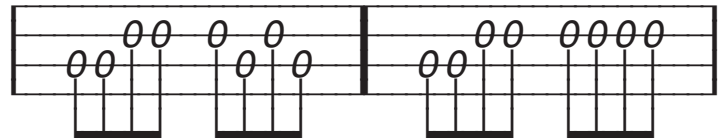
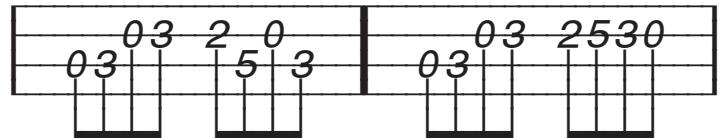
To give you an idea of what I am talking about here are two examples. This first one is the first 2 measures of the old fiddle tune "Mississippi Sawyer".



And now, to reveal the embedded right hand pattern I have converted all the numbers to zeros. Practice the rhythm and pick motion of this. Until this is good why bother with the left hand notes?



This next example consists of the first 2 measures of my composition "McDonough". Just like the previous example I have simply converted all the notes to zeros for practicing the right hand.



By the way, if you like the first 16 notes of this song you might like the rest of it too. I am currently assembling a little book of original mandolin tunes that I have written and this one will definately be in it. If you'd like to hear a version of the tune go to: www.cdbaby.com/ponyexpress and you can hear an MP3 of the song.

Now, back to the point of this article. Take sections of songs that are giving you trouble and use this technique to isolate the right hand part. You might even be surprised to discover that many LEFT HAND PROBLEMS (or what you think are left hand problems) have right hand difficulties at their root! Think on that a while!

A Comment From My Newest Favorite Human Being...

"Although I haven't worked my way through the first book, it is so much better than the other books I have that I want your other book too. Keep up the good work."

-Ed Hume

Thank you, Ed! I hope you don't mind my shameless self-promotion and the use of your comment without your permission, but I want others to read what you had to say. And since I am on a roll saying thank you to people let me say thank you to everyone who has purchased either "Mandolin Master Class" or "Mandolin Training Camp". The comments I have received over the last year have astounded me and I really appreciate hearing that the effort has been worthwhile. If anyone is curious about the books I keep blabbing about I invite you to read about them on my webpage:

And Now, A Pop Quiz... This is a University, After All!

Class, put away your Palm Pilots and please clear the memory on your Texas Instruments TI-994A. (Not a calculator... I know.) Let's see if any of that junk I have been lecturing about has taken root. Please use a number 2 pencil.

1. How many notes are found in the G7 chord? What are they?
2. What 3 notes make up an F major triad?
3. If you go from any open string to the next higher open string what interval have you played?
4. If a song is in the key of A, what is the I chord?
5. What is the VIIb chord in the key of A?
6. In the key of C what chords are to be played if the progression is I, IIIm, IV, V, I?
7. Which fret on the mandolin divides the length of the string in half?
8. The distance from the nut to the 7th fret is _____ of the overall string length?
9. In standard tuning how many different pitches can be played on a mandolin up to and including the 15th fret? (No string bending please.)
10. The F pentatonic scale includes what notes?

The answers will appear in the next issue of MandoUniversity News. That gives you lots of time to think. Feel free to cheat by digging around in "Mandolin Master Class" or by doodling around on your mandolin. This is an open book test. Good luck.

Read the books and you too can get fabulous, high paying gigs like this, be swarmed by autograph seeking fans, and astound beer-swilling, hearing impaired audiences.



Eureka!!
The G
chord!! I
should write
a book on
that!!!

The real
reason this
guy is here.

