

BEGINNER TO PRO

# HOW TO MASTER THE ELECTRIC BASS



## FOR BASS GUITAR

HOWARD HEAD

# Introduction

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Thanks for downloading this FREE PDF!

Over the next few pages I've given you a sneak peak of both books.

Starting off with some classic albums, bass players and films (you may or may not know) which aims to get you inspired!

Then I move on to learning material covered in both books.

When reading through, **ask yourself these questions:**

- Do you know every single note on the fretboard?
- Do you know how to setup your bass to play in the style you want to?
- Are you constantly thinking about how to play the instrument? (instead of actually playing it and interacting with your band and audience).

If the answer is no to any of these please consider reading 'How to Master the Electric Bass'.

When reading through 'Mastering the Language of Music' ask yourself these questions:

- Do you know your intervals?
- Do you know how to solo over chord changes?
- Do you know how to create bass lines?
- Can you play any song instantly just by hearing it for the first time?

If the answer is no to any of these, please consider reading that book!



# Inspiration

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***'The essence of teaching is to get the student excited about the subject that they explore on their own.'*** - Harry Evans (Bill Evans Brother)  
(1966)

In order to inspire you, I encourage you to listen to as much music as possible, and you'll find never-ending inspiration. I've compiled some amazing albums from a few genres below:

## **Pop**

Thriller - Michael Jackson  
Monkey Business - The Black Eyed Peas  
I've Been Expecting You - Robbie Williams  
Purple Rain - Prince & The New Power Generation  
Arrival - Abba  
Pet Sounds - The Beach Boys  
Hounds of Love - Kate Bush  
Lemonade - Beyonce

## **Rock**

The Dark Side of the Moon - Pink Floyd  
Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band - The Beatles  
The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust - David Bowie  
Goodbye Yellow Brick Road - Elton John  
News of The World - Queen  
Rumours - Fleetwood Mac  
90210 - Yes  
Permanent Waves - Rush  
Van Halen - Van Halen  
Out of the Blue - ELO  
Apocalypse Dudes - Turbonegro

## **Blues**

The Blues Brothers (Original Soundtrack Recording) - The Blues Brothers  
I Wanna Get Funky - Albert King  
Burglar - Freddie King  
Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs - Derek & The Dominoes  
Continuum - John Mayer  
At Fillmore East - The Allman Brothers  
Are You Experienced - The Jimi Hendrix Experience  
Still Got the Blues - Gary Moore

## **Punk**

Never Mind the Bollocks - Sex Pistols  
Bad Brains - Bad Brains  
Killing Joke - Killing Joke  
Dookie - Green Day  
Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables - Dead Kennedys  
Face to Face - Face to Face  
Enema of the State - Blink-182

## **Indie Rock**

The Stone Roses - The Stone Roses  
Heaven or Las Vegas - Cocteau Twins  
Strange Times - The Chameleons  
Silent Alarm - Bloc Party  
Definitely Maybe - Oasis  
The Bends - Radiohead  
The Joshua Tree - U2  
Urban Hymns - The Verve  
Disintegration - The Cure  
Laughing Stock - Talk Talk  
Currents - Tame Impala

## **Modern Alt Rock**

Wasting Light - The Foo Fighters  
Pandemonium - Killing Joke  
Them Crooked Vultures - Them Crooked Vultures  
Relationship of Command - At the Drive-In  
Audioslave - Audioslave  
Billy Talent - Billy Talent  
Ideas Above Our Station - Hundred Reasons  
Black Holes and Revelations - Muse  
Silver Side Up - Nickelback  
Siren Song of the Counter Culture - Rise Against  
Full Collapse - Thursday  
Rage Against the Machine - Rage Against the Machine  
Californication - Red Hot Chili Peppers

## **Metal**

Master of Puppets - Metallica  
The Number of the Beast - Iron Maiden  
Blizzard of Oz - Ozzy Osbourne  
Paranoid - Black Sabbath  
Reign in Blood - Slayer  
Screaming for Vengeance - Judas Priest  
Dr Feelgood - Motley Crue

## **Soul/Disco/Motown**

I Am - Earth Wind and Fire  
We Are Family - Sister Sledge  
C'est Chic - Chic  
Innervisions - Stevie Wonder  
An Evening With Silk Sonic - Silk Sonic  
D'Angelo & The Vanguard - The Messiah  
Still Bill - Bill Withers  
Love Deluxe - Sade  
Back to Black - Amy Winehouse  
Black Radio - Robert Glasper

## **Hip Hop**

Illmatic - Nas  
Me Against the World - 2pac  
Enter The Wu-Tang - Wu-Tang Clan  
Straight Outta Compton - N.W.A  
Violent By Design - Jedi Mind tricks  
Ready to Die - The Notorious B.I.G  
Death Certificate - Ice Cube

## **Jazz**

Mint Jams - Casiopea  
The Rainbow Goblins - Masayoshi Takanka  
Heavy Weather - Weather Report  
Gate of Dreams - Claus Ogerman  
Aja - Steely Dan  
Chain Reaction - The Crusaders  
Lyle Mays - Lyle Mays  
Still Life (Talking) - Pat Metheny Group

## **Singer/Songwriter**

Tea for the Tillerman - Cat Stevens  
Songs of Leonard Cohen - Leonard Cohen  
Blood on the Tracks - Bob Dylan  
Fuzzy - Grant Lee Buffalo  
Reading, Writing and Arithmetic - The Sundays  
Blue - Joni Mitchell  
Tapestry - Carole King  
Deserter's Songs - Mercury Rev  
Gypsies, Tramps & Thieves - Cher  
Grace - Jeff Buckley

Check out all of the great bass players/musicians who've come before you! Of course, this isn't an exhaustive list!

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b><u>Rock</u></b><br/>           Chris Wolstenholm<br/>           Billy Sheehan<br/>           Geddy Lee<br/>           Chris Squire<br/>           John Mcvie<br/>           John Deacon<br/>           Lemmy<br/>           John Entwistle (Thunderfingers)<br/>           John Paul Jones<br/>           Jack Bruce<br/>           Paul McCartney<br/>           Kim Deal<br/>           Peter Hook</p> | <p><b><u>Jazz Fusion/Jazz</u></b><br/>           Victor Wooten<br/>           Jaco Pastorius<br/>           Marcus Miller<br/>           Stanley Clarke<br/>           Jeff Berlin<br/>           Esperanza Spalding<br/>           Carlos del Pureto<br/>           Marc Johnson<br/>           Mark King<br/>           Tetsuo Sakurai<br/>           Henrik Linder<br/>           Anthony Jackson<br/>           Ron Carter</p> |
| <p><b><u>Pop</u></b><br/>           Thundercat<br/>           Sting<br/>           Nathan East<br/>           Abraham Laboriel<br/>           Willie Weeks<br/>           Leland Sklar<br/>           Gail Ann Dorsey<br/>           Tina Weymouth</p>   | <p><b><u>Soul &amp; R&amp;B</u></b><br/>           Adam Blackstone<br/>           Donald 'Duck' Dunn<br/>           James Jamerson<br/>           Pino Palladino<br/>           Chuck Rainey<br/>           Verdine White<br/>           Bernard Edwards<br/>           Jerry Jemmott</p>  |
| <p><b><u>Funk</u></b><br/>           Larry Graham<br/>           Louis Johnson<br/>           Bootsy Collins<br/>           Robert Trujillo<br/>           Flea<br/>           Les Claypool<br/>           Tim Commerford<br/>           Joe Dart</p>  | <p><b><u>Punk</u></b><br/>           Mike Dirnt<br/>           Paul Simonon<br/>           Matt Freeman<br/>           Mark Hoppus<br/>           Norman Watt-Roy<br/>           Chris Barker<br/>           Scott Shiflett</p>  |
| <p><b><u>Metal</u></b><br/>           Steve Harris<br/>           Steve DiGorgio<br/>           Justin Chancellor<br/>           Cliff Burton<br/>           John Myung<br/>           Geezer Butler</p>   | <p><b><u>Solo Bass</u></b><br/>           Michel Manring<br/>           Steve Lawson<br/>           Zander Zon<br/>           Stuart Hamm</p>  |

There's also plenty of great films, tv shows and media that give you an insight into artists/musicians lives and their creative process. I think an outlining factor between all great creators is that they have something unique to say. Whilst they may get inspiration from other people, they don't produce an exact replica. Instead they communicate something real that's unique to themselves. In other words, surround yourself with inspiration, but be creative for yourself. That's authenticity.

### **Films**

The Dirt  
The Doors  
The Blues Brothers  
Love & Mercy  
The Beatles Yellow Submarine  
Rocketman  
The Runaways  
Amy  
Ray  
Whiplash  
Straight Outta Compton  
Notorious  
8 Mile  
I'm not There  
Sid & Nancy  
The Summer of Soul  
Woodstock  
Trainwreck: Woodstock 99

### **Documentaries**

The Death and Resurrection Show  
Rush: Beyond the Lighted Stage  
Frank Zappa  
Jaco  
Festivals Britannia  
The Wrecking Crew  
Pink Floyd Live in Pompeii  
Artifact  
The Bee Gees: How Can You Mend a Broken Heart  
Oasis: Supersonic  
The Stone Roses: Made of Stone  
Foo Fighters: Back and Forth  
The US vs John Lennon  
Pearl Jam Twenty  
Nile Rodgers: The Hitmaker

## **Comedies**

Bill & Ted  
The Boat that Rocked  
This is Spinal Tap  
Tenacious D: The Pick of Destiny  
Get Him to the Greek  
Wayne's World  
Walk Hard  
School of Rock  
Kevin & Perry Go Large

## **TV Series**

The Beatles: Get Back  
Pistol  
Vinyl  
Later with Jools Holland  
The Tonight show

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## **Bonus!**

### **Films on Creativity**

Samsara  
Tim's Vermeer  
Press Pause Play  
Exit Through the Gift Shop  
It's Kind of a Funny Story  
Adaption  
Dead Poets Society  
Loving Vincent  
Pollock  
The Aviator  
Why Man Creates



# Why learn the Electric Bass?

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Firstly, the feeling you get when you pluck a string is extraordinary. The vibrations made are very powerful due to the thickness of the strings and are able to travel right through to the bones. It's almost as if the bass guitar brings you closer to music. And you have that power to affect people in the same way. This is important when making music as you always want to evoke an emotional response from a listener.

The role of the bass guitar is to provide rhythm, define harmony and occasionally even offer melodies. But first and foremost, the rhythmic element is the most important. It doesn't matter how great your note choice is, if you can't play notes rhythmically in the right place it won't sound good as it wouldn't be contributing to the feel you're trying to communicate to the listener. The second role is to define the harmony. Chords are heard relative to the lowest sounding pitch, and so it is very important for the bass player to understand harmony and be on the same page as the harmony instruments.

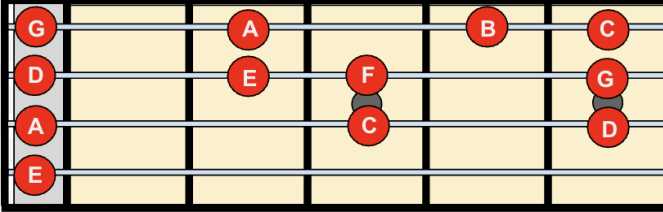
**Music can be as complicated or as uncomplicated as you want it to be.**

**You could play one note per bar and sound great if it's the right note and locking in with the rest of the band.**

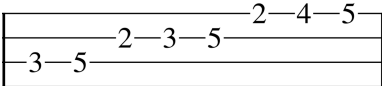

# Major Scale Box Shapes

Box shapes are great to get started with scales as you only have to remember a shape and not know the notes you play. This is of course, not a very good way to learn the fretboard as you're disregarding the notes.

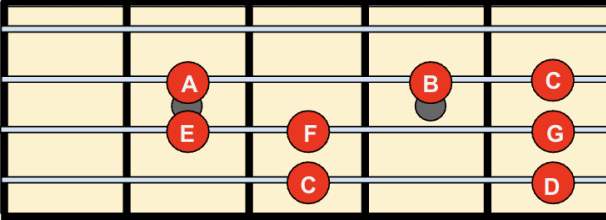
## Box Shape #1



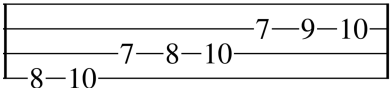

1 2 3 4 5



This box shape can be transferred to any Major scale, and learning this shape will allow you to play any Major scale. Although as stated above it has its limitations.

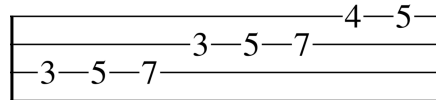
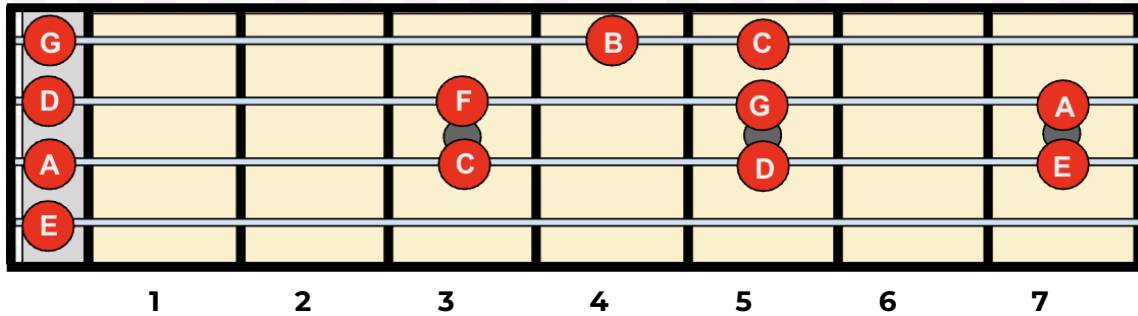


6 7 8 9 10

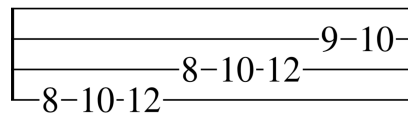
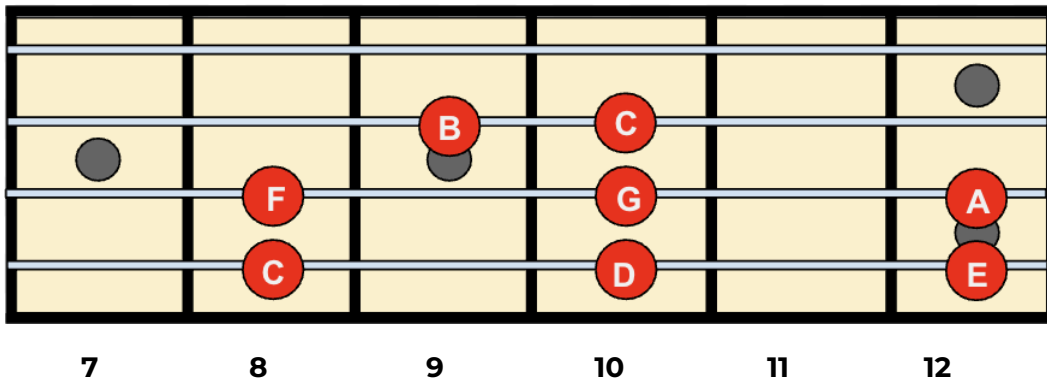


**This is the same scale and same shape starting at the 8th fret on the E string.**

## Box Shape #2



This box shape can be transferred to any Major scale, and learning this shape will allow you to play any Major scale. This box shape is spread over five frets whereas the other shape is spread over four, and this is a bit more of a stretch.



This is the same shape and same scale starting from the 8th fret again.

## Box Shape #3

Diagram illustrating Box Shape #3 on the 4th string. The fretboard shows notes B (4th fret), C (5th fret), G (5th fret), D (5th fret), A (7th fret), E (7th fret), F (8th fret), and C (8th fret). Below the fretboard is a musical staff with notes and a tablature showing fingerings: 5-7-8 on the 4th string and 4-5 on the 5th string.

This box shape involves a finger position that goes down the neck and requires you to play the root with your 'pinky' finger.

Diagram illustrating Box Shape #3 on the 5th string. The fretboard shows notes G (1st fret), D (1st fret), A (2nd fret), E (2nd fret), F (3rd fret), C (3rd fret), B (4th fret), and C (5th fret). Below the fretboard is a musical staff with notes and a tablature showing fingerings: 0-2-3 on the 4th string and 0-2-4-5 on the 5th string.

This is the same box shape played on the above string. However, the position runs out of frets, and you are forced to play open strings.

# Expanding Major Scale Box Shapes

We can expand these box shapes by including other notes easy to reach from the scale. You have to know what these additional notes are in relation to the scale. I have written the intervals below the notes.

## Expanding Box Shape #1

1 2 3 4 5

3 4 5 6 7 R 2 3 4 5 6 7 R

0-1-3-5 2-3-5 2 3-5 2-4-5

## Expanding Box Shape #2

8 9 10 11 12

R 2 3 4 5 6 7 R 2 3 4 5

8-10-12 8-10-12 9-10 12 9-10-12-12



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**MASTERING THE  
LANGUAGE OF MUSIC:  
INTERVAL EAR  
TRAINING**



**FOR BASS GUITAR**

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# 3rds

2 3 2 5 3 2 5 4 2 5 5

3 5

3rds are three notes away from your starting note in the scale and are very major and sweet sounding!

## Example

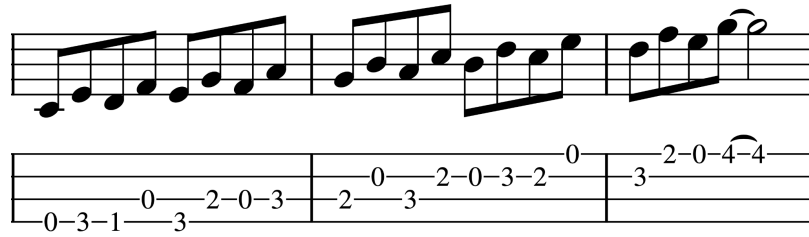
8 7 10 8 7 10 8 7 10 9 7 10 9 7 10 7 10 9 12 10 14 12 16

14 17 16 19 16 17 19 16 17 19 17 19 15 17 14 15 17 14 15 12 14 15 12 14 15 12

13 15 12 13 10 12 8 10 7 8 5 7 3 5 1 3 0 1 5 3 2 5 3 2 5 3 3



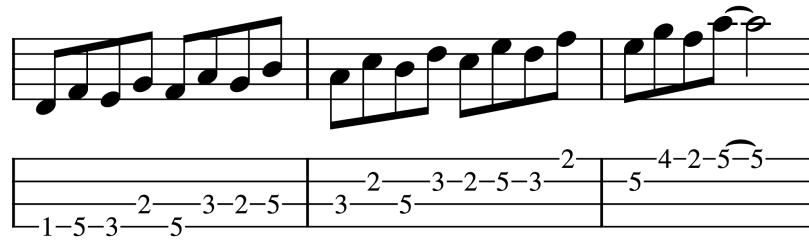
### Position 1



Musical notation for Position 1, showing a sequence of notes on a staff and a corresponding fretboard diagram below it. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the first three measures.

|         |         |         |       |         |
|---------|---------|---------|-------|---------|
| 0-3-1-3 | 0-2-0-3 | 2-3-2-0 | 3-2-0 | 2-0-4-4 |
|---------|---------|---------|-------|---------|

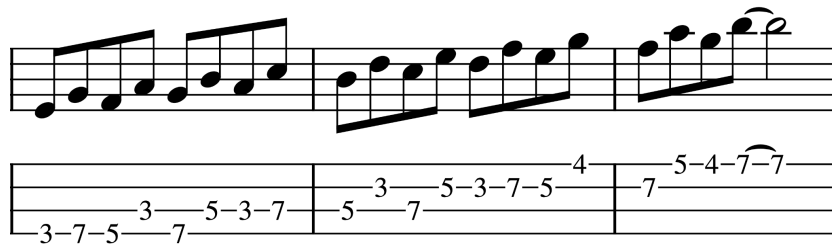
### Position 2



Musical notation for Position 2, showing a sequence of notes on a staff and a corresponding fretboard diagram below it. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the first three measures.

|         |         |           |     |         |
|---------|---------|-----------|-----|---------|
| 1-5-3-5 | 2-3-2-5 | 3-5-2-5-3 | 2-3 | 4-2-5-5 |
|---------|---------|-----------|-----|---------|

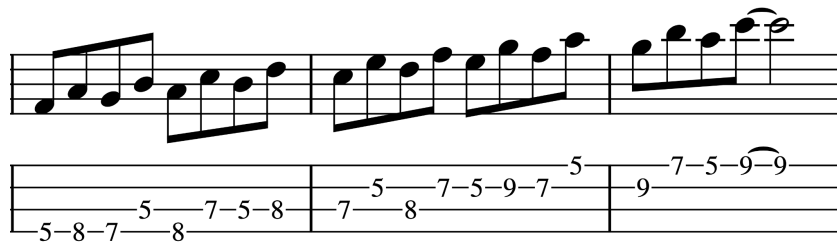
### Position 3



Musical notation for Position 3, showing a sequence of notes on a staff and a corresponding fretboard diagram below it. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the first three measures.

|         |         |           |     |         |
|---------|---------|-----------|-----|---------|
| 3-7-5-7 | 3-5-3-7 | 5-7-3-7-5 | 4-5 | 5-4-7-7 |
|---------|---------|-----------|-----|---------|

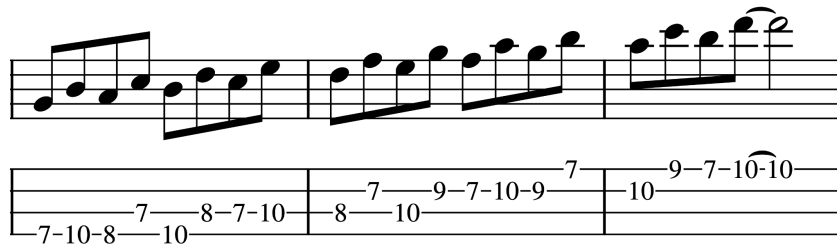
### Position 4



Musical notation for Position 4, showing a sequence of notes on a staff and a corresponding fretboard diagram below it. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the first three measures.

|         |         |           |     |         |
|---------|---------|-----------|-----|---------|
| 5-8-7-8 | 5-7-5-8 | 7-8-5-9-7 | 5-7 | 7-5-9-9 |
|---------|---------|-----------|-----|---------|

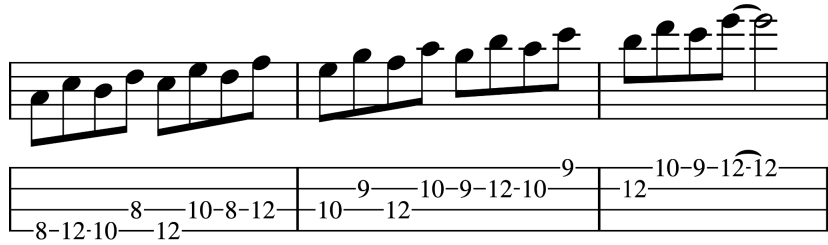
### Position 5



Musical notation for Position 5, showing a sequence of notes on a staff and a corresponding fretboard diagram below it. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the first three measures.

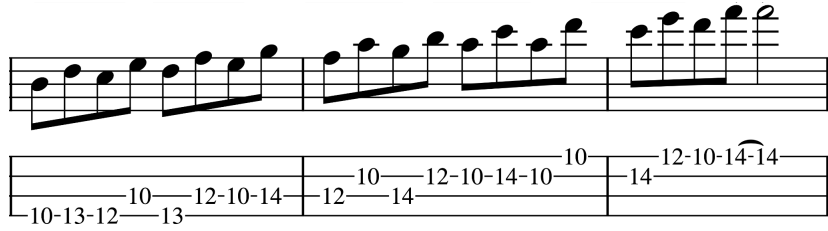
|           |          |               |     |           |
|-----------|----------|---------------|-----|-----------|
| 7-10-8-10 | 7-8-7-10 | 8-10-9-7-10-9 | 7-9 | 9-7-10-10 |
|-----------|----------|---------------|-----|-----------|

### Position 6



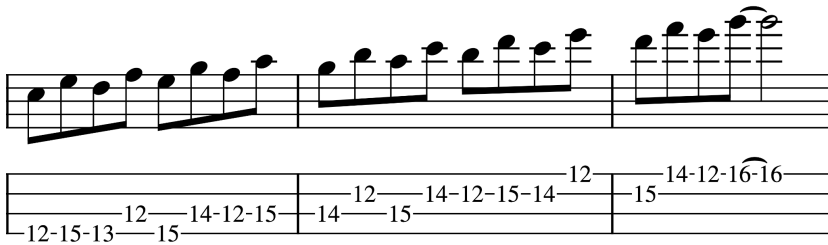
Musical notation for Position 6, showing a sequence of notes on a staff and a corresponding fretboard diagram below. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the notes: 8-12-10, 8-10-8-12, 9-10-9-12-10, and 10-9-12-12.

### Position 7



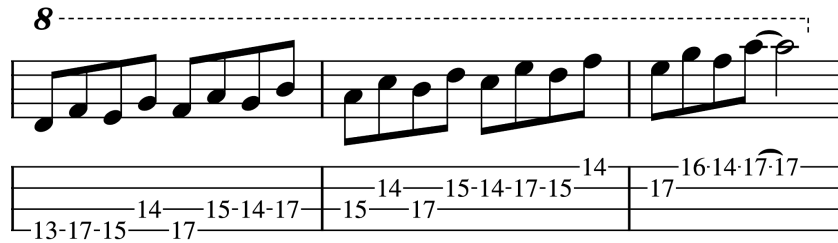
Musical notation for Position 7, showing a sequence of notes on a staff and a corresponding fretboard diagram below. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the notes: 10-13-12, 10-12-10-14, 10-12-10-14-10, and 12-10-14-14.

### Position 8



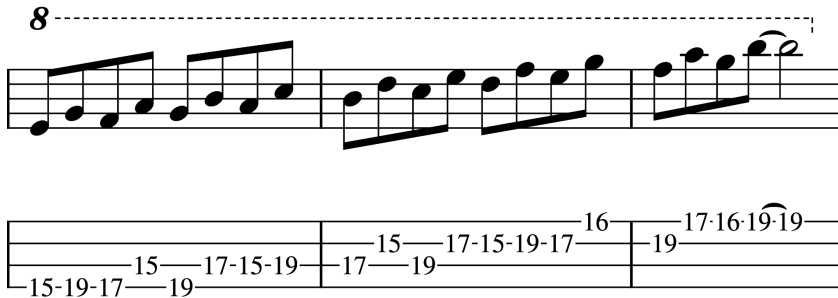
Musical notation for Position 8, showing a sequence of notes on a staff and a corresponding fretboard diagram below. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the notes: 12-15-13, 12-14-12-15, 12-14-12-15-14, and 14-12-16-16.

### Position 9



Musical notation for Position 9, showing a sequence of notes on a staff and a corresponding fretboard diagram below. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the notes: 13-17-15, 14-15-14-17, 14-15-14-17-15, and 16-14-17-17.

### Position 10



Musical notation for Position 10, showing a sequence of notes on a staff and a corresponding fretboard diagram below. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the notes: 15-19-17, 15-17-15-19, 15-17-15-19-17, and 17-16-19-19.

### Position 11

8

The musical notation for Position 11 consists of a single staff with a treble clef. It features a melodic line starting on the first string, moving up stepwise through the first three frets, then down stepwise, and finally up to the fourth fret. The fretboard diagram below shows the fret positions for the first three strings: the first string has frets 17, 19, 17, 20; the second string has frets 17, 19, 17, 21, 19; and the third string has frets 17, 19, 17, 21, 19. The final measure shows a double stop on the second and third strings at the 21st fret.

### Position 12

8

The musical notation for Position 12 consists of a single staff with a treble clef. It features a melodic line starting on the first string, moving up stepwise through the first three frets, then down stepwise, and finally up to the fourth fret. The fretboard diagram below shows the fret positions for the first three strings: the first string has frets 19, 22, 20; the second string has frets 19, 20, 19, 22; and the third string has frets 19, 20, 19, 22, 21. The final measure shows a double stop on the second and third strings at the 22nd fret.

### Position 13

8

The musical notation for Position 13 consists of a single staff with a treble clef. It features a melodic line starting on the first string, moving up stepwise through the first three frets, then down stepwise, and finally up to the fourth fret. The fretboard diagram below shows the fret positions for the first three strings: the first string has frets 20, 24, 22; the second string has frets 20, 22, 20, 24; and the third string has frets 21, 22, 21, 24, 22. The final measure shows a double stop on the second and third strings at the 24th fret.