

Bluegrass Mandolin:
Creating and Using Double Stops
© 2012 by Pete Martin

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Introduction

In music, a double stop is the act of playing two notes simultaneously. A classical music definition usually means two strings are depressed (“stopped”) by the fingers, and picked simultaneously. Folk musicians usually call any time two notes are played simultaneously “double stops”. This latter definition is what we will use in this book.

Bluegrass mandolinists have made this sound a staple of the style. From Bill Monroe to the present, double stops are a vital part of the bluegrass language. Every bluegrass mandolin player needs at least a basic understanding of how these work to sound authentic. The focus of this book is to help players gain this knowledge and be able to apply it to any playing situation.

For MIDI files of the examples in this book, email:

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Section 1

5 D G

3 7 3 7 3 7 3 7 3 7 3 7 3 7 3 7 3 7 3 7 0 5 5 9 5 9 5 9 5 9 5 9 5 9 5 9 5 9 0 2

Two Strings

Chapter 1

Playing on Two Strings

Playing double stops requires the ability to play a pair of strings with the right hand while comfortably moving the fingers of the left hand. When I say a “pair of strings,” I don’t mean the two G strings, the two D strings, the two A strings or the two E strings. For the picking hand, a “pair of strings” means two consecutive pairs (i.e. G and D, D and A, A and E).

Authors note: If you can comfortably play on a pair of strings, skip chapter 1 and go to chapter 2. If you need help playing on two strings, start here. I also assume a right handed player, so any reference to the “right hand” means the picking hand and any reference to the “left hand” is the fingering hand. Left-handed players, just assume the opposite.

If playing on these consecutive pairs is not easy for you, play the exercises in this chapter. If played consistently over a period of time, the exercises in this chapter will give the player the ability to play on two strings comfortably.

Play example 1. Make sure you hit the pair of strings on both down strokes and up strokes.

Example 1

Musical notation for Example 1, measures 1-4. The notation is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The first two measures contain a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, and the last two measures contain a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes. The guitar tablature below shows the fretting for each measure.

Musical notation for Example 1, measures 5-8. The notation is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The first two measures contain a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, and the last two measures contain a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes. The guitar tablature below shows the fretting for each measure.

Play example 2. Again, make sure you hit the pair of strings on both down strokes and up strokes.

Example 2

Musical notation for Example 2, measures 1-2. The notation is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The first measure contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, and the second measure contains a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes. The guitar tablature below shows the fretting for each measure.

One more open string exercise: Play example 3. Just as before, make sure you hit the pair of strings on both down strokes and up strokes.

Example 3

The image shows a musical score for 'Example 3'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melody of eighth notes, and the bass staff contains a bass line of eighth notes. The piece is in common time (C) and consists of 12 measures. The notation includes a treble clef, a bass clef, and a common time signature. The melody in the treble staff is a sequence of eighth notes, and the bass line in the bass staff is a sequence of eighth notes. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Now let's put some fingering from the left hand into the mix. Play example 4. Strive for a sound where you can hear all notes clearly.

Chapter 2

Simple Old Time Tunes With Two Strings

One of the easiest ways to start playing double stops is to learn some simple old time tunes on two strings. Here's the most common way this is done: one note is the melody, the other note "drones" an open string. The droning note usually is a note of the chord being played. This means the sustained notes (the ones being droned) fit the sound of the chord. Occasionally other non chord notes work as a drone (use your ear and play what sounds good to you) but the most common is to play a chord note as the drone.

A droning note is usually one of the notes of the chord being played by the backup musicians.

Let's see how to do this. First, learn the simple melody to the common old time tune "Angeline the Baker," example 5.

Example 5

Angeline the Baker

Simple Melody

D G

5 D G D

9 D G

14 D G D

The first four measures of the melody of “Angeline the Baker” are played on the A string and accompanied by a D chord. Let’s add a drone note. Remember, the droning note is usually an open string that is a note of the chord being played. Mu-

music theory tell us the notes of a D chord are D, F# and A.* The higher open string from the melody in this section of “Angeline” is the note E. That note is not a note of the D chord (D, F#, A). The lower string, D, is a note of the chord. Therefore, we will select the open D string as our drone note.

In the last measure of the first line of “Angeline,” the accompaniment chord changes to G. Music theory tells us the notes of a G chord are the notes G, B and D. Once again we choose the D string as our drone note because it is one of the notes of the G chord (The E string doesn’t fit the chord notes).

If we do this process all the way through “Angeline,” we get the results shown in example 6. Learn example 6 now.

* If you don’t know basic music theory, such as how to construct major scales, minor scales and chord arpeggios, you may want to study this subject. The book “Easy Music Theory for Fiddle and Mandolin” from www.petimarpress.com is a good place to start.

Example 6

Angeline the Baker

With Open String Drones

D G

TAB: 0 0 | 0 0 2 5 5 5 0 | 2 5 5 5 5 2 | 0 2 5 0 | 2 2 2 2 2 2 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

5 D G D

TAB: 0 0 2 5 5 5 0 | 2 0 5 5 5 0 | 2 0 5 2 | 0 0 0 0 0 0

9 D G

TAB: 2 3 5 2 0 5 0 | 2 0 5 2 3 5 2 0 5 | 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 3 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

14 D G D

TAB: 5 2 0 5 0 | 2 0 5 5 0 | 2 0 5 2 | 0 0 0 0 0 0

Compare examples 5 and 6 to see how the drone sounds are applied. Let's do the same with "Buffalo Gals," examples 7 and 8.

Example 7

Buffalo Gals

Simple Melody

A E A

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The bass staff shows guitar fretting numbers: 2 4, 0 0 0 0 4, 2 0, 4 4 4 4, 7 5 2 2 2 2, 2 0, 4 4 4 4.

5 E A

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The melody continues on the treble clef staff. The bass staff shows guitar fretting numbers: 0 0 0 0 4, 2 0, 4 4 5, 7 7 7 7 5 4 2, 0 0 0 0 0.

9 A E A

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The melody continues on the treble clef staff. The bass staff shows guitar fretting numbers: 2 4, 5 5 4 2 0, 2 0, 4 4 4 4, 7 5 2 2 2 2, 2 0, 4 4 4 4.

14 E A

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The melody continues on the treble clef staff. The bass staff shows guitar fretting numbers: 5 5 4 2 0, 2 0, 4 4 5, 7 7 7 7 5 4 2, 0 0 0 0 0.

Music theory tells us the notes in an A chord are the notes A, C# and E. The notes in an E chord are E, G# and B. We use this to get the drones, example 8.

Example 8

Buffalo Gals

With Open String Drones

The musical score for 'Buffalo Gals' is presented in four systems, each with a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is common time (C). Above the first staff, the chords A, E, and A are indicated. Above the second staff, E and A are indicated. Above the third staff, A, E, and A are indicated. Above the fourth staff, E and A are indicated. The tablature includes various fret numbers (0, 2, 4, 5, 7) and techniques like natural harmonics (indicated by a dot) and bends (indicated by a slash). The melody is primarily played on the A string, with some notes on the G string. The drone chords are played on the A and E strings.

Notice in example 8 there are some places where we had to play the melody with the seventh fret on the A string to get an E note drone. See example 9.

Example 9

E

TAB

0 7 7 7 7 5 4 2

If we had played the melody on the open E string, we would not have had a drone note, as the note A is not in the E chord. If we finger the seventh fret of the A string to get the E melody note, the open E string is available to drone, so that is what we did. It is a very good trick and keeps a much fuller sound going.

There can be different ways to play drone notes. To see how this works, learn “Sally Goodin,” example 10.

Example 10 Sally Goodin Simple Melody

A E A

TAB

0 2 4 0 2 4 0 0 2 4 0 2 0 2 4 0 0 4 2 0 2 4 0 0 4 2 2 4 0

A E A

TAB

4 2 0 2 4 5 0 4 5 0 2 0 5 4 4 5 0 0 2 0 0 4 2 2 4 0

Now “Sally Goodin” with open string drones, example 11.

Example 11 Sally Goodin With Open String Drones

The musical notation for Example 11 is presented in two systems. The first system consists of four measures, and the second system consists of four measures, starting with a measure number '5'. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written on a single staff, and the guitar accompaniment is written on a six-string staff with fret numbers below the notes. The melody features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The guitar accompaniment includes open strings (0) and fretted notes (e.g., 2, 4, 5) on various strings. Above the first system, the chords A, E, and A are indicated. Above the second system, the chords A, E, and A are indicated.

The open A and E notes work great for drones against the A chord sections. You may notice we went against the rule for drone notes in the E chord section. That is because in this tune, the E chord lasts such a short time that the drone of the A note against the E chord sounds fine.

For tunes in the key of A whose melody is mostly on the A string, it is common to drone the A note on the D string. Let's look at this in the Sally Goodin of example 12.

Example 12

Sally Goodin

With Fingered and Open Drones

A E A

5 A E A

Many will agree that the example 12 “Sally Goodin” is a stronger sound than the example 11 version. While it is harder to play, it is worth the extra effort to be able to play these type of drones. This works with many tunes in D where we drone the D note, the seventh fret of the G string.

Section 2

The musical notation consists of a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The notation is divided into two sections: 'D' and 'G'. The 'D' section contains two measures of double stops (dyads) with fingerings 3/7, 3/7, 3/7, 3/7, 3/7, 3/7, 3/7, 3/7. The 'G' section contains two measures of double stops with fingerings 5/9, 5/9, 5/9, 5/9, 5/9, 5/9, 5/9, 5/9, followed by a measure with fingerings 5/9, 5/9, 5/9, 0, 2. A small '5' is written above the first measure.

Embellishing Melodies with Double Stops

Chapter 3

Introduction to Bluegrass Double Stops

In chapter 2 we saw a few old time tunes that consisted of a melody note and a second droning note. While this can work for bluegrass, it is more common to have the second note be something other than a static drone. The harmony note moves when the melody note moves, much like harmony singing is done. When played in this way, we can still hear the melody note clearly, but the sound is embellished due to the second note, the double stop, played with the melody. We will see that in this chapter.

Example 13 has the melody to the common bluegrass song “Way Downtown.”

Example 13

Way Downtown Melody

G D

5 5 2 2 0 4

A D

5

0 0 2 0 4 0 0

G D

9

5 5 2 2 0 4

A D

13

0 0 2 0 4 0 0

In bluegrass, when a melody note is a **chord tone** (a note of the chord),

the most common double stop adds the next chord tone higher in sound. In “Way Downtown,” the first melody note is G. The chord being played by the rhythm section is a G chord. Music theory tells us the notes of the G chord are the notes G, B and D. Since the melody note is a chord tone (G), the next chord tone higher (B) is our double stop note.

Look at the last measure in the first line of example 13. The melody note is F#, the chord D. Music theory tells us the notes of the D chord are D, F# and A. Because the F# is the melody note and is a chord tone, we will use the next chord tone higher (the note A) for the double stop note.

Example 14 shows this process for all of “Way Downtown.”

Example 14

Way Downtown Double Stops

G D

Musical notation for measures 1-3. Measure 1: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), common time. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). Measure 2: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). Measure 3: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). Fingering: Measure 1: T (thumb) on G, A (index) on A, B (middle) on B. Measure 2: 2 (index) on G, 5 (middle) on A, 7 (ring) on B. Measure 3: 0 (open) on G, 4 (index) on A.

5 A D

Musical notation for measures 4-6. Measure 4: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Notes: A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C#5 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). Measure 5: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Notes: A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C#5 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). Measure 6: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Notes: A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C#5 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). Fingering: Measure 4: 4 (index) on A, 7 (ring) on B. Measure 5: 2 (index) on A. Measure 6: 4 (index) on A, 0 (open) on B.

9 G D

Musical notation for measures 7-9. Measure 7: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). Measure 8: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). Measure 9: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). Fingering: Measure 7: 2 (index) on G, 5 (middle) on A. Measure 8: 5 (middle) on G, 9 (ring) on A. Measure 9: 2 (index) on G, 5 (middle) on A, 7 (ring) on B.

13 A D

Musical notation for measures 10-12. Measure 10: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Notes: A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C#5 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). Measure 11: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Notes: A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C#5 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). Measure 12: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Notes: A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C#5 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). Fingering: Measure 10: 4 (index) on A, 7 (ring) on B. Measure 11: 2 (index) on A. Measure 12: 4 (index) on A, 0 (open) on B.

The most common way of playing bluegrass double stops:

- 1) Find the sustained melody notes (usually held two beats or longer). These sustained notes are where we play the double stops. These can also be one note that is repeated over a few beats.**
- 2) See what chord is being played by the rhythm section on this note.**
- 3) If this sustained melody note is a note of the chord (it usually is), the double stop is the next *chord tone* (note of the chord) higher.**

It is not the focus of this book to teach the structure of a bluegrass solo. Example 14 doesn't sound like a bluegrass mandolin solo, but a few additions turn it into one. In example 15, we sustain the long melody double stops with eighth note down and up strokes, play a kickoff into the solo, add a common Bill Monroe ending phrase and presto, we have a solid bluegrass mandolin solo. Play example 15.

Example 15

Way Downtown

Bluegrass Solo with Double Stops

G D

A D

5

G D

9

A D

13

Example 15 isn't anything super fancy, but it is a solid traditional bluegrass mandolin solo. Many of the 60 tracks recorded by The Monroe Brothers (Bill and Charlie) between 1936 and 1938 have this type of mandolin solo. Bill's playing on these recordings is a great study in early bluegrass mandolin style. Throughout his career he would often come back to this double stop idea in soloing on vocal songs. Listen and learn some solos from him during this period.

Let's do this for another song in a different key. Examples 16-18 are the song "Two Dollar Bill," a.k.a "Long Journey Home."

Example 16

Two Dollar Bill

Melody

A

T
A
B

2 2 4 | 0 0 0 2 | 4 4 2 | 0

5

D A

4 4 2 | 0 2 | 4 0 4 | 2

9

2 2 4 | 0 0 0 2 | 4 4 2 | 0 0

13

E A

0 4 | 2 4 6 | 0 | 0

Example 17

Two Dollar Bill

Melody with Double Stops

A

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is common time (C). The melody is written in a treble clef. The bass clef shows fingerings for the left hand. Measure 1 contains a double stop (F#4 and C#5) followed by a quarter note G#4. Measure 2 contains double stops (F#4 and C#5), (C#5 and G#4), and (G#4 and F#4) followed by a quarter note G#4. Measure 3 contains double stops (F#4 and C#5) and (C#5 and G#4) followed by a quarter note G#4. Measure 4 contains a whole rest.

5

D A

Musical notation for measures 5-8. Measure 5 contains a double stop (F#4 and C#5) followed by a quarter note G#4. Measure 6 contains double stops (F#4 and C#5), (C#5 and G#4), and (G#4 and F#4) followed by a quarter note G#4. Measure 7 contains double stops (F#4 and C#5) and (C#5 and G#4) followed by a quarter note G#4. Measure 8 contains a whole rest.

9

Musical notation for measures 9-12. Measure 9 contains a double stop (F#4 and C#5) followed by a quarter note G#4. Measure 10 contains double stops (F#4 and C#5), (C#5 and G#4), and (G#4 and F#4) followed by a quarter note G#4. Measure 11 contains double stops (F#4 and C#5) and (C#5 and G#4) followed by a quarter note G#4. Measure 12 contains a double stop (F#4 and C#5) followed by a quarter note G#4.

13

E A

Musical notation for measures 13-16. Measure 13 contains a double stop (F#4 and C#5) followed by a quarter note G#4. Measure 14 contains double stops (F#4 and C#5), (C#5 and G#4), and (G#4 and F#4) followed by a quarter note G#4. Measure 15 contains a whole rest. Measure 16 contains a whole rest.

Example 18

Two Dollar Bill

Bluegrass Solo with Double Stops

A

0 0 4 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 4 4 4 4 4 4 2 | 0 0 0 0 0 | 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

2 2 2 2 2 2 4 | 7 7 7 7 7 7 | 4 4 4 4 4 2 | 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 | 7 7 7 7 7 7 7

D

A

5

0 0 0 0 0 | 4 4 4 4 0 0 0 0 | 0 5 5 5 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

4 4 4 4 4 2 | 7 7 7 7 2 2 2 2 | 4 7 7 7 4 | 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

A

9

0 0 0 0 0 0 | 4 4 4 4 4 4 2 | 0 0 0 0 0 | 4 4 4 5 5 5 5

2 2 2 2 2 2 4 | 7 7 7 7 7 7 | 4 4 4 4 4 2 | 7 7 7 7 7 7 7

E

A

13

5 5 5 0 0 0 | 6 6 6 4 6 | 0 0 0 2 0 4 0 5

7 7 7 4 4 4 | 9 9 9 4 6 | 9 9 9 4 6 | 9 9 9 4 6

It may seem like a tedious process to create a double stop mandolin solo from a singing melody, but if you do it on enough songs, eventually you will be able to do this “on the fly” at jams. This is a wonderful skill for a bluegrass musician. You can always create a solo that fits the style. It is a skill worth the work to acquire.

In Review

The most common way of playing bluegrass double stops:

- 1) Find the sustained melody notes (usually held two beats or longer). These sustained notes are where we play the double stops. These can also be one note that is repeated over a few beats.**
- 2) See what chord is being played by the rhythm section on this note.**
- 3) If this sustained melody note is a note of the chord (it usually is), the double stop is the next *chord tone* (note of the chord) higher.**

Chapter 4

Double Stops in More Keys

In previous chapters we looked at tunes in D and A. Now look at some other keys. We will find the double stops the same way we did in chapter 3. Page 29 has example 19, the melody to “Nine Pound Hammer” in Bb. Play this melody now.

The chords in the key of Bb we will need to play are Bb, Eb and F, the I, IV and V chords.

Chord	Notes in Chord
Bb	Bb, D, F
Eb	Eb, G, Bb
F	F, A, C

Example 19

Nine Pound Hammer

Simple Melody

B \flat E \flat

3 3 5 1 1 5 5 5 5 3 1 5

5 B \flat F B \flat

3 3 5 1 1

9 E \flat

5 1 5 5 5 3 1 5 1 1 5

13 B \flat F B \flat

3 3 5 1 1

Example 20 has the double stop notes for “Nine Pound Hammer.”

Example 20

Nine Pound Hammer

Simple Melody with Double Stops

B \flat E \flat

B \flat F B \flat

5

E \flat

9

B \flat F B \flat

13

Example 21 has a mandolin solo using these double stops.

Example 21

Nine Pound Hammer

Mandolin Solo with Double Stops

B \flat E \flat

B \flat F B \flat

5

E \flat

9

B \flat F B \flat

13

Example 22 is the melody of “Little Maggie,” key of B.

Example 22

Little Maggie

Simple Melody

B A

T
A
B

5 B F B

T
A
B

9 B A

T
A
B

13 B F B

T
A
B

Example 23 is the double stops to “Little Maggie.”

Example 23

Little Maggie

Simple Melody with Double Stops

B A

1 2 3 4

5 B F# B

5 6 7 8

9 B A

9 10 11 12

13 B F# B

13 14 15 16

Example 24 is a mandolin solo for “Little Maggie.”

Example 24

Little Maggie

Mandolin Solo with Double Stops

B A

4 4 6 | 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 | 7 7 7 7 7 0 | 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 | 4 4 4 7 7 7 7

5 B F# B

7 7 7 7 7 7 7 | 6 6 6 6 6 | 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 | 6 4 4 6

9 B A

6 6 6 6 6 6 6 | 7 7 7 7 7 0 | 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 | 4 4 4 7 7 7 7

13 B F# B

7 7 7 7 7 7 7 | 6 6 6 6 6 | 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 | 7

Let's continue with different keys. Example 25 has the melody to "Dark Hollow" in the key of C.

Example 25

Dark Hollow

Simple Melody

C G C

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The treble clef staff shows a melody starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5 in the first measure. The bass clef staff shows a bass line starting on B2, moving to C3, D3, and E3 in the first measure. Chords C, G, and C are indicated above the staff.

5 F C

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The treble clef staff shows a melody starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5 in the fifth measure. The bass clef staff shows a bass line starting on B2, moving to C3, D3, and E3 in the fifth measure. Chords F and C are indicated above the staff.

9 F

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The treble clef staff shows a melody starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5 in the ninth measure. The bass clef staff shows a bass line starting on B2, moving to C3, D3, and E3 in the ninth measure. Chord F is indicated above the staff.

13 C G C

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The treble clef staff shows a melody starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5 in the thirteenth measure. The bass clef staff shows a bass line starting on B2, moving to C3, D3, and E3 in the thirteenth measure. Chords C, G, and C are indicated above the staff.

There are several places in “Dark Hollow” where the melody is not a note of the chord. In these cases, use your ear. You can choose to play a double stop or not. Example 26 shows one possible set of double stops for “Dark Hollow.”

Example 26

Dark Hollow

Simple Melody with Double Stops

C G C

TAB 2 3 4 | 3 5 | 2 0 3 7 | 3 3 7 5 | 3 5

5 F C

3 7 | 5 7 | 1 3 | 0 3 | 3 5 | 3 5

9 F

3 7 | 5 3 | 1 5 | 0 3 | 0 3 | 1 3 | 1 3 | 1 3

13 C G C

0 3 | 3 5 | 2 3 | 0 3 | 2 0 | 2 5

Example 27 is a mandolin solo made from these double stops.

Example 27

Dark Hollow

Mandolin Solo with Double Stops

C G C

5 F C

9 F

13 C G C

Example 28 has the melody to “New River Train” in the key of E.

Example 28

New River Train

Simple Melody

E

5

B

9

E A

13

B E

Example 29 is the double stops to “New River Train.”

Example 29

New River Train

Simple Melody with Double Stops

E

B

E A

B E

Example 30 is a mandolin solo for “New River Train.”

Example 30

New River Train

Mandolin Solo with Double Stops

E

1 2 3 4

B

5

5 6 7 8

E A

9

9 10 11 12

B E

13

13 14 15 16

Let's continue with double stops in many keys. Example 31 is the melody to "I Can't Feel At Home In This World Anymore" in F.

Example 31

I Can't Feel At Home In This World Anymore

Simple Melody

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The time signature is common time (C). The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The bass staff shows fingerings: 0, 0, 5, 3, 5, 0, 3, 0, 5, 0. Chord symbols F, Bb, and F are placed above the staff.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The melody continues on the treble clef staff. The bass staff shows fingerings: 3, 3, 0, 3, 5, 3, 0, 3, 5, 5, 0. A slur is placed over the last two measures of the bass staff. A chord symbol C is placed above the staff.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The melody continues on the treble clef staff. The bass staff shows fingerings: 0, 0, 5, 3, 5, 0, 3, 0, 5, 0. Chord symbols F, Bb, and F are placed above the staff.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The melody continues on the treble clef staff. The bass staff shows fingerings: 3, 3, 0, 3, 5, 3, 0, 0, 5, 3, 3. A slur is placed over the last two measures of the bass staff. Chord symbols C and F are placed above the staff.

In measure 16 above, we have an A note against a C chord. We will just put a C note above it as that sounds fine. Example 32 has the double stops.

Example 32

I Can't Feel At Home In This World Anymore Simple Melody With Double Stops

F B \flat F

5

C

5

F B \flat F

10

C F

14

A mandolin solo is in example 33.

Example 33

I Can't Feel At Home In This World Anymore

Mandolin Solo With Double Stops

F B^b F

5 C

10 F B^b F

14 C F

Example 34 has the melody of the verse of “Columbus Stockade Blues” in the key of G.

Example 34

Colombus Stockade Blues (Verse)

Simple Melody

G

5

D G

5

9

5

D G

13

Example 35 is the double stops to the verse of “Colombus Stockade Blues” in the key of G.

Example 35

Colombus Stockade Blues (Verse)

Simple Melody With Double Stops

G

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key of G, 4/4 time. Measure 1: G4 quarter note. Measure 2: G4-G#4 double stop (chord). Measure 3: G4 quarter note, A4 quarter note, B4 quarter note. Measure 4: G4-G#4 double stop (chord). Measure 5: G4-G#4 double stop (chord). Bass clef, tablature: Measure 1: 2. Measure 2: 5/5. Measure 3: 5 5 2 3. Measure 4: 3/5. Measure 5: 5/9.

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, key of G, 4/4 time. Measure 6: D5-G#5 double stop (chord). Measure 7: A5 quarter note, G#5 quarter note, F#5 quarter note, E5 quarter note. Measure 8: D5-G#5 double stop (chord). Measure 9: D5-G#5 double stop (chord). Bass clef, tablature: Measure 6: 5/3. Measure 7: 2 3 2 0. Measure 8: 2/5. Measure 9: 2.

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, key of G, 4/4 time. Measure 10: D5-G#5 double stop (chord). Measure 11: G4 quarter note, A4 quarter note, B4 quarter note. Measure 12: D5-G#5 double stop (chord). Measure 13: D5-G#5 double stop (chord). Bass clef, tablature: Measure 10: 2/5. Measure 11: 5 5 2 3. Measure 12: 3/5. Measure 13: 5/9.

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, key of G, 4/4 time. Measure 14: D5-G#5 double stop (chord). Measure 15: A5 quarter note, G#5 quarter note, F#5 quarter note, E5 quarter note. Measure 16: D5-G#5 double stop (chord). Measure 17: D5-G#5 double stop (chord). Bass clef, tablature: Measure 14: 2/5. Measure 15: 3 2 3 2 0. Measure 16: 2/5. Measure 17: 5.

Example 36 is a mandolin solo to the verse of “Colombus Stockade Blues” in the key of G.

Example 36

Colombus Stockade Blues (Verse)

Mandolin Solo With Double Stops

G

Mandolin solo for Example 36, measures 1-4. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The music features a mix of single notes and double stops. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for both treble and bass staves.

D G

5

Mandolin solo for Example 36, measures 5-8. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The music features a mix of single notes and double stops. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for both treble and bass staves.

9

Mandolin solo for Example 36, measures 9-12. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The music features a mix of single notes and double stops. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for both treble and bass staves.

D G

13

Mandolin solo for Example 36, measures 13-16. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The music features a mix of single notes and double stops. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for both treble and bass staves.

Now you have seen the most used double stops for bluegrass mandolin solos in all the common bluegrass keys (A, B, Bb, C, D, E, F, G). For the most part we

have used the guidelines introduced in chapter 3. This can be done for any melody, any chord progression in any key, major or minor. Those guidelines are reviewed here.

The most common way of playing bluegrass double stops:

- 1) Find the sustained melody notes (usually held two beats or longer). These sustained notes are where we play the double stops. These can also be one note that is repeated over a few beats.**
- 2) See what chord is being played by the rhythm section on this note.**
- 3) If this sustained melody note is a note of the chord (it usually is), the double stop is the next *chord tone* (note of the chord) higher.**

Chapter 5

Double Stops In Minor Keys

In chapters 3 and 4 we looked at a way to find double stops. All the examples in these chapters were songs in major keys with major chords. You may ask, what about minor keys and minor chords?

Turns out we do exactly the same process to find double stops for minor keys and chords. Suppose we had a tune where the chords are Am, Dm and E. Look at the notes in these chords.

Chord Name	Notes in Chord (Chord Tones)
Am	A C E
Dm	D F A
E	E G# B

Just use the same method previously described to find the double stop notes. For example, if the melody was the note A and the chord Am, the double stop note would be C, the next chord tone higher. If the melody was the note F and we had a D minor chord, the double stop note would be A, the next chord tone higher.

Example 37 is the melody to the verse of “Wayfaring Stranger.”

Example 37

Wayfaring Stranger

Simple Melody

A m

0 0 0 0 5 3 0 0

D m E

5

5 0 3 5 0 0 0 0

A m

9

0 0 0 5 3 0 0 0

D m E7 A m

13

5 3 0 5 0 0 0 0

Example 38 are the double stops to the verse of “Wayfaring Stranger.”

Example 38

Wayfaring Stranger

Simple Melody With Double Stops

Am

Dm E

5

Am

9

Dm E7 Am

13

Example 39 shows the verse melody to “Wayfaring Stranger” in Em.

Example 39

Wayfaring Stranger

Simple Melody

Em

5 Am B

9 Em

13 Am B Em

Example 40 shows the double stops.

Example 40

Wayfaring Stranger

Simple Melody With Double Stops

E m

5 A m B

9 E m

13 A m B7 E m

It makes no difference the key or the chord. The most common double stop is found by the same method, reviewed once more here.

The most common way of playing bluegrass double stops:

- 1) Find the sustained melody notes (usually held two beats or longer). These sustained notes are where we play the double stops. These can also be one note that is repeated over a few beats.**
- 2) See what chord is being played by the rhythm section on this note.**
- 3) If this sustained melody note is a note of the chord (it usually is), the double stop is the next *chord tone* (note of the chord) higher.**

Before moving forward in this book, take the time to learn MANY songs in MANY keys using these double stops. Eventually you will be able to do this on any song you know.

Chapter 6

Other Bluegrass Double Stops

The previous chapters have focused on the most common double stops for bluegrass mandolin. This is a good place to start as it really gives that sound. However, there are also others ways to play double stops.

The second most common way of playing bluegrass double stops:

1) Find the sustained melody notes. These sustained notes are where we play the double stops.

2) See what chord is being played by the rhythm section on this note.

3) If this sustained melody note is a note of the chord (it usually is), the double stop is the two *chord tones* (notes of the chord) lower.

For example, if we want to add a double stop to a B melody note on a G chord.

Chord Name		Notes In Chord
G	higher sound	G
		D (One Chord Tone Higher)
		B (Melody)
	lower sound	G
		D (Two Chord Tones Lower)
		B
		G

The notes in a G chord are the notes G, B and D. One chord tone higher is the note D. Two chord tones lower is the note D. The two most common double stop notes are the same note one octave apart!

Look at this on “Columbus Stockade Blues.” Review example 34.

Example 34

Colombus Stockade Blues (Verse)

Simple Melody

G

Musical notation for measures 1-4, G chord. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The guitar tablature below shows the fretting: 2, 5, 5 5 2 3, 5, 2.

D

G

Musical notation for measures 5-8, D and G chords. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The guitar tablature below shows the fretting: 5 3, 2 3 2 0, 5, 2.

Musical notation for measures 9-12, G chord. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The guitar tablature below shows the fretting: 5, 5 5 2 3, 5, 2.

D

G

Musical notation for measures 13-16, D and G chords. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The guitar tablature below shows the fretting: 5 3, 2 3 2 0, 5.

Example 41 has the double stops two chord tones below the melody.

Example 41

Colombus Stockade Blues (Verse)

Simple Melody Double Stops

G

Musical notation for Example 41, measures 1-4. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), common time. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The bass line consists of double stops: G2-B2, G2-B2, G2-B2, G2-B2. Chord G is indicated above the staff.

Musical notation for Example 41, measures 5-8. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), common time. The melody consists of quarter notes: A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The bass line consists of double stops: A2-C2, B2-A2, G2-F#2, G2-F#2, A2-C2. Chords D and G are indicated above the staff.

Musical notation for Example 41, measures 9-12. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), common time. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The bass line consists of double stops: G2-B2, G2-B2, G2-B2, G2-B2. Chord G is indicated above the staff.

Musical notation for Example 41, measures 13-16. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), common time. The melody consists of quarter notes: A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The bass line consists of double stops: A2-C2, B2-A2, G2-F#2, G2-F#2, A2-C2. Chords D and G are indicated above the staff.

Example 35 has the double stops one chord tone higher. Compare examples 35 and 41.

Example 35

Colombus Stockade Blues (Verse)

Simple Melody With Double Stops

G

D

G

D

G

Most folks find example 35 to have a more powerful sound and example 41 to be a sweeter sound. Remember both are right. You can also mix and match, as in example 42.

Example 42

Colombus Stockade Blues (Verse)

Simple Melody Double Stops

G

Musical notation for measures 1-4 of Example 42, G chord. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody is written on a single staff. The bass lines are written on a six-string guitar staff with fret numbers indicated below the strings. Measure 1: Treble clef has a half note G4. Bass line has fret numbers 2 (T), 5 (A), and 4 (B). Measure 2: Treble clef has a half note G4. Bass line has fret numbers 5 (T), 5 (A), and 4 (B). Measure 3: Treble clef has a quarter rest followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and G4. Bass line has fret numbers 5 (T), 5 (A), 2 (B), and 3 (G). Measure 4: Treble clef has a half note G4. Bass line has fret numbers 3 (T), 5 (A), and 0 (B).

D

G

Musical notation for measures 5-8 of Example 42, D and G chords. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody is written on a single staff. The bass lines are written on a six-string guitar staff with fret numbers indicated below the strings. Measure 5: Treble clef has a dotted quarter note G4 followed by an eighth rest. Bass line has fret numbers 2 (T), 5 (A), and 3 (B). Measure 6: Treble clef has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and G4. Bass line has fret numbers 2 (T), 3 (A), 2 (B), and 0 (G). Measure 7: Treble clef has a half note G4. Bass line has fret numbers 5 (T), 5 (A), and 4 (B). Measure 8: Treble clef has a half note G4. Bass line has fret number 2 (B).

Musical notation for measures 9-12 of Example 42, G chord. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody is written on a single staff. The bass lines are written on a six-string guitar staff with fret numbers indicated below the strings. Measure 9: Treble clef has a half note G4. Bass line has fret numbers 2 (T), 5 (A), and 5 (B). Measure 10: Treble clef has a quarter rest followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and G4. Bass line has fret numbers 5 (T), 5 (A), 2 (B), and 3 (G). Measure 11: Treble clef has a half note G4. Bass line has fret numbers 3 (T), 5 (A), and 5 (B). Measure 12: Treble clef has a half note G4. Bass line has fret numbers 5 (T), 5 (A), and 9 (B).

D

G

Musical notation for measures 13-16 of Example 42, D and G chords. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody is written on a single staff. The bass lines are written on a six-string guitar staff with fret numbers indicated below the strings. Measure 13: Treble clef has a dotted quarter note G4 followed by an eighth rest. Bass line has fret numbers 5 (T), 4 (A), and 3 (B). Measure 14: Treble clef has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and G4. Bass line has fret numbers 2 (T), 3 (A), 2 (B), and 0 (G). Measure 15: Treble clef has a half note G4. Bass line has fret numbers 5 (T), 5 (A), and 4 (B). Measure 16: Treble clef has a half note G4. Bass line has fret number 4 (B).

Example 42 has a more diverse sound than examples 35 or 41. That is because “Colombus Stockade’s” melody is basically the same thing twice. Notice the different double stops in the first and second halves of example 42.

Example 43

Hand Me Down My Walking Cane

Simple Melody

G

5

D G

9

C G

13

D G

Example 43 has the melody of “Hand Me Down My Walking Cane.” Let’s find double stops for this one using the two methods we’ve learned. This is in example 44.

Example 44

Hand Me Down My Walking Cane

Simple Melody With Double Stops

G

Remember, this is only one of many possibilities using the two types of double stops we've seen. Study example 44 and find how each double stop was constructed. Make up your own variations. Do this song in many keys.

Take some common songs and find doublestops that are:

1) one chord tone higher

2) two chord tones lower

Play these songs in many keys.

I'm going a bit deeper into music theory here. If you don't understand what follows, study theory, ask a friend who knows theory, take a college level theory class, etc. Knowledge of theory can help you find many interesting things to play and **knowledge never hurt anyone!**

Music theory tells us that any V chord can be played as a dominant seventh chord. For the key of G, the V chord would be D. This means we can also play a D7 in place of D and it will sound fine. Let's compare the two chords here.

CHORD	NOTES IN CHORD
D	D, F#, A
D7	D, F#, A, C

Notice the note C is the difference between D and D7. This gives us another double stop possibility.

"Hand Me Down My Walking Cane" is in the key of G. The V chord is D, so we could add in the C note as a double stop if we cared to. We do this twice in example 45.

Example 45

Hand Me Down My Walking Cane

Simple Melody With Double Stops

G

D

G

C

G

D

G

Example 46 is a solo from these double stops.

Example 46

Hand Me Down My Walking Cane

Mandolin Solo With Double Stops

G

TAB 0 5 0 | 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 | 2 5 2 0 | 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 2

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 | 4 4 4

5 D G

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 | 3 0 5 0 | 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 0 2

7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 | 7 5 7 9 9 9 9 9 | 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 | 9 9 9 0 2

9 C G

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 2 0 | 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 | 3 3 3 5 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

13 D G

5 5 5 5 0 | 9 9 9 7 7 7 | 5 0 2 4 0 2 4 | 5

4 4 4 4 0 | 7 7 7 5 5 5 | 5 0 2 4 0 2 4 | 5

Section 3

5

D G

The musical notation consists of a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 5-measure staff. The first two measures are labeled 'D' and the last two 'G'. The notation consists of chords and notes on the treble staff, with corresponding fret numbers on the bottom staff.

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0	2	
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	5	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

Non Melody Double Stops

Chapter 7

Two Notes of a Chord

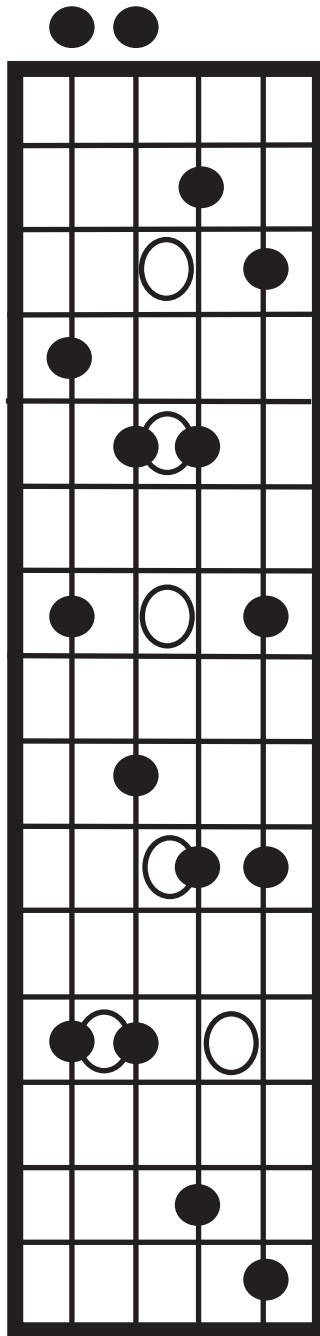
Up to now we've looked at double stops where one note was the singing melody of the song we were playing. We can also use double stops that have nothing to do with the melody of the song. In fact **any two notes of the current chord** in the song work in a solo. Let's find out how to do this.

Music theory tells us the notes in a G chord are the notes G, B and D. If a G chord is being played in a song, we could play any two note combination of the notes G, B and D and fit well with the sound of the G chord. We could even play two of the same note and sound good!

Let's find the location of the G, B and D notes on the fingerboard. Here are where the notes fall on the first 15 frets of the mandolin.

Fret	String Name			
#	G	D	A	E
1	G#/Ab	D#/Eb	A#/Bb	F
2	A	E	B	F#/Gb
3	A#/Bb	F	C	G
4	B	F#/Gb	C#/Db	G#/Ab
5	C	G	D	A
6	C#/Db	G#/Ab	D#/Eb	A#/Bb
7	D	A	E	B
8	D#/Eb	A#/Bb	F	C
9	E	B	F#/Gb	C#/Db
10	F	C	G	D
11	F#/Gb	C#/Db	G#/Ab	D#/Eb
12	G	D	A	E
13	G#/Ab	D#/Eb	A#/Bb	F
14	A	E	B	F#/Gb
15	A#/Bb	F	C	G

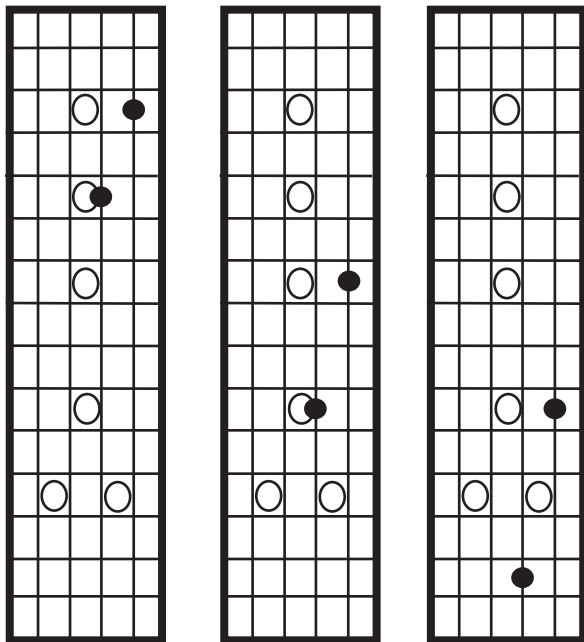
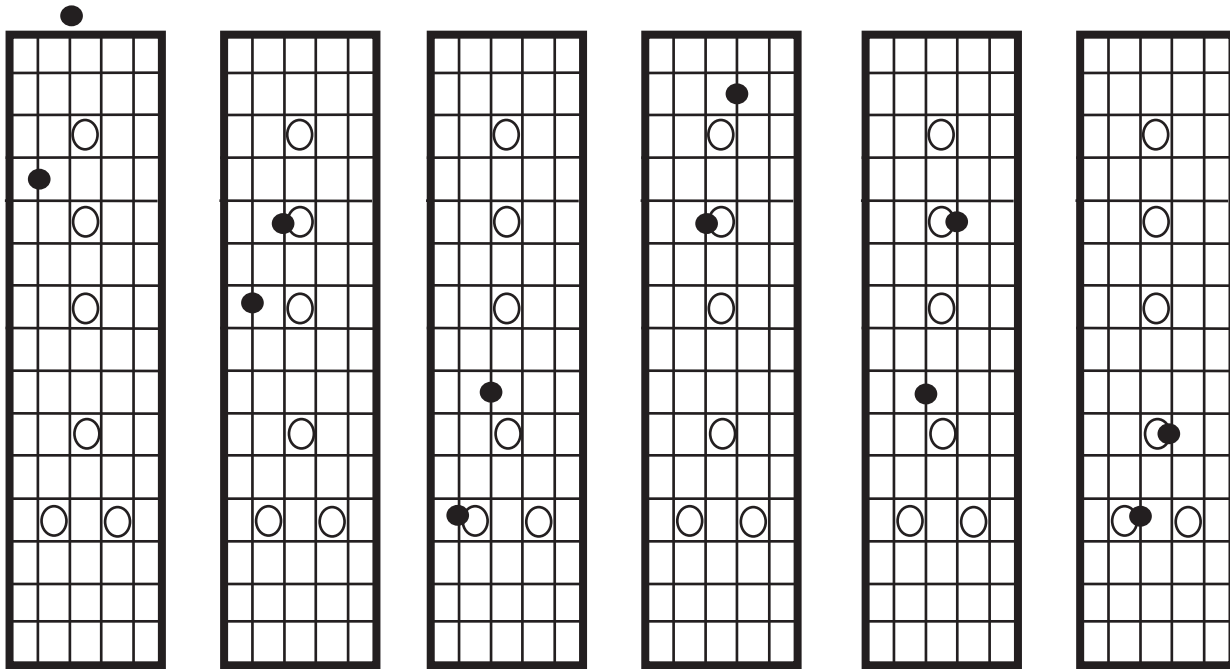
From the chart above, on the G string the notes G, B and D would be the open string, 4th, 7th and 12th frets. Find them yourself on the other strings. This is charted out on the next page.



Remember, if you play any two of these notes together, you sound good when you are playing against a G chord.

I am not going into every combination here, but I will point out the ones I hear played most on recordings. These are very useful to practice.

Example 47
Common G Major Chord Double Stops #1



Example 48 has example 47 in music and tablature.

Example 48

Common G Major Chord Double Stops #1

Line 1: Treble clef, common time signature 'c'. Staff 1: G-B (first and second lines), G-D (second and third lines), G-E (third and fourth lines). Staff 2: Fret numbers: 0/4, 5/7, 9/12.

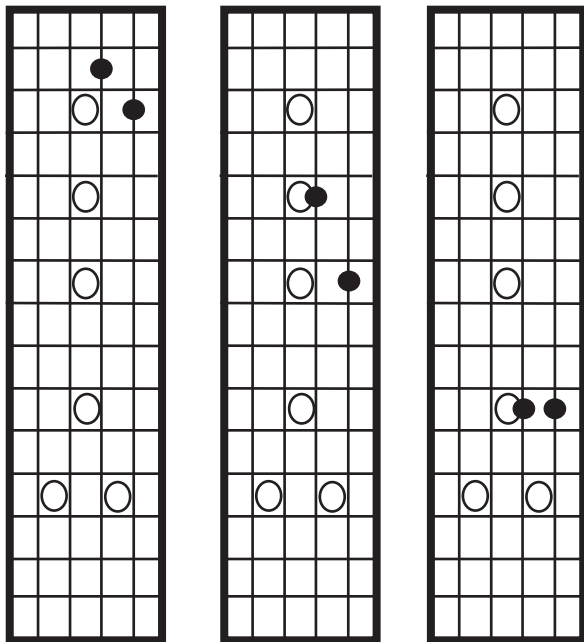
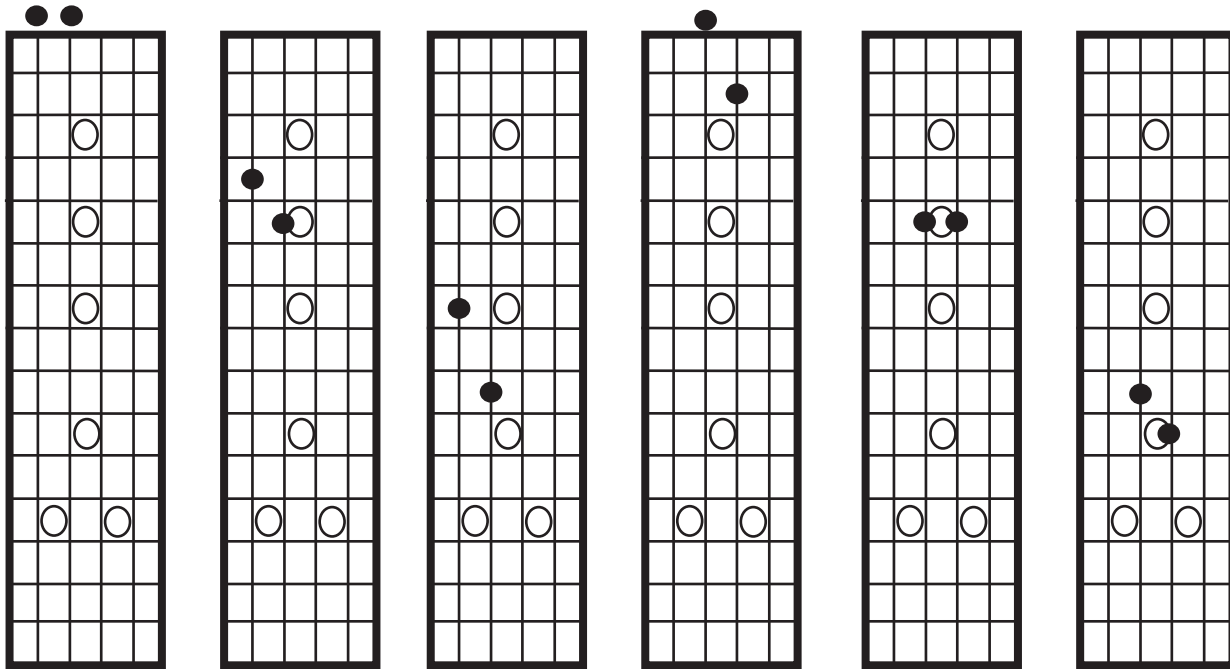
Line 2: Treble clef. Staff 1: G-B (second and third lines), G-D (third and fourth lines), G-E (fourth and fifth lines). Staff 2: Fret numbers: 2/5, 5/9, 10/12.

Line 3: Treble clef. Staff 1: G-B (third and fourth lines), G-D (fourth and fifth lines), G-E (fifth and sixth lines). Staff 2: Fret numbers: 3/5, 7/10, 10/14.

Did you notice that the last double stop in each line and the first double stop in the next line are the same sound? They are just the same notes played in different locations.

More common G chord double stops are shown in examples 49 and 50.

Example 49
Common G Major Chord Double Stops #2



Example 50

Common G Major Chord Double Stops #2

First system of musical notation for Example 50. The treble clef is in common time (C). The first staff shows three double stops: G4-B4, G4-D5, and G4-F#5. The second staff shows the corresponding fret numbers: 0-0, 5-4, and 9-7.

Second system of musical notation for Example 50. It begins with a measure rest labeled '4'. The first staff shows three double stops: G4-B4, G4-D5, and G4-F#5. The second staff shows the corresponding fret numbers: 2-0, 5-5, and 10-9.

Third system of musical notation for Example 50. It begins with a measure rest labeled '7'. The first staff shows three double stops: G4-B4, G4-D5, and G4-F#5. The second staff shows the corresponding fret numbers: 3-2, 7-5, and 10-10.

Once again, did you notice that the last double stop in each line and the first double stop in the next line are the same sound? They are just the same notes played in different locations on the fingerboard.

In all the double stops shown in examples 47 - 50 the double stops are either one chord tone apart (examples 47 and 48) or two chord tones apart (examples 49 and 50). These tend to be the strongest sounding double stops, so therefore are used the most. Don't let that stop you from trying any other combination of notes on page 68 (where we charted out all the notes in a G chord in the first 15 frets). Use what sounds good to YOUR ear!

How could we use these in a solo? Example 51 has a solo for "Hand Me Down My Walking Cane" where we use double stops that are not part of the melody as well as ones that embellish the singing melody.

Example 51

Hand Me Down My Walking Cane

Mandolin Solo With Double Stops

G

Musical notation for measures 1-4, starting on a G chord. The piece is in one sharp (F#) and common time (C). The first staff shows the melody, and the second staff shows the mandolin accompaniment with fret numbers. The accompaniment features a mix of single notes and double stops.

D G

Musical notation for measures 5-8, starting on a D chord and moving to a G chord. The piece is in one sharp (F#). The first staff shows the melody, and the second staff shows the mandolin accompaniment with fret numbers. The accompaniment continues with double stops.

C G

Musical notation for measures 9-12, starting on a C chord and moving to a G chord. The piece is in one sharp (F#). The first staff shows the melody, and the second staff shows the mandolin accompaniment with fret numbers. The accompaniment continues with double stops.

D G

Musical notation for measures 13-16, starting on a D chord and moving to a G chord. The piece is in one sharp (F#). The first staff shows the melody, and the second staff shows the mandolin accompaniment with fret numbers. The accompaniment continues with double stops.

In measure 8, there is a G dominant seventh double stop, made by adding the note F. Theory tells us when we go from the I (G) chord to the IV (C) chord, we can use a dominant seventh sound to do this, thus the added F note.

This chapter has shown us a method of learning where double stops are on the fingerboard. This method is reviewed below. Go through this for all the chords you play (major, minor, dominant seventh) in any key you need to play. Eventually learn all 12 keys!

To find double stops for any chord:

- 1) Chart out all notes for a chord on a fingerboard chart.**
- 2) Find the most common double stops. This is where the notes are one chord tone apart or two chord tones apart.**
- 3) Play all possibilities and learn the ones you like the sound of best.**

Chapter 8

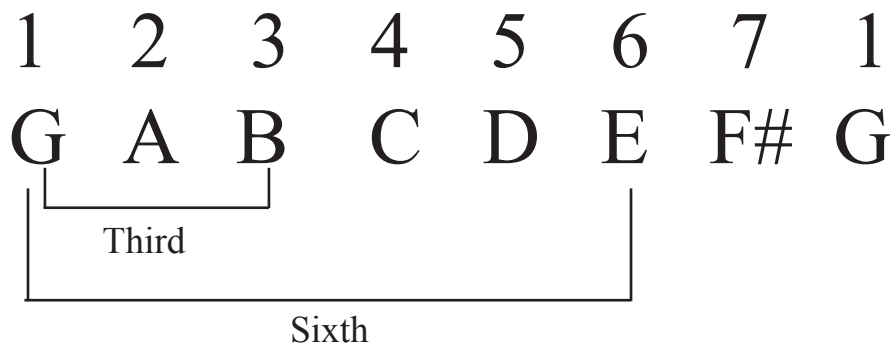
Double Stop Scales In Thirds And Sixths

Another common usage of double stops are scales. We can take any two notes from a scale and advance up the scale with each note while playing double stops. In Bluegrass, the most common double stops scales are **thirds** and **sixths**.

A little theory here. If I play a G major scale, I will play the notes G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, and G. The first note of the scale is G, the second note is A, the third note is B and so on. The distance between G and B is three scale notes, or a third in the scale. This is where these number terms come from. A sixth would be from G to E. Confirm this in Example 52.

Example 52

Notes in the G Major Scale



To find a scale in sixths, take the lowest note you can play in a key on the mandolin (quite often it is G), then add the note that is a sixth higher. Then you advance one note up the scale for each note in the double stop.

Let's do this for the key of G, example 53. We start with a sixth double stop, G and E. Notice after the first double stop, we just take each note up one place in the scale to make the next double stop, A and F#. The distance between the notes is always six scale notes.

Example 53

Double Stops In Sixths

G Major Scale

Musical notation for Example 53, first system. It shows a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The staff contains six measures of double stops in sixths. The notes are G4, B4, C5, D5, E5, and F#5. Below the staff is a TAB line with fret numbers: 0, 2, 4, 5, 7, 5.

Musical notation for Example 53, second system. It continues the G major scale with double stops in sixths. The notes are G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, and E6. Below the staff is a TAB line with fret numbers: 5, 4, 7, 5, 2, 0, 3, 2, 5, 3, 7, 5.

Now look at scales in thirds, example 54.

Example 54

Double Stops In Thirds

G Major Scale

Musical notation for Example 54, first system. It shows a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The staff contains six measures of double stops in thirds. The notes are G4, B4, C5, D5, E5, and F#5. Below the staff is a TAB line with fret numbers: 0, 4, 2, 5, 4, 7, 5, 9, 0, 4, 2, 5.

Musical notation for Example 54, second system. It continues the G major scale with double stops in thirds. The notes are G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, and E6. Below the staff is a TAB line with fret numbers: 3, 7, 5, 9, 0, 3, 2, 5, 3, 7, 5, 9, 7, 10.

Eventually you should do learn the thirds and sixth double stops for all the keys in which you play.

Where can these be used? If we were playing “Blue Ridge Cabin Home” in the key of G, the chords would be G for 2 measures, C for 2 measures and D for 2 measures. We could play moving double stops for each of these chords, as in example 55.

Example 55 G, C and D Chord Double Stops

The image shows two systems of musical notation for guitar. The first system is for chords G and C. The second system is for chords D and G. Each system consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). Below the staff is a guitar tablature with two lines (T and B). The notation shows moving double stops for each chord, with specific fret numbers indicated in the tablature.

System 1: G and C Chords

- Chord G:** Treble clef, F# key signature, common time. Treble staff shows a sequence of double stops: G3-B3, G3-A3, G3-B3, G3-A3, G3-B3, G3-A3. Tablature: 3 3 3 | 5 5 5 | 7 7 7 | 7 7 7 | 7 7 7 | 7 7 7.
- Chord C:** Treble clef, F# key signature, common time. Treble staff shows a sequence of double stops: C4-E4, C4-F#4, C4-E4, C4-F#4, C4-E4, C4-F#4. Tablature: 3 3 3 | 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 | 0 0 0.

System 2: D and G Chords

- Chord D:** Treble clef, F# key signature, common time. Treble staff shows a sequence of double stops: D4-F#4, D4-E4, D4-F#4, D4-E4, D4-F#4, D4-E4. Tablature: 5 5 5 | 7 7 7 | 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 | 2 2 2.
- Chord G:** Treble clef, F# key signature, common time. Treble staff shows a sequence of double stops: G3-B3, G3-A3, G3-B3, G3-A3, G3-B3, G3-A3. Tablature: 7 7 7 | 5 5 5 | 3 3 3 | 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 | 2 2 2.

In example 55, the rhythms are very simple. You could do any number of rhythms to make it more interesting. The double stops, however, fit nicely.

Example 56 has a phrase used by Bill Monroe on a number of Monroe Brother’s recordings. It has scale in thirds double stops with one extra thrown in. The double stop section transposes to any key very well. Bill played it often in many keys.

Example 56

Monroe Style Ending Phrase

G D G

T	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2
A	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	5
B																	

Any of these scale double stops or 2 note of the chord double stops (as studied in chapter 7) make excellent backup fill material. Put on a CD of your favorite band and play along behind the vocals using some of these. Just be sure to listen! If you feel you are in the vocal range, move your double stops higher or lower until the vocals come through very clear. Soon you will get the feel of fitting in well.

1) Learn double stop scales in thirds and sixths in all the common keys.

Chapter 9

Fluid Double Stops In All Keys

One of your goals with double stops may be to be fluid in their use for any song in any key. Here is one method to attain this goal.

- 1) Take one song. Learn the melody in all keys.**
- 2) Find the double stops that are one chord tone higher.**
- 3) Find the double stops that are two chord tones lower.**
- 4) Learn the double stop scale in thirds in this key.**
- 5) Learn the double stop scale in sixths in this key.**
- 6) Learn a solo for this song in this key.**
- 7) Improvise MANY solos on this song in this key using all above items.**
- 8) Repeat all steps with other songs.**

With apologies to Connor Hutteball, let's do this with "Worried Man Blues". We will just go through the keys of G, A and B (it's up to you to do the rest), but you will get the idea how this works. Start in the key of G with the melody, example 57.

Example 57

Worried Man Blues - Key of G

G

Musical notation for Example 57, measures 1-4. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The notation includes a treble clef and a guitar tablature below. The tablature shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B.

Measure	T	A	B
1		0	0
2		0	0
3		0	0
4		2	5
5		0	5
6		2	2
7		2	2
8		0	5

C

G

Musical notation for Example 57, measures 5-8. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The notation includes a treble clef and a guitar tablature below. The tablature shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B.

Measure	T	A	B
5		2	2
6		2	2
7		2	4
8		5	2
9		5	0
10		5	2
11		0	5
12		0	0

Musical notation for Example 57, measures 9-12. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The notation includes a treble clef and a guitar tablature below. The tablature shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B.

Measure	T	A	B
9		0	0
10		0	0
11		2	5
12		0	5
13		2	2
14		2	2
15		0	5
16		5	2
17		2	2
18		2	2

D

G

Musical notation for Example 57, measures 13-16. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The notation includes a treble clef and a guitar tablature below. The tablature shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B.

Measure	T	A	B
13		0	0
14		2	2
15		2	2
16		0	5

Example 58 has the double stops one chord tone higher.

Example 58

Worried Man Blues - Key of G

G

Musical notation for Example 58, measures 1-4. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), common time signature (C). The first staff shows a melody of quarter notes. The second staff shows guitar fretting for strings T, A, and B. Chord G is indicated above the first measure.

C

G

Musical notation for Example 58, measures 5-8. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), common time signature (C). The first staff shows a melody of quarter notes. The second staff shows guitar fretting for strings T, A, and B. Chords C and G are indicated above the first and fifth measures respectively.

Musical notation for Example 58, measures 9-12. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), common time signature (C). The first staff shows a melody of quarter notes. The second staff shows guitar fretting for strings T, A, and B.

D

G

Musical notation for Example 58, measures 13-16. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), common time signature (C). The first staff shows a melody of quarter notes. The second staff shows guitar fretting for strings T, A, and B. Chords D and G are indicated above the first and fifth measures respectively.

Example 59 has the double stops two chord tones lower.

Example 59

Worried Man Blues - Key of G

G

C

G

D

G

As seen in chapter 8, example 54 has the double stops scale in thirds, key of G.

Example 54

Double Stops In Thirds

G Major Scale

0/4 2/5 4/7 5/9 0/4 2/5

3/7 5/9 0/3 2/5 3/7 5/9 7/10

Example 53 has the double stops scale in sixths.

Example 53

Double Stops In Sixths

G Major Scale

2/0 4/2 5/4 7/5 2/0 3/2

5/4 7/5 2/0 3/2 5/3 7/5

Now a solo, example 60.

Example 60 Worried Man Blues Solo - Key of G

G

5

C

G

9

D

13

Now move to the key of A. Example 61 has the melody.

Example 61

Worried Man Blues - Key of A

A

Musical notation for Example 61, measures 1-4. The key signature is A major (two sharps). The time signature is common time (C). The notation consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The melody in the treble staff is: A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter). The TAB staff shows the following fret numbers: 2, 2, 2, 2, 4, 0, 2, 4, 4, 4, 2, 0, 0.

D

A

Musical notation for Example 61, measures 5-8. The key signature is A major. The notation consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The melody in the treble staff is: D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), C3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), F#2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter). The TAB staff shows the following fret numbers: 4, 4, 4, 6, 0, 4, 0, 2, 0, 4, 2, 2.

Musical notation for Example 61, measures 9-12. The key signature is A major. The notation consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The melody in the treble staff is: D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), C3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), F#2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter). The TAB staff shows the following fret numbers: 2, 2, 2, 4, 0, 2, 4, 4, 4, 2, 0, 4, 4, 4.

E

A

Musical notation for Example 61, measures 13-16. The key signature is A major. The notation consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The melody in the treble staff is: D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), C3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), F#2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter). The TAB staff shows the following fret numbers: 2, 2, 4, 4, 4, 2, 0.

Example 62 has the double stops one chord tone higher.

Example 62

Worried Man Blues - Key of A

A

5

9

13

Detailed description: This is a guitar tablature for a blues piece in the key of A. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble clef staff and a six-string guitar staff. The first system (measures 1-4) starts with a whole note A chord, followed by a half note D chord, and then two measures of a whole note A chord. The second system (measures 5-8) starts with a half note D chord, followed by a half note A chord, and then two measures of a whole note A chord. The third system (measures 9-12) starts with a whole note A chord, followed by a half note D chord, and then two measures of a whole note A chord. The fourth system (measures 13-16) starts with a whole note E chord, followed by a half note A chord, and then two measures of a whole note A chord. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Example 63 has the double stops two chords tone lower.

Example 63

Worried Man Blues - Key of A

A

D

A

5

9

E

A

13

Example 64 has the double stops scale in thirds, key of A.

Example 64

Double Stops In Thirds

A Major Scale

Example 65 has the double stops scale in sixths, key of A.

Example 65

Double Stops In Sixths

A Major Scale

Example 66 is a solo in A.

Example 66

Worried Man Blues Solo - Key of A

A

5

9

13

E

Example 67 has the melody in B.

Example 67

Worried Man Blues - Key of B

B

Musical notation for measures 1-4. Treble clef, key signature of B major (three sharps), common time. Bass clef shows fret numbers. Chord B is indicated above the staff.

4	4	4 4 6	2 4	6 6 6 4	2 2
---	---	-------	-----	---------	-----

E

B

Musical notation for measures 5-8. Treble clef, key signature of B major. Bass clef shows fret numbers. Chords E and B are indicated above the staff.

6 6 6 8	2 6	2 4 2 6	4 4
---------	-----	---------	-----

Musical notation for measures 9-12. Treble clef, key signature of B major. Bass clef shows fret numbers.

4 4 4 6	2 4	6 6 6 4	2 6 6 6
---------	-----	---------	---------

F#

B

Musical notation for measures 13-16. Treble clef, key signature of B major. Bass clef shows fret numbers. Chords F# and B are indicated above the staff.

4 4	6 6 6 4	2	
-----	---------	---	--

Example 68 has the double stops one chord tone higher.

Example 68

Worried Man Blues - Key of B

B

Musical notation for measures 1-4. Treble clef, key signature of B major (two sharps), common time. The bass line shows fret numbers for the left hand.

E

B

Musical notation for measures 5-8. Treble clef, key signature of B major. The bass line shows fret numbers for the left hand.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. Treble clef, key signature of B major. The bass line shows fret numbers for the left hand.

F#

B

Musical notation for measures 13-16. Treble clef, key signature of B major. The bass line shows fret numbers for the left hand.

Example 69 has the double stops two chord tones lower.

Example 69

Worried Man Blues - Key of B

B

Measures 1-4: Treble clef, key signature of B major (two sharps), common time. The melody consists of eighth notes and quarter notes. The bass line includes fingerings for the thumb (T), index (A), and middle (B) fingers.

Measures 5-8: Treble clef, key signature of B major. Measure 5 is marked with a '5' above the staff. Chord changes to E major in measure 5 and back to B major in measure 7. The bass line includes fingerings for the thumb (T), index (A), and middle (B) fingers.

Measures 9-12: Treble clef, key signature of B major. The melody continues with eighth notes and quarter notes. The bass line includes fingerings for the thumb (T), index (A), and middle (B) fingers.

Measures 13-16: Treble clef, key signature of B major. Measure 13 is marked with a '13' above the staff. Chord changes to F# major in measure 13 and back to B major in measure 14. The melody concludes with a whole note chord in measure 16. The bass line includes fingerings for the thumb (T), index (A), and middle (B) fingers.

Example 70 has the double stops scale in thirds, key of B.

Example 70

Double Stops In Thirds

B Major Scale

First system of Example 70: Treble clef, key signature of B major (F#, C#, G#), common time. Seven measures of double stops in thirds. Fingering: T (1), A (4), B (4) for the first measure.

Second system of Example 70: Treble clef, key signature of B major (F#, C#, G#), common time. Seven measures of double stops in thirds. Fingering: 6/9, 0/4, 2/6, 4/7, 6/9, 7/11, 9/13.

Example 71 has the double stops scale in thirds, key of B.

Example 71

Double Stops In Sixths

B Major Scale

First system of Example 71: Treble clef, key signature of B major (F#, C#, G#), common time. Seven measures of double stops in sixths. Fingering: T (2), A (1), B (1) for the first measure.

Second system of Example 71: Treble clef, key signature of B major (F#, C#, G#), common time. Seven measures of double stops in sixths. Fingering: 7/6, 2/1, 4/2, 6/4, 7/6, 9/7, 11/9.

Example 72 has solo in the key of B.

Example 72

Worried Man Blues Solo - Key of B

B

Musical notation for measures 1-4 in the key of B. The top staff shows a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature. The bottom staff shows a guitar fretboard with strings T, A, and B labeled. Fingering numbers are provided for each measure.

E

B

Musical notation for measures 5-8. Measure 5 is in the key of E (two sharps). Measures 6-7 are in the key of B (three sharps). Measure 8 returns to the key of B. Fingering numbers are provided for each measure.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. Measures 9-10 are in the key of E (two sharps). Measures 11-12 are in the key of B (three sharps). Fingering numbers are provided for each measure.

F#

Musical notation for measures 13-16 in the key of F# (three sharps). The top staff shows a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps. The bottom staff shows a guitar fretboard with strings T, A, and B labeled. Fingering numbers are provided for each measure.

It is my suggestion you find all of the above in all the keys you need to play in. Eventually learn A, Bb, B, C, D, E, F and G, the common Bluegrass keys. Best of luck!!!

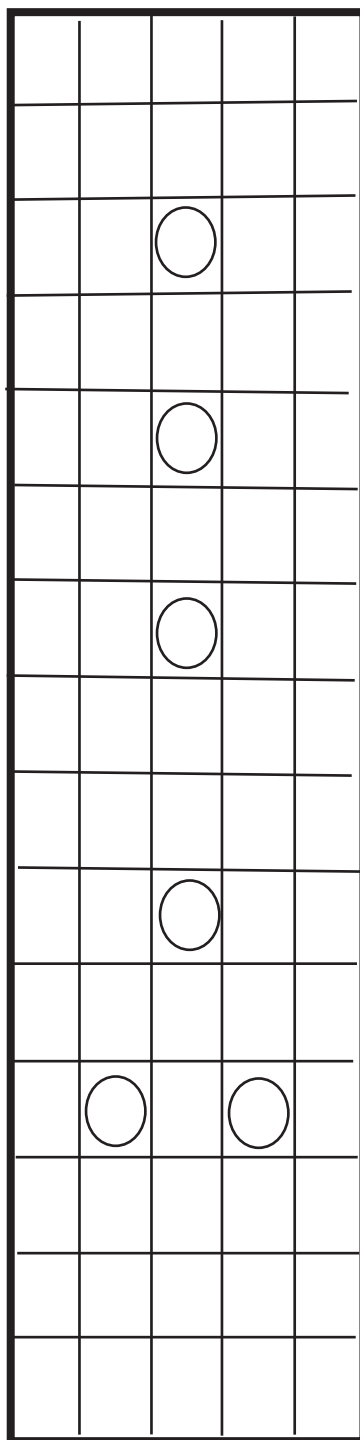
Appendix 1

Mandolin Note Names

Fret	String Name			
#	G	D	A	E
1	G#/Ab	D#/Eb	A#/Bb	F
2	A	E	B	F#/Gb
3	A#/Bb	F	C	G
4	B	F#/Gb	C#/Db	G#/Ab
5	C	G	D	A
6	C#/Db	G#/Ab	D#/Eb	A#/Bb
7	D	A	E	B
8	D#/Eb	A#/Bb	F	C
9	E	B	F#/Gb	C#/Db
10	F	C	G	D
11	F#/Gb	C#/Db	G#/Ab	D#/Eb
12	G	D	A	E
13	G#/Ab	D#/Eb	A#/Bb	F
14	A	E	B	F#/Gb
15	A#/Bb	F	C	G
16	B	F#/Gb	C#/Db	G#/Ab
17	C	G	D	A

Appendix 2

Blank Fingerboard Chart



Appendix 3

Books by Pete Martin

Available at Amazon.com or www.petimarpress.com

Easy Music Theory For Fiddle and Mandolin

A good introduction for players who know no theory but want to learn. Music and tab.

Mandolin and Fiddle Improvisation Using the Chord Tone Scale

Looks at developing ideas for improvising in a non Jazz setting (Bluegrass, Fiddle tunes, etc.), Music and tab.

Bluegrass Mandolin: Creating and Using Double Stops

How to get get double stops into your Bluegrass playing.

Oldtime Tunes for Fiddle and Mandolin, Volume 1

50 common fiddle tunes. Music and tab.

Oldtime Tunes for Fiddle and Mandolin, Volume 2

50 less common fiddle tunes. Music and tab.

Texas Style Fiddle Tunes for Mandolin

Tunes from this great fiddlin' style arranged for mandolin players. Music and tab.

Bebop Mandolin: Target Notes and Chromatic Approaches

Explains Target and Approach notes and how to get this fundamental Bebop sound into your improvising. Music and tab.

Bebop Scales for Mandolin and Violin

Learn and practice the scales commonly used by Jazz players in the Bebop era.

Jazz Chording for Mandolin

A comprehensive look at chords for Jazz (Swing, Bebop, Post Bebop) Mandolin

Texas Style Fiddle Transcriptions, Volume 1

21 note for note versions as played by top Texas style fiddlers. Music notation only.

Texas Style Fiddle Transcriptions, Volume 2

18 more note for note versions as played by top Texas style fiddlers. Music notation only.

Benny Thomasson Fiddle Transcriptions

16 tunes as played by the legendary Texas fiddler. Music notation only.