

# GUITAR RIFFS

**YOU CAN PLAY TODAY**



*10 Classic Guitar Riffs that are actually EASY to play!*

# RIFFS YOU CAN PLAY TODAY

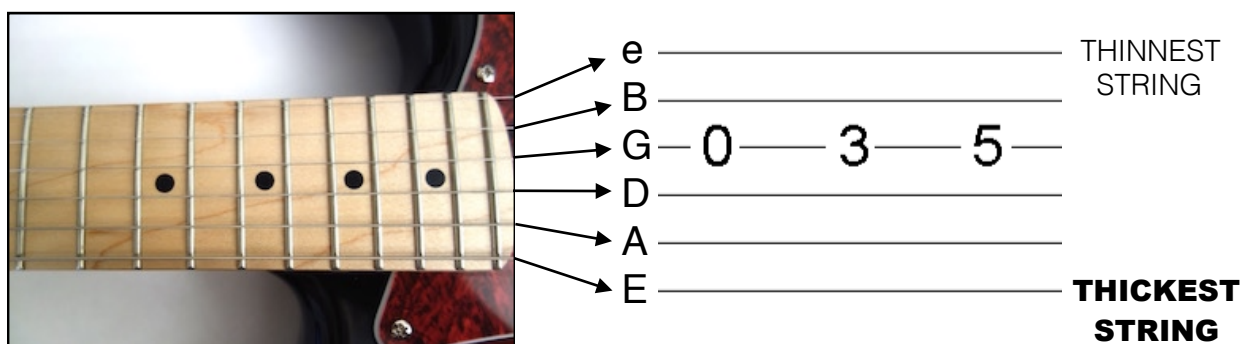
## Welcome to Riffs You Can Play Today!

The riffs in this book use only one string at a time, and do not require any techniques to play, other than fretting and picking individual notes. All of the riffs can be learned first on the string you find easiest, before moving it to the string indicated.

These riffs sound good and are achievable even for a complete beginner, and if you have never played before, an ideal way to get started and start having some fun quickly.

We hope you enjoy them. If you have any questions, send us an email at [hello@frets-on-fire.com](mailto:hello@frets-on-fire.com).

## How to read the numbers you see on each page



The **lines** going across the page show the **strings** of your guitar.

The **numbers** tell you what **frets** you need to play, and the line they are written on tells you what string to use.

- 0 = play the string on its own
- 1 = play the 1st fret
- 2 = play the 2nd fret
- 3 = play the 3rd fret... and so on!

# CREAM

## Sunshine of Your Love

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E  
 B  
 G  
 D — 12 — 12 — 10 — 12 — — — 7 — — — 6 — — — 5 — — — 0 — 3 — 0 —  
 A  
 F

When learning something new on guitar, it's good to break it down into smaller chunks. One chunk can be as little as a few notes. For example, in Sunshine Of Your Love, the first chunk would be 12-12-10-12, the second would be 7-6-5, and the final chunk would be the 0-3-0 at the end. Practice each chunk separately, then put them together once you're confident with each part. This will make your practice more efficient, and help you learn faster!

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E	
B	
G	0 — 3 — 5      0 — 3 — 6 — 5      0 — 3 — 5      3 — 0
D	
A	
F	

## 4 of 13



## BLACK SABBATH IRON MAN

**Written by:** Iommi, Osbourne, Butler, Ward

**Release Date:** September 1970, on the album *Paranoid*

Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi lost the tips of two fingers in a factory accident aged 17, but was inspired to continue playing after hearing jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt (who had suffered a similar injury). A blues player at heart, his heavy tone, and dark, lumbering riffs in Black Sabbath were arguably the birth of the Heavy Metal sound.



Black Sabbath, from left to right: Geezer Butler, Tony Iommi, Bill Ward and Ozzy Osbourne.

### Iron Man

play on the  
**A string** →

e														
B														
G														
D														
A	2	5	5	7	7	10	9	10	9	10	5	5	7	7
E														

### Quick Tip #3 - Practice Makes Perfect?

We've all heard the saying "*Practice Makes Perfect*", but there's one very important word we need to add to that: "**Perfect** Practice Makes Perfect". Your fingers get better at whatever they repeat. This means that when you repeat mistakes, you literally train your fingers to do the wrong thing - in other words, you *get better at getting it wrong!* If you find you consistently a mistake at a certain point, go back to the start of the riff (or the chunk) and work on the problem until you can reliably do it right.

## AC/DC

### WHOLE LOTTA ROSIE

**Written by:** Angus Young, Bon Scott, Malcolm Young

**Release Date:** March 1977, on the album *Let There Be Rock*

Born in Scotland, brothers Angus and Malcolm Young moved to Australia at a young age where they formed the legendary guitar partnership behind AC/DC. Angus often takes the limelight with his incendiary solos, but it was Malcolm's tight and punchy riffs that powered the band's heavy blues-rock sound.

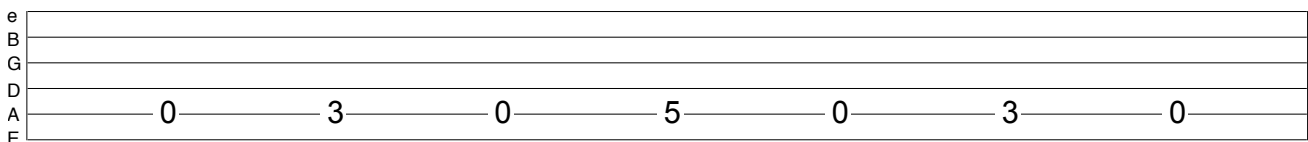
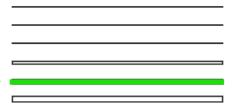


ACDC lead guitarist Angus Young

#### Whole Lotta Rosie

play on the

A string →



#### Quick Tip #4 - Need For Speed

It can be tempting, but don't try to practice too fast. What is too fast? If you're consistently making mistakes, or feel like you're playing 'catch up' with the song, then you're going too fast. The right speed to practice something is where you can comfortably repeat it without mistakes. This builds 'muscle memory' - when your fingers are so certain of what they need to do that you don't even need to consciously think. Speed is a byproduct of **accuracy** and **efficient playing technique**. Focus on these things, and speed will soon come!

## PETER GUNN (THEME) BLUES BROTHERS

**Written by:** Henry Mancini

**Release Date:** 1959, on the album *The Music From Peter Gunn*

Originally written by film composer Henry Mancini (who also wrote the famous 'Pink Panther' theme!), Peter Gunn was the theme song to a TV series of the same name. It was re-recorded by rock n' roller Duane Eddy in the same year, then re-popularised years later in 1980 in the film *The Blues Brothers*. This is a great bluesy guitar riff that repeats the whole way through the song underneath the wailing saxophone.

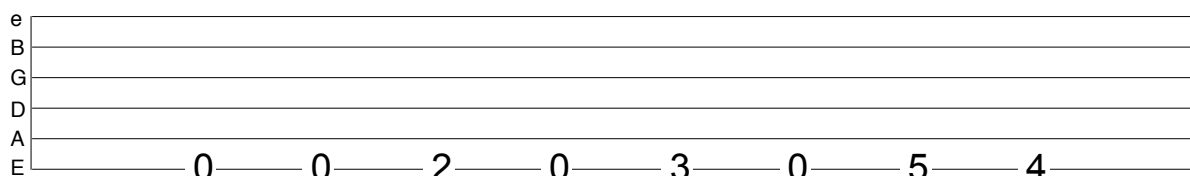


play on the

E string →



### Peter Gunn Theme - in the key of E



#### Quick Tip #5 - Don't Get Hung Up

Results don't happen overnight, so it is important to keep working on something until you get it. At the same time, the skills you gain while working on a totally different thing will often create a breakthrough with the very thing you have been trying to perfect. Strike a balance between sticking with things and trying out new things. Something doesn't need to be 'perfect' before you can move on. Things will not become 'perfect' until a bit later down the line anyway, once your skills have had the chance to develop in other ways. Each riff in this book will help the other riffs in surprising ways.

## YOU REALLY GOT ME THE KINKS

**Written by:** Ray Davies

**Release Date:** August 1964 as a single, later included on the album *Kinks*

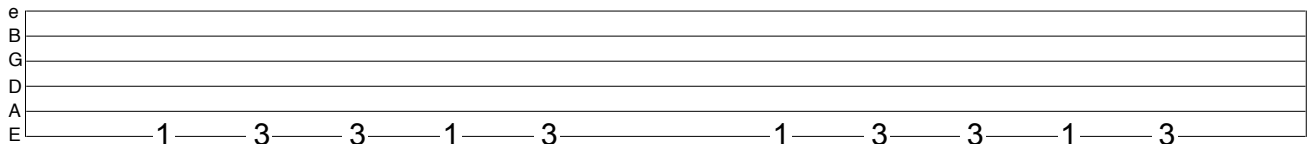
Kinks guitarist Ray Davies was an early pioneer of the overdriven guitar sound. Unhappy with the tones he was getting from the amps of the day, Davies punctured his speaker cone to give it a rougher and more distorted sound. "You Really Got Me" is a very influential rock riff, and was famously covered by Van Halen years later.



The Kinks in 1966, from left to right: Ray Davies, Dave Davies, Mick Avory and Pete Quaife

### You Really Got Me

play on the  
E string →



### Quick Tip #6 - Little and Often

When it comes to practice, regular shorter sessions are better than infrequent longer sessions. For example, it's far better to practice for 10 minutes each day than it is to do one hour at the weekend. Muscle Memory builds up in small increments, so daily repetition is the best way to build it up quickly. Don't worry if you can't always practice every single day, but try to be as consistent as you can. If you fall out of the habit for a few days or weeks, don't beat yourself up about it - just dust yourself off and get back to it as soon as you can!



## NO ONE LIKE YOU SCORPIONS

**Written by:** Rudolf Schenker, Klaus Meine

**Release Date:** April 1982 on the album *Blackout*

German rock band Scorpions was formed in 1965 by brothers Rudolf and Michael Schenker. Best known for their signature song *Rock You Like A Hurricane*, the Scorpions are masters of catchy riffs and epic solos. *No One Like You* is another heavy rock stadium anthem firmly in Scorpions tradition.



Scorpions guitarist Rudolf Schenker

### No One Like You

play on the  
**E string** →



x3

then play

e											
B											
G											
D											
A											
E	5	5	1	1	3	3	1	0			

### Quick Tip #7 - Out of Sight, Out of Mind

Make it easy for yourself to take advantage of those little moments of time during the day or evening by leaving your guitar out, ideally in plain sight, and easily accessible. Putting your guitar away in its case each time you practice makes it much harder to get started next time, and wastes time when you do.

You don't need a fancy music room, but make a place for the guitar at home (the corner of a room will do), and consider investing in a low cost fold-up guitar stand so that it's easy to grab when inspiration strikes.

## MISSION IMPOSSIBLE (THEME) VARIOUS

**Written by:** Lalo Schifrin

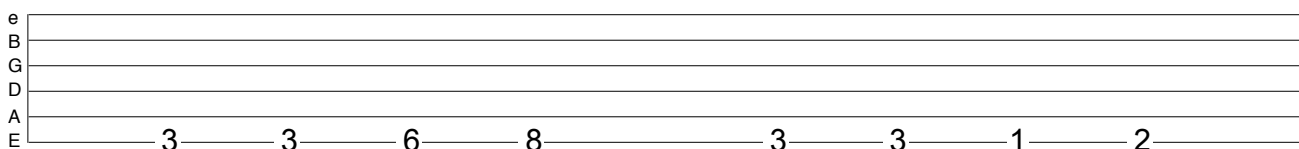
**Release Date:** 1967

Mission Impossible is one of those riffs you could tap without any notes, and it would still be immediately clear what it is. Despite not being written originally by a guitar band, this is a great example of a riff - a short combination of a few notes and a rhythm, that repeats throughout the entire song. There has always been a rock/metal edge to the MI theme which is only accentuated in the re-recordings by U2 and Limp Bizkit for the 1996 and 2000 films.



### Mission Impossible Theme

play on the  
E string →



### Quick Tip #8 - About Your Sound

There are many things that go into a professional guitar recording - amplifiers, pedals, effects, studio production techniques and more. Often, guitars will even be recorded multiple times playing the same or different things to create a thick, rich sound ('multitracking'). So don't be put off if your guitar doesn't sound exactly like the original recording. Do your best to replicate what you hear, but bear in mind that it's almost impossible to reproduce some things 100% perfectly. Aim to capture the 'spirit' of the riff, and remember - playing with conviction is worth infinitely more than any piece of equipment!

## EYE OF THE TIGER SURVIVOR

**Written by:** Frankie Sullivan, Jim Peterik

**Release Date:** June 1982, on the album *Eye of the Tiger*

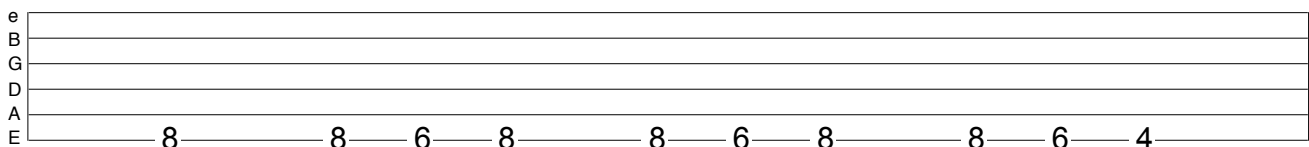
This iconic riff is best known for featuring in the Rocky Balboa movies. The story goes that Sylvester Stallone had heard another Survivor song - *Poor Man's Son* - and wanted a song somewhere between this and *Another One Bites The Dust* by Queen for the movie. The result was Eye of the Tiger, which topped charts around the world thanks to its punchy and energetic main riff.



### Eye of the Tiger

play on the

**E string** →



### Quick Tip #9 - Use Your Fingers

In the very beginning it can make something feel easier to use just 1 or 2 fingers to play it. The flip side is that this results in a lot of jumping around the fretboard to hit notes that are further away. The fingers that are smaller and further away from your thumb are harder to control at first (especially the pinky!). However, these fingers allow you to stretch much further and not need to move around nearly as much. Get used to using your other fingers as early as you can, and you'll soon find you can do a lot more!

# SEVEN NATION ARMY

## THE WHITE STRIPES

**Written by:** Jack White

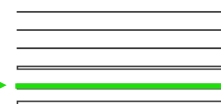
**Release Date:** April 2003, on the album *Elephant*

The White Stripes are a garage rock duo known for their stripped-down raw blues sound and distinctive red, white and black colour scheme. Jack White sings, plays guitar and mimics the bass using an 'octave' pedal, while Meg White is the drummer. Jack White is a fan of using old, quirky guitars and vintage recording gear to get that lo-fi sound. The band shot to fame with Seven Nation Army's singalong riff.

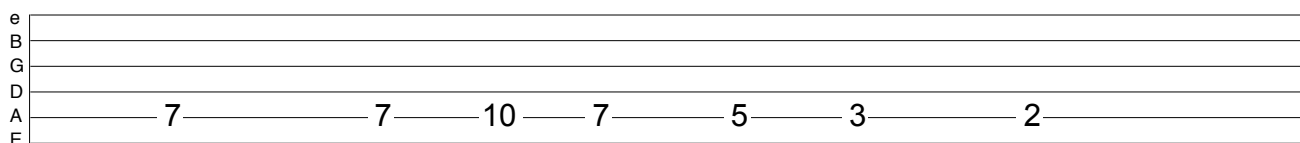


Jack and Meg White

play on the  
**A string –**



## Seven Nation Army



## Quick Tip #10 - Get Help

Nobody is born being able to play guitar, and nobody becomes great at guitar all by themselves. Most of the musicians you listen to had lessons when they were young, and all of them learned from colleagues and other musical mentors throughout their lives. Having a great guitar teacher saves so much time and frustration, and helps you improve so much faster.



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