

NBN GUITAR

# ESSENTIALS PRIMER

FREE E-BOOK FOR BEGINNERS



*Joshua Rogers*



# THE JOY OF GUITAR

Explore the beauty of the guitar and your musical potential in a fun, engaging, and informative way.

## ABSTRACT

Learn how to play the guitar in a way that touches your heart & soul. Strum chords, pick famous melodies, dance with theory, play with others, and begin speaking the universal language of music through your guitar.

## NBN Guitar

The Joy of Guitar

# Introduction

*A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.” – Lao Tzu (Ancient Chinese Philosopher)*

When I started playing the guitar many years ago I had no idea that all these years later it would bring me to you today. I’m genuinely excited and I hope that this is the first step of many that you, your guitar, and I will take together.

My first lesson was horrific and it made me think my teacher hated me. My fingers ached; they refused to do what I wanted them to do. I had to borrow guitars for every lesson because I didn’t even have my own guitar; the other students seemed way better than me, and yet...I started to enjoy it. In spite of all of that I began to love playing or more accurately - trying to play.

I discovered that playing music made me appreciate it in an entirely different way than merely listening to it. Honestly, it felt like I’d found the unlock code to an esoteric world full of wonder and magic that was in plain sight but remained invisible to most – not unlike the train platform to Hogwarts in the Harry Potter movies.

I started to make new friends that played all kinds of instruments; we shared ideas; we wrote awful songs; we pretended to be rockstars into the wee small hours. I also found great joy just playing my guitar peacefully, alone in my room, while my family watched tv and ate snacks in the living room.

During this time I realised I was part of something. I wasn’t exactly sure what that something was, however I felt like I had started a very special journey. I didn’t care that I didn’t know where I was going and it didn’t matter. I was just happy to be along for the ride with my trusty guitar as sidekick and confidante.

Life is a journey, and learning guitar is a journey within that journey. Our lives are full of ups, downs, trials, tribulations, circles and squares, yet I’m beyond grateful that the guitar has been a refrain in the song that is my life’s journey. Every now and again when I turn on my metronome I ponder how it may have clicked off the many beats of my life if I hadn’t decided to see what this piece of wood and strings was all about.

My name is Joshua Rogers - welcome to the NBN Guitar Course for You!

Grab your guitar – your journey is about to begin.

## Course Overview

This course is comprised of modules. Within each module are lessons and exercises that are numbered and named for easy reference.

You can find and navigate to any course content in this eBook quickly and easily by clicking on a module, lesson or exercise in the table of contents.

Each module begins with an overview where I explain what you will learn in the module. Modules are usually comprised of instructional videos, music scores, quizzes, and exercises aimed at gradually building and strengthening your technique, theory and mental fortitude.

I strongly recommend that you finish one module before proceeding to the next, otherwise you may find yourself struggling unnecessarily with material that is too advanced which leads to frustration, which in turn hinders progress.

The course has been designed to introduce you to guitar using classical guitar fundamentals. It avoids rushing in with lofty promises of teaching you to play songs because that approach often ends in tears. Beginners feel compelled to play exactly like the song, only to discover their efforts are futile, progress slows, and in the worst case they give up entirely.

Instead, you and I are going to play the long game. We trade short-term thrills for long-term gains and ability. Crafting technique and theory over time resulting in a consummate guitarist that is armed with the techniques and theoretical knowledge to confidently make music alone and with collaboratively.

During this course you will learn how to:

- Strum and pick with your fingers
- Recognise the symbols used to name the fingers on both hands
- Name all the strings on the guitar
- Understand two different time signatures
- Count different rhythms, name notes, dotted notes, and their values
- Read tablature and develop an awareness of music notation
- Recognise and understand the effect of sharps and natural signs
- Play eight different chords and a chord progression that is used in thousands of songs
- Play Ode to Joy, Malagueña Facil, and the 12 Bar Blues in A
- Accompany and be accompanied by another player
- Interpret the meaning of several musical symbols and score indications
- Four different scales including G major, A Pentatonic Major, D Pentatonic Minor, and E Pentatonic Major

- Improvise and create your own solos using the A, D and E Pentatonic Scales
- Cope and deal with finger pain, lack of progress, information overload, poor motivation and more
- Use classical guitar techniques for both hands
- Communicate and share your experiences with like-minded people on their own journey's via the NBN Guitar Community Forum

All exercises and pieces or songs are played at 60bpm (sixty beats per minute). In classical terms this tempo is known as *Adagio* and it was chosen because it is considered neither too slow nor too fast.

Four or three clicks are played at the beginning of every exercise or song to set the tempo and to serve as an introduction before you are required to begin.

I estimate the course to take anywhere from two to four months to complete, based on completing either one or two modules every week.

## House Keeping & Essential Equipment

Below are some tips to help you get through the course in good time with minimal stress and interruptions:

- Get your guitar set up by a luthier or guitar technician
- Buy a metronome, guitar tuner, and a stand
- Keep your guitar in good condition
- Have a spare set of strings handy
- Keep snacks and a drink nearby
- Practice in a quiet tidy space
- Tell people your routine
- Minimise distractions

Links to the gear mentioned above are at the end of the eBook

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# Module 1

## Overview

In this module you and I are going to learn the nomenclature of the first three strings, the numbers assigned to the fingers on the fretting/fingering hand, the pros & cons of the three most common thumb positions of this hand, and how to read tablature.

## Lesson 1: Naming the First Three Strings

In this lesson we are going to learn the names & numbers of the first three strings on the guitar.

Knowing the names and numbers of the strings is beneficial because it allows us to communicate quickly & effectively when transferring information. An open string refers to a string that has no fingers placed upon it along the fretboard.

I recommend memorising these before moving on to the next lesson.

### *Exercise 1a: 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Open Strings*

I will play the exercise using my thumb to play each string:

- E, B, G
- 1, 2, 3
- 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>

Exercise 1: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Open Strings

0

Now it's your turn!

## Lesson 2: Abbreviations for the Picking/Strumming Fingers

Each finger on the picking/strumming hand has a name. The name of each digit along with its abbreviation is:

- Pulgar/Thumb (P/T)
- Index (i)
- Middle (m)
- Annular/Ring (a)
- Chiquito/Little finger (c/e)

The Spanish word for the thumb and little fingers are *pulgar* and *chiquito* respectively, and their appearance here may seem somewhat out of place, however the abbreviation *P* (not *T*) and *c* (not *l*) are ubiquitous in classical guitar scores. In modern music scores the letters *T* and *e* have become more commonplace. It should be noted that the *chiquito* finger is rarely used unless it is to play chords that have five or more notes.

### Lesson 3: Fretting/Fingering Hand Thumb Positions

The importance of the position of the fretting hand thumb is often overlooked when starting out on the guitar. This does not seem problematic at first, however this can come back to haunt us when we begin to learn more difficult chords and more complex music.

Therefore, I want you and I to take more time to understand the impact the three most thumb common thumb positions have on our playing, and why I favour one position in particular.

- *Grabber*. In this position the thumb loops over the top of the neck and it originates from grabbing the guitar and holding it by the neck. It feels extremely natural and comfortable
- *Thumbs Up*. In this position the thumb sticks up and protrudes above the neck of the guitar. It can also feel quite natural.
- *Unseen*. In this position the thumb is behind the neck and is virtually invisible when viewed from an audience’s perspective. Out of the three positions this is the position that feels most unnatural

Let us explore the pros & cons of each thumb position in more detail using the table below.

	<b>Comfort (Beginners)</b>	<b>Stretch</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>Grabber</b>	High	Worst	Good, especially when bending strings
<b>Thumbs Up</b>	Medium	Better	Bad, offers the least amount of versatility
<b>Unseen</b>	Medium/Low	Best	Best, except when bending strings

Playing the guitar can be quite an uncomfortable experience due to the strings and neck causing fingertip, hand, and wrist pain. We often tend to seek the path of least resistance which is why most guitarists love looping their thumb over the top of the

neck, however we can develop better technique from the beginning by trying to use the Unseen position wherever possible.

## Lesson 4: Basics of Tablature and Music Notation

Reading tablature and music notation is truly wondrous because it unlocks an esoteric world full of delightful music from different time periods and cultures. Although reading music & tablature is by no means necessary when playing the guitar, I want you and I to consider it as part of the journey rather than something separate and distinct.

### *Exercise 4a: Tablature Explanation*

Tablature has six lines that run horizontally across the page. At the beginning you can see the word TAB written vertically across six lines that run horizontally from left to right to inform you that this is the tablature system. Tablature uses these lines to represent strings and numbers on those lines to indicate which fret we should play on any given string. It is a beautiful and extremely intuitive system that is relatively easy to learn, enabling rapid acquisition of wonderful compositions and songs

I will play lesson 4a:

- 0 written on the top line = E open or String 1 open or 1<sup>st</sup> string open
- 0 written on the next line = B open or String 2 open or 2<sup>nd</sup> string open
- 0 written on the next line = G open or String 3 open or 3<sup>rd</sup> string open

Exercise 4a: Tablature Explanation

The image shows a musical score for Exercise 4a. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef in 4/4 time, showing three measures of music. The first measure has a quarter note on the 4th line (F4) with a '4' above it. The second measure has a quarter note on the 5th line (G4) with a '5' above it. The third measure has a quarter note on the 6th line (A4) with a '6' above it. The bottom staff is a tablature system with six lines labeled T, A, B, and three measures of '0' on the top line.

Now it's your turn!

### *Exercise 4b: Demonstrating Tablature using the G simple chord*

In this lesson I will play a G simple chord to demonstrate how to play a number other than 0 on a string. The number 3 is written on the E string. This means we play the note on the 3<sup>rd</sup> fret of the E (string 1, 1<sup>st</sup> string) like this. You can use any finger on your fretting hand to finger the note. Make sure you place your finger as close to the fret as possible.

Moving along we can see that the next two notes are the same as the notes we played in lesson 4a – B, followed by G.

### Exercise 4b: Demonstrating Tablature using the G chord

7 E 8 B 9 G 10 G (simple)

3 0 0 3 0 0

## Lesson 5: The 80:20 Rule

Pareto's Principle is a popular saying that is prominent in the business world. In essence it states that 80% of outcomes result from 20% of inputs. When it comes to applying that to guitar I find it looks something like this:

“ You'll find yourself spending 80 percent of your time on 20% of the song.”

In my experience it's more like 95% of your time on 5% of the song. Many songs and pieces of music have one or two annoying bars where you may find yourself struggling. Ways to get past these roadblocks will be discussed in upcoming modules so keep going!