

Here We Go

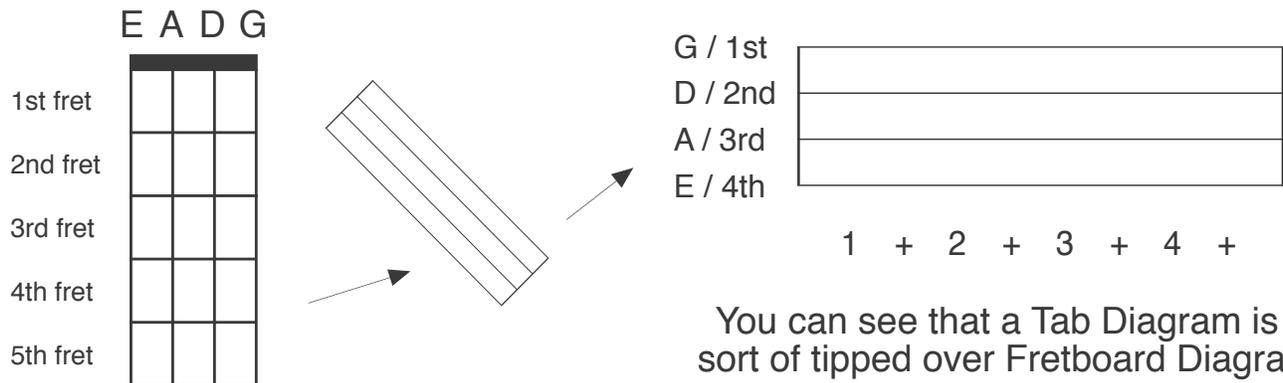
So, I am assuming you have access to a bass, or know how to contact a music store to get one. I have no opinion on the kind of bass you should learn on, just that it works. You know, the strings shouldn't be too far from the fretboard, and of course you need an amplifier, which the same Gang can help you with. Wouldn't hurt to take along a knowledgeable friend, though. Maybe a tall, scary one.

I understand that *The Inner Game of Tennis*, written by Timothy Gallway in 1974, suggested that people just go out and hit the ball around in the beginning, to get a feel for the game before engaging in the analytical process. Should work for bass as well.

Still, we need some form of music notation. On the guitar there are 6 strings that are numbered 1 through 6, but on the bass there are 4 strings that aren't really numbered. What is up with that? The strings are called the E, A, D and G strings, from low to high.

One possible reason: The guitarist recognizes that E, A, D and G are the names of the 6th, 5th, 4th and 3rd strings, but on the bass they'd be the 4th, 3rd, 2nd and 1st strings, so the numbers might serve only to confuse guitarists. But I feel like being inclusive, so we'll call the strings the E/4th, A/3rd, D/2nd and G/1st strings. No confusion.

On the left is a Fretboard Diagram and on the right is a Tab Diagram:



You can see that a Tab Diagram is a sort of tipped over Fretboard Diagram.

Why do we need both? Well, the Fretboard Diagram pinpoints the locations of notes on the neck; it's pictorial. Those are the frets going across and the strings going up and down. (This Fretboard Diagram goes up to the 5th fret, and we call it "up the neck" because pitch increases as you go down the page, from the nut to the bridge.)

But it tells you nothing about either the passage of time or the sequence of notes. The Tab Diagram shows 4 beats or counts of music and the half beats in between, and that's one measure or bar of what we call 4/4 Time, or 4 counts to the bar.