

Classic Funk and R&B Grooves for Bass

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A FEW WORDS ABOUT STRING MUTING AND STRING RAKING

String muting is one of the most useful techniques available to develop a solid groove. Also known as muffling, or ghost notes, string muting creates a hollow percussive sound that can add an exciting percussive sound to your bass lines.

Here is how it works:

Step 1: For example, fret a “C” note (3rd fret on the A string) and then pick it with your right hand. The result should be a clear, sustained note.

Step 2: While keeping the left hand in the exact same position, release the pressure just enough so that the string no longer touches the fret. Use more than one left-hand finger to avoid harmonics.

Step 3: Attack the string with the right hand. The resulting sound should be a muffled, percussive, undefined note with no sustain.


As far as the right hand is concerned, pull on the string using your index finger (i) or middle finger (m). Don't pluck! After striking a string, your follow-through should result in your finger resting on the next lower string. This is called a rest stroke. It is similar to the technique used to play upright bass or classical guitar.

In music notation, muted notes are indicated by substituting Xs for noteheads. To get the desired combination of notes and thuds, apply and release the left-hand finger pressure as indicated by the Xs and noteheads.

STRING-MUTING EXERCISES

Practice this exercise on a “C” note until you are familiar with its rhythmic content.

CD Example 1

 2

Bass staff (4/4 time) showing two measures of music. The first measure contains four eighth notes (G, A, B, C) and the second measure contains four eighth notes (D, E, F, G). The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

R.H. i m i m i m i m i m i m i m i m
R.H. m i m i m i m i m i m i m i m i m

TAB 3 x x x 3 x x x 3 x x x 3 x x x | 3 x x x 3 x x x 3 x x x 3 x x x .

Apply the previous exercise to all 4 strings of your instrument. Play this pattern twice, then move up chromatically, in $\frac{1}{2}$ steps (a $\frac{1}{2}$ step equals 1 fret).

CD Example 2

[illegible]