Beginning Finger Picking For The Delta Blues Guitar

Delta Blues style finger picking and use of the ‘bottleneck slide’ is essential to learn when studying the various playing styles of the artists from this important musical genre. The songs and lessons illustrated in this E-Book give the learner a solid foundation in beginning Delta Blues guitar playing. The book will cover songs based in ‘vestapol’ tuning using Mississippi Fred McDowell as a model example for finger picking and slide application.
Part I

Here is the basic layout of the finger picking pattern in open ‘D’ vestapol tuning.

The thumb will play the 5th string open, and will remain positioned there across the entire sequence. For the 1st and 2nd strings, match the correct finger with the corresponding note as it is laid out below. Play the double stops by pinching and playing together the 5th string and 1st string only with the thumb playing the 5th string and the index finger playing the 1st string. Build momentum and speed once familiar with the pattern.

‘i’ = index finger
‘m’ = middle
‘t’ = thumb

Finger individual notes on the bottom string while holding the same picking pattern.
Now try playing the notes on the second string with holding the same pattern.

Part II

Shift your finger picking stance towards the 6th, 5th, and 4th string for this example to follow.

The bass lick is shown below.

Match the finger to the corresponding notes.

‘I’ = index finger
‘m’ = middle
‘t’ = thumb
Part III

We will extract out a lick from Mississippi Fred McDowell's *You've Done Told Everybody (I'm in your neighborhood)*. This song will have you incorporate using a slide/bottleneck to play out the notes on the 1st and 2nd strings. When applying the slide/bottleneck on your guitar, be sure to gently toggle and dampen across the strings to ring out the notes clearly.

The main riff shown below.

![Guitar Tab](image)

Apply the right finger to the corresponding notes.

‘i’ = index finger

‘m’ = middle

‘t’ = thumb

![Guitar Tab](image)

Together in sequence.

![Guitar Tab](image)
The following lick in the song. The thumb will play the chord combination on the 1st fret.

Match the corresponding finger with the right note.

Part IV

The riff below is taken from Mississippi Fred McDowell’s What’s The Matter Now. Use of the slide appears yet again. This time, the slide will be pressed with more force to capture the rugged ‘Delta Blues’ notes of the composition.

The main riff shown below.
Match the right finger with the corresponding notes.

‘i’ = index finger

‘m’ = middle

‘t’ = thumb

The break in the song. Pinch the thumb and index finger together towards the center of the strings upon plucking the double stops.

The next lick reverts back to playing the slide.
The lick that caps off the stanza; apply the slide again.

Conclusion

The lessons presented in this E-book will undoubtedly solidify your foundation in understanding and playing Delta Blues Music. Mastery of finger picking techniques will also help you to move on to study other Delta Blues artists that will follow in lessons to come in the future.

Thank you for downloading this E-Book, and I hope that you continue to love and play the blues forever.

Best wishes,

Delta Lou-

www.deltaloumusic.com