

# Bending for Beginners



Watching a guitar great like Steve Vai, John Petrucci or Joe Satriani is one of the most amazing things, I think, that a guitar player could ever experience. Now a days we have the luxury of playing a replaying those special moments. Bending a note into submission, I remember, was one of the most jaw dropping things I had ever seen a guitar player do. So, what does it mean to bend a note? Basically, we are taking one note, and bending it from its static position to another note. The reality of this is that the second note doesn't exist in the "static note's" position because that note is static...in other words it is forever the note that it was meant to be, in the fret and string that it was meant to be in. So... when a guitar player manipulates the static note, we get artificial notes that can only exist because of the aid of the player, but the moment the bend stops the note returns to its static position. I guess the science behind it is more complex than the actual execution.

## \*\*\*\*\*Things to Know and Remember\*\*\*\*\*

Bending Notes is a delicate matter that takes a lot of ear training practice.

Precision is especially important when bending notes, otherwise the second note will always sound dissonant.

Mindlessly bending notes will force cringy results.

Figure 1. Play this exercise first, to audibly familiarize to the note's pitches

Figure 1 shows a musical exercise in 4/4 time. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C#5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F#5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), B5 (quarter), C#6 (quarter), D6 (quarter), E6 (quarter), F#6 (quarter), G6 (quarter). The bottom staff is a guitar TAB staff with fret numbers: 7-9-9, 9-11-11, 11-13-13, 13-15-15, 15-17-17, 17-19-19. Fingerings are indicated above the notes: 1, 3, 3, 1, 3, 3, #1, #3, 3, #1, #3, 3, #1, 3, 3, 1, 3, 3.

Figure 2. Play this exercise while carefully listening to your bend. IMPORTANT: use fingers 1,2 & 3 to accomplish the bend.

Figure 2 shows a musical exercise in 4/4 time, similar to Figure 1. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C#5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F#5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), B5 (quarter), C#6 (quarter), D6 (quarter), E6 (quarter), F#6 (quarter), G6 (quarter). The bottom staff is a guitar TAB staff with fret numbers: 7-9-7, 9-11-9, 11-13-11, 13-15-13, 15-17-15, 17-19-17. Above each note in the top staff, the word "full" is written with an upward-pointing arrow, indicating a full bend. The bottom staff has upward-pointing arrows from the fret numbers to the "full" text above the notes.