

Other Tunings

Thus far every song in the book has been in standard G tuning. This is because GDGBD gives us the open, hard driving sound necessary for pushing a bluegrass band. Indeed, that's why Scruggs used it almost exclusively when he was first showcasing his new style with Bill Monroe. And since his was the classic sound that every fledgling bluegrass banjo player sought to emulate, we find ourselves, today, playing primarily in G tuning.

This isn't to say you should avoid other tunings. *Au contraire*. The very first song that Earl worked out in the three-finger style was in D tuning—*Ruben's Train*.

D tuning is similar to G in that it gives you an open chord when you strum across the strings. Also, many of the Scruggs positions used in G tuning work just as well in D (as you'll see in *Ruben's Train*). Still the D tuning has its own unique personality. To get into D, simply tune the 5th and 3rd strings down a half step to F# and the second string down a whole step to A.

Other tunings are sometimes used when desired notes are too low to fall within the range of the G tuning. Such is the case with the C tuning, represented here by *Farewell Blues*. By taking your fourth string and tuning it down a whole step to C you'll get a rich, low, bottomy sound which will keep you placid for hours.

In addition to the G, C, and D, there are many other tunings, each with their own distinct flavor, which can give you new insights into the potential of your instrument. Here are three more just to get you started.

full C — GCGCD

modal — GDGCD (see *Shady Grove*)

saw mill — F#CGAD



Ruben's Train

Key of D

Tuning: F# D F# A D

D

T 2/T T 1 S T 2 TP1 T 2 T 1 S T 2 T 1 H T 2 T 1 S T 2 TP1 T 2 T 2/T T 2/T

A D 1. 2.

T 1 S 2 T 2 1 TP1 T 2 T 2 TP1 T 2 T 2 T 1 2 1 TP2 T 2/T T 2/T T

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Shady Grove

Key of Gm

Tuning: G D G C D

Gm F Gm 0 0

Sha - dy grove, my true love, sha - dy grove, my dar - lin',

sha - dy grove, my true love, go - in' back to Har - lan.

T 1 S T 2 T 1 S T 2 T 1 T 2 T T 2 T 1 S T 2 T 1 S T 2 T S T 1 2 T 1 T

F Gm

1 2 1 T 2 T 2 1 T 1 T 2 T T 2 T 1 T 2 TP1 T 2 T S T 1 2 T 1

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Farewell Blues

Capo on 2nd fret:
actual Key of D

Tuning: G C G B D

Rapallo, Pettis, Meyers, Schoebel

Chords: C, G, C

2 1 T T 2 1
T 2 T 1 2 T 1 2
T 1 2 T 2 1 2 T
1 T 2 T 1 TP 2

Chords: G, C

T T 1 2 T 1 2
1 2 T 1 2 T 1 2
T 1 2 T 2 1 2 T
1 T 2 T 1 TP 2

Chords: A, D

T T 1 2 T 1 2
T 1 2 T 2 1 T 1
T 1 2 T 2 1 T 2
T 1 2 T 1 T 2

Chords: Eb, C, G, C

T 1 2 T 2 1 T 2
T 1 2 T 1 2 T
2 1 2 T 2 1 2 T
1 T 2 T 1 TP 2
T

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