

Drop Thumb Drills

a Breakthrough Banjo supplement

The following exercises are intended as a means of developing and reinforcing your drop thumb skills.

Before working through them, make sure you've already made your way through the [Drop Thumb video lesson](#) inside of the Breakthrough Banjo course, so that you have a solid understanding of the mechanics involved.

These exercises are all based on commonly used drop thumb maneuvers that you'd find in clawhammer arrangements. Make your way successfully through these exercises, and you can assure that you're well prepared to drop your thumb through any arrangement (the use of drop thumb is the primary difference between level 2 and 3 arrangements).

HOW TO USE THESE EXERCISES

Here's how I'd recommend working through these exercises to get the most out of them:

Step 1: Work through each exercise individually (i.e. without the practice track to first learn the picking pattern).

Step 2: Practice each exercise along with the practice tracks. Click the links below to download the tracks.

[DROP THUMB WORKOUT SET 1 \(Exercises 1-4\)](#)

[DROP THUMB WORKOUT SET 2 \(Exercises 5-8\)](#)



Each track will begin with the track played at a slow (60 BPM), comfortable tempo (with metronome backing). You'll move through each exercise in the set (exercises 1-4 are in set 1, exercises 5-8 are in set 2), and then the tempo will increase, to a maximum of 100 BPM.

On the tracks, the exercises are presented in “call and response” format, though I suggest you play the entire time. You'll hear me play through the 4 measure exercise (play along with me), and then I'll drop out so that you can play it solo.

You'll continue to hear me come in and out every 4 measures throughout each exercise.

The total running time for each workout track is about 20 minutes, plenty of time to signal your brain that some learning needs to happen!

Your goal is to play cleanly and in time with the track. **If you find yourself getting sloppy, or falling out of time as the tempo increases, start over.** If you find yourself losing focus, or hit the 30 minute mark (from rewinding, etc.), then end your session for the day.

The workout tracks are **also a great way to practice visualization**, another powerful technique covered in the Laws of Brainjo series ([click here for the article on visualization](#)). Play it while relaxing, riding the car, or anywhere else you choose, and you can reap the benefits of the workout even without your banjo in hand.

Most of all, make sure to have fun!



SET ONE

(all exercises in gDGBD tuning)

EXERCISE 1

Exercise 1 is a 2/4 time signature exercise. It consists of four measures, each containing two eighth notes. The first measure has a 2 on the first string and a 4 on the second string. The second measure has a 2 on the second string and a 4 on the third string. The third measure has a 2 on the third string and a 4 on the fourth string. The fourth measure has a 2 on the fourth string and a 4 on the fifth string. Each measure is marked with a 'T' below the strings, indicating a tapping exercise.

EXERCISE 2

Exercise 2 is a 2/4 time signature exercise. It consists of four measures, each containing two eighth notes. The first measure has a 2 on the first string and a 4 on the second string. The second measure has a 2 on the second string and a 4 on the third string. The third measure has a 2 on the third string and a 4 on the fourth string. The fourth measure has a 2 on the fourth string and a 4 on the fifth string. Each measure is marked with a 'T' below the strings, indicating a tapping exercise.

EXERCISE 3

Exercise 3 is a 2/4 time signature exercise. It consists of four measures, each containing two eighth notes. The first measure has a 2 on the first string and a 4 on the second string. The second measure has a 2 on the second string and a 4 on the third string. The third measure has a 2 on the third string and a 4 on the fourth string. The fourth measure has a 2 on the fourth string and a 4 on the fifth string. Each measure is marked with a 'T' below the strings, indicating a tapping exercise.

EXERCISE 4

Musical notation for Exercise 4 in 2/4 time. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The exercise is divided into four measures, each containing a trill (T) indicated by a double line under the note. The fret numbers for each note are as follows:

Measure	1st Note	2nd Note	3rd Note	4th Note
1	0	0	2	2
2	4	4	5	5
3	0	0	2	2
4	3	3	5	5

Trill markings (T) are placed below the first note of each measure. The fret numbers 0, 2, 4, and 5 are written above the notes, while the fret number 1 is written below the second note in the first measure.

SET TWO

EXERCISE 5

Exercise 5 is a four-measure guitar exercise in 2/4 time. The notation is as follows:

- Measure 1: Chords at fret 0 (0-0-0) and fret 2 (2-2-2). A 'T' is written below the second measure.
- Measure 2: Chords at fret 0 (0-0-0) and fret 2 (2-2-2). A 'T' is written below the second measure.
- Measure 3: Chords at fret 0 (0-0-0) and fret 2 (2-2-2). A 'T' is written below the second measure.
- Measure 4: Chords at fret 0 (0-0-0) and fret 2 (2-2-2). A 'T' is written below the second measure.

EXERCISE 6

Exercise 6 is a four-measure guitar exercise in 2/4 time. The notation is as follows:

- Measure 1: Chords at fret 0 (0-0-0) and fret 2 (2-2-2). A 'T' is written below the second measure.
- Measure 2: Chords at fret 0 (0-0-0) and fret 2 (2-2-2). A 'T' is written below the second measure.
- Measure 3: Chords at fret 0 (0-0-0) and fret 2 (2-2-2). A 'T' is written below the second measure.
- Measure 4: Chords at fret 0 (0-0-0) and fret 2 (2-2-2). A 'T' is written below the second measure.

EXERCISE 7

Exercise 7 is a four-measure guitar exercise in 2/4 time. The notation is as follows:

- Measure 1: Chords at fret 0 (0-0-0) and fret 2 (2-2-2). A 'T' is written below the second measure.
- Measure 2: Chords at fret 0 (0-0-0) and fret 2 (2-2-2). A 'T' is written below the second measure.
- Measure 3: Chords at fret 0 (0-0-0) and fret 2 (2-2-2). A 'T' is written below the second measure.
- Measure 4: Chords at fret 0 (0-0-0) and fret 2 (2-2-2). A 'T' is written below the second measure.

EXERCISE 8

Musical notation for Exercise 8 in 2/4 time. The notation is presented on a guitar-style staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The staff contains four measures of music, each with a vertical bar line. The notes are represented by circles with numbers 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12, indicating fret positions. The notes are placed on the staff lines and are connected by horizontal lines. Below the staff, there are eight tablature lines, each with a 'T' underneath. The tablature lines are connected by horizontal lines, indicating the fret positions for each note. The notes are: Measure 1: 0, 0, 0, 0; Measure 2: 0, 0, 0, 0; Measure 3: 0, 0, 0, 0; Measure 4: 0, 0, 0, 0.