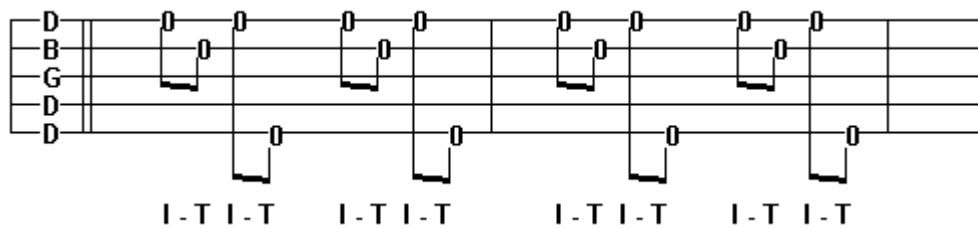


Old Time Banjo / Clawhammer Lesson #2

A. Introduction to Double Thumbing

Double thumbing is the foundation of more intricate melodic clawhammer banjo playing styles. In an alternating pattern of Index-Thumb Index-Thumb (I-T I-T), the thumb first drops down to the second string, then back to the fifth string as usual. It's a little strange at first but once you get it you just can't stop!

Like this:



It just keeps doing this over and over again in the same pattern. The key to doing this correctly and smoothly is: as the index finger comes down and strikes the string, the thumb rests on the string right above it. After the index finger plays its' string, and the hand is coming back up, the thumb sort of plucks the string backwards to sound it.

If this sounds familiar it should. This is the same thing we did in the basic strum of ringing the fifth string every time we brushed a chord. Only this time it's not just the fifth string, but one of the inside strings. Just think of the possibilities!

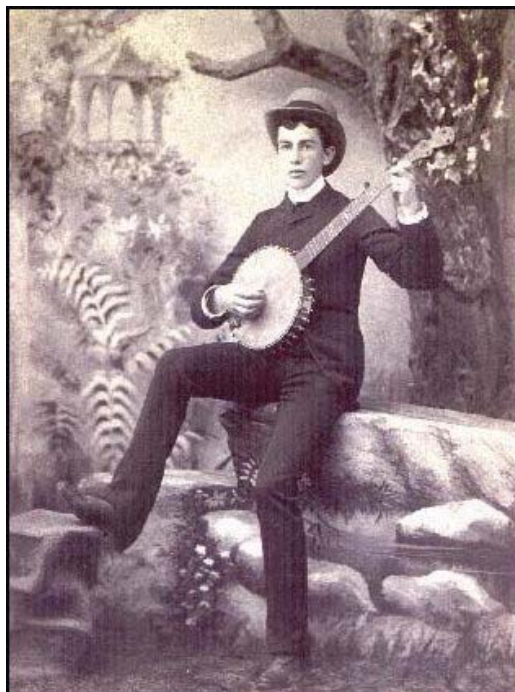
B. Basic Double Thumbing Practice

Try these double thumbing practice runs to get more into the idea of this.

Musical notation for basic double thumbing practice. The notation is on a five-line staff with a treble clef. The notes are: 0 (open), 0 (open), 0 (open), 0 (open), 2 (second fret), 1 (first fret), 2 (second fret), 2 (second fret), 1 (first fret), 2 (second fret). Below the staff, the fingering is indicated as: I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T.

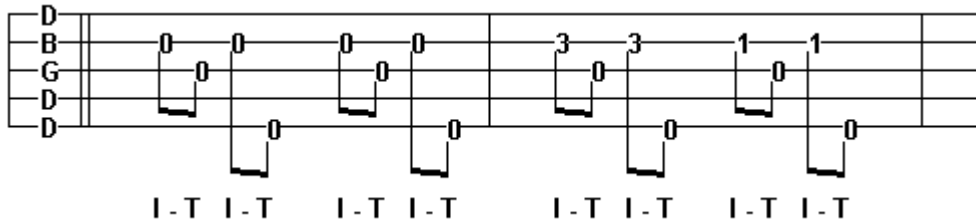
In this one you can start to see some interesting melodic possibilities beginning to emerge with this style.

Musical notation for advanced double thumbing practice. The notation is on a five-line staff with a treble clef. The notes are: 0 (open), 2 (second fret), 2 (second fret), 0 (open), 5 (fifth fret), 5 (fifth fret), 0 (open), 5 (fifth fret). Below the staff, the fingering is indicated as: I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T.

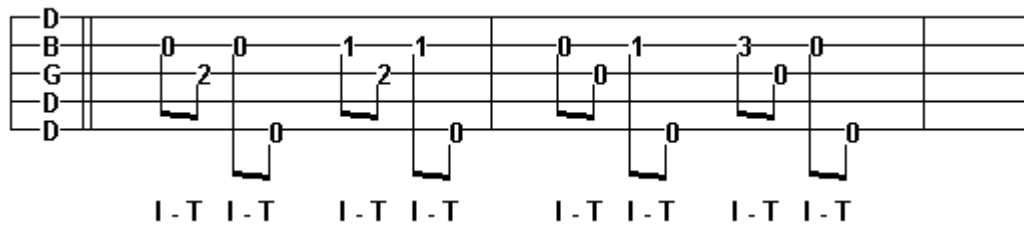


C. Double Thumbing On the Inside Strings

The same double thumb sequence can be done on the inside strings as well.



Here it gets a little more complicated with note changes mid stream and the thumb playing a melody note on an inside string.



D. Barlow Knife

Plenty of double thumbing practice here. In the Open A tuning.

E
C#
A
E
A

5 5 4 7 5 5 0 0 5 5 4 4 2 1 0 0

I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-B-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-B-T

E
C#
A
E
A

2 0 2 0 2 0 0 2 2 0 0 2 0 0 0

I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-B-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I I-T I-B-T

I been picked on all my life,
Ain't got noth'in but a barlow knife.

Barlow knife and a barlow blade,
Best dang knife that ever was made.



E. Sourwood Mountain Double-thumbed

Try this double thumbed version of the same tune we had in the first clawhammer lesson. It only gets better. Feel free to match and mix all the techniques you've learned so far, from frailing to clawhammer, in this simple tune.

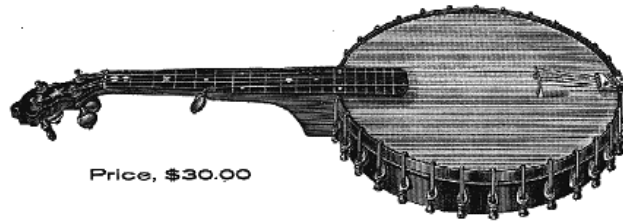
I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I-T I I-T I-T I-T I-H I-T I-P I-P I B-T

I-T I-T I I-T I-P I-T I-P I-T I I-T I-T I-T I-T I B-T

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