

An Excerpt from Flatpicking the Blues: "Nine Pound Hammer"

Arrangments by [Brad Davis](#) and Performance notes by Dan Miller

In Flatpicking the Blues, Brad Davis and Dan Miller methodically introduce various scales based on the tonic note G. These include G major, G minor, the G minor pentatonic scale, the G minor pentatonic blues scale, and the G blues scale- all in various positions throughout the fretboard. The reader is then encouraged to apply this knowledge to standard bluegrass tunes in order to give them a blues improv flavor.

This grounding in scale theory and its practical application might take the average player several weeks to master and lies well beyond the scope of a single Guitar Sessions article. With Brad and Dan's permission we have chosen to offer Brad's variations of the bluegrass standard "Nine-Pound Hammer". This tune is used about midway as well as towards the end of the book to illustrate how various scales, licks and double stops might be used to add the blues touch.

Stephen Rekas
Guitar Sessions Editor

Performance Notes

This homework assignment is going to be more like a homework "project." Hey, we are getting towards the end of the book here. Think of this as one of those end of term projects that counts for half of your grade!

What we would like you to do is figure out your own bluesy arrangement of "Nine Pound Hammer." Brad has given you two bluesy examples on the DVD, plus you now have a bunch of great blues licks in your blues repertoire. What we recommend is that you get a recording device and record your own rhythm bed for "Nine Pound Hammer" using the blues rhythm you learned in this course. Once you have the rhythm bed to work with, then start trying to work on an arrangement of "Nine Pound Hammer" and play along with the rhythm recording that you created. After you've practiced your own cool arrangement, continue to play through the tune and come up with some impromptu improvised variations. You can have a lot of fun with this!

Next time you see Brad out on the road at a workshop, ask him to pick "Nine Pound Hammer" with you and dazzle me with your solo!

"Nine Pound Hammer" Example

Based on the G Major Scale

The musical score is presented in four systems, each consisting of a standard musical staff and a guitar tablature staff. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 4/4.

- System 1 (Measures 1-5):** Starts with a G chord. The melody features eighth and quarter notes. The tablature includes a slide (S) and a hammer-on (H).
- System 2 (Measures 6-9):** Features G, D, and G chords. The melody continues with eighth and quarter notes. The tablature includes a slide (S) and a pull-off (P).
- System 3 (Measures 10-13):** Features G and C chords. The melody includes a triplet of eighth notes. The tablature includes a slide (S), a hammer-on (H), and a pull-off (P).
- System 4 (Measures 14-17):** Features G, D, and G chords. The melody concludes with a quarter note. The tablature includes a slide (S), a bend (BEND), a hammer-on (H), and a pull-off (P).

"Nine Pound Hammer" Example

Based on the G Blues Scale

1 G C

TAB

BEND

6 G D G

10 G C

14 G D G

Nine Pound Hammer

1 **G** **C**

6 **G** **D** **G**

11 **C** **G**

15 **D** **G** **G**

20 **C** **G** **D** **G**

Nine Pound Hammer (con't)

25 G C

29 G D G

S S P

BEND BEND

The image displays a musical score for the guitar piece "Nine Pound Hammer (con't)". It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble clef staff and a guitar-specific staff below it. The first system starts at measure 25 and ends at measure 28. The second system starts at measure 29 and ends at measure 32. Chord diagrams for G, C, D, and G are provided above the treble clef staffs. The guitar staffs contain fret numbers and rhythmic notation. Specific techniques are marked with "S" (slide), "P" (pull-off), and "BEND".