



Learning Dobro® Rolls

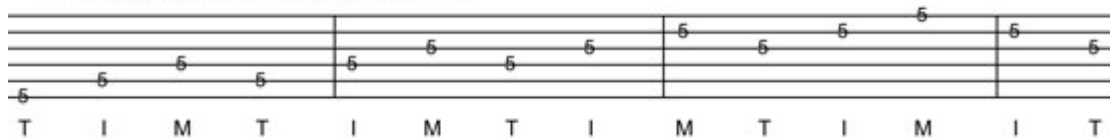
by [Phil Leadbetter](#)

Well here it is October, and it won't be too long until the leaves start falling here in East Tennessee. Things on the music scene tend to start winding down for the year around this time. Less outdoor activity means more time to practice ! It's really a great time to sharpen your skills for next season.

This month we are going to discuss more "roll" patterns. Last month's column discussed forward rolls. We will not only work on reverse rolls, but also "alternating rolls". An "alternating roll" is a roll that alternates back and forth between a select set of strings. These rolls are fun to play, and can be very useful in most tunes. As I have mentioned in several of my past columns, the key to playing effective "rolls" is practice. Repetition helps you to play them clean and with the proper flow.

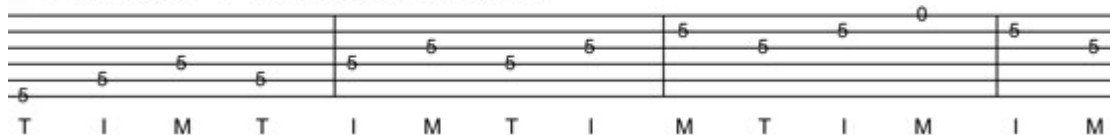
The first thing we will work on will be an "alternating roll". This roll (in most cases) will start with the thumb (T), then the index finger (I), then the middle finger (M). This is a forward roll, but will drop back and repeat itself. Notice that the last two notes of this roll form the start of a reverse roll (meaning that it starts to change direction). While this roll is shown as being played on the 5th fret (or "C" chord), it can be played anywhere on the neck. I have only used the "C" chord position as an example.

FORWARD ROLL / CLOSED "C"



The alternating roll can be used in many places, and is often employed when creating a break for a song. Now, let's try the very same roll, but this time we will leave the top string (1st) open. Place you slide across all the strings except for the 1st string. This approach will only sound right when played at the 2nd, 5th, or 9th fret. The TAB below is shown at the 5th fret (or "C" chord position):

FORWARD "C" ROLL WITH OPEN 1ST



One of the last rolls I will show you here is the reverse roll. This roll is one of the most difficult to master, but once you do, it is a very neat roll to play and can be used in lots of places. The trick to playing this roll fast and clean is to use the index finger (I) and thumb (T) once you get the roll started. The roll starts with the middle finger (M), and this is the

only time you will use the middle finger to actually start a roll. After that, it is all thumb (T) and index finger (I). My advice to master this roll.....Practice, practice, practice!

REVERSE ROLL IN "C"

T I M I T T I T T I T T

Well, here's enough stuff to hopefully keep you busy until next month. The key to learning anything is to practice as much as you can, but once you start to get frustrated, put it down for a little while and get away from it. This will help your mind clear. Later on, try it again. You will be surprised at how much easier it is to learn a new technique if you don't let yourself get frustrated. It's hard to retain much when you are frustrated. Frustration is common when learning. Everyone goes through it. The whole key is not to give up. It will get easier, and the end results are always very rewarding!

See you again next month!

Phil