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# CHAPTER 1

# Getting Started

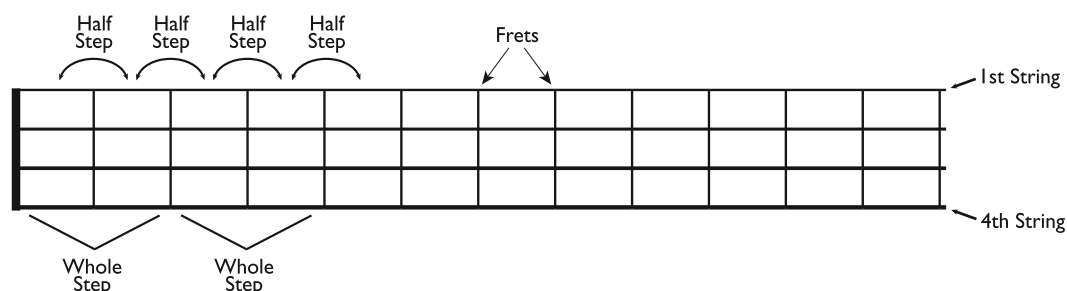
This chapter is a review of basic materials. If you already read music and tablature, know how to find any note on the bass and are familiar with basic technique, you can skip this chapter and begin with Chapter 2 on page 13.

## THE FRETBOARD

## HALF STEPS AND WHOLE STEPS

To understand the fretboard of the bass, you must first understand half steps and whole steps. A half step is the smallest interval (distance between two notes on the bass. It is the distance from one fret to the next. For example, the distance from the 4th fret to the 5th fret is a half step. The combination of two half steps equal a whole step, so a whole step is the distance of two frets on the bass. For example, the distance from the 4th fret to the 6th fret is a whole step. Being able to count half steps and whole steps will help you with many important musical concepts.

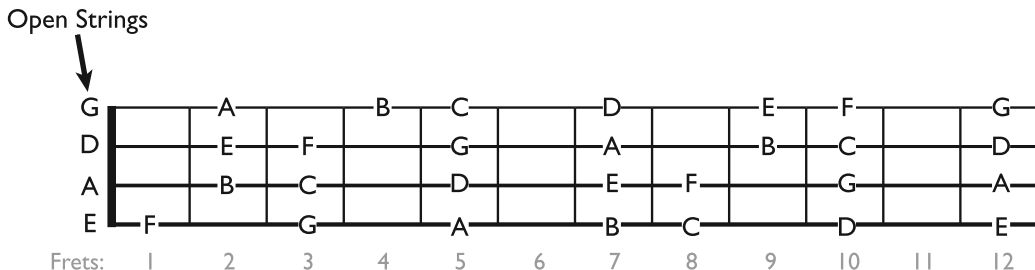
Here is a diagram showing some half steps and whole steps on the bass:



## THE NOTES ON THE FRETBOARD

The musical alphabet includes the letters A through G: A B C D E F G. These seven note names are repeated: A B C D E F G A B C D E F G A and so on to encompass all the notes in the range of any instrument. As you go forward in the alphabet, the pitches (the highness or lowness of the musical sounds) ascend; as you go backwards through the alphabet, the pitches descend.

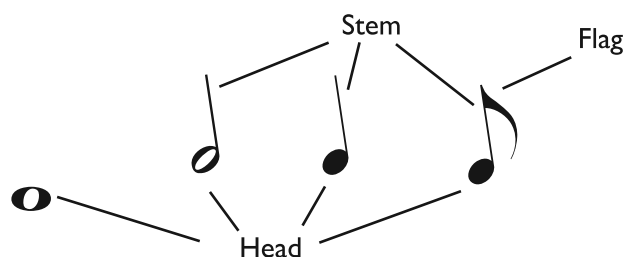
Every note you play has a note name from the musical alphabet. Here is a diagram showing where the notes are located on the fretboard:



# READING STANDARD MUSIC NOTATION

## NOTES

Pitch refers to the highness or lowness of musical sounds, called *notes*. Pitch is indicated by placing notes on a staff. Notes appear in various ways. Every note has a head and some have stems and flags.



## THE STAFF AND CLEF

The staff has five lines and four spaces and is read from left to right. At the beginning of the staff is a *clef*. The clef indicates what note corresponds to a particular line or space on the staff. Bass music is written in *bass clef* ♭; sometimes called *F clef*. The dots surround the F line.



## NOTES ON THE STAFF

A good way to learn the notes on the staff is to memorize the letter names of the lines separately from the spaces. Here they are, starting from the bottom line and then the bottom space. To help you memorize them, a catchy phrase is suggested for each group of notes.

Bass Clef Line Names: **G B D F A** (Good **B**oys **D**o **F**ine **A**lways)

Bass Clef Space Names: **A C E G** (**A**ll **C**ows **E**at **G**rass)

Notes on the lines:

Notes on the spaces:



## LEDGER LINES

Lines that are located above or below the staff are called *ledger lines* (sometimes spelled *leger*). They are an extension of the staff and are used when notes occur that are too high or too low to be accommodated within the staff.

