

Chapter Two

BENDING

Bending is approached quite differently in country guitar playing than in blues or rock. The main difference is that in country, when you bend a note, you will more than likely hold that note up and play some notes on another string while you are holding it. Here are a few examples. Bend the second degree to the third. Then, on the adjacent higher string, grab the fifth, then the fourth.

13 Fig. 19
A

Fig. 19 shows a musical example of bending in country guitar. The staff notation is in A major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The melody starts with a quarter note on the second degree (F#), which is then bent up to the third degree (G#). The guitar tab below the staff shows the fretting hand: the index finger bends the second string (4th fret) to the third degree, while the other fingers play the fifth and fourth strings. The tab includes a 'hold bend' instruction and a dashed line indicating the bend.

Try grabbing the fourth before the fifth, with the second bent up to the third:

14 Fig. 20
A

Fig. 20 shows a musical example of bending in country guitar. The staff notation is in A major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The melody starts with a quarter note on the second degree (F#), which is then bent up to the third degree (G#). The guitar tab below the staff shows the fretting hand: the index finger bends the second string (4th fret) to the third degree, while the other fingers play the fourth and fifth strings. The tab includes a 'hold bend' instruction and a dashed line indicating the bend.

You can also bend the fourth to the fifth and grab the root, then add the flat seventh:

15 Fig. 21
A

Fig. 21 shows a musical example of bending in country guitar. The staff notation is in A major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The melody starts with a quarter note on the fourth degree (D), which is then bent up to the fifth degree (E). The guitar tab below the staff shows the fretting hand: the index finger bends the fourth string (4th fret) to the fifth degree, while the other fingers play the root and flat seventh. The tab includes a 'hold bend' instruction and a dashed line indicating the bend.

Or, you can grab the flat seventh and then the root, with the fourth still bent to the fifth:

16 Fig. 22
A

Fig. 22 shows a musical example of bending in country guitar. The staff notation is in A major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The melody starts with a quarter note on the fourth degree (D), which is then bent up to the fifth degree (E). The guitar tab below the staff shows the fretting hand: the index finger bends the fourth string (4th fret) to the fifth degree, while the other fingers play the flat seventh and root. The tab includes a 'hold bend' instruction and a dashed line indicating the bend.

Bend the flat seventh up to the root; grab the third above, then the second:

17 Fig. 23

With the flat seventh bent up to the root, grab the second, then the third:

18 Fig. 24

You don't always have to grab notes on adjacent strings when you have a note already bent. For example, try bending the second to the third on the third string. Then grab the root and then the flat seventh on the first string:

19 Fig. 25

With the same note bent, substitute the sixth for the flat seventh:

20 Fig. 26

Again, with the same note bend, grab the flat seventh first, then the root:

21 Fig. 27

Here is another idea that you can use with the second bent to the third: try grabbing the sixth, then the fifth

22 Fig. 28

A

Figure 28 shows a musical notation for a guitar lick. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with six lines. The lick starts on the 4th fret of the 4th string, bends up to the 5th fret (labeled '1'), holds the bend, then slides down to the 2nd fret (labeled '2'). The tablature continues with a 5th fret note, a 4th fret note, and a 2nd fret note. The text 'hold bend' is written above the first bend.

Or you can grab the fifth, then the sixth:

23 Fig. 29

A

Figure 29 shows a musical notation for a guitar lick. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with six lines. The lick starts on the 4th fret of the 4th string, bends up to the 5th fret (labeled '1'), holds the bend, then slides down to the 2nd fret (labeled '2'). The tablature continues with a 5th fret note, a 4th fret note, and a 2nd fret note. The text 'hold bend' is written above the first bend.

All of the bending licks covered here can be played with harmonics to sound even more like a pedal steel guitar. Another interesting idea you can try is to link some of these licks together and work your way horizontally up and down the neck. Here's a descending idea:

24 Fig. 30

A

Figure 30 shows a musical notation for a descending guitar lick. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with six lines. The lick starts on the 15th fret of the 4th string, bends up to the 16th fret (labeled '1'), holds the bend, then slides down to the 12th fret (labeled '12'). The tablature continues with a 9th fret note, a 5th fret note, and a 2nd fret note. The text 'hold bend' is written above the first bend.

You can embellish this idea by adding extra notes:

25 Fig. 31

A

Figure 31 shows a musical notation for a descending guitar lick. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with six lines. The lick starts on the 15th fret of the 4th string, bends up to the 16th fret (labeled '1'), holds the bend, then slides down to the 12th fret (labeled '12'). The tablature continues with a 9th fret note, a 5th fret note, and a 2nd fret note. The text 'hold bend' is written above the first bend.

Try this idea using non-adjacent strings:

26 Fig. 32

A

Figure 32 shows a musical notation for a descending guitar lick. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with six lines. The lick starts on the 15th fret of the 4th string, bends up to the 16th fret (labeled '1'), holds the bend, then slides down to the 12th fret (labeled '12'). The tablature continues with a 9th fret note, a 5th fret note, and a 2nd fret note. The text 'hold bend' is written above the first bend.

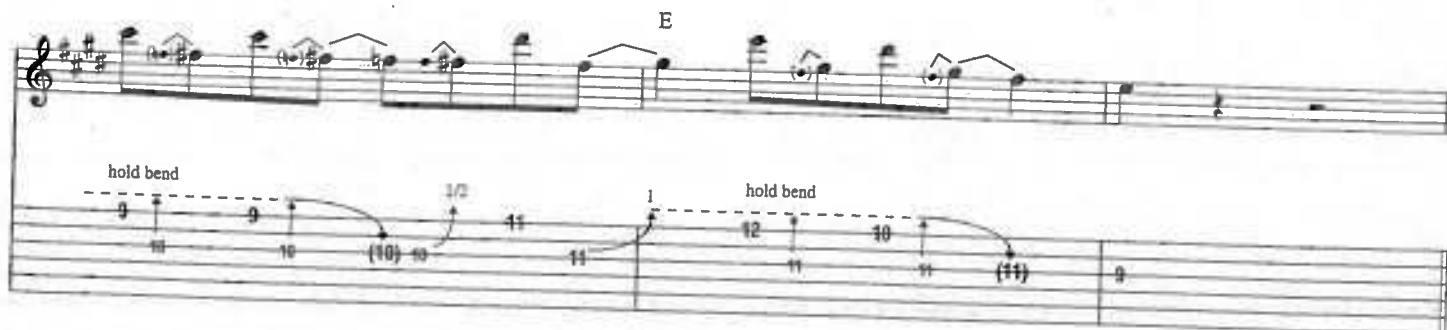
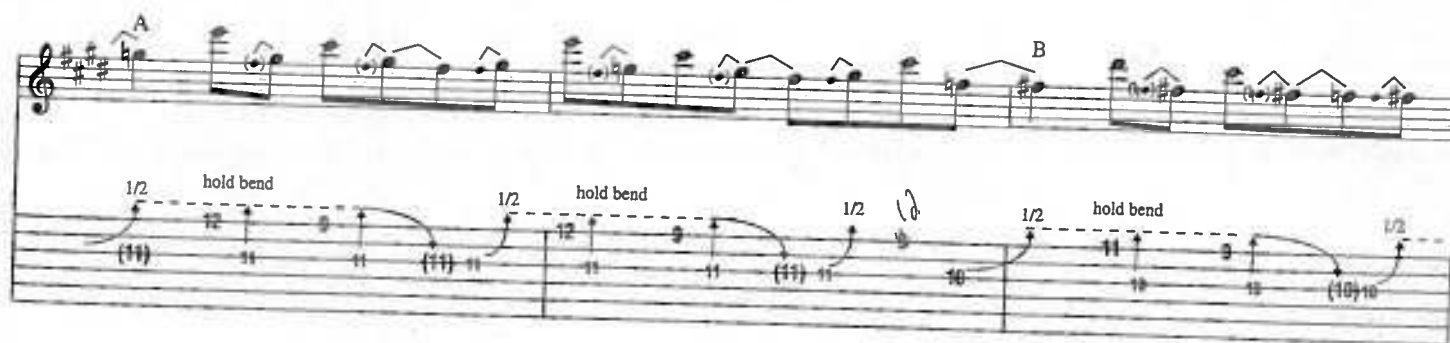
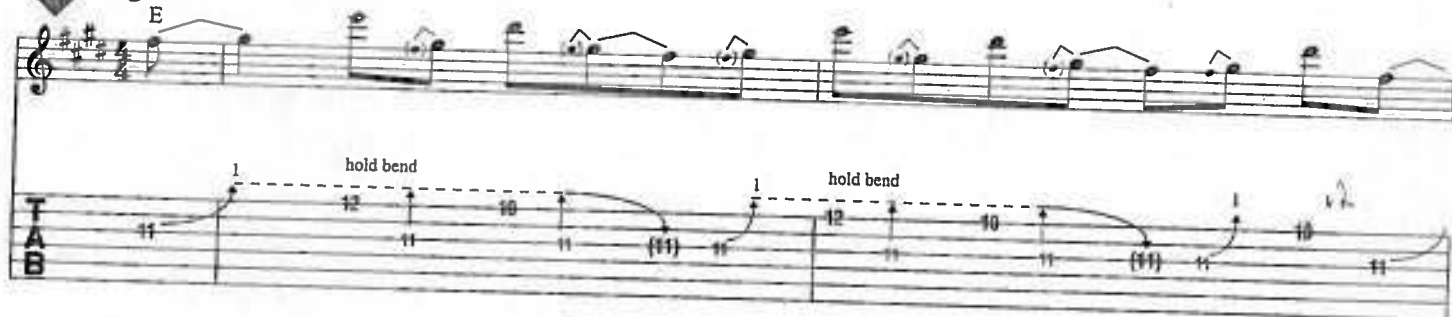
27

A



28

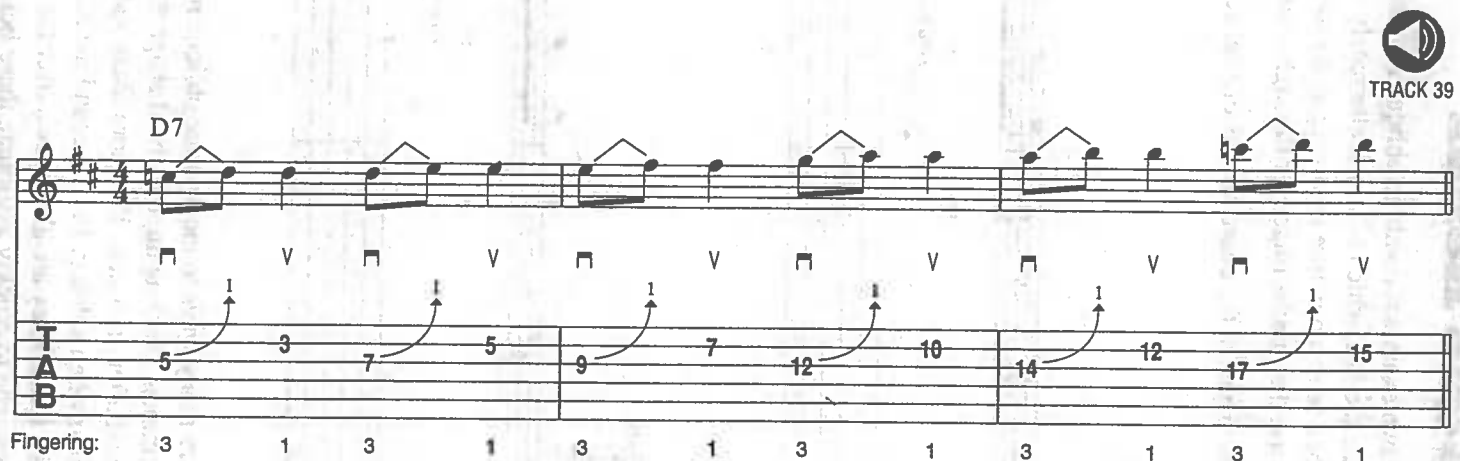
E



Bending

Accuracy

String bending in country guitar differs from that found in blues and rock in two important ways: accuracy and oblique motion. Accuracy refers to the pitch and stability of the string being bent. Because many country licks involve bending in and out of chord tones it is critical that the string being stretched stay in tune. Oblique motion refers to the technique of playing one or more strings while a bent note is held in place. These bends must be properly intonated as well. To better develop precision and accuracy we will first examine unison bends. In the example below, the note on the third string is pushed up a whole step (two frets) by the third finger (reinforced by the second finger behind). Once the desired pitch is achieved, it is held in place and the same (unison) tone is played by the first finger on the second string. This process is repeated up the neck, outlining a D major pentatonic scale. Listen closely to the bent note and be sure it is identical to the pitch on the second string. Your first finger remains planted throughout, and your second finger is placed a fret below the third for support.




TRACK 39

D7

Fingering: 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1

The diagram shows a musical exercise for a D7 chord. It consists of a staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The exercise is written in 4/4 time. The notation shows a series of eighth notes on the third string, each bent up a whole step (two frets) by the third finger, reinforced by the second finger behind. The notes are: D4 (open), E4 (first fret), F#4 (second fret), G4 (third fret), A4 (fourth fret), B4 (fifth fret), C#5 (sixth fret), D5 (seventh fret), E5 (eighth fret), F#5 (ninth fret), G5 (tenth fret), A5 (eleventh fret), B5 (twelfth fret), C#6 (thirteenth fret), D6 (fourteenth fret), E6 (fifteenth fret), F#6 (sixteenth fret), G6 (seventeenth fret), A6 (eighteenth fret), B6 (nineteenth fret), C#7 (twentieth fret), D7 (twenty-first fret). The notes are grouped into pairs of eighth notes, with the first note of each pair being bent. The exercise is repeated four times, each time starting on a higher fret. The fingering for the first four pairs is: 3 (first finger), 1 (second finger), 3 (third finger), 1 (second finger). The fingering for the last four pairs is: 3 (first finger), 1 (second finger), 3 (third finger), 1 (second finger).

The process is repeated on the first and second strings with slightly different finger spacing. This example outlines a G major pentatonic scale.



TRACK 39 (cont'd)

G7

Fingering: 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1

The diagram shows a musical exercise for a G7 chord. It consists of a staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The exercise is written in 4/4 time. The notation shows a series of eighth notes on the second string, each bent up a whole step (two frets) by the third finger, reinforced by the second finger behind. The notes are: G4 (open), A4 (first fret), B4 (second fret), C#4 (third fret), D4 (fourth fret), E4 (fifth fret), F#4 (sixth fret), G4 (seventh fret), A4 (eighth fret), B4 (ninth fret), C#4 (tenth fret), D4 (eleventh fret), E4 (twelfth fret), F#4 (thirteenth fret), G4 (fourteenth fret), A4 (fifteenth fret), B4 (sixteenth fret), C#4 (seventeenth fret), D4 (eighteenth fret), E4 (nineteenth fret), F#4 (twentieth fret), G4 (twenty-first fret). The notes are grouped into pairs of eighth notes, with the first note of each pair being bent. The exercise is repeated four times, each time starting on a higher fret. The fingering for the first four pairs is: 3 (first finger), 1 (second finger), 3 (third finger), 1 (second finger). The fingering for the last four pairs is: 3 (first finger), 1 (second finger), 3 (third finger), 1 (second finger).