

The Murphy Method

Recommended Intermediate Banjo Track

We strongly suggest learning only ONE SONG A MONTH, including the vamping. You may need to take longer on these tunes as they get harder.

So, you've been playing banjo for a couple of years now. Or maybe like some industrious students you've been playing for a year and a half or so. You've been through [Beginning Banjo Vol 1](#), [Banjo For Misfits](#), and [Vamping](#). You *can* play **all** the songs on these DVDs **and** you can vamp to them. If you followed the beginning banjo "[Jam Session Track](#)" you can also rely on all the songs on [Kickstart Your Jamming](#) (and hopefully most other three-chord songs) and you can use these breaks in jams. Where do you go from here?

Here is the list of tunes I usually use, in the order that I usually use them, followed by the DVD they are on. Remember to learn the vamping at the same time as you learn the break.

Old Joe Clark ([Beginning Banjo Vol. 2](#))
Foggy Mountain Breakdown (high break) (Beg. Banjo Vol. 2)
Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arms ([Jam Session Standards DVD](#))
Blue Ridge Cabin Home ([Improvising DVD](#))
Bury Me Beneath the Willow (Improv)
Lonesome Road Blues (Beg. Banjo Vol. 2)
Foggy Mountain Top (Improv)
Your Love is Like a Flower (Improv)
Fireball Mail (Beg. Banjo Vol. 2)
On and On (Improv)
Lonesome Road Blues (Improv)
Roll On Buddy (Improv)
When the Roll is Called Up Yonder ([Amazing Grace DVD](#))
I'll Fly Away (Amazing Grace)
Will the Circle Be Unbroken (Amazing Grace)
Salty Dog (Jam Session Standards)
Mountain Dew (Jam Session Standards)

Learning the chords to these tunes and being able to vamp to them is also a must! And after that, you should be ready for the Advanced Track! More about that some other time.

And if you haven't already done this: The DVD [Capos, Chords, and Theory](#) offers a wealth of information about how to use the capo in all keys, the names of all the vamp chords on the banjo neck and how to find them, and just a touch of

easily understandable theory that assumes you know nothing about theory to start with! You can start watching and learning from this DVD at any time during your Beginning Track. And you'll probably find that the more you learn from playing the banjo, the more you will be able to learn from this DVD. In other words, it's a DVD you can return to time and time again and learn more each time.

As one of our students said recently, "Just want to express how very helpful this DVD is to me. I have had 'dribs and drabs' of this info from different teachers and I usually came away totally confused. Your presentation on this DVD all makes sense now and I finally get it!" Thank you, Sue!

Thoughts on songs chosen and songs left out:

Salt Creek: You'll notice Salt Creek did not make this list. I mostly don't teach it anymore, not because the break is too hard, but because the chords are too hard, even for intermediate jammers. It is totally optional.

Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arms: Has got that great "Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arm" lick in it. That lick will continue to come up in almost as many songs as the tag lick! In particular, it comes up in When the Roll is Called Up Yonder and I'll Fly Away and is one of the best improvising licks ever. (Note: Mama Don't Allow, on the Improv DVD, has the exact same break as Roll. No need to go through it twice!)

[Improvising DVD](#)

You should definitely do these songs in the order they are presented on the DVD. I've finally realized that, yes, I was right all along and that you should not skip around. Or leave any of these songs out. (Grin!) Yes, I know they all sound alike. But I assure you, there is method in my madness and each song builds on the previous one and usually includes at least one new important lick.

[Jam Session Standards](#)

Stay away from Rocky Top and Dueling Banjos right now. They are too hard. Trust me on this!

[Amazing Grace \(and other Gospel Favorites\)](#)

Don't try this version of Amazing Grace right now. It's too hard. If you need to play this song, learn the easier-but-still-excellent version Casey teaches on [Easy Songs for Banjo](#).

[Easy Songs For Banjo](#)

All these songs are at an early Intermediate Level and do not have to be learned in order. You can pick and choose. I'd stay away from the Ballad of Jed Clampett right now unless absolutely necessary! That is one hard song, even with our minor adjustments for ease in learning.

Exceptions to the Rules:

If you are in a jamming situation (or even a band!) where certain tunes are being played that are taught on these DVDs, then I'd say the heck with the list—full speed ahead on whatever the group is playing. These are the tunes you'll be playing most often. For instance, if you are playing in a church or doing the nursing home circuit, you might learn *I'll Fly Away*, *When the Roll is Called Up Yonder*, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*, and *Will the Circle Be Unbroken* from the *Amazing Grace* DVD. Naturally, the more foundation you lay before you tackle these, the easier they will be.

Hope this helps. If you've had success in learning tunes in a different order, tell us about it! I'm always looking for a better way to teach.