

Wilko Johnson style practice sheet

Rhythm and lead together: chord stab chart. Exercises in his style, not transcriptions.

How to read the tab: dots are the string lines and numbers are frets. **x** = muted stroke (fingers resting, not pressing). **D** = down, **U** = up, **u** = the hand swings up but misses the strings. **5h.6** = fret 5, hammer on to fret 6. No pick: the strumming hand keeps moving on every eighth note.

Chord shapes

A (thumb over): thumb low E fret 5 (it also mutes the A string), D 7, G 6, B 5, high E 5.

D: A string 5, then D, G and B barred at 7 with the ring finger, high E muted.

E: A string 7, then D, G and B at 9, high E muted.

Small hands: skip the thumb, play the top four strings, and let the D string finger lean on the A string to mute it.

Exercise 1: the engine (muted chug)

Fingers rest on the strings without pressing. One minute without stopping.

```
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &
D U D U D U D U
e|x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..|
B|x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..|
G|x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..|
D|x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..|
```

Exercise 2: A stabs on beats 1 and 3

Press for one stroke, then release. The right hand never changes.

```
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &
D U D U D U D U
e|5..x..x..x..5..x..x..x..|
B|5..x..x..x..5..x..x..x..|
G|6..x..x..x..6..x..x..x..|
D|7..x..x..x..7..x..x..x..|
A|x.....x.....|
E|5.....5.....|
```

Exercise 3: offbeat stabs on the upstroke

```
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &
D U D U D U D U
e|x..x..x..5..x..x..x..5..|
B|x..x..x..5..x..x..x..5..|
G|x..x..x..6..x..x..x..6..|
D|x..x..x..7..x..x..x..7..|
A|.....x.....x..|
E|.....5.....5..|
```

Exercise 4: stab and fill

Two stabs, then C hammered on to C sharp (G string), A on the D string, G to lead on. Pick single notes with a finger.

```
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &
D U D U D u D U
e|5..x..5..x.....|
B|5..x..5..x.....|
G|6..x..6..x..5h.6.....|
D|7..x..7..x.....7..5..|
A|x.....x.....|
E|5.....5.....|
```

Exercise 5: D stabs

```
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &
D U D U D U D U
e|x..x..x..x..x..x..x..x..|
B|7..x..x..x..7..x..x..x..|
G|7..x..x..x..7..x..x..x..|
D|7..x..x..x..7..x..x..x..|
A|5.....5.....|
```

Exercise 5b: E turnaround fill

Two E stabs, then E (A string 7) and G sharp (D string 6), back to A.

```
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &
D U D U D U D U
e|x..x..x..x.....x.....|
B|9..x..9..x.....x.....|
G|9..x..9..x.....x.....|
D|9..x..9..x.....x..6..x..|
A|7.....7.....7.....|
```

Exercise 6: 12 bar in A

Stabs in normal bars, Exercise 4 in bars 4 and 8, Exercise 5b in bar 12.

```
| A      | A      | A      | A fill |
| D      | D      | A      | A fill |
| E      | D      | A      | E fill |
```

Tempo log

Date	Exercise	bpm	Clean? (yes or no)	Note

Tips

- Start slow.** 60 to 70 bpm in eighth notes. Speed up only when every bar is clean.
- Never stop the hand.** The left hand decides what sounds.
- Look after your skin.** No pick means the strumming hand takes the wear. Keep sessions short, and stop if the skin breaks.

Listen to

BBC Radio 4 clip: Wilko Johnson explains his guitar style (2013)
Dr Feelgood, Roxette
Dr Feelgood, She Does It Right
Dr Feelgood, Back in the Night
Dr Feelgood, Route 66
Wilko Johnson and Roger Daltrey, Going Back Home