

The Murphy Method

Recommended Advanced Banjo Track Part 2 (3rd Level, Specialty Tunes, If You're In A Band)

Because we offer so many Advanced Level tunes, we have divided the Advanced Banjo Track into three levels of increasing difficulty. We have also included a group of Specialty Tunes, some of which are advanced and some of which are intermediate. And finally, we offer a track called If You Play In A Band. The third level, Specialty Tunes, and If You Play In A Band are discussed here. The first and second levels are in [Part One](#).

If you are "advanced," you can play all or most of the tunes on our Intermediate Track, you can vamp to these numbers, you can trade breaks easily in a jam, you can do some basic improvising, and, through your participation in jams, you have gained an ability to play faster. For those of you who are playing at home alone, strictly for your own enjoyment, you might want to stick to the instrumentals and bypass the singing songs which really call for band participation.

NOTE TO JAMMERS: Do not bring these tunes to a jam and expect the pickers to play them slow! When you start bringing Advanced Tunes to the jam, folks will expect you to play them somewhere close to speed. Most pickers are tolerant of playing songs like Cripple Creek slowly but few will tolerate your playing songs like Rocky Top slow. That's why it's important to make sure that when you arrive here, at this Advanced Level, you have acquired the skills and experience to play faster or at least not train wreck! (You might want to read the blog I wrote titled ["Stop Learning Songs That Are Too Hard For You!"](#)) Just saying...!

Advanced Banjo Track—Third Level

These are some of the most difficult tunes that we teach from the traditional bluegrass "canon." (As opposed to specialty tunes.) This list offers a mixture of Earl Scruggs tunes, fiddle tunes, melodic tunes, and even a couple of Don Reno tunes. Again, these don't have to be done in this order.

Sally Goodwin ([Advanced Earl](#)) (fiddle tune)

Bill Cheatum ([Great Banjo Tunes](#)) (fiddle tune)

Rawhide ([Rawhide DVD](#))

Foggy Mountain Special (Advanced Earl)

Dixie Breakdown (Great Banjo Tunes) (A Don Reno tune)

Hazel Creek (Rawhide DVD) (suggest you learn Sally Goodwin first)

Pike County Breakdown (Advanced Earl)

Limehouse Blues (Great Banjo Tunes) (A Don Reno tune)

Katy Hill and/or *Roanoke* ([Blackberry Blossom DVD](#)) (if you like the melodic style; fiddle tunes)

Home Sweet Home and/or *Farewell Blues* ([Soldier's Joy DVD](#)) (if you like Scruggs tunes and playing in Open C)

Randy Lynn Rag ([More Advanced Earl](#)) (A tuner song; we also show you how to play it without tuners)

Specialty Tunes—Intermediate and Advanced Level

We do teach some tunes that are unlikely to be played at most jams. Still, we like them and occasionally play some of these in more professional jam sessions or on stage.

Dueling Banjos ([Jam Session Standards](#)) (Intermediate Level.
A specialty tune because no one plays the duel part of this tune the same way)

Man Of Constant Sorrow ([Ralph Stanley DVD](#)) (Two versions, easy & hard)

Ballad Of Jed Clampett ([Easy Songs DVD](#)) (Easy/Intermediate level)

Reuben ([More Advanced Earl](#)) (Intermediate Level, listed as a specialty tune because

you have to retune the banjo into D tuning, which we explain]

Wildwood Flower ([Wildwood Flower DVD](#)) (Intermediate Level, in Open C)

Old Spinning Wheel ([Soldier's Joy DVD](#)) (Advanced Level, in Open C)

Uncloudy Day (Wildwood Flower DVD) (Intermediate Level, in Open C)

Leaning On The Everlasting Arms (Wildwood Flower DVD) (Intermediate Level, in Open C)

Big Panther Creek Waltz (Blackberry Blossom DVD) (A Casey Henry tune; the first part is Banjo In The Hollow in $\frac{3}{4}$ time! Advanced Level because of the harder second part)

Kansas City Railroad Blues (Great Banjo Tunes) (Advanced Level, in Open C)

Amazing Grace ([Amazing Grace DVD](#)) [Advanced Level; I put this song at the very end, not because it's a specialty tune, but because this arrangement is incredibly hard. You really have to be able to "hear" the basic $\frac{3}{4}$ time pattern to be able to play the song this way.]

If You Are In A Band

If you are in a band we offer two DVDs that will help teach you the nuances of playing with a group.

[Banjo Backup For Fiddle Tunes](#) (Intermediate/Advanced Level)

You would use the skills and techniques from this DVD to play backup when a fiddle or mandolin player is taking a break *in a band*. These are *not jam session skills* unless the session features highly skilled players and includes only 4 to 6 people.

[Beyond Vamping: Fancy Banjo Backup](#) (Advanced Level)

Again, these are skills and techniques that you would use in a *band setting*, not in a large jam session where these licks would be intrusive and overbearing. You could also use these skills—very quietly—in a small jam session that features highly skilled, professional-level musicians.