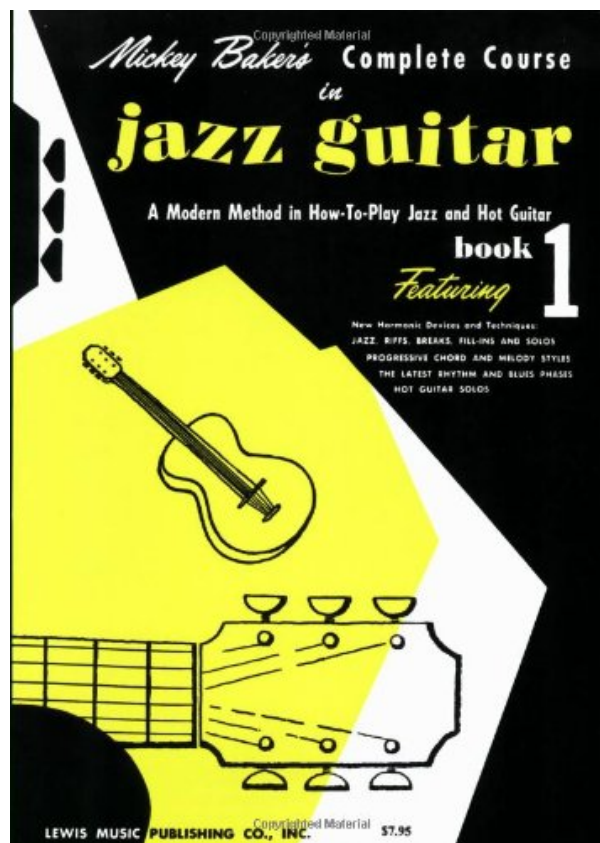
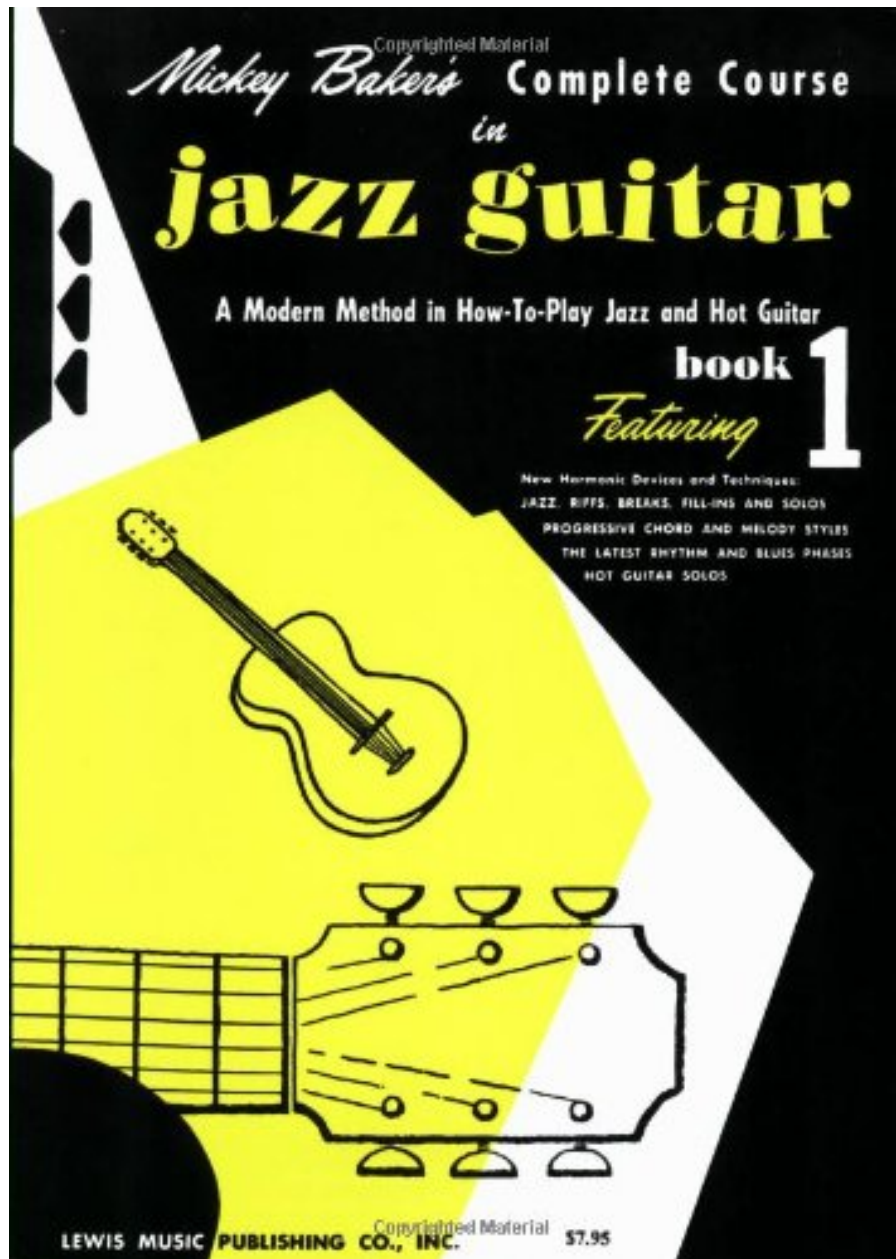


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A method in how to play jazz and hot guitar.

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Most helpful customer reviews

39 of 39 people found the following review helpful.

Deceptively Simple

By Michael J. Edelman

Almost every pro guitarist, and a lot of amateur ones, know the Mickey Baker books. A number of jazzers and rockers started out with them- Pete Townsend has said that he learned his chords from Mickey. This was the only specifically jazz oriented guitar method available back in the 50s when Mickey wrote it, and it's been in print pretty much continuously since then. That by itself should tell you a lot. A lot of guitarists looking for a good jazz self-study course have looked at this book, and wondered if there was really much to be learned from few simple chord exercises and a few dozen riffs. Sure, there were a lot of good chords to be learned from it, but beyond that...?

Actually, there is a tremendous amount of information to be found in this book, but only if you follow Mickey's directions. He doesn't give you a lot of why- just "do this until you have it down." But if you do that, you'll find yourself internalizing a lot of important rules and skills that other teachers spell out. Those hokey sounding chord progressions that Mickey wants you to memorize and transpose to other keys are actually teaching you all the standard jazz substitutions. Mickey does spell out some of these rules in the second half of the book, but if you've done your homework you'll find that it's much easier to apply these rules to soloing if you've actually internalized them than if he had just told you that you could use a Lydian or Aeolian sub for a dominant chord in a 12 bar blues.

The second half of this book is all about learning to solo, and a lot of non-readers have looked at it, and been put off by the lack of tab. But you don't need reading skills beyond that absolute minimum to use this book.

Mickey has provided all the fingerings below the staff for each exercise. It may be a little unfamiliar at first, but by the time you finish this book- and it'll take a year to really do it right- you'll find that you have some pretty good reading skills, too.

Even though it was written back in the 1950s, the riffs and chords Mickey teaches sound just as hip today. Some guitarists will quibble with some of Mickey's choices, or his chord names, but it's more a matter of opinion than a fault in the book. For example, a lot of contemporary guitarists would play something like Bm7-Bb7-Am7... rather than Mickey's straight descending m7ths (Bm7-Bbm7-Am7..) today, but that's something the student will learn just by listening to guitarists today.

In short, if you have some basic guitar skills- you know a few dozen chords, and you can strum along- and you're confused by all the different jazz guitar books out there- this is the one you should start with. If you follow his directions, practice every exercise until you've memorized it, and written out and practiced all the transpositions, too, by the time you finish the book you'll be able to comp and put together a simple solo over most any jazz tune.

[n.b.- this edition is the original book as printed in the 1950s. There's another edition with a blue cover that was edited and re-typeset in the 70s, but that edition contained a number of errors that were introduced in the editing. This is the one you want.]

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Not for beginners, but great for novice guitarists looking to study jazz techniques.

By cp

I'm returning to jazz guitar study after nearly 20 years away. When I was learning, in a college focused on jazz, this was standard fare. I learned on this book. The first part of the book is focused on chord study. There are tons of great jazz chords and basic, simple, progressions to learn and apply those chords. The reader is learning how to substitute jazz chords in a very simple and repetitive way. The second part of the book is focused on scales, various runs and riffs and soloing.

There is no tablature, and I think that is best. It is in every guitarists best interest to learn how to read music. it's very easy and will only help the studying guitarist advance in the long run.

This is not an appropriate book for a complete beginner. As a guitarist who had been playing for over 10 years, but with no jazz experience, this book was challenging. 20 years later, with a rusty music degree, it's keeping me on my toes. Not impossible, and a great motivator. I'm feeling great about reinforcing my core knowledge and technique as well as refreshing forgotten ones.

If you complete this and the 2nd Baker book, you're well on your way to being able to hold your own in a jazz setting, provided you're also listening to jazz and playing along to records and with other musicians.

I feel this would be a great follow-up to the Berklee Modern Method for Guitar books.

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent jazz chord primer for guitar...

By Gitfiddler

I purchased this volume (and volume 2) 6 months ago or so and have been steadily working through the lessons. As for my skill, I'm an intermediate player with a solid chord vocabulary and a fair understanding of jazz harmony. Like most jazz guitar players, I want to know more. Aside from the low cost (\$7.95), what most inspired me to consider these books was the "subtle" endorsement given them by Robben Ford in his "Art of Blues Solos" instructional video (which I enjoyed too). Ford stated that he worked through Mickey

Baker's book when he first started playing guitar and... well, Ford is an awesome player!

Lesson 1 starts with Baker diagramming 26 chord forms and telling the reading to get familiar with them. The book does not use tab for showing chords, but the chord diagrams Baker provides are straight-forward. I suspect beginning players should want to break the chord forms down, by note, to learn which dotted fret is the root, 3rd, 5th, 7th, etc., for any given chord. The lessons that follow ask the reader to play melodies using specific groups of the 26 chords. Also, for some lessons, Baker asks the reader to transpose progressions from previous lessons into new keys and then practice playing them. As the lessons progress, Baker methodically introduces the reader to more chord forms, to single-note lines, chord vamps, progressions, and more... and more... and more. As other reviewers have pointed out, there are 52 lessons in volume 1, and so there is lots to learn.

The Baker books are simply designed for the reader to work at a comfortable yet steady pace, not become overwhelmed by discussions of theory, and to lean to play some cool sounding jazz melodies on the guitar. Beginning guitarists will likely have more difficulty but that would be due to a lack of mechanics than with anything else. With sufficient finger and chord exercises, playing troubles will diminish.

Bob

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