SOFTWARE & TECH

Beat It Michael Jackson Tab

PUBLISHED
November 25, 2026

REFERENCE
#1795582309444596

Mastering the Iconic Riff: Your Complete Guide to the Beat It Michael Jackson Tab

When the opening drum fill of "Beat It" explodes through the speakers, even the most casual listener knows they are in for something special. The 1982 hit, co-written and produced by Michael Jackson with a legendary guitar solo by Eddie Van Halen, is a masterclass in pop-rock fusion. For musicians, learning to play this track on guitar is a rite of passage. The **Beat It Michael Jackson tab**is not merely a set of notes; it is a roadmap to understanding one of the most iconic riffs in music history. Whether you are a beginner eager to tackle your first rock solo or an intermediate player looking to refine your technique, this guide will break down every section of the tab, offering insights into the gear, the techniques, and the subtle nuances that make this song unforgettable.

Why the Beat It Michael Jackson Tab Endures

Decades after its release, "Beat It" remains a staple in guitar classrooms and on setlists worldwide. The appeal of the **Beat It Michael Jackson tab**lies in its perfect balance of simplicity and challenge. The main riff is built on a straightforward power-chord progression that is easy to memorize, yet the timing and feel require attention to detail. Then, of course, there is the solo. Eddie Van Halen's contribution is a masterwork of tapping, whammy bar dives, and blistering speed that still makes guitarists stop and listen in awe. Learning this tab means learning a piece of history—a song that broke down genre barriers and proved that a pop track could have the edge of hard rock.

Breaking Down the Main Riff: The Foundation

The heart of any **Beat It Michael Jackson tab**is the main riff that drives the verses and the chorus. This riff is played primarily on the lower strings (the E, A, and D strings) and relies heavily on the rhythmic interplay between the open E string and fretted notes. The key is to use down-picking for the heavier accents and alternate picking for the faster transitions. Most tabs notate this riff in standard tuning, so you can jump right in without retuning your instrument. The chord structure revolves around E, B, and A power chords, giving the song its driving, aggressive feel. Practicing this riff with a metronome is essential because the groove sits slightly behind the beat, giving it that signature swagger.

The Syncopated Rhythms and Ghost Notes

What separates a good performance from a great one when playing from the **Beat It Michael Jackson tab**is the ability to capture the rhythmic nuance. The song makes heavy use of ghost notes—percussive, muted strings that add texture without adding pitch. You will see these notated as an "X" on the tab staff. Incorporating these ghost notes requires a relaxed fretting hand. You want to lightly lay your fingers across the strings without pressing down fully, then strum with the same intensity as your power chords. This technique creates a rhythmic chug that locks in with the drums. Additionally, pay attention to the rests. Silence is a powerful tool in

this riff, and clipping the notes short at the right moments is what gives the riff its punch.

Eddie Van Halen's Solo: A Deep Dive into the Beat It Michael Jackson Tab

No discussion of the **Beat It Michael Jackson tab** is complete without dissecting the solo. What makes this solo so iconic is not just the speed but the melodic structure. Eddie Van Halen reportedly improvised the entire solo in two takes, and that spontaneous energy is palpable in every note. The solo is in the key of E minor, which gives it a dark, bluesy flavor that contrasts beautifully with the pop verse melody. For intermediate players, this solo serves as a perfect introduction to two-handed tapping.

Tapping Techniques in the Solo

The most recognizable moment in the **Beat It Michael Jackson tab** is the rapid-fire tapping section in the middle of the solo. To execute this correctly, you need to use your picking hand to hammer-on notes on the higher frets (usually the 12th, 15th, and 17th frets on the high E string) while your fretting hand maintains a chord shape or single note. The key to clean tapping is to strike the note with the tip of your index or middle finger on your picking hand and immediately pull off to allow the fretting hand to take over. Many guitarists make the mistake of hitting the string too hard, which causes a dull thud. Instead, aim for a precise, controlled impact that allows the note to ring clearly through the amplifier.

Whammy Bar Dives and Dime Squeeks

Another hallmark of this solo is the dramatic use of the Floyd Rose tremolo system. The **Beat It Michael Jackson tab** will show dive bombs where the pitch drops sharply before returning. This technique requires you to push the whammy bar down firmly while picking a note, then let it snap back into place. The trick is to have a guitar with a stable locking tremolo system; otherwise, you will likely go out of tune. Additionally, Eddie uses "dime squeaks"—high-pitched harmonics created by lightly touching the string with the side of your picking hand while picking. These squeals add a frantic, almost vocal quality to the solo. To practice this, find the natural harmonic nodes on the strings (around the 5th, 7th, and 12th frets) and experiment with different picking positions until you get that piercing scream.

Essential Gear to Authentically Play the Beat It Michael Jackson Tab

While you can learn the notes from any **Beat It Michael Jackson tab**, capturing the authentic tone requires some attention to gear. Eddie Van Halen famously used a custom-built Kramer guitar with a Floyd Rose tremolo and a modified Marshall amplifier. However, you do not need vintage gear to get close. A guitar with a humbucker pickup in the bridge position is the most critical component. Single-coil pickups tend to sound too thin for this riff. If you are using a budget-friendly guitar, consider adjusting your amp settings: boost the midrange slightly, keep the treble high, and add a moderate amount of gain. Too much distortion will muddy the rapid-fire tapping, while too little will make the power chords sound weak.

Amp Settings and Effects for the Beat It Tab

- Gain: Set to about 6 or 7 out of 10. You want enough drive to sustain the solo notes but not so much that the riff loses its attack.
- EQ: Boost the mids (around 7), keep the bass at 5, and set the treble to 7. This mid-boost is key to getting that aggressive, cutting tone.
- Reverb: Use a very light room reverb. Too much reverb will wash out the percussive ghost notes.
- Compression: A touch of compression can help even out the dynamics of your tapping, making the solo sound more fluid.

Recommended Strings and Tuning

The song is played in standard tuning (EADGBe), so you do not need to retune. However, the string gauge

matters. Eddie Van Halen used heavy-gauge strings (typically .009 to .042) because they could withstand the aggressive whammy bar abuse without breaking. If you are primarily a rhythm player, consider using .010 to .046 strings for a fuller tone on the power chords. Just be aware that heavier strings Beat it michael jackson tab for any specific tuning. Always check the published tabs use standard tuning.

Step-by-Step Guide to Learning the Beat It Michael Jackson Tab

Approaching this tab systematically will save you hours of frustration. Do not try to play the entire song at full speed on day one. Instead, break the song into manageable sections.

Phase 1: The Main Riff (Slow Tempo)

Set your metronome to 60 BPM. Play only the first four bars of the intro riff. Focus on consistent down-picking on the beats and clean muting with your palm. The **Beat It Michael Jackson tab** will show palm muting indicated by "P.M." above the tab lines. Rest your palm lightly on the strings right at the bridge. As you practice, gradually increase the tempo by 5 BPM increments. Do not move on until you can play this section ten times in a row without a mistake.

Phase 2: The Verse and Chorus Progression

The verse sections are built on a call-and-response pattern between the guitar and the vocals. Your guitar part is sparse here—just a few power chords punctuated by rests. Pay attention to the **Beat It Michael Jackson tab** notation for rests (usually a rest symbol above the staff). Many beginners rush through these rests. Count out loud: "1, 2, 3, 4." Hit the chord on beat 1 and let it ring for two counts before cutting it off. This discipline is what makes the rhythm section tight.

Phase 3: The Solo (One Phrase at a Time)

Eddie Van Halen's solo is composed of distinct phrases. Identify the first phrase in the **Beat It Michael Jackson tab**—usually a descending blues lick on the B and high E strings. Practice that three-note pattern in isolation for ten minutes. Then, move to the next phrase: the tapping sequence. Do not try to connect the phrases until you can play each one cleanly at half speed. Use a practice amp at a low volume to hear every note clearly. If a note buzzes, check your finger placement and pressure.

Common Mistakes When Playing the Beat It Michael Jackson Tab

Even experienced guitarists can fall into traps when learning this song. Being aware of these pitfalls will accelerate your progress.

Mistake 1: Ignoring the Muting

The **Beat It Michael Jackson tab** sounds sloppy without proper muting. The open E string should ring clearly for the main riff, but all other strings must be muted by your fretting hand. If you hear unwanted sympathetic vibrations, you are not muting enough. Use the underside of your index finger to lightly touch the lower strings while your ring finger presses the power chord shape.

Mistake 2: Overplaying the Solo

Many guitarists try to add extra notes or bends to "make it their own." While that is fine for jam sessions, when learning the **Beat It Michael Jackson tab**, stick to the original notation. Eddie Van Halen's solo is already incredibly dense. Adding more notes often results in a muddy, chaotic sound. Respect the spacing and the rests within the solo; they are just as important as the fast runs.

Mistake 3: Poor Timing on the Tapping Section

The tapping section is rhythmically precise. Each tap must fall exactly on the beat. Use a metronome and tap your foot. If you rush the taps, the whole solo sounds frantic. Slow down until your taps are perfectly

Beat It Michael Jackson tab will often include rhythm notation above the tab staff—pay close attention to that.

Where to Find Reliable Beat It Michael Jackson Tab Sources

Not all tabs are created equal. A poorly transcribed **Beat It Michael Jackson tab** can teach you incorrect fingerings and rhythms. For accuracy, look for tabs from reputable sources such as Ultimate Guitar, Songsterr, or official guitar tab books published by Hal Leonard. Community-rated tabs are also helpful; look for tabs with five-star ratings and comments from users who have verified the accuracy. Video lesson platforms like YouTube are excellent companions to written tabs. Watching a guitarist play the song while you read the **Beat It Michael Jackson tab**helps bridge the gap between notation and physical movement. Ideally, you want a combination of a high-quality tab and a slow-motion video breakdown.

Adapting the Beat It Michael Jackson Tab for Different Skill Levels

One of the beautiful aspects of this song is that it can be scaled to fit any skill level. Beginners do not need to tackle the full solo from day one.

Beginner Version: Simplified Power Chords

If you are new to guitar, focus only on the main riff and the chord changes. Ignore the ghost notes for now. Play the power chords as whole notes (full, ringing chords) rather than st

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