

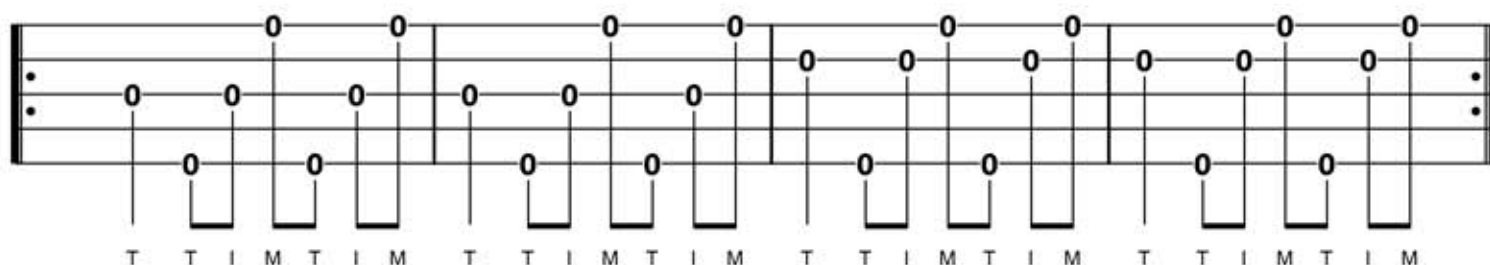
3 - Melody Forward Roll

The Melody Forward Roll leaves out the second note of the roll. Now there is a quarter note at the start of each measure, then 2 Forward Rolls complete the measure. This puts an accent on the first note, aka the melody note.

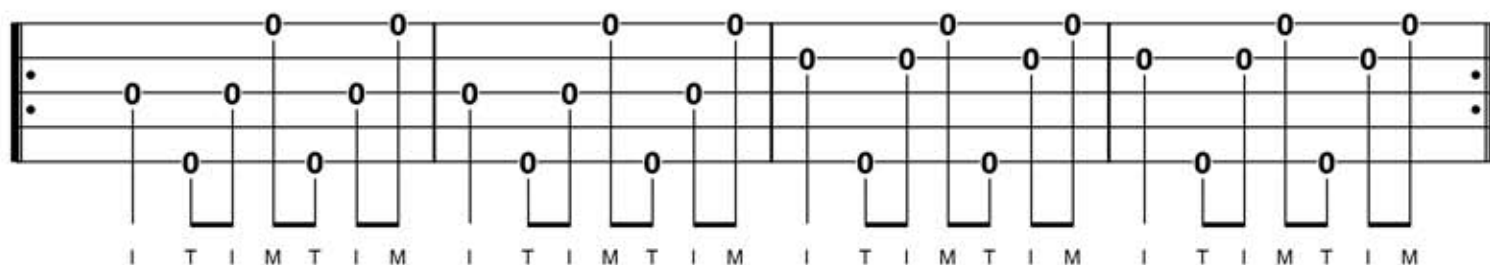
Although the melody of a particular tune can be anywhere and everywhere throughout a measure, practicing the accent on the first beat of the measure is useful. Most melody notes for simple folk tunes are on the first beat. This type of practice will solidify your rhythm and timing around the first beat of a measure.

Pay attention to what finger is “leading”. If the first note of each measure is picked with the Thumb, it is said to be “Thumb Lead”. This is the most common and preferred way to learn bluegrass banjo style. Earl Scruggs primarily was a Thumb Lead player. “Index Lead” or “Middle Lead” is done often as well. Depending on which string the melody note lay, the lead will change. It is a good idea to know which finger is leading the melody to develop full control over the rolls.

Ex. 1 - Thumb Lead



Ex. 2 - Index Lead



For this category of Forward Roll, it can be tricky to determine the lead when the first note is on the first string. Notice the above examples do not lead with the first string. The next examples show how to play a lead note on the first string.