

Stand By Me Tutorial

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Stand By Me is an iconic hit by Ben E. King. Released in 1964 on Atlantic Records, this is one of those songs that will get everyone - young and old - singing along. This song is simple to play, since it only has five chords!

In this tutorial, we follow the usual four step protocol for learning to sing and play songs.

Step #1: Learn the chords

Step #2: Learn the groove

Step #3: Learn the hook

Step #4: Put it all together.

Let's go!

Step #1: Learn the chords (see lyrics and chords on the next two pages)

For our first step, you can simply learn the chords in root position. Watch the video and I'll take you through it.

Stand By Me - Ben E. King

[Verse 1]

When the night has come and the land is dark
A A F#m F#m
D E A A
And the moon is the only light we'll see
A A F#m F#m
No, I won't be afraid, no, I won't be afraid
D E A A
Just as long as you stand, stand by me. So darlin', darlin'

[Chorus 1]

stand by me, oh now stand by me,
A A F#m F#m
D E A A
stand by me, stand by me.

[Verse 2]

If the sky that we look up-on should tumble and fall
A A F#m F#m
D E A A
And the mountain should crumble to the sea
A A F#m F#m
I won't cry, I won't cry, no, I won't shed a tear
D E A A
Just as long as you stand, stand by me. And darling, darling

[Chorus 2]

[Solo]

A A F#m F#m
D E A A
A A F#m F#m
D E A A

[Chorus 3]

Steps #2: Learn The groove

The groove of this song is linked to the bass line. The underlying rhythmic pattern for Stand By Me is the Tresillo, which is the 3+3+2 pattern. Try clapping this rhythm while you sing the song.



Step #3: Learn the hook

This song's hook is the iconic bass line, which makes you feel like you could just groove on forever.

The image displays the hook of 'Stand By Me' in G major (one sharp). It consists of two systems of music. The first system has four measures with chords A, A, F#, and F# above the treble staff. The second system has four measures with chords D, E, A, and A above the treble staff. The bass line in both systems follows the iconic Tresillo rhythm: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

Step #4: Put it all together.

Remember that you can (and should!) customize this to fit your skill level. If the chord inversions are too challenging for you, then play them all root positioning. If you want to level it up, try altering the groove or adding some solo fills.

Try to avoid getting stuck in the little details! The goal is for you to learn to sing and play more songs - not drown in a pool of perfectionism. Have fun - it's only music!