

Chapter 36: Guitar Notation

Automatic Tablature Plug-in

How to get there

Select a region using the Mass Mover Tool. Select Automatic Tablature from the Plug-ins Menu.

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See [PLUG-INS MENU](#) for more information on plug-ins.

What it does

The Automatic Tablature plug-in allows you to easily create a Tablature staff (a series of one-line staves set to display fret numbers instead of notes) from the standard notation of a selected staff. You can also select both the standard notation staff and the Tablature staff to modify fret or capo options and to recalculate the tablature from the notation staff.

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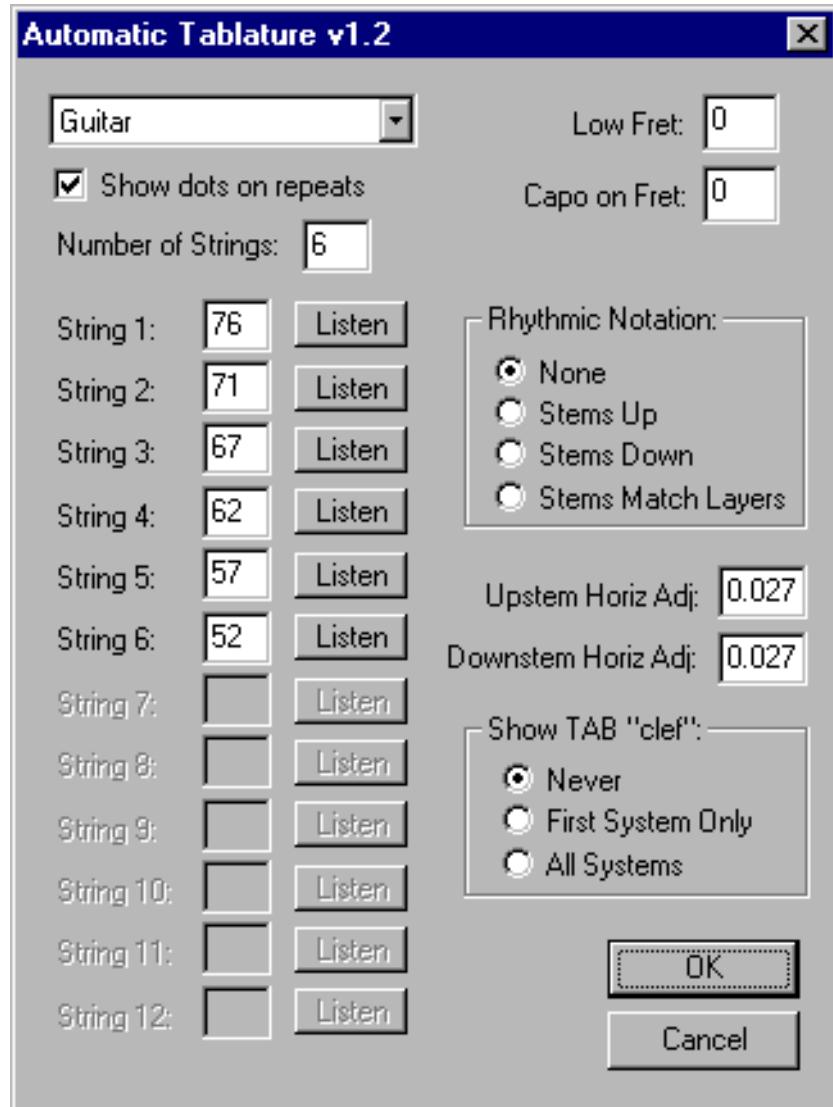
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- **Type: Guitar • Bass • Tenor Banjo • Mandolin • Lute • Custom.** Select the type of tablature staff you want to create from this drop-down list. If you select Custom all of the strings are available for you to define.
- **Show dots on repeats.** Check this box to have dots appear on the tablature staff at repeat bar-lines. Uncheck this box if you prefer no dots on the tablature staff. See [STAFF SETUP](#).
- **Low Fret.** Type in this text box to indicate the lowest fret to use on the instrument.
- **Capo on Fret.** Type a fret number in this text box to indicate the location of a capo.
- **Number of Strings.** Type the number of strings of your instrument into this text box.
- **String 1: • String 2: . . . String 12: • Listen.** Define up to 12 strings. Either type the string into the text box, or, if you don't know the MIDI note number, clicking the Listen button will bring up the Listen dialog box. Highlight the text box next to the string number you want to enter. Click the Listen button and play the note on your MIDI instrument for the highlighted string. Finale will enter the MIDI note number for you.

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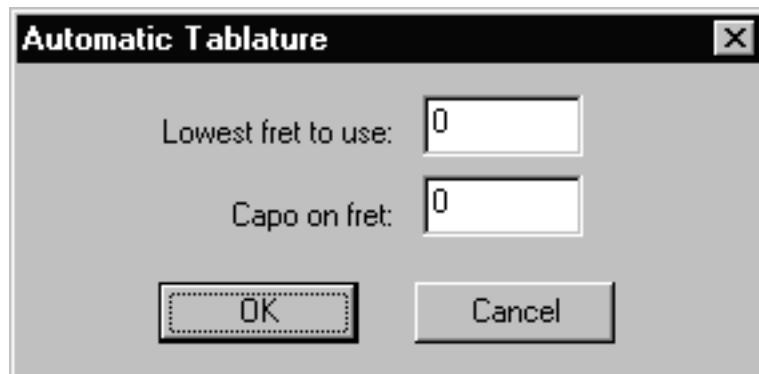
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- **Rhythmic Notation: None • Stems Up • Stems Down • Stems Match Layers.** These radio buttons control whether your tablature will display any rhythmic notation. You can choose between having the stems always up, always down, or matching your layer selections.
- **Upstem Horiz Adj • Downstem Horiz Adj.** These text boxes control the placement of your rhythmic notation in relation to the tablature number. Use the text boxes to move the upstem and downstem notation more to the left or right of the tablature number. Enter the placement in the units currently selected in the Measurement submenu of the Options Menu.
- **Show TAB clef: Never • First System Only • All Systems.** These buttons control whether or not your Tablature staff has the word TAB written down the side as a clef. You can choose to have it displayed only on the first system or all systems, as well as not show it at all.
- **OK • Cancel.** Click OK to create a TAB staff. Click Cancel to return to the score without creating a tablature staff.

Note: If you have already created a tablature staff and would just like to change the fret position or capo position select the tablature **and** notation staves that you would like to change with the Mass Mover Tool. From the Plug-ins Menu, choose Automatic Tablature. A dialog box will appear, and you can then make modifications to your selected measures.



Tablature dialog box

How to get there

Click the Staff Tool , and double-click any staff. From the Notation Style drop-down list choose Tablature, then click Select.

What it does

You can use Finale to create tablature notation (for guitar or banjo, for example), where small numbers appear on a special “staff” to indicate fret numbers. See [TABLATURE](#) for step-by-step instructions. To automatically create tablature notation from standard notation, see [AUTOMATIC TABLATURE](#) plug-in above.

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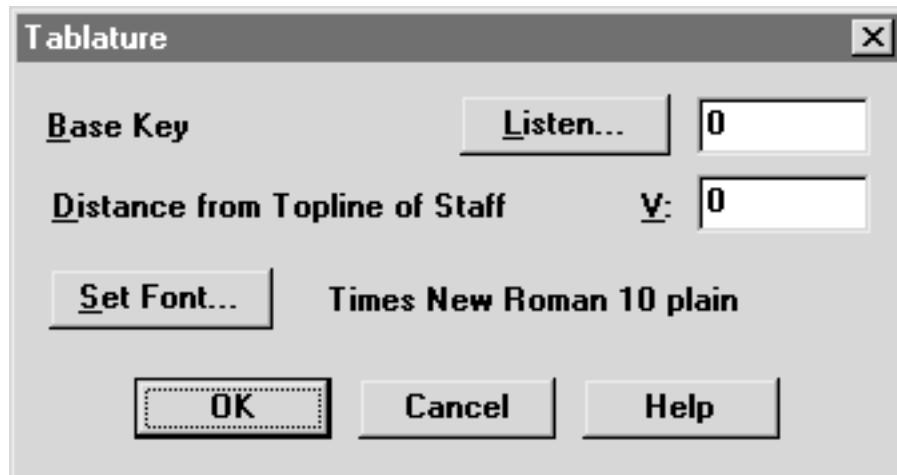
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This special “staff” is, in fact, a series of one-line staves each of which represent one string. In this dialog box, you specify the “open” pitch for the string staff you’re creating. You can also choose a font and position for the numbers themselves.



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- **Base Key • Listen.** In this text box, enter the MIDI key number or pitch corresponding to each open string. You can control whether this value is represented in MIDI key number (middle C=60) or pitch (middle C=C4) in the Program Options dialog box. If you prefer, you can press the listen button and then play the appropriate pitch on a MIDI keyboard.
- **Distance from Topline of Staff.** The number in this text box specifies the vertical placement for the fret numbers Finale will automatically generate. It’s the distance, in points (72 per inch), between the top line of the staff (the only line, in this case) and the baseline (bottom edge) of the numbers.
- **Set Font.** Click this button to display the Font dialog box, where you can choose a font for the fret numbers.
- **OK • Cancel.** Click OK (or press enter) to confirm, or Cancel to discard, your tablature settings. You return to the Staff Attributes dialog box. If you clicked OK, Tablature will be selected in the Notation Style drop-down list.

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Tablature is a special kind of notation for plectrum instruments which uses two staves; the top staff displays the notes in standard notation, and the bottom staff has a staff line for each string of the instrument and displays small numbers instead of noteheads (to indicate fret numbers).

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A tablature score appears as an upper, notation staff and a lower staff whose lines correspond to the strings of the plectrum instrument.

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The instructions for creating tablature notation from scratch show you how to construct and use a tablature staff. Keep in mind, however, that Finale's Automatic Tablature Plug-in fully automates these tasks. See [AUTOMATIC TABLATURE](#) plug-in for details. For instructions on how to edit your guitar tablature, see [TO EDIT GUITAR TABLATURE](#).

In the instructions below, the term notation staff refers to the upper staff, and tablature staff refers to the lower “staff.” (In fact, the lower “staff” is composed of several one-line staves, placed very closely together—one for each string of the instrument.)

To create tablature notation

- **Notate the instrument's music on a normal staff (the notation staff) in the normal way.**
- **Click the Mass Mover Tool**  **and select all of the measures of the notation staff.** See [SELECTING MUSIC](#) for some region-selecting shortcuts.
- **From the Plug-ins Menu, choose Automatic Tablature.** The Automatic Tablature dialog box appears. Make any desired changes. You can change things like the number of strings and tuning, capo and lowest fret position, the look of the repeats, clef and rhythmic notation, and so on. See [AUTOMATIC TABLATURE](#) plug-in for details.
- **Click OK.** A set of TAB staves (one single-line staff for each string) will be created below your notation staff. If you didn't get precisely what you wanted, see [TO EDIT GUITAR TABLATURE](#) below.

To edit guitar tablature (many notes)

- **Make any note changes to the notation staff.**
- **Click the Mass Mover Tool**  **and select the region of music you want to affect in both the notation staff and the tablature staff.** See [SELECTING MUSIC](#) for some region-selecting shortcuts.
- **From the Plug-ins Menu, choose Automatic Tablature.** The Capo Automatic Tablature dialog box appears. Make any desired changes.
- **Click OK.** Finale will recalculate your tablature based on the changes in the notation staff.

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To edit guitar tablature (a few notes)

Note: The Auto Tab plug-in creates Rhythmic Notation by placing headless notes in a new staff almost on top of the 1st string tab. Before editing, click on the Staff Tool, double-click on the top-

most staff handle and place a check next to Hide Staff in the Staff Attributes dialog box. Now make your edits. When you’re finishing, turn the Rhythmic Notation back on by unchecking the Hide Staff box.

- **To move fret numbers to a different string, click the Note Mover Tool  . From the Note Mover Menu, choose Delete and Merge.**
- **Click on any string.** A handle appears on each fret number in the measure on that string.
- **To move a fret number from one string to another, click and drag the handle to the appropriate string.** TOC
- **To edit the fret number, click on the Speedy Entry Tool  .** The Speedy Menu appears. Index
- **From the Speedy Menu, choose Edit TAB as Standard Notation.**
- **Click on the string with the note you wish to edit. The Speedy editing frame appears, with your fret number displayed as a note and placeholder rests.** Next Chapter
- **Click and drag the note to the desired pitch or horizontal position.** You can also click on the note and use the plus or minus keys to raise or lower the fret number by half-steps. Previous Chapter

To create tablature notation (from scratch)

These instructions assume that you’ve selected Points as your measurement units (from the Measurement Units submenu of the Options Menu.)

- **Notate the instrument’s music on a normal staff (the notation staff) in the normal way.**
- **Click the Staff Tool  , and choose Add Staves from the Staff Menu.** The New Staves dialog box appears.
- **In the Number of Staves text box, enter the number of strings on the instrument for which you’re creating tablature.** For a guitar (six strings), enter 6. For a five-string banjo, enter 5. For a tenor banjo, enter 4.
- **In the Topline to Topline Distance text box, enter **–7.25**.** You’re specifying, in points (72 per inch), the distance you want between each of the resultant “staff” lines (of the tablature staff). The value **–7.25** is only an example, which provides slightly more space between staff lines than the usual staff-line distance (6 points) to make room for the fret numbers. You can increase or decrease this number, if you prefer. (It’s a negative number because it specifies how far below the previous staff each new one should appear.) TOC
- **Click OK (or press enter).** You return to the score, where you see a tangle of superimposed staves. If there are several staves in the score, the new staves are at the bottom of the system. If the notation staff was the only staff you created, the new staves hang just below it, overlapping it slightly. Index
- Don’t panic—and don’t click anywhere on the screen yet.
- **Carefully drag-enclose the bottom handles—but not the top handle, which is the handle of the notation staff.** Enclose the closely-spaced handles of the staves you just created. (If you’re preparing guitar tablature, select the bottom six handles. If you’re creating five-string banjo tablature, select the bottom five handles, and so on.) Next Chapter
- **Carefully drag-enclose the bottom handles—but not the top handle, which is the handle of the notation staff.** Enclose the closely-spaced handles of the staves you just created. (If you’re preparing guitar tablature, select the bottom six handles. If you’re creating five-string banjo tablature, select the bottom five handles, and so on.) Previous Chapter

The handles of the staves that will become the tablature staff should now be highlighted.

- **Drag any one of the selected handles downward until they’re clear of the notation staff.** If the cluster of staves was at the bottom of the score, drag it upward until it’s just below the notation staff (but leave a space between the staves).
- **Drag-enclose the handles of the staves you moved.**
- **Choose Add Group and Bracket from the Staff Menu and click OK.** This groups the staves, so that the barline is drawn continuously through the group of staves.
- **Double-click the top tablature staff (its handle is the first one in the cluster).** The Staff Attributes dialog box appears. You’re about to make a series of settings in this dialog box that will transform the existing five-line staff into a special one-line staff, representing a single string of the plectrum instrument.
- * **In the Items to Display section of the dialog box, click to de-select the following checkboxes: Clefs; Endings and Text Repeats; Key Signatures; Measure Numbers; Measure Attached Expressions; Staff Name; Time Signatures.**
- **Choose Other in the drop-down list next to Staff.** The Staff Setup dialog box appears.
- **In the Staff Setup dialog box choose Custom Staff.**
- **Click the handles of the bottom four staff lines to deselect them.** Only the top staff line should remain.
- **Click OK.** You return to the Staff Attributes dialog box.
- **Deselect Display Rests in Empty Measures and Allow Optimization.**
- **From the Notation Style drop-down list choose Tablature, then click Select.** The Tablature dialog box appears. In this box, you’ll specify the pitch of the open string that this one-line “staff” represents.
- **In the Base Key text box, enter the MIDI key number corresponding to the pitch of the open string whose “staff” you’re creating.** In the MIDI key numbering system, middle C is 60, C♯ is 61, and so on.

Here, for example, is a table of the Base Key values for the six “staves” (strings) of a guitar:

Guitar string	“Base Key” number
E string (high)	76
B string	71
G string	67
D string	62
A string	57
E string (low)	52

- **In the V: box, enter the descent value for the fret number.** The number in the V: text box specifies the placement for the fret number Finale will automatically generate. It’s the distance between the top line of the staff (the only line, in this case) and the baseline (bottom edge) of the number. You might enter -4 (points) for a standard 10-point font, for example; the idea is to center the fret number vertically on the staff line.

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- **Click Set Font. Specify the font, size, and style for the fret number, and click OK.** You return to the Staff Attributes dialog box; you've just completed the adjustments for the first line of the tablature "staff."
- **From the staff name drop-down list at the top of the dialog box, choose the next staff down (or click on the down arrow).** You're now viewing the Staff Attributes dialog box for the second "staff line" of your tablature staff. Repeat the steps beginning with the instruction marked by the (*) for this second (one-line) staff.

Repeat the entire process for the remaining "staff lines" of the tablature staff, remembering to enter an appropriate Base Key (open string) value for each.

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- **Click OK (or press enter).** You return to the score. The tablature staff is now complete; now you must copy the music onto it from the notation staff.

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- **Click the Note Mover Tool . Choose Copy and Merge from the Note Mover Menu.**

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- **Click the first measure of the notation staff that you want to be notated on the tablature staff.** A handle appears on each notehead in the measure you clicked.

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- **Drag-enclose all the handles whose notes you'll want played on the bottom (lowest) string of the plectrum instrument.** You can also select nonadjacent notes by shift-clicking their handles.

The selected handles appear highlighted.

- **Drag any of the highlighted handles directly down onto the bottom "staff line" of the tablature staff.** Finale substitutes a fret number for each of the notes you dragged. The number appears in the font and with the placement you specified in the Tablature dialog box.

If the note you drag to the staff line is too low for the string to play, it won't appear at all on the staff line.

- **Drag-enclose (or shift-click) all the handles whose notes you'll want played on the next (second-lowest) string. Drag the highlighted handles directly down onto the next "staff line" of the tablature staff.** Repeat the process with the remaining notes in the measure, and with the remaining measures in the piece.

Guitar parts

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See also [SLASHES](#), [TABLATURE](#), [FRETBOARD DIAGRAMS](#), [AUTOMATIC TABLATURE](#), [TAB SLIDES](#).

Guitar parts are often more complex than other parts, because they often combine regular notation with slashes, or hash marks, representing chordal rhythms. There are three ways to accomplish this combination, depending on the kind of part you want to create.

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If there's a passage where you want to indicate ad lib comping, you can let Finale fill in the measures automatically with either stemless, evenly-spaced slashes, or beamed, stemmed rhythmic slashes. See [SLASHES](#).

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If the part calls for a combination of notes and pitchless slashes, you can enter the melodic parts in one Finale layer, and add the slashes in another. See "[To combine notes with pitchless slashes on one staff](#)," below.

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If there are only a few slashes that must fall on specific pitches, you can notate the entire part in one layer, temporarily notating the slashes as standard noteheads. Once that's done, you can change the appropriate noteheads to slashes with the Special Tools Tool. See “[To create pitched slashes \(note-by-note method\)](#),” below.

To combine notes with rhythmic notation slashes on one staff

- Choose Layer 2 from layer buttons in the lower-left corner of the screen, and click the **Speedy Entry Tool** . You're going to notate the parts that are to display normal noteheads. See [SPEEDY ENTRY](#) for instructions in using the Speedy Entry Tool.
- Click a measure, and enter the notes. For each beat where you'll want a slash, enter any pitch; we'll convert them to slashes next so what counts are the rhythms.
- From the Edit Menu, choose Select Partial Measures.
- Click the Staff Tool , and select the notes that will contain slashes. See [SELECTING MUSIC - TO SELECT PART OF A MEASURE](#) for more information.
- From the Staff Menu, choose Apply Staff Styles. The Apply Staff Styles dialog box appears.
- Select Rhythmic Notation, and click OK. See [STAFF STYLES DIALOG BOX](#) for more information.

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To create pitched slashes (note-by-note method)

- Create the part on a single staff. For each note that's going to be a slash, enter a normal note.
- Click the Special Tools Tool , and click the first measure you want to contain slashes.
- Click the Note Shape Tool . Double-click the handle of the first notehead you want to be a slash. Finale displays a palette containing every symbol in the Maestro music font.
- Double-click the slash. You actually have a choice of two slashes; the smaller one (slot #33) usually looks best. (The larger one is slot #243.) You return to the score, where the note now has a slash instead of a notehead.
- Repeat the process with the other slashed notes.

If the stems don't connect with the notehead correctly, this can be adjusted for each character you use as a notehead. See [STEM CONNECTIONS DIALOG BOX](#) for details.

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Slashes

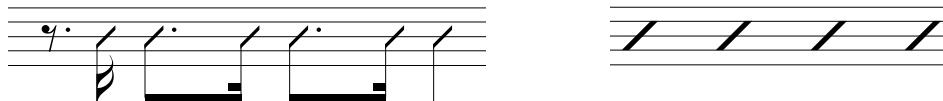
There are two kinds of slashes, or hash marks, used to indicate improvised chording or comping. If you want to indicate ad lib comping, but you don't require a specific rhythm, you can let Finale fill the measures with stemless slashes, spaced according to the time signature (four slashes in a $\frac{4}{4}$ measure, for example, at right in the figure below). If you want to indicate a specific rhythm of comping, Finale can turn the noteheads of any passage into slashes, still beamed and stemmed (at left in the figure below).

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You can also create a passage of mixed normal notation and slash notation, and you can also turn any individual notehead into a slash. See [GUITAR PARTS](#).

To create ‘comping’ slashes

- **Click the Staff Tool** , and **select the measures in which you want slashes to appear**. See [SELECTING MUSIC](#) for some region-selecting shortcuts.
- **From the Staff Menu, choose Apply Staff Styles.** The Apply Staff Styles dialog box appears.
- **Select Rhythmic or Slash Notation and click OK.** Slash Notation hides all the music and replaces it with evenly-spaced hash marks. The number of hash marks is determined by the bottom number of the time signature. Rhythmic Notation turns the music into beamed and stemmed slashes, all on the middle line of the staff. See [STAFF STYLES DIALOG BOX](#) for more information.
- **Click OK (or press enter).** Any music that was in the selected region is now hidden; to restore it, choose the measures again, choose Clear Staff Styles from the Staff Menu.

Fretboard diagrams

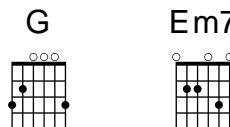
Creating guitar-fretboard chord diagrams is easy in Finale; they're intelligent, too, because they transpose automatically when the music is transposed.

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To create or show fretboard diagrams globally

- **Click the Chord Tool** . The Chord Menu appears.
- **From the Chord Menu, choose Show Fretboards.** If you have already added chord symbols to your piece, the guitar diagrams now appear. Individual chords with Show Fretboards unchecked in the Chord Definition box will not have fretboards. See [CHORD SYMBOLS](#) for instructions.

If you haven't yet added chord symbols, add them as described in Chord symbols; as you add [TOC](#) each chord, its fretboard diagram will also appear.

To create custom fretboard diagrams

See [CUSTOM FRETBOARDS](#).

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To show and hide fretboards for a region

Fretboards must be set to display globally to allow regional fretboards. See To create or show fretboard diagrams globally above. See [CHANGE CHORD ASSIGNMENT DIALOG BOX](#) under the Mass Mover Menu.

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To show and hide fretboards on individual chords (Manual Input)

To show fretboards on all chords, choose Show Guitar Fretboards from the Chord Menu. When selected, fretboards will appear on all chords in the score, except for those chords where you specifically hide the fretboard. Note: This hides the fretboard for all occurrences of that chord.

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- **Click the Chord Tool** . The Chord Menu appears.
- **From the Chord Menu, choose Manual Input.**
- **Click on the note containing the chord you want to edit.**
- **Double-click the handle of the chord.** The Chord Definition dialog box appears.
- **Under Show, uncheck Fretboard. Click OK.** You return to the score, where the fretboard no longer appears for that chord. (If you later decide you want the fretboard to appear, check the Show Fretboard box.)

To remove all fretboard diagrams

- **Click the Chord Tool** . The Chord Menu appears.
- **From the Chord Menu, choose Show Fretboards.** The diagrams disappear, and there should no longer be a checkmark next to Show Fretboards in the Chord Menu.

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To move the fretboard diagrams up or down

- **Click the Chord Tool** . The Chord Menu appears, and four small triangles appear at the left edge of the screen. These control the baseline of the chords (against which the bottom edges of the symbols line up).
- **From the Chord Menu, choose Position Fretboards.** You've just told Finale that the triangles should adjust the baseline for the diagrams instead of the textual chord symbols.

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- **Drag the triangle handles up or down.** Drag the leftmost triangle to set the baseline for the entire piece. As you drag it, the other three triangles move with it.

Drag the second triangle up or down to set the baseline for this staff, all the way through the piece. As you drag it, the two triangles to its right move with it.

Drag the third triangle up or down to set the baseline for this staff, this system only. As you drag it, the rightmost triangle moves with it. Use this third triangle only in Page View (so you can see the system you're affecting).

The rightmost triangle has no effect on fretboard diagrams.

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To change Fretboard Style or capo settings in a region

See [CHANGE CHORD ASSIGNMENT DIALOG BOX](#) under the Mass Mover Menu.

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Bends

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A bend in Finale is just a special kind of slur. See also [SLURS \(AND BENDS\)](#). To add special characters, such as arrowheads at the end of the slurs or $\frac{1}{2}$, you'll need to build them in the [SHAPE DESIGNER](#).

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To place a bend

- Click the Smart Shape Tool  in the Main Tool palette. The Smart Shape Palette and Smart Shape Menu appear. Make sure that a checkmark appears next to Attach to Notes in the Smart Shape Menu.
- Click on the Bend Tool  in the Smart Shape palette, then position the cursor on the bend's beginning note.
- Double-click the mouse, holding the mouse button down on the second click. The note will be highlighted and a small bend will appear. Continuing to hold down the button, drag the slur to the right until you reach the note marking the end of the attachment. When Finale highlights that note, let go of the mouse button. The new note-attached bend appears.

To create a bend spanning two consecutive notes, just double-click the mouse on the first note. Finale places the bend on the adjacent notes.

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To define bend thickness

- Click the Smart Shape Tool . The Smart Shape Menu appears.
- Choose Smart Shape Options from the Smart Shape Menu. The Smart Shape Options dialog box appears.
- Enter a number (in a measurement unit you've selected) into the Line Thickness text box to specify the desired line thickness of all slurs and bends.
- Click OK (or press enter) when you're ready to save the new settings and return to the score. Or click Cancel at any time if you want to restore the original built-in settings and return to the score.

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Note: All bends you create from now on will use these settings. Also remember that all bends already in the score will change to reflect these settings.

To copy bends

See [TO COPY SMART SHAPE SLURS](#).

To create custom bends

See [TO CREATE A SHAPE EXPRESSION SLUR](#).

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Tab Slides

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