

# Kickoffs Lesson 1 - Potatoes

"Potatoes" is one of the most common fiddle tune kickoffs. The syllables "po", "tayt", and "uh" are used in place of numbers to count the rythm made by playing a quarter note and two eighth notes.

Musical notation for a "Potatoes" kickoff pattern. The pattern consists of a quarter note followed by two eighth notes. This sequence is repeated four times. Below the staff, the lyrics "po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh" are written, corresponding to the notes. A tablature below shows fingers A and B plucking the strings.

Potatoes come in counts of "four potatoes" and "eight potatoes". Below is an example of four potatoes. Four potatoes is a deceptive term because we don't play four full potatoes. Instead we play the pattern below to signal the end of the kickoff, and to leave room for pickup notes.

Musical notation for a four-potato kickoff pattern. It follows the same quarter note followed by two eighth notes sequence as the first example, but ends with a single quarter note. The lyrics "po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh po" are written below. A tablature below shows fingers A and B plucking the strings.

Below is an example of eight potatoes. Eight potatoes is also a deceptive term because we don't play eight full potatoes. Instead we play the pattern below to signal the end of the kickoff, and to leave room for pickup notes.

Musical notation for an eight-potato kickoff pattern. It follows the same quarter note followed by two eighth notes sequence as the previous examples, but ends with a single quarter note. The lyrics "po tayt uh po tayt uh po" are written below. A tablature below shows fingers A and B plucking the strings.

Potatoes are often played as a double stop or drone, using chord tones from the first chord appearing in the song. Below is an A chord double stop made up of the root and fifth of the chord. This kickoff is four potatoes long.

Musical notation for a four-potato double stop kickoff. It features a continuous double stop on the A chord (root and fifth) followed by the "potato" pattern. The lyrics "po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh po" are written below. A tablature below shows fingers A and B plucking the strings.

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Below is an example of a four potatoes kickoff for the fiddle tune, Cripple Creek in the key of A.

Below is an example of a four potatoes kickoff for the fiddle tune, Bill Cheatham in the key of A.  
This version of the tune has two pickup notes.

Below is an example of a four potatoes kickoff for the fiddle tune, Devil's Dream in the key of A.  
This version of the tune has three pickup notes in a triplet rhythm.