

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 rhythm made by playing a quarter note and two eighth notes.

po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh

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.

po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh po

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.

po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh po

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.

po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh po

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

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po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh po

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.

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po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh

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.

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po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh po tayt uh