HOW I SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED BEGINNER TO BADASS

My Musical Journey at 70

Today, October 6, 2026 I turn 71.

During my 70th year, I began learning to play the bass guitar. What started as a new challenge has opened up a whole new adventure in music. I successfully completed Josh's Beginner to Badass course, and I'm really looking forward to seeing where this musical journey takes me during my 71st year.

THANKS, JOSH!

Here are the things that helped me successfully complete the course and is helping me to continue learning

How it Started?

Mason, my 13 year old grandson, wanted me to learn Bass guitar along with him. I wanted a new hobby and I had always envied those who could play music I had cousins who were excellent musicians but that gene passed right by me! I watched videos on YouTube and found Josh and his Beginner to Badass course. Excellent instruction, entertaining, and 6 month money-back guarantee?! Why not? If I really sucked, I could give the Bass to my grandson as his second Bass and get my money back from Josh.

1. START WITH A BASS THAT IS READY TO PLAY

I bought an inexpensive Squier Jazz Bass kit from Guitar Center and the video course Beginner to Badass. I also took Josh's advice and had the bass professionally set up. It cost me only $25—which I know was a great price—but it made a huge difference. My bass, "Miss Ruby Rose," plays beautifully.

Lesson learned: Make it easy and enjoyable to pick up your bass and play.

2. MAKE YOUR BASS EASY TO GET TO

I created a quiet place to practice and kept my bass sitting on a stand, ready to play every day. I didn't want to have to unpack everything, plug everything in, and "get ready" before I could practice. Make playing the bass convenient.

I also bought inexpensive headphones—for my wife's sanity! LOL.

3. PRACTICE DAILY — BUT DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP

I practiced every day, with an occasional "life happens" break. I did each lesson the best I could. If a particularly challenging lesson needed a second day, I gladly took the extra day. But I never took a third. Learn the best you can, then move on.

Two or three lessons down the road, you'll often be able to come back to that difficult riff or technique and do it much better. As they say in boxing: "Jab and move."You don't have to win every exchange. Keep moving forward.

4. KEEP A DAILY JOURNAL

I took Josh's advice and kept a daily practice journal. Each day I wrote down what I had accomplished and what I had worked on. This gave me something extremely important:

Visible evidence of progress.

When you're learning something new, improvement can sometimes be difficult to feel from day to day. Looking back through the journal makes that progress obvious.

5. USE THE GEAR BUTTON — SLOW IT DOWN!

One of my most useful tools was the Gear button. When Josh demonstrated something that was moving too fast for me, I slowed it down to 75% or even 50%.

This was especially helpful when learning:

New riffs
Fretting patterns
Plucking techniques
New bass techniques
New musical concepts

Slowing things down allowed me to concentrate on what I was actually doing rather than simply trying to keep up.

6. USE CLOSED CAPTIONS

Use the CC button! I am a strong visual learner. Hearing someone explain a concept is helpful, but seeing the explanation written out makes a significant difference for me. I learn best when I can:

HEAR IT → SEE IT → SAY IT → PLAY IT → WRITE IT DOWN

Using several learning pathways together dramatically improved my comprehension and retention.

7. TAKE SCREENSHOTS — BUILD YOUR OWN DIGITAL REFERENCE LIBRARY

Josh provides an incredible amount of written information, diagrams, definitions, charts, and illustrations. I took hundreds of screenshots and organized them into different photo albums on my phone.

For example:

- Scales — Major, Minor, Pentatonic, Blues
- Circle of Fifths
- Shapes
- Fretboard
- Music Theory
- Songs
- Techniques

I also write notes directly on the photographs and use the “Add a Caption” function underneath them. You can put several lines—or even a couple of paragraphs—into the caption. This turned my phone into a portable bass reference library.

8. PRINT THE RIFFS

I also printed the lesson riffs before working on them. I made notes directly on the pages—especially things like:

• Fingering
• Slides
• Position changes
• Timing
• Techniques that gave me trouble

Writing things down adds another tactile learning component and helps reinforce memory.

9. BUILD A PHYSICAL BASS NOTEBOOK

Yes, I know all of this information is available digitally. But I’m old school. I like the feel of a physical book! I created a Lesson & Song Notebook using a three-ring binder and clear plastic page protectors.

It contains:

• Lesson riffs
• Favorite songs
• Tabs
• Instructional notes
• Fingering patterns
• Slides
• Personal reminders

I can flip through it quickly and find what I need. It’s essentially my own personal bass textbook.

10. PRINT YOUR FAVORITE SONG TABS

Take advantage of the song resources Josh provides.

I especially recommend going through First 50 Songs and 100 First Songs and choosing songs that you actually enjoy. If a printable tab isn’t available, take a screenshot and print it directly from your photo album. Learn songs you want to play. Enjoyment is fuel for practice.

11. LEARN THE FRETBOARD

Study the fretboard. Don’t just learn songs—learn where the notes are.

I started out knowing nothing about the bass fretboard. Now I can identify the notes, and with regular review I’m finding them faster and faster. That knowledge has changed how I approach the bass.

12. BUILD YOUR BASS “TOOLKIT” ONE TOOL AT A TIME

Don’t try to learn everything at once. Build your toolkit gradually.

For example:

Tool #1 — Root & Fifth
Learn it. Practice it. Use it.

Tool #2 — Major Triad
Learn it. Practice it. Use it.

Tool #3 — 12-Bar Blues
Learn the 1–4–5 pattern. Practice it. Use it.

Then keep adding tools. The goal isn’t simply to collect information. Use your tools until they become second nature. You are building the skills of a craftsman.

13. ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR PROGRESS

This may be one of the most important lessons I’ve learned. I started knowing absolutely nothing about playing bass.

Now I know what a major triad is and how to use it. I know the notes on the fretboard. I can read tabs. I can find notes faster. I can learn and play riffs. I can play songs. And with continued practice, I’m becoming more precise, developing better timing, and getting closer to playing things at normal speed. That’s progress!

Don’t overlook how far you’ve come.

14. MAKE “DELIBERATE DAILY PRACTICE” YOUR MANTRA

DELIBERATE DAILY PRACTICE

Don’t simply pick up the bass and play randomly every day. Have a small, specific goal. Make the goal something you can accomplish in one or two practice sessions.

If something is going to take three or more sessions, divide it into smaller goals. Small victories add up.

15. REMEMBER THE PEAK-END RULE

This has become one of my favorite practice principles:

The peak–end rule is a psychological shortcut where people judge an event based on how they felt at its most intense moment (the peak) and its final moments (the end), rather than the total average or length of the experience.

“ END WITH FUN — YOU’LL COME BACK!”

Don’t finish every practice session frustrated by the hardest thing you’re learning. End by doing something you enjoy:

• Play a favorite song
• Improvise along with a cool song
• Practice something you’ve already mastered
• Just NOODLE!

Finish practice with a smile. That makes you want to come back tomorrow.

16. SET REALISTIC GOALS — BUT DREAM BIG!

I started this journey simply wanting to learn how to play the bass. Now I believe something much bigger is possible. I believe I can become an excellent bassist. With good instruction, such as Beginner to Badass, combined with deliberate daily practice, patience, persistence, and a willingness to keep learning, I believe I can become the best bassist I can be.

I’m 71 years old today. And I don’t see that as a limitation. I see it as the beginning of another adventure.

The journey isn’t over because I completed Beginner to Badass.

Completing Beginner to Badass is where the next journey begins.

Thanks, Josh, for helping open the door to a whole new world of music.

Here’s to 71! Doc Randy