

THE THINGS THAT I USED TO DO

Guitar Slim, 1954

Words and Music by Eddie "Guitar Slim" Jones

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From the book *Blues Guitar Classics (Guitar Signature Licks)* Hal Leonard HL 00695177
by Wolf Marshall

AUDIO CLIP

Intro and Verse

New Orleans bluesman Guitar Slim (Eddie Jones) exerted an enormous influence on many modern guitarists to follow, including Buddy Guy, Jimi Hendrix, and Stevie Ray Vaughan. A brilliant and underrated guitarist, Slim was also the consummate showman. He dyed his hair to match the color of his suits and used a 100-foot+ guitar cord to wander off stage into the parking lot during gigs. He lived in the fast lane and he played loudly! His 1954 hit, “Things That I Used to Do,” a timeless and important blues classic, reached the top of the R&B charts. It featured another blues legend, Ray Charles—who arranged the gospel-tinged track and played piano.

“The Things That I Used to Do” is a slow 12-bar blues in F and grooves in the 12/8 meter endemic to the style. Slim’s guitar parts in the verse [\[A\]](#) are confined to catchy single-note riffs which answer the vocal lines in the familiar call-and-response format of the genre. These thematic licks are based on the F major pentatonic scale (F–G–A–C–D) in the first position. They exploit slides to high A on the first string as a recurring expressive device and repeated single notes as a melodic motif. The turnaround lick in measure 12 has become an indispensable cliché in the blues guitar lexicon.

Though Guitar Slim dabbled with a number of guitars in his brief career (he turned Buddy Guy on to a Strat®), his main squeeze was a Gibson Les Paul goldtop with P-90 pickups. He is rumored to be buried with it. Slim played it through an overdriven PA system—apparently the guitar amps of the day simply weren’t loud enough!

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Intro and Verse

AUDIO CLIP 

Intro
Free Time

[A] Verse
Slow Blues ♩. = 66

C7 **F** **B♭** **F**

mp *mf w/ dist.*

TAB

V I IV I

4 **B♭**

7 **F** **C7**

I V

10 **B♭** **F**

IV I

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