

# INTRODUCTION:

Hi and Welcome,

This book is a developmental approach in that it builds upon simple sweep picking patterns for superimposition and extension. This can then be applied to all styles of music.

This book starts from the basics and then moves forward by demonstrating the extreme possibilities available on the guitar fingerboard.

<https://youtube.com/c/AlternatePickingGuitar>



<https://www.jazzimproviser.com>



# WHAT IS "SWEEP PICKING"?

Sweep picking or raking is a technique where the guitar strings can be crossed with the same picking stroke. For instance when executing an arpeggio we can literally "Sweep/Rake" across the strings with one picking stroke, as you will find in these exercises. For simplicity's sake we will concentrate on arpeggios and variations around them.

**BE WARNED THOUGH:** This technique can become sloppy and unmusical if the player doesn't count time to begin with and follow the "CORRECT" picking strokes.

The following exercises are based upon "Simple Picking Strokes/Patterns that are quite similar and so are easy to remember. The down stroke is indicated by an upside down looking box and the Up stroke by a V looking sign. [See below]

▣ V  
down up

In the first example below we pluck Down and then up and sweep down on a simple Em arpeggio. Starting with crotchets we move through quavers to semiquavers [16's].

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The image shows musical notation for three exercises on an Em arpeggio in 4/4 time. The first staff is in treble clef, and the second staff is in bass clef. The exercises are as follows:

- Exercise 1:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. It starts with a downstroke (▣) on the 7th fret and an upstroke (V) on the 3rd fret. The notes are G4 (7), B4 (3), and D5 (5). The exercise is repeated three times, each time with a double bar line and repeat dots. The first iteration uses crotchets, the second uses quavers, and the third uses semiquavers.
- Exercise 2:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. It starts with a downstroke (▣) on the 7th fret and an upstroke (V) on the 3rd fret. The notes are G4 (7), B4 (3), and D5 (5). The exercise is repeated three times, each time with a double bar line and repeat dots. The first iteration uses crotchets, the second uses quavers, and the third uses semiquavers.
- Exercise 3:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. It starts with a downstroke (▣) on the 7th fret and an upstroke (V) on the 3rd fret. The notes are G4 (7), B4 (3), and D5 (5). The exercise is repeated three times, each time with a double bar line and repeat dots. The first iteration uses crotchets, the second uses quavers, and the third uses semiquavers.

The bass clef staff shows the fretting for the Em arpeggio: 7 (T), 3 (A), and 5 (B) on the first three strings, with a 4 on the 4th string. The fret numbers are repeated for each iteration of the exercises.

## Extending the arpeggio:

In the next exercise we descend a full octave Em arpeggio with the Down and Up and sweep down motion. Firstly in quavers and then in 6's or you can count in triplets. \*[You can also "Pull Off" the G note and pick UP from the E note. We will look at this concept in greater detail as we progress but keep it SIMPLE for the moment].\*

The image displays musical notation for an exercise on the Em arpeggio. It consists of four staves. The first staff shows a descending arpeggio in quavers (G4, E4, C4, G3, E3, C3, G2, E2) with a 'V' pick direction. The second staff shows the same arpeggio in sixteenth notes, grouped into four triplets, with 'V' pick directions. The third and fourth staves show the fretboard diagrams for the first and second measures of the exercise, with fingerings: 7-3-5-4-5-7 for the first measure and 7-3-5-4-5-7 for the second measure.

## COMPLETING MUSICAL PHRASES

Here we pluck down when we land on the note of D [or in this case the minor seventh of the Em arpeggio]. In the variation next to it we then pluck UP to finish the full octave of this minor seventh descending sweep arpeggio.

The image shows a musical score for a descending sweep arpeggio in E minor. It consists of three measures. The first measure shows a descending sweep from the 7th fret to the 3rd fret, with a pluck-down (V) on the 3rd fret. The second measure shows a descending sweep from the 7th fret to the 3rd fret, with a pluck-down (V) on the 3rd fret. The third measure shows a descending sweep from the 7th fret to the 3rd fret, with a pluck-up (V) on the 3rd fret. The tablature below the staff shows the fret numbers: 7 3 5 4 7 for the first two measures, and 4 5 7 for the third measure.

Next we will EXTEND into an E minor seventh 2 octave descending sweep arpeggio. This is followed by a variation with some "Embellishment" employing alternate picking in order to give you an idea of how to phrase at the end of a sweep lick or arpeggio so that a phrase sounds finished and professional.

The image shows a musical score for an extended descending sweep arpeggio in E minor. It consists of three measures. The first measure shows a descending sweep from the 10th fret to the 7th fret, with a pluck-down (V) on the 7th fret. The second measure shows a descending sweep from the 10th fret to the 7th fret, with a pluck-down (V) on the 7th fret. The third measure shows a descending sweep from the 10th fret to the 7th fret, with a pluck-down (V) on the 7th fret. The tablature below the staff shows the fret numbers: 10 7 8 7 4 5 7 for the first two measures, and 5 4 9 7 for the third measure.



# ASCENDING SWEEP PICKING CONCEPTS

We will now look at SIMPLE ascending sweep picking strokes and patterns. The first is a simple Em arpeggio followed by an Em7 arpeggio. So the first bar is DOWN DOWN UP and the second bar is DOWN DOWN DOWN UP.

Musical notation showing two bars of ascending sweep picking. The first bar contains an Em arpeggio (E2, G2, B2) and the second bar contains an Em7 arpeggio (E2, G2, B2, D3). The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar tablature below the staff shows the fret numbers for each note: 7 5 4 7 5 4 for the first bar and 7 5 4 7 7 5 4 7 for the second bar. Pick strokes are indicated by 'V' for downstrokes and '∩' for upstrokes.

Going back to what was mentioned earlier we can now see in the exercise below the "Hammer on/Pull off" approach that can be employed. The hammer on/pull off is between the B and G notes as the UP STROKE is on the E note of the second string. Some players prefer this approach.

Musical notation and guitar tablature for an exercise. The notation shows a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 3/4 time signature. The exercise consists of two measures. The first measure has a downstroke on E2, followed by an upstroke on E2. The second measure has a downstroke on E2, followed by a hammer on/pull off between B2 and G2, and then a downstroke on E2. The guitar tablature shows the fret numbers for each note: 7 5 4 5 3 7 3 5 4 5 7. The hammer on/pull off is indicated by a red bracket and the text "hammer/pulloff". A red arrow points to the hammer on/pull off with the text "Hammer on/Pull off on B and G note".

# ASCENDING AND DESCENDING EXERCISE

Below is a full ascending, descending and ascending sweep arpeggio exercise. Look carefully at the SUGGESTED PICKING STROKES. Remember you can use the hammer on/pull of technique on the C and A notes before the upstroke on the A note of the second string. Start very slowly and get the FRETTING HAND comfortable with the SHAPES of the arpeggios in this pattern. Put both hands together and SYNC the fretting hand with the picking hand and learn what strokes go with which fingers.

Although this is getting a bit advanced if you learn each part chunk by chunk by breaking it down and familiarize the fretting hand shapes with the picking hands strokes then it WILL start to flow and you will gain confidence quickly.

Am Sweep Picking Full Exercise

The image displays a musical exercise for an Am sweep picking. It includes a treble clef staff in 3/4 time, a guitar TAB staff, and a fretting hand diagram. The treble staff shows an ascending arpeggio (A2, C3, E3), a descending arpeggio (E3, C3, A2), and an ascending sweep arpeggio (A2, C3, E3, G3, B3, D4). The guitar TAB shows fret numbers: 12, 10, 9, 10, 8, 12, 8, 10, 9, 10, 12 for the first measure; and 10, 9, 14, 13, 12, 17 for the second measure. The fretting hand diagram shows fingerings: index on A2, middle on C3, ring on E3, and a sweep stroke 'V' over the G3, B3, and D4 notes.

# EXTENDING SWEEP ARPEGGIOS

Employing what we have practiced and learnt in the first FULL exercise above we will descend DOWN the guitar neck with an F major and a D minor arpeggio joined together [or superimposed]. Notice that we start with an UPSTROKE to down stroke. Get the shapes of the fretting hand familiar. This exercise is actually quite easy as the fretting hand shapes are very comfortable on the hand.

Double Time Quick/Fast

Can Hammer / Pull off

Can Land on Down Stroke to start next Phrase

# A Major 3 Octaves Sweep Picking

In the Exercise below we will ascend the guitar neck with an A major three octave arpeggio. Again, get the fretting hand comfortable and sync it to the picking strokes and gradually build speed. The second variation covers even more ground so take your time. Although it looks difficult it has to be said that the fretting shapes are very comfortable and relatively easy to play.

Double Time Quick/Fast

## ALTERNATE PICKING SET-UP FOR SWEEP PICKING ARPEGGIOS

In the beginning example we noted how it is important to finish a sweep picking phrase with a bent note or a lick or some other embellishment. Well, It is also important to start a phrase with something, so here we will give it some RHYTHMIC drive by employing alternate picking. The alternate picking line is in 8<sup>th</sup> notes and lets go on 16<sup>th</sup> notes for the sweep picking arpeggio. We also finish the line with some more alternate picking and a chord.

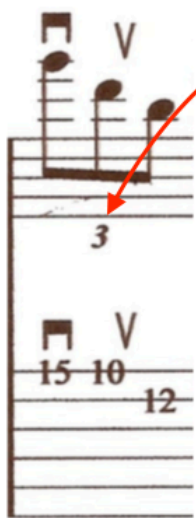
The image shows a musical score for guitar on a single staff. The notation is divided into two measures. The first measure contains an 8-measure phrase of alternate picking, indicated by 'V' symbols above the notes. The notes are: G4 (sharp), A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and F4 (sharp). The second measure contains a 16-measure sweep picking arpeggio, indicated by a horizontal line above the notes. The notes are: G4 (sharp), A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4 (sharp), E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, and E3. The score concludes with a final chord: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4 (sharp), E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, and E3. The fretboard diagram below the staff shows the fingerings for each note: 14, 10, 12, 10, 12, 9, 10, 9, 6, 7, 2, 4, 5, 4, 2, 6, 4, 0, 0, 6, 6, 0, 0.



# Triplet simple pattern: VARIANT TO ALTERNATE PICKING

A variation of alternate picking will be looked at now. This simple pattern can be applied to scales, pentatonics and arpeggios. The key to start with is to feel the triplet rhythmic drive because then it will really flow effortlessly. The strokes are also very simple, just, down up up.

Count the Triplet time: Feel the "tri pi let" or "1 trip let 2 trip let" etc



We can then extend this by adding an arpeggio. This concept is actually quite simple and flows very easily with the triplet rhythmic feel.

# ONE LAST EXERCISE TO FINISH!

Okay, one last exercise for a bit of fun. It is a C Lydian idea. Go through the usual things like looking at the fretting hand shapes, the picking hands strokes whilst building tempo slowly but gradually.

The image shows a musical score for a guitar exercise in C Lydian mode. It consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a guitar fretboard diagram below it. The score is divided into four measures. The first measure contains a sequence of notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter). The second measure contains: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter). The third measure contains: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), with a red bracket under the last three notes labeled "Slide". The fourth measure contains: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), with a red bracket under the last three notes labeled "or Slide". The fretboard diagram shows the following fret numbers for each measure: Measure 1: 3, 7, 5, 5, 5, 3; Measure 2: 10, 7, 8, 7, 9, 10; Measure 3: 9, 7, 11, 12, 10, 15; Measure 4: 17, 15. Picking hand strokes are indicated by 'V' (downstroke) and 'P' (pick) above the notes. A red checkmark is above the final note of the fourth measure.

## EPILOGUE:

I hope that this book has been of value to you. As I always say it is best to have a few exercises and MASTER them by understanding the sync between the picking hand and the fretting hand than to have a million exercises un learnt. Truly if you only master a few and have a few good picking stokes and you can do them easily then you can start to create your own patterns and lines within your own preferred style.

*Thanks for taking the time to study this book and good luck!*

*Clifford Martin c2021*

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