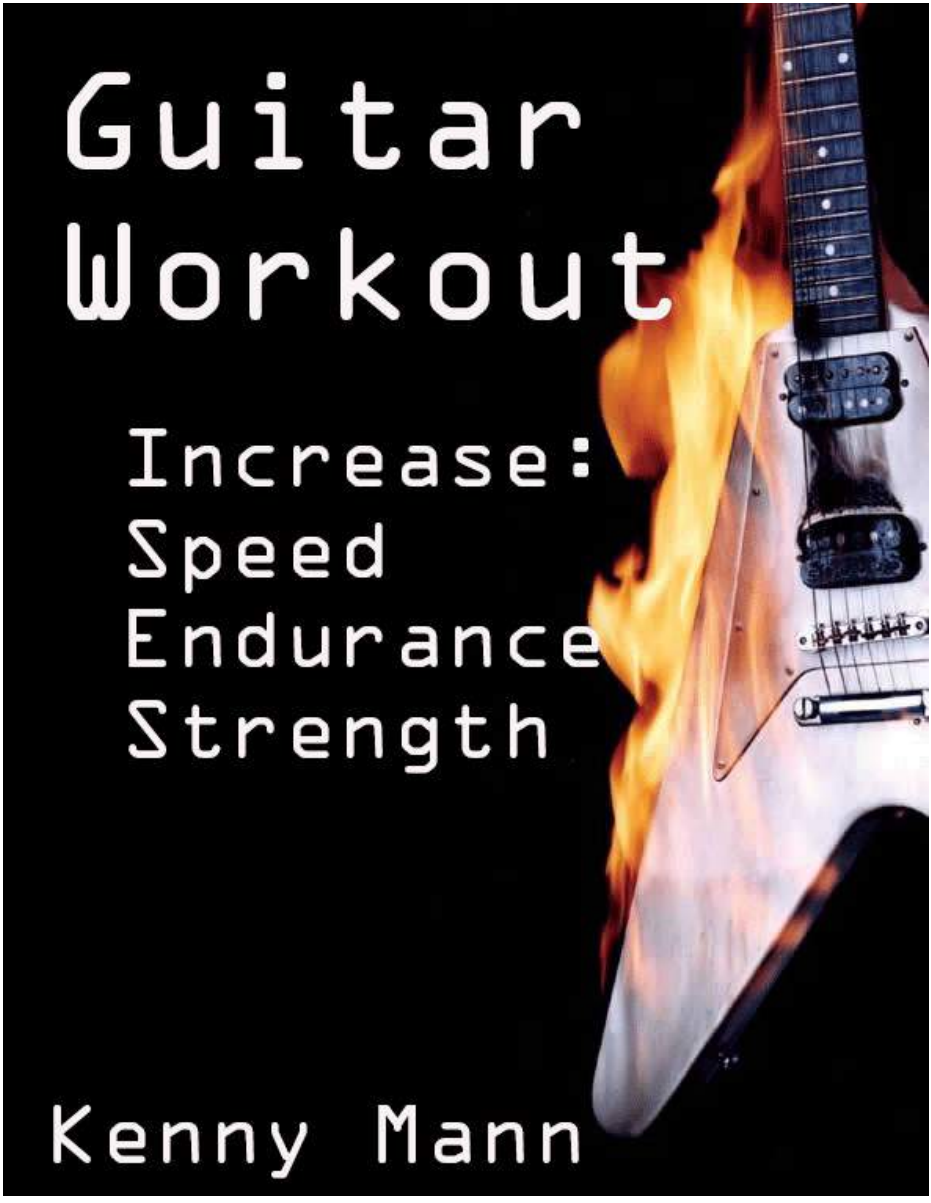
Guitar Workout

Increase:
Speed
Endurance
Strength



Kenny Mann

GUITAR WORKOUT

BY KENNY MANN

Guitar Alliance Inc.

Publisher:
Guitar Alliance Inc.
1518 McBee St.
Malvern AR 72104

Web Site: http://guitaralliance.com
E-Mail: kenny@guitaralliance.com

Copyright © 2013 **Guitar Alliance Inc.**

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means without prior permission of the copyright owner.
Enquires Should be Made to the Publisher.

Every effort has been made to ensure that this book is free from error or omissions. However, the Publisher, the Author, the Editor or their respective employees or agents, shall not accept responsibility for injury, loss or damage occasioned to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of material in this book whether or not such injury, loss or damage is in any way due to any negligent act or omission, breach of duty or default on the part of the Publisher, the Author, the Editor or their respective employees or agents.

The Quest For Chops

Ok, so you want to play faster. You've got a goal and I'm about to tell you how to go about it, but let's get a few things out of the way...

The main thing to remember is that building speed takes time. Lots of time. You may not notice marked improvement from day to day, but you will be making progress if you put in the time.

To really gauge your success, try making an audio recording of yourself playing some of the exercises in this book on your first day of playing them. You can make subsequent recordings in the weeks that follow. You'll find that your skills have been increasing all along.

It's kind of like a 'before' and 'after' shot from just about any fitness craze product- except this 'before' and 'after' will be sonic in nature and not visual.

The exercises in this book will help you develop confidence in your playing and will help make you aware of weak areas of your playing that need concentrated effort.

They are great way to start out a practice session as they help loosen your fingers and stretch your hand muscles to get you ready to practice other material.

These exercises should be part of your regular practice routine, but you don’t want to practice them to the point where you may injure your hands. If you feel a little too much discomfort or cramping

in your hands, by all means cut back a little. Like at the gym, your muscles and tendons need time to recuperate in between workouts.

You should always play each exercise at a speed that you are comfortable with. If cannot play the exercises smoothly and without mistakes, then you are going too fast and you need to slow it down a little. Start out slow and slowly build speed. We're striving for good technique, not fast bad technique. Remember, speed comes with time.

I can't tell you how many students come up to me to show me how fast they've gotten only to mangle an exercise with terrible technique. You might fool some of the people, but you won't fool a musician. Just take your time and do it right. Don't worry about showing off at first.

Again, you may not see improvement overnight, but you will see improvement eventually. If you practice these exercises just 15 minutes a day for a week, at the end of the week you will have improved guaranteed. With practice you can only get better, not worse.

Using A Metronome

An invaluable tool is what is called a metronome. It's a simple device that keeps time by creating a regular beat.

You will find using one in conjunction with the Guitar Workout exercises very beneficial To practice with a metronome simply play one, two, or three notes per beat. When you are able to play an exercise without error at one speed, then you just speed the metronome up a little.

You can get a metronome at any music store. They come in all shapes and sizes, most notable is the traditional piano metronome with it's swinging pendulum. Prices range from about $10 all the way to $100+. There's no need to spend more than $20 for one.

Illustration: The "old school", swinging pendulum metronome.

Illustration: A more modern metronome....

It's really important to use a metronome. Most of us lack the skill of keeping perfect time, so what will eventually happen is that you'll get stuck at a certain speed and then not be able to get any faster than if you don't use one.

I've got a video for those of you would like more help using a metronome with your exercises at the link below:

http://guitaralliance.com/guitar-exercises/the-metronome/

1 Chromatic Alternate Picking Exercises

Alternate Picking

For our first set of exercises we will use a picking technique called alternate picking where you pick in an down, up, down, up pattern.

It allows you to play a series of picked notes fluently and cleanly. It helps develop a good sense of rhythm because the regular picking motion helps acquire an evenness of timing that is absolutely essential.

Some important point about alternate picking to remember are...

- Everyone holds a pick a little bit differently. Most people find that holding your pick with the tips of the thumb and forefinger sufficient.
- How you hold your pick to the strings is what is important here. You don't want the top of your pick to lean too far towards the ceiling or towards the floor. You may want to position you pick at a slight angle.
- You should limit arm movement to your wrist. Your thumb, finger, elbow, or arm should not move when picking. Keep your wrist movement to a minimum to achieve maximum speed.

You're picking motion will look something like this:

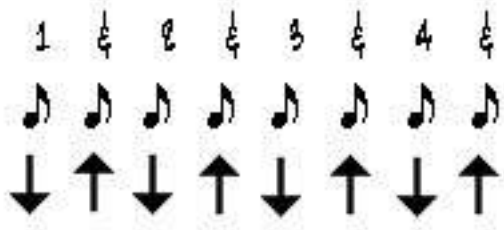


Illustration: The down, up, down, up motion.

You can count along as '1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and'. You'll pick down on each beat and pick up in-between.

Watch a video demonstration of alternate picking at the link below:

http://guitaralliance.com/guitar-exercises/exercises-1-4/

The Chromatic Scale

For these exercises we'll be using the chromatic scale. It's a fancy term for a scale that includes every note. These exercises will not have very much musical value to them in that they'll sound like a song or anything you would normally play during a song.

The point of our exercises is to work technique, after all.

Exercise 1

For this exercise practice the down, up, down, up alternate picking pattern on the open high E string. Start slowly! You want the notes to be as even as possible. Once you're able to play the pattern evenly slowly increase the tempo. This may seem like a boring exercise, but it's very beneficial to build alternate picking skills.

When I first started speed training many, many moons ago, I used to practice my alternate picking (as in exercise 1) while doing common things like watching TV. It doesn't require much focus, so

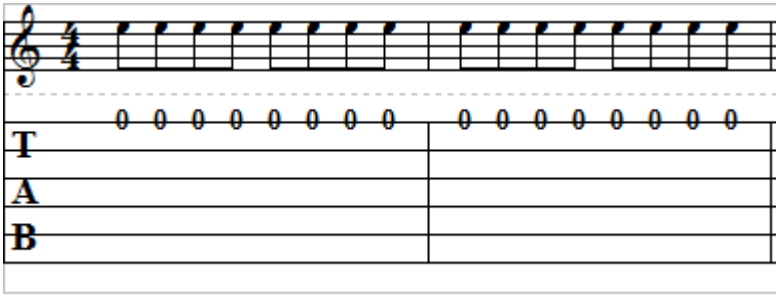


Illustration: Exercise 1

you can passively practice it whenever you like.

EXERCISE 2

Now we're going to alternate pick on all 6 strings. This one isn't as easy as it looks. Remember to keep the notes even. Once you can play through the exercise without a mishap and all the notes are even, try playing it faster and faster. Don't get sloppy! Maintain a clean attack.

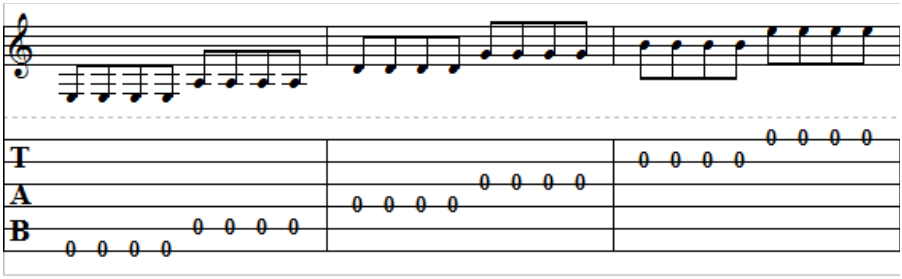


Illustration: Exercise 2

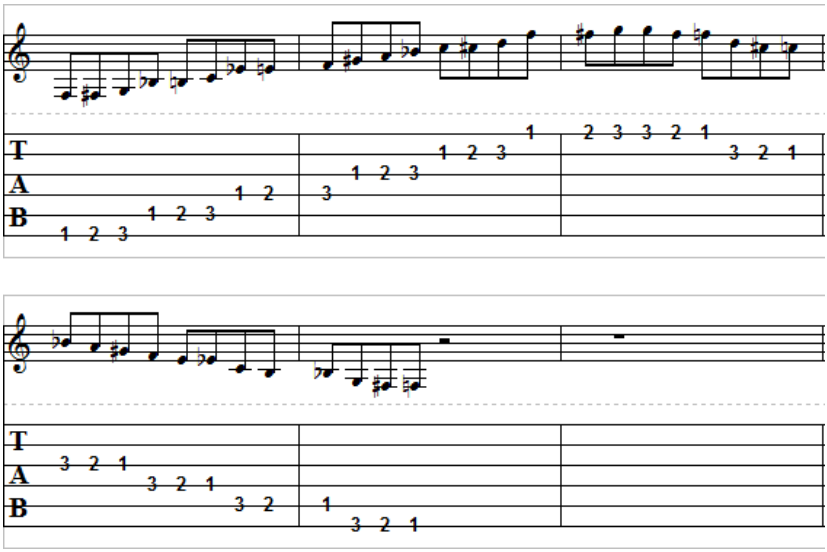
Once you get to the end try immediately playing the exercise backwards!

EXERCISE 3

Let's get our left hand involved now!

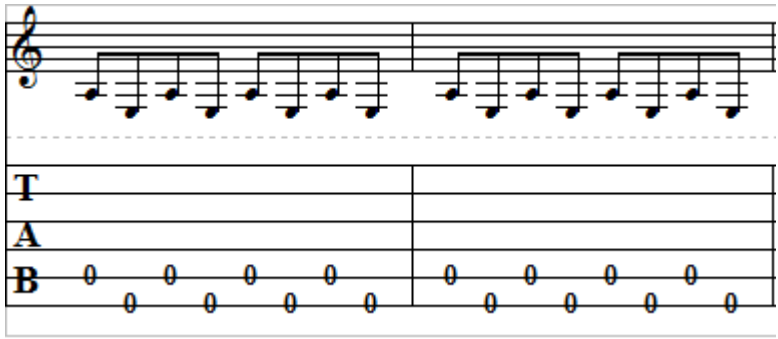
Concentrate on keeping this exercise clean and even. It doesn't matter if you have to go real slow at first. You'll build speed with time. If you try to rush into playing fast before you are ready it will just sound sloppy.

Notice that there are 3 notes per string on this one and some strings begin with an upstroke. We don't change the alternate picking pattern even when we switch strings.



Exercise 4

This is more of a challenge exercise. I don't think you'll be able to play this one very fast without a lot of practice. It's a alternate picking string switching exercise. Instead of alternate picking on one string we're going to alternate between to adjacent strings. Hard!



Visit the link below to see video demonstrations of exercises 1-4:

http://guitaralliance.com/guitar-exercises/exercises-1-4/

Exercise 5

This is simply a chromatic run up the 1st 4 frets on each string.

It's a great warm-up exercise because it warms both your left and right hand, but it's also great for building speed. Use all 4 of your fingers on your left hand.

Use your 1st finger for notes on the 1st fret, 2nd finger for notes on the 2nd, 3rd finger for notes on the 3rd fret, and 4th finger for notes on the 4th fret.

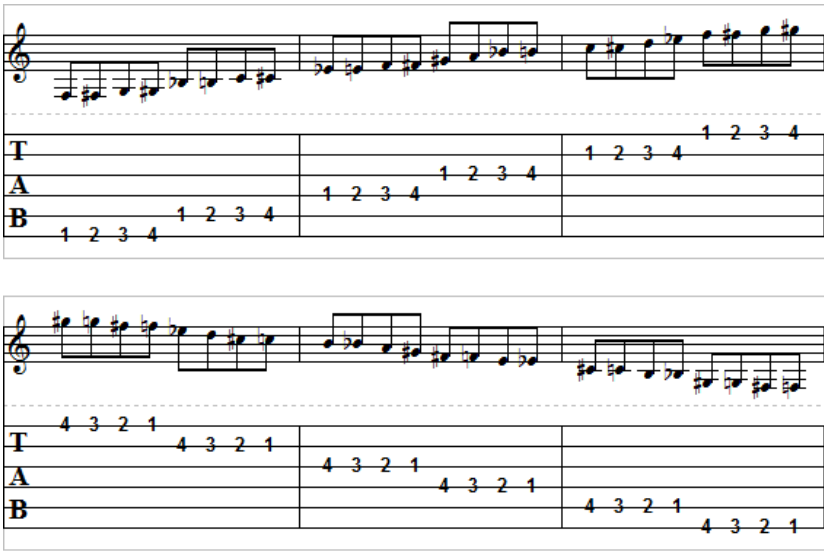


Illustration 1: 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4...

EXERCISE 6

This exercise is performed on a single string. It's a 4 note ascending pattern. Use the correct fingerings as illustrated below:

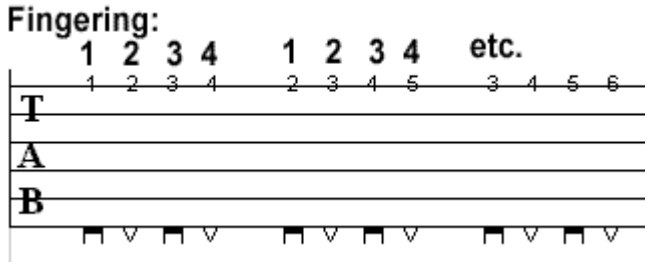
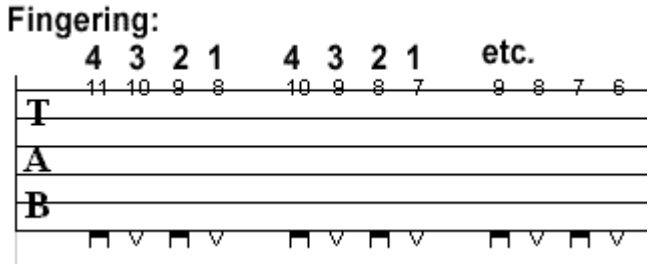
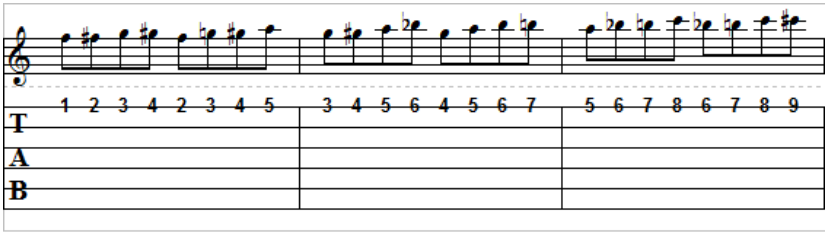


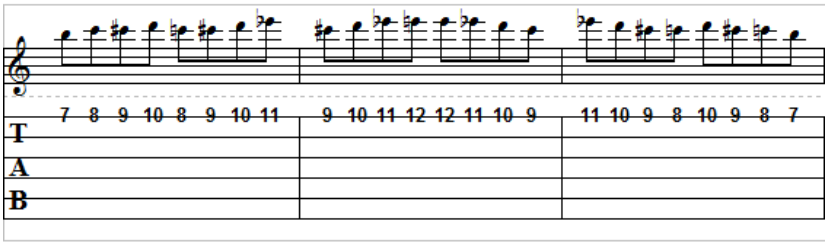
Illustration: Ascending

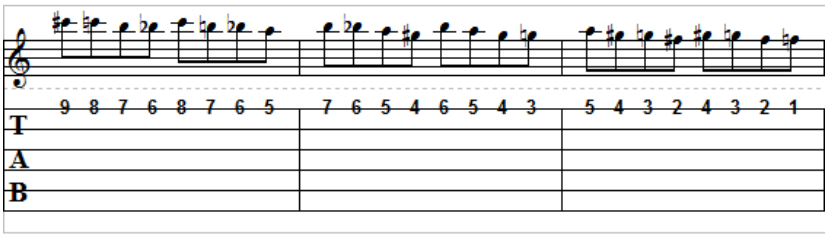


The actual exercise is on the following page. Keep it as clean as possible. Make sure the notes are even!

Guitar Workout







EXERCISE 7

This one is pretty fun to play. You'll actually see several songs with licks played that are similar to this exercise. Keep a steady picking motion during this exercise. Don’t let the notes run into each other.

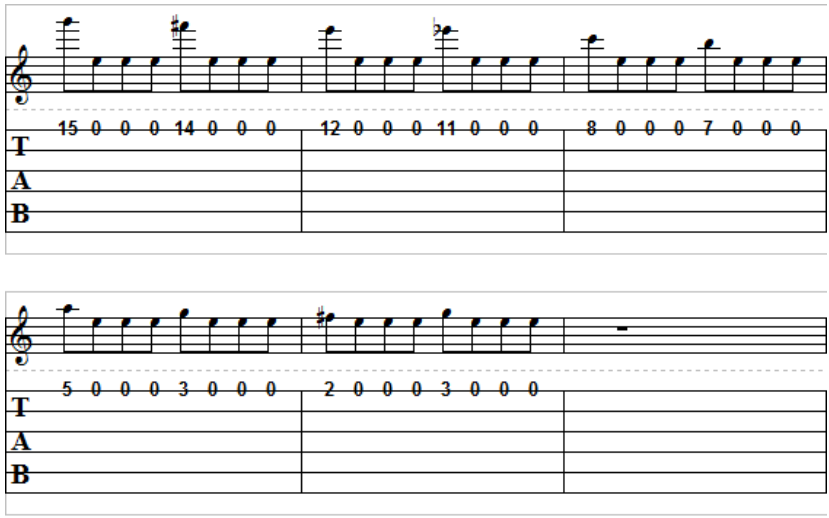


Illustration: Exercise 7: It's got bounce!

You should play around with variations of this exercise by changing the fretted notes, or playing a similar pattern on a different string. Be creative and see what you can come up with!

Exercise 8

This one is harder than it looks. It will give your left hand a good work out as well as develop your alternate picking. Play this exercise until you turn blue in the face. Repeat the same pattern over and over non-stop until your hands can't handle it any more. Take a minute to recoup and then do it again. When you can play it cleanly and evenly, try the next exercise.

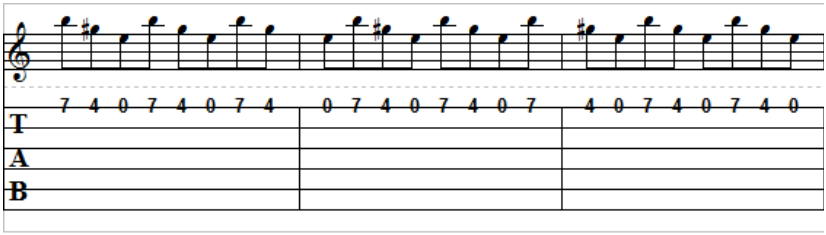


Illustration: Exercise 8: Feel the burn!

It might seem like torture, but we're building technique. Hand cramps are common, so fight through it! We're not only working our speed, but we're working our endurance. You don't want to cramp up during your big solo, do you? No one does, so you've got to train like it's a 12 round fight and be prepared.

We'll play off of the pattern presented in exercise 8 with our next exercise.

EXERCISE 9

This one is a monster, but you can do it!

It's the same pattern as the previous exercise, but we're ascending up the neck and descending down the neck.

Notice that the tablature stops at the 15th fret. If you get brave you can go all the way up to the highest fret and then back down again. In fact, you can play it any way you want. Go as high up the fretboard as you dare. Go back down again. Go back in forth between two positions. Just have fun with it, but maintain that 3 note pattern.

It gets quite challenging to play fast because it's a three note pattern being played in standard 4/4 time. A different note of the sequence is always falling on the beat.

Remember if you get frustrated while trying to play a hard exercise, take a break for a minute and then come back and try. Tension builds up in our neck, shoulders, hands, and arms. A lot of times when you come back after your break the tension will be not be as intense and you might find yourself performing the exercise 10 times better on the first try back.

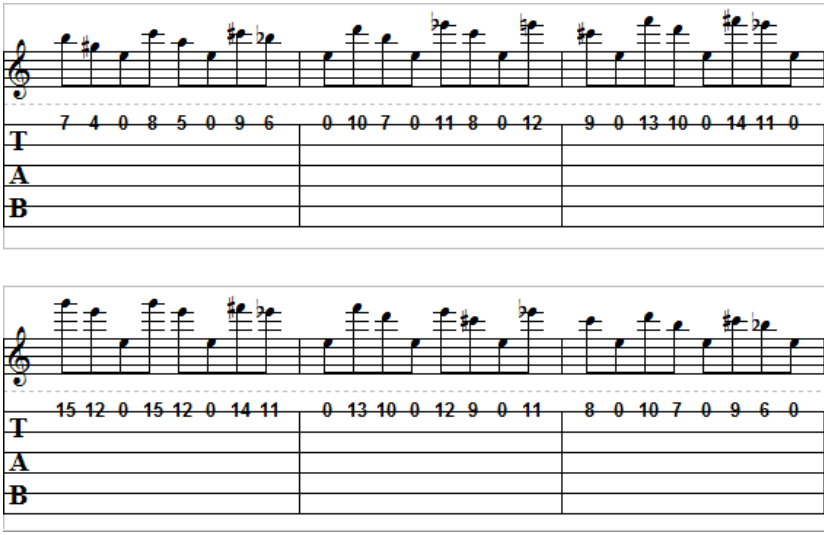


Illustration: Exercise 9: Have fun with it!

For video demonstration of exercises 7-9, please visit the link below:

http://guitaralliance.com/guitar-exercises/exercises-7-9-single-string/

Exercise 10

Here's a twist on the simple 1, 2, 3, 4. For each rising string we'll bump it up one fret. In the descent we'll bump it down one fret.

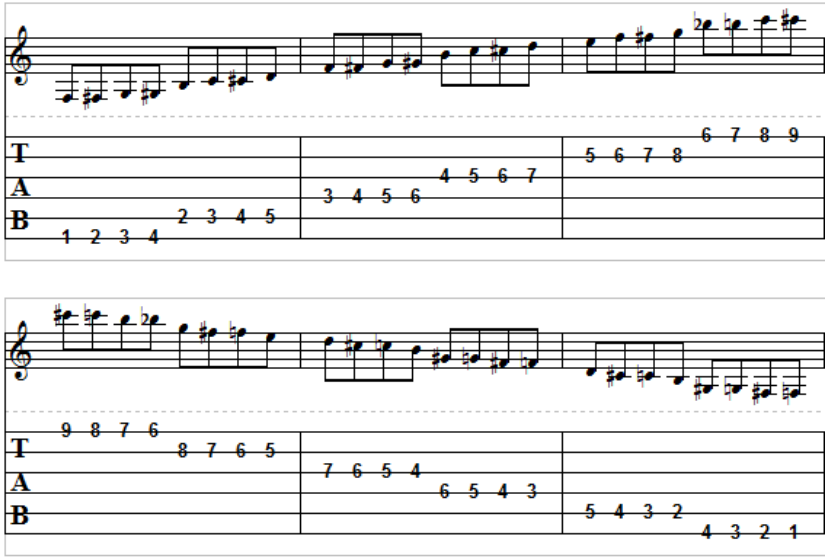


Illustration: Exercise 10: With a twist!

Exercise 11

You'll just need your 1st finger to play this one, or you could play it using one of your other fingers. Just use the same finger throughout once you start.

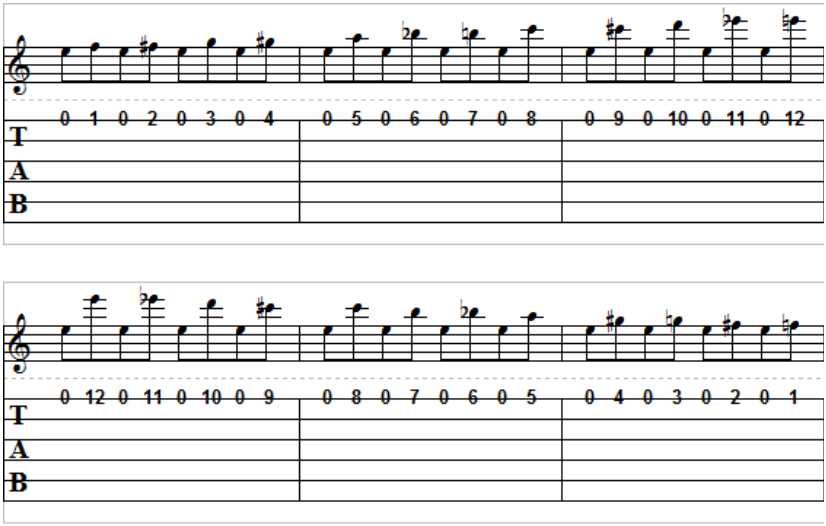


Illustration: Exercise 11: Pick a finger.

EXERCISE 12

This exercise is built off of the pentatonic scale which you'll end up using a lot for solos.

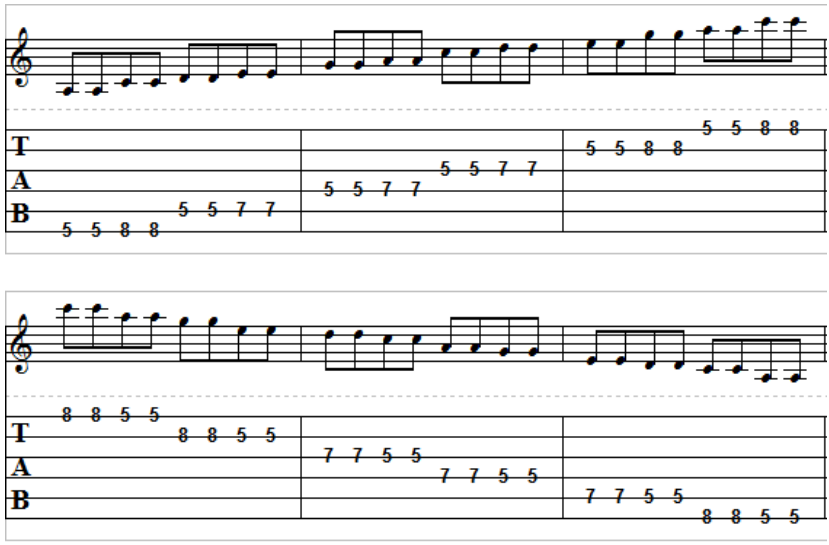


Illustration: Exercise 12: It's a pentatonic thang...

For video demonstrations of exercises 10-12, please visit the link below:

http://guitaralliance.com/guitar-exercises/exercises-10-12-advanced-alternate-picking/

2 Finger Isolation Exercises

Easy as 1, 2, 3, 4

The set of exercises we'll learn in this chapter occur on the first 4 frets.

You'll use the following fingerings for each exercise:

- 1st fret = 1st finger
- 2nd fret = 2nd finger
- 3rd fret = 3rd finger
- 4th fret = 4th finger

It doesn't matter what string you're on. Just follow prescribed fingerings and you can't go wrong. It's as easy as that.

These exercises are easy in *concept,* but that does not mean they are just for beginners. Beginners can use them as well as advanced players. Everyone benefits because the playing difficulty is determined by the tempo you set.

For example, a beginner might practice the exercises at 60 beats per minute and work their way up from there. Advanced players might play them at speeds approaching 200 bpm (or more!). And if that' too easy, you can always turn the eighth notes into sixteenth notes and go for a world record.

The best part about these isolation exercises is that we can find our weak spots and work on them. You'll find that some of your fingers are faster than the others. You may find that your pinky acts as if it's not attached to your body.

EXERCISE 13

Your 1st and 2nd fingers are probably your most responsive fingers, so we'll start with an exercise that uses them.

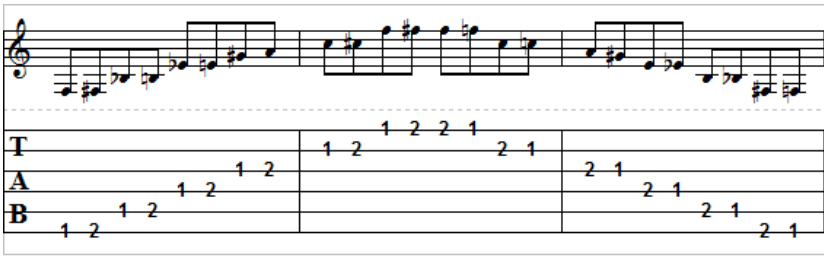


Illustration: Exercise 13

Exercise 14

Your 1st finger and 3rd finger will get a workout in this one. The 3rd finger is actually the weakest finger in the hand (I bet you thought it was the pinky). You won't feel the weakness in your 3rd finger as much in this exercise as you will in a subsequent exercise.

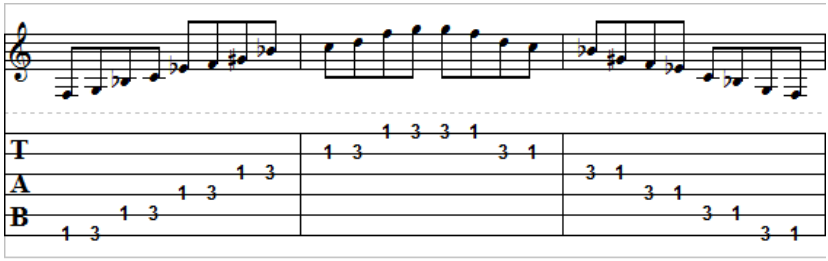


Illustration: Exercise 14

Exercise 15

This one is a bit of a stretch. 1st and 4th fingers only!

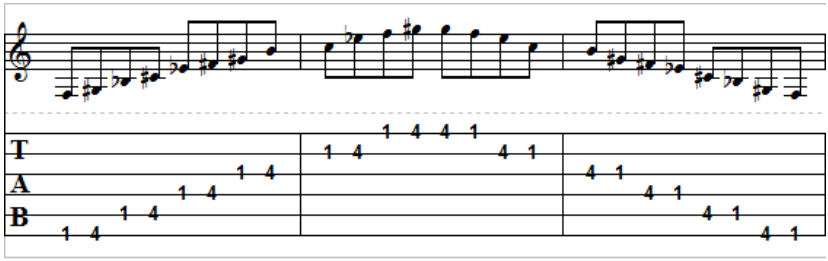


Illustration: Exercise 15

Exercise 16

This time we won't lead with our 1st finger.

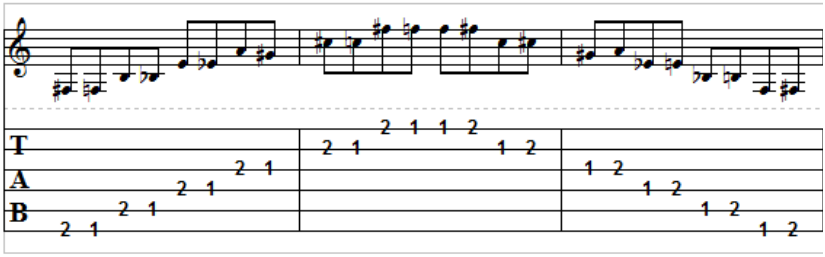


Illustration: Exercise 16

Exercise 17

A variation of exercise 14...

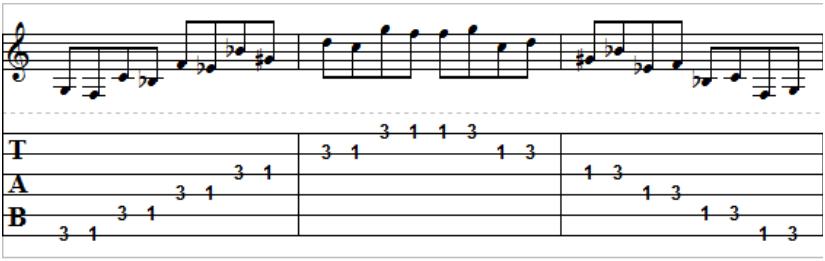


Illustration: Exercise 17

Exercise 18

Here we go with the pinky again...

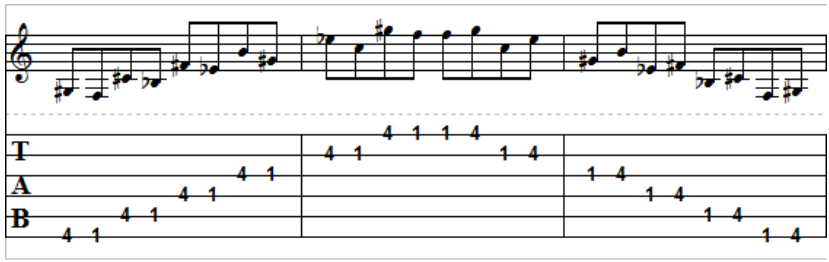


Illustration: Exercise 18

Exercise 19

Just use your 2nd and 3rd fingers. This one is pretty tough and highlights the weakness of the 3rd finger.

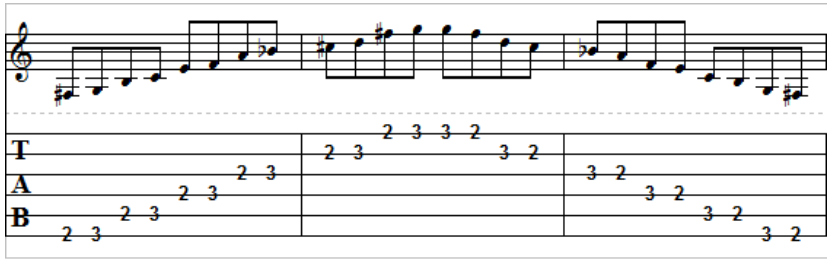


Illustration: Exercise 19

Exercise 20

Try playing this one right after exercise 19. It's going to hurt!

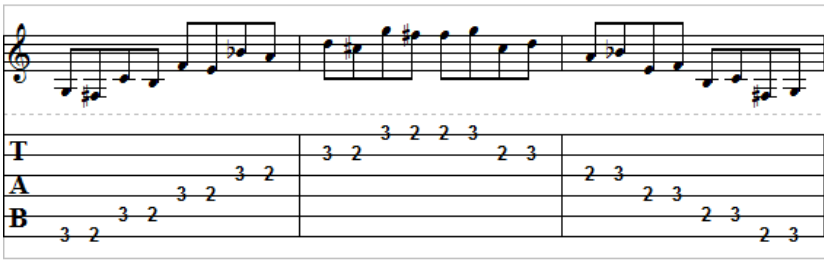


Illustration: Exercise 20

Exercise 21

This one is not so bad compared to the last 2 exercises.

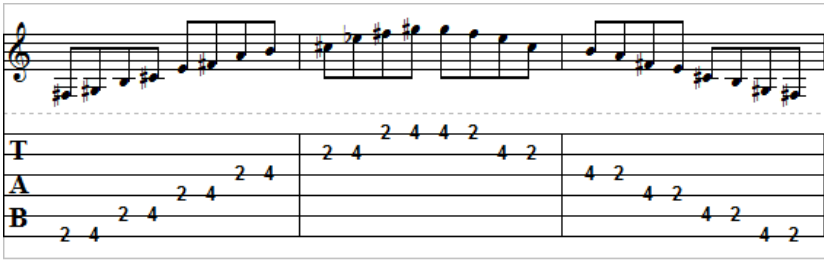


Illustration: Exercise 21

Exercise 22

This exercises focuses on the two most common weak spots. The 3rd and 4th finger.

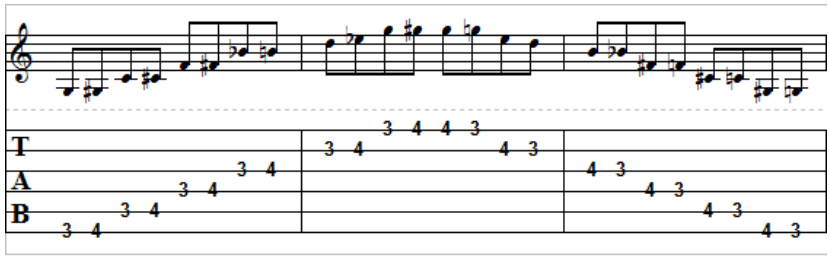


Illustration: Exercise 22

Exercise 23

Ok, we're going to digress from our previous fingering formula. You'll use your 3rd finger for the notes on the 3rd fret and your 4th finger for the notes on the 5th fret. You'll feel a bit of a stretch.

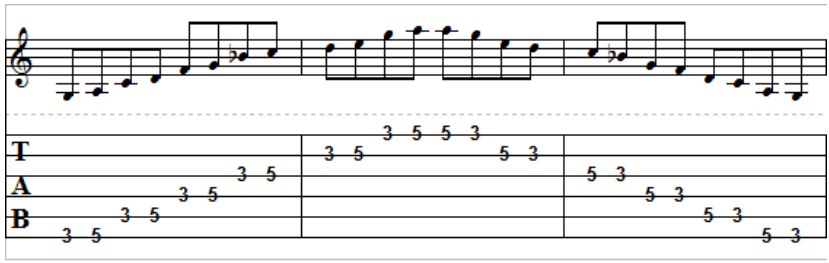


Illustration: Exercise 23

Exercise 24

Here's the last exercise of this chapter and probably the hardest to play. It's just a variation of exercise 23. Just use your 3rd and 4th fingers!

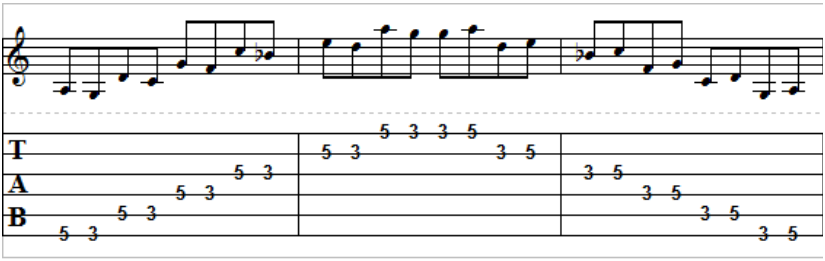


Illustration: Exercise 24

3 Legato Exercises

What Is Legato?

Legato means that musical notes are to be played smoothly and connected. That is to transition from note to note with no intervening silence. On the guitar we can use hammer-ons and pull-offs to create legato. The following series of exercises uses legato throughout. That means that there will be lots of hammer-ons and pull-offs.

One of the main differences between this method and strictly picking throughout is that the hammer-ons and pull-offs require a little more strength to pull of properly. If you don't pull-off hard enough the next note will not produce much of a sound, hence you would 'lose' a note.

You'll use the same fingering structure that we outlined in the previous chapter. Remember it's as easy as 1, 2, 3, 4.

Exercise 25

Make sure the even notes ring out as loud as the odd notes when you hammer-on.

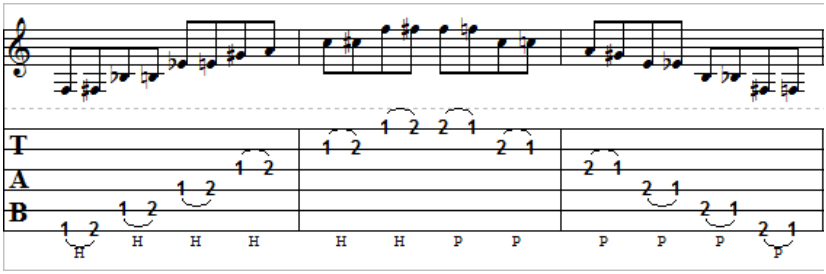


Illustration: Exercise 25

Exercise 26

This will work that 1st finger 3rd finger connection.

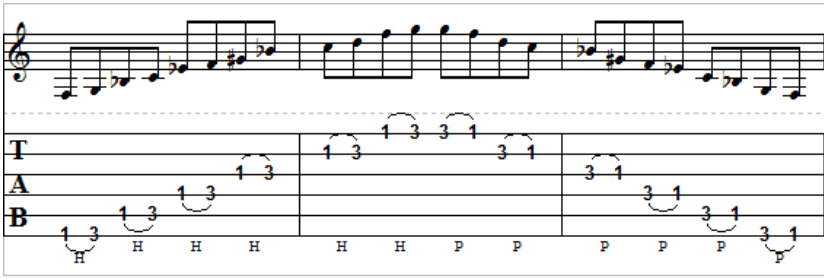


Illustration: Exercise 26

Exercise 27

This one can be tricky. You really have to work at it to get enough momentum going to sound the notes on the 4th fret. Keep at it, because it CAN be done.

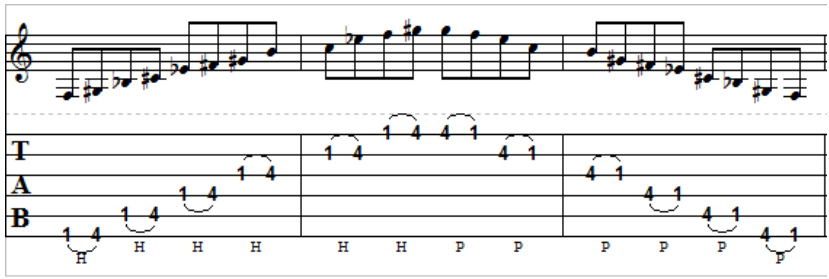


Illustration: Exercise 27

Exercise 28

Now we'll lead with our 2nd finger.

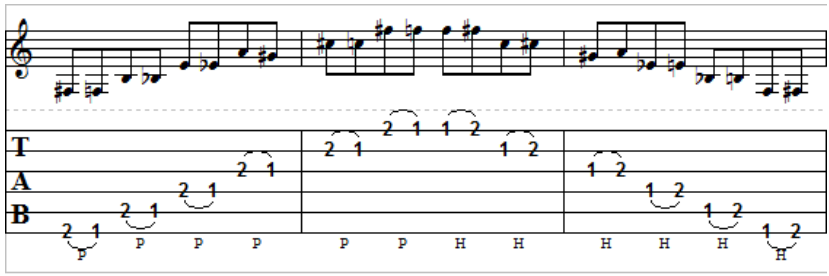


Illustration: Exercise 28

Exercise 29

The pull-offs in this exercise are tough at first. Remember that the 3rd finger is the weakest and you really have to work on it to get a good sounding pull-off using it.

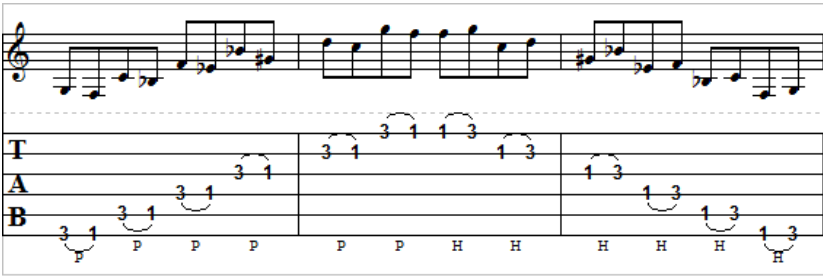


Illustration: Exercise 29

Exercise 30

If you thought exercise 27 was tough, wait till you try this ...

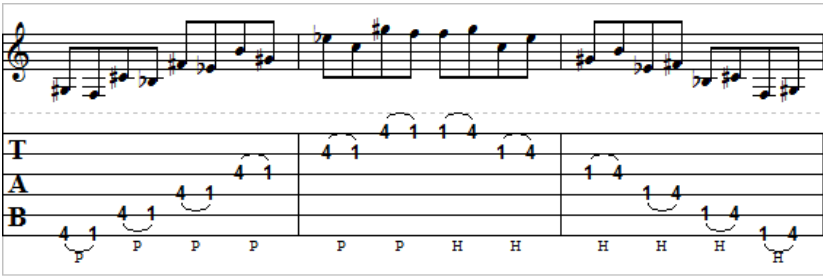


Illustration: Exercise 30

Exercise 31

Here's the hardest series of hammer-ons you'll play.

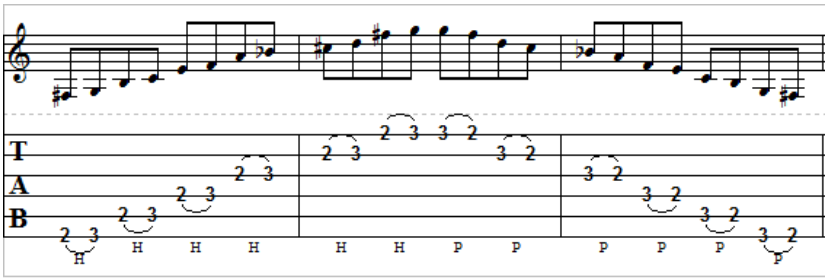


Illustration: Exercise 31

Exercise 32

And now, the hardest pull-offs. Ouch!

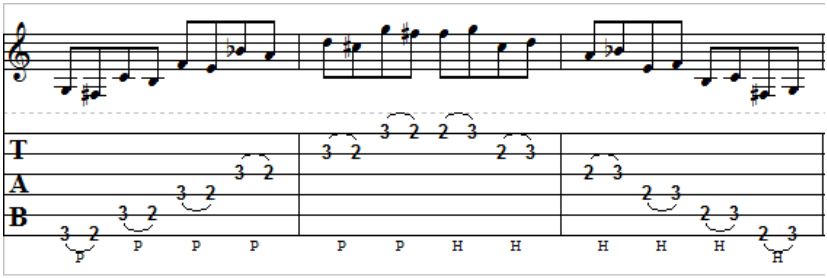


Illustration: Exercise 32

Exercise 33

Don't cheat and use your 1st and 3rd fingers. Use your 2nd and 4th fingers only!

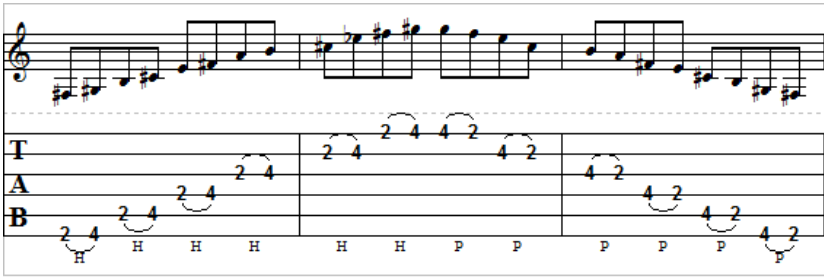


Illustration: Exercise 33

Exercise 34

Here's a workout for the two weakest fingers.

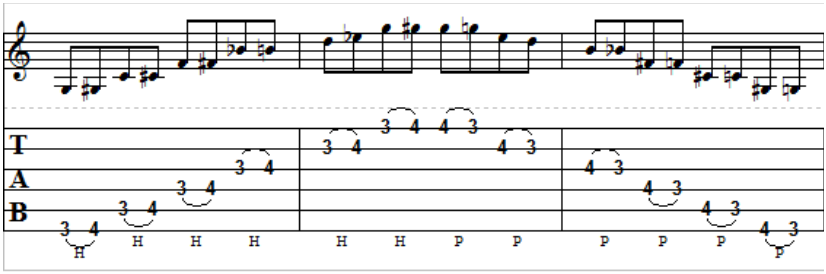


Illustration: Exercise 34

Exercise 35

Ok, now use your 3rd and 4th fingers only for this one.

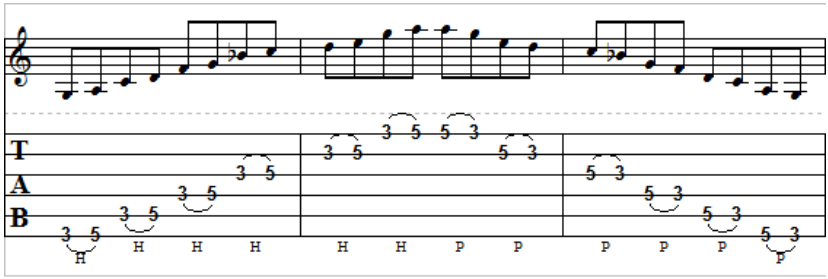
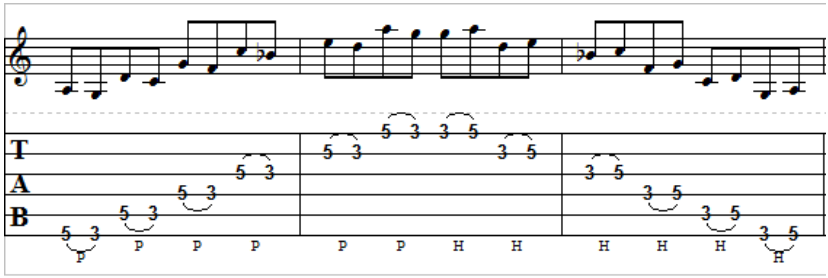


Illustration: Exercise 35

Exercise 36

And your 3rd and 4th fingers for this one as well. If you didn't already hate me enough at this point...



Exercise 37

Are you ready to play something that doesn't hurt quite as much? This exercise is a series of three notes. You can play this one all the way up the fretboard if you wish.

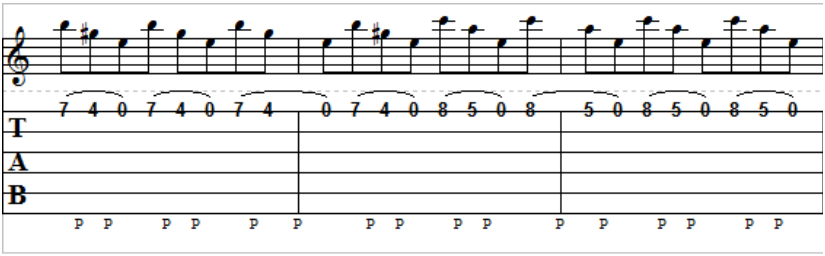


Illustration: Exercise 37

Exercise 38

Here's an exercise that plays around with the pentatonic.

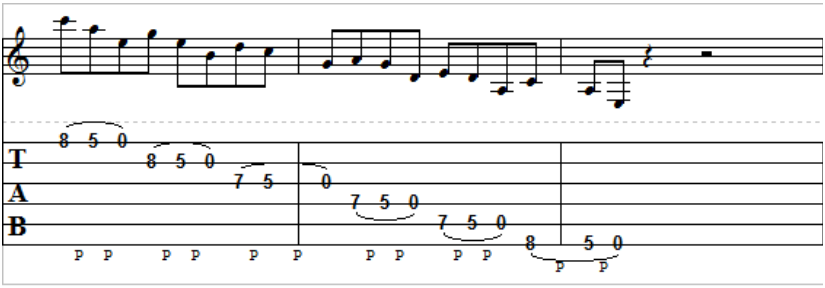


Illustration: Exercise 38

EXERCISE 39

This exercise might sound like something you've heard in a song. Just use your 1st and 3rd fingers to play the fretted notes. The open string helps you move to the next note.

You can move it all the way up the fretboard or all the way down. Just maintain the pattern throughout.

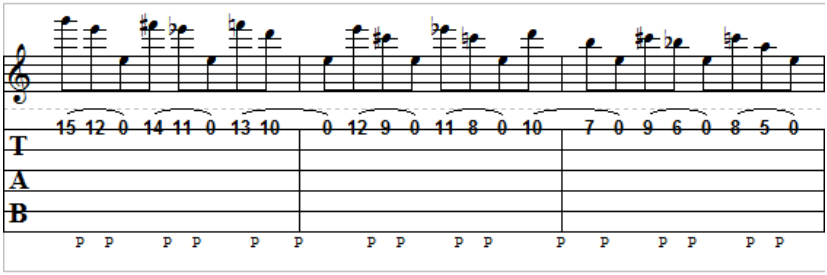


Illustration: Exercise 39

EXERCISE 40

Here's a series of hammer-ons that will challenge you. Use your 1st , 2nd, and 4th fingers for fingerings.

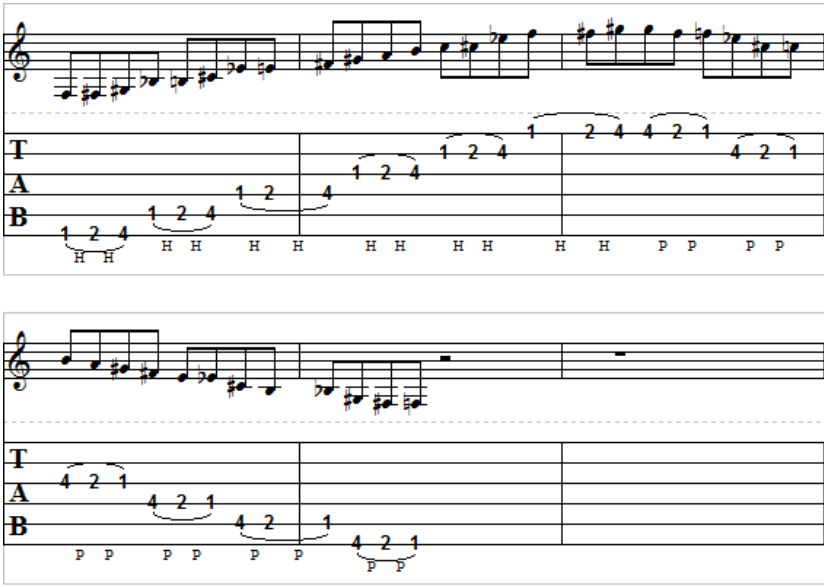


Illustration: Exercise 40

Exercise 41

Here you'll find a slight variation on the last exercise. 1St, 3rd, and 4th fingers only!

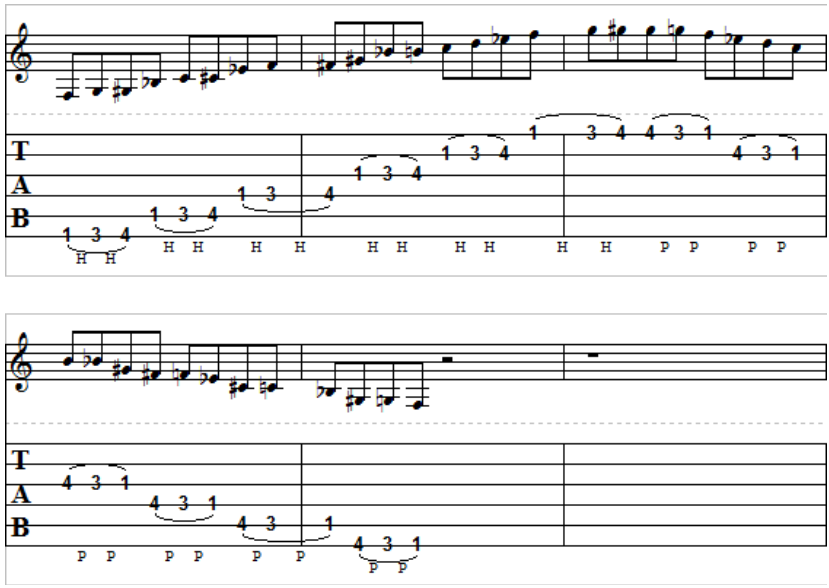


Illustration: Exercise 41

Exercise 42

Here's a tough one. Use your 1st, 3rd, and 4th fingers. It's going to hurt going up, but it will hurt more going down.

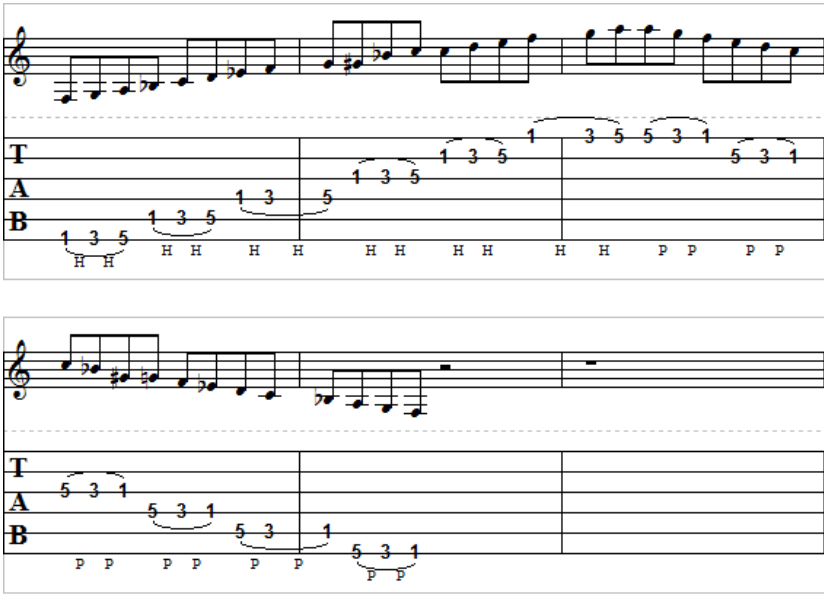


Illustration: Exercise 42

Exercise 43

You'll use all four fingers for this exercise. Try to play so that each note rings out clearly.

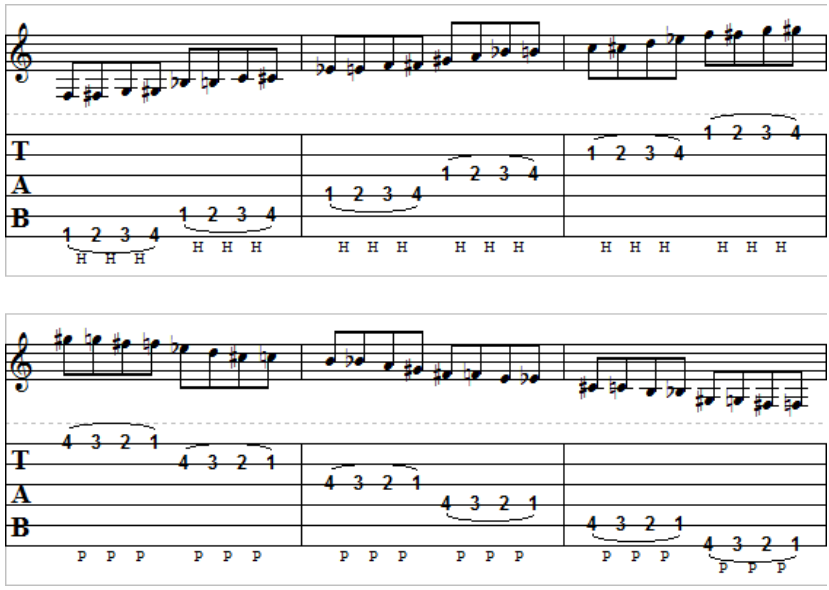


Illustration: Exercise 43

Exercise 44

This variation on exercise 43 will throw a little bit of finger confusion in the mix.

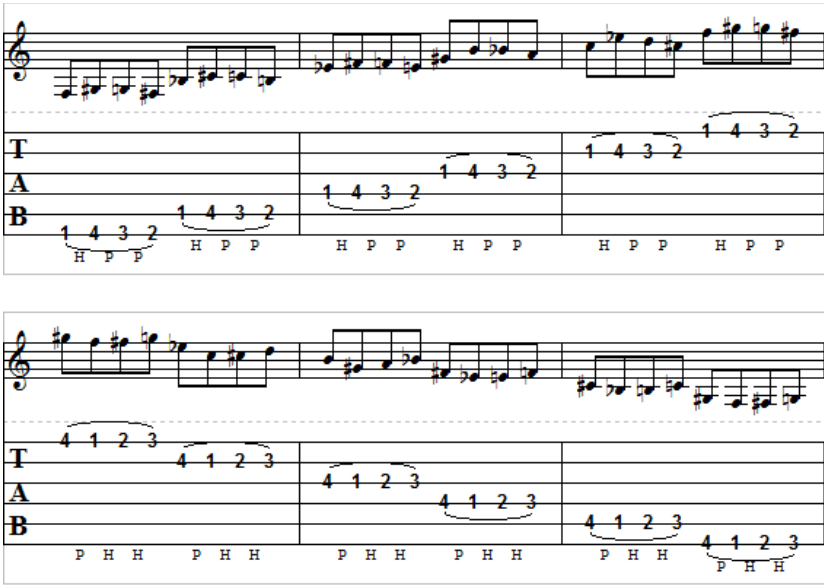


Illustration: Exercise 44

Exercise 45

This one is a monster! It's quite a stretch for you poor fingers, so if you're don't feel agile enough to tackle it, please don't trouble yourself just yet. We don't want you to damage your hand.

I'm just give you fair warning, because you're using your 1st finger for the notes on the 1st fret, 2nd finger for notes on the 3rd fret, 3rd finger for notes on the 4th fret, and your 4th finger for the notes on the 6th fret.

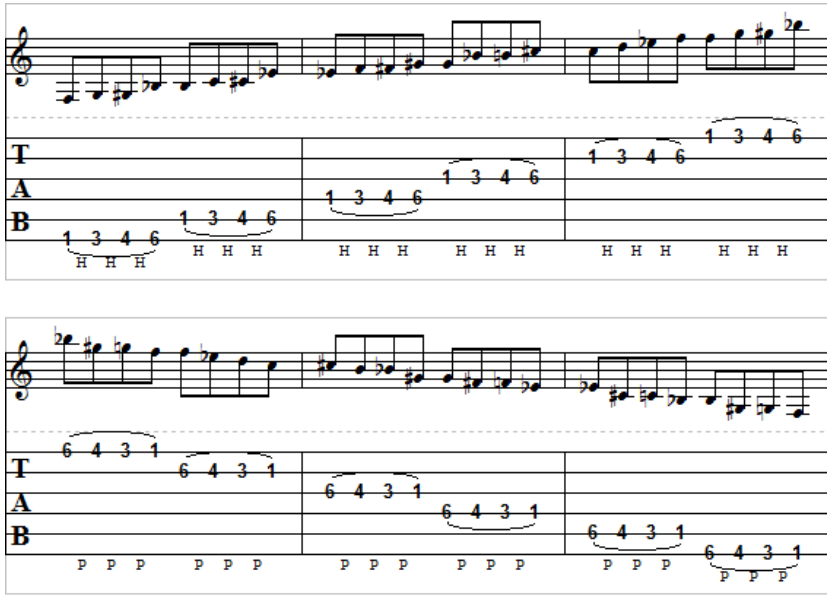


Illustration: Exercise 45

Exercise 46

Here's an exercise that doubles as a cool lick. It's an ascending pattern I've seen many players, such as Randy Rhoads, use. You can continue to play it all the way up the fretboard if you wish.

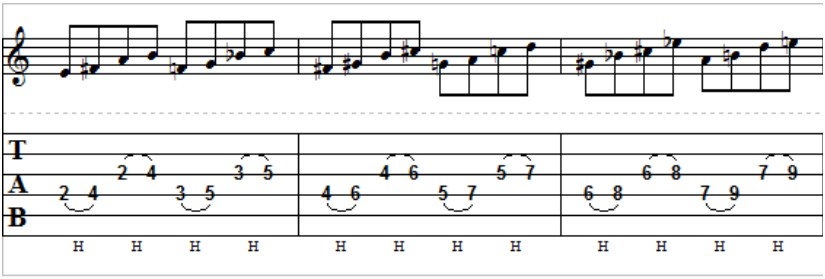


Illustration: Exercise 46

Exercise 47

Once you go up as in exercise 46, you've got to come down...

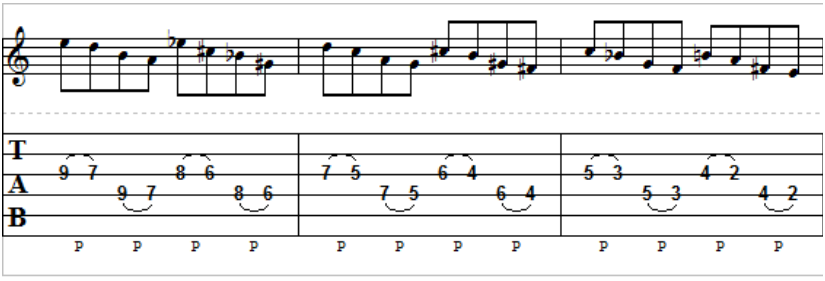


Illustration: Exercise 47

4

PENTATONIC EXERCISES

THE PENTATONIC SCALE

The word pentatonic gets it's name from the Greek word "penta" which means 5 and tonic which stands for tone. That's what pentatonic scales are: 5 tone scales.

The pentatonic scales are widely used for guitar leads and solos. Practicing the pentatonic scale patterns is a great exercise that provides technical training as well as helps you memorize practical scales that have a use in the real world.

You won't find much in the way in variation in this chapter. Just 12 pentatonic scale patterns, so let's get started...

Exercise 48

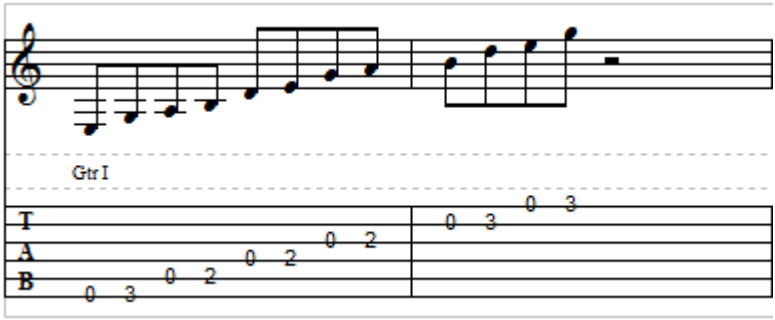


Illustration: Exercise 48: G pentatonic

Exercise 49

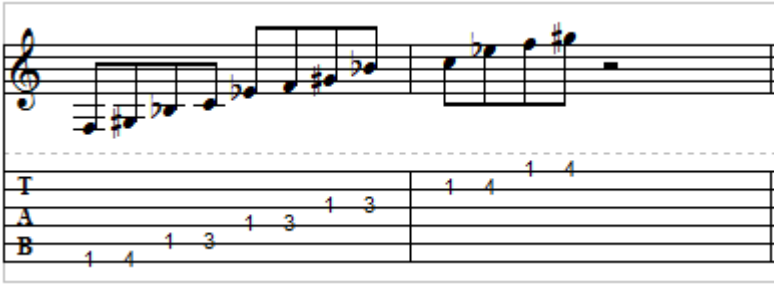


Illustration: Exercise 49: G# pentatonic

Exercise 50

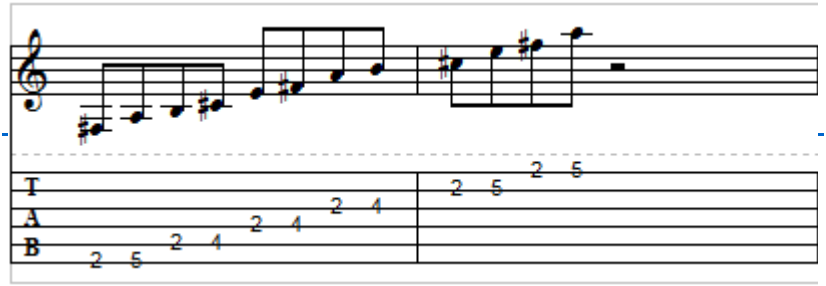


Illustration: Exercise 50: A pentatonic

Exercise 51

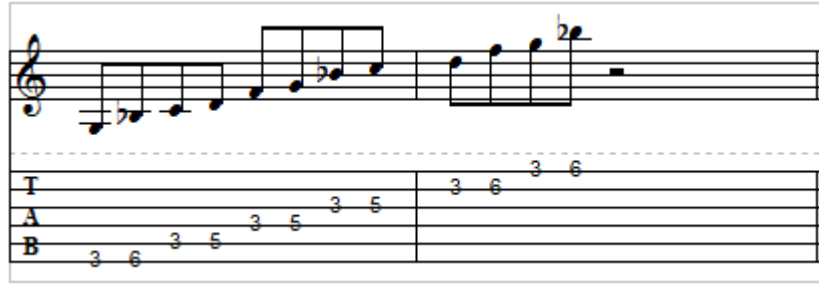


Illustration: Exercise 51: A# pentatonic

Exercise 52

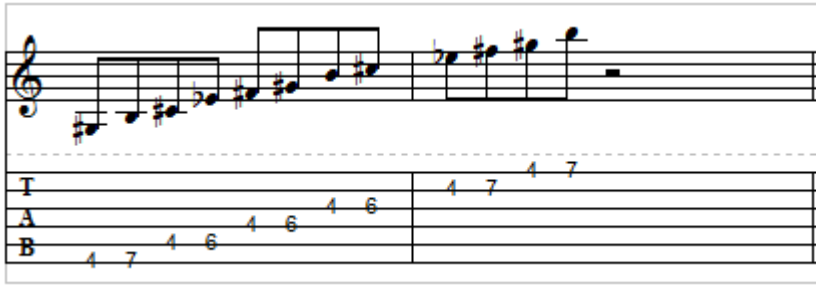


Illustration: Exercise 52: B pentatonic

Exercise 53

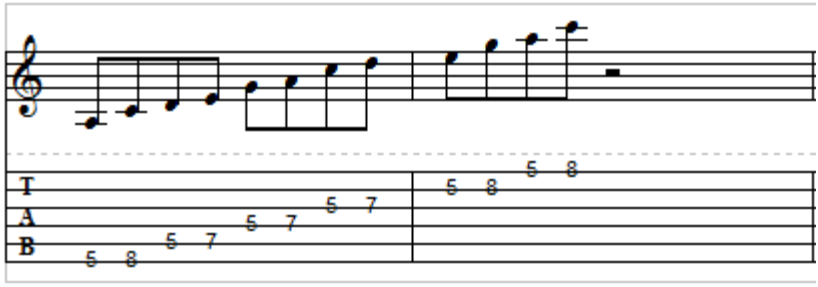


Illustration : Exercise 53: C pentatonic

Exercise 54

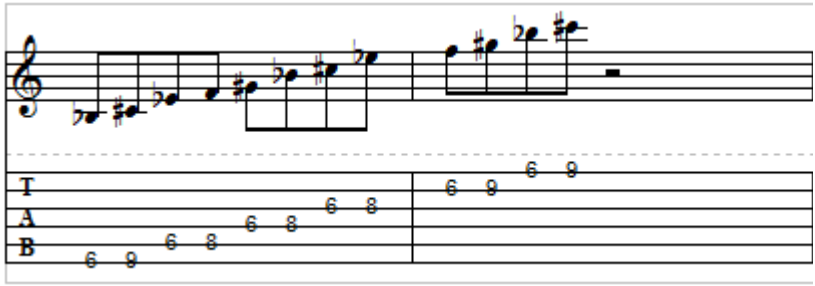


Illustration: Exercise 54: C# pentatonic

Exercise 55

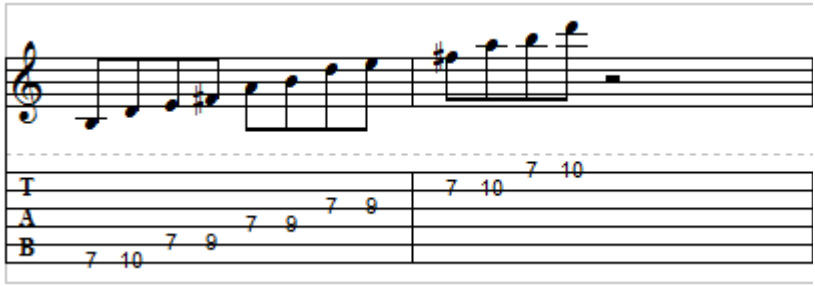


Illustration: Exercise 55: D pentatonic

Exercise 56

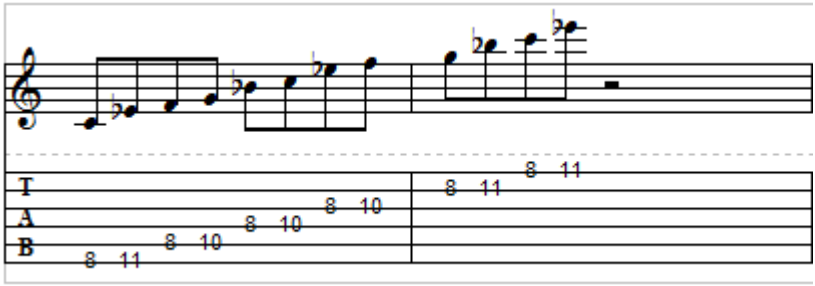


Illustration: Exercise 56: D# pentatonic

Exercise 57

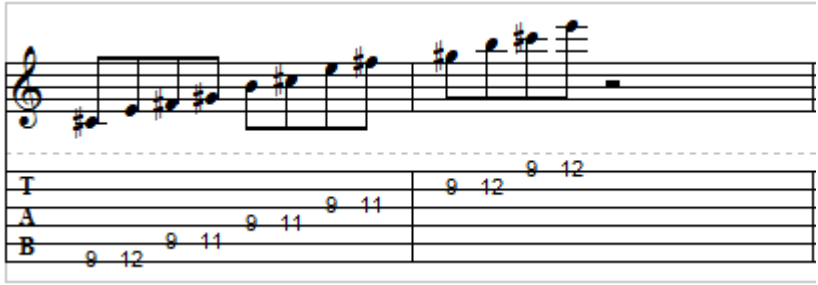


Illustration: Exercise 57: E pentatonic

Exercise 58

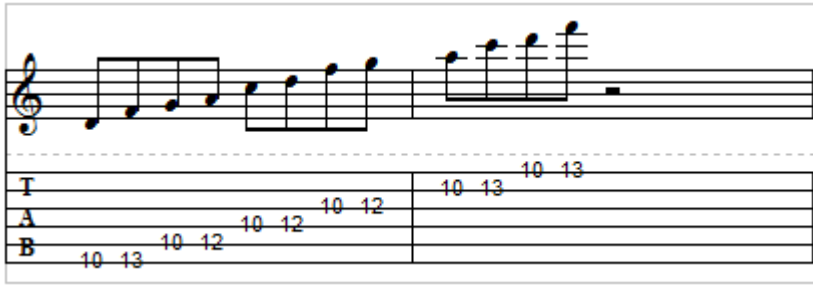


Illustration: Exercise 58: F pentatonic

Exercise 59

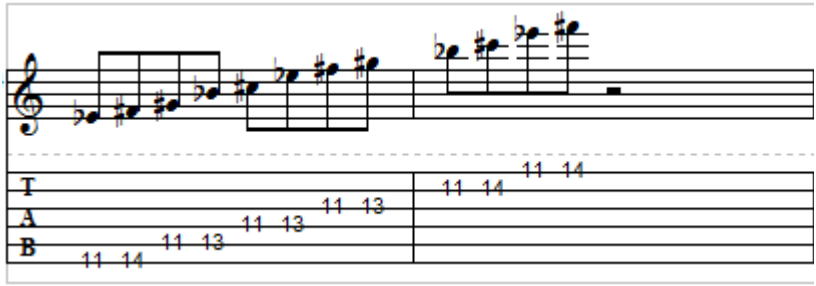


Illustration: Exercise 59: F# pentatonic

EXERCISE 60

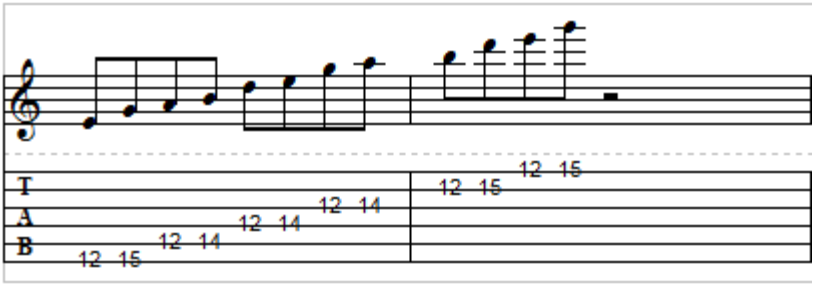


Illustration: Exercise 60: G pentatonic

5 Endurance Exercises

Feel The Burn

The exercises in this chapter are designed to bring the pain. You're hands will be cramping! The purpose is to develop stamina. Fingers and hands get tired quickly, so you've got to train the muscles for endurance.

These exercises are meant to be played for as long as you can. Each contains a repeating pattern. Just repeat the pattern over and over until you just can't stand it anymore.

Also, keep in mind that you can only pick the very first note. Each note after that must be executed with hammer-ons and pull-offs only.

Exercise 61

Keep the trill going for as long as you can. Eventually you'll start missing notes and hand cramps will invade. Use your 1st and 4th fingers for fretting purposes.

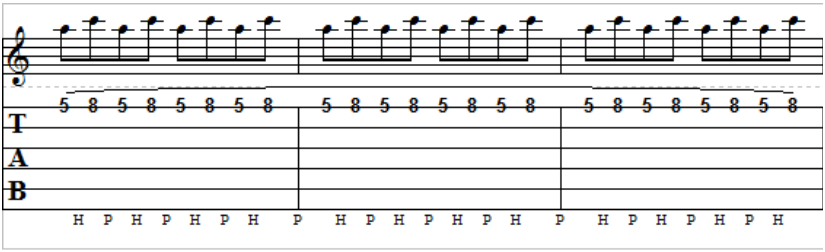


Illustration: Exercise 61

Exercise 62

This one is similar to the last, but just use your 2nd and 3rd fingers to fret it. You won't be able to play it as long as the last one.

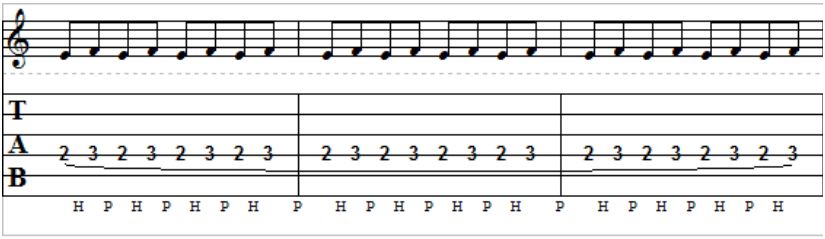


Illustration: Exercise 62

Exercise 63

Use your 2nd and 4th fingers. Fight through the burn for a few seconds before you stop.

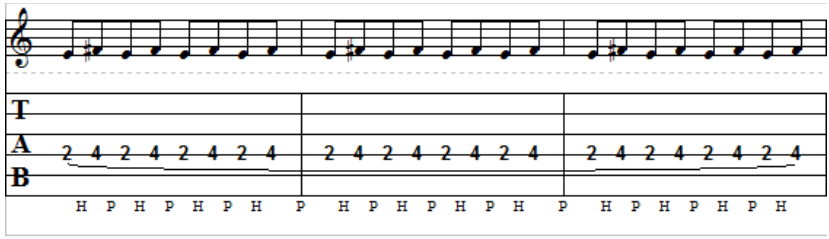


Illustration: Exercise 63

Exercise 64

This one is really hard to keep going. Use your 3rd and 4th fingers.

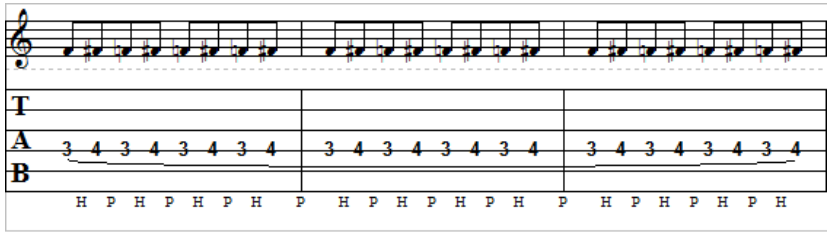


Illustration: Exercise 65

Exercise 65

Here's you'll use your 1st and 4th fingers. This one is also hard to keep going for very long.

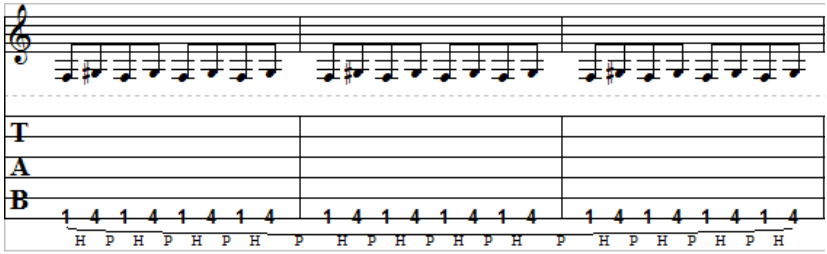


Illustration: Exercise 65

Exercise 66

Here's a slight variation using three fingers.

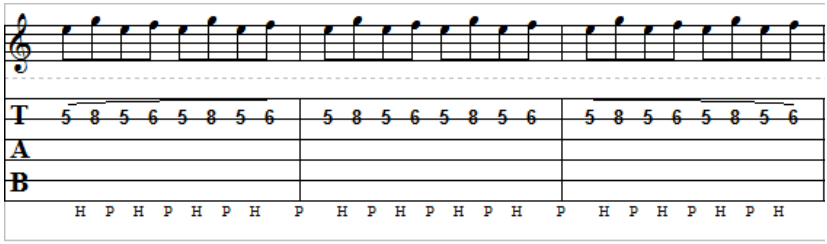


Illustration: Exercise 66

Exercise 67

This one is similar to the last. Only in this one we'll ascend the fretboard. Go as high or as low as you want.

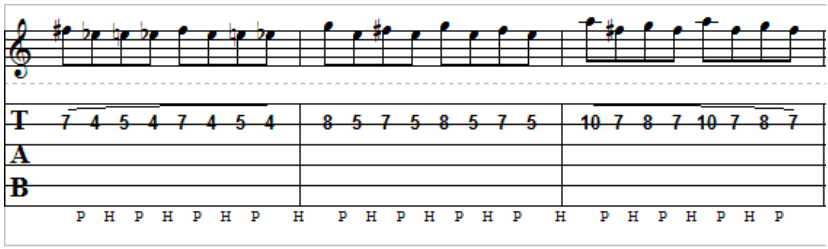


Illustration: Exercise: 67

Exercise 68

Keep repeating the three measures below. See how long you can last. You can also play it going up or even add your own variations.

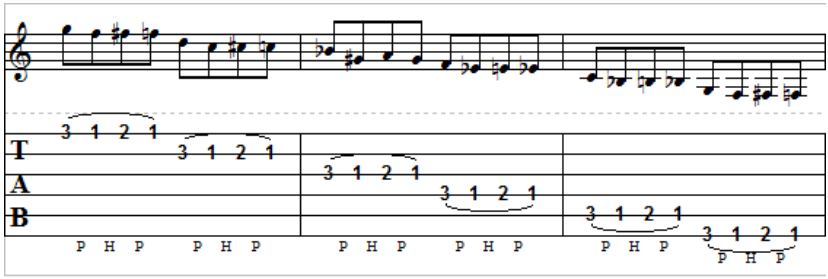


Illustration: Exercise 68

6 Strength Building Exercises

Let's get Pumped!

I've just got a trio of exercises in this chapter. They are extremely challenging, so proceed with caution!

EXERCISE 69

This is probably the weirdest exercise in this book. You'll play the 3rd fret with your 1st finger, the 5th fret with your 3rd, and use your 4th finger to slide from the 7th fret to the 9th. Use similar fingerings throughout the exercise and you'll have it made!

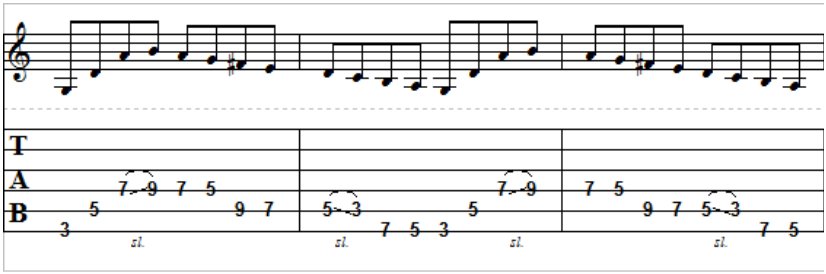


Illustration: Exercise 69

Exercise 70

This is the exercise I like most. You cross the string quickly and it sound real cool. It's tricky to play at first. You'll end up playing on the wrong strings and hitting the wrong notes, but it's worth the effort as I have noticed how it's improved my playing, and and other's playing, throughout the years.

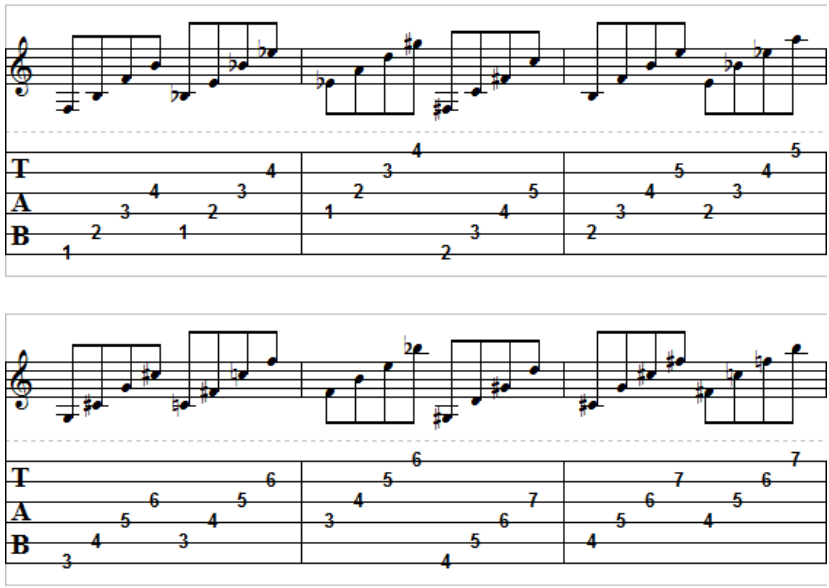


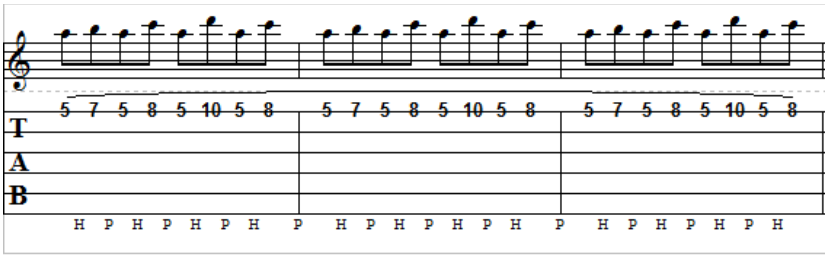
Illustration: Exercise 70

EXERCISE 71

Our last strength building exercise doesn't look too difficult at first, but upon a further look we'll realize that it's a doozy.

We're going to perform a series of hammer-ons and pull-offs, like a trill, but we're going to shift the high note.

The basic patter is 5th fret, 7th fret, 5th, fret, 8th fret, 5th, fret, 10th fret, and then back down again. It's very tough to reach for a higher and higher note. Just keep your 1st finger glued to the 5th fret.



6 Finger Confusion Exercises

Who? What? Where?

Your fingers sometime seem like they have a brain of their own, but it's the brain in your head that is getting confused. These exercises challenge you by playing weird finger combinations. They will stress your concentration, but don't let it get to you!

EXERCISE 72

Play through this one slowly at first to determine if you're actually playing it right. I've had several students look at it and assume things about it and then go on to play something totally different.

Just use the old 1, 2, 3, 4 fingerings, but pay attention to where the hammer-ons and pull offs are and what notes you're actually using.

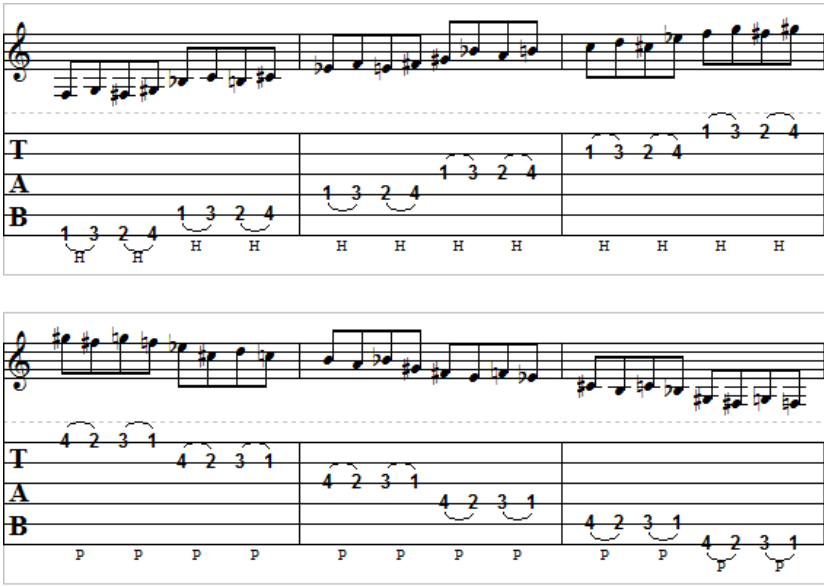


Illustration: Exercise 72

Exercise 73

Our last few exercises use a lot of hammer-ons and pull-offs. You can also play a variation of it by just picking the notes.

Use the same fingerings as before and concentrate on clearly sounding each note.

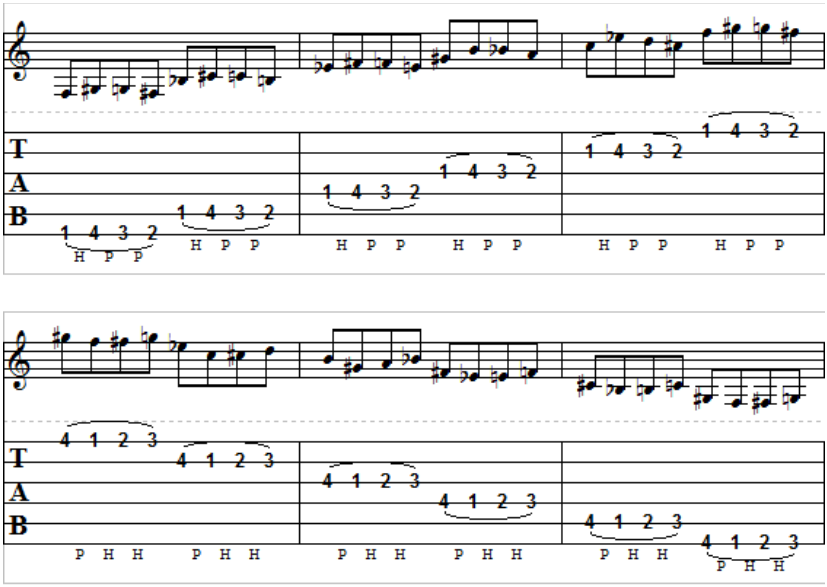


Illustration: Exercise 73

Exercise 74

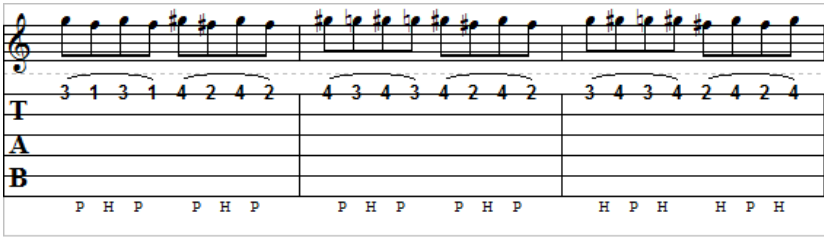


Illustration: Exercise 74

Exercise 75

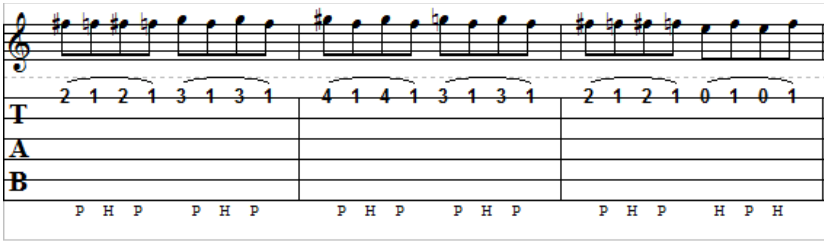


Illustration: Exercise 75

7 RESOURCES

ON THE WEB

You'll find resources for this e-book on the web at the link below:

http://guitaralliance.com/guitar-exercises/

Feel free to use the comments system at the website to leave comments or to suggest any additions to Guitar Workout.

You can also download any revisions of this e-book as they become available.

IN CLOSING

Well, that's about it for now. I'll certainly revisit this topic in the future to add even more exercises, so check the website out frequently to scout for updates.

Sincerely,
Kenny Mann

Guitar Workout