

GET STARTED PLAYING ARPEGGIOS *-written by David Taub*

Lets get started with a few basic arpeggios. Arpeggios are notes of a certain chord or scale usually played quickly one after another instead of strummed all at once. Arpeggios are the notes that make up chords, but played individually, or one at a time. Many times they are played from the lowest sounding note to the highest sounding note. Arpeggios are quite useful as they can be utilized throughout your soloing and improvisational lead lines, you can build riffs out of them, or create melody lines with them - the sky is the limit!

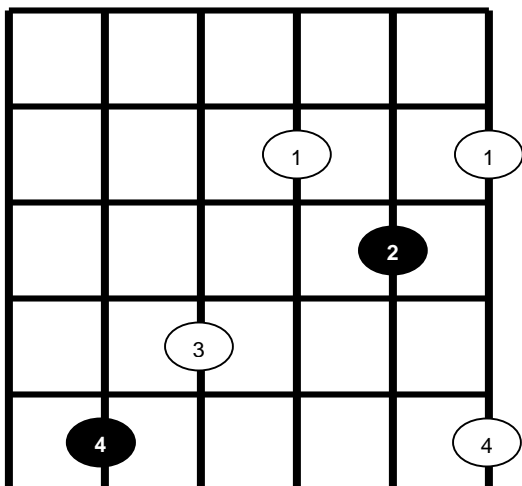
I have found the key to being able to phrase your arpeggios fluidly into your playing is being able to grab them quickly – knowing where they are at and what scales they live in so to speak. So in this lesson and the ones right after this, we will examine arpeggios that have first finger roots or pinky roots on the 6th, 5th, or 4th strings. I have found students are able to grasp these the fastest and insert them fluidly into their playing. You certainly want to learn the arpeggio in all positions, much like your scales, but to get started these are what I have found students grab the fastest. Another key to good arpeggio playing is mixing them in with your scales, modes, and riffs – not necessarily just playing a certain arpeggio up and down and up and down in full as that can get very sterile after a while. So try and mix them together with your modal or other scalar lead lines, that's how they sound best in my opinion – mixed in. Another key when playing arpeggios is that you want to be sure you are playing one note at a time. You don't want the arpeggio to sound like a chord strummed all at once – you want to kind of infer the color of the chord with the arpeggio. So kill each successive note after it is played. Do this by muting the strings. If you are not familiar with right and left hand string muting see my lesson on muting out all the strings.

Sometimes when playing certain arpeggios you will have to utilize the same finger for two or more strings as you move down or up the arpeggio. This is crucial especially if you want to eventually get into sweep picking. You want to try and "roll" your finger down the strings from one string to the next. The rolling motion of the finger works the best as opposed to barring your finger when playing arpeggios. This rolling of the finger technique produces a much smoother sound and the notes don't bleed into each other and contaminate the pure arpeggiated sound. This technique takes a little while to get the motion down, but keep practicing and it will come in time.

The examples below are a Major and Minor arpeggio that you can grab in any key by grabbing the root note off the 5th string, (A string), with your pinky finger. A major chord is constructed from the intervals of root, 3rd, and 5th degrees of the major scale. To play a major arpeggio just play those three notes, r,3rd,5th, one at a time and then repeat as per the illustration below. A minor chord is constructed from the intervals of root, b3rd, and 5th. That is how you can tell the difference from most major and minor chords, look at the 3rd – minor chords have b3rds for the most part. Play these three notes, r,b3rd,5th, one at a time and you have a Minor arpeggio. Once familiar with the fingerings, practice the examples below in different keys all over the neck utilizing the shapes below just move the root note along the 5th string and find the root with your pinky. I like to sweep that major arpeggio – good one to sweep!

Now apply these by playing the major arpeggio over a major family chord and the minor arpeggio over a minor family chord. Once you learn these we can move onto arpeggios that start adding other intervals to the mix like m7 arpeggios, 7th arpeggios, m7b5 arpeggios, maj7 arpeggios, and many more as they add so much color over their corresponding chords. ROCK ON!

Major arpeggio
(root, 3rd, and 5th)



Minor arpeggio
(root, b3rd, and 5th)

