

Chapter 2: Fundamentals

Now that you've checked out the intro video and know how the course works, time to grab your guitar and get started!

To begin, you learn about fingerpicking fundamentals and start applying fingerpicking to open-string exercises in your studies.

As fingerpicking is a skill that takes time to learn properly, there's no rush to get through this or any chapter.

Work on an exercise until you feel you have it down or run into a wall and aren't progressing further.

At that time move on to another exercise and progress from that point forward.

Have fun with this initial chapter as you dive into the wonderful world of fingerpicking!

Chapter Goals

Here are the goals for this chapter so that you can organize your practice routine and know when to move on to the next chapter.

- Introduce fingerpicking techniques to your playing.
- Learn the names of the picking-hand fingers.
- Learn fundamental plucking exercises.
- Learn fundamental picking exercises.
- Develop dexterity and endurance in your picking hand.

Now that you know your goals, time to aim for them in your studies.

Picking Hand Fingers

To begin, you learn the symbols used for each picking-hand finger.

Here are those symbols for each finger.

- P = Thumb
- I = Index
- M = Middle
- A = Ring

For now you don't use your pinky finger, that will come into play as you advance in your fingerpicking studies.

When playing chords and broken chords, the rule of thumb is as follows in regards to which finger plucks which string.

- P = 6, 5, and 4
- I = 3
- M = 2
- A = 1

Here's an example of open strings that use each finger on the proper strings.

Give this exercise a try before moving down to the more involved workouts below.

Over time you will adapt your fingerpicking to include variations of this approach, but in the beginning it's best to start with this approach to plucking strings.

4/4

P P P i m a m i P P P

T
A
B

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Open String Plucking Exercises

To begin, you explore open-string exercises that use different string combinations in your picking hand.

Start by plucking these chords using the given fingers above, so thumb on low 3 strings and 1 finger per string after that.

Go slow, make sure every note is even, and pluck each string one at a time if you want to take the exercise further.

First exercise musical notation. The top staff is in 4/4 time, showing four measures of chords. The bottom staff shows fingerings: T (thumb) for the first three strings and 1 (index) for the other three strings in each measure.

Moving on, you now pluck the bass notes for each chord first, then the top notes of the chord from there.

With each of these bars, you play thumb on the bass note, then ima on the other notes in the chord.

Second exercise musical notation. The top staff is in 4/4 time, showing four measures of chords. The bottom staff shows fingerings: T (thumb) for the bass note and 1 (index) for the other notes in each measure.

The musical score for "The Wind" by The Beatles is presented in two staves. The top staff is a guitar melody in 4/4 time, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some chords indicated by vertical lines. The bottom staff is a bass line in 4/4 time, featuring a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. It includes fret numbers (0, 1, 2) and a "TAB" label, indicating it is a guitar tablature. The bass line consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some chords indicated by vertical lines.

Open String Picking Exercises

You now work on arpeggiating chords as you pluck each note one at a time.

The fingerpicking is written below the notes, so you can use that as a guide for each variation of this exercise.

To begin, here's an exercise with open strings that uses all strings and fingers in the four-bar phrase.

Work this with a metronome, then take it to chord shapes in your studies when comfortable.

P i m a m i P

Here's a variation that will be like a tongue twister for your fingers at this point.

Go slow, use a metronome, and memorize the pattern so you can focus on the notes and not on the page as soon as possible.

Again, take this exercise to other chords when ready.

The final pattern is another finger twister, so go slow and use a metronome when ready with this exercise.

If you want to expand on this exercise, start to make the bass notes a little louder than all the other notes in the pattern.

This introduces your picking hand to accents, which you dive into more fully in subsequent chapters.

P a m i m a P