

From Zero to Guitar Fingerpicking in 30 Days



A Udemy Course by Patrick O'Malley

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Section 5 – Lesson One

Starting Travis Picking

In Section 5, we get to do some really fun stuff.

The basics you have learned up until now are going to be extremely useful as we dive into more advanced techniques, which I'm really excited for you to learn.

One of those techniques is Travis picking, pioneered by Merle Travis and made popular by others such as Chet Atkins. If you know those guitar players, you'll be excited to play in a similar style to how they play. Another technique is the Clawhammer, which has some similarities but is different as well.

In order to play these styles, we're going to have to go back to the thumb.

We are going to get the thumb playing in a more rhythmically and more alternate bass way.

A Simple Exercise

I'm going to start playing the most simple pattern in G.

This is played with the thumb on 6th string, then the other fingers playing a string each.



A Similar Exercise

Now what I'm going to do is instead of playing T123 I'm going to play T1 then T3. Note the thumb is on the 6th string for the first thumb and the second thumb is on the 4th string.



Take a few minutes to play that. These exercises are tricky, we haven't played anything quite like this in previous lessons so allow yourself to take some time here until it feels comfortable. The main difference between this and the simple exercise above is that the thumb is playing two notes out of four and therefore it must jump between the 6th string and the 4th string.

A Close Look At The Thumb

You might remember our big rule when it comes to fingerpicking: the thumb plays the lowest three strings. Watch the thumb of the right hand move between the two bass notes as you play it for a few minutes.

A Similar Exercise

Now we're going to play another exercise, which is very similar.

This is T1T1 where the first thumb is on the 6th string and the next thumb is on the 4th string.

It's a similar exercise but gets the thumb moving.



Assignment

I want you really now to spend time on playing this pattern.

- Sometimes you might hit into the wrong string. It doesn't matter, keep playing and slow down if you're not playing it accurately.
- Make sure you are hitting the notes cleanly.
- Make sure you are using the right fingers.

A little advice

First question, did you stick to the Big Rule?

If one finger started to play each string (instead of one per string), go back and check out the exercises we had to correct that.

Also, you need to spend hours before this feels truly comfortable (this thumb movement combined with fingers that makes up travis picking). Allow yourself to spend a couple of hours on these exercises if it feels good and it feels like you are making progress.