

Arpeggio Picking

The #1 Way to Beautify Songs

Because of the large scope of this technique, this section is the largest section in the course – so go through it at your own pace

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The #1 Way to Beautify Songs

Arpeggio picking, which I like to call "the art of chopping down chords to individual notes" – is in my opinion the most beautiful, useful, and most flexible way to spice up songs.

In this section, you will learn how to play songs that were originally played with it, and you will also start developing the feeling for when (and how) it will sound best when you *implement* it to any song.

The Main Takeaways from the Lesson

- Arpeggio divides into **two main schools** – playing with a pick, or playing with your fingers. (Also often called "fingerstyle") The pick has a sharper, more distinct sound, while the fingers provide for a more delicate sound with increased options. (Such as plucking two or more strings at once)

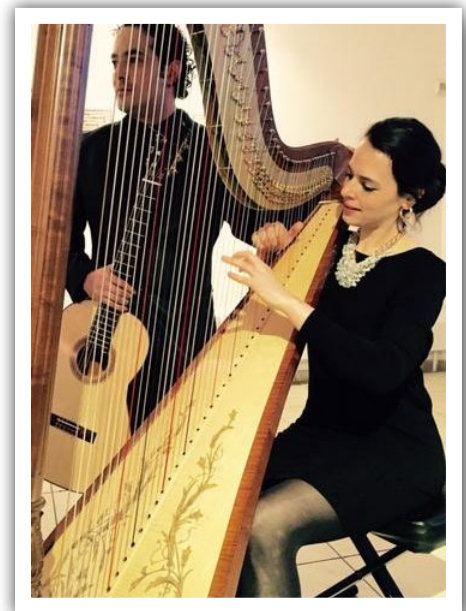
- The term arpeggio comes from **Italian** - *Arpeggiari* means "to play the harp".

- Remember that you can use arpeggio just in **some** parts of the song, while strumming the rest of it. Usually, it makes more sense to arpeggiate the more relaxed parts (intro, first verse, maybe first chorus) and strum the more upbeat parts.

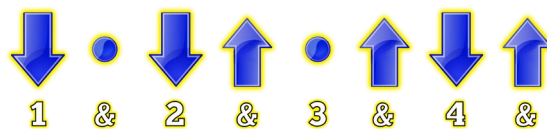
- When playing with a pick, the **#1 rule to multiply your accuracy** is to mostly pick once-from-above, and then once-from-below (the string). It's hard to get used to it in the beginning, but afterwards – everything becomes way easier.

- The basic arpeggio pattern (**B 3 2 1 2 3** – as in "Everybody Hurts") is the first thing you'll want to "get into your fingers", both with a pick or with the fingers. Then, you can think of all the other patterns as modifications to this one.

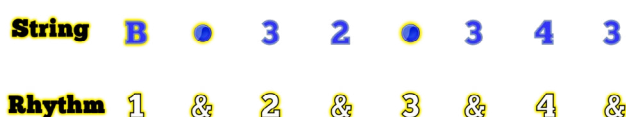
- In order to **convert** any song into an arpeggio song, think of the rhythmic placements of the strums on the beat (on the 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & "timeline") – and switch them to individual string picks. (Hard to understand it through text, so watch the "Converting into Arpeggio" lesson for clear demonstrations)



For example, a song that you **strummed** with this strumming pattern below: (Let's say "Love Me Do" by The Beatles or "Hey Ya" by Outkast)



...Will sound great with this **arpeggio** pattern below: (and soon enough, you'll find that you're able to "convert" any song to arpeggio without even thinking about it)



The Main Takeaways from the Lesson

- The most important thing to remember is that in 95% of the cases, the only finger that is moving between strings is **your thumb**. The rest of your fingers mostly stay either just on strings 1-2-3 or (in more advanced picking patterns) on strings 2-3-4.

- There are **many types of fingerstyle arpeggio playing**. (and you will see many of them in the next page) The more of them that you'll start getting into, the richer that your arpeggio playing will become in any situation.

- When playing fingerstyle arpeggio, your sound and your comfort of playing are mainly determined by the length of your **finger nails' length**. I have found that the length shown in the pic – is where you'll get the best balance between a good sound and comfort of playing, *while* still being relatively aesthetic and functional for everyday life (and touchscreens operation)



The same length can be kept in the thumb as well. Also, if you wish, you can completely clip the pinky fingernail - since you will likely not use it.

You can make sure that your fingernails stay around this ideal length by gently clipping only half of them, (when it's time to) or by gently using a **nail filer**.

Examples of Famous "Arpeggio Songs"

First - Arpeggio Songs that Were Played **with a Pick** (can't mistake that sound...)

▶ = This example is shown at the lesson

*For the arpeggio section, whenever they were available, I also included the **tabs** – so that will help you better understand the arpeggio picking pattern in this song. (Also – use YouTube lessons!)*

The Eagles – Hotel California ([Chords](#)) ([Tabs](#)) | One of the most recognizable guitar intros of all time.

Green Day – Time of Your Life ([Chords](#)) ([Tabs](#)) | Another one – which is also surprisingly easy to learn. (I included an entire lesson for you about it, along with an entire lesson about "Hallelujah") ▶

R.E.M – Everybody Hurts ([Chords + Tabs](#)) | As seen in the lesson. ▶

Anouk – Michel ([Chords + Tabs](#)) | Notice how the guitar here is playing arpeggio in the slow and emotional verses, and then moves to full strums in the upbeat choruses. Excellent example of choosing where to play arpeggios - and where not to.

Boyce Avenue – Heaven (Bryan Adams Cover) ([Chords](#)) | Same – the song starts in an arpeggio, and then from the first chorus and onwards – it's in full strums.


Lynyrd Skynyrd – Sweet Home Alabama ([Chords](#)) ([Tabs](#))

The Animals – House of the Rising Sun ([Chords + Tabs](#))

Eric Clapton – Wonderful Tonight ([Chords](#))

“Arpeggio Songs” that Were Played with the fingers

Including different styles of fingerstyle arpeggio that it's **great** to know (in no particular order)

 = This example is shown at the lesson

First of all, you can always play all of the songs listed in the “played with a pick” list above – with your fingers. They will simply sound more mellow than when they are played with a pick.

Michael Kiwanuka – Home Again ([Chords](#)) ([Tabs](#)) | A rather simple (but beautiful) song in terms of the arpeggio picking pattern – with some added variations that make it more interesting.

Bob Dylan – Don't Think Twice, It's Alright ([Chords](#)) ([Tabs](#)) | This (advanced) folk fingerstyle classic represents the beauty of [Travis Picking](#), where you alternate between the bass string that you're picking in each chord. (For example – a C chord, followed by a C/G) Travis picking is also very common in music of similar folk artists, such as Simon & Garfunkel. (see: [The Boxer](#))

Tommy Emmanuel – Day Tripper (The Beatles Cover) | This style of fingerpicking – where the melody is played on the guitar (instead of sung) – is the expertise of many instrumental players. Tommy Emmanuel is, IMHO, the best of them all. Watch this [Ted talk](#) to see him explain a lot more about how he is basically doing the roles of a drummer, a bass player, and a singer altogether. Besides the educational value – this man is a true charmer and a joy to watch.

The Beautiful Girls – La Mar ([Chords](#)) | A rather simple picking pattern - with an added twist. Listen to those “acoustic slaps” in between – that are imitating a snare drum. If you dig it, go to the section about the “Jack Johnson Slaps & Mutes” to learn all about this mellow, “beach-vibes” playing style.


John Butler Trio – Spring to Come ([Chords](#)) ([Tabs](#)) | John Butler is an Australian virtuoso which I highly recommend checking out. Watch the video to probably see the longest nails that you've seen. That's a big part of his crisp, signature sound on the acoustic guitar. (Also – check out [Ocean](#) by him)

Adikara Fardy – Just the Two of Us (Grover Washington Jr. Cover) ([Chords](#)) | Now that's how you add some groove to your fingerstyle arpeggios.

Dire Straits - Romeo & Juliet ([Chords](#)) ([Tabs](#)) | Watch out for more from Mark Knopfler. He is unique for almost strictly just using his fingers, and his right-hand technique is something that leaves you in awe. One of the all-time greatest.

The Beatles – Blackbird ([Chords](#) – although they're not very relevant here) ([Tabs](#)) | Paul McCartney is the one responsible to this fingerpicked masterpiece. Challenging - but VERY satisfying to learn.

Eric Clapton - Tears in Heaven ([Chords](#)) ([Tabs](#)) | Arpeggio picking on a *classical* guitar this time.

Kansas - Dust In The Wind ([Chords](#)) ([Tabs](#)) | An example of a melody that's played on the treble strings while the chords keep switching around. 

To hear how arpeggios sound like on a PIANO – check out [Elvis Presley – Can't Help Falling In Love with You](#) | [John Mayer – Dreaming with a Broken Heart](#) | [Skeeter Davis - The End of the World.](#)

Examples of a Couple of Songs Which Are NOT Originally Played as Arpeggios, But Sound Great When You “Convert” Them to It (or at least their first parts)

For a further explanation on **how** to convert them, check out the “conversions” lesson in the section. Also, feel free to **slow** these songs down – sometimes it just sounds much better for arpeggiated versions of songs.

[Bob Dylan – Blowin’ in the Wind](#) (Chords)

[Outkast – Hey Ya](#) (Chords)

[Old Crow Medicine Show - Wagon Wheel](#) (Chords)

[Elton John - Can You Feel the Love Tonight](#) (Chords)

[Tom Petty – Free Fallin’](#) (Chords) | John Mayer have actually [already converted it](#). (-: You can see the [tabs](#) to his version right here.

[Bob Marley – Redemption Song](#) (Chords)

[Oasis – Wonderwall](#) (Chords) | Check out the “examples” lesson in the section about “The Jack Johnson Slaps & Mutes” to learn an example of how to convert it into a groovy arpeggio pattern.

[The Beatles - Love Me Do](#) (Chords)

[Jason Mraz - I’m Yours](#) (Chords)

[Bright Eyes – First Day of My Life](#) (Chords)

[Coldplay – The Scientist](#) (Chords)

[Bob Dylan – Knocking on Heaven’s Door](#) (Chords)



Oasis. Yes – even Wonderwall – a hardcore “strumming” song, can beautifully convert into an “arpeggio song”.