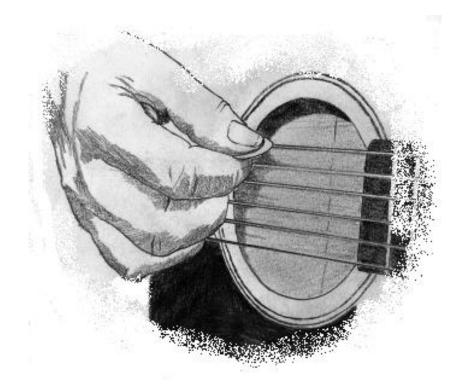
Pick Hand FIRST AID KIT



· The Art of Slowing Down.

Pre-face

Now is the time to develop a tight, clean picking technique. When beginners try picking at too fast a tempo they can sometimes look kinda like . . . I don't know, you can think of something to compare it too. Then, when they try harder it gets worse. Years of this kind of practice can still be set strait with the right exercises. These lessons can be used as a study supplement for both novice and experienced guitarists to develop a more refined picking technique, all while improving your overall approach toward each practice session. It's about going back to when you first said 'ok, I just pick the string like this...'.

And with each practice session, everything starts to get better.



Everything here should be common sense . . . just like walking.

Introduction

Let's say you walk from your house to the store. How often do you think of your feet? Do you think 'OK, first my right foot, then my left... now my right foot again'. That would be ridiculous. But there was once a time when you did think like that, when you first started to take one step, then another. All your concentration went into keeping your balance as each step was taken. And what if you tried running right away? Well, odds are you would trip and fall after just a few steps. So in the beginning there was a real need to stay balanced while thinking through each action.

Learning to develop good finger memory can sometimes be a lot like this. The goal of this study is to get through this stage so that you can go places musically; to free up your creativity by getting the beginning steps down more clearly. This means going very slowly at first so as to pay more attention to each step.

Beginners are sometimes told to work out their pick hand more intuitively without focusing on it. This can actually be good advise when first starting out, but at some point more attention should be given to fully develop the pick hand. This book should be looked at as a study supplement. Beginners should also look for some easy songs or riffs to work on.

Who hasn't aspired to some rock star putting every ounce of energy into a guitar solo. Yet this only accounts for a small part of most performances. When it comes to practice, body tension should be avoided. An accomplished musician is relaxed and at ease. His actions are disciplined but not stressed... and they sound good. Slowing down is the secret to faster playing with less stress and a fuller sense of expression. Slow means smooth, and smooth means fast.

There is a difference between extra unwanted tension and the strength needed for various techniques. Learning to slow down will allow to focus on the right kind of muscle tension and for it develop naturally. Any musician who struggles with too much tension when they play needs to work through it slowly, and anyone who has been hitting this proverbial brick wall by trying to do too much too soon will need to let go of a lot of anxiety and excess body tension.

This leads us to the exercises. Setting a metronome to 60 M.M. and then gradually increasing the tempo is a common way to develop speed. In this book most of the exercises start by setting the metronome to 40 M.M. in order to put more thought into everything: how to sit and hold the instrument (and pick), the amount of resistance in the strings, the distance going from one string to the next, etc. Practice finding actions and movements that feel easy and natural. Always use a solid pick attack and be aware of and counter any unnecessary stress or tension that develops.

A metronome and a stopwatch will be needed. It should be easy for anyone with a smart phone to find a metronome app that can continue in the background, and a stopwatch app that allows the screen to stay lit while it is running. The study tips in <u>Appendix A</u> are meant to help make the most out each practice. <u>Appendix B</u> covers enough about tablature to study this book and to start learning from other sources. Other appendices are referred to as needed.

Don't expect instant improvement if bad habits have already developed. If this is the case, these exercises might make you feel a little shaky. Don't be discouraged! This is a natural process when learning to let go of tension. As you master each lesson your approach (and attitude) toward each practice session should improve; bad habits should start to fade, and the good habits developed should create more confidence.

Lowercase numerals are used to indicate each page of the pre-study, numbers like 2-5 are used for the main lessons, and capital letters are used for the appendices. This book is a somewhat serious study supplement and it will take some persistence to get through it. It is OK to quit and to come back to it (starting at the beginning) when you feel ready.

Table of Contents

<u>Pre-Study:</u> First Relax

i	Parts of the Guitar
11	How to Sit Properly
iii	Tune Your Instrument!
iv	'Inside/Outside' Picking

	<u>Section One</u> : Sweeps	Number <u>Of Exercises</u>	Suggested Time For Each Exercise
1-1	Sweeping Primer	3	5 (or 3) minutes
1-2	Using Inside/Outside Picking	10	3 minutes
1-3	Focus on Changing Directions	10	3 minutes
1-4	Building Speed With Four Strings	10	3 minutes
	Section Two: Picking Patterns		
	Part One: Alternate Picking		
2-1	Single and Adjacent Strings	15	2 (or 1) minutes
2-2	String Skipping	10	3 minutes
2-3	Skipping 2 Strings	10	3 minutes
2-4	Skipping 3 Strings	10	3 minutes
2-5	Skipping 4 Strings	10	3 minutes
2-6	Complex Patterns	5	6 minutes
	Part Two: Economy Picking		
2-7	Adjacent Strings	5	6 minutes
2-8	Skipping 1 & 2 Strings	10	3 minutes
2-9	Skipping 3 & 4 Strings	10	3 minutes
2-10	Complex Patterns	5	6 minutes
	Part Three: Cross Picking		
2-11	3 String Banjo Rolls	10	3 minutes
2-12	Inside/Outside Exercises	10	3 minutes
2-13	Miscellaneous Exercises	10	3 minutes
2-14	Complex Patterns	6	5 minutes
	Section Three: Two-hand Coordination		
3-1	Open Chords	10	2 minutes
3-2	Chord Progressions	-	-
3-3	Tremolo Picking	15	2 minutes
3-5	Trills	5	6 minutes
3-4	Scales And Good Form	2	5 minutes
3-6	Trills & Tremolo Picking	-	-
3-7	Scale Patterns/Repetitions	-	-
3-8	Moveable Arpeggios	15	2 minutes

Conclusion

Appendices A - G

Musical Example

Pre-study

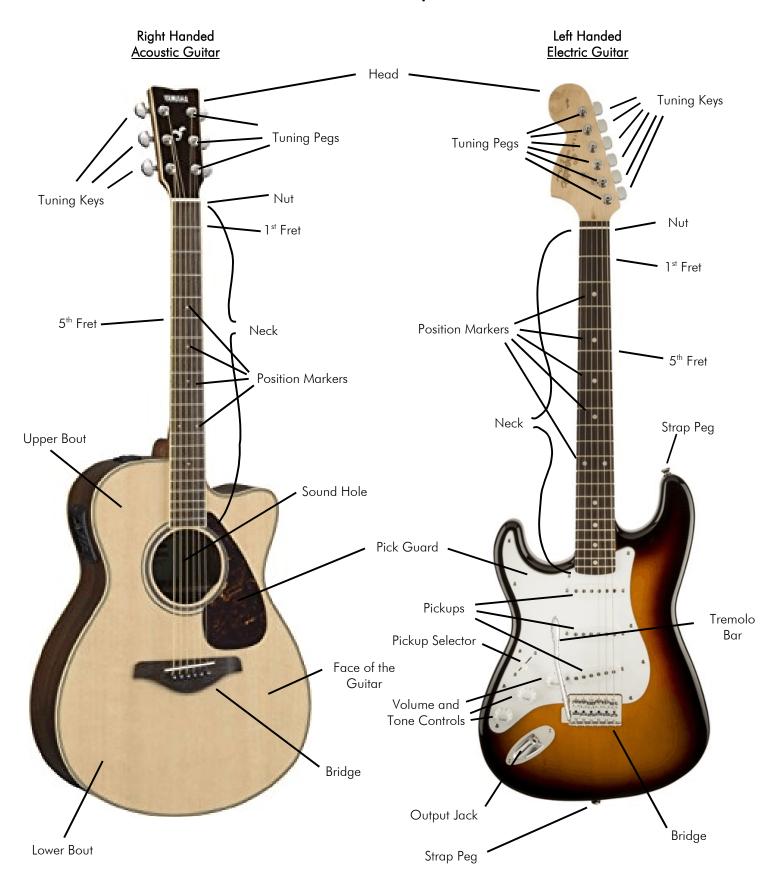
Learn to Relax

The natural 'go-to' response for facing hard challenges is to tense-up, bear down, get in gear, etc. However it might be described, it is often a normal response for anybody. Its purpose is to speed up or strengthen a person's abilities, but it can also get in the way by creating too much tension. This study is all about working to develop a stress free approach. This means relaxing your body (hands, shoulders, etc.) as well as letting your mind be at peace while countering any tension that might develop. This can be an excellent form of meditation for anyone who would appreciate it as such.

Novice guitarists might consider taking up to a week to play around with the four lessons found in the pre-study. Experienced guitarists can go through this material a little quicker.

Make an effort to pick up the guitar at least once every day, even if it is jut to go over it's parts or to practice tuning it.

Parts of the Guitar



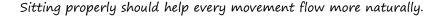
Beginners might start by holding the guitar face up on their lap and learning to go over all the parts from memory.

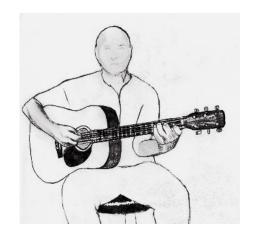
This will help to develop confidence as well as an appreciation for the instrument.

How to Sit Properly

Good technique begins with **good posture**. It's OK to lean forward just a little as long as your back is kept strait. If slouching becomes a problem, the discomfort and awkward posture that develops should hopefully be enough to reconsider how important good posture really is.

Acoustic guitars can be awkward to hold at first. Set the inner elbow of the pick arm on the edge of the lower bout. This can be used as an anchor while the forearm falls naturally over the face of the instrument. The leg the guitar sets on should be elevated just enough to make playing comfortable.





Pick Hand

Playing right handed means holding the guitar so the neck extends to the left. This gives the more dominant hand control over the rhythm and volume of the music. In standard tuning the open strings are:

EADGBE (low to high)



Hold the pick between the thumb and the first part of the index finger. How far the pick extends past the thumb can vary depending on personal preference.

Fret Hand

Curl your fingers so that each fingertip comes straight down onto the fret board. Use just the fingertips to press any string just behind any fret, not directly on the fret.



The thumb is generally across from the 1^{st} and 2^{nd} fingers. In classical technique no other part of the fret hand should be allowed to touch the neck. The fret hand fingers are:



Holding and using a pick uses new muscles. It is normal even for experience guitarists to drop it now and then. One idea is to actively control the pick to keep it in one place. This can be done with the pick hand middle finger or even with how you pick or strum the strings.

Once you gain a feel for maintaining smooth strums, stay with it. Strumming is the fastest way to play songs, and not paying enough attention to this simple, easy technique is how bad habits set in.

Keep the picking wrist loose and free. Imagine you are shaking water off your hand when you strum.

Left-handed guitarists can look at these illustrations as though looking into a mirror.

Tune Your Instrument!

Tuning to a standard pitch makes it easier for musicians to get together, and electronic tuners are probably the easiest way to get tuned up. Pitch pipes, tuning forks, recorded tones, an instrument that's already in-tune and some musical toys can also be used to tune-up. 'Middle C' on any keyboard has the same pitch as C on the 1st fret in standard tuning.

To adjust any string, follow it up to the head to find the right tuning key. Tune slightly lower than the desired pitch, then gradually raise the pitch. Once the string is in-tune, pinch it at the 12th fret and pull it away from the fret board. Let go so it snaps back, and then check its tuning again. This is to balance out the tension on either side of the nut.

First Steps to Tuning-up

Many guitarists develop an ear for the 'low E string'. Once this is in tune, fret it at the 5^{th} fret to tune the 5^{th} string. Then fret the A string at the 5^{th} fret to tune the open 4^{th} string. All the strings are tuned like this with one exception. To tune the B string, fret the G string at the 4^{th} fret. The open 1^{st} to 4^{th} strings can be compared to notes at the 9^{th} and 10^{th} frets to tune non-adjacent strings.

When two notes are just slightly out-of-tune, their sound waves won't quite 'match' and a pulse is created. The closer the frequencies, the slower the pulse. When both notes match, there shouldn't be any pulse at all, just a clear harmony.

Natural Harmonics

(see appendix E)

The 5^{th} fret N.H. of most strings is the same as the 7^{th} fret N.H. one string up. This, of coarse, won't work when comparing the 3^{rd} string to the 2^{nd} string.

On the 6^{th} string, the 5^{th} fret N.H. can be used to tune the open 1^{st} string, and the 7^{th} fret N.H. should create the same pitch as the open 2^{nd} string.

Standard Tuning (right handed) E A D G B E nut/ open position A D G C E A 5th fret B E A D B C F G C B E A D B C F A D B E A D B C F A D B E A D B C F A D B E A D B C F A D

Comparing Octave Notes

The 'pulse' created when two notes are out-of-tune can also be heard between octave notes, especially between notes in the lower positions. Try comparing the open 6^{th} string to E at the 2^{nd} fret. This is part of what experience guitarists listen for when they check the tuning by strumming a few open chords. Taking the time to tune the guitar at least to itself can be enough for a good practice even if/when the guitar is not on pitch.

Using a Tuning Fork

High E tuning forks (329.6 vps) work well with acoustic guitars. Strike the fork against something solid and set the butt of it against the bridge. Use this to tune the open 1^{st} string and the 6^{th} string (5^{th} fret N.H). These two strings can be used to tune the rest. Starting from the 6^{th} string, if the 1^{st} string ends up going out of tune then start again. Using a tuning fork takes more work than an electronic tuner, but it can also be a fun way to develop a good ear!

Inside/Outside Picking

This lesson does not have regular 'exercises'. Simply take a little time to walk through and understand the differences between inside and outside picking, and to learn to keep a tight economy of motion. Using a metronome is optional. See Appendix B if you are unclear about tablature and how it is used for in this book.

First, pick the 6^{th} string with an up-stroke, then the 5^{th} string with a down-stroke (example #1). This is called inside picking because the pick stays inside the strings. Likewise, picking the 5^{th} string with a down-stroke, then the 6^{th} string with an up-stroke would also be inside picking.

Now pick the 6^{th} string with a down-stroke followed by an up-stroke for the 5^{th} string (example #2). In this case the pick first goes across the 5^{th} string before coming back to pick it. This is called 'outside' picking. Picking the 5^{th} string with an up-stroke and going across the 6^{th} string before picking it with a down-stroke would also be outside picking.

#1

Inside Picking

Pick the 5th and 6th strings a few times with inside picking.



The pick always goes from each string directly to the next string.

#2

Outside Picking

Now pick the 6th and 5th strings a few times with outside picking.



Bring the pick around each string before coming back to pick it.

Using a downstroke to pick the 2^{nd} string and an up-stroke for the 1^{st} string is outside picking because the strings are picked 'from the outside'. This can be streamlined by picking the 2^{nd} string and allowing the pick to cross over the 1^{st} string all in one motion. From there it should be easy to pick the 1^{st} string with an up-stroke. Likewise, the 1^{st} string should be picked so the pick goes over the 2^{nd} string in one motion before coming back again (example #3).



Faster Outside Picking

Pick the 2^{nd} and 1^{st} strings a few times with outside picking.



Pick each string and go over the next string in one easy motion.

Take a few minutes to pick any two adjacent strings with inside and outside picking. Pick each string so the pick is left in a good position to come back again before picking the next string. Always look for a clear 'path' that feels natural. Inside and outside picking will be worked on throughout the majority of this book.

Section One

Sweep Picking

For the sake of presenting the ideas found in this method, sweeps are defined here as two or more strings that are played consecutively with one motion (up or down) to create two distinctly separate notes. Not all music teachers feel that only two notes constitutes a sweep. Keep an open mind toward what each person/method offers.

Sweeps depend more on timing and finesse than physical force. Using just the tip of the pick can help to develop speed by keeping the string resistance down, and learning to move the whole arm instead of the wrist can help to keep a better economy of motion.

For this section the general rule is simple: sweep the strings with the whole arm and move the wrist as little as possible to articulate each note. Keep the wrist loose as if you are about to go right into picking single notes or strumming right away. For the lessons in this section, it is OK to stop now and to do a little easy strumming on all six strings to get a better idea of how it feels for the pick to go through the strings with one motion. It should only take a few seconds to do this so don't worry too much about the timer or the metronome.

Work out the sweeping primer first. This great 'go-to' lesson helps to feel where the strings are in relation to one another. Stopwatch 'start times' are given for both a 15 minute workout and a 9 minute condensed version for an easy warm-up. These exercises use 5 strings to better accommodate playing 4 notes per beat (rather than an awkward 5 notes per beat).

The three lessons after that can be combined with <u>Section Two</u>. Sweeps using inside/outside picking can be practiced at the same time as <u>Part One</u> (alternate picking). Learning to change directions faster can be practiced with <u>Part Two</u> (economy picking). Building speed with four strings can then go with <u>Part Three</u> (cross picking). This approach is recommended so that plenty of time is given to each sweeping lesson before moving on. However, everyone has their own learning curve and some may do better by focusing on and developing their sweeps first.

Practicing one lesson from <u>Section One</u> and one from <u>Section Two</u> would mean 1 hour a day, not counting any other practice you may have planned on. Another option might be to alternate from day to day. This means ½ hour per day leaving more time for other things. A third idea is to practice <u>Section Two</u> every day, and only practice one of the sweeping lessons maybe 2 or 3 times a week or when you have the time. Since this is only a study supplement, it would even be Ok to practice <u>Section Two</u> a few times a week, and the accompanying sweep lesson once a week. Bottom line: find something you can work with that will fit your needs.

The great thing about these sweep lessons is how easy these exercises can be to practice almost anytime, anywhere. Even watching TV.

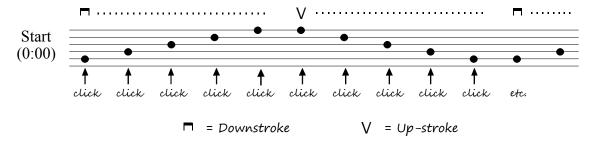
Sweeping Primer

A sweep is a common way to arpeggiate the notes in a chord. This is done by using one smooth motion up or down to pick each string individually. Keep the 'bouncing' to and from the guitar to a minimum when picking each string. Using support fingers to establish a smooth plane for your sweeps is a good idea in the beginning. This will also develop a consistent 'pick depth', which means developing pick accuracy as well as more consistence resistence from each string. Set the metronome to 40 m.m. and spend 5 minutes on each exercise (15 min. total). Start times have also been included for a short 9 minute version (3 minutes for each exercise). Arrows indicate each metronome click (1).

One Note Per Beat

Starting at the very slow pace of one note per beat, pick from the 5th string to the 1st with one downward motion. Let your arm fall, like gravity is doing most of the work. For upward sweeps lift the whole arm up. Keeping a steady motion across all five strings will take practice since the pick tends to jump forward as it breaks free from each string.

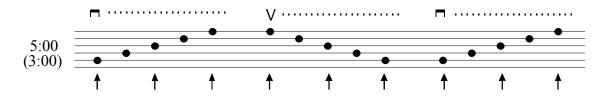
To help smooth out your technique, take a few seconds now and then to strum across all 6 strings.



Practice keeping a mental count of each note (1, 2, 3, 4, 5.... 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.... etc. For those who aspire to lightning fast Yngwie-speed, a shallow pick depth will have less string resistance and less bouncing from string to string.

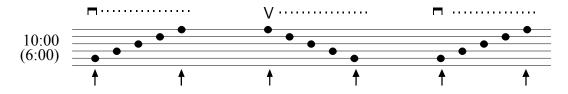
Two Notes Per Beat

Next pick two notes per beat with one whole beat between each sweep. You can count like before (1, 2, 3, 4, 5...), or you can count the beats: 1 - & - 2 - & - 3 (pause). Learning to keep a mental count will help at faster tempos.



Four Notes Per Beat

To pick 4 notes per beat count: 1 - e - & - a - 2 (pause) 3 - e - & - a - 4 (pause). The &'s are always halfway between each click with two 'counts' added in ('e' and 'a'). At this pace it should be easy for the whole arm to make each sweep with less 'bouncing'.



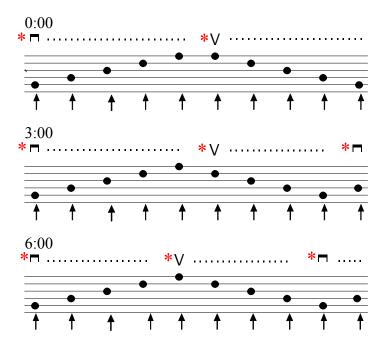
Unfortunately it can be hard to practice every day, either because of a lack of time or inspiration. This is the perfect lesson for days like these. If nothing else, try to at least cover the short version before going to sleep.

Sweeping in one direction is relatively easy; changing directions is where tension starts to build. Use the whole arm to sweep while relying on the wrist and fingers to articulate each note. Changing the pick angle to reach the highest and lowest strings gives the whole arm just a little extra time to slow down. Support fingers can be allowed to brush across the pick guard to keep an even plane across the strings, but one you have a feel for this it should be easy to use the inner elbow as an anchor. Set the metronome to 40 m.m. and spend 3 minutes on each exercise.

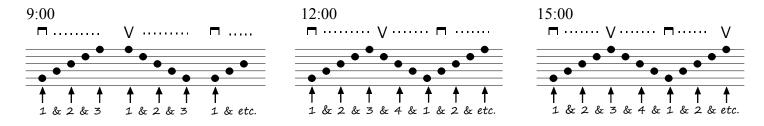
The first exercise is just like the sweeping pre-study; sweep from the 5^{th} string to the 1^{st} , then back. Pick one note per beat, and count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc. like before. This is to warm-up for the 2^{nd} and 3^{rd} exercises.

Pay attention to which muscles will be needed to be ready to sweep in each direction (*). Do what feels best to to create an easy, natural path while avoiding tension.

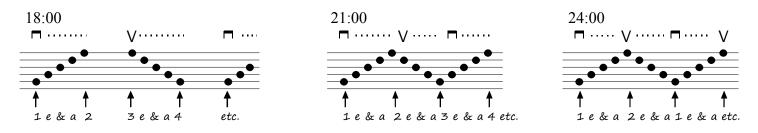
The 2^{nd} exercise uses inside picking, while the 3^{rd} exercise uses outside picking. Count 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. These two exercises should sound like one continuos stream of notes without any noticeable break in the rhythm.



Pick two notes per beat for the next 3 exercises. The first exercise practices one sweep at a time, again to warm-up before using inside and then outside picking to change directions. Stay relaxed and focus on keeping a steady tempo. The first exercise is counted like in the pre-study, while the 2^{nd} and 3^{rd} exercises are counted 1, &, 2, &, 3, &, 4, &.

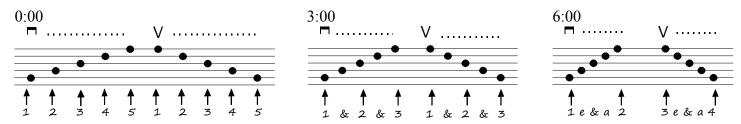


Finally, pick 4 notes per beat for the next three exercises. As before, the first exercise uses single sweeps up and down to warm-up before using inside picking and outside picking to change directions. Notice the '&'s' are still halfway between the beats (clicks of the metronome), but this time with 'e' and 'a' added in to get a feel for counting 16th notes.

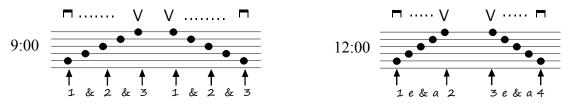


27:00 Use the remaining 3 minutes to continue picking 4 notes per beat while freely alternating between inside and outside picking to change directions. Aim for being versatile at switching to either technique.

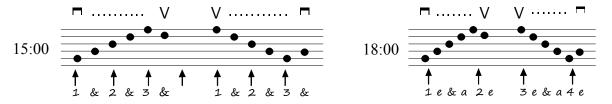
This lesson is to practice changing directions at a faster tempo, so set the metronome to 80 M.M. The warm-up is similar to the sweeping primer; do just one sweep at a time with one note per beat, then two notes, then four notes.



The next step is to pick the last note in each sweep with outside picking, e.g. downward sweeps should end by playing the last note with an up-stroke, and upward sweeps should end with a downstroke. Make that last note sound the same as if it was picked with one steady sweep In the same direction. Start with two notes per beat, then four notes.

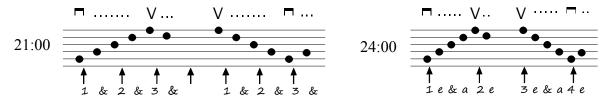


Even though outside picking is often favored by professionals, it is important to freely alternate between both inside and outside picking. For the next two exercises use inside picking to add just one note after changing directions. Count out the first four notes, then use more of the wrist to pick the highest or lowest note while getting ready to sweep in the other direction. First practice two notes per beat, then four. Work at keeping the same tempo for all six notes.



An extra beat was given to accommodate this extra note when playing two notes per beat.

And now its back to outside picking to add the same note as in the last two exercises. Listen carefully for that fourth note and be ready to pick it, go over the next string and get ready to come back again all in the same motion.

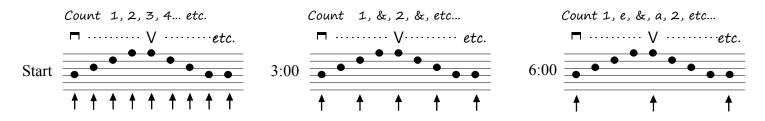


27:00 Practice sweeps at four note per beat again with the extra note added in, only this time alternate freely between inside and outside picking. Every sweep should sound the same either way.

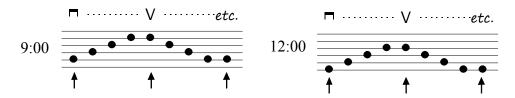
You can celebrate finishing this lesson with The Woody Woodpecker theme. First fret the CM chord (see lesson 3-1). Use the 4^{th} finger to fret G on the 1^{st} string. There are two 8^{th} note triplet. Each triplet is played in the same amount of time as two eighth notes (one quarter note). The last 7 notes are all 16^{th} notes.



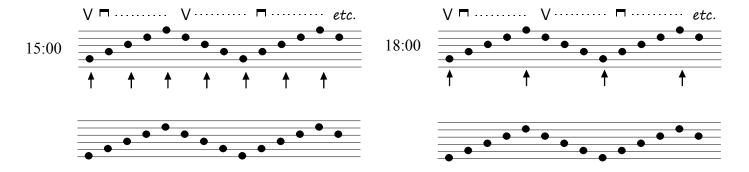
For this lesson start with the metronome set to 80mm. The first three exercises are to warm-up to this much faster tempo by using only four strings, with the highest and lowest notes picked twice. Picking the last string and then coming right back to the same string makes changing directions easier and faster. Start with one note per beat, then two notes and then four. The notes in each sweep can be counted the same as before.



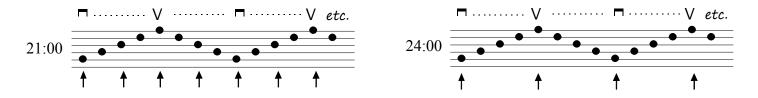
Thicker strings have more resistance.... not much, just enough to feel it a little. Pay constant attention to not letting too much tension set in, and try to let go of it if/when it does; shake your hand out, try strumming a few times, etc.



Warming-up with four strings like this should make it a lot easier to sweep with inside picking. First play two notes per beat to get the feel of it, then back up to four notes per beat. Notice these two exercises start with an up-stroke to maintain a consistent picking pattern. These exercises can also be played on the lower strings.



The last two exercises cover outside picking; first with two notes per beat, then four notes. These can also be practiced over the thicker strings. By this time just a little more 'burn' should be noticed when practicing over the thicker strings. Holding the pick just a little bit looser should make it easier to play longer without getting tired.



For this last exercise practice each of the three picking patterns shown below. Each pattern goes from the 6th string to the 1st string while skipping one string. Freely change between each pattern and between inside and outside picking. Start at one note per beat, then two and then four. Don't expect to master four notes per beat very soon.



Section Two

Changing Strings

A key focus in this method is to use wrist movement to pick individual notes while using elbow movement to change strings. Positioning the arm so the pick is directly over each string will develop accuracy and make less work for the wrist. Don't take this for granted; stay consistent.

These lessons build progressively and are easy when practiced IN ORDER. It is important not to skip <u>Part One</u> (alternate picking). Anyone who plans to practice directional picking should be sure to cover both economy picking and cross picking to get a complete picture, and anyone who has been told to skip alternate picking should read <u>Appendix G</u>.

All of the lessons in this section have the metronome set to 40 mm, and most of the exercises have only one note per beat. Five of the lessons in this section have exercises that break the one note per beat rule: the first lesson in <u>Part One</u> and <u>Part Two</u> (adjacent strings), and the last lesson in each of the three parts in this section (complex patterns). I don't think 'complex patterns' is an actual musical term. It was just a convenient title for this lesson.

Work out each lesson until it can be walked through confidently. Once you feel comfortable it might help to learn to play each lesson from memory. Take plenty of time for this and keep the lesson itself in reach to avoid stress in case you need to refresh your memory.

Stay relaxed.

Part One: Alternate Picking

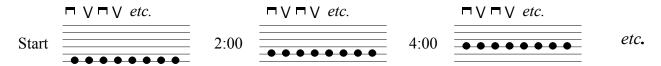
Alternate picking is simple. Keep moving in a continuous down/up motion. This makes the pick direction easy to work out; the first note is picked with a downstroke, the next note is picked with an up-stroke, then another downstroke and so on. It does not matter which string is picked next, the pick direction is always moving in a pendulum like motion.

Wrist movement is used to pick individual notes, elbow movement is used to change strings. Learning to position the pick directly over each string will make less distance, and less work, for the wrist to cover. Don't take this for granted. Be aware of it and make a conscious effort to keep each arm movement consistent when changing strings.

These lessons are easy to walk through if they are taken IN ORDER. Still, some of the more advanced exercises are likely to be a little bit difficult at first. Remember to always stay relaxed; take a few breathes if needed. Don't worry if you feel jittery or frustrated. This is a natural reaction when learning to let go of excess tension. As confidence builds there should be a noticeable improvement in your approach toward each practice.

Again, work on each lesson until it can be practiced with confidence before moving on.

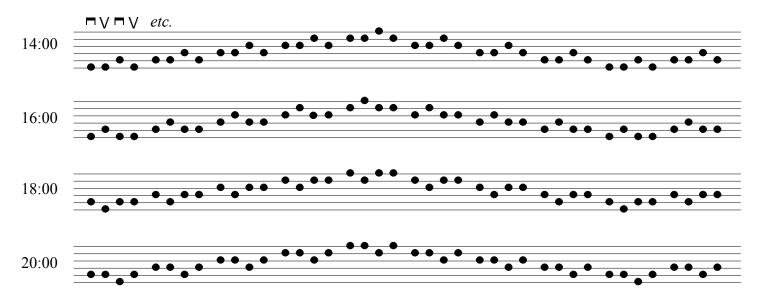
The first 6 exercises cover picking each string one at a time. Set the metronome to 40 bpm and practice each exercise for 2 minutes. Pick the 6^{th} string (one note per beat) for two minutes, then the 5^{th} string for two minutes, and so on. This should help to establish a 'safe' and easy pace. Think of this as home base for all three parts of <u>Section Two</u>.



The next exercise is just one step harder; play four notes per string up and down all six strings. Inside picking is used to change strings when ascending (pitch), and outside picking is used when descending. As your picking accuracy continues to improve, every exercise here will be easier to walk through. This, in turn, means less stress....



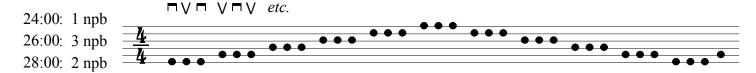
Each of the next four exercises uses a '2 string sequence' to focus on inside/outside picking. Really pay attention to the kind of picking used in each exercise. The 1^{st} & 3^{rd} exercises focus on inside picking, the 2^{rd} & 4^{th} exercises focus on outside picking. Remember to maintain a constant up & down pendulum-like pick motion.



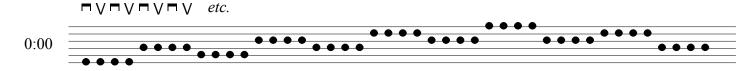
Scale runs often have three notes per string causing the pick direction to alternate for each string. Where one string is played down-up-down, the next string is played up-down-up. This exercise is to warm-up by alternating the pick attack with just one note on each string. Note: some musicians do use alternate picking to play arpeggios.



The last pattern has three notes per string. Play 1 note per beat for two minutes, then play 3 notes per beat for two minutes (the only fast exercise in <u>Section Two</u>). Finally, for an exercise in rhythm try 2 note per beat (8th notes in 4/4).



Practice each exercise for 3 minutes (30 min. total). Don't worry about 'inside/outside' picking for the first exercises; just work on getting a clear idea of the distances between the strings. Maintain down/up pendulum like movements.



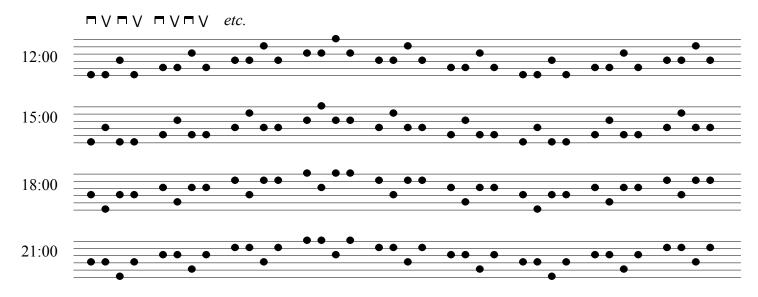
Practice the same pattern, but with only two notes per string instead of four



Here is the same pattern again, but with only one note per string. The first exercise starts with an up stroke to practice inside picking, the second exercise starts with a downstroke for outside picking. Play each note loud and clear and focus on keeping a smooth technique. Timing will develop naturally as your hand and fingers learn what to do.



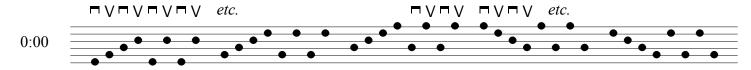
Time to focus on the usual inside and outside picking exercises and the 'micro-movements' involved with either going straight to each string (inside) or going around the string and coming back again (outside).



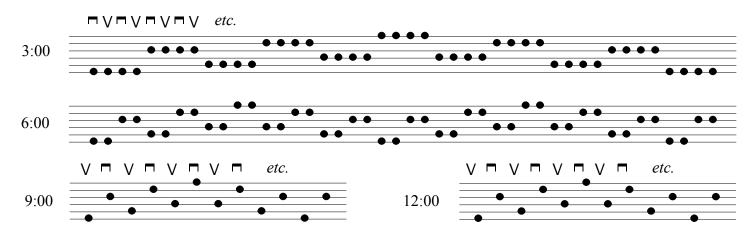
If tension develops, it is usually from poor technique or an unclear idea of what to do. If this happens, stop the metronome (and the timer) and practice the pattern as slowly as needed. Restart the metronome and timer as soon as you can keep a steady pace. If this doesn't help, go back to the previous lesson and practice adjacent strings again. As usual, don't go on to the next lesson until you are comfortable playing everything up to this point.



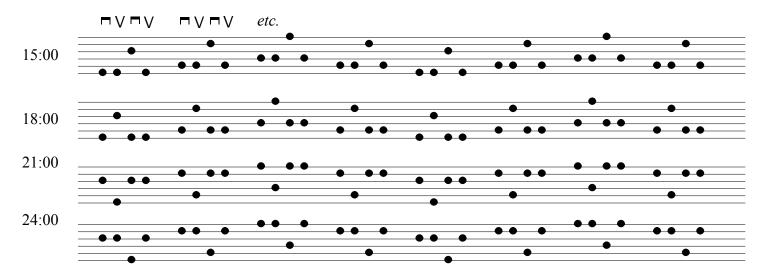
Skipping two strings can be a little more challenging. The first exercise should make it easier to recognize this distance by picking four consecutive strings and then picking the first and last strings a couple times. Learn where the strings are before worrying about inside/outside picking. Practice each exercise for 3 minutes.



Now play four notes per string, then two, then one. Recognizing the general distance when skipping 2 strings at a time is what matters here; focus on where the strings are before thinking too much about inside/outside picking.



Time to focus on those little movements needed for 'inside/outside' picking. If everything has been practiced up to now, then it should not take long for these picking patterns to be played with confidence.

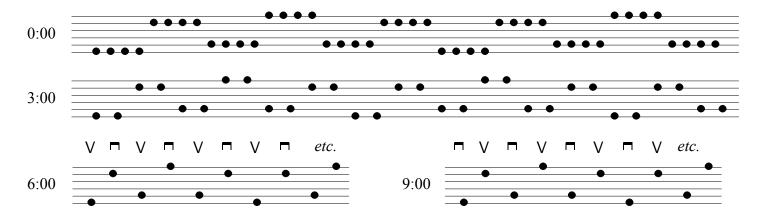


To finish with a challenge, here is a slightly more complicated version of the first exercise. Listen to the sound of each string and pay attention to the size of each string skip (one or two strings). Maintain strict alternate picking. Notice that the string skips are played 'outside' when ascending (pitch) and 'inside' when descending.

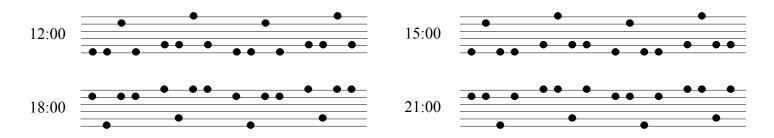


Before starting, pick the 6^{th} , 5^{th} , 2^{nd} and 1^{st} strings. This is to have the sound of each string fresh in your memory. Set the metronome to 40 M.M. and practice each exercise for 3 minutes. Even though the focus here should simply be on where the strings are, 1 note per string is practiced twice to give equal attention to inside and outside picking.

Skipping 3 strings means playing the 6^{th} and 2^{nd} stings, or the 5^{th} and 1^{st} strings. Remember to stay as consistent as possible while using the whole arm to cover each string skip. If you can skip 2 strings, this is only one string further.



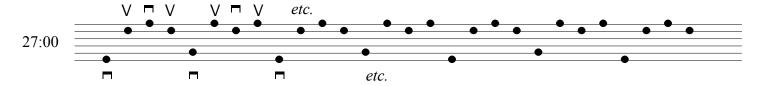
As usual the four variations of the 'inside/outside' exercises are practiced next, this time skipping 3 strings.



A four note pattern is use here. Notice outside picking is used first, then when going from high to low the high note is picked first and inside picking is used.

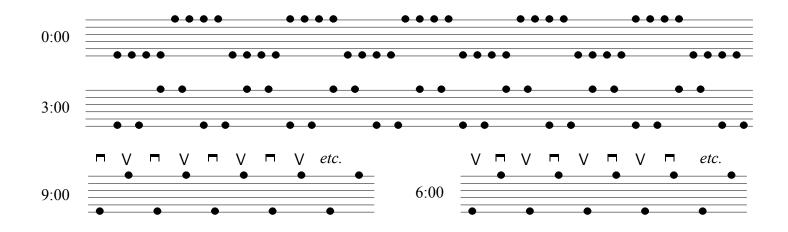


Finger picking often has one bass note followed by a few melody notes. The pattern shown below is one variation of this type of pattern. The base notes are picked with downstrokes while the top 2 strings continue with up/down/up. A string skip from the 1^{st} to the 6^{th} string is also included here.

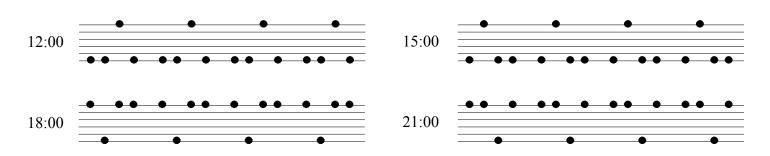


It is OK if you find yourself resting the pick on each string before picking it. This helps to feel where each string is, especially at this tempo, and to feel that 'snap' the instant the string goes free. As your confidence improves, these little 'rests' can become shorter until they are no longer needed. Take plenty of time and do what feels right to you.

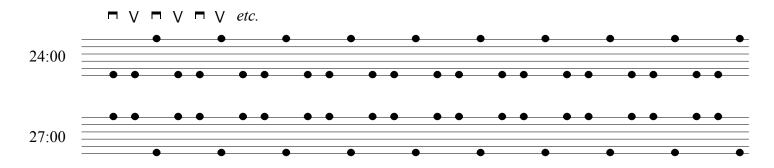
Set the metronome to 40 mm and play one note per beat. Pick each string 4 times, then 2 times, and then one note on each string is practiced twice. Practice each exercise for 3 minutes.



Keep the movements at the elbow smooth and consistent!



So far the last exercise(s) in each lesson have presented unique challenges. Since this lesson only uses two strings a little extra creativity was needed. In these two exercises, the 'inside/outside' picking between the 1st and 6th strings alternates. These last two exercises can be counted 1, 2, 3 OR 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. OR 1, &, 2, &, 3, &...



At this point the distances between all six strings should be established, and 'picturing' all six strings at once should start to feel natural. As usual, do not go on to the next lesson until you are comfortable with the exercises in this lesson.

Even after all these exercises can be played effortlessly, don't think it is OK to rush through new music just because you've developed a little picking versatility. Always practice new material slow enough not to make any mistakes.

If your picking starts to fall apart, or if too much tension starts to build up, then go back to lesson 1-1 and work through everything again until each lesson can be practiced with confidence. This isn't a race to see how fast all the exercises can be covered. It's a race toward developing quality practice time and good study habits.

Until now the picking patterns have been fairly simple. Set the metronome to 40 m.m. and play each sequence on the LOWEST 3 OR 4 STRINGS ONLY a few times without changing strings. Once this feels comfortable, play up and down the strings for the rest of the 3 minutes. Also start by looking at the tablature whenever needed to avoid stress, then try practicing with your eyes closed. There is allot to think through, so take your time and don't get discouraged.

Spend 3 minutes playing all eight notes in each sequence, then go back through the exercises again and SKIP the highlighted notes. To skip a note the pick hand should move in the air a little bit so the rhythm isn't interrupted. Play one note per click and count 1, &, 2, &, 3, &, 4, &. In 4/4 time each click counts for ½ of a beat or one 8th note.



This lesson should get easier each time it is practiced. If tension develops it might be because either the patterns or the distances between the strings aren't worked out enough. To work on the picking patterns, turn off the metronome and stopwatch and walk through each sequence note by note. Go back to any lesson in this section for string distances.

Finger memory and 'brain' memory should support each other, not get in the way. The better each pattern is worked out the easier it should be to focus on accuracy. As accuracy and good technique become second nature it will also become easier to think through new material. One good sign that everything has been thoroughly worked out is when making little changes and/or corrections becomes easy. The goal of every practice session should be to improve.

When you get to a point that you can practice this lesson without any stress (or mistakes), then you should try playing completely from memory. Once this can be done then try playing two notes (one beat) per click. Make sure the pick hand maintains a steady pendulum like motion. This is the last challenge before moving on to economy picking.

Part Two: Economy Picking

The second and third parts of <u>Section Two</u> cover directional picking. This means that the picking directions are determined by the direction of the next string, not by the occurrence of up-beats and downbeats; <u>Part Two</u> covers economy picking, <u>Part Three</u> covers cross picking. Remember, the terminology established here is for easier communication. The guitar is a very independent instrument, and terminology may differ from one instructor to the next.

In economy picking (as defined in this method) the pick always goes strait to each string, and sweeps are used when two or more strings can be played consecutively with one motion.

When going from the 2^{nd} to the 5^{th} string, the 5^{th} string is picked with an up-stroke no matter where it is on the beat. This is because the pick has to go up from the 2^{nd} string to the 5^{th} . If the 6^{th} string is picked next, then another up-stroke should be used. With this technique there are fewer direction changes and less overall movement, which means less potential tension. Since the picking direction is independent of the rhythm it is even more important to pay attention to the sound of the music, especially the rhythm.

Sweeps depend on timing and coordination more than sheer physical effort. This makes it even more important to start off slow. The whole arm should move up and down for each string change with the same consistency as <u>Part One</u>. Slow means smooth, and smooth means fast.

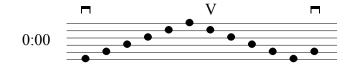
Most of the lessons in <u>Part One</u> started by picking each string 4 times, then 2 times and then just once. These exercises weren't meant for directional picking. By leaving these out the lessons on skipping 1 and 2 strings, and also 3 and 4 strings, could all be combined into two lessons.

The 'inside/outside' exercises were originally intended for alternate picking. Here they have been borrowed from their more classical use to cover economy picking as well. It turns out they translate pretty well for this purpose.

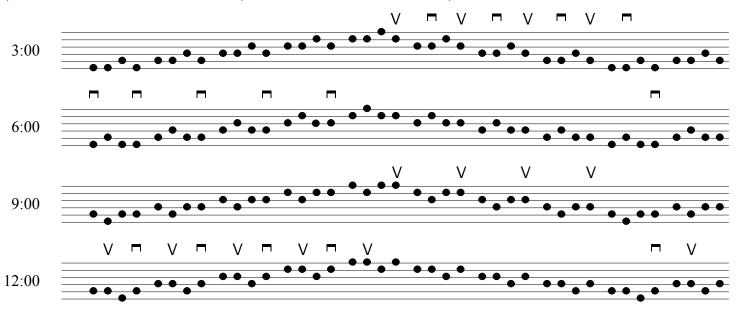
Once <u>Part Two</u> has been worked through move on to <u>Part Three</u> right away. Economy picking is good in some situations, but cross picking can be even faster. Being comfortable with both will make it easier to have more confidence finding what works best in any situation.

Four patterns were consistently used in <u>Section One</u> to practice 'inside/outside' picking. How to pick these same sequences changes when economy picking is used. Try to work through each pattern without looking at the tablature. The goal is to use economy picking intuitively; look at the tablature if needed. Practice each exercise for 3 minutes.

Start by warming-up with this simple sweep exercise. Sweeps are an important part of directional picking. Notice inside picking is used to change directions.



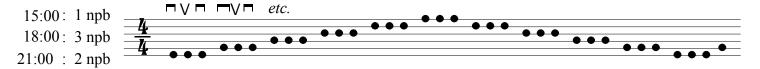
Count the notes in each sequence as 1, 2, 3, 4 and follow the sound of what you are playing. Pick directions are placed over the first note of each sweep (two or more consecutive notes picked in the same direction.)



Inside picking **IS** economy picking. Since the 1^{st} and 3^{rd} exercises already use inside picking, the first half of these two picking pattern stay the same. But there is some outside picking when the pattern descends (pitch), therefore sweeps should be used to maintain the rule of going directly to each string.

The 2nd and 4th exercises use 'outside' alternate picking. Sweeps can be used instead of outside picking when these sequences ascend (pitch). When descending these sequence start with an up-stroke, which naturally creates inside picking.

With economy picking each string is started with a downstroke going from low to high (pitch), and an up-stroke when going from high to low. Start by playing 1 note per beat, then play an 8th note triplet for each beat, and finally play 2 note per beat (8th notes in 4/4). Playing scales can get pretty fast with economy picking



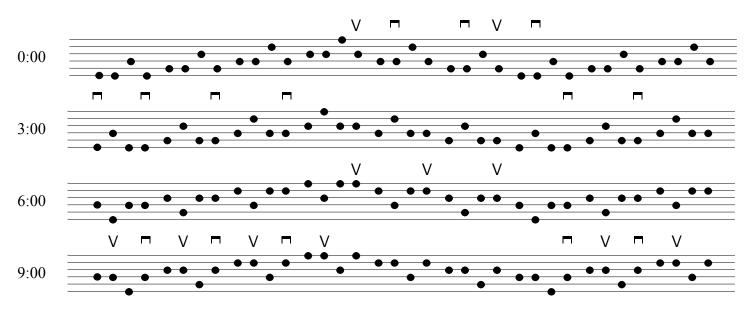
Scale patterns occasionally have two notes on a string. This exercise uses inside picking to play two notes per string.



27:00 Spend the last 3 minutes playing any of the exercises you like or feel needs work

Fast scale runs are not limited to any specific genre of music. They can be found in rock, country, metal, blues, jazz, and classical music. This can be done successfully with alternate picking or sweep picking. Knowing what to expect and how to think through the mechanics is a big part of playing fast and keeping a clean sound.

This lesson covers using economy picking with 1 and 2 strings skips. This shouldn't be too difficult if all of the previous material is practiced first. Try to work through this intuitively before looking at the tablature. The pick directions shown here only indicate the first note of each sweep. Set the metronome to 40 mm and spend 3 minutes on each exercise.



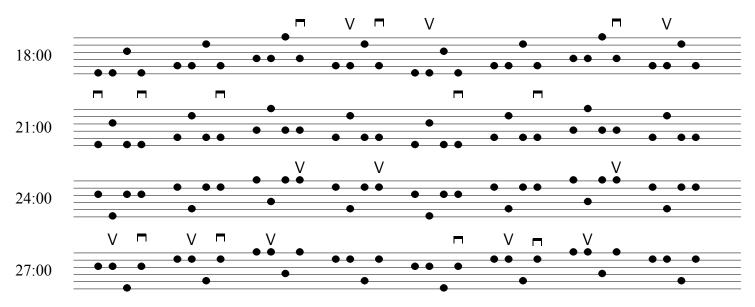
The next exercise is variations of the last exercise in lesson 1-2. Each sweep picks 3 notes while skipping one string between each note. Inside picking is used to change directions. This exercise is easy once you get the hang of it.



This is to better recognize the distance when skipping 2 strings. Notice the sequence changes when descending (pitch).

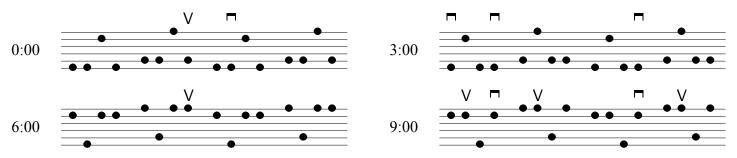


No big surprise with the inside/outside patterns. The sweeps are pretty much the same as the first four exercises, except two strings are being skipped instead of one.

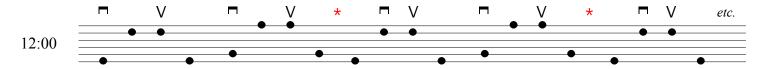


This lesson combines practicing 3 and 4 string skips. Start by picking the 6^{th} , 5^{th} , 2^{nd} , and 1^{st} strings to get a fresh idea of how each string sounds. Then set the metronome to 40 mm and practice each exercise for 3 minutes.

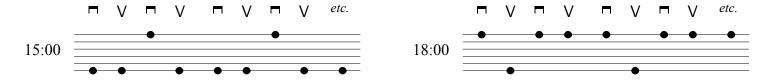
These first four exercises apply economy picking to the inside/outside picking patterns. As before, sweeps are used when the sequences descend (pitch) in the first and third exercises, and when the sequences ascend in the 2nd and 4th exercises. The picking directions indicate the first note of each sweep; try to play each pattern intuitively before looking at the tab.



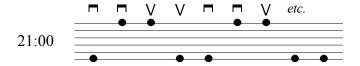
This next exercise uses some outside picking from the 5^{th} string to the 6^{th} string (*) to maintain a more consistent sweeping pattern between the 6^{th} and 2^{nd} and the 5^{th} and 1^{st} strings.



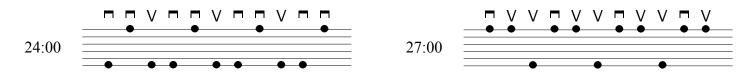
Skipping 4 strings means only playing the 6^{th} and 1^{st} strings. The inside/outside patterns don't work when economy picking is applied to two strings. All four patterns end up using inside picking starting on either the 6^{th} or 1^{st} string.



This is just an easy pattern that covers sweeping from the 6th string to the 1st string and back.



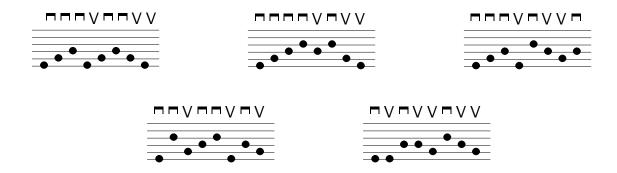
For the last two exercises, the first one uses a sweep to pick from the 6th string to the 1st string, and then inside picking to go back to the 6th string again. The second exercise uses a sweep to go from the 1st string to the 6th string.



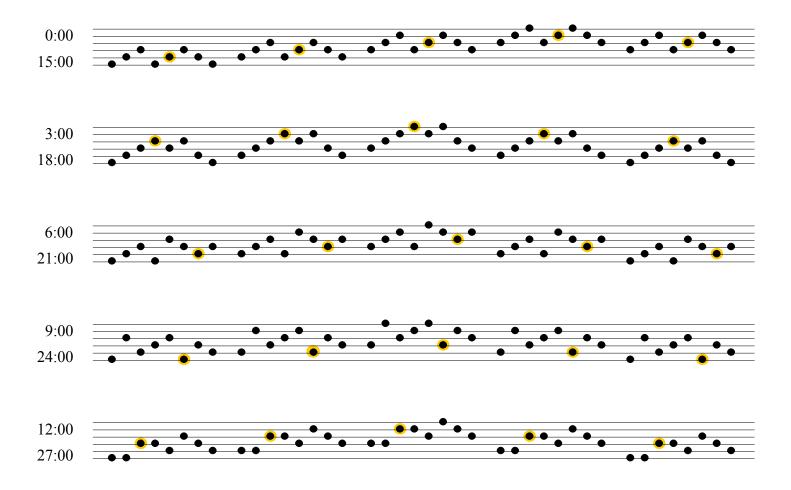
So far this section has covered everything from sweeping adjacent strings to skipping 4 strings. Keep working through these three lessons until they can be practiced with complete confidence before going any further. It is entirely up to you to decide when that is. Don't forget, the second sweep lesson on changing directions faster goes with Part Two.

Some guitar instructors teach that directional picking should come intuitively, and that 'mapping out' the up-strokes and downstrokes will only get in the way. The pick directions shown for the short TABs are for anyone who would like to double-check that they are getting it right. NO PICK DIRECTIONS are given for the full tablature.

Set the metronome to 40mm and count 1, &, 2, &, 3, &, 4, &. Practice on the lowest strings a few times before moving the sequence up and down the strings. Remember, the general rule is to take the most direct path to each string.



Here are the sequence patterns ascending and descending the strings. Remember when the sequences descend the first note of each sequence is picked with an up-stroke. The picking directions change a little for the last two exercises when the highlighted notes are skipped (second time through). Practice with your eyes closed when you feel comfortable.



As always, practice slow enough not to make any mistakes. When you can do this without any stress then try playing completely from memory. Once this can be done then try playing two notes (one beat) per click.

Part Three: Cross Picking

Cross picking was developed by George Shuffler in the 1950's and 60's. It was a way to simulate 3 string finger picked banjo rolls. Like economy picking, sweeps (two or more strings picked in the same direction) are used to minimize pick movement. The difference between cross picking and economy picking is that instead of picking a string from the direction the pick is already coming from, each string is picked in the direction of the next string. This means outside picking is used when changing the direction of the pick. Some advantages are:

- the momentum of the pick is used to get to the next string faster.
- There is a larger target area for the pick to aim for when outside picking.

Diagram Diagram

Inside picking Outside picking

Cross picking should feel like a natural extension to economy picking. However, anyone who has been practicing economy picking for a long time and who has just recently learned the benefits of cross picking might think about working it into their regular practiced gradually. Learning new music is always a good way to grow.

Cross picking is often the preferred choice of professionals. However, even with it's advantages there is no one 'best' way to pick. Alternate picking, economy picking and cross picking are all useful depending on the situation. There are occasions when inside picking works better, and some music is composed with just alternate picking.

In the end it is up to you to find a picking style that you like. Sometimes it will help to follow alternate picking, with downstrokes played on the beat. Or sometimes a well timed up – or downstroke will help to set up the pick direction a few notes further on in the music. Sometimes it's better to let go and let yourself play more intuitively, often times a slow walk through is needed to think through everything. The goal of this book is to bring all of this together into one comprehensive method that is flexible enough to suit anyone's particular style and/or situation.

Similar to the lessons in Part Two (economy picking), half of each inside/outside exercise translates well here, while the other half basically works out to be alternate picking. Lesson 2–12 explores this with adjacent strings, then it combines the exercises to form two more exercises for adjacent strings and for skipping 1 and 2 strings. This lesson focuses on smaller string changes since the usual scale exercises really don't fit in with cross-picking.

Even though the basic techniques are the main focus right now, the goal is to play intuitively once you know what you are doing. Having a solid technique, really knowing the material and learning to play more intuitively will allow more attention to be given to the sound of the music you are playing. If all this seems like too much, then you are doing it wrong. Just look for what works well and for what has the most natural rhythm and flow. Working out a smooth, fluid picking technique should always be enjoyable.

And yes, the final goal is to pick and strum without even thinking about it.

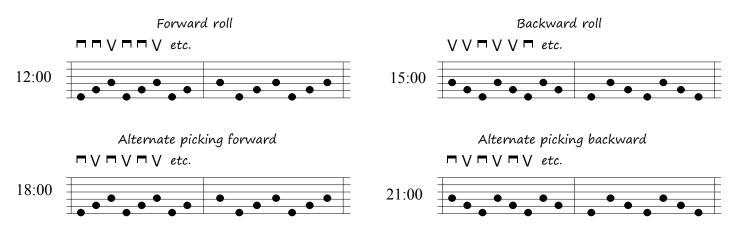
Cross picking was developed to simulate 3 string banjo rolls with two downstrokes and one up-stroke (forward roll), or two up-strokes followed by a downstroke (backward roll). Set the metronome to 40 m.m. and play one note per beat. Play each exercise in this lesson on the lowest strings a few times, then use the pattern as a sequence across all six strings. This includes the exercises with patterns that take two whole measures; play both measures before changing strings.



Although many modern guitarists have adopted these banjo style rolls into their repertoire, they still prefer the more consistent motion of alternate picking that two-down or two-up doesn't seem to have for them.



Playing over a straight-eight rhythm (8th notes in 4/4 time) creates a syncopated feel. This can be clearly heard by playing 5 rolls over 2 measures and counting 1, &, 2, &, 3, &, 4, & for each measure. Rhythmic notations are not normally included since all the notes are usually the same duration. Play two notes per click for these next four exercises, but let the last note of the second measure ring out for one beat (one click). These should also be played as sequences.



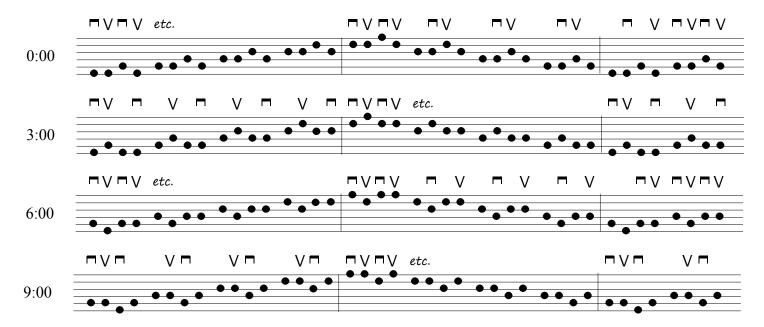
Cross picking is not limited to banjo rolls. Play these sequences with all cross picking starting with one note per click, and count each note 1, &, 2, &, 3, &, 4, &. Once you feel comfortable play 2 notes per click (one beat per click). The pick directions for the last note has been left out in each sequence since this changes when ascending or descending.



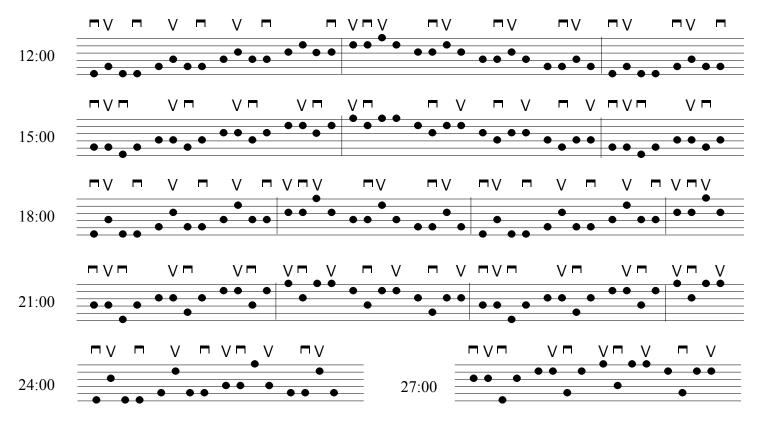
Whatever style you choose, keep an open mind and always leave room for growth.

A little extra thought is needed to practice with the inside/outside exercises. Cross picking and sweeps work well when descending the 1st and 3rd exercises or ascending the 2nd and 4th exercises. Alternate picking is kinda unavoidable for the other half of each exercise. Inside picking is suggested; outside alternate picking creates a lot of extra movement when practicing with adjacent strings. Feel free to explore this yourself.

Think about looking one note ahead and always pick in the direction of the next string. It gets more interesting when two notes are on the same string. In order to keep picking in the direction of the next sting the first note needs to set up the second note. Following these directions will help to avoid any confusion. Pay attention to the sound of each sequence as you count the notes (1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, etc.). If you read the TAB try to avoid looking at the pick directions.



These exercises can be combined to form two exercises that use all cross-picking. Written below are six exercises for practicing adjacent strings and for skipping 1 and 2 strings. It might help to remember the first exercise starts with 1 note on the lower string before picking the higher string (pitch), then it switches to 2 notes when descending. The second exercise is the opposite. Bar lines show where the sequences change. Keep count and listen to each sequence.

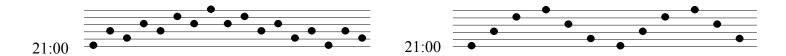


This lesson quickly goes from adjacent strings to 4 string skips. Since distances between the strings have been covered fairly well up to this point, all that is left is to get a better handle on cross picking. This lesson includes variations of exercises from <u>Part One</u> along with consolidated versions of the inside/outside picking exercises for skipping 3 & 4 strings.

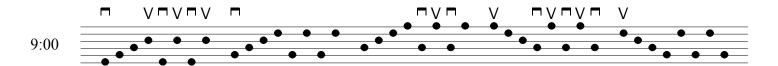
This exercise is a quick warm-up that uses outside picking for adjacent strings.



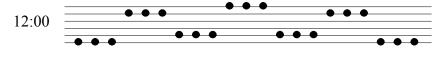
The first exercise below uses outside picking to skip 1 string. The second exercise is formed by 3 string sweeps where one string is skipped between the notes in each sweep and cross picking used to change directions.



Notice the 1st string is picked with a downstroke just before the sequence changes directions.



Here are three exercises for skipping 3 strings, including two hybrid variations of the inside/outside picking exercises.



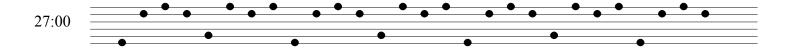




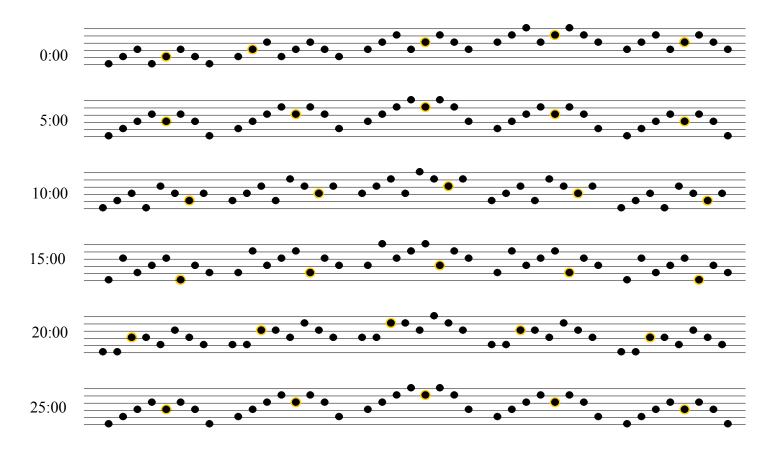
Here is a simple exercise for skipping 4 strings, followed by one more variation of the inside/outside picking exercises.



This last exercise is the finger style pattern that was already used with alternate and economy picking.



Finding your own pick directions is the last challenge to finish <u>Section Two</u>. Notice an extra exercise has been added, and that each exercise is practiced for 5 minutes. Practice cross picking on the lowest strings with and without the highlighted notes, then play up and down the strings. Once you can do this with cross picking, try changing some of the picking direction at different times in the sequence. Below are a few ideas that might or might not apply here. Set the metronome to 40 M.M. and play one note per click. Count the notes 1, &, 2, &, 3, &, 4, &, etc.



A Few Real Life Ideas

Whenever there is a choice, using the pick direction to emphasize up-beats and downbeats is a good way to create a solid 'feel' to the rhythm and the overall sound, even if this is more felt than heard. If alternate picking were used, 1, 2, 3 and 4 would be downstrokes while the &'s are all up-stokes.

Picking the first note of each sequence in the same direction will obviously lead to a consistent 'path' for your pick hand each time the sequence is played. Down-strokes are a safe bet for the first note, and if the first note is a base note (like here) it should naturally get a down-stroke when cross picking.

Some planning can be helpful. One example is if the 1st string needs to be picked with an up-stroke before coming back to strum all six strings. In some cases a better flow can be created by changing the direction you might otherwise pick a few notes early.

Try 2 or 3 ways to pick each sequence to find the best 'flow', ascending and descending. Remember that most professionals favor cross picking over inside picking, but there might still be times when economy picking works better. Once you have some clear ideas on what can be done there should be more freedom to let go and focus on the music.

Remember to practice slow enough not to make any mistakes. Taking the time to find the most natural way to pick is the fastest way for it to become second nature. Try practicing two notes per beat whenever you feel comfortable. When this gets to be too easy and you only make an occasional mistake, then try choosing a different note to skip.