

Fingerpicking Rules

Arpeggiating

Arpeggiating is like playing a harp, it's where you'll usually play each string once without repeating it. To make changes efficient, we often designate each finger its own string.

The most common patterns will use the thumb on strings 4 5 and 6 (from the floor), index on string 3, middle on string 2, and ring finger on string 1.

Try this.

p = thumb i = index m = middle a = ring

Standard tuning
♩ = 70

s. guit.

If we are using mainly the top three strings, it would look more like this, the thumb can claim the third string allowing the index string two, and the middle for string one.

Standard tuning
♩ = 70

s. guit.

Single note plucking and alternating (walking fingers)

In the exercise shown below we are using one finger for the slow notes, and walking fingers for the faster notes. The slow notes can also be done with walking fingers, and fast notes can be done with one finger or the thumb, but this will use more effort.

Standard tuning

♩ = 70

s. guit.

T
A
B

Mixing it all together

Below are a range of drills simulating scenarios which commonly confuse people, as they mix arpeggiating, single note plucking, and alternating. Sometimes the two principles meet seamlessly, other times they clash and rules have to be broken.

Standard tuning

♩ = 70

s. guit.

T
A
B

T
A
B