

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.

The image shows a musical score for guitar in 4/4 time. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef, and the bottom staff is a guitar tablature line. The lyrics are "P P P i m a m i P P P". The guitar tablature consists of two staves, with the top staff labeled 'T' and the bottom staff labeled 'B'. The tablature shows fret numbers (0) for each note in the vocal line.

Vocal Line (Treble Clef):

4/4

P P P i m a m i P P P

Guitar Tablature (Two Staves):

T
B

0 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.

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.

The final intro exercise in this section has two bass notes followed by the top of the chord from there.

For the bass notes, you use thumb on both, then ima on the other notes above.

Once you have this exercise down, go back to the first pattern in this chapter.

From there, add your own chords to these exercises, such as D, E, A, G7, E7#9, Bbsus, etc.

These patterns can be applied to any chord and any progression.

Start with the open strings to focus 100% on your picking hand.

From there, take these exercises to other chord shapes when ready.

The image shows a musical exercise in 4/4 time. The top staff is a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G2, A2, G2, A2, G2, A2, G2, A2. The bottom two staves are labeled 'TAB' and 'B'. The TAB staff shows open strings (0) for all six strings in every measure. The 'B' staff shows the bass line with quarter notes: G2, A2, G2, A2, G2, A2, G2, A2.

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.

P m i a i m P

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