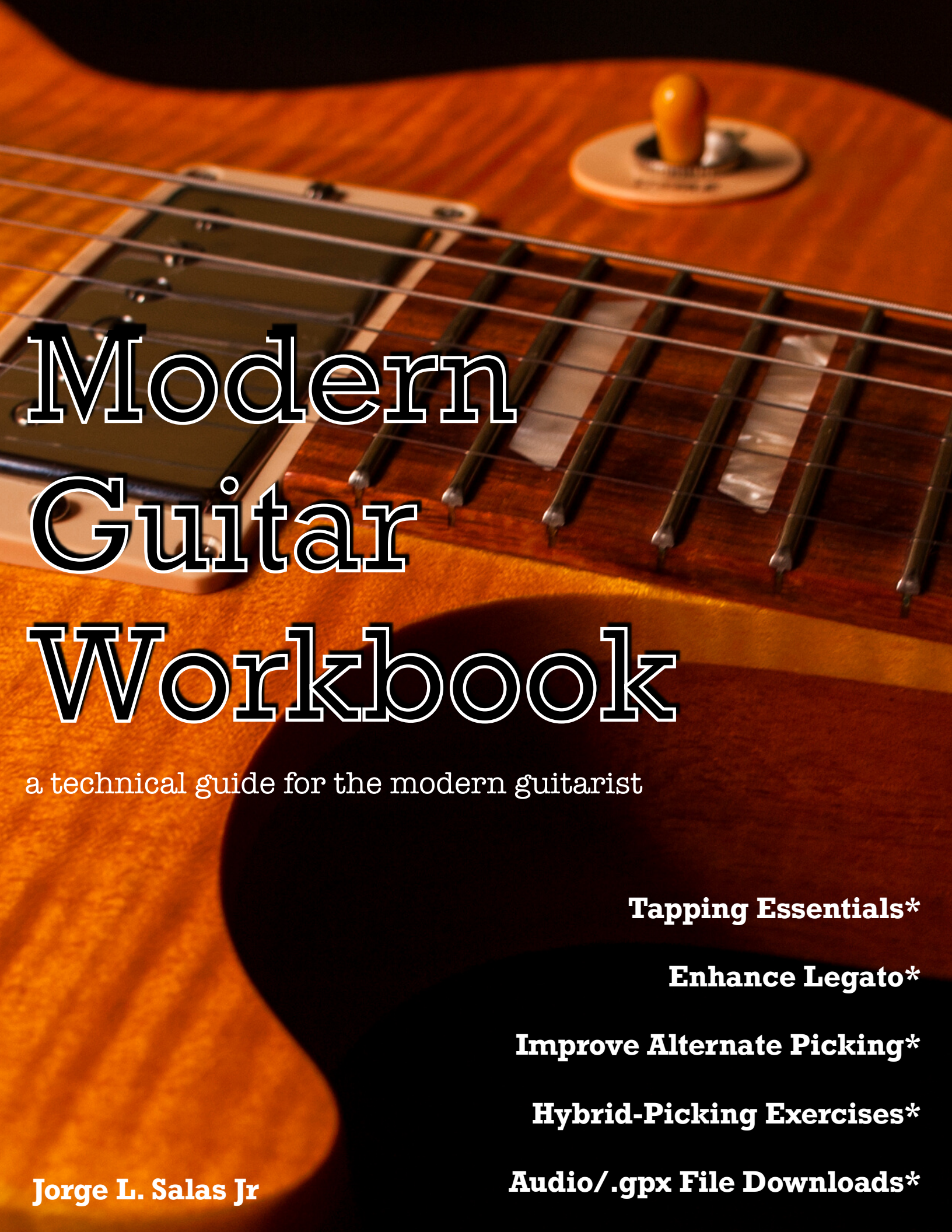


Modern Guitar Workbook

a technical guide for the modern guitarist

Tapping Essentials*

Enhance Legato*

Improve Alternate Picking*

Hybrid-Picking Exercises*

Audio/.gpx File Downloads*

Jorge L. Salas Jr

Modern Guitar Workbook

a technical guide for the modern guitarist

Jorge L. Salas Jr.

All work is self-published by the author. All tablature was notated on Guitar Pro 7 and all audio was recorded using Logic Pro X software.

Jorge uses Gibson guitars, Marshall amplification, D'Addario strings, and Seymour Duncan pickups.

Contents

Foreword……4

Audio Download……5

Daily Warm-Up……6

Alternate Picking……8

Two Finger Exercise……11

Three String Scales – Treble Strings……16

Shifting……19

Diagonal Finger Exercise……21

"Crab" Exercise……23

Single String Scales……25

Pentatonic Scale Shapes……27

Three Finger Exercise……29

Sustain……..32

Inside-Outside Picking……..35

Modes……..37

Four Finger Exercise……..50

Harmonic Minor……53

Hybrid Picking……..57

Modal Sequence Exercise……61

Developing Legato……64

Lead Guitar Builder……70

Intro to Tapping……74

Tapping Example……76

Conclusion……77

About the Author……78

Foreword

Welcome to “A Modern Guitar Workbook”! Throughout the years, I have studied guitar and its pedagogy and learned many things. I have worked hard to graduate from University and become a public-school guitar teacher enabling me to work with hundreds and hundreds of students ranging from 5 years old to 70. All this has taught me how to make effective lessons and exercises on the guitar that improved not only myself but many others as well.

I am excited to share these exercises in my first ever book because I’ve always wanted to give back to the world what I have so thankfully learned myself. I invite you to learn from these examples, but I also challenge you to make them your own. You’ll notice that I write, “be creative” many times throughout this book because on some of the examples, there is so much more to do other than just what I have written. Once you have mastered these examples, your technique and knowledge of the fretboard will have increased substantially. Please, pass the examples down to your students one day.

I wish you the best in all your guitar playing and teaching.

-Jorge L. Salas Jr

Audio Download

To download all audio files for free, click HERE

To download all examples as Guitar Pro files, click HERE

These links lead to two different Google Drive folders. There is no sign-in necessary. All audio files will be visible once you click the appropriate link. By double-clicking the audio file, it will playback to you the selected example. By right-clicking the audio or gpx file, you will see a menu where you have the option to download either file.

To use .gpx files, you must have a version of Guitar Pro. To purchase a copy of the latest version of Guitar Pro, click HERE

For more lessons and content, follow/subscribe to me on social media.

Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/c/JorgeSalasGuitar

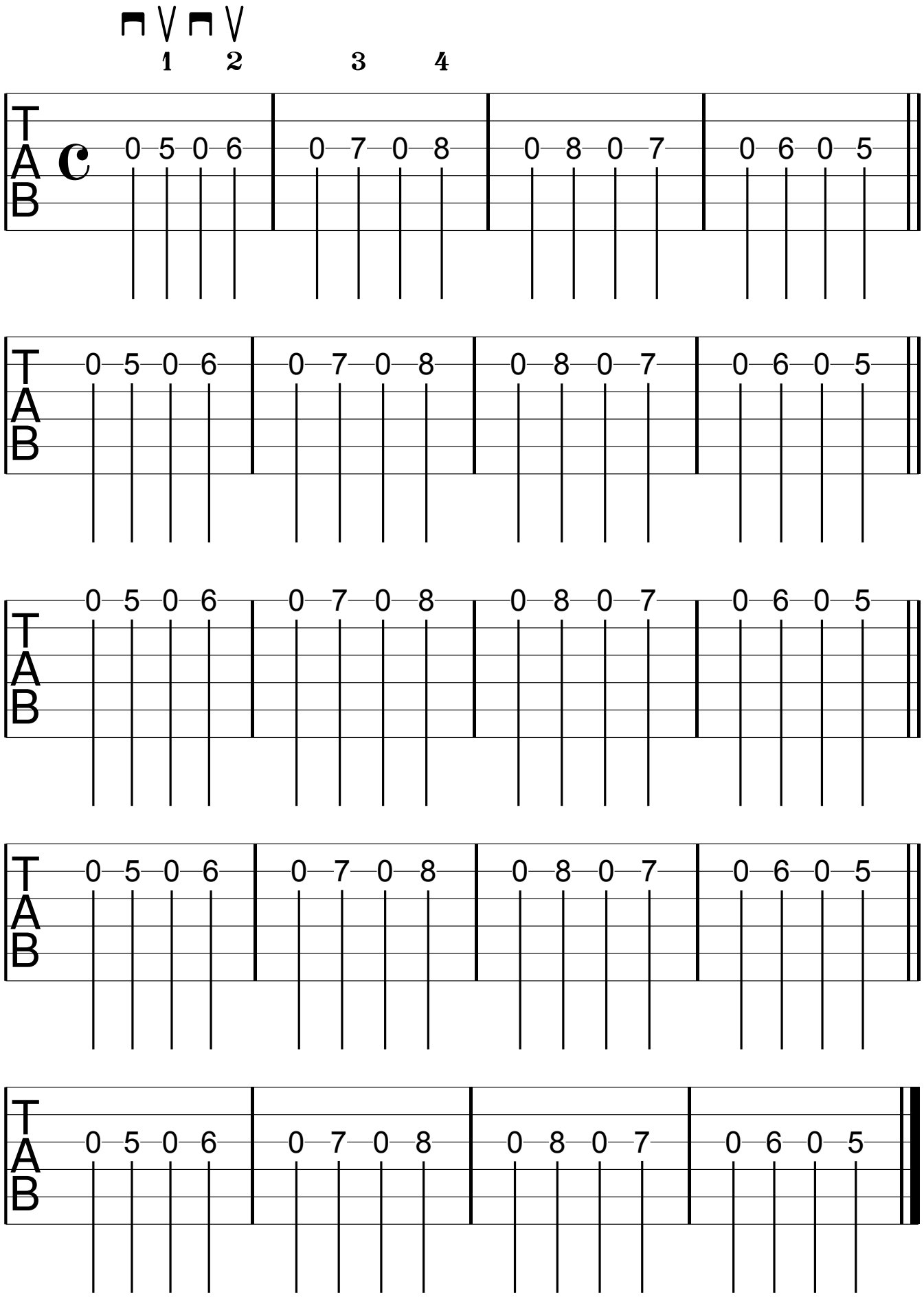
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/jorgesalasguitar/

1.Daily Warm-Up

I used to wake up around 6:30am and begin with this exact exercise. The point is to slowly mentally prepare yourself for your practice day. It is most effective right as you wake up and right before going to bed. Your brain starts the day off with playing guitar and it's also the last thing it does. This is a good exercise to build that routine.

To be most effective for this exercise, it is very easy to have poor posture since you will be waking up or falling asleep to this. Focus on long breaths and keeping the left hand parallel to the fretboard. Each finger should move as little as possible consuming little energy. Your right hand should be alternate picking and also moving as little as possible. Once you get more acquainted with this exercise, add a light vibrato.

On an extra note, I would use different guitars for this exercise. Try finger-picking a nylon string guitar. Maybe one day you feel like playing a steel-string or electric guitar with a guitar pick.


1 2 3 4
TAB
0 5 0 6 0 7 0 8 0 8 0 7 0 6 0 5
TAB
0 5 0 6 0 7 0 8 0 8 0 7 0 6 0 5
TAB
0 5 0 6 0 7 0 8 0 8 0 7 0 6 0 5
TAB
0 5 0 6 0 7 0 8 0 8 0 7 0 6 0 5
TAB
0 5 0 6 0 7 0 8 0 8 0 7 0 6 0 5

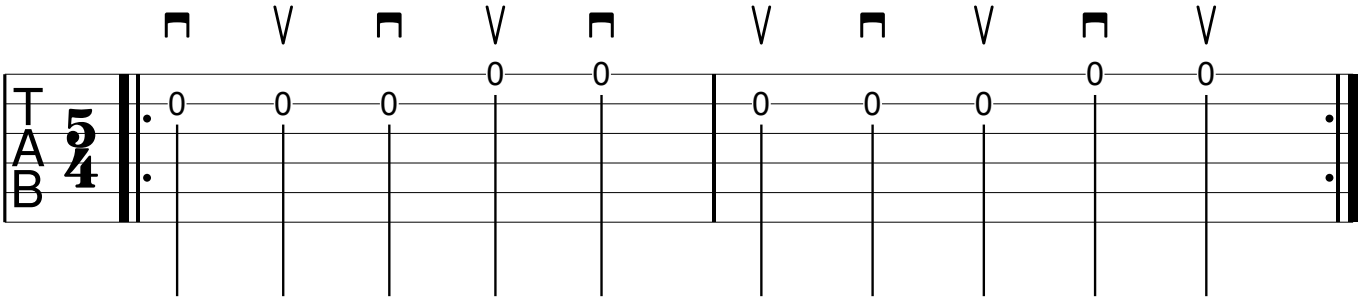
2.Alternate Picking

This exercise was shown to me on classical guitar by a dear friend and mentor, Eric Slavin. He's quite the accomplished guitarist so actually having a relationship with him is pretty neat.

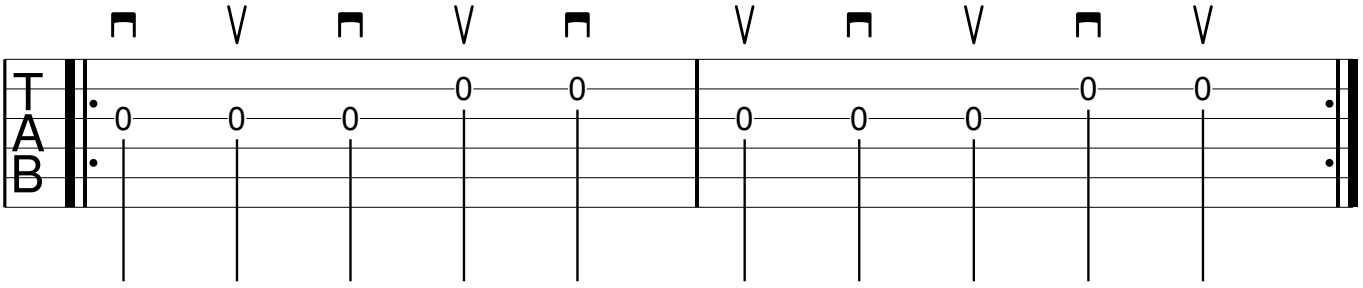
The idea behind this exercise is to alternate between *i* (index) and *m* (middle) on the right hand, but since we're playing with a guitar pick, I've altered it to show alternate picking direction. Because we start this example in the odd timing of 5, we're forced to pluck the adjacent string (or distant string) with a different stroke each time we repeat. It seems easy to do but, nonetheless an awesome exercise in my arsenal. Using this to teach the beginning student is highly effective when they are having trouble switching from string to string. This will build a strong habit to alternate pick in any situation.

As with many of these examples, experiment with them yourself. Try finger-picking this example by alternating *i* and *m.* You can also turn this example into a hybrid-picking exercise.

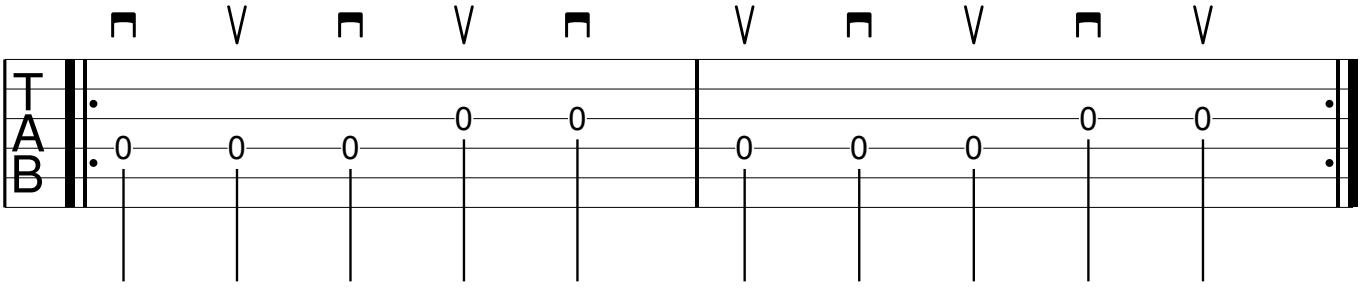
Example 1.1



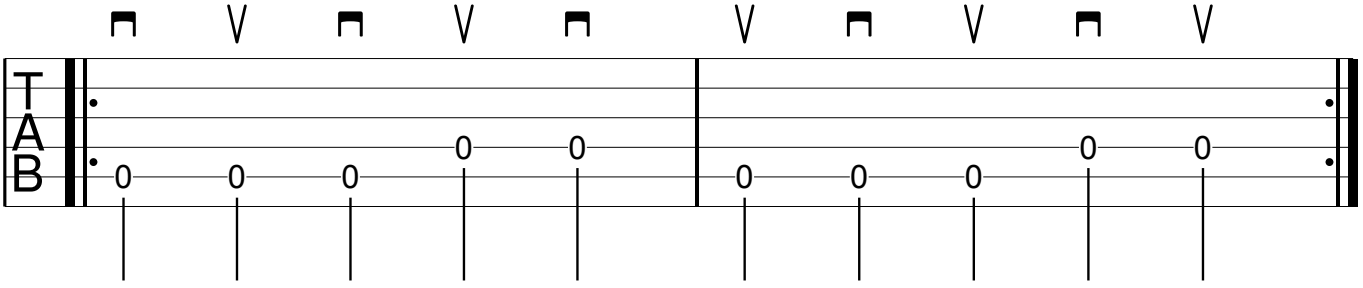
Example 1.2



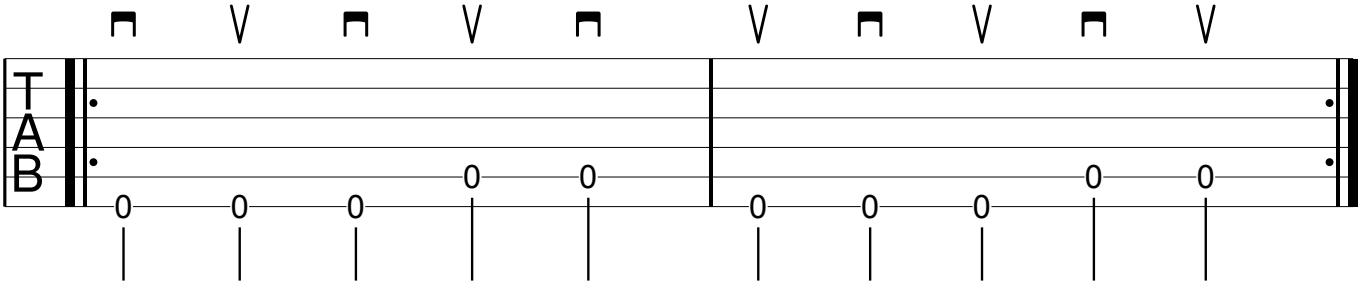
Example 1.3



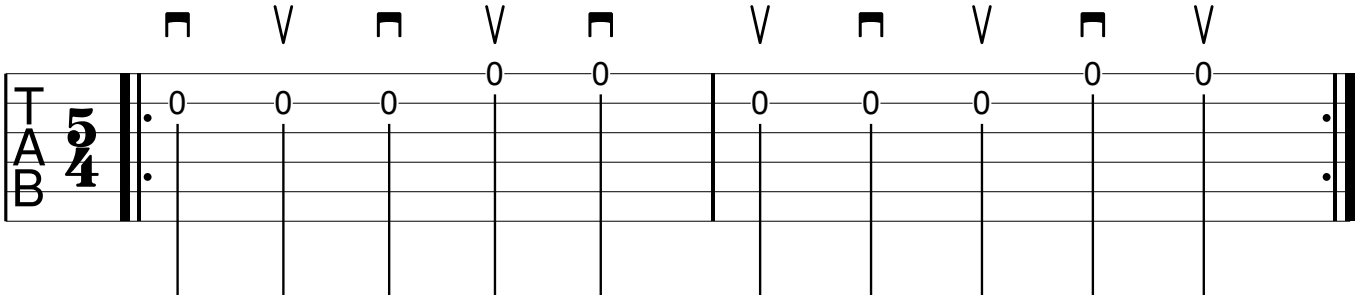
Example 1.4



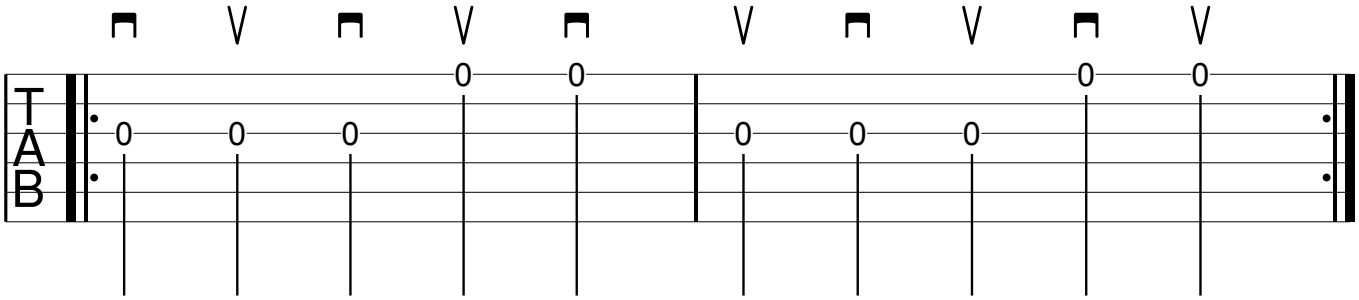
Example 1.5



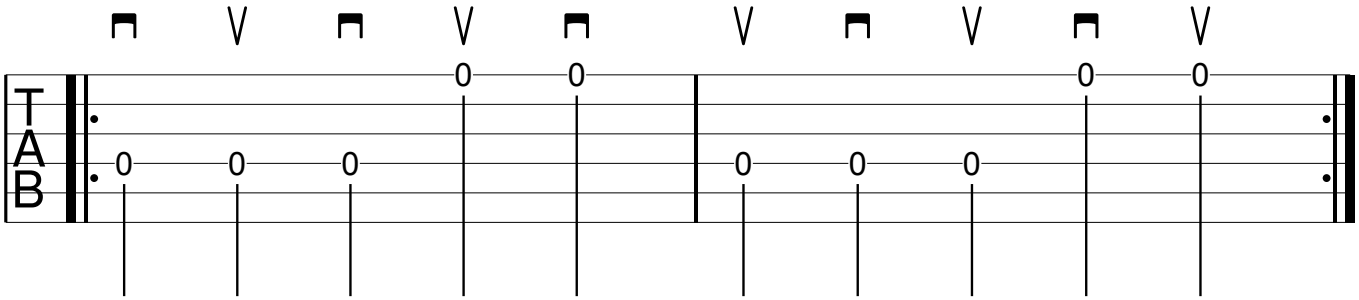
Example 2.1



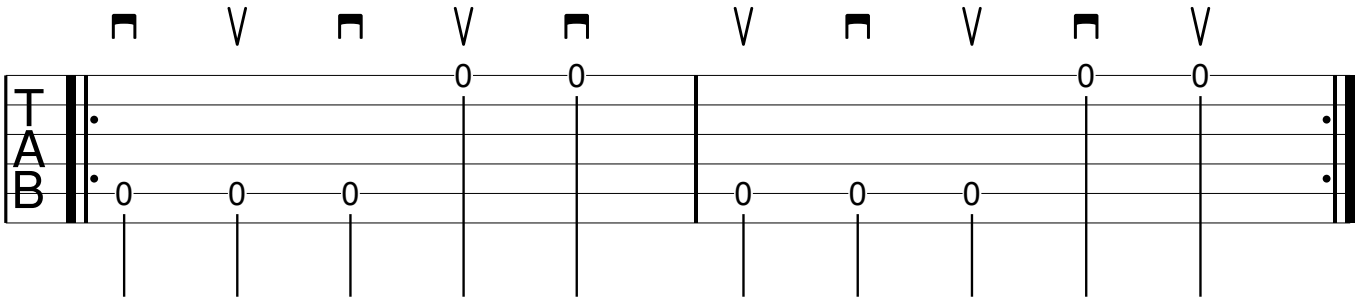
Example 2.2



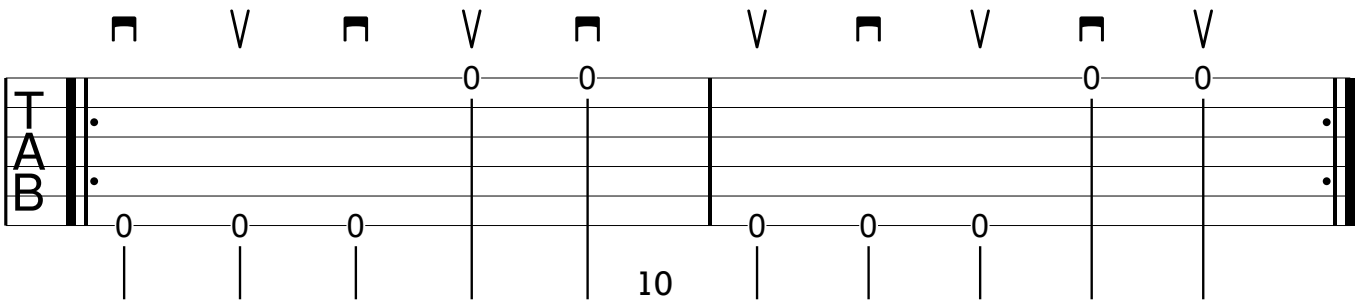
Example 2.3



Example 2.4



Example 2.5



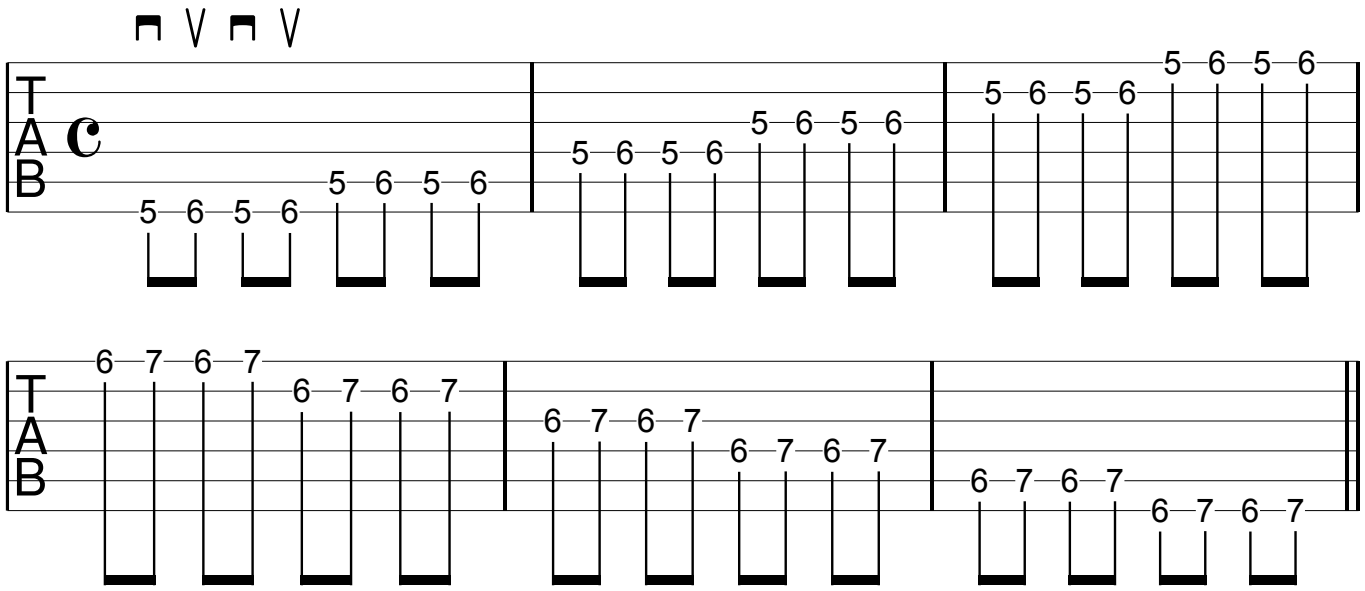
3.Two Finger Exercise

The following example is great near the beginning of the book. It will build skill and strength between the movement of any two finger patterns. Any scale or musical idea played on the guitar requires the movement of one or many of these examples. Isolating each movement and practicing it with repetition is going to help with more complex phrases.

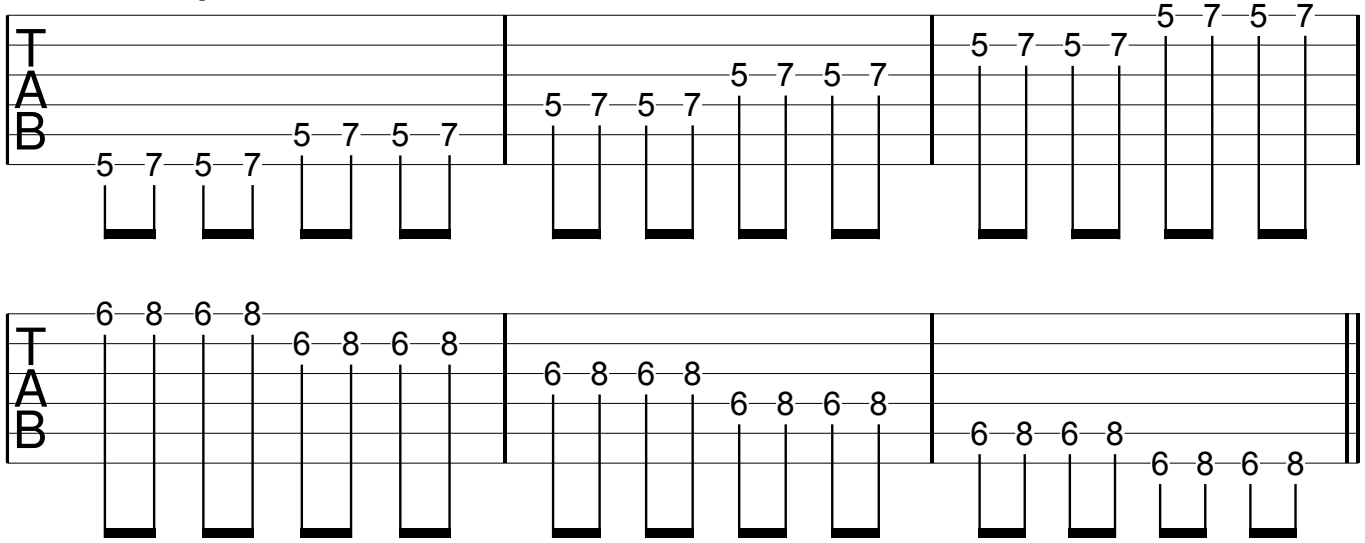
The purpose of this specific exercise is to strengthen the muscles between only two fingers. Sometimes we find it difficult to play fingers 3 and 4 right after each other. Maybe the transition between 2 and 4 are slower or not even as accurate as the transition between 1 and 3 per se. The repetition of this exercise helps eliminate that problem and make the transitions between each two fingers as clear and rhythmically accurate as possible.

As you build up speed with these examples, count them as sixteenth notes instead of eighth. I would strictly stick with alternate picking throughout.

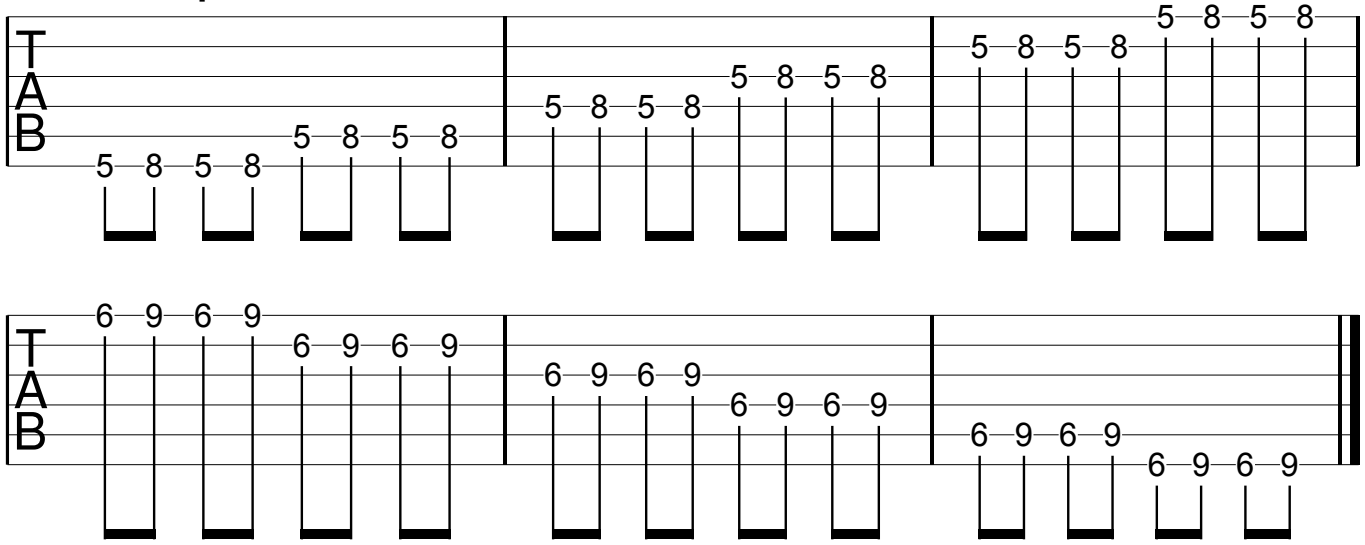
Example 1.1



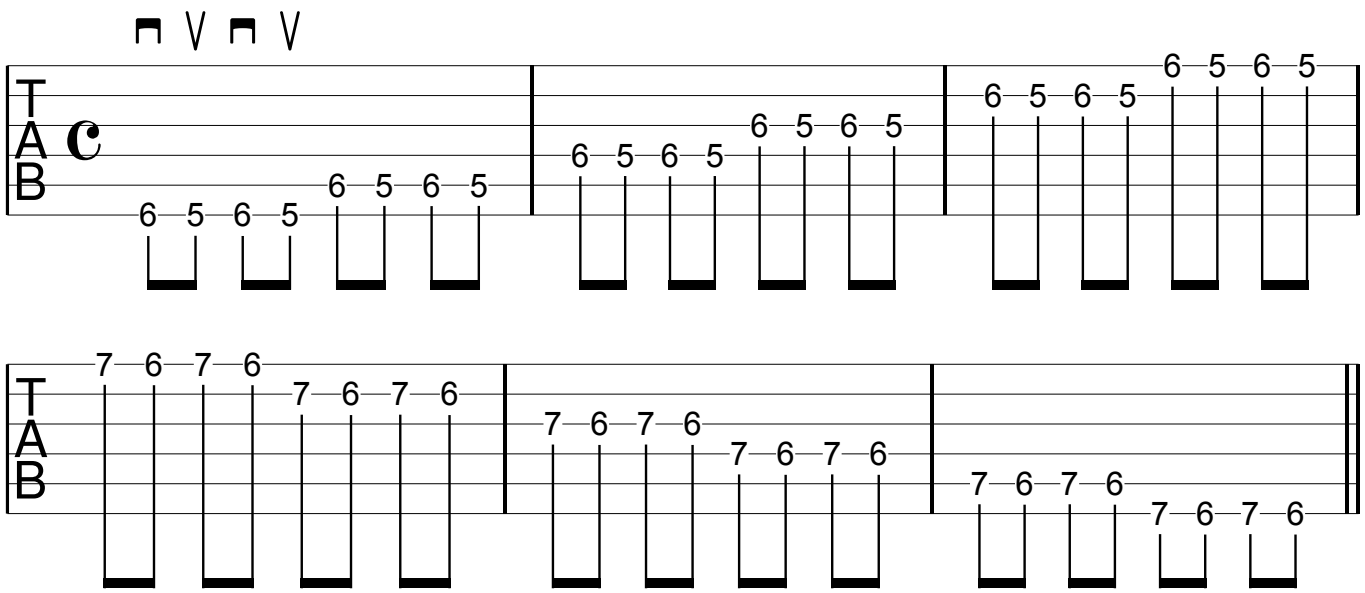
Example 1.2



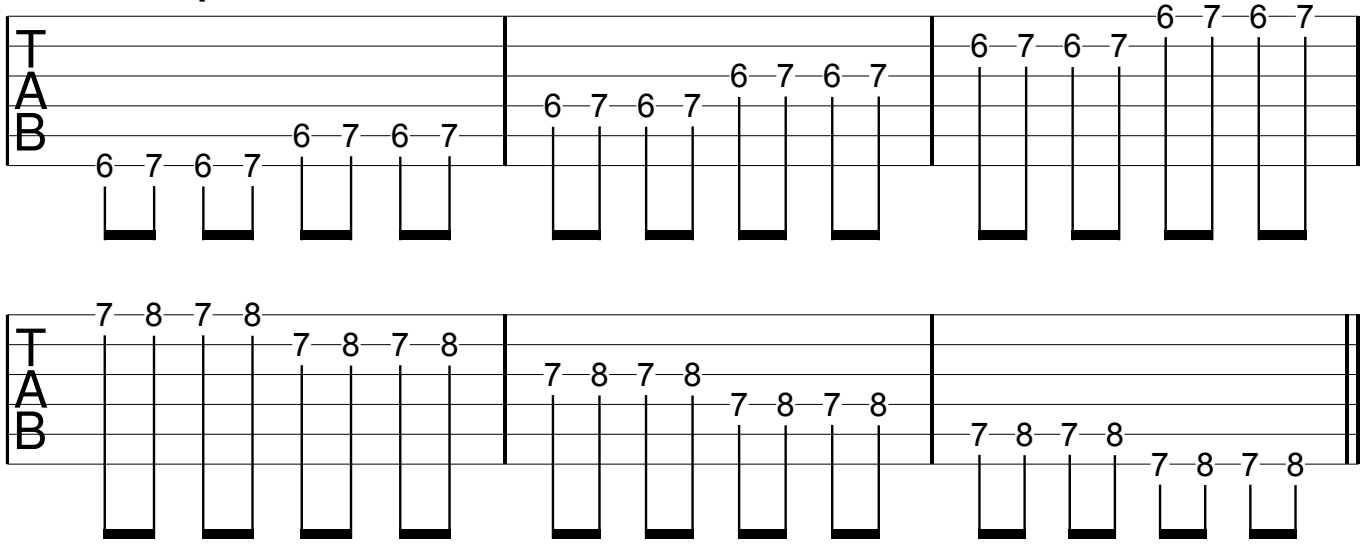
Example 1.3



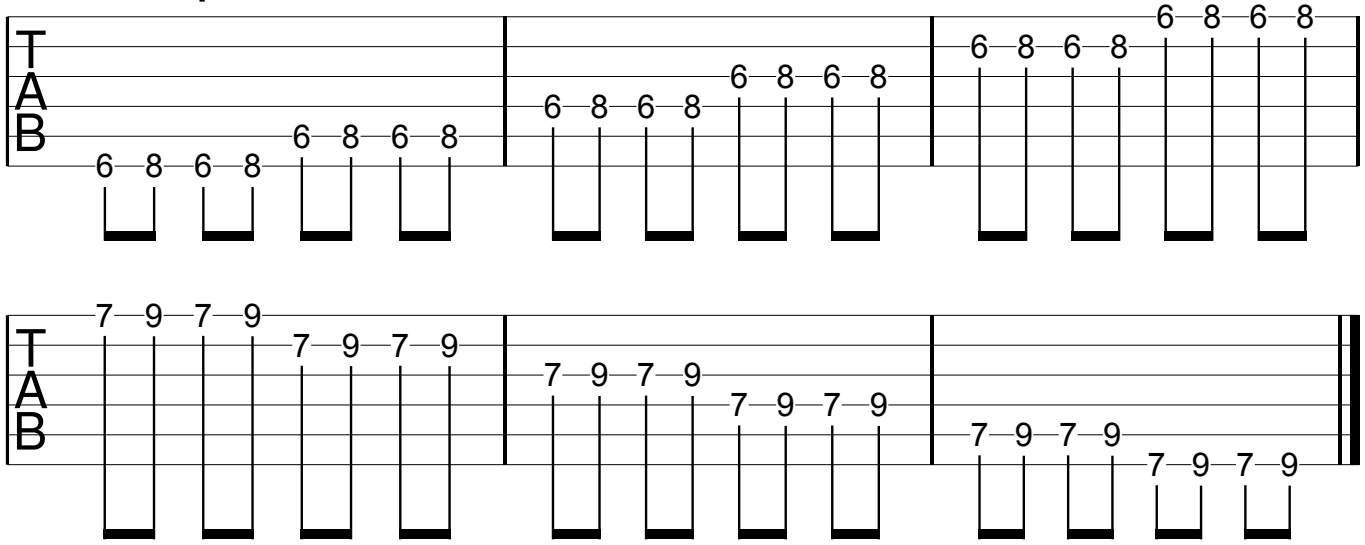
Example 2.1



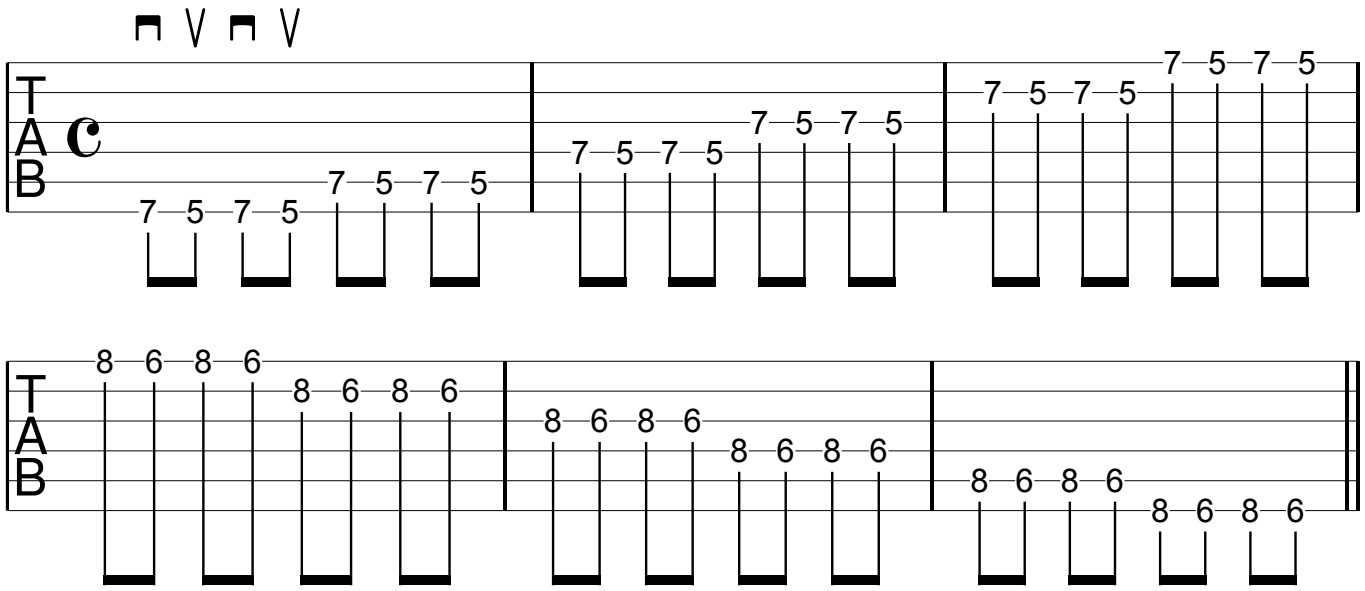
Example 2.2



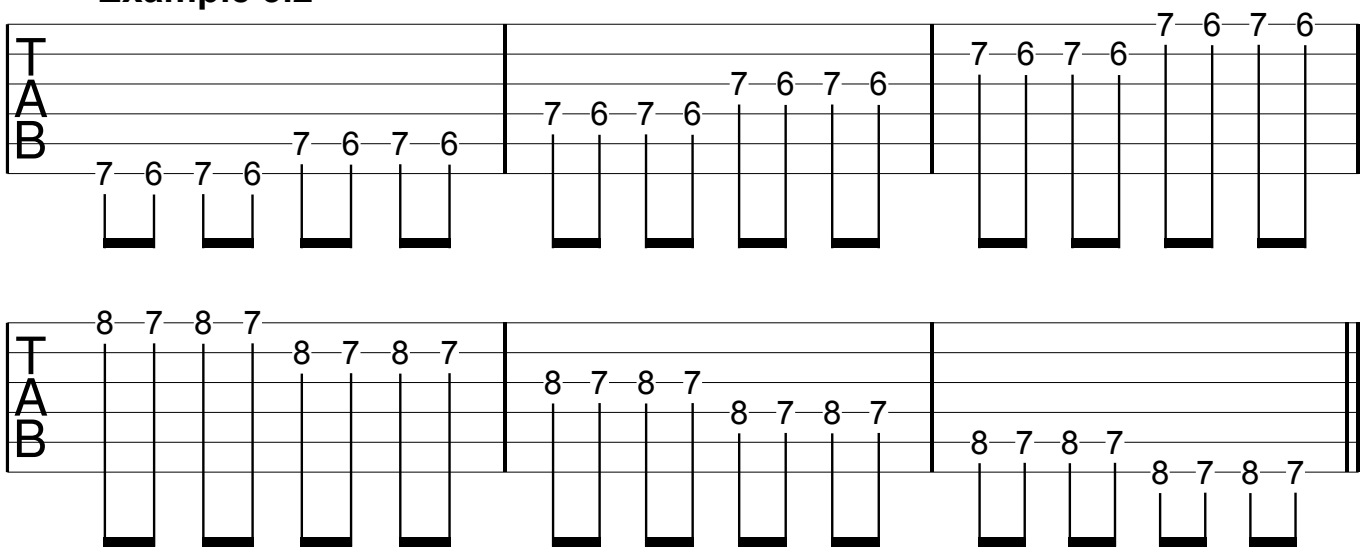
Example 2.3



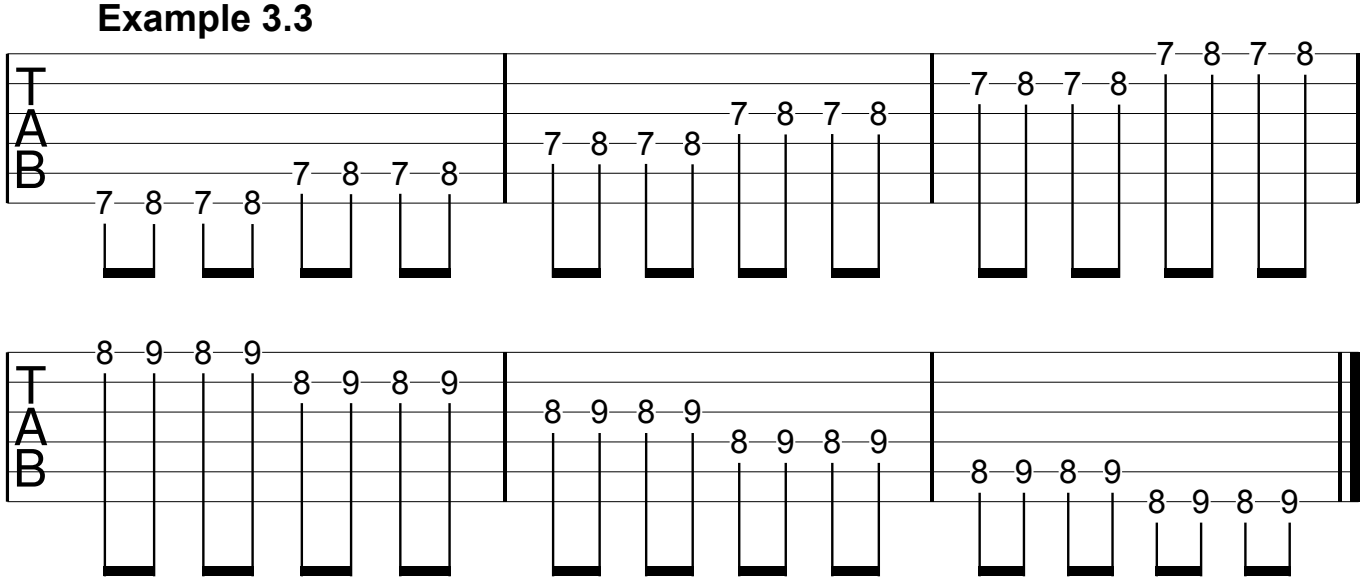
Example 3.1



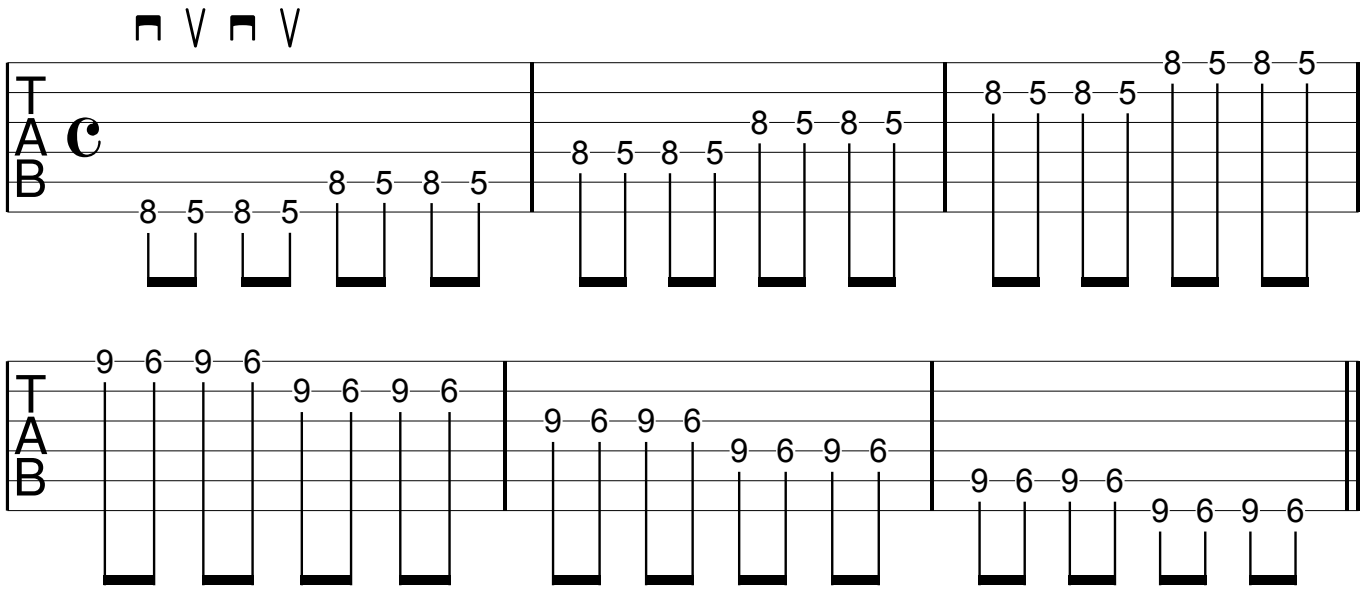
Example 3.2



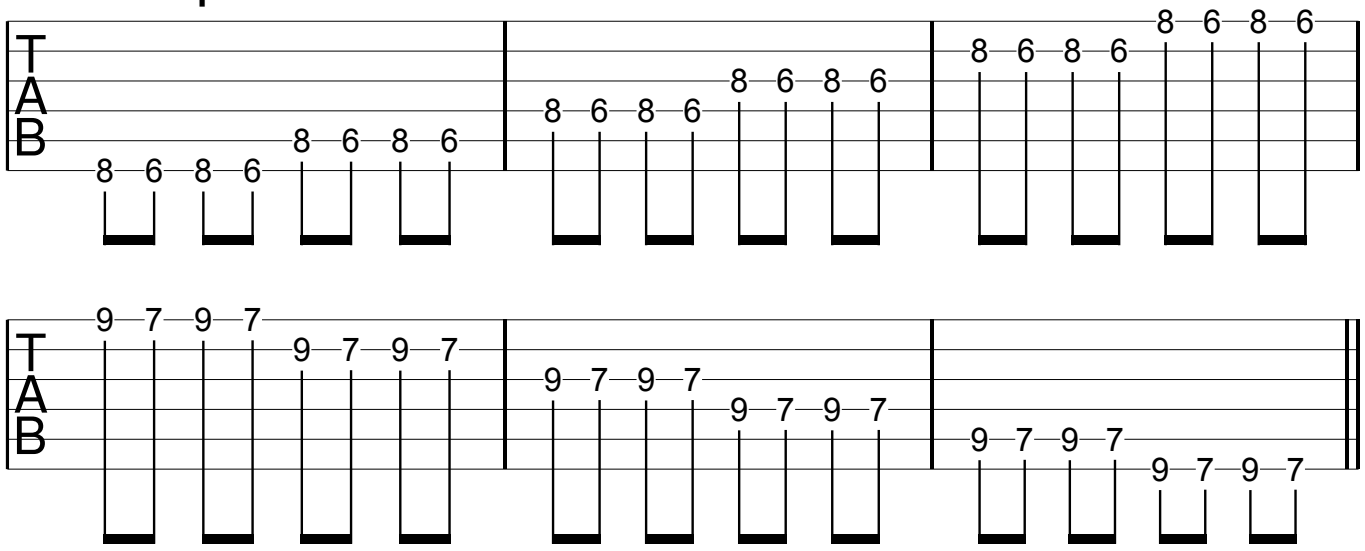
Example 3.3



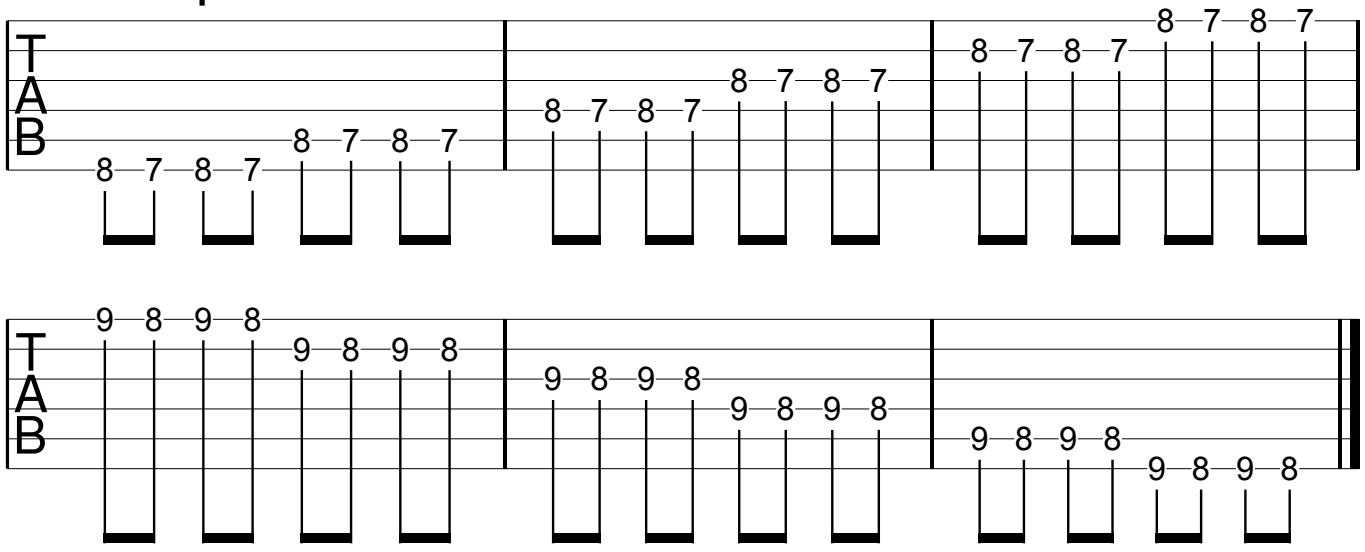
Example 4.1



Example 4.2



Example 4.3



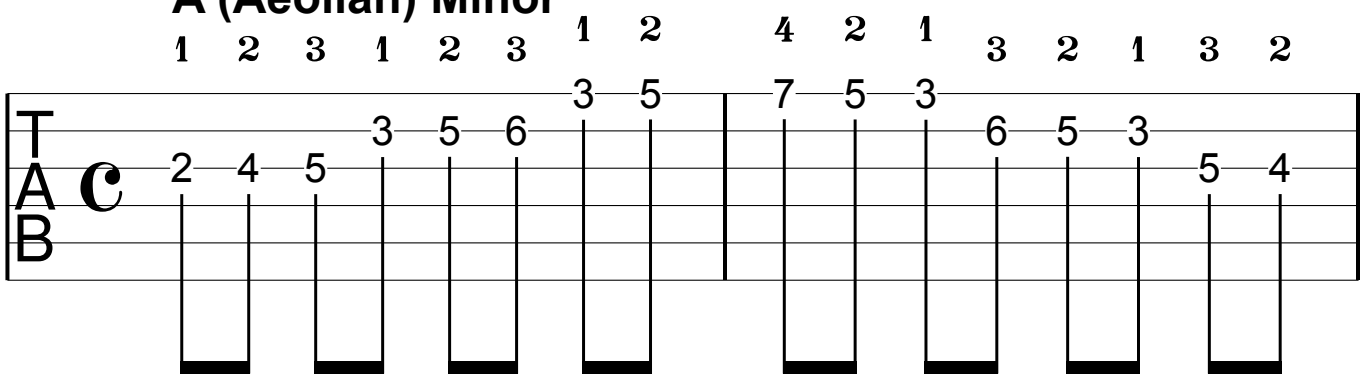
4.Three String Scales

Treble Strings

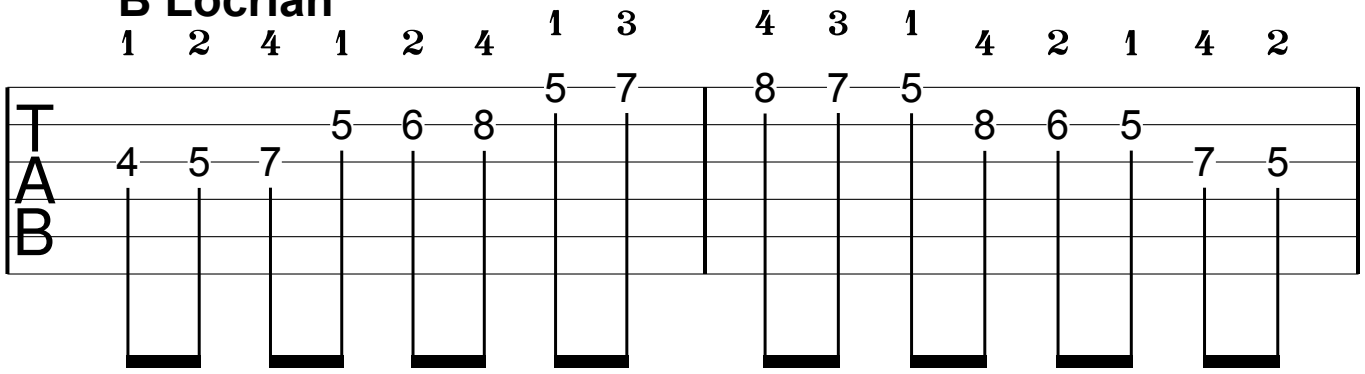
This is probably one of my favorite exercises in this book. The great thing about this one is that this exercise is transferable in many ways, meaning that it not only working on technique, but also improvisation. While you don't want to only play scales during an improv, this helps you understand the notes you can use during the improv. This is also a great ear-training exercise. The benefits of scales are plentiful.

First, understand the positioning and keep your left hand as relaxed as possible. Go about memorizing all these patterns. You'll notice that the scales are all very similar, meaning the same three patterns repeat just on a different string. Then, start to increase speed. Be creative! I like to alternate pick these scales and modes, BUT I also like to hammer-on on the way up and pull-off on the way down. Combine different elements!

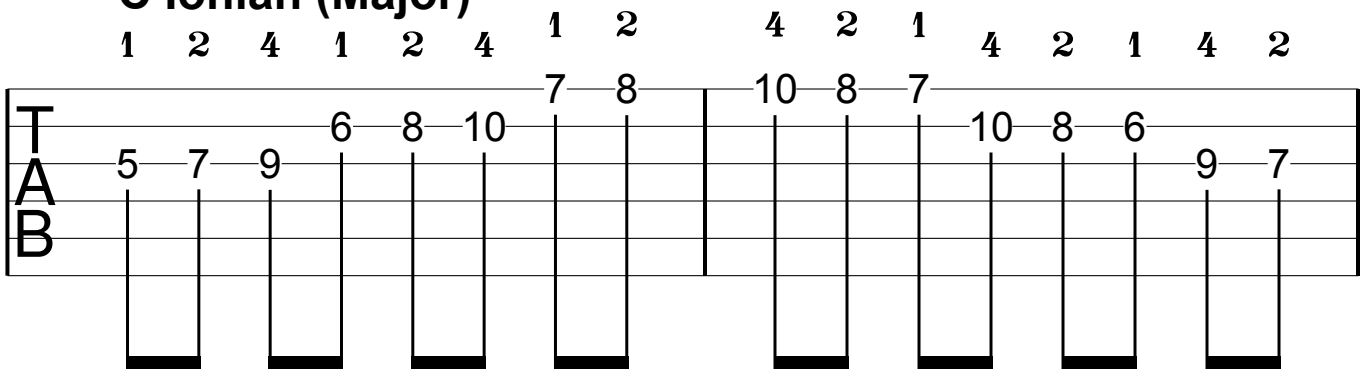
A (Aeolian) Minor



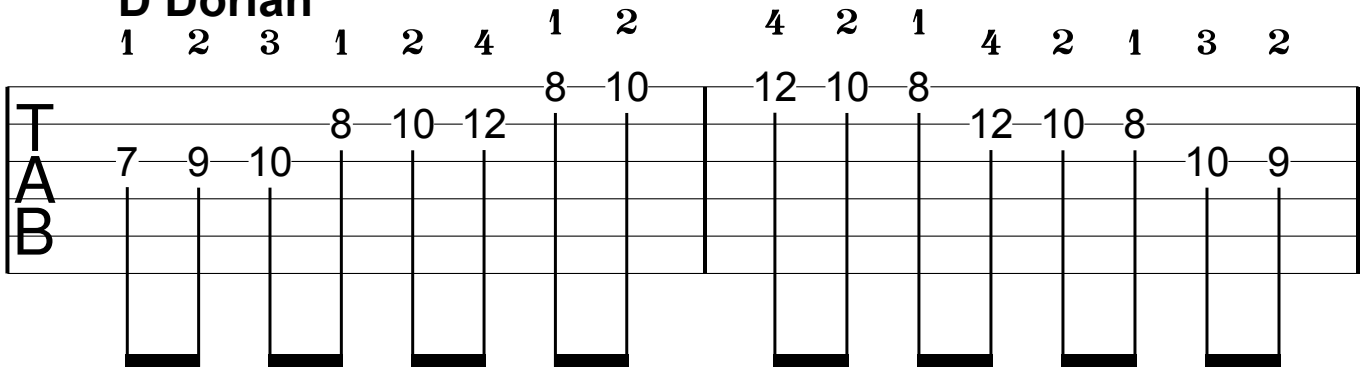
B Locrian



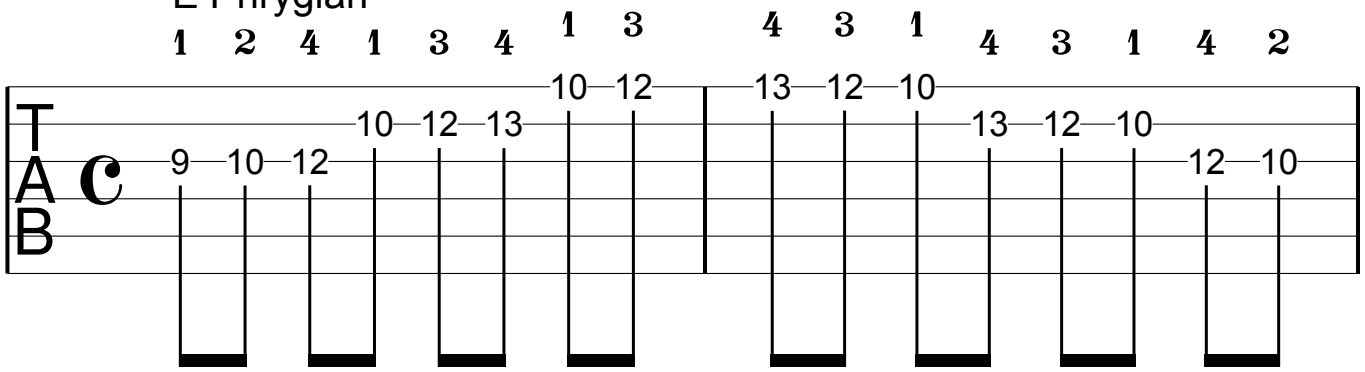
C Ionian (Major)



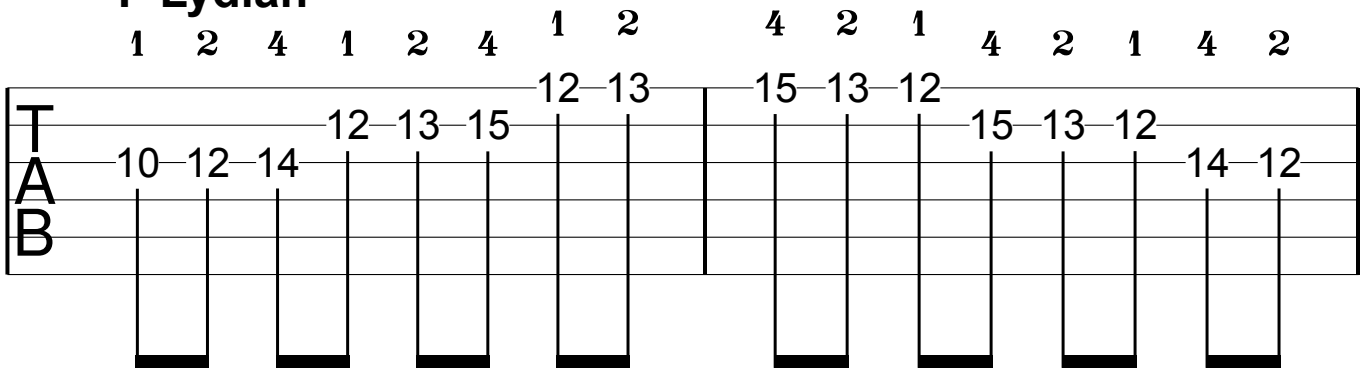
D Dorian



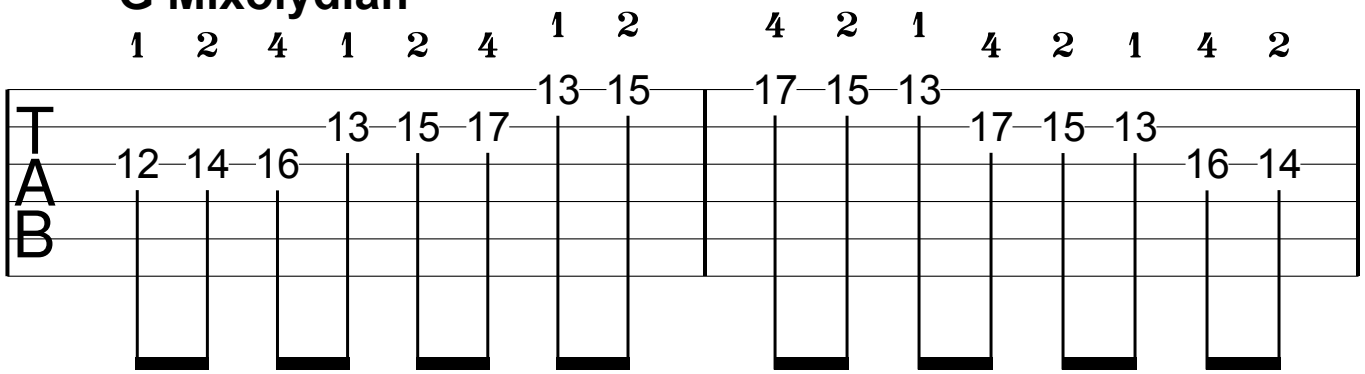
E Phrygian



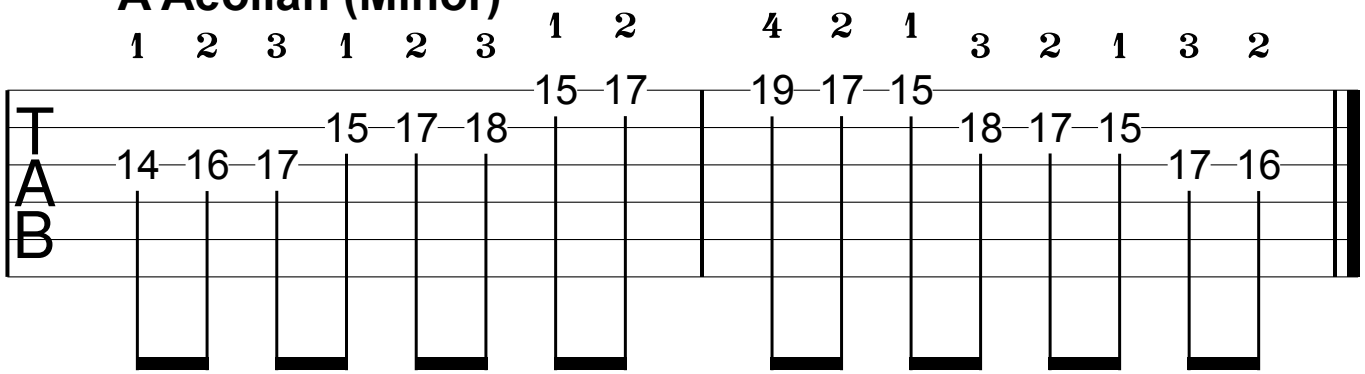
F Lydian



G Mixolydian



A Aeolian (Minor)



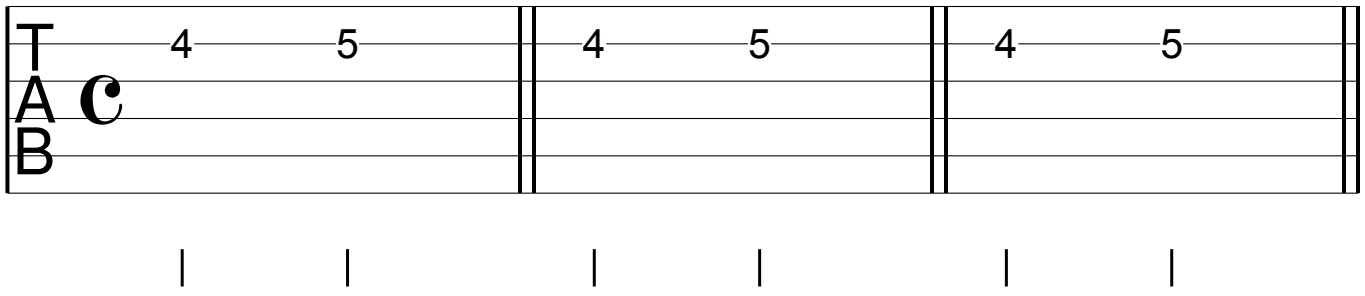
5.Shifting

Single-String

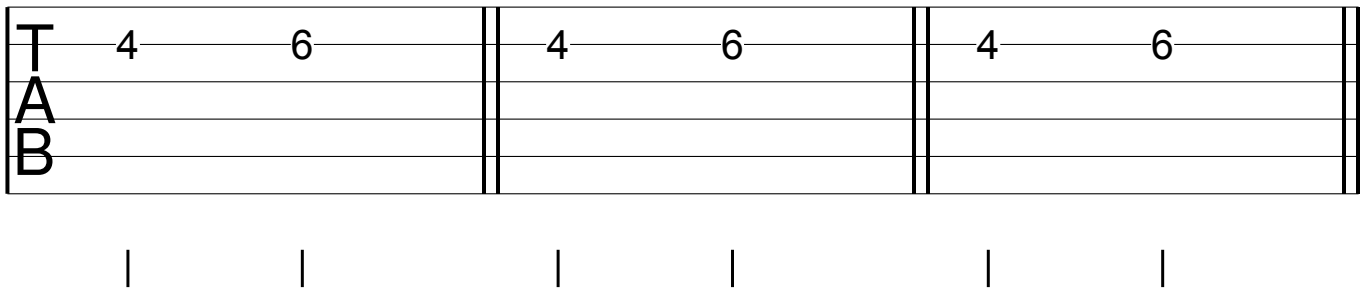
I learned this exercise as an undergraduate classical guitar student. This one can get rather challenging because it needs to sound as if there is no shift at all. The point is to set the metronome SLOW but move FAST, meaning the left hand would have to shift position almost instantaneously. As you become more comfortable with the exercise, add vibrato to each note.

When you've mastered this technique, close your eyes and play the example. It should sound as if you are not shifting but playing the lower note with your first finger and the higher note with another finger. The shift should be a smooth transition.

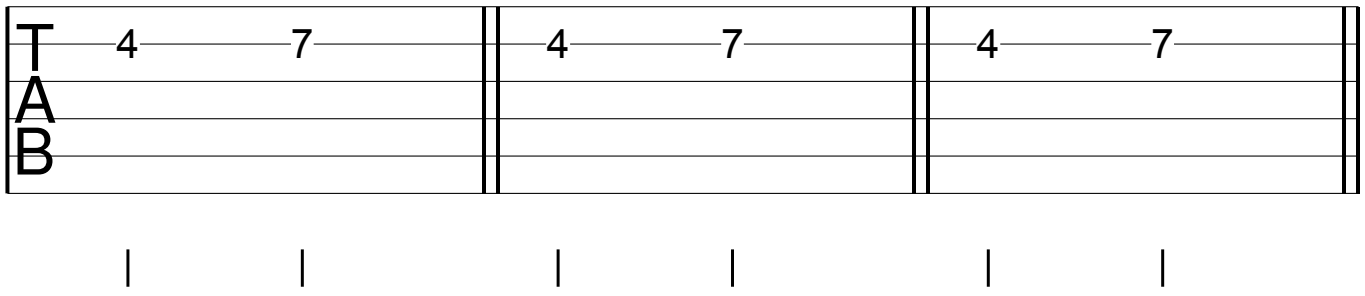
Example 1.1 **Example 1.2** **Example 1.3**



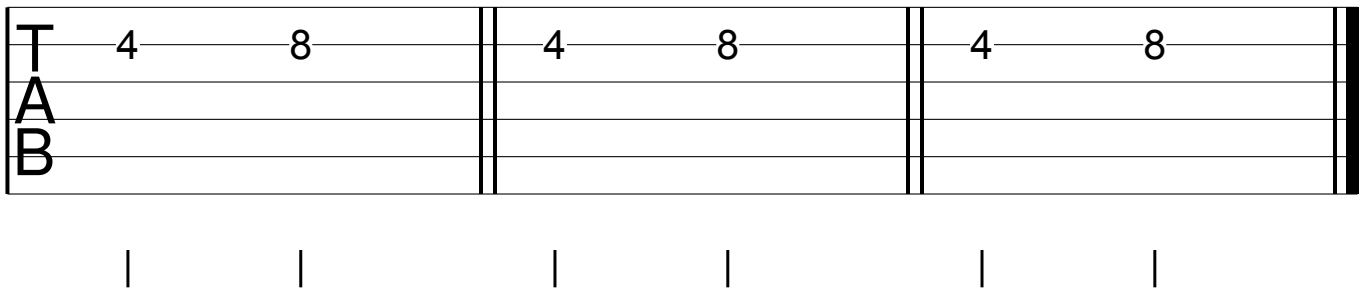
Example 2.1 **Example 2.2** **Example 2.3**



Example 3.1 **Example 3.2** **Example 3.3**



Example 4.1 **Example 4.2** **Example 4.3**



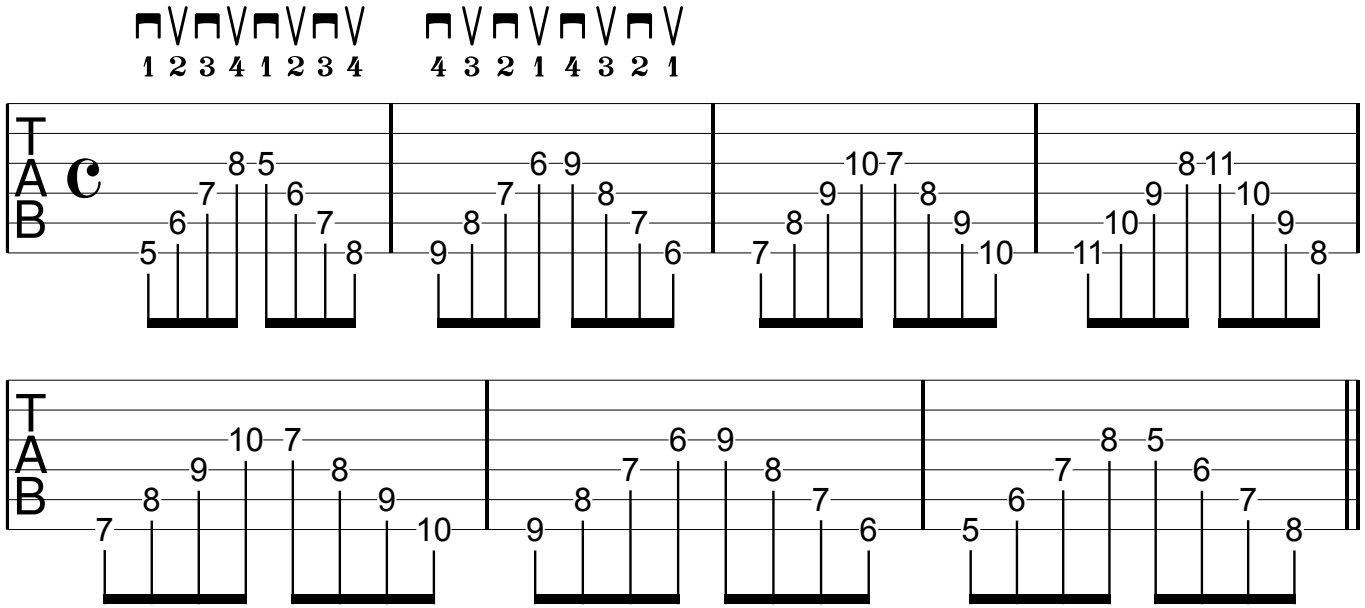
6.Diagonal Finger Exercise

This is one of my more interesting exercises. It turns heads and has people asking what I am doing to make such a strange sound.

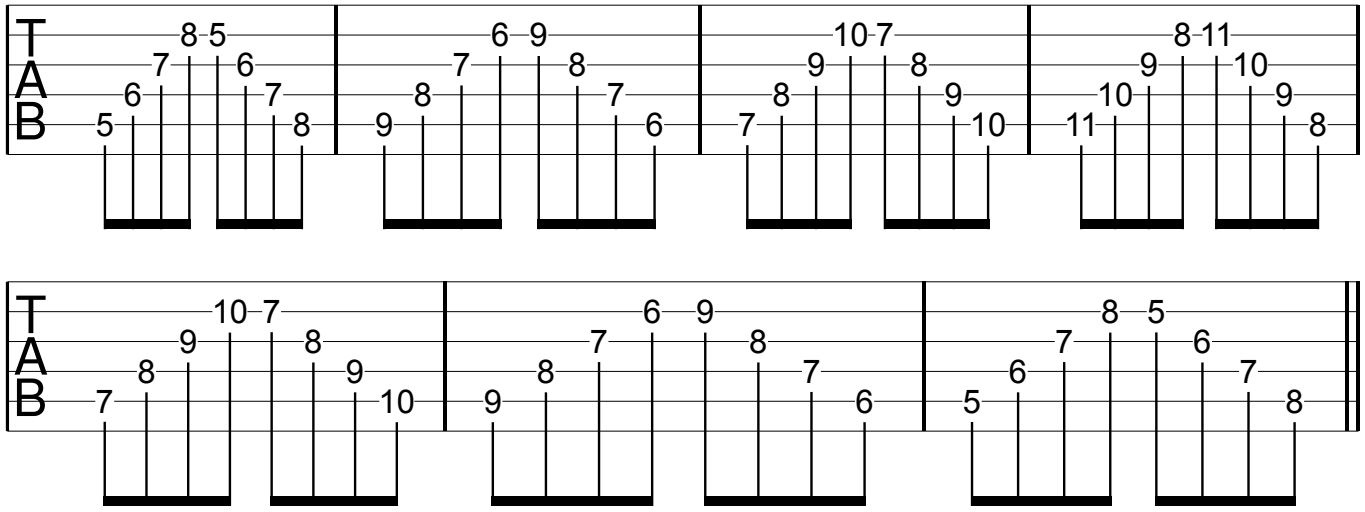
It is important that you practice lifting the fingers lightly when transitioning to the next note. The alternate picking can get difficult at faster speeds. Position your fingers to where you are over each new string when you play each note. This will require you to slide your arm towards the middle of the guitar then back.

Between each measure is a half-step shift alternating between the pinky at first, then the index finger. Each shift should sound seamless and natural. Also transitioning between examples should be the same way. You can choose to pause between, but this exercise is best utilized when all is one continuous action.

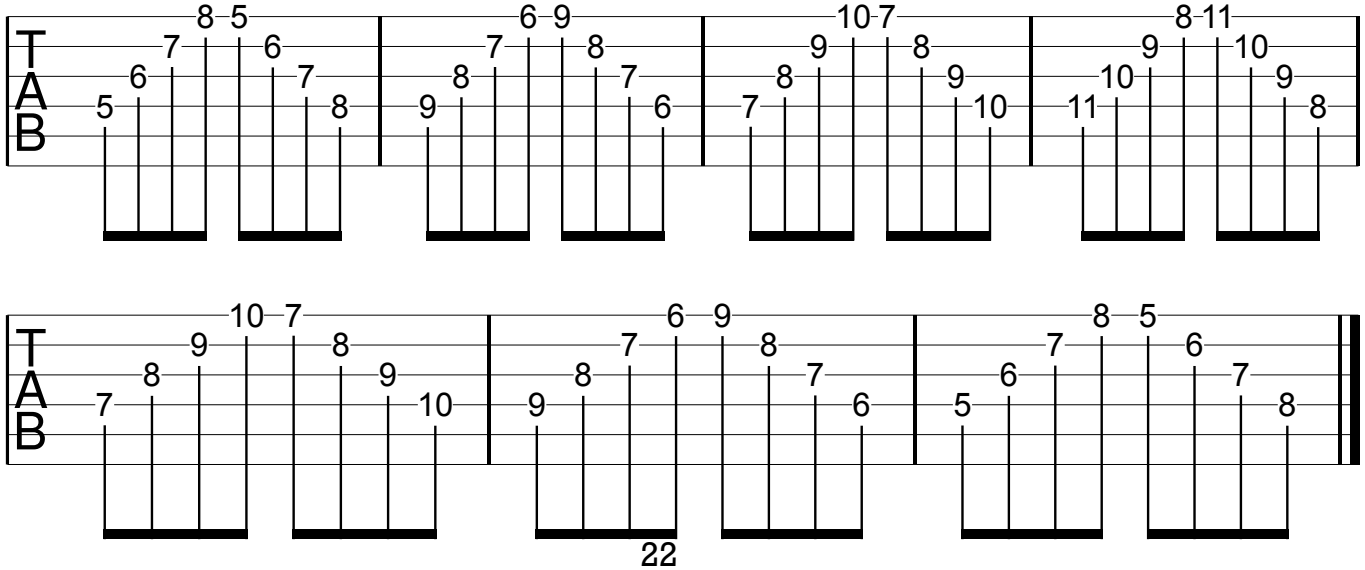
Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



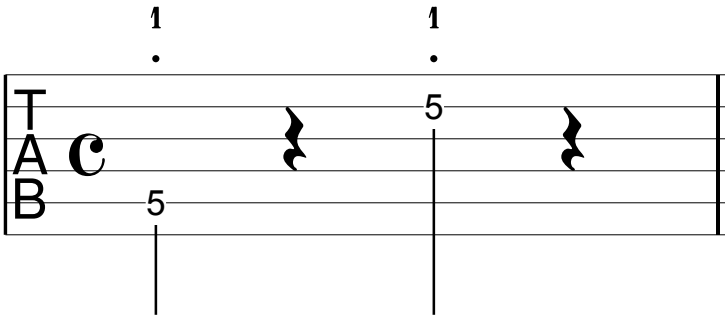
7.“Crab” Exercise

This can be one of the ultimate exercises in achieving a high level of finger independence. Each note(s) played should all be as staccato as possible so that the finger(s) can move to the next target.

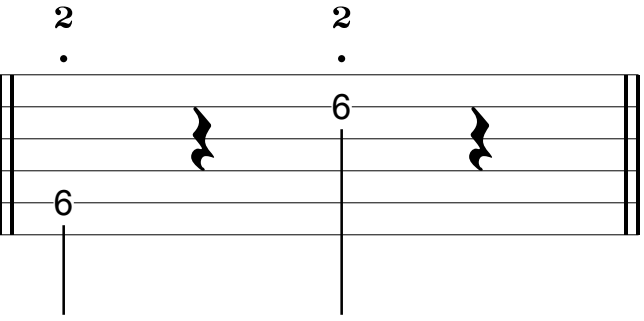
When playing Ex.1-4, focus on only moving one finger while the others are resting on the G-string in 5th position respectively. This may take tremendous amounts of focus at the beginning but will help with the other examples. When it comes to picking, you can alternate pick the first four examples. You can also finger-pick or hybrid-pick. Obviously, you will have to finger-pick or hybrid-pick Ex.5-10 since there are two notes played at once.

When using two fingers, both fingers should land at the same time for each note. Try to avoid one finger being faster than another. Get used to playing short notes and lifting the finger and immediately float above the next note. Both fingers should move exactly the same for these examples to be most effective. The metronome should be at a SLOW tempo, but the fingers should move FAST into place.

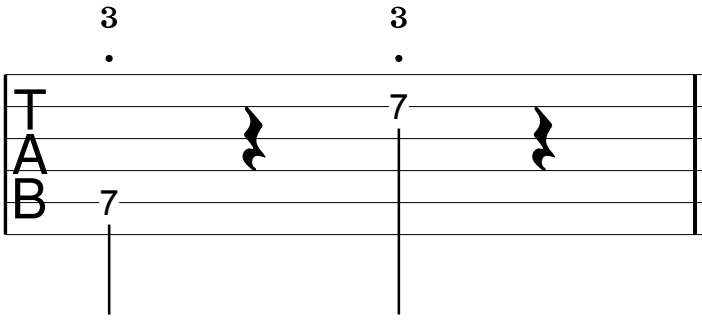
Example 1



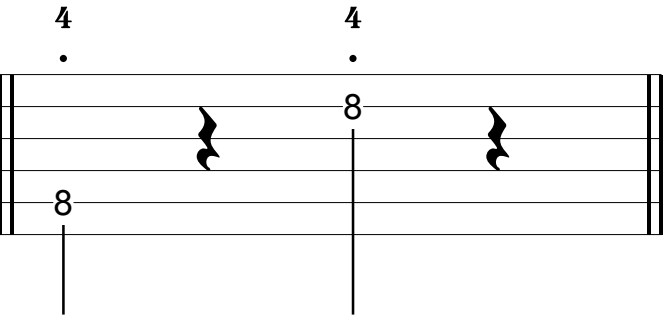
Example 2



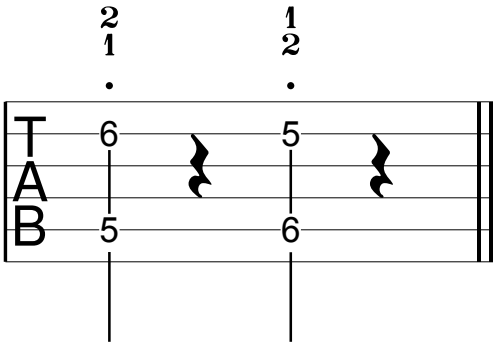
Example 3



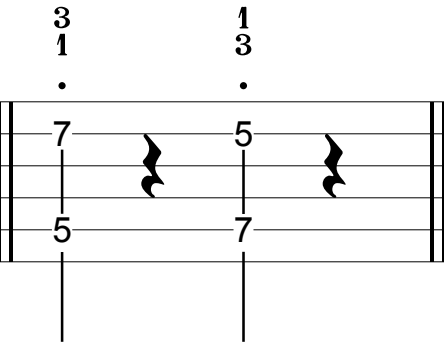
Example 4



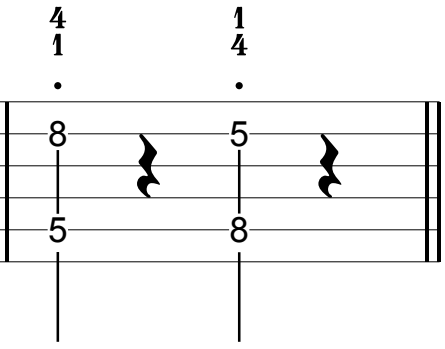
Example 5



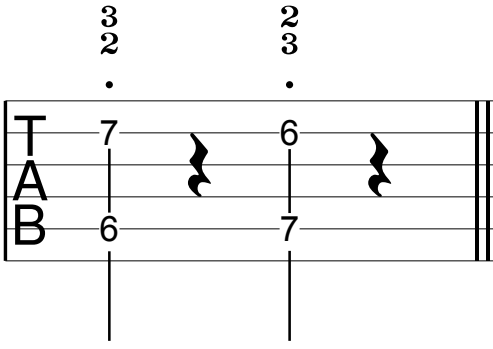
Example 6



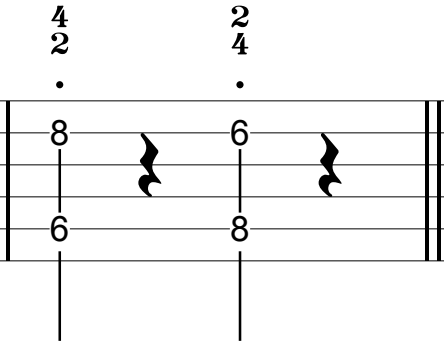
Example 7



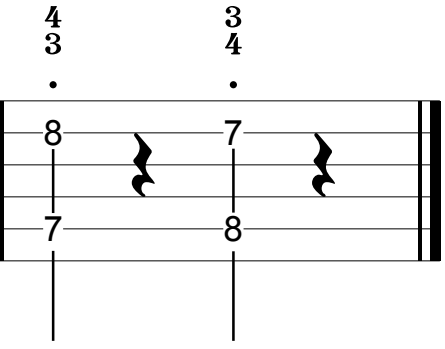
Example 8



Example 9



Example 10



8.Single String Scales

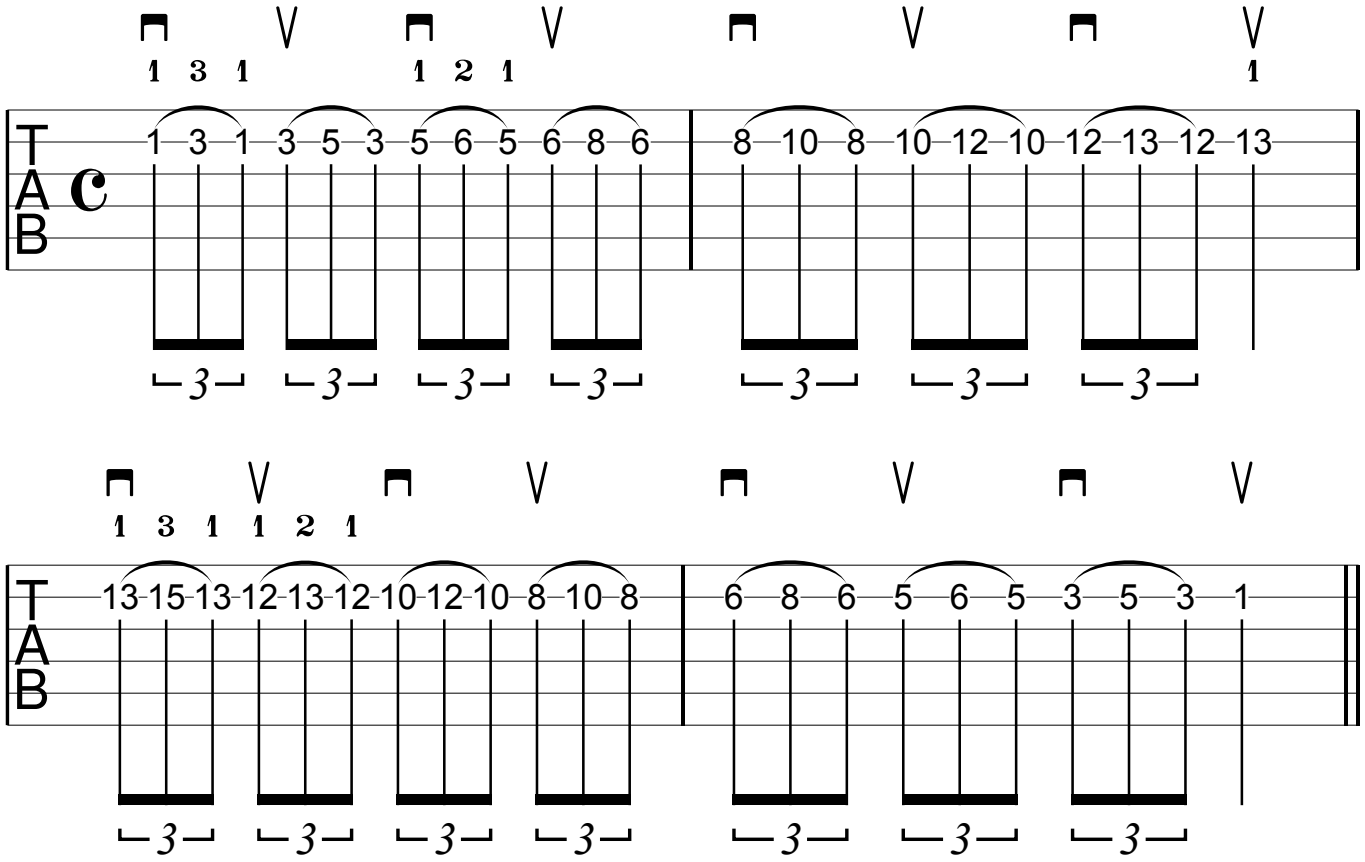
Shifting - Legato

This exercise is a good example of how you can combine different techniques into your playing. Try reviewing the shifting examples found earlier in the book since the same technique is used on those examples as they are here.

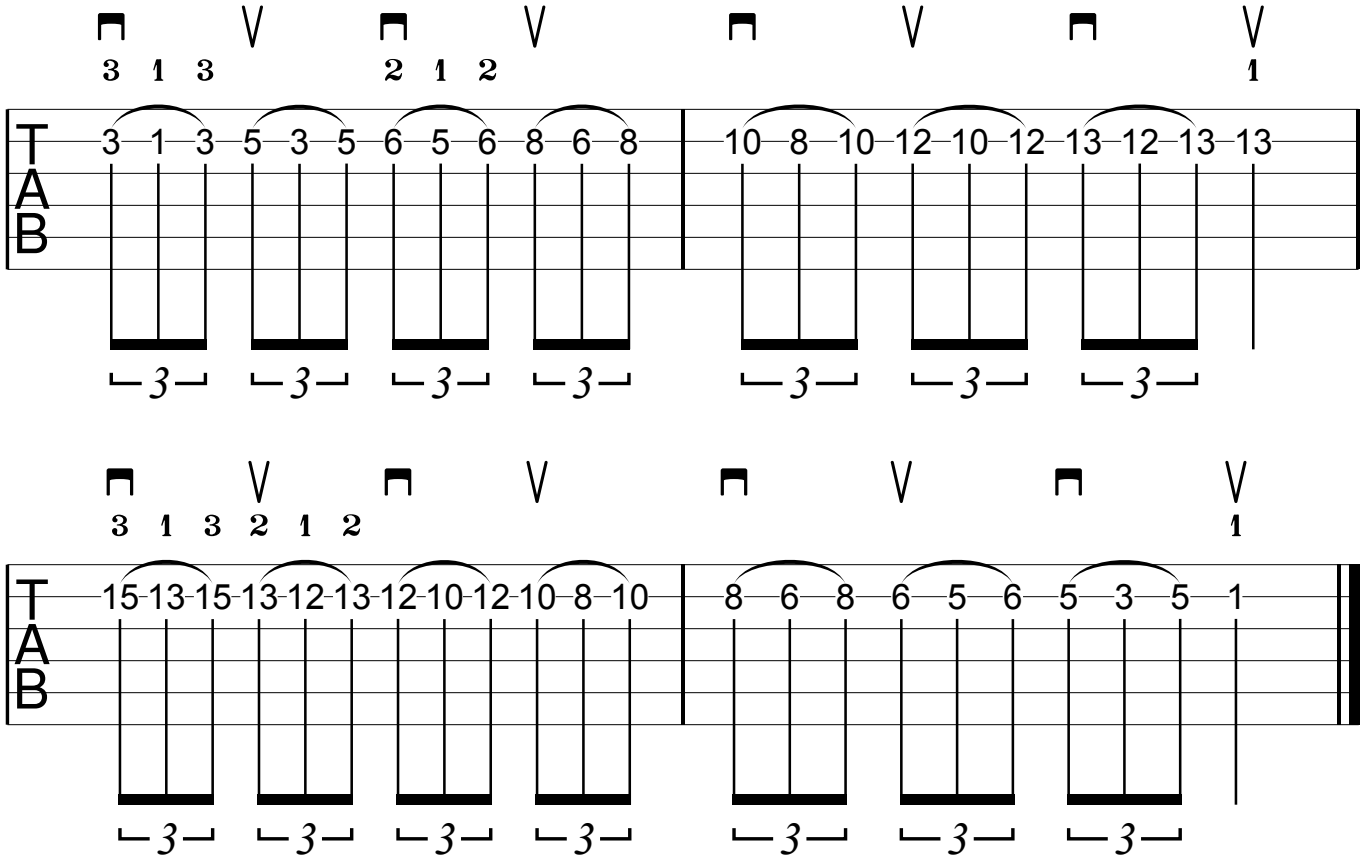
Example 1 begins with a hammer-on on every downbeat while example 2 begins with a pull-off on every downbeat. Be sure to follow all symbology written in these examples and make sure that the examples transition very smoothly from each note to the next. This one is real fun to get at fast speeds.

You can apply this to any string and any position. For example, simply memorize the pattern and apply it in a different position. Wherever your first finger begins, that is the new key you are in.

Example 1



Example 2



9.Pentatonic Scale Shapes

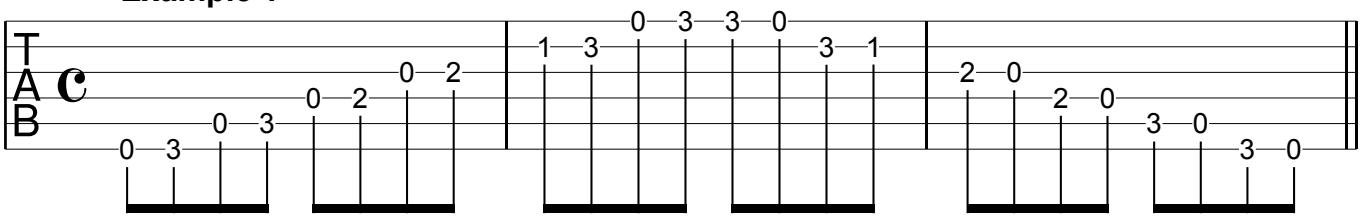
C Major / A Minor

Arguably the most effective scale for improvising are pentatonic scales. “Penta”, meaning “five” means that there are five notes in the scale. There are two reasons why these scales make improvising so easy. 1) They are easy to learn and memorize since there are two notes per string and 2) They are missing what are known as “tendency tones”.

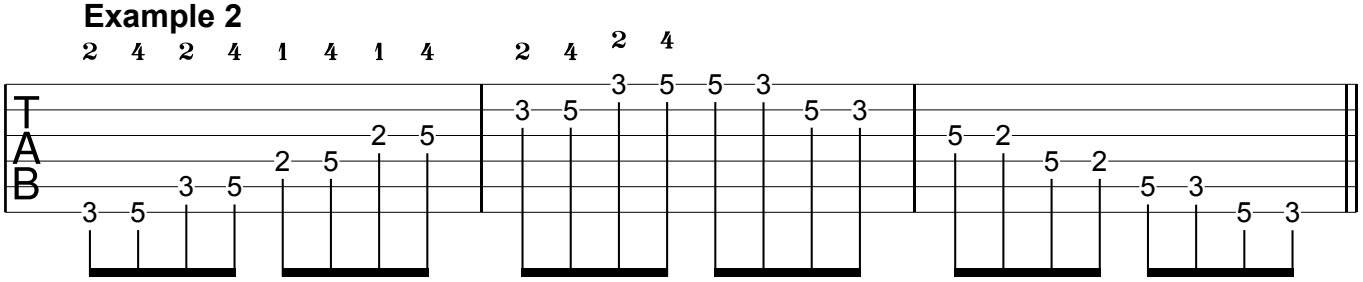
Tendency tones are notes that have a tendency to be unstable and want to resolve somewhere. The tendency tones are the 4th and 7th scale degrees. The 4th wants to resolve a half step down to the 3rd, while the 7th wants to resolve a half step up to the root. The pentatonic scale eliminates those two notes making it easy to solo without hitting a “wrong” note.

Memorize these patterns and come up with a ton of riffs yourself. I personally like to start my solos off with them and, as I become more in tune with the section, I incorporate tendency tones, chromatic notes, and other fun stuff. But that’s another book to write!

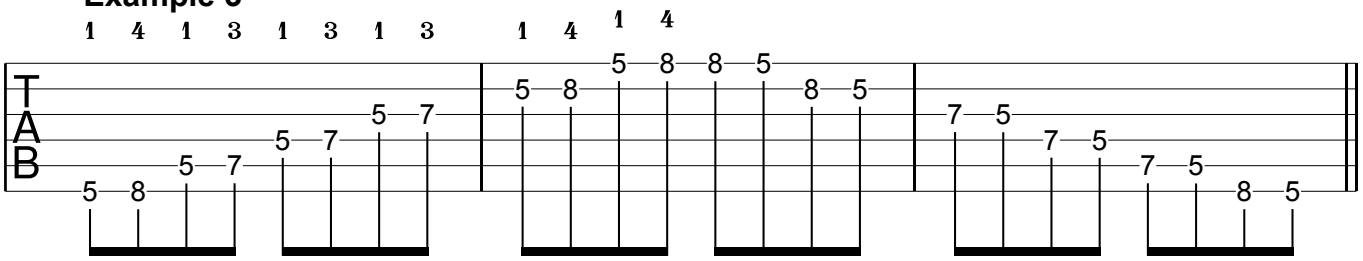
Example 1



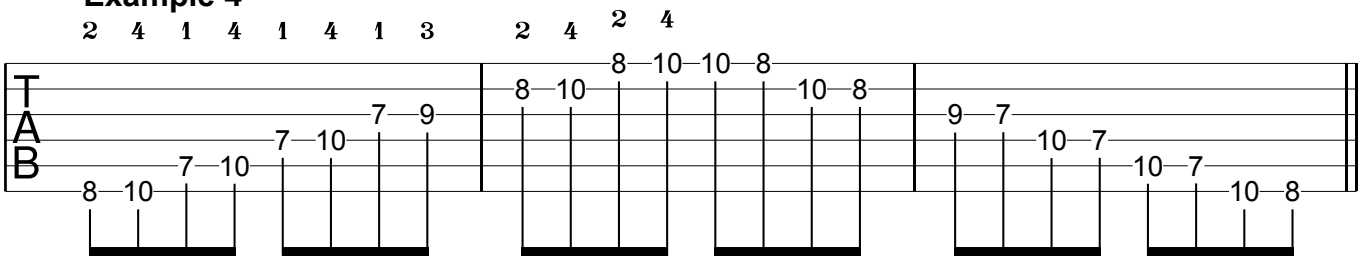
Example 2



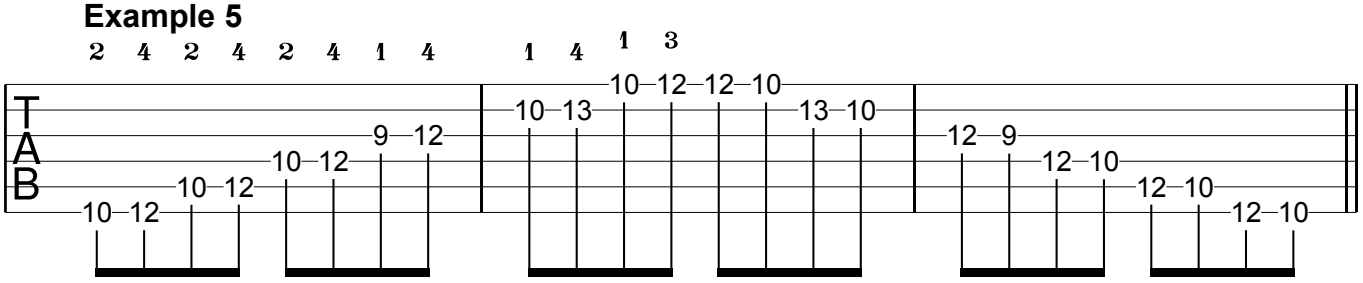
Example 3



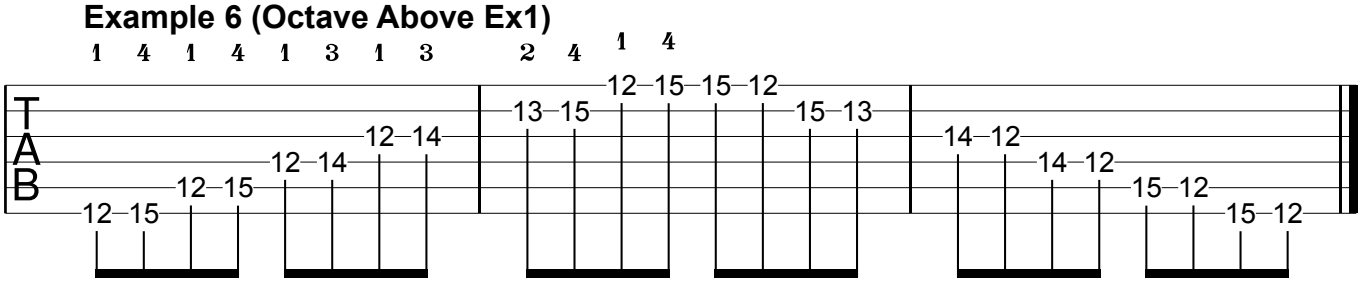
Example 4



Example 5



Example 6 (Octave Above Ex1)



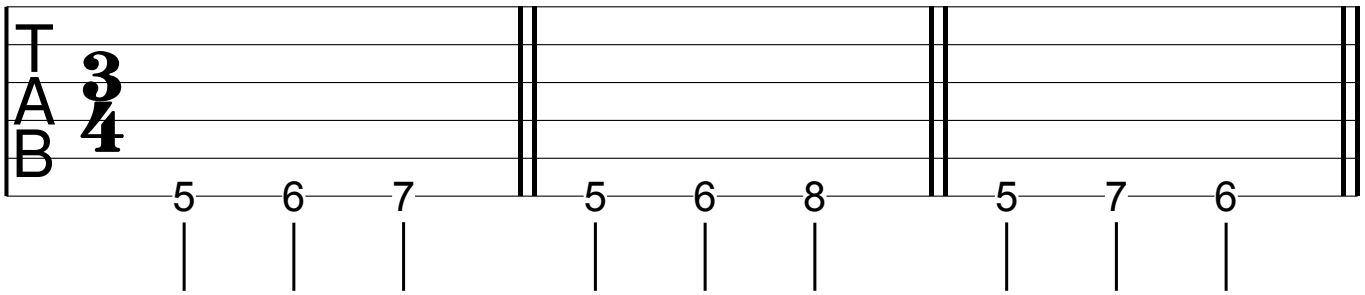
10.Three Finger Exercise

These patterns continue where “2 Finger Exercise” left off to help develop the motion between three finger patterns throughout the fretboard. Set the metronome to accent the first beat of every measure to help with not getting lost. Like any 3-finger pattern, practice different right-hand picking techniques.

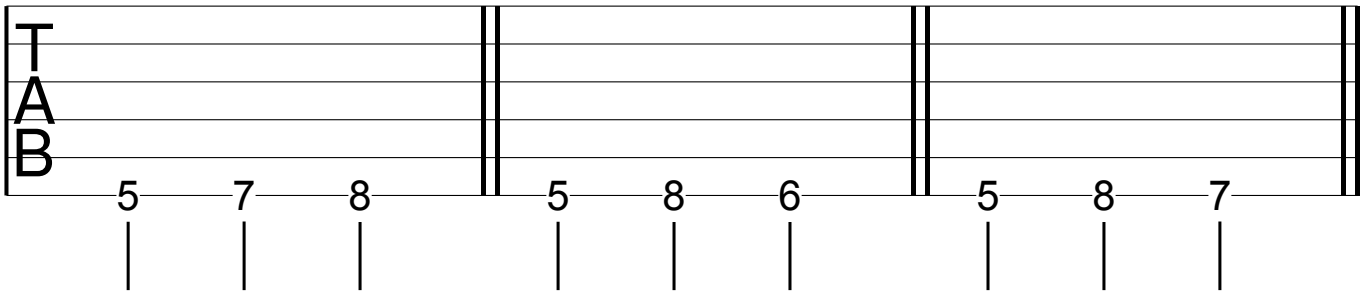
Typically, with 3 note patterns, economy picking is very useful and often preferred. Memorizing and practicing these patterns is very beneficial for the reason that most scales will be constructed and played with three notes per string. As with other exercises, applying different techniques is encouraged. All legato playing may be difficult but something to strive for in these examples.

Just a reminder, apply the examples to all strings. Start with the 6th string “E” and make your way to the higher strings, shift up a half-step, then play the same pattern making your way back to the 6th string “E”. Repeat as desired.

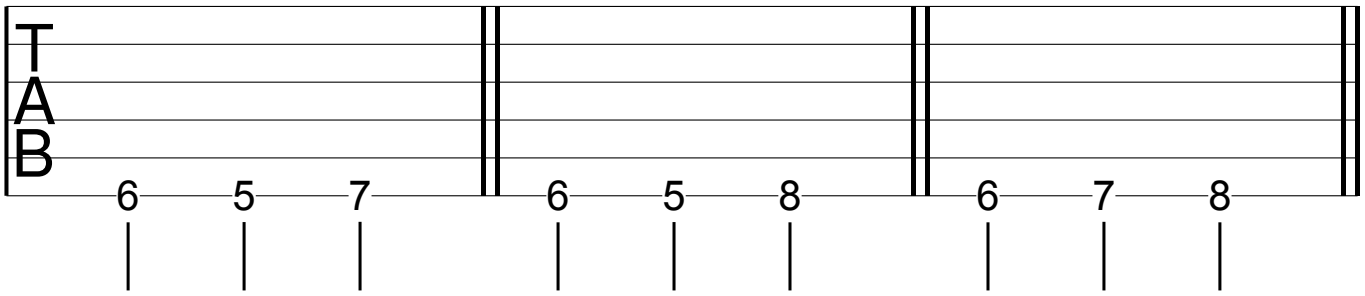
Example 1.1 **1.2** **1.3**



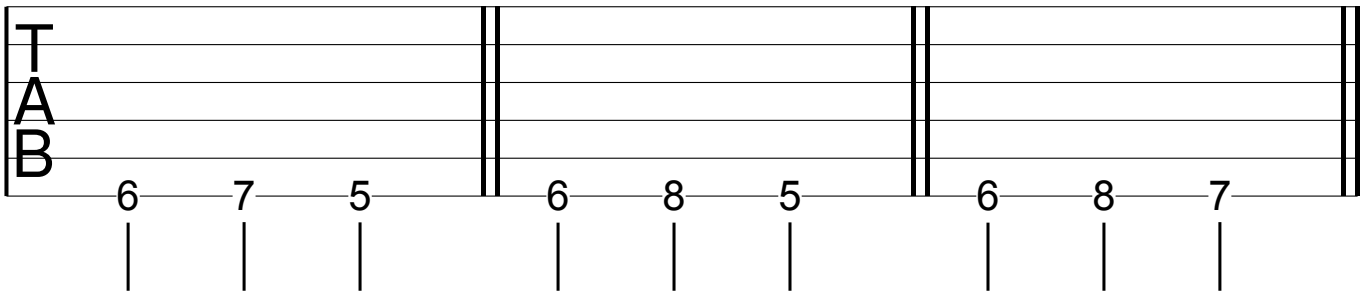
1.4 **1.5** **1.6**

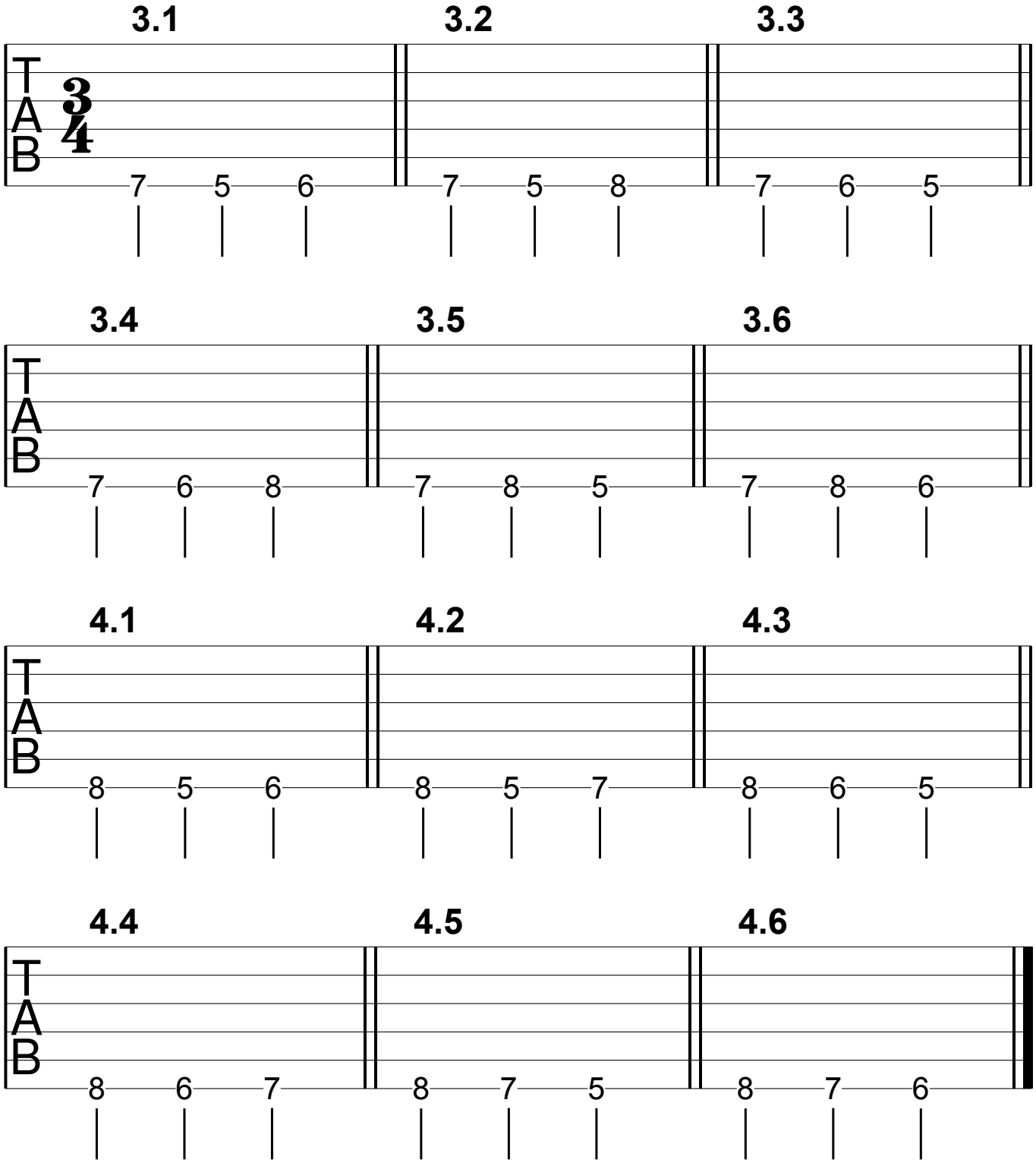


2.1 **2.2** **2.3**



2.4 **2.5** **2.6**



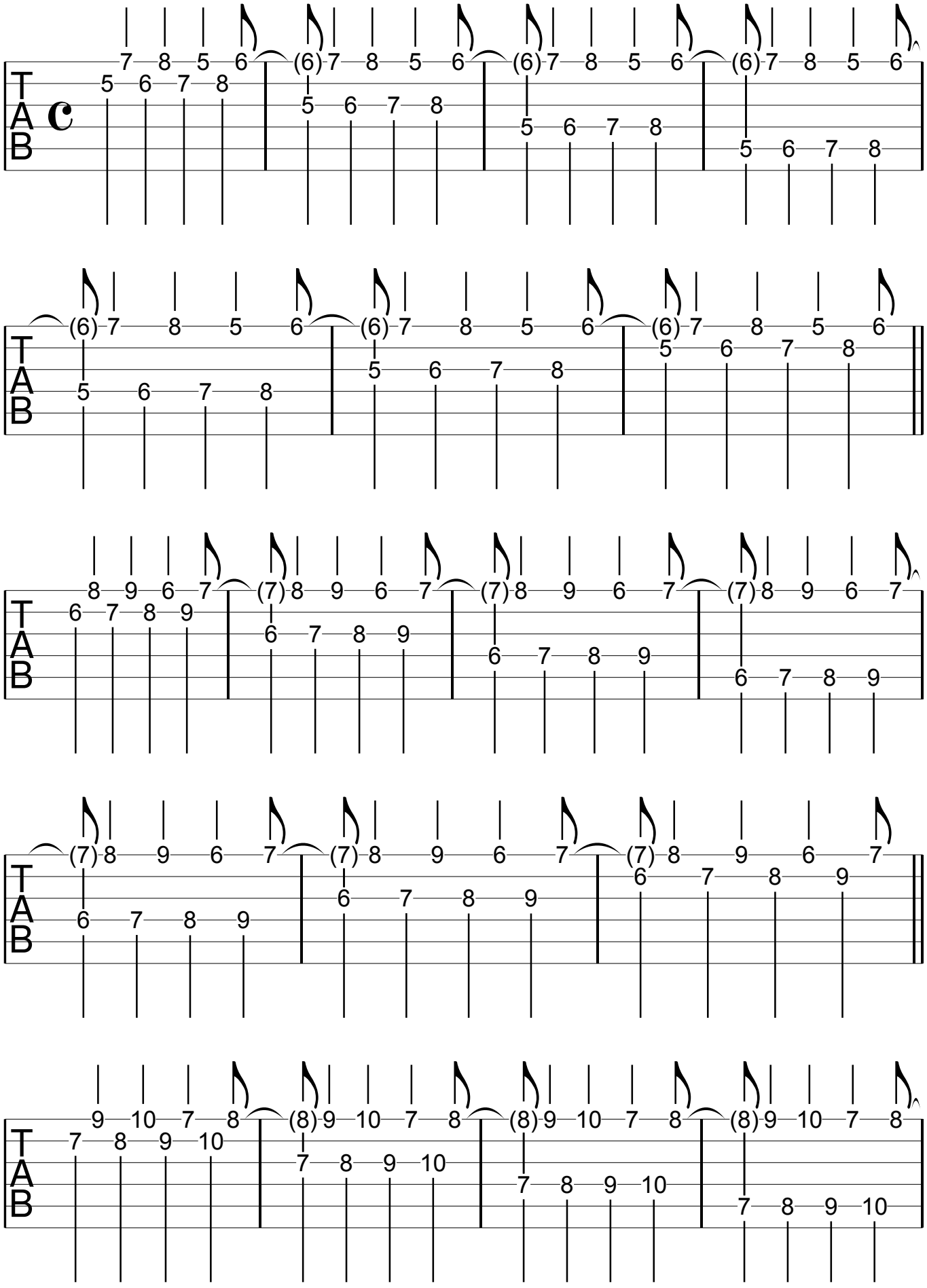

3.1
3.2
3.3
3.4
3.5
3.6
4.1
4.2
4.3
4.4
4.5
4.6
T
A
B
3
4
7 5 6
7 5 8
7 6 5
7 6 8
7 8 5
7 8 6
8 5 6
8 5 7
8 6 5
8 6 7
8 7 5
8 7 6

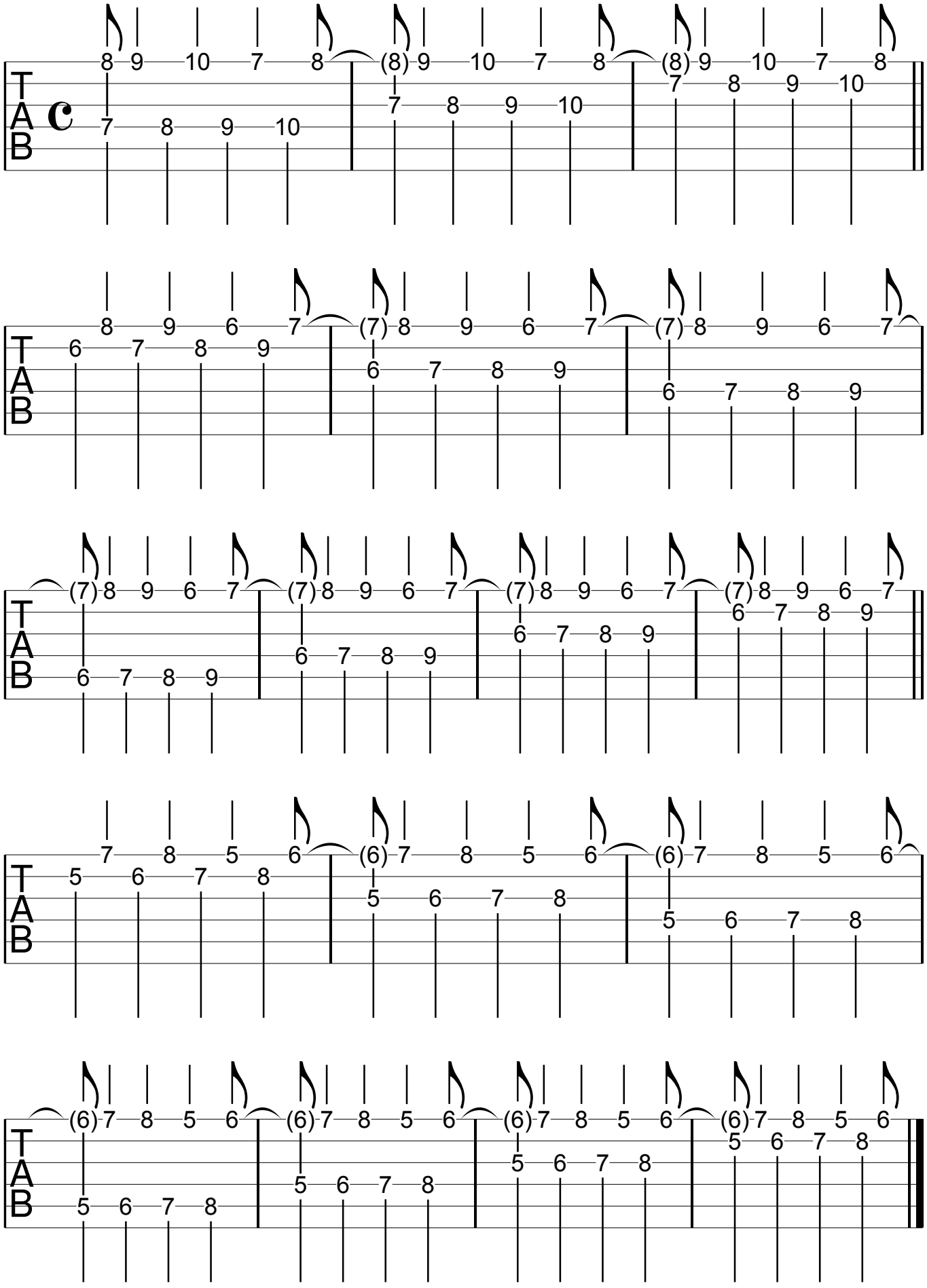
11.Sustain

This is one of my favorite exercises in this book. As with many of these examples, I learned this on classical guitar using my thumb on all strings but the high “e”. If you’re finger-picking, alternate *i* and *m* between each thumb-stroke. I’ve purposely left out the 6th string for the fact that most hands won’t be able to naturally make that reach. However, if you can, do it!

If you are using a pick, there are two ways you can practice this example. You can alternate pick the whole thing and the benefits of this is that you will be more comfortable with string skipping especially when you reach lower strings. The other way is to hybrid-pick the whole way through. If you choose this route, I would alternate *m* and *a* between each time you pick a string other than the high “e”.

Intermediate and Advanced level students love playing this example because of how it sounds. Remember, this exercise is meant to teach you about sustaining each note to its fullest. The left-hand finger should only move once it has played the duration that is noted.


T
A
B
c

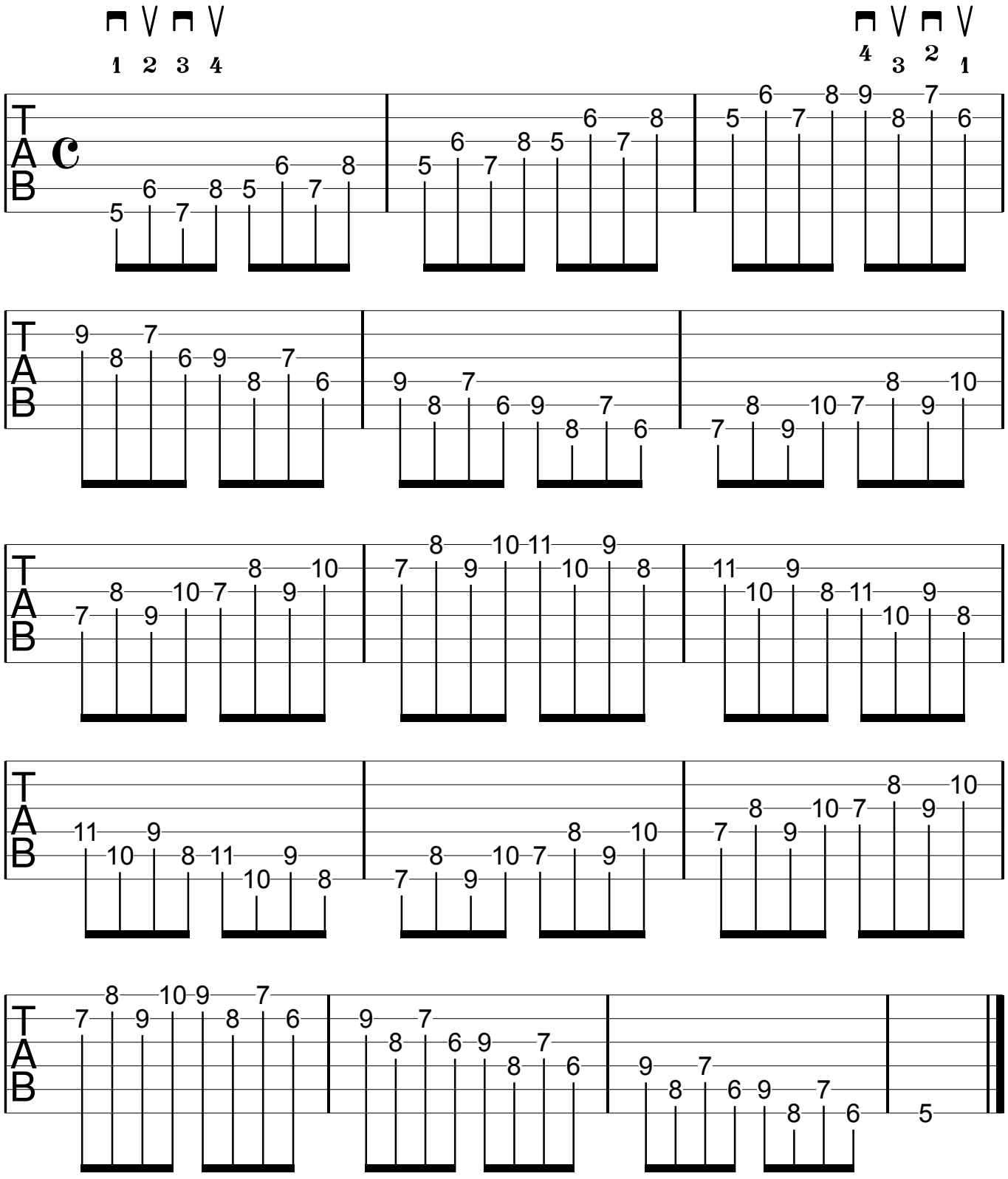

TAB
8 9 10 7 8 (8) 9 10 7 8 (8) 9 10 7 8
7 8 9 10 7 8 9 10 7 8 9 10
8 9 6 7 (7) 8 9 6 7 (7) 8 9 6 7
6 7 8 9 6 7 8 9 6 7 8 9
(7) 8 9 6 7 (7) 8 9 6 7 (7) 8 9 6 7 (7) 8 9 6 7
6 7 8 9 6 7 8 9 6 7 8 9 6 7 8 9
7 8 5 6 (6) 7 8 5 6 (6) 7 8 5 6
5 6 7 8 5 6 7 8 5 6 7 8
(6) 7 8 5 6 (6) 7 8 5 6 (6) 7 8 5 6 (6) 7 8 5 6
5 6 7 8 5 6 7 8 5 6 7 8 5 6 7 8

12.Inside-Outside Picking

When I was an undergraduate freshman at the University of North Texas, I will never forget that when I showed this example to an incredible electric guitarist, he called me a “genius” (haha)… Original or not, it was obvious he loved the idea of “Inside-Outside picking”. I won’t ever forget the reaction on his face.

This exercise is a great example as to what you can achieve when alternate picking. The left hand can be relatively simple to play, however the more difficult one is the right hand. It will take a while to get used to this exercise and reach faster speeds. You can take this exercise all the way up the neck and back down or any other combination you may think up.

The difficult part is the descent back towards the low strings. Be patient because while you still alternate pick, the feel is different once you switch to “inside” picking (picking between two adjacent strings). It’s easy to play with a shuffle feel but I would recommend keeping it in a straight feel.


1 2 3 4
4 3 2 1
T
A
B

13.Modes

Part 1 is about alternate picking each note. The challenging aspect about this example is that with each new string, you approach it with a different picking direction. This is great to build up your picking speed and accuracy.

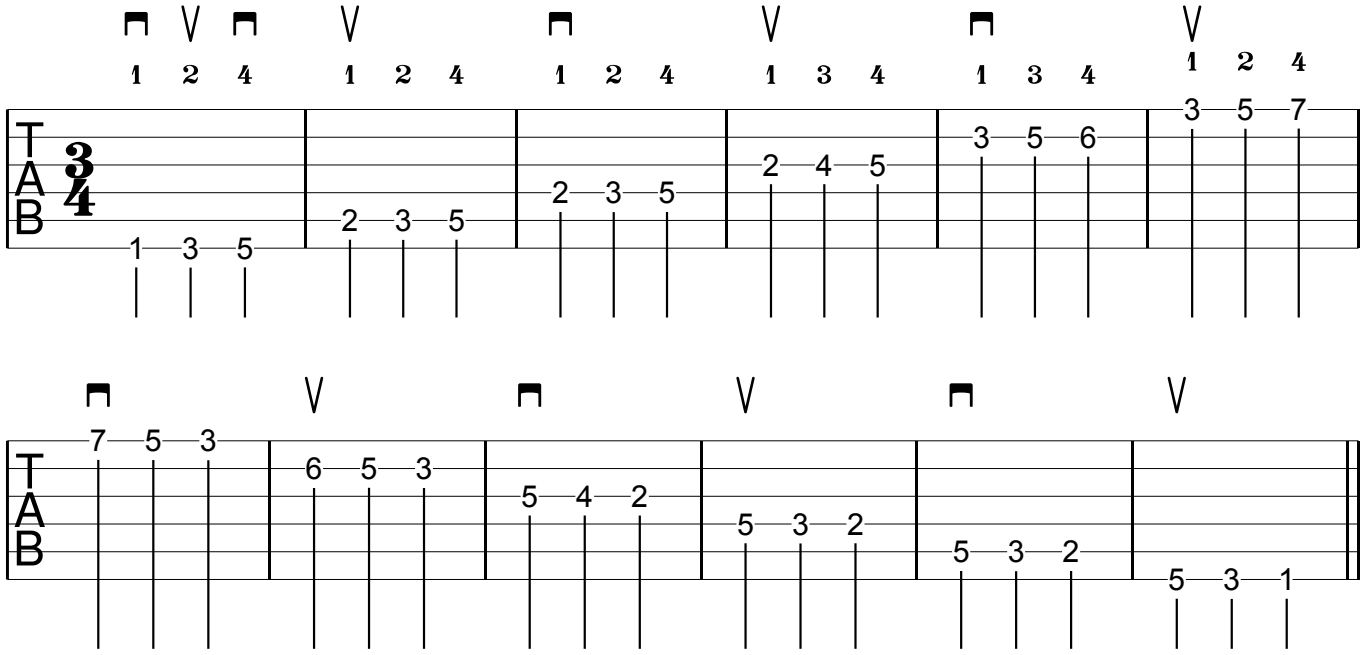
Part 2 is about economy picking. Economy picking is almost the same as alternate picking but in the case of picking an odd number of notes, you would pick in the same direction you did last when transitioning strings. It's easier to practice the example and understand in that sense.

Part 3 incorporates hammer-ons and pull-offs. This can be quite the challenge when moving back down while using pull-offs. Left hand fingering is important for this.

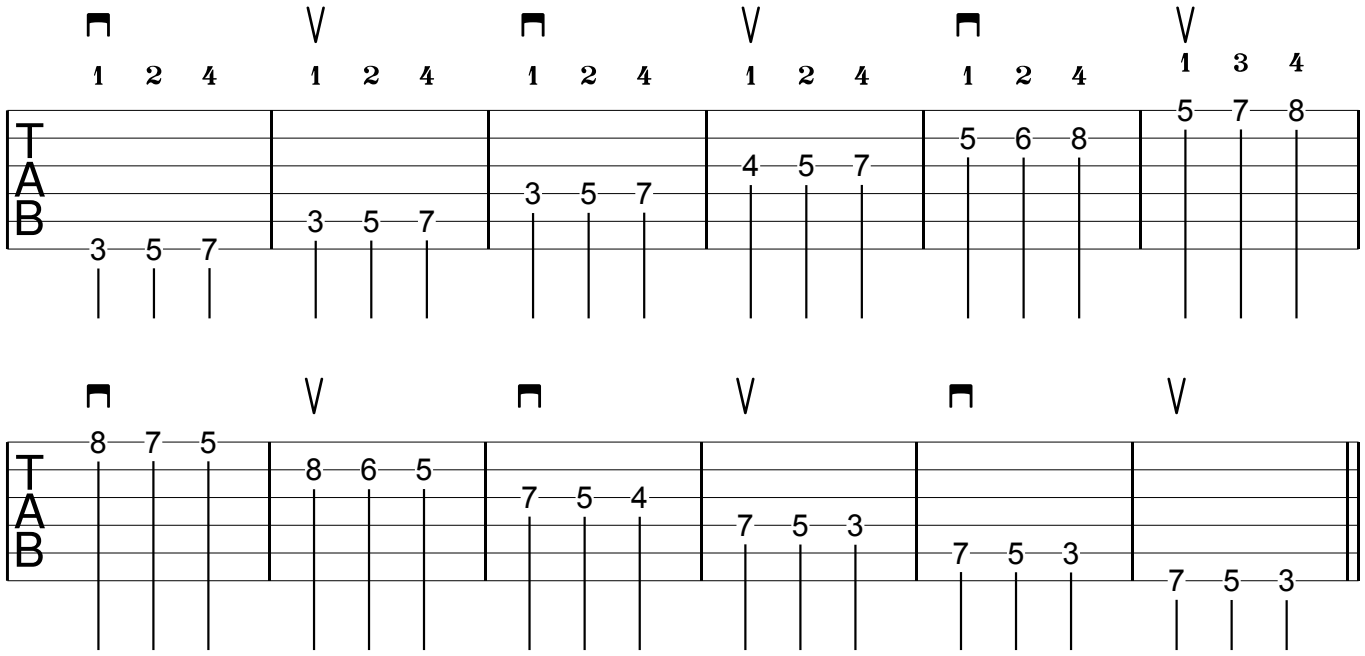
And lastly, Part 4 is using hybrid-picking. You can change from *i, m* to *m, i* while descending. Also, be creative with picking direction. You can alternate pick each beginning note or economy picking ascending and descending. Note that left hand finger numbers are below the tablature for this example.

Part 1: Alternate Picking

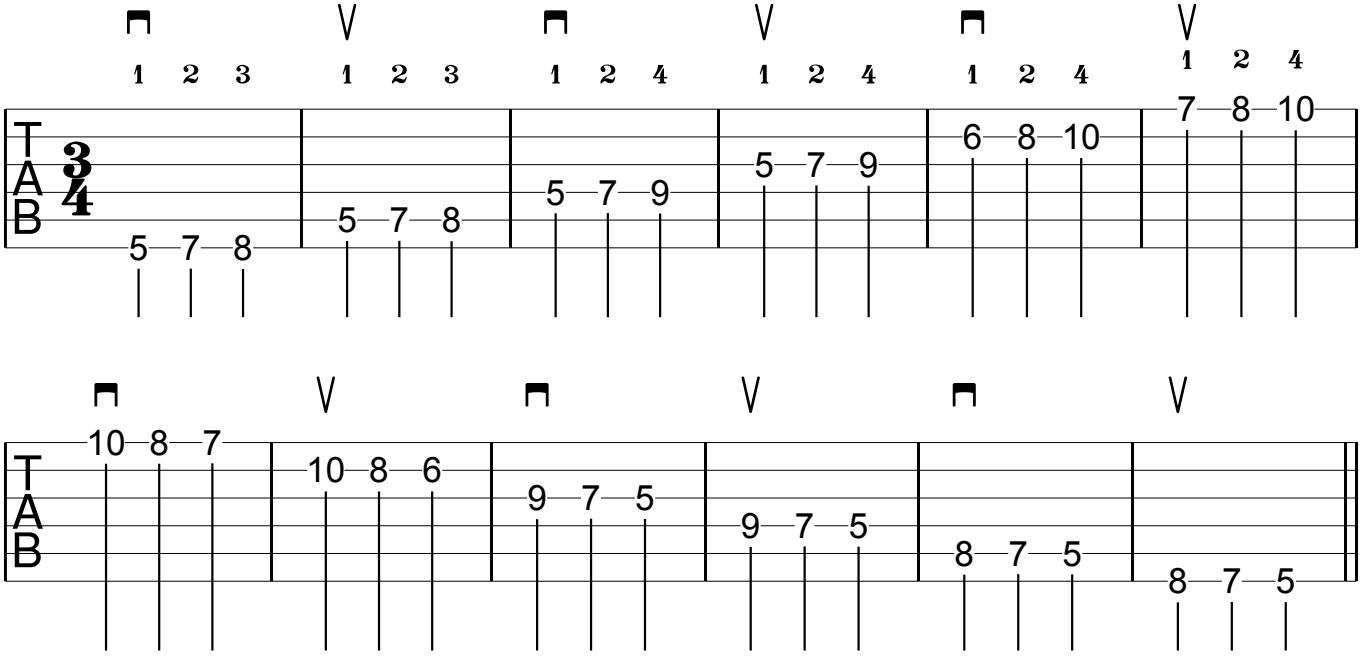
F Lydian



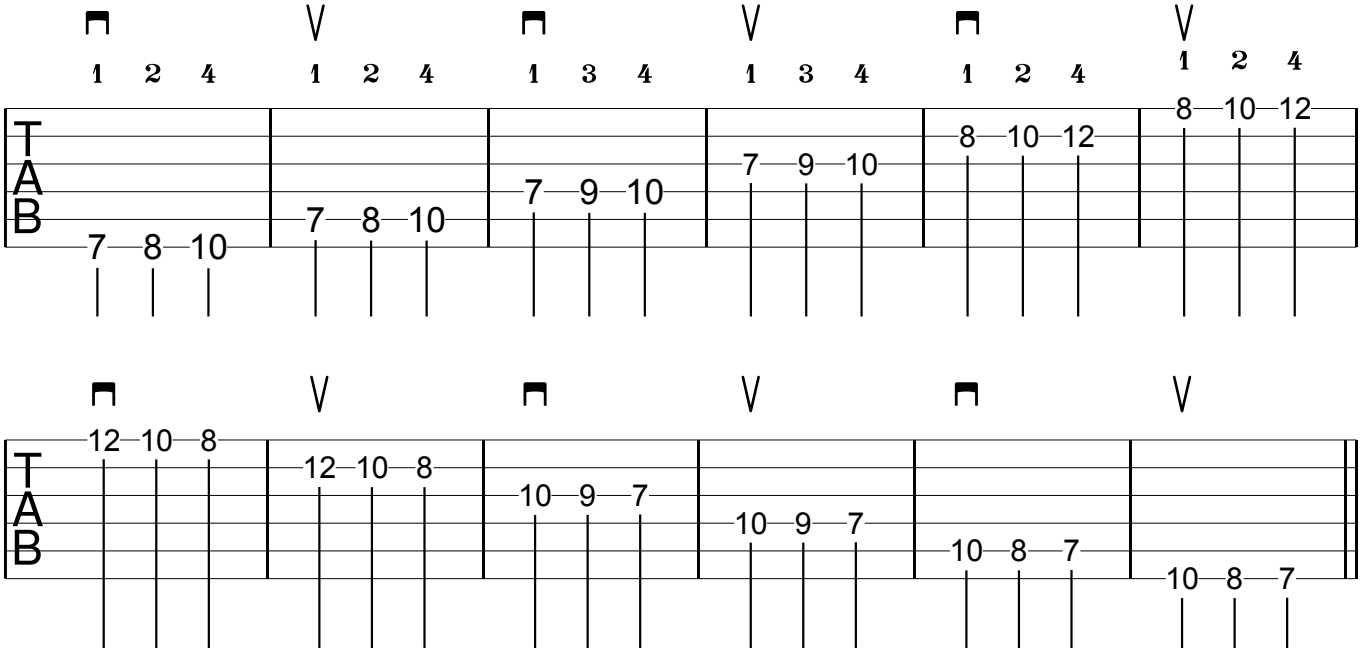
G Mixolydian



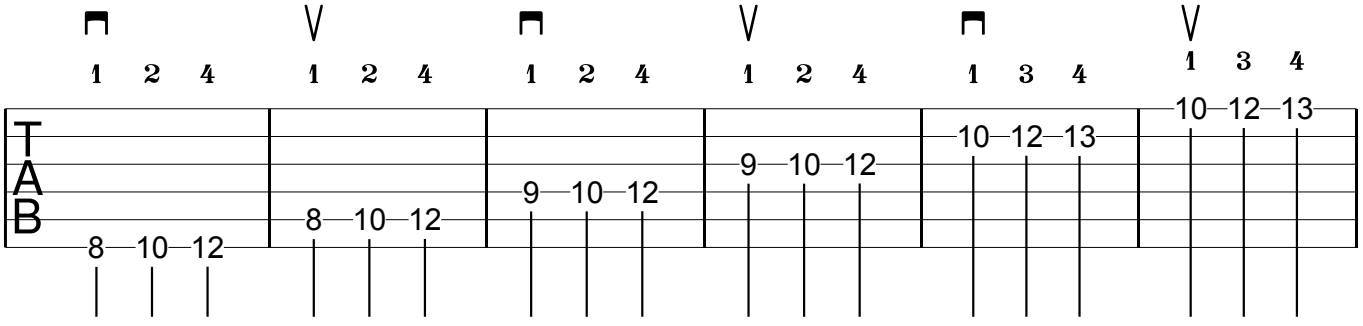
A Aeolian (Natural Minor)

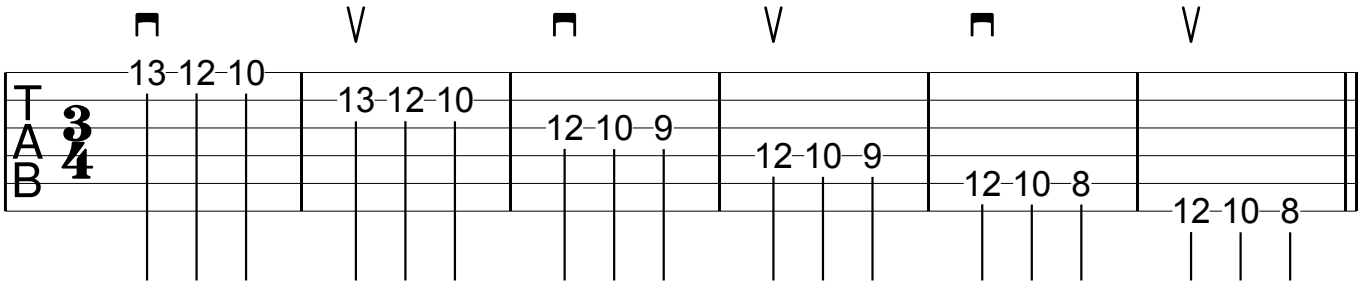


B Locrian

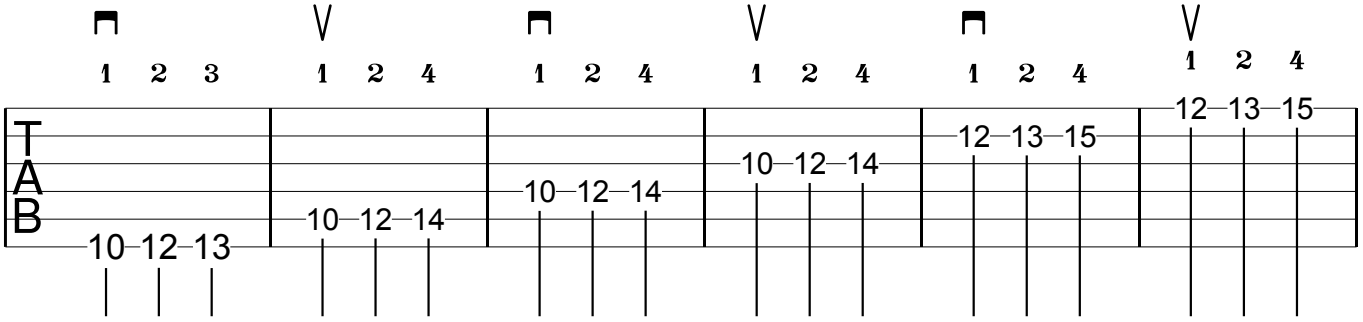


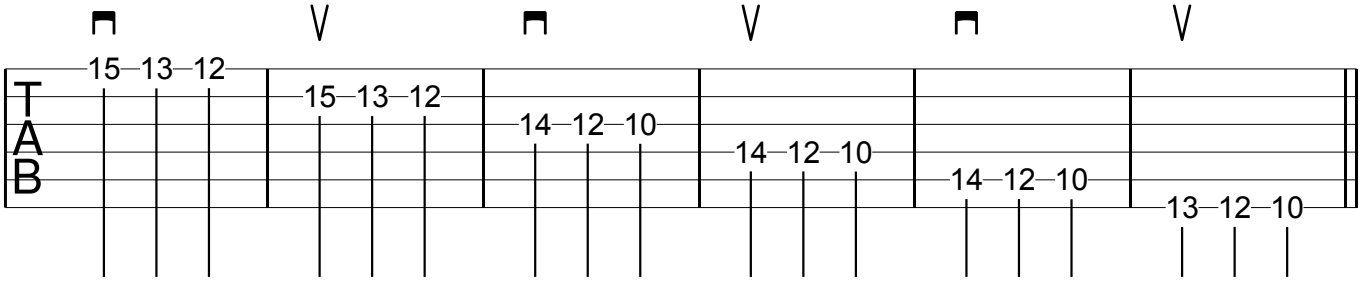
C Ionian (Major)



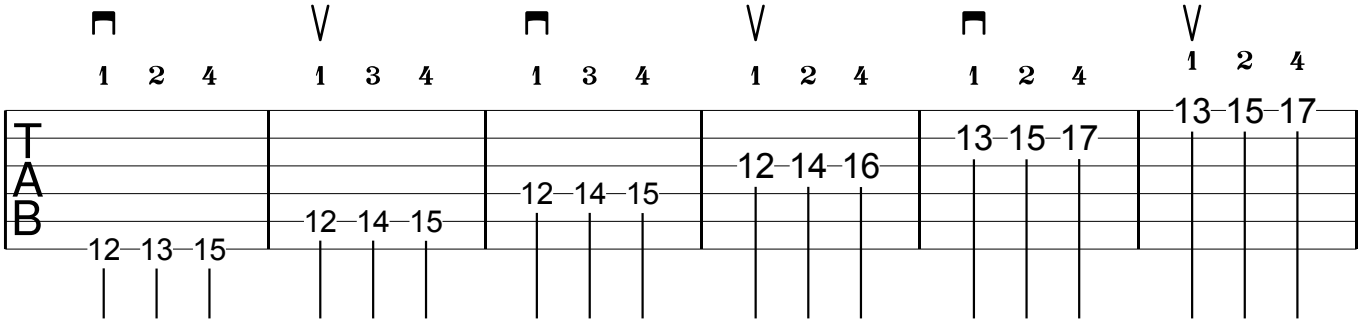


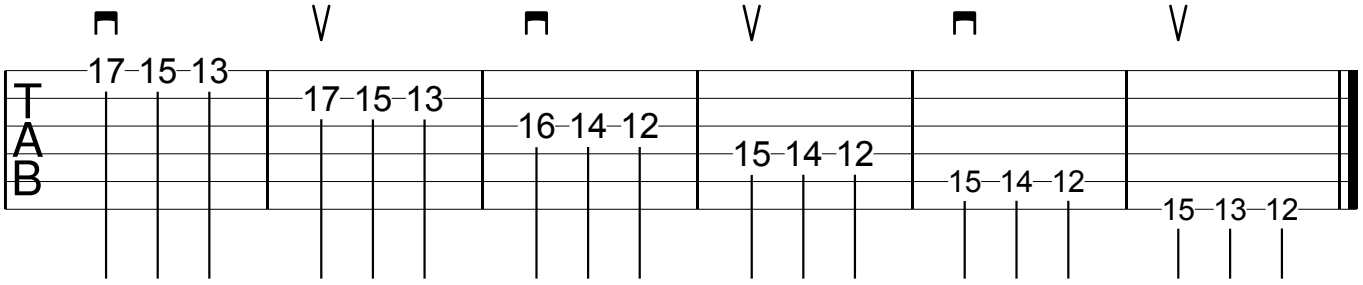
D Dorian





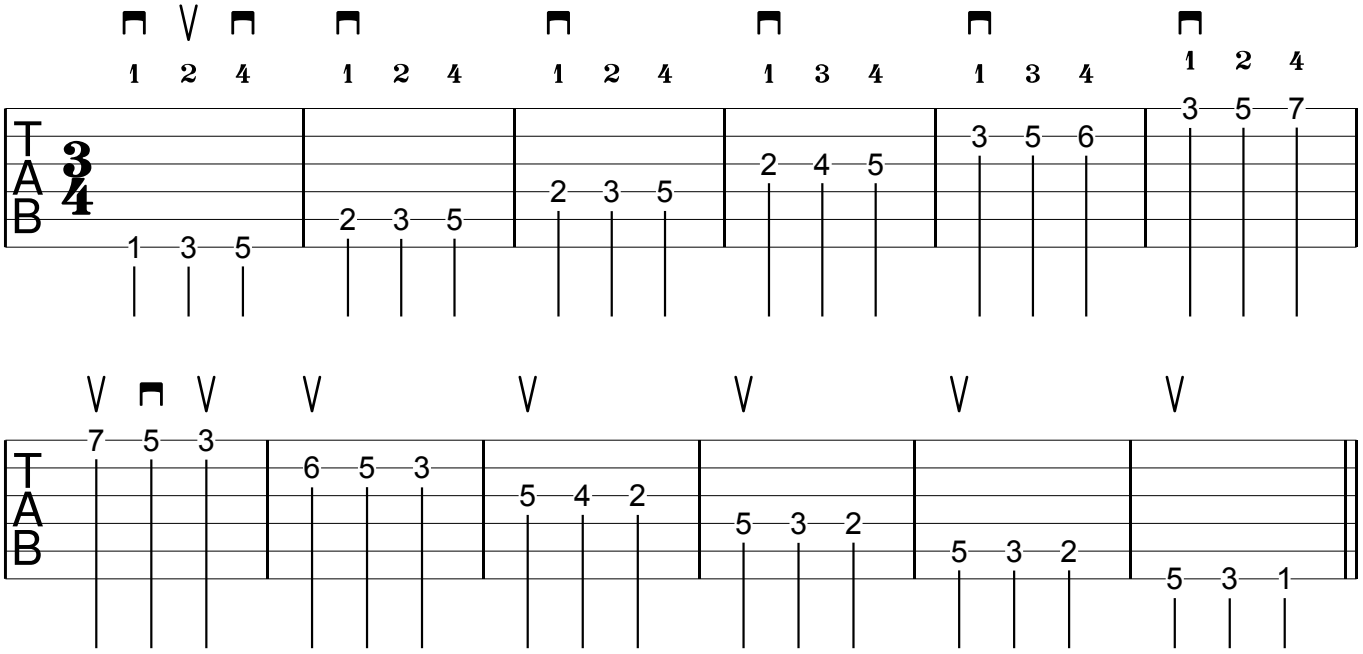
E Phrygian



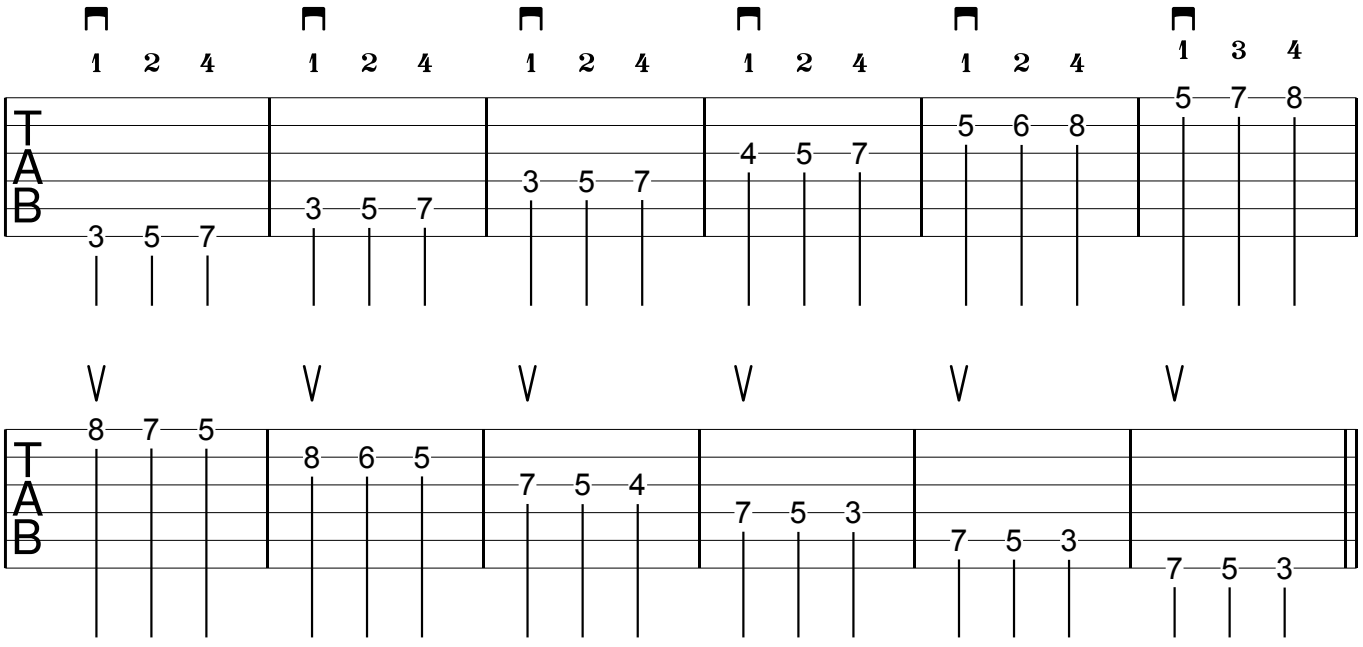


Part 2: Economy Picking

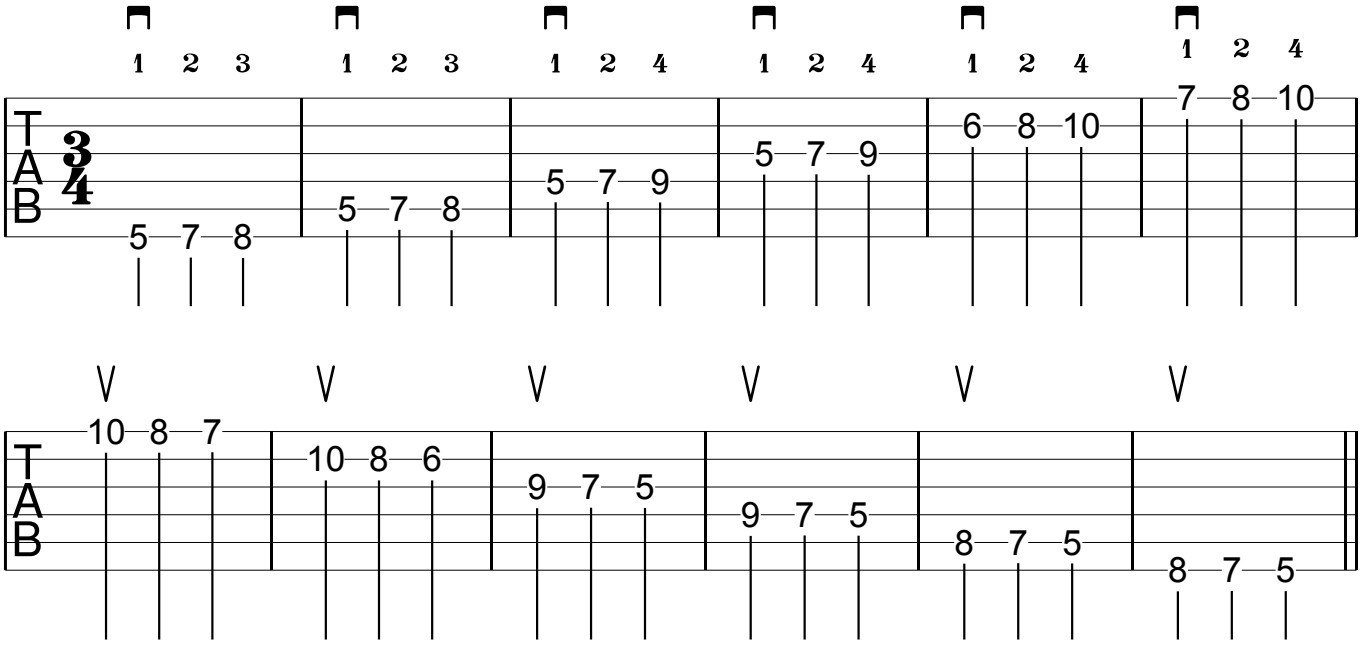
F Lydian



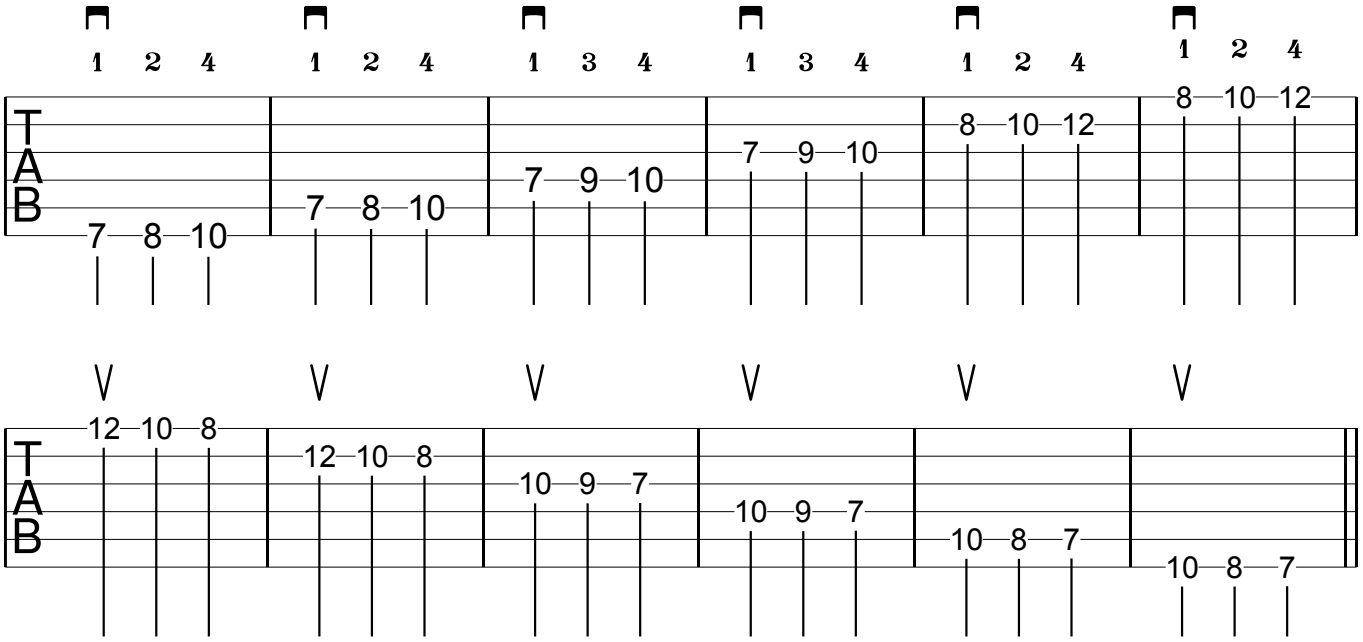
G Mixolydian



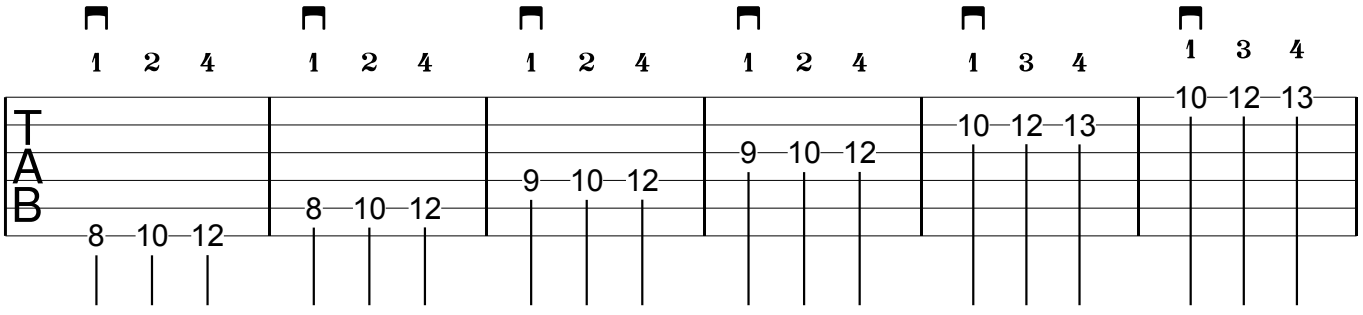
A Aeolian (Natural Minor)

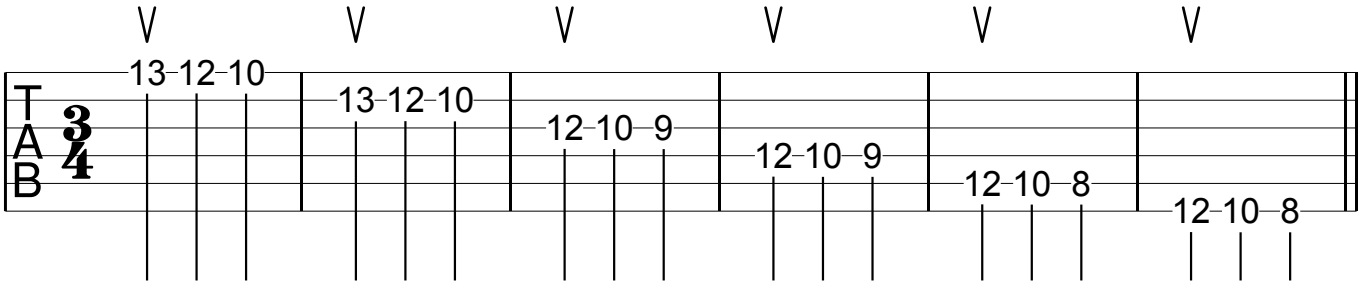


B Locrian

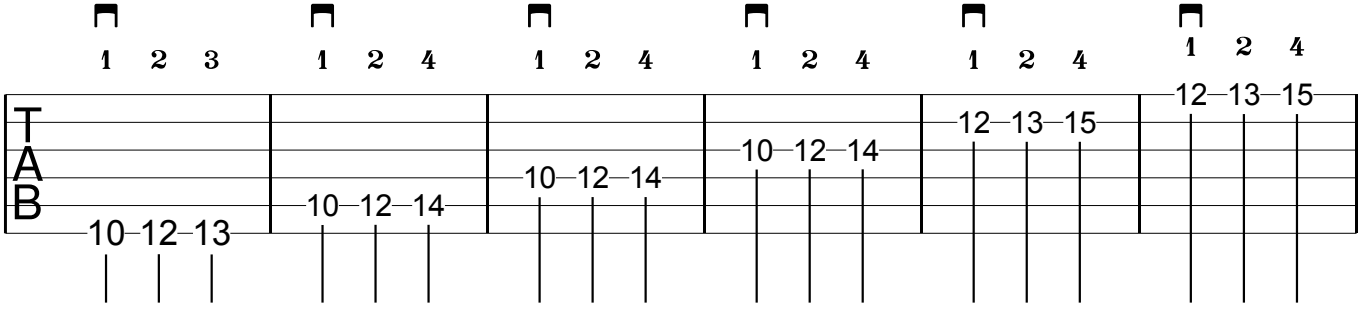


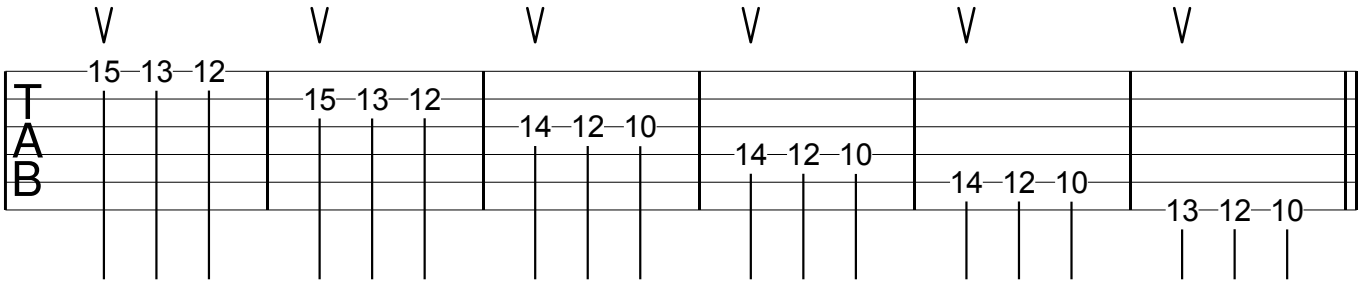
C Ionian (Major)



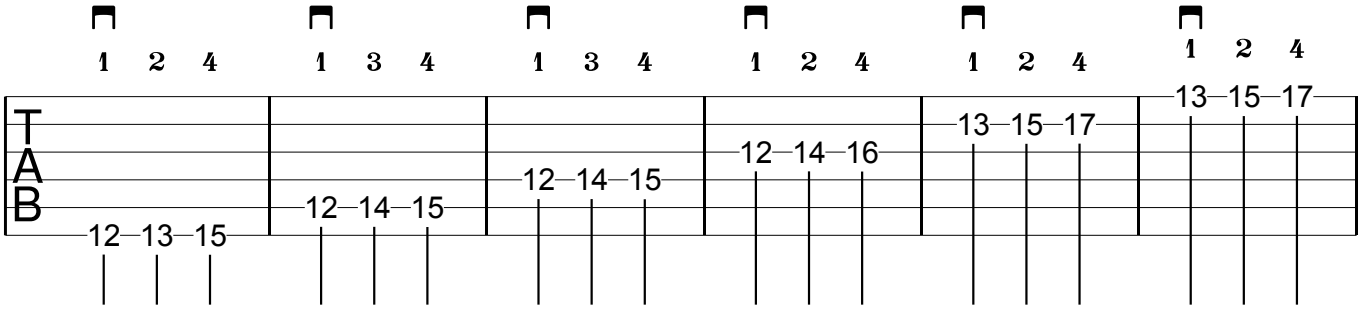


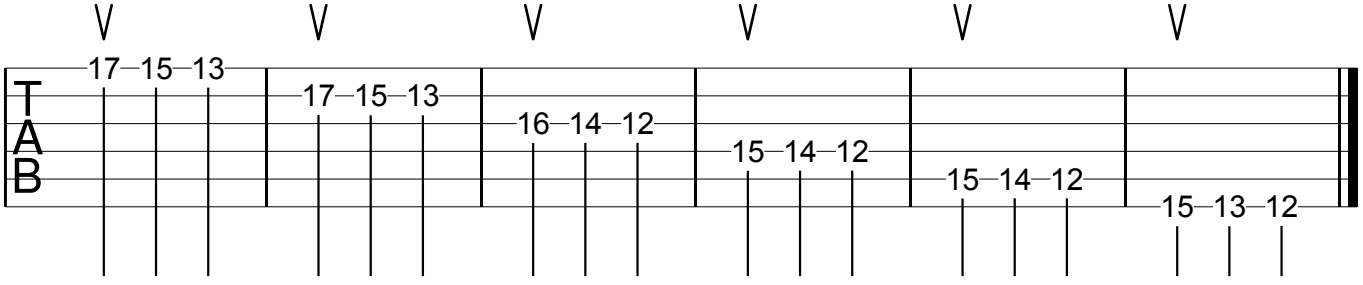
D Dorian





E Phrygian

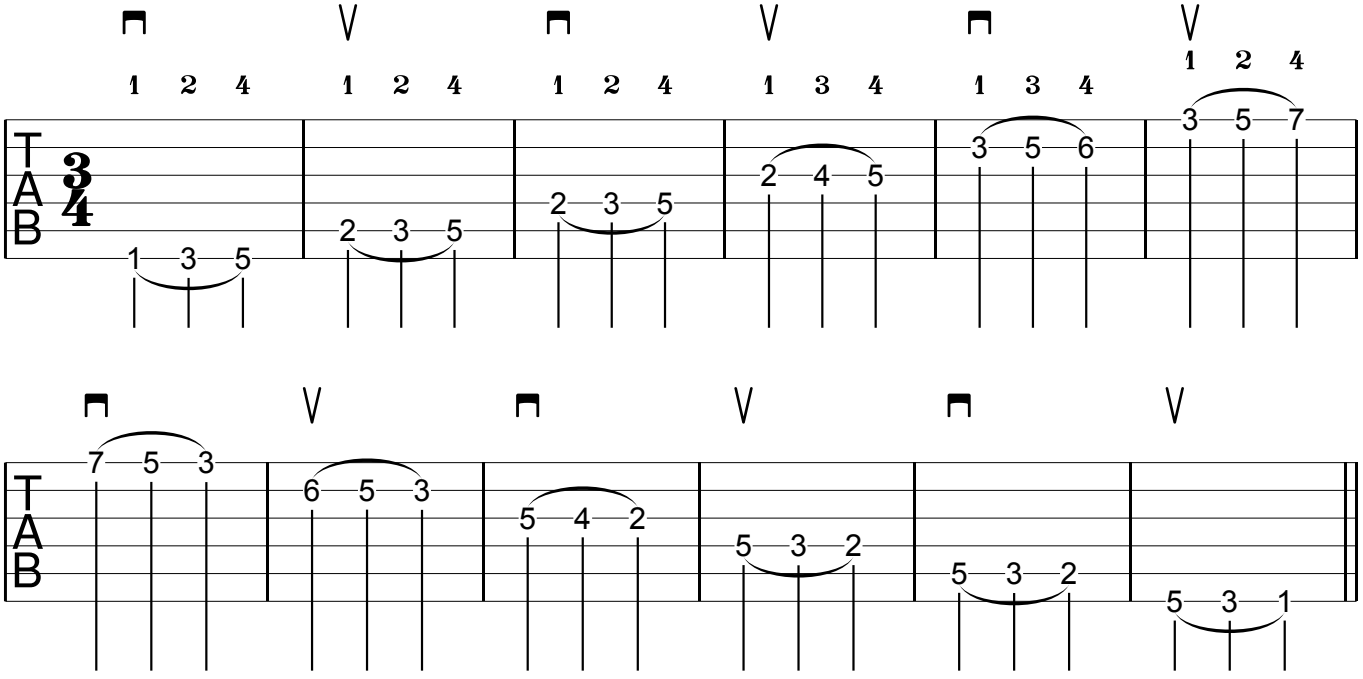




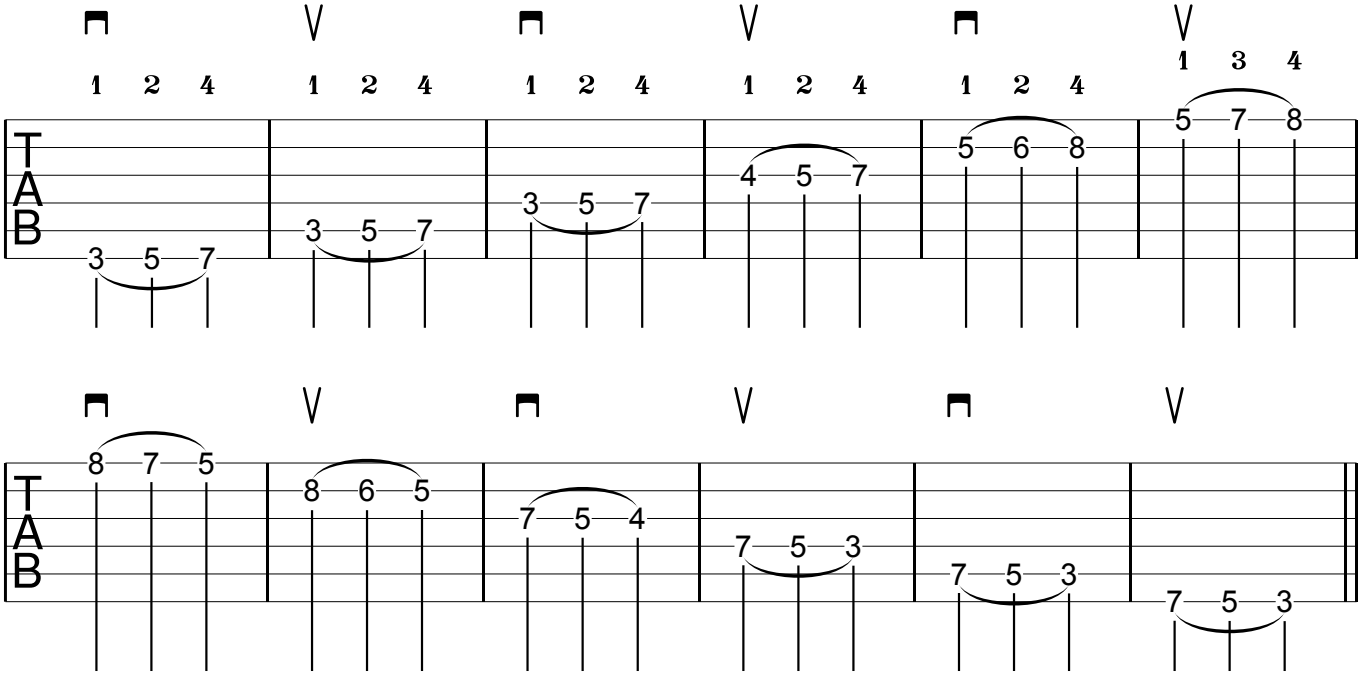
Part 3: Legato

Hammer-On/Pull-Off

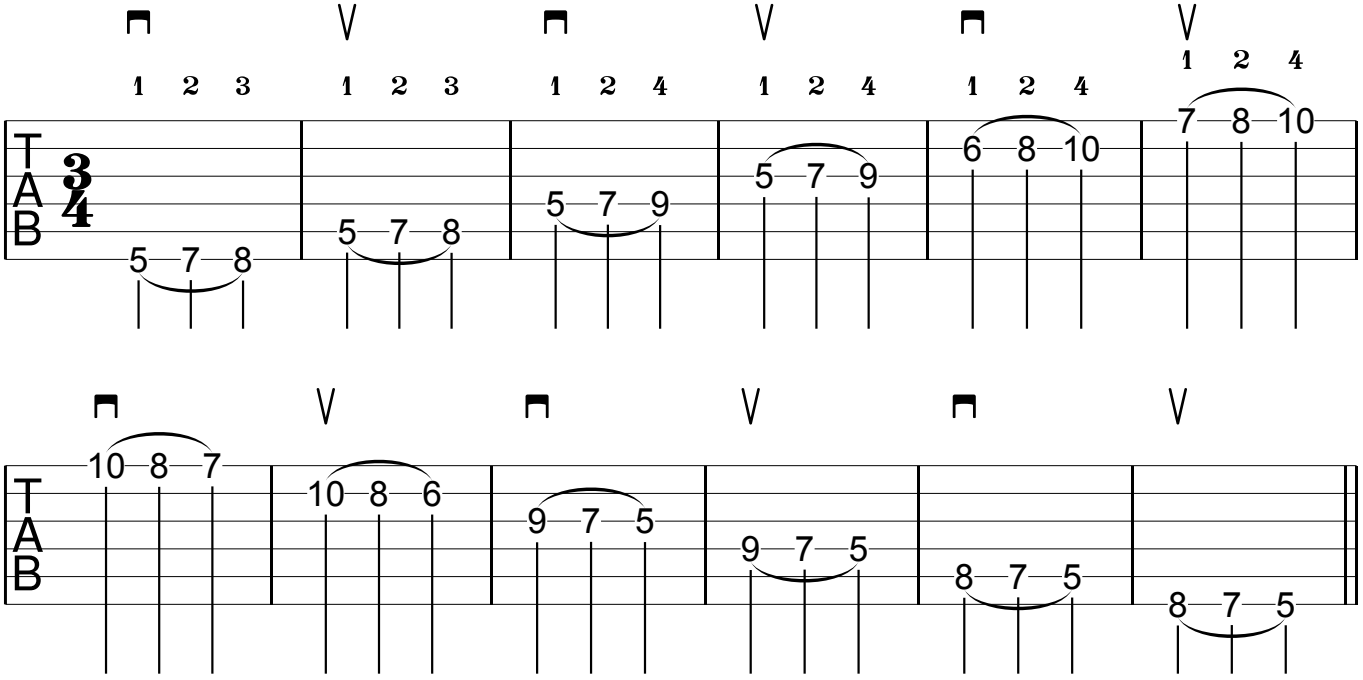
F Lydian



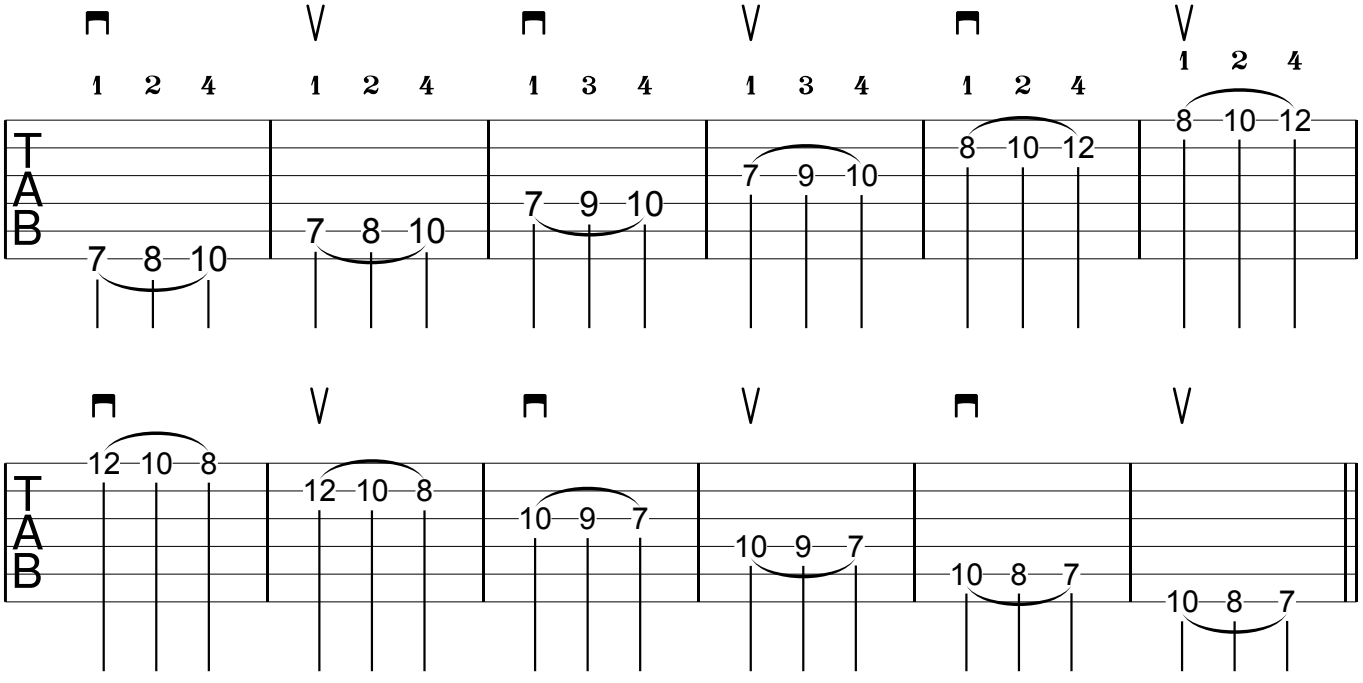
G Mixolydian



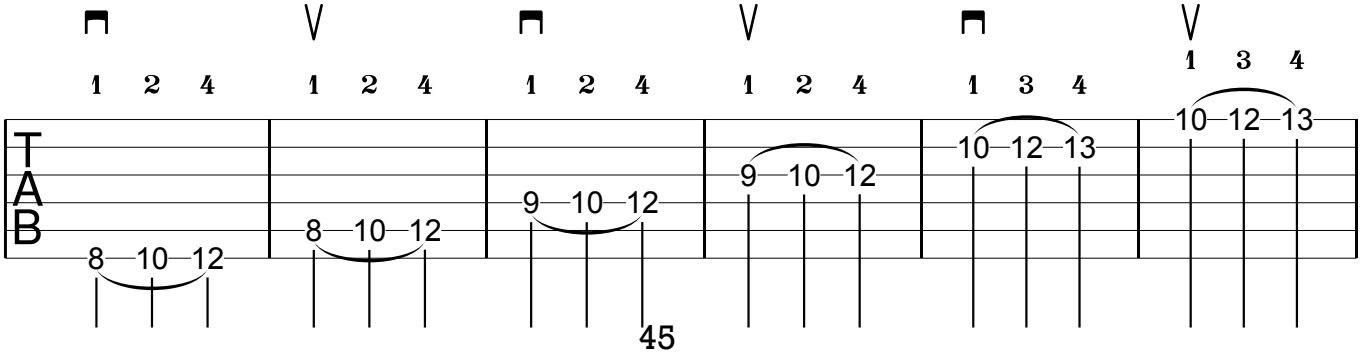
A Aeolian (Natural Minor)

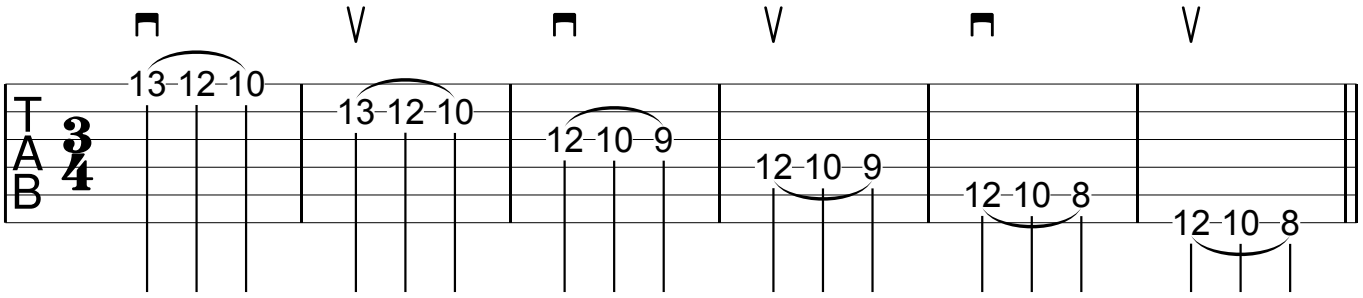


B Locrian

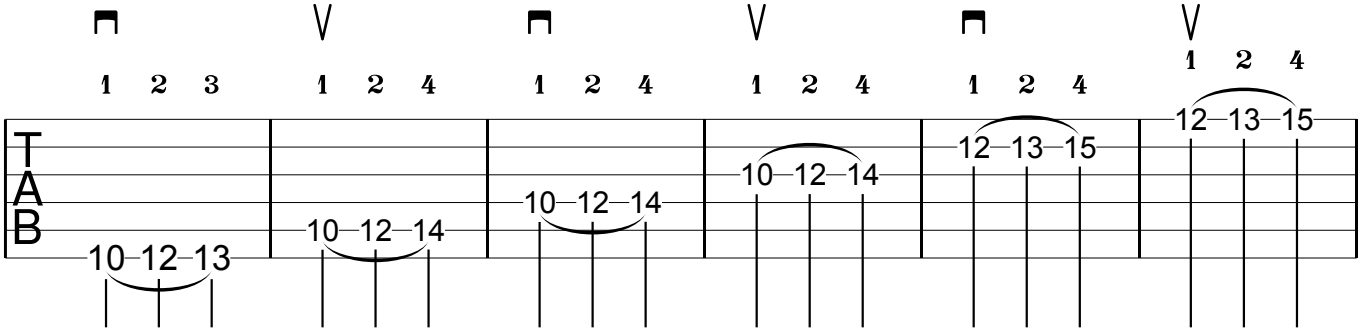


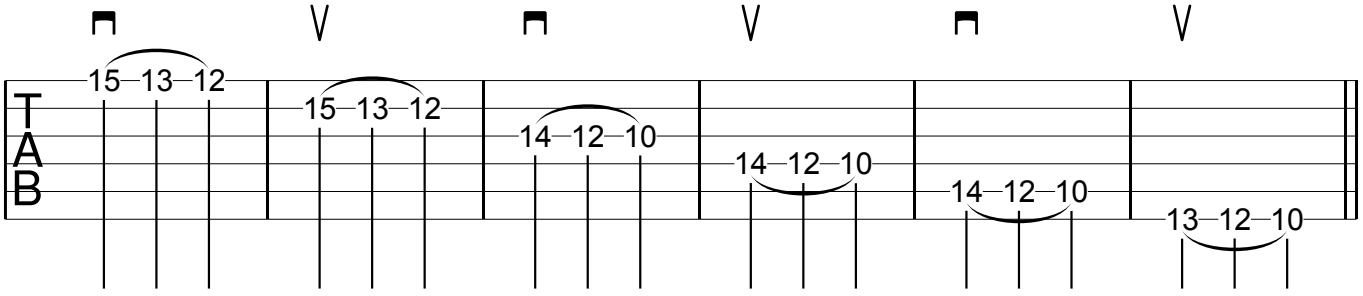
C Ionian (Major)



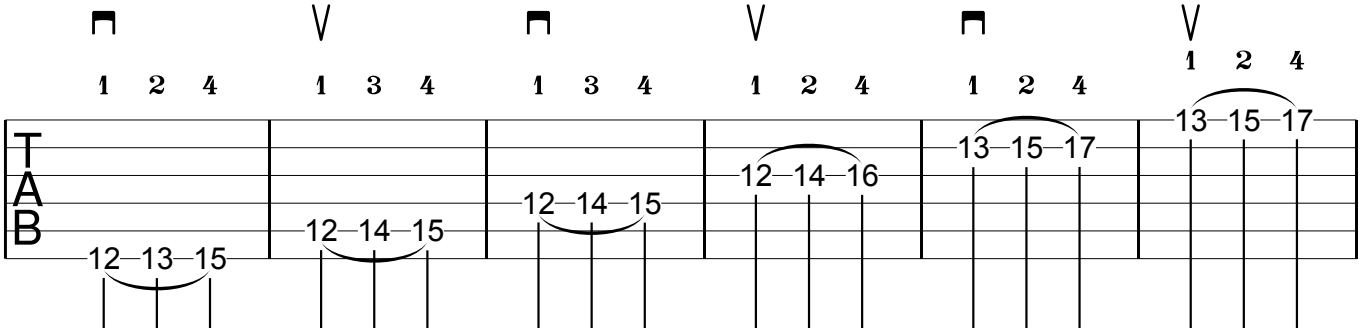


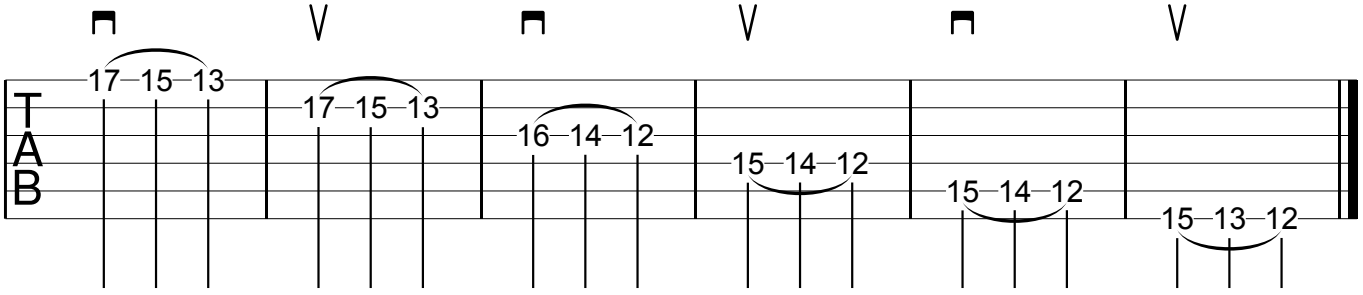
D Dorian





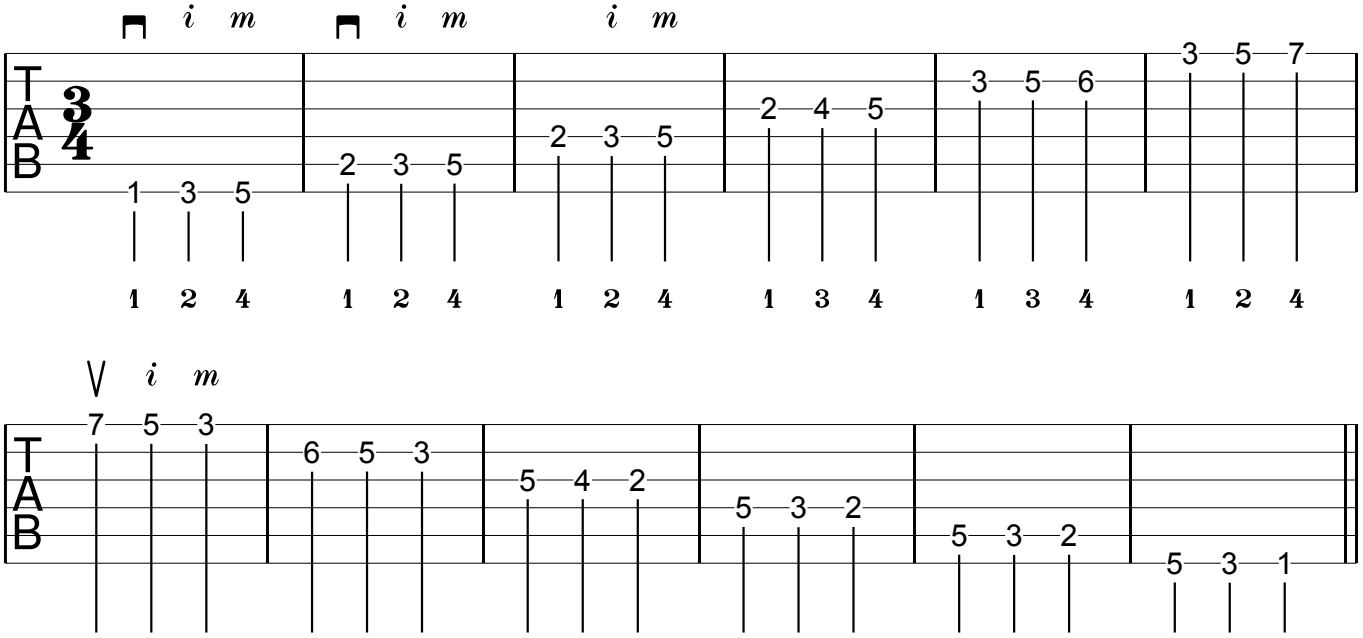
E Phrygian



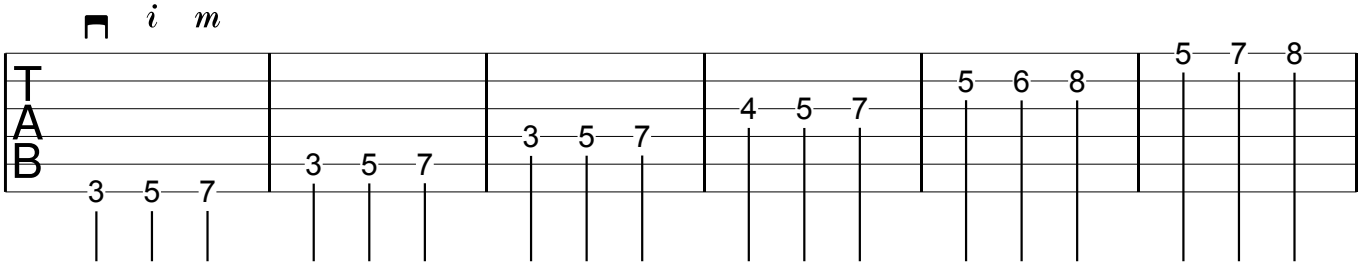


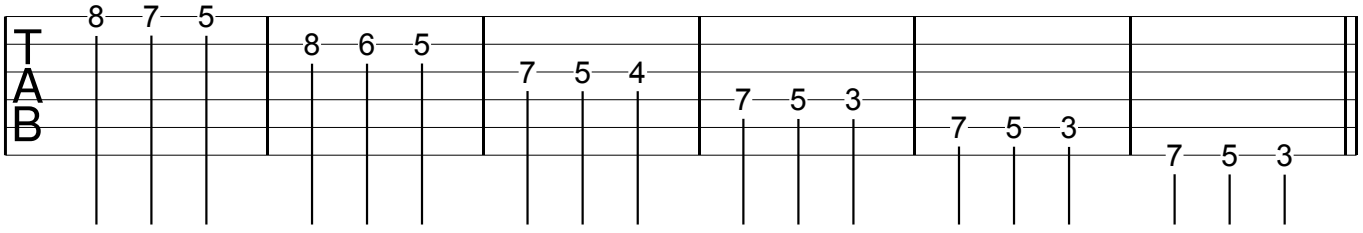
Part 4: Hybrid Picking

F Lydian

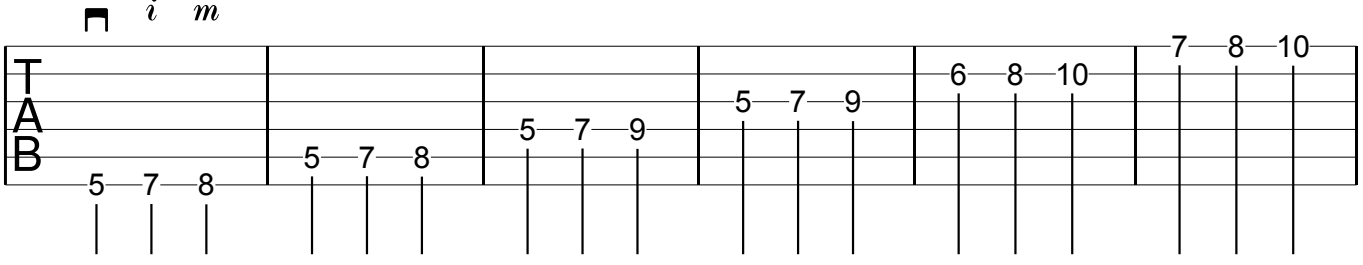


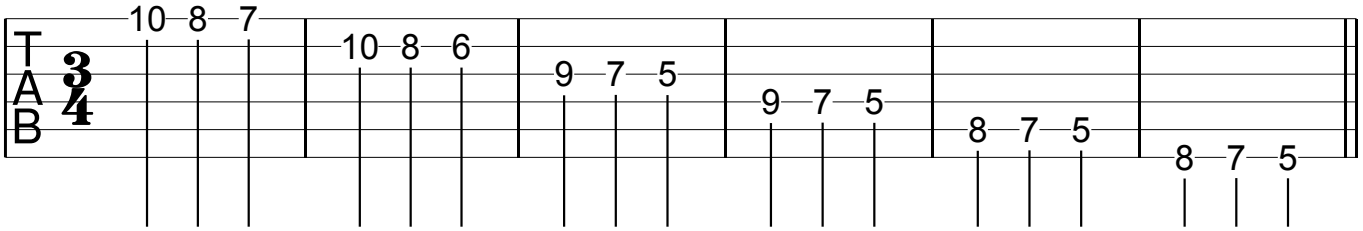
G Mixolydian





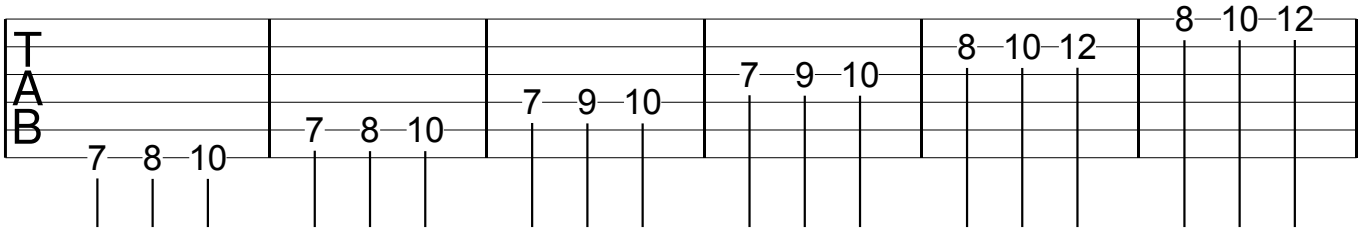
A Aeolian (Natural Minor)

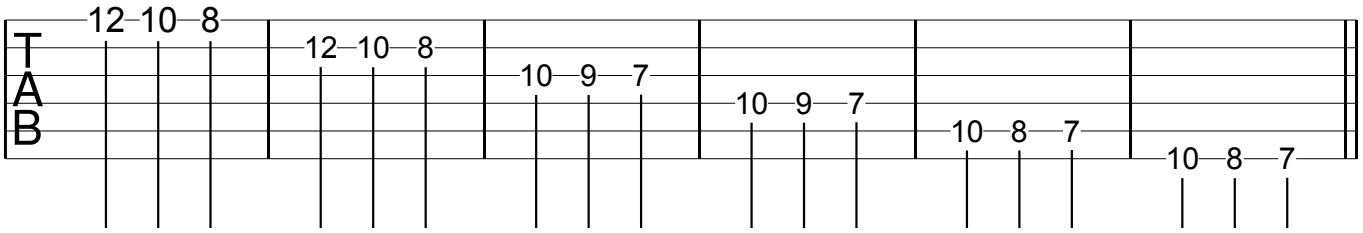




B Locrian

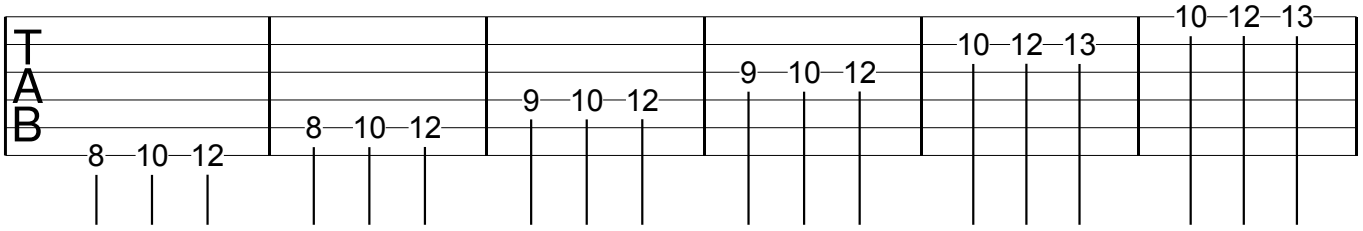
i m

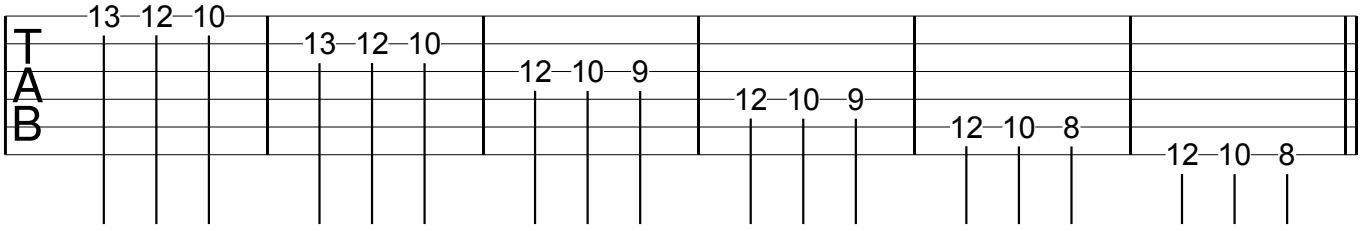




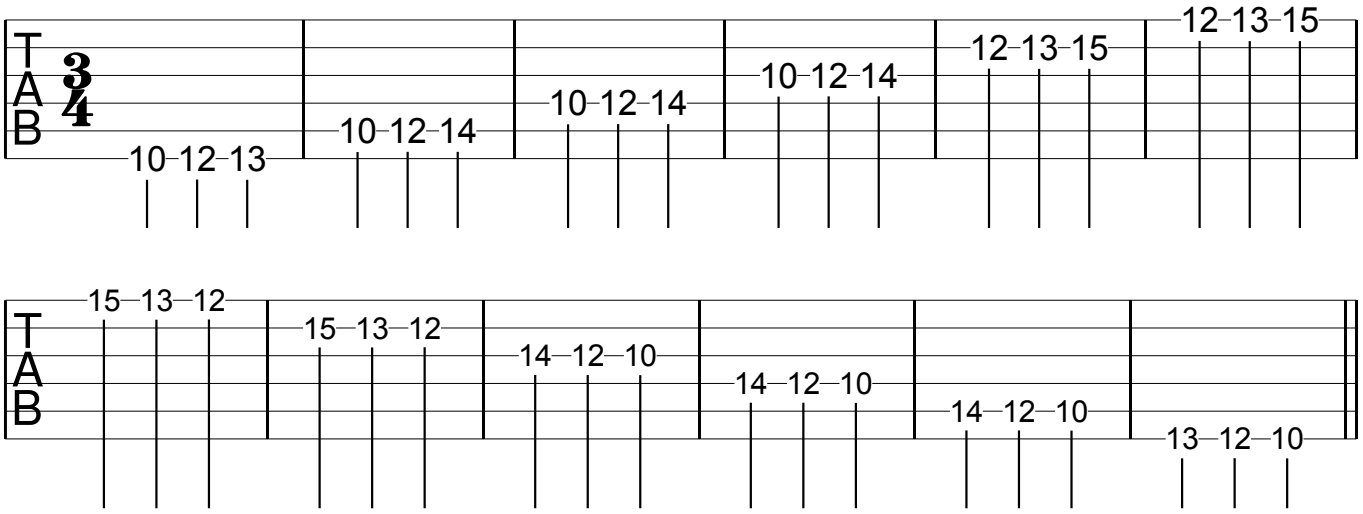
C Ionian (Major)

i m

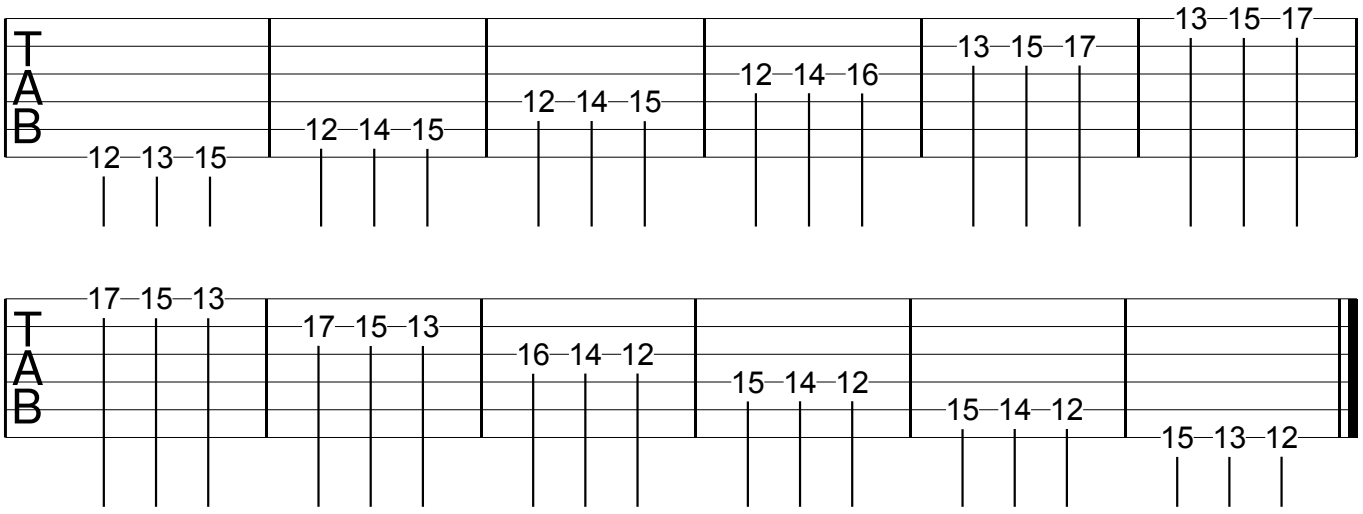




D Dorian



E Phrygian



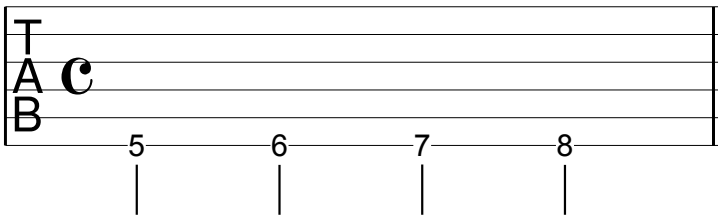
14.Four Finger Exercise

With this exercise, you will develop a strong sense of finger independence. Properly played, you will feel that each of your fingers can move and/or stay in position on demand. This exercise is not meant to be played fast. Rather, it is meant to play accurately and smoothly. Do not lift each finger until you need to and when your finger is lifted, try to lift very little.

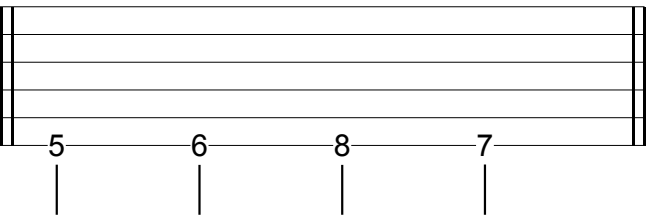
Each of these examples is meant to be played on each string. Move to each string starting with the 6th. Make your way to the 1st string and then shift up a half-step and make your way back to the 6th string. Do not change the pattern though. Keep the same pattern going down as you do going up.

In my experience, students have loved these examples. Each new week I challenge them with two new patterns. Let them get used to each pattern. As they get used to it, you can have them play more. Instead of focusing on speed, focus on legato; the connection between each note. Make sure you stay in 5th position and use the appropriate fingers for each fret. No stretches should be done.

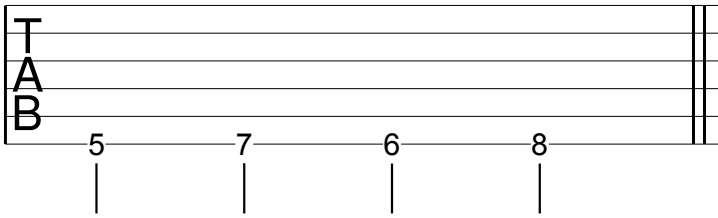
Example 1.1



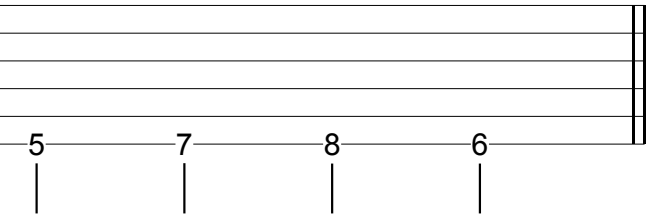
Example 1.2



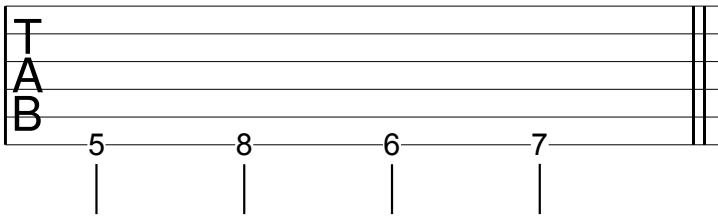
Example 1.3



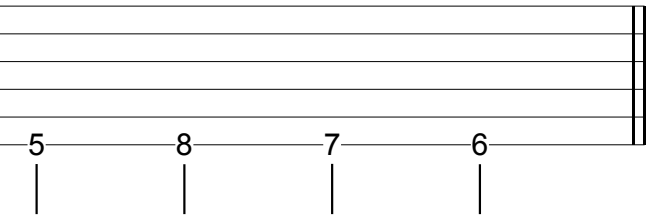
Example 1.4



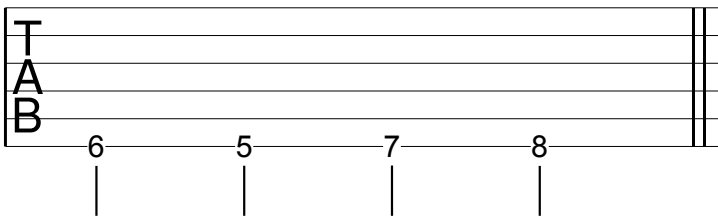
Example 1.5



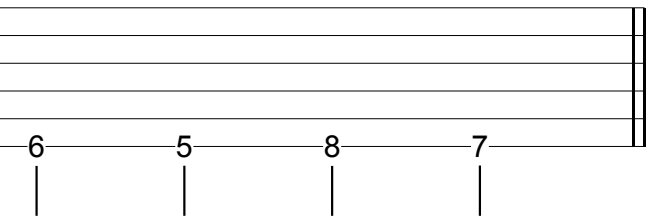
Example 1.6



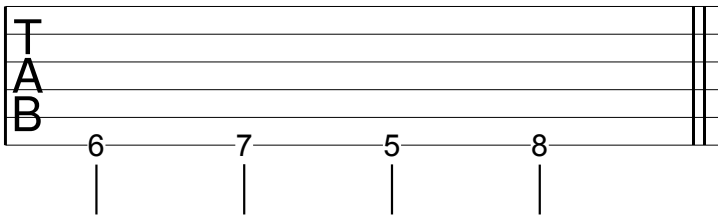
Example 2.1



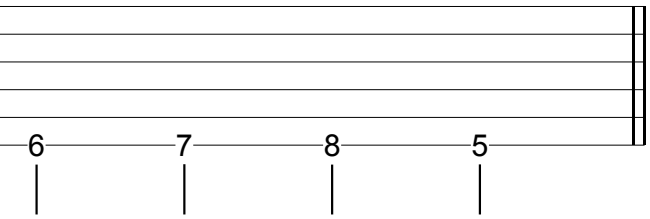
Example 2.2



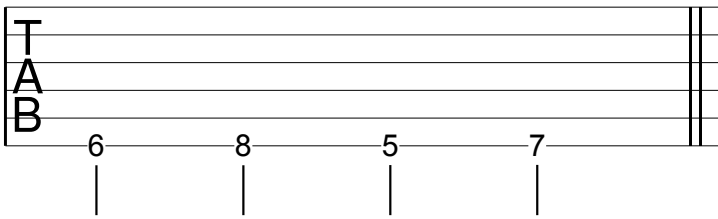
Example 2.3



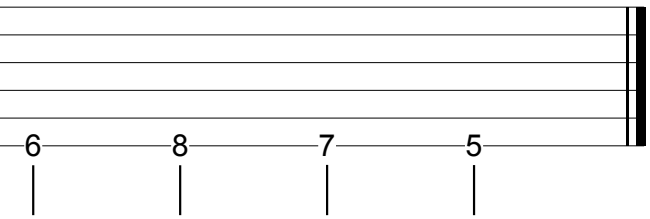
Example 2.4



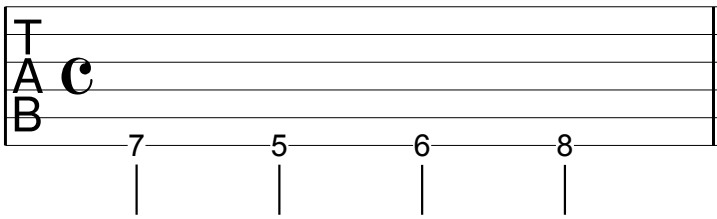
Example 2.5



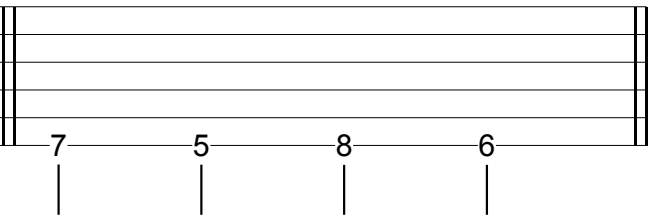
Example 2.6



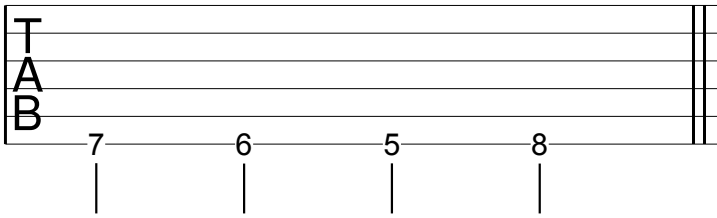
Example 3.1



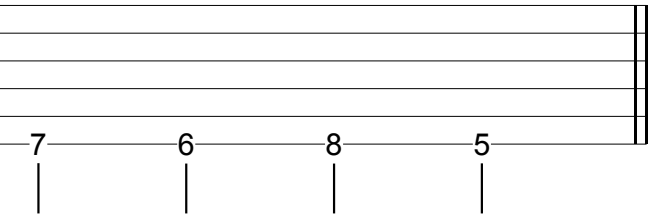
Example 3.2



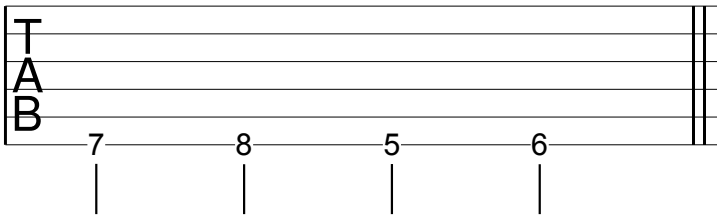
Example 3.3



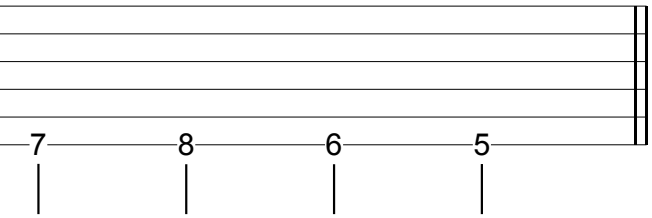
Example 3.4



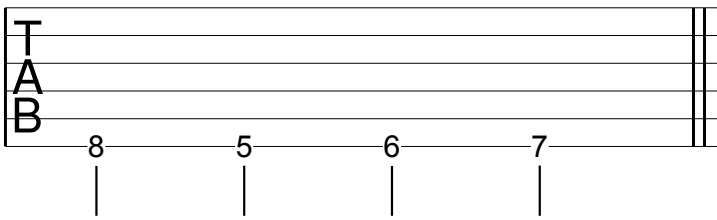
Example 3.5



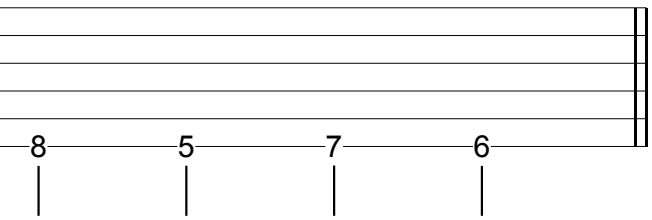
Example 3.6



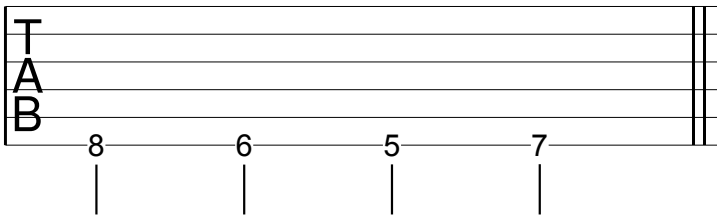
Example 4.1



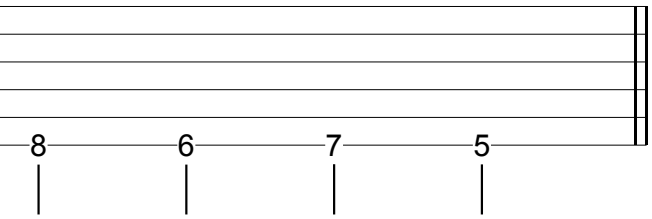
Example 4.2



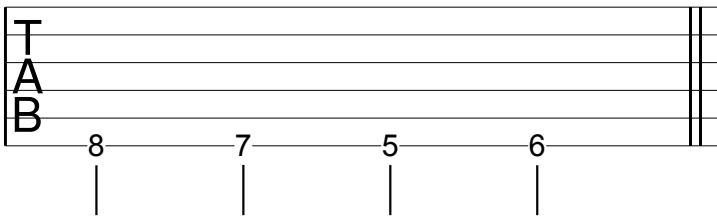
Example 4.3



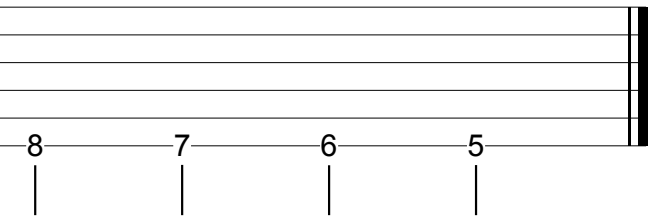
Example 4.4



Example 4.5



Example 4.6



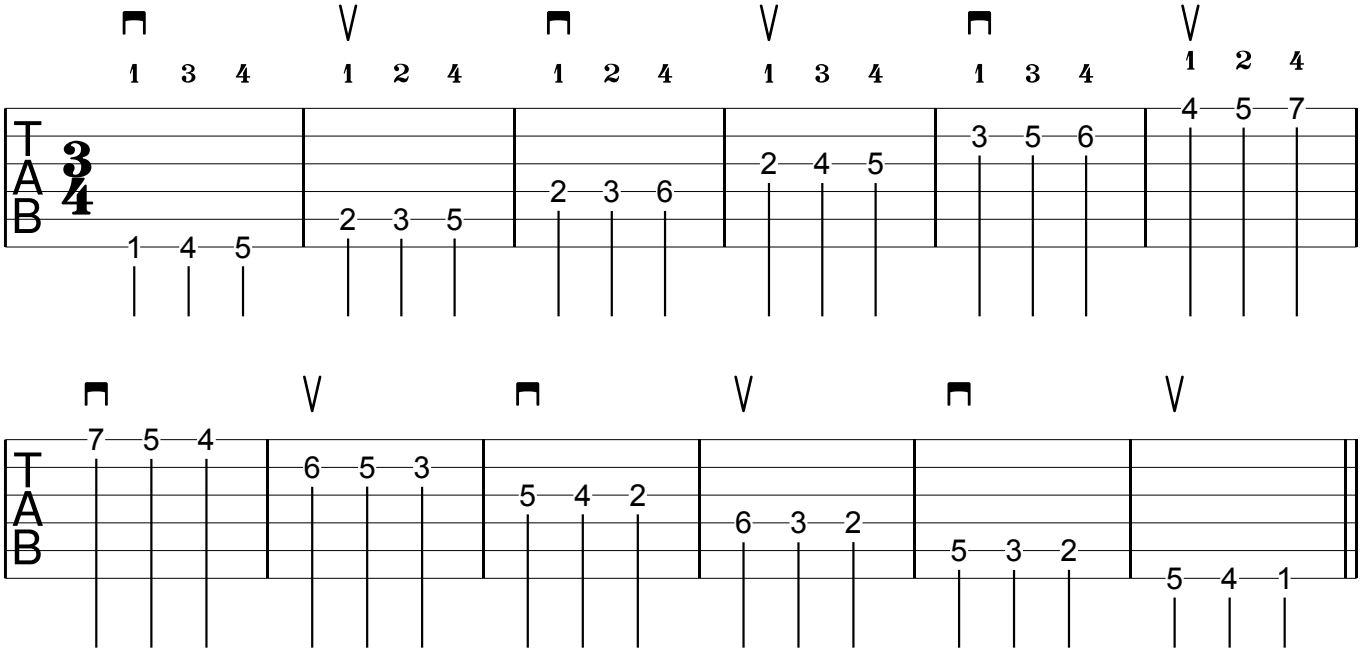
15.Harmonic Minor

In the world of improvisation, the study of scales is highly important. The Harmonic Minor scale is a useful tool when improvising in a minor key.

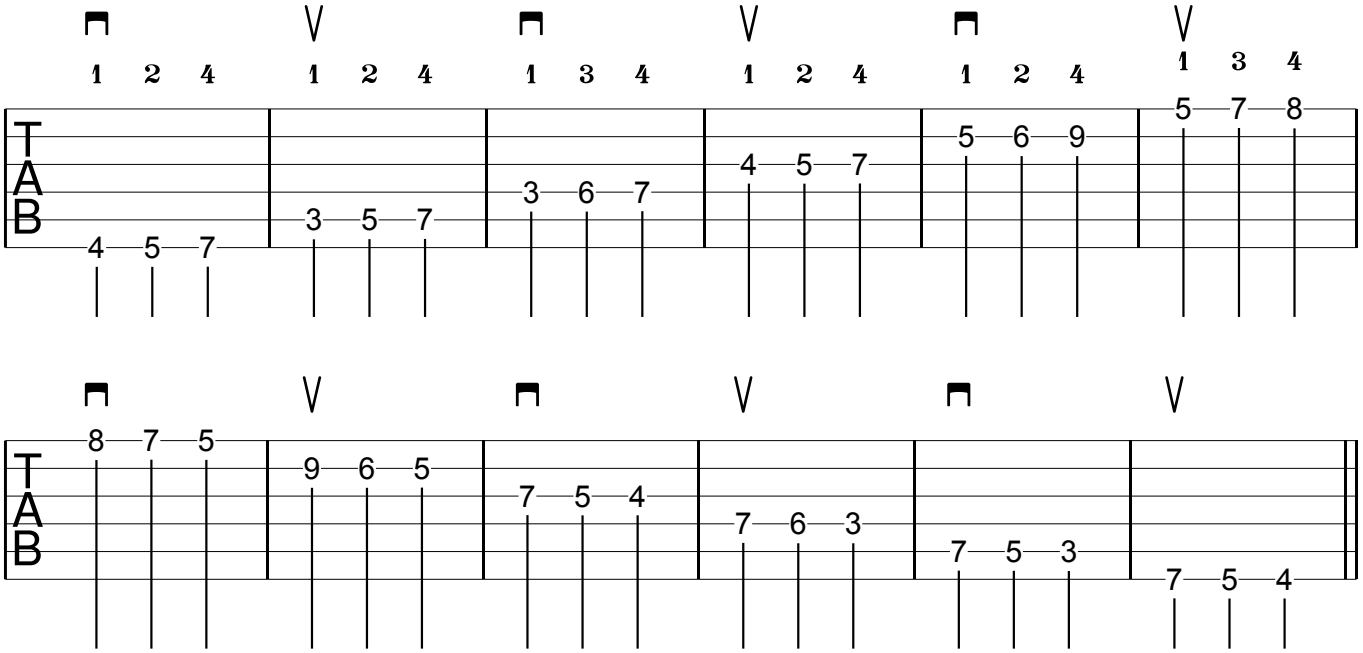
In this example, I've written the scale with the fingering that I would approach it as. It is all written in the key of A but is easily transferable to any other keys you may be using. I've found that once I memorize the patterns, it is easy to transfer over to any other key.

Another consideration is to use different techniques other than alternate picking. Hammer-on / Pull-offs, economy, and hybrid picking are examples of other ways you can practice these scale patterns. The harmonic minor scale is a must in a bag of tools to grow as a musician. It can help with neoclassical ideas and Latin-style sounding ideas. The main difference is the rhythm you utilize the scales with and how the harmony is being used.

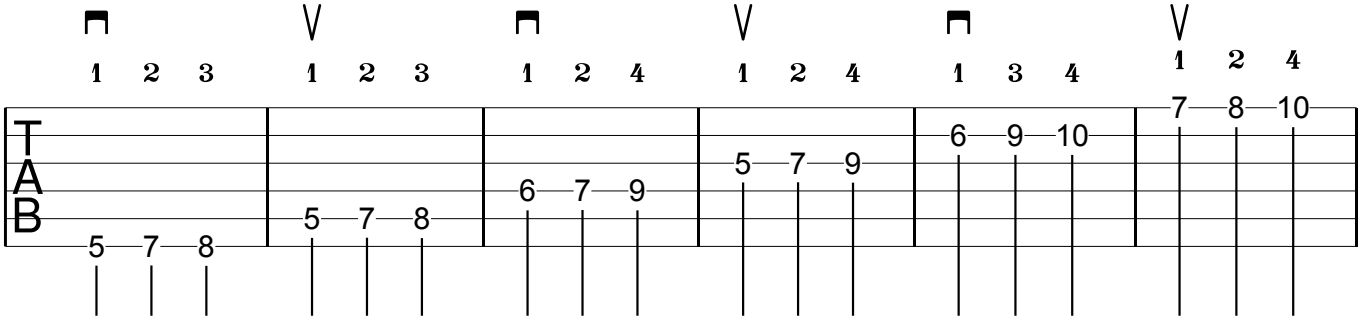
Example 1

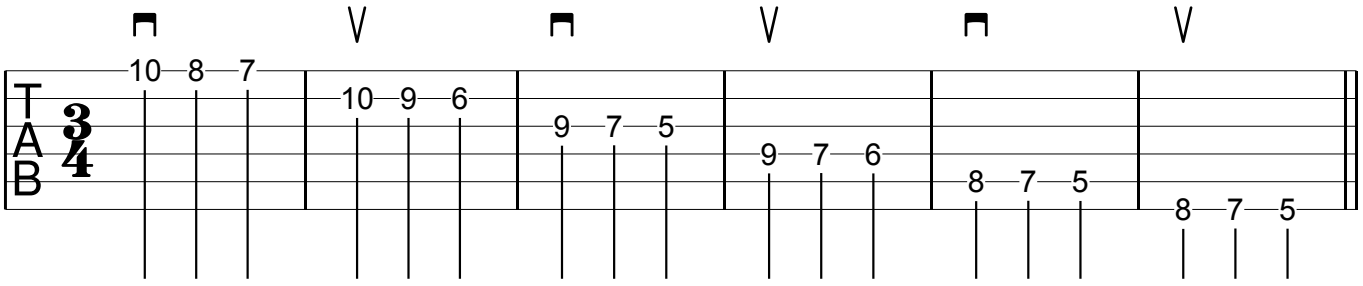


Example 2

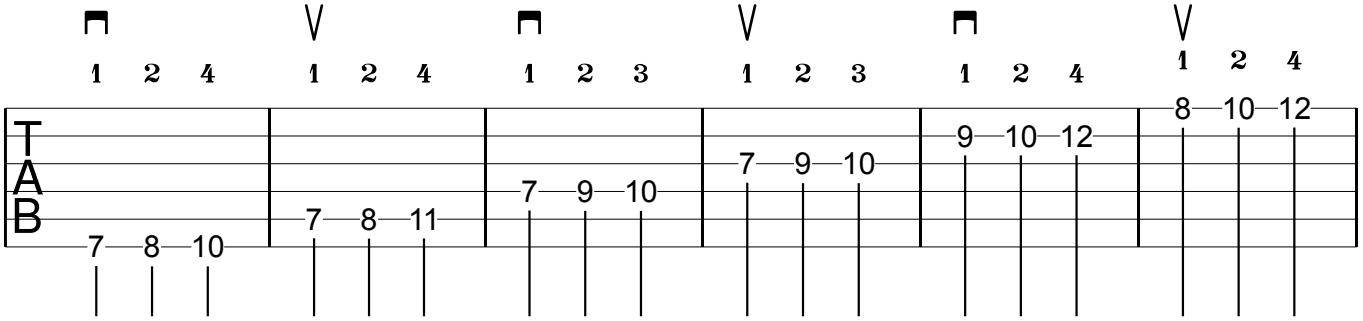


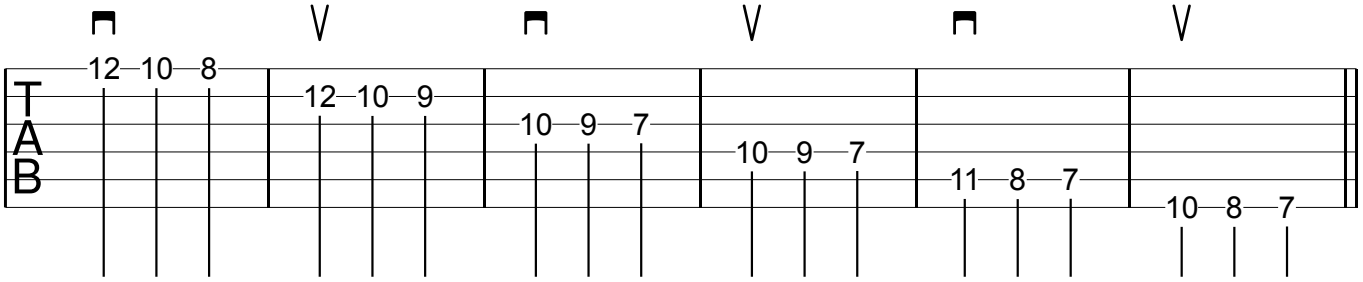
Example 3



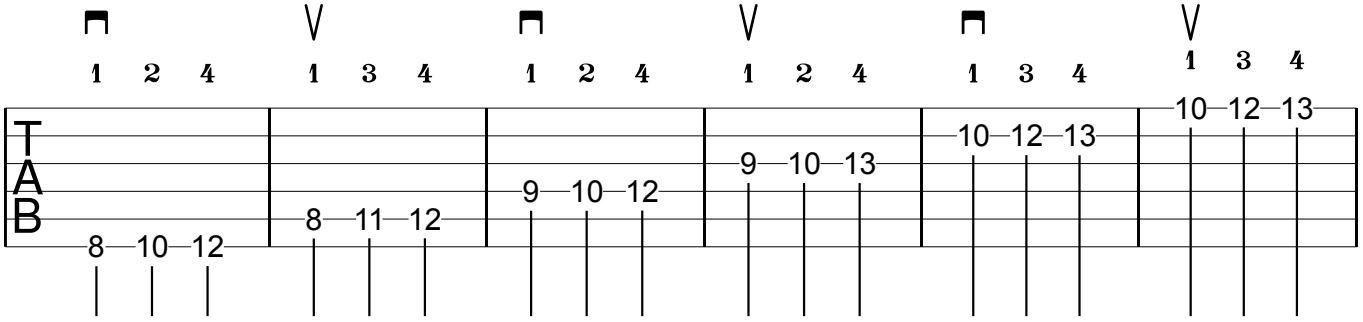


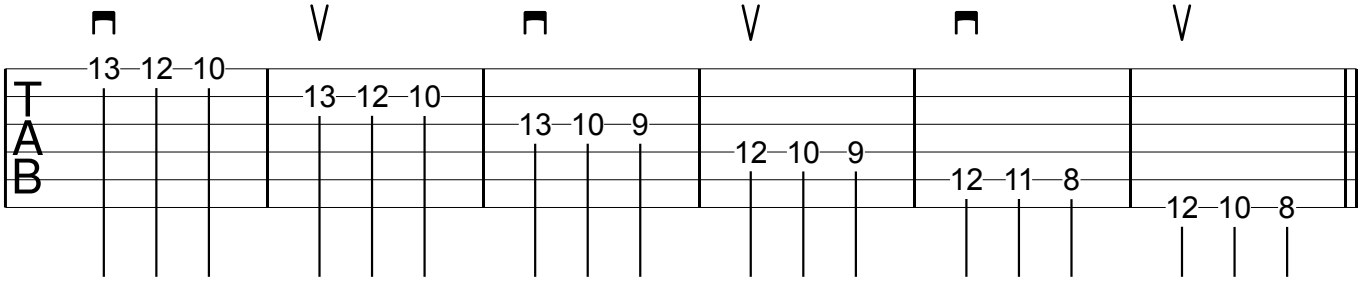
Example 4



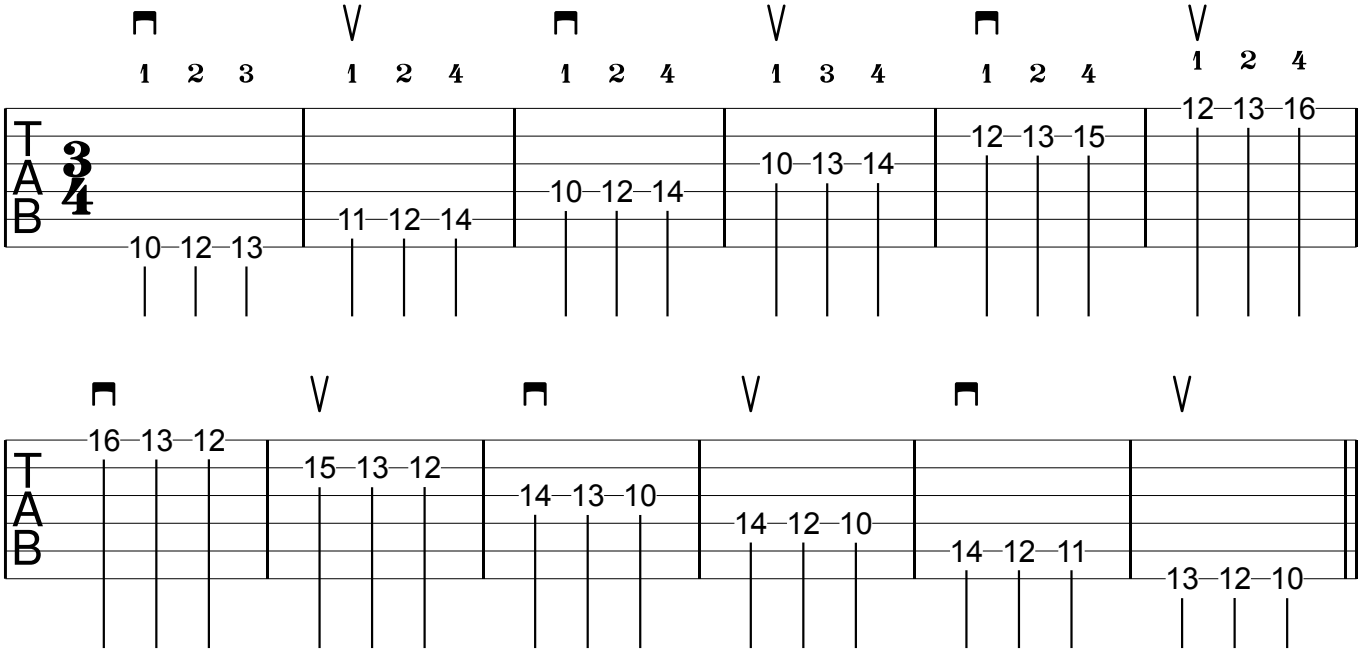


Example 5

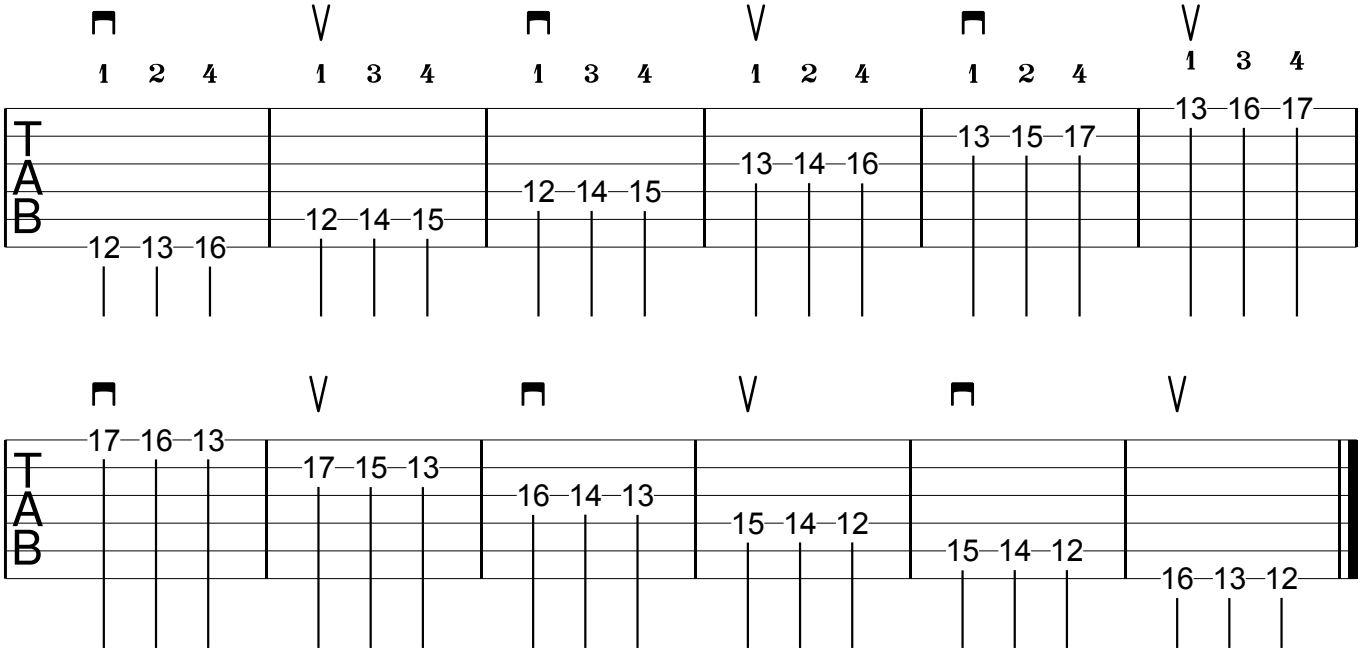




Example 6



Example 7



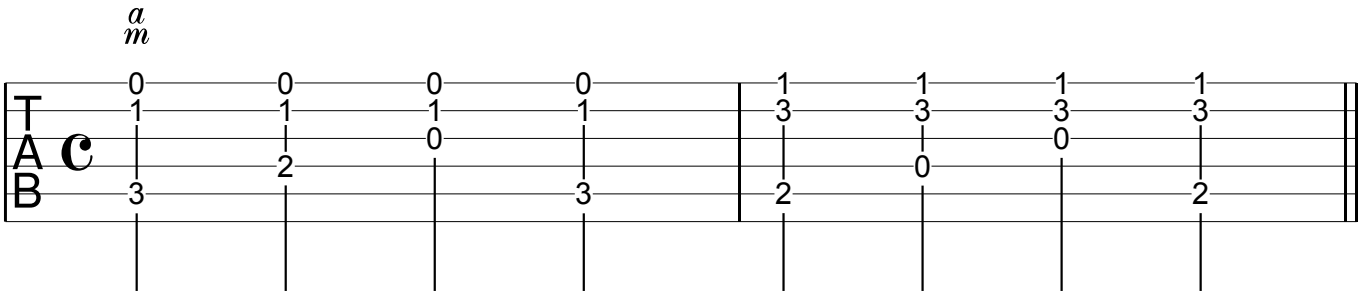
16.Hybrid-Picking
Giuliani Style

Hybrid-Picking is when you play strings with your pick and your middle, ring, and pinky fingers respectively. This technique is highly used in country music and I've seen a few rock musicians use it as well.

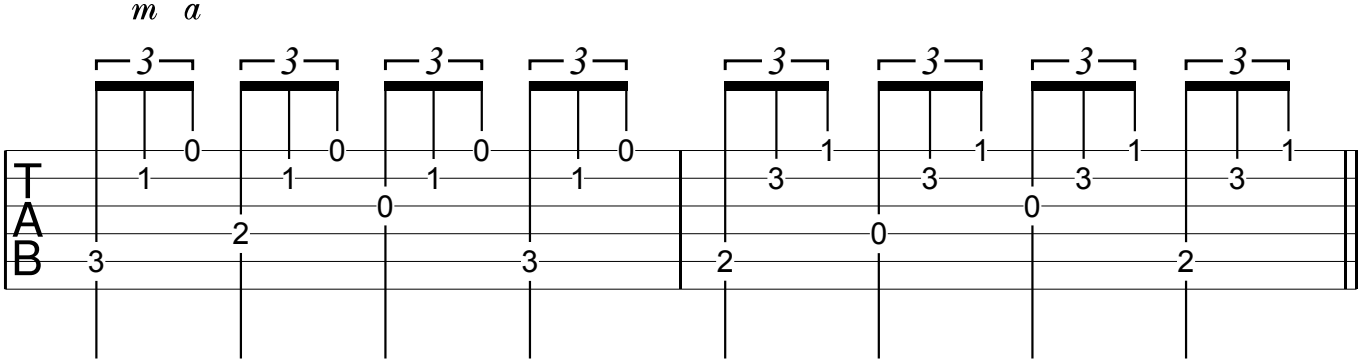
The application of the hybrid-picking technique can be used in many instances. In fact, I do use it for country-style chord playing but I also use it for soloing. I will randomly use *m* to accentuate certain notes during my lead playing.

Pay close attention to right hand fingering on top of the notes. If the note does not indicate which right hand fingers to use, then you would use the guitar pick. Once you get the hang of the first 4, I think the rest will come easy. As usual, take it slow and be patient, this is a difficult technique if you have never tried it before.

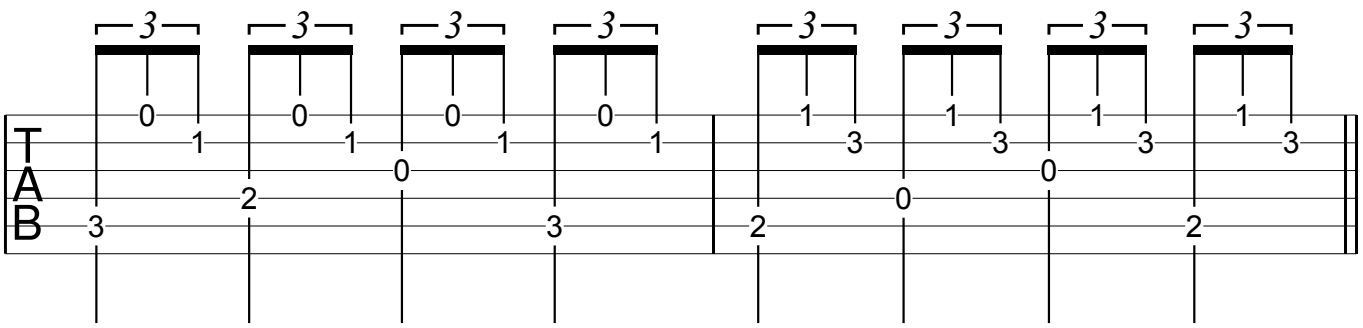
Example 1



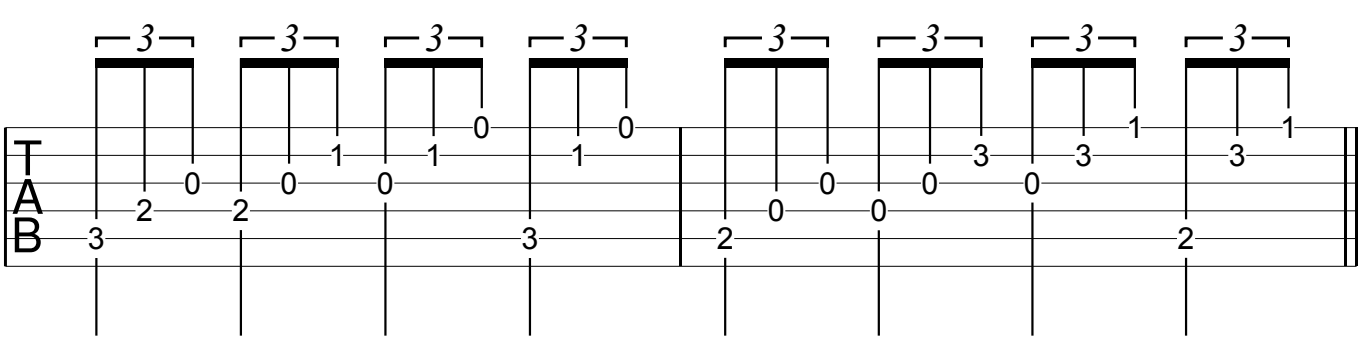
Example 2



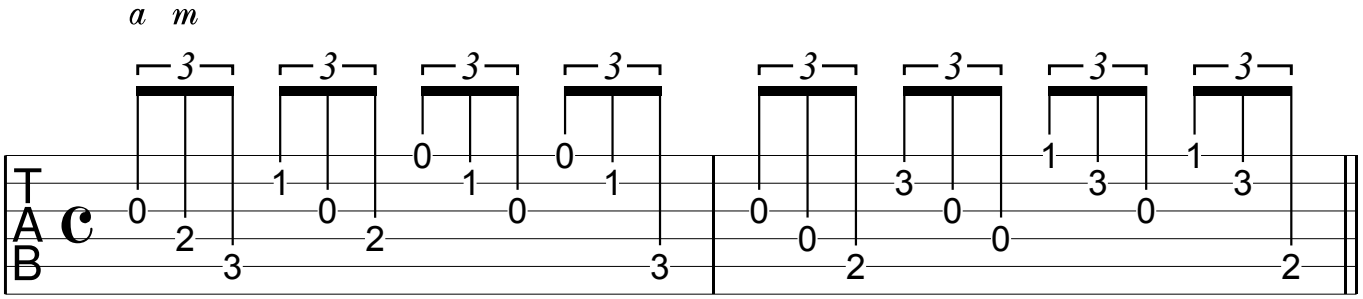
Example 3



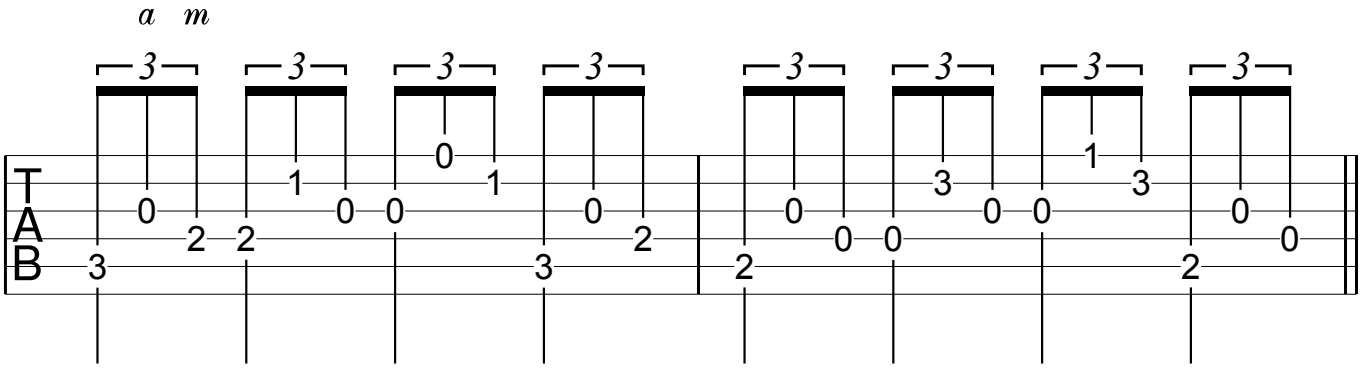
Example 4



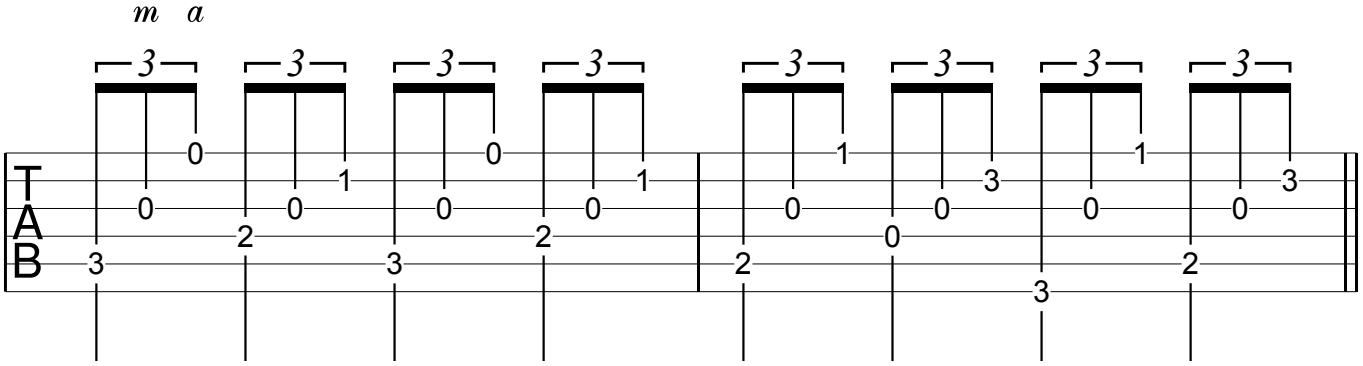
Example 5



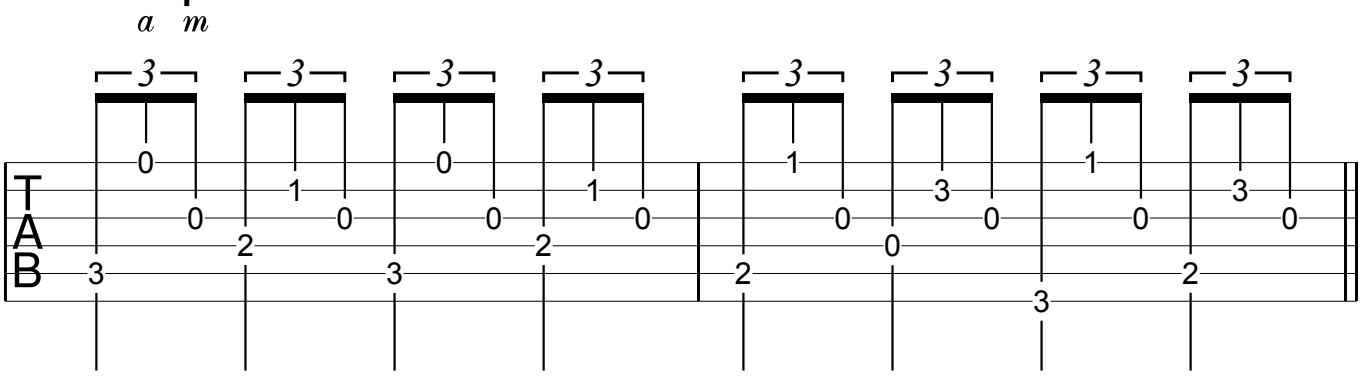
Example 6



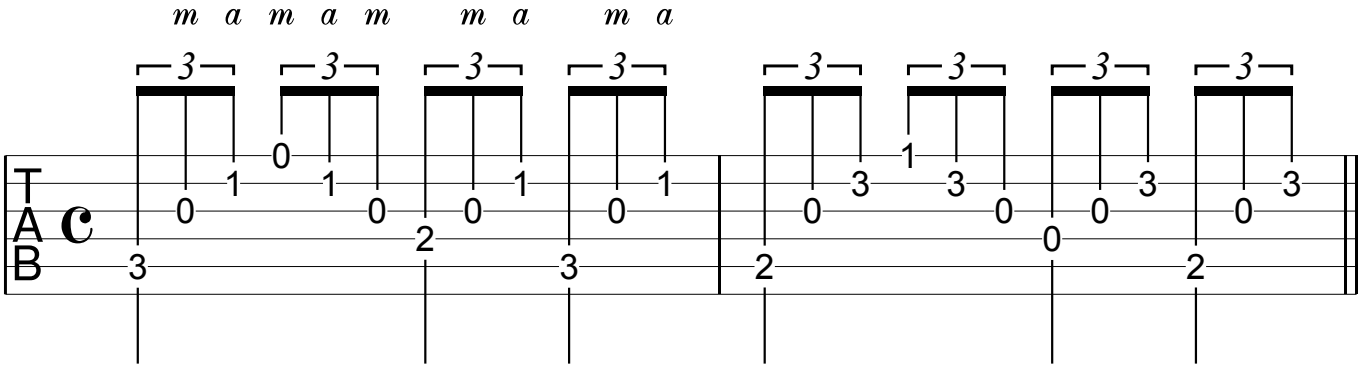
Example 7



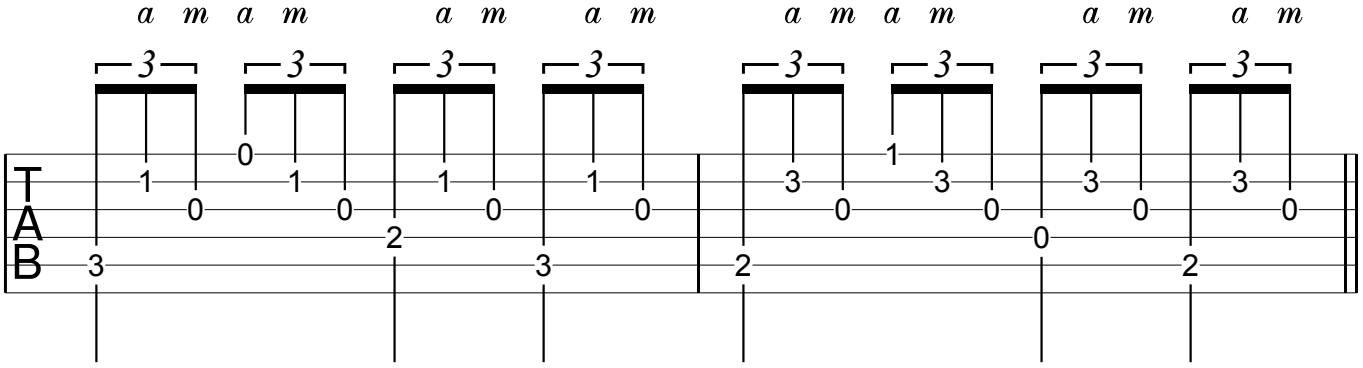
Example 8



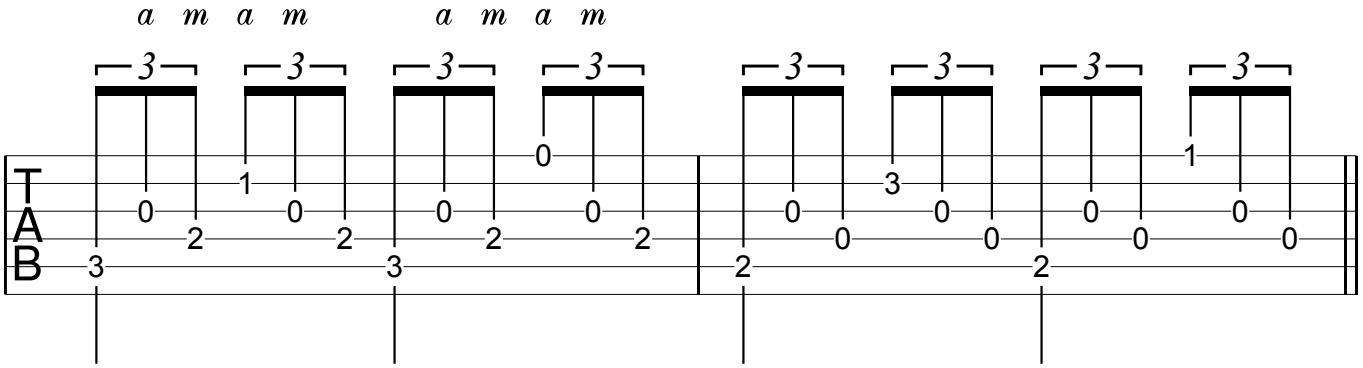
Example 9



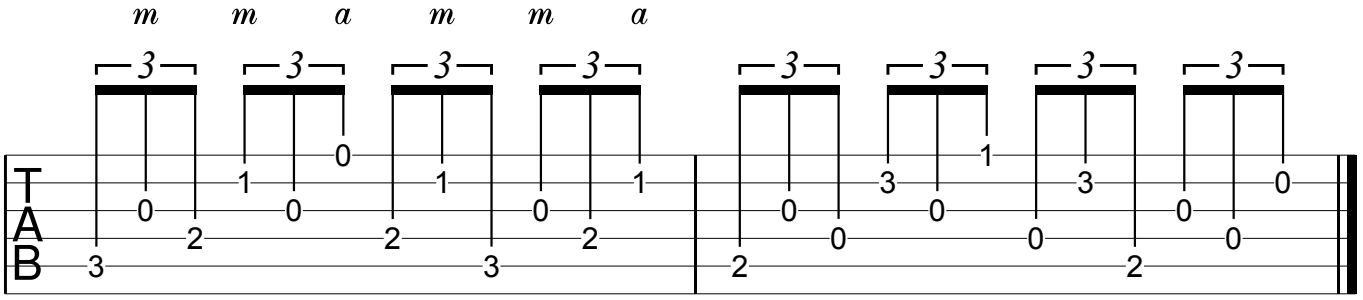
Example 10



Example 11



Example 12



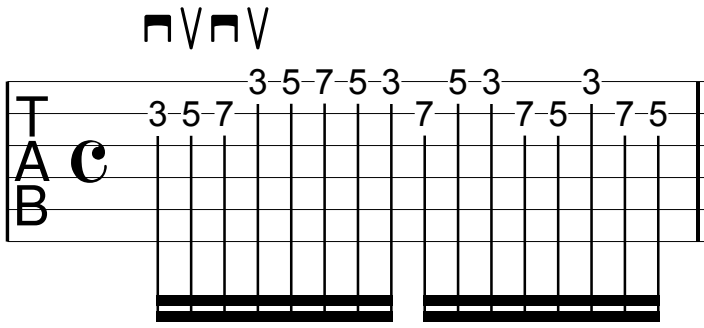
17.Modal Sequence

This is a great diatonic exercise. You will be using these shapes throughout all your guitar career and these examples are meant to be played at top speeds. It is important to use a metronome and gradually increase speed. The shift between measures should happen quickly and correctly in the sense that the note before is sustained as long as possible and the preceding note to fall directly on beat.

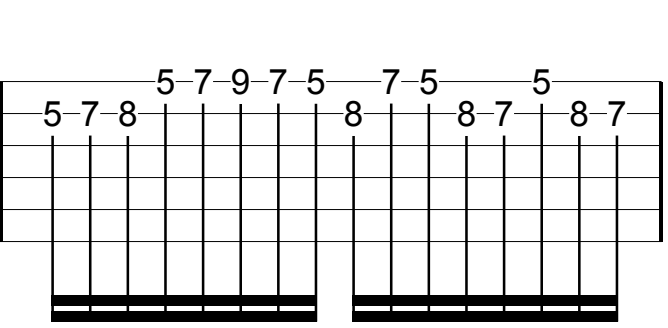
If you're having difficulty at first, play each note as an eighth note. As you reach appropriate speeds, play as written (sixteenth notes). Use whichever left-hand fingers feels most natural to you and always alternate pick this example. Most of the previous exercises build up skills to prepare you for this one.

Unlike other examples, this one must be done with alternate picking. It doesn't seem to be very economical to use legato throughout. The alternate picking should be done with little right-hand movement and relaxation. Over playing will lead to sloppiness and fatigue.

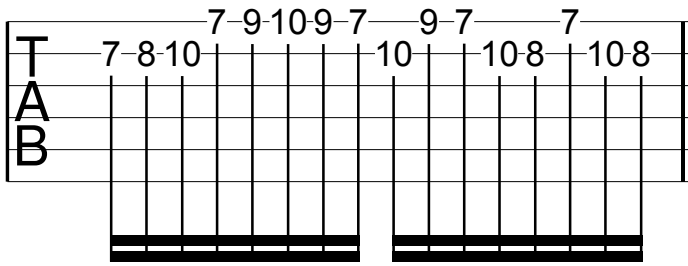
Ionian (Major)



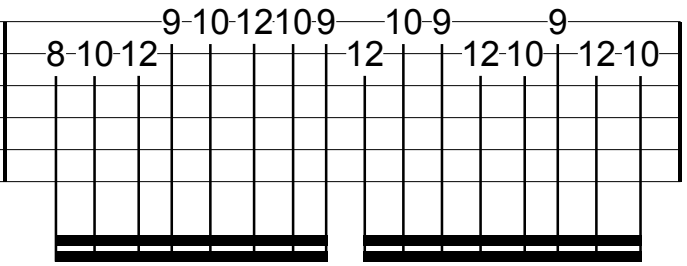
Dorian



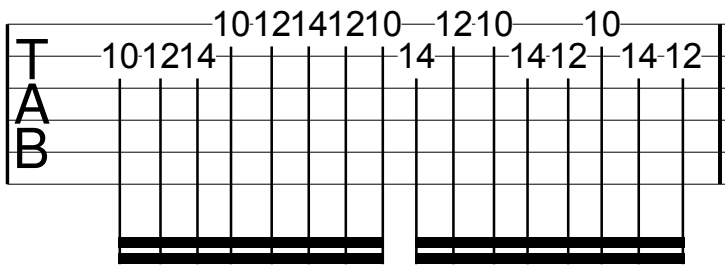
Phrygian



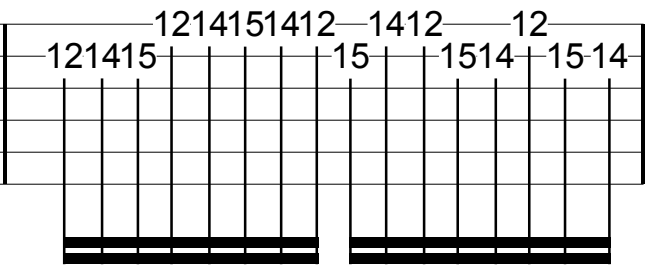
Lydian



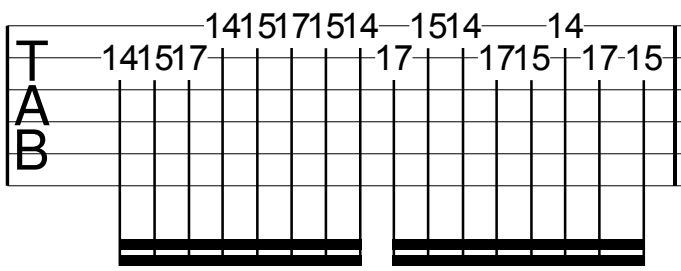
Mixo-Lydian



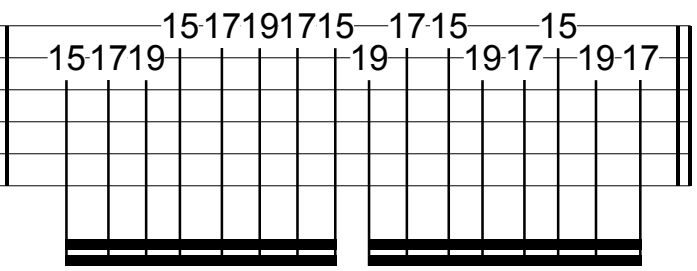
Aeolian (Natural Minor)



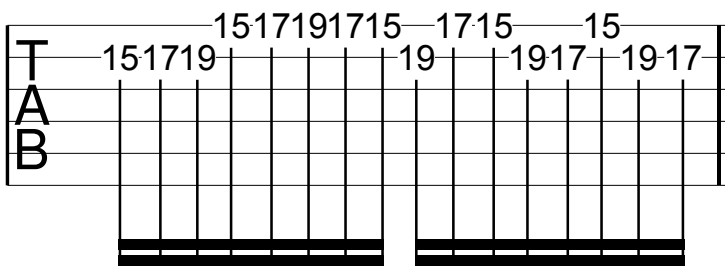
Locrian



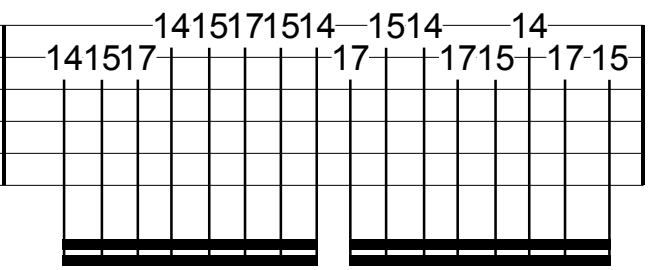
Ionian (Major)



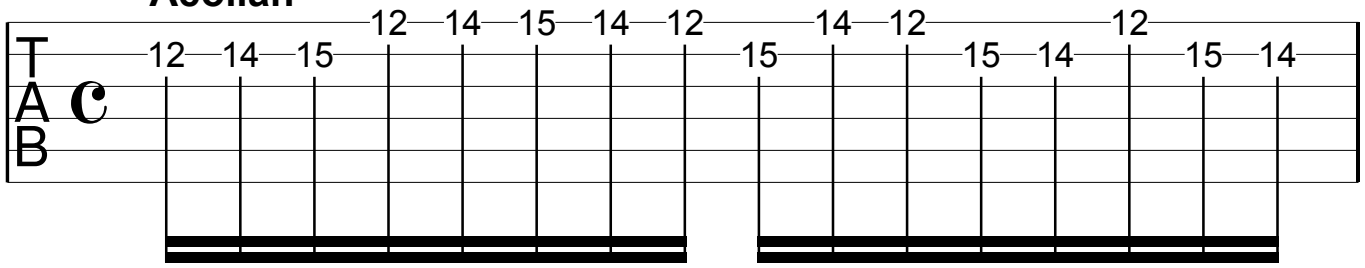
Ionian (Major)



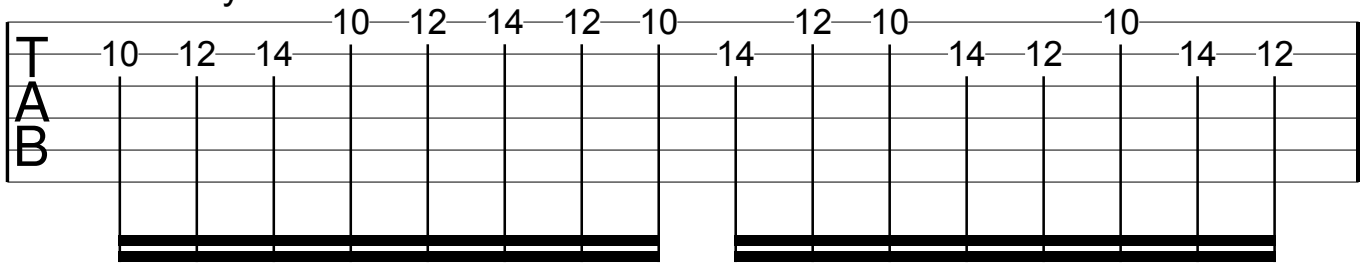
Locrian



Aeolian

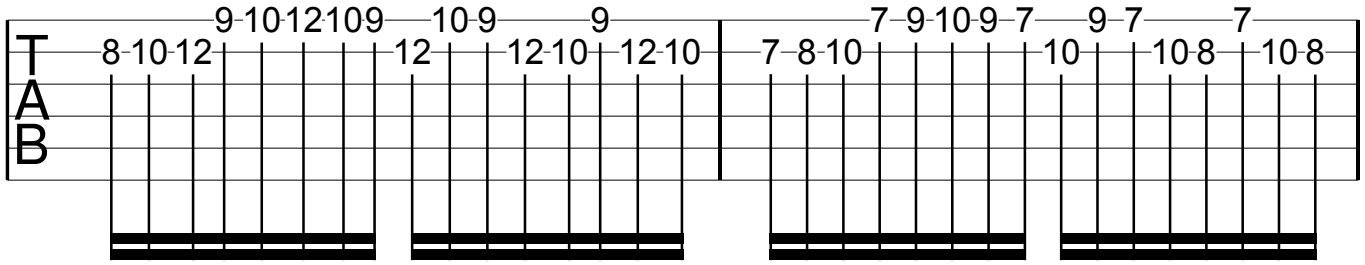


Mixo-Lydian



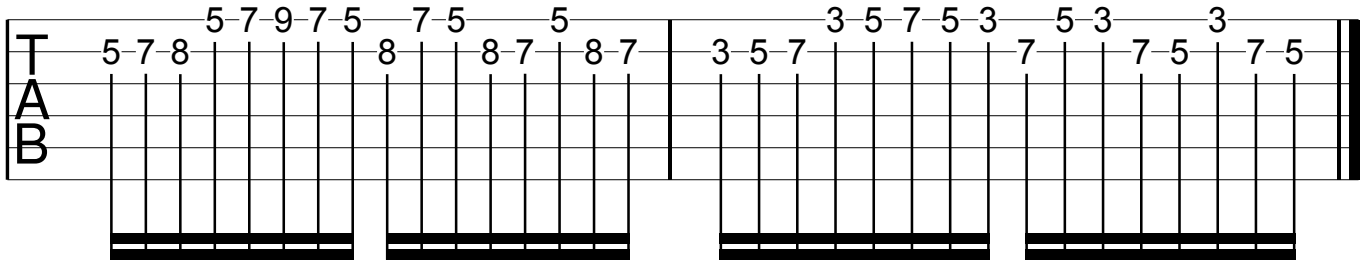
Lydian

Phrygian



Dorian

Ionian (Major)



18.Developing Legato

Part 1 focuses on building the strength to hammer-on various patterns only between two fingers. Each example is meant to be repeated in any number of ways. For example, I would repeat on an adjacent string after each measure. Or, you simply shift up a fret and complete the example using only one string.

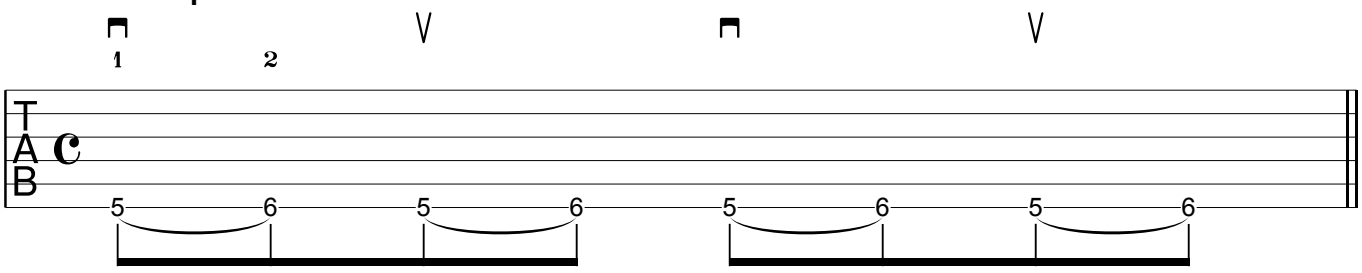
Part 2 is very similar to Part 1 except we focus on the pull-offs. A common mistake regarding pull-offs is that you simply lift the finger off the string. You must snap the finger off the string but leave it on the fretboard. Download the audio to hear an accurate representation of what this sounds like. Again, be creative and play each example on different strings or even shift to different positions.

Part 3 combines Part 1 and 2 into 12 separate examples. You'll notice that we are taking small steps to ensure a clean and convincing legato sound. Focus on a clean sound as opposed to playing this fast.

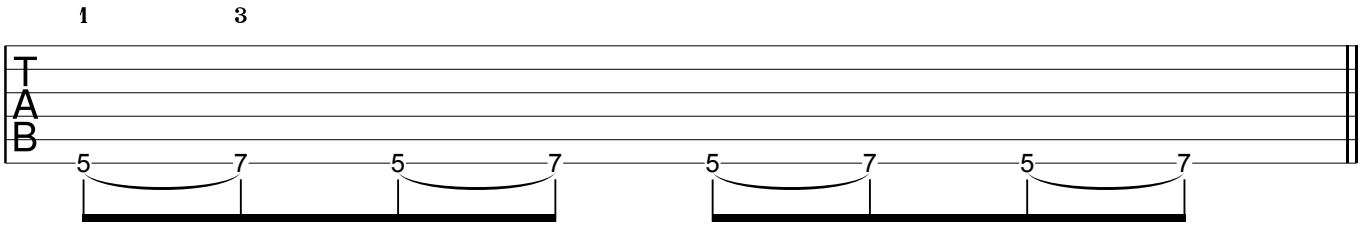
Lastly, Parts 4 and 5 have the similar rhythm pattern. The difference is that Part 4 is all hammer-on while Part 5 has all pull-offs. It is tempting to play these examples with a lot of gain, but I would stay on a clean channel until you feel very comfortable on a clean setting or with an acoustic guitar.

Part 1

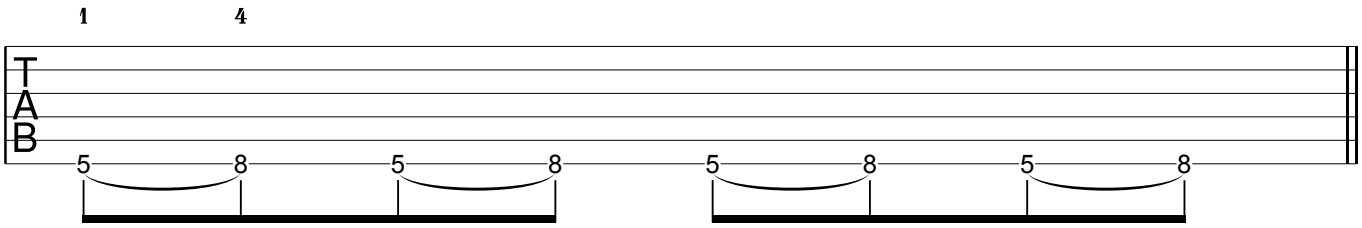
Example 1



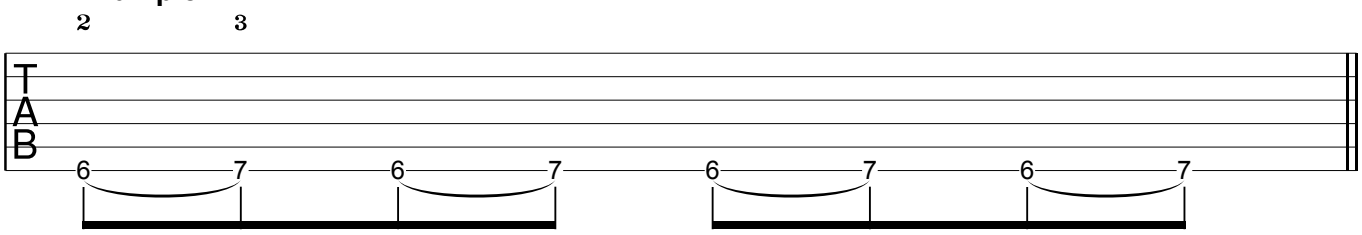
Example 2



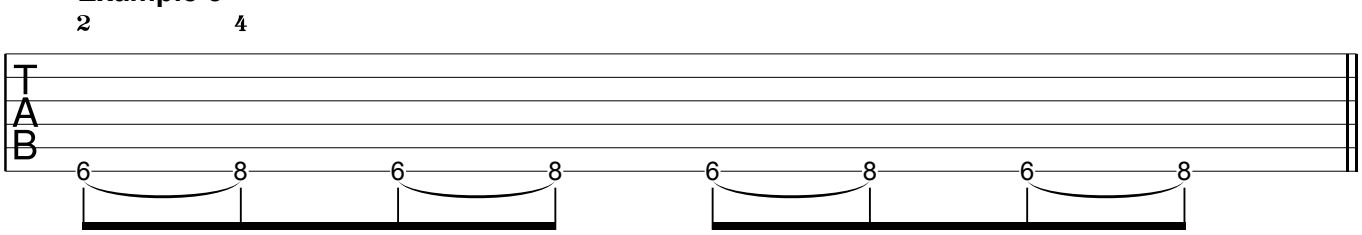
Example 3



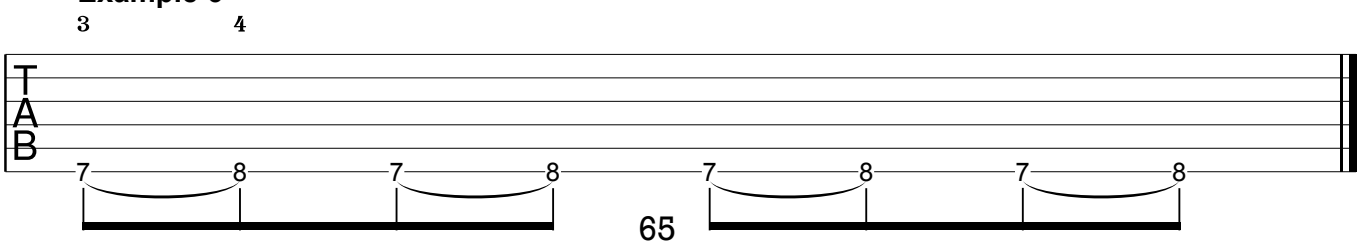
Example 4



Example 5

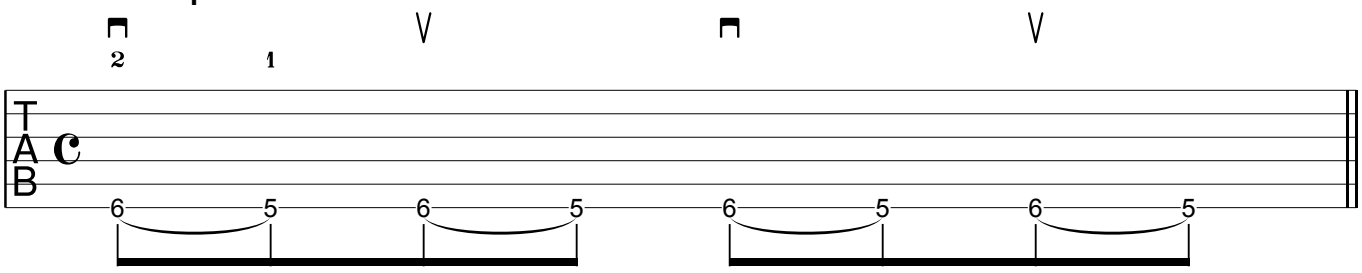


Example 6

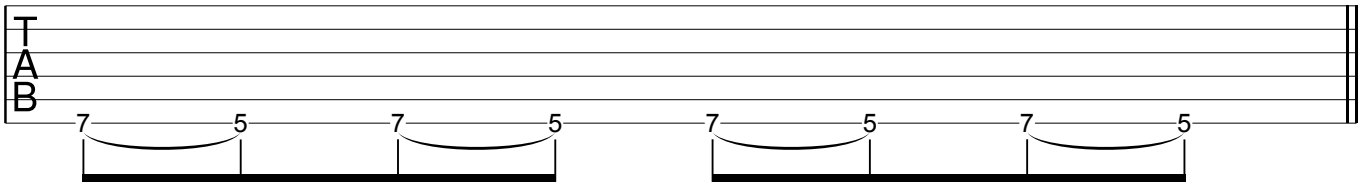


Part 2

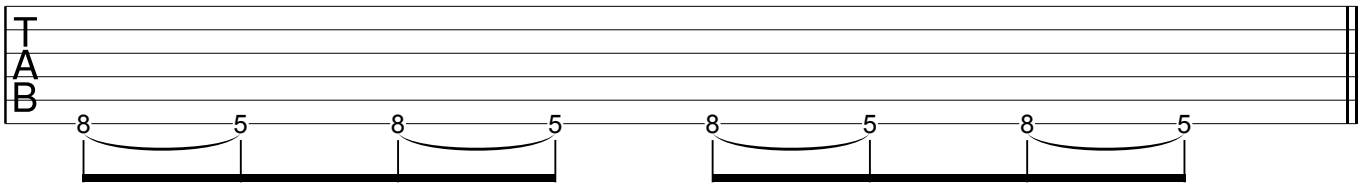
Example 1



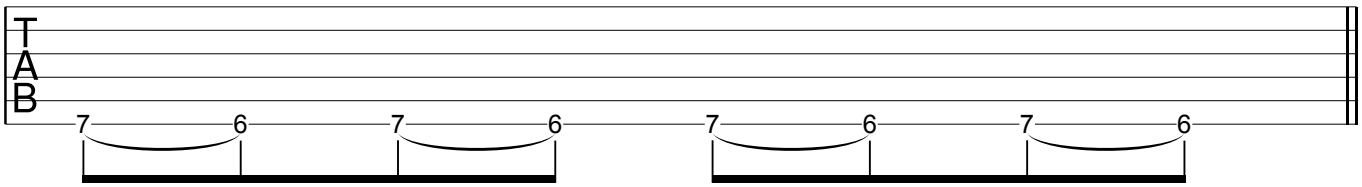
Example 2



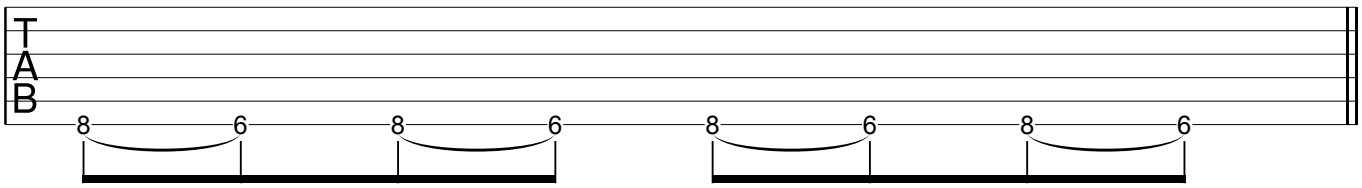
Example 3



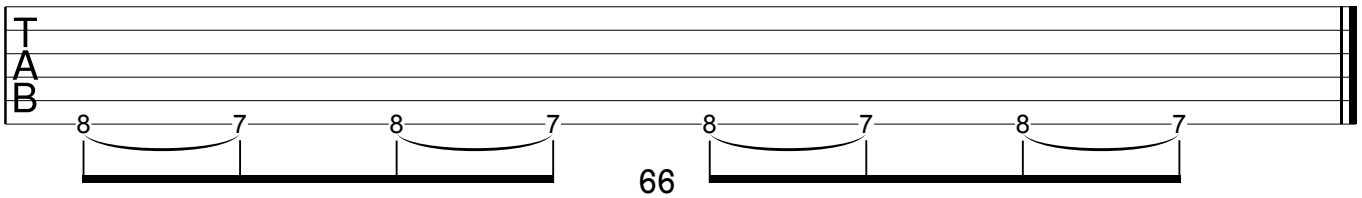
Example 4



Example 5

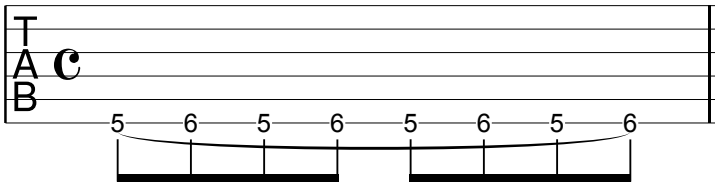


Example 6

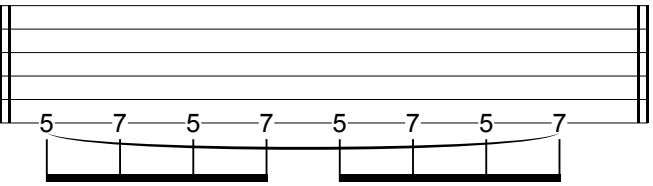


Part 3

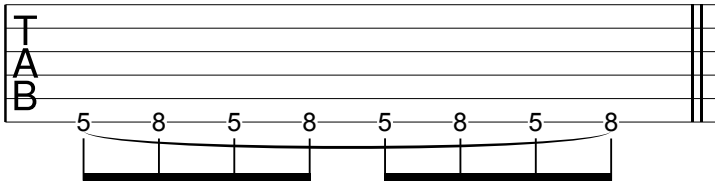
Example 1



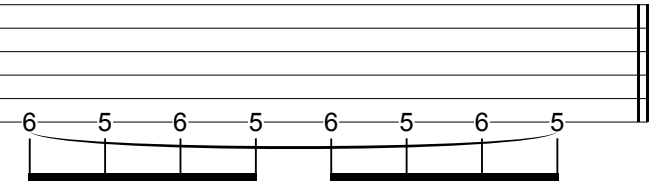
Example 2



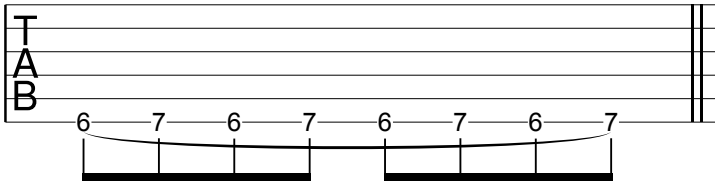
Example 3



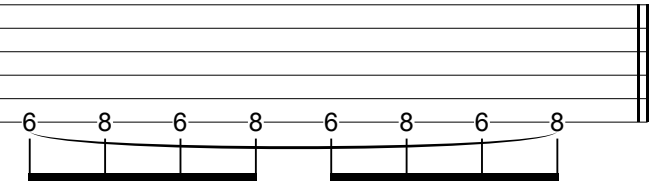
Example 4



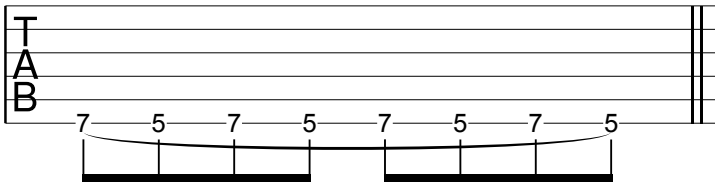
Example 5



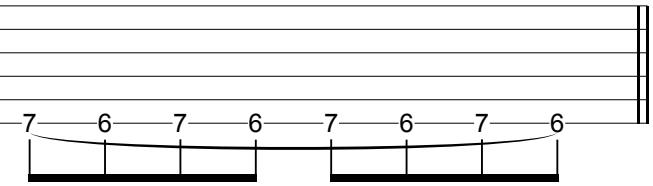
Example 6



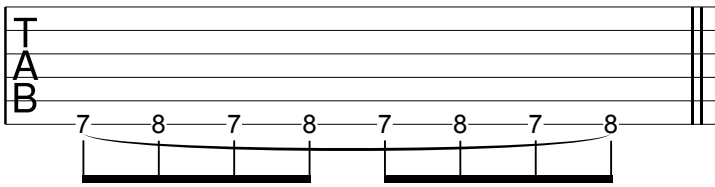
Example 7



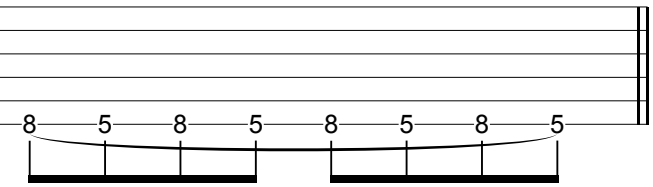
Example 8



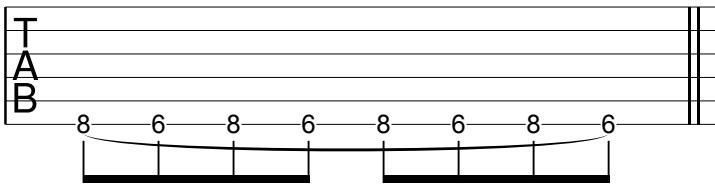
Example 9



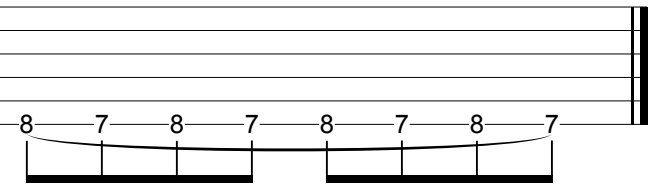
Example 10



Example 11

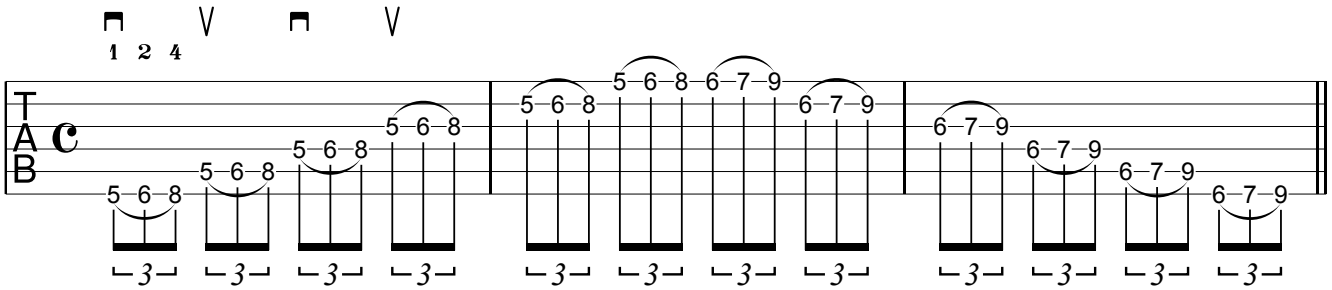


Example 12

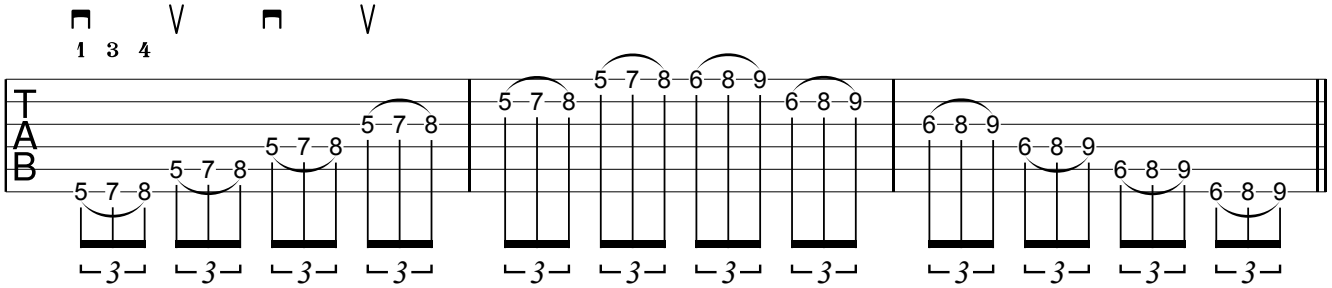


Part 4

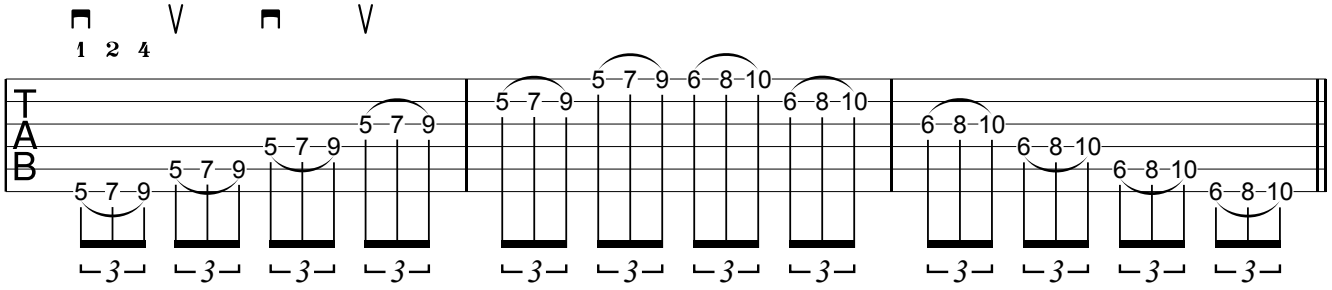
Example 1



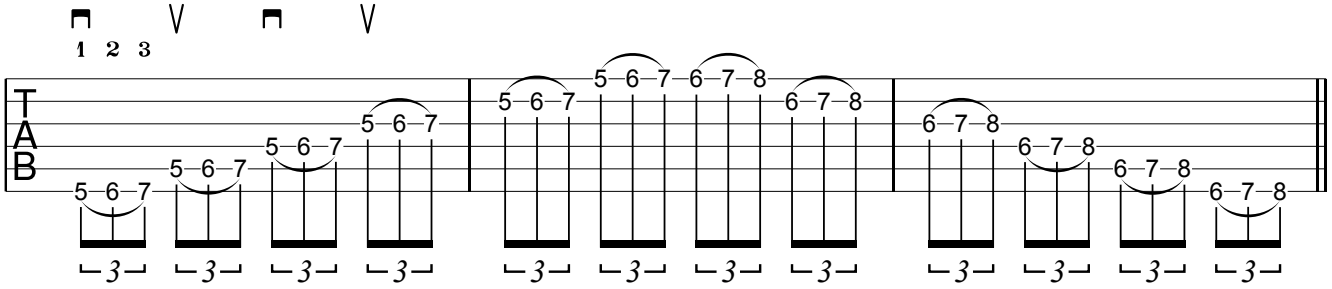
Example 2



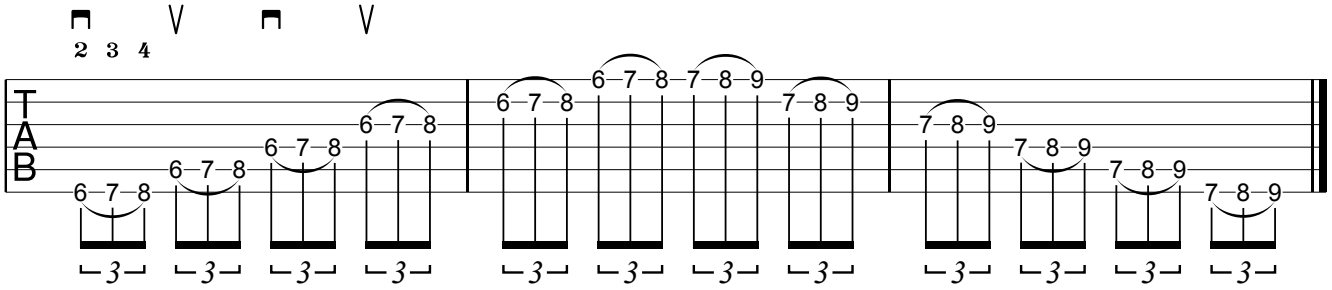
Example 3



Example 4

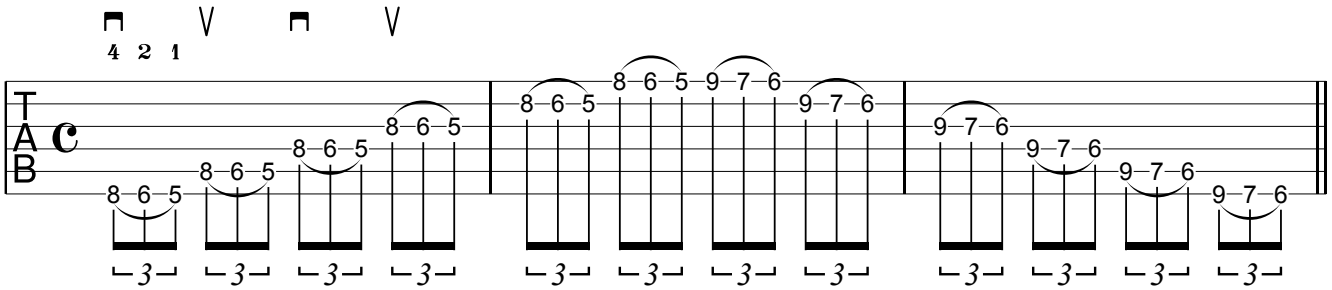


Example 5

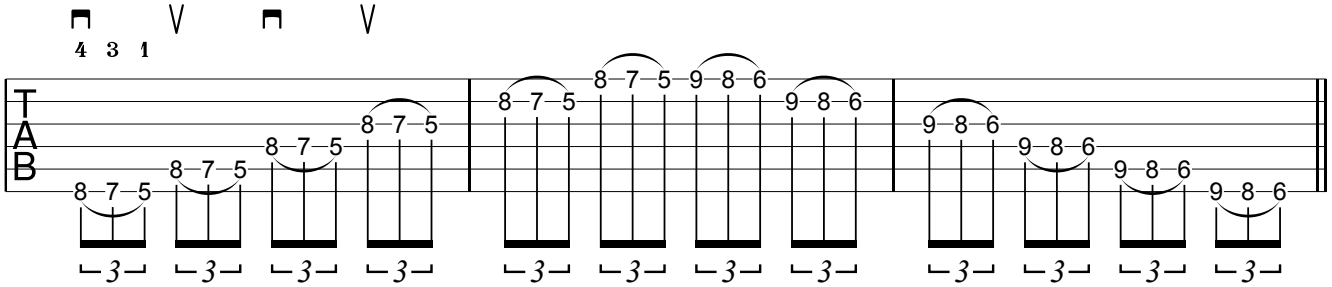


Part 5

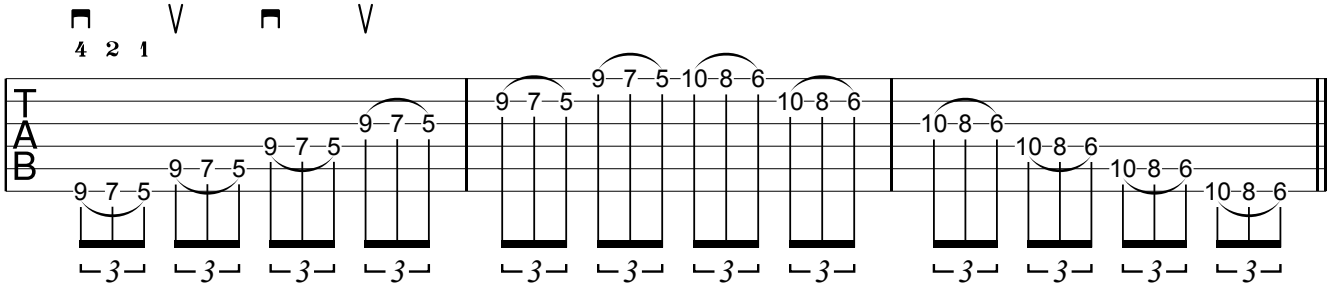
Example 1



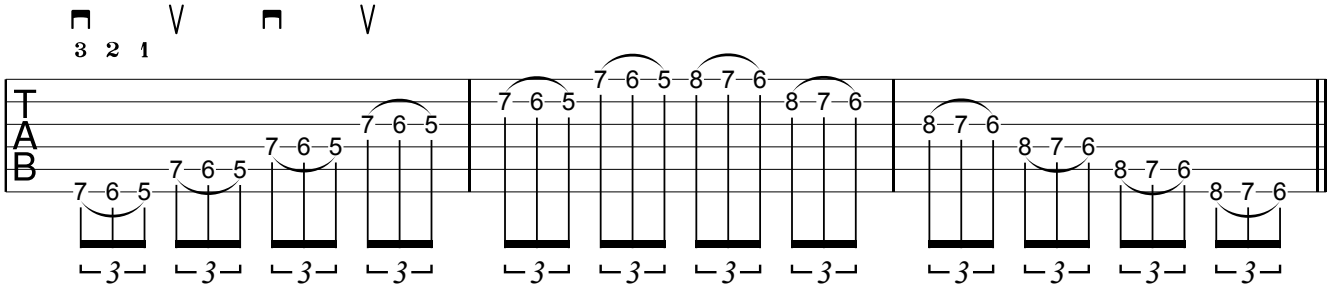
Example 2



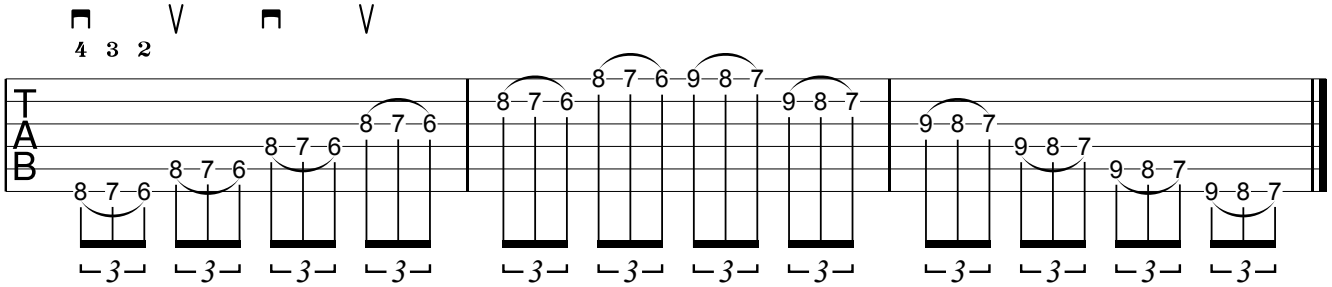
Example 3



Example 4



Example 5



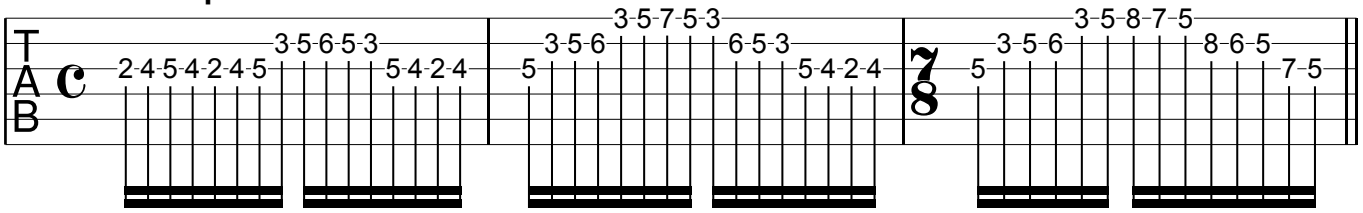
19.Lead Guitar Builder

I'm not 100% sure how I came up with this exercise. However, it truly is unique and has helped me build my speed and alternate picking throughout the years. Before learning this example, memorize "3 String Scales". This will take lots of work out of memorizing these new patterns.

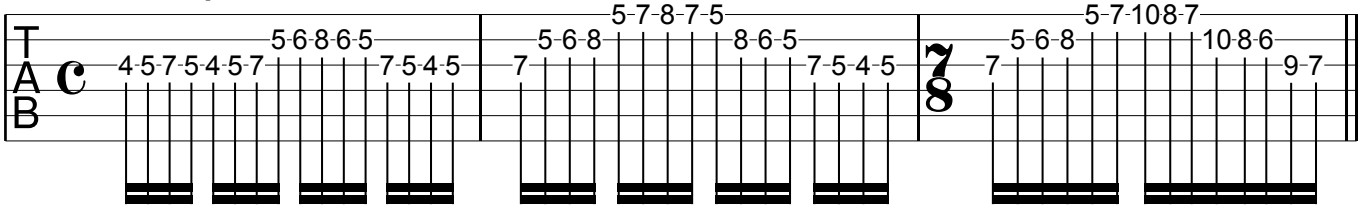
Using a metronome is tricky with this simply because of the odd signature every 3rd measure. The top 3 strings will be your main strings to solo on, naturally speaking. We begin using the A minor (natural) scale and progress upwards to the B Locrian scale. To change the key, simply start on the note of the new key. For example, C minor would just be 3 frets up (5^{th} fret).

Despite the odd signature, these patterns are all meant to be alternate picked and somehow work that way. You will always begin a down-pick at the beginning of each new pattern. This is a good example of all our alternate picking regiment throughout this book.

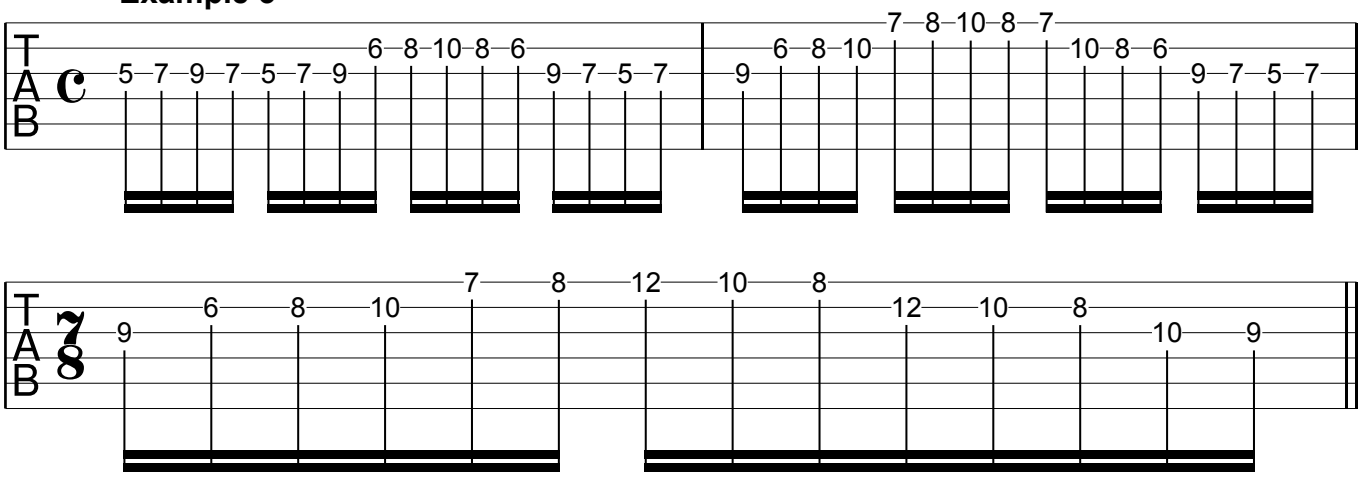
Example 1



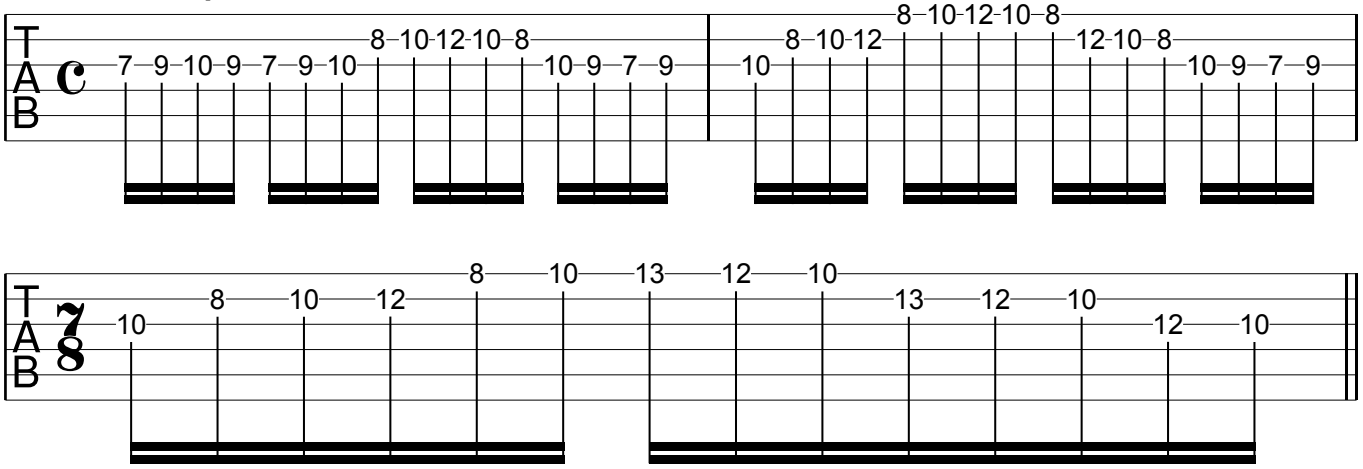
Example 2



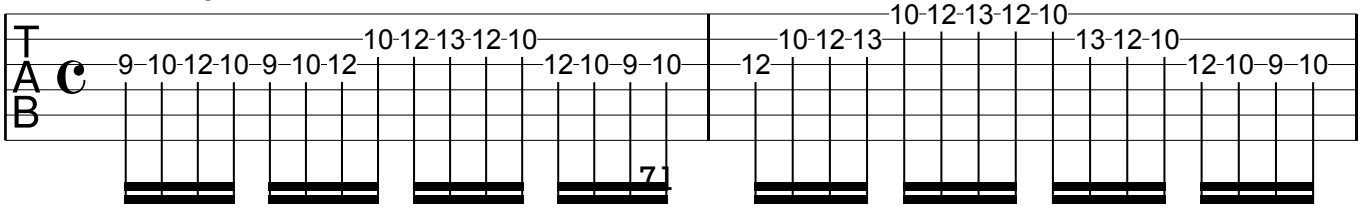
Example 3

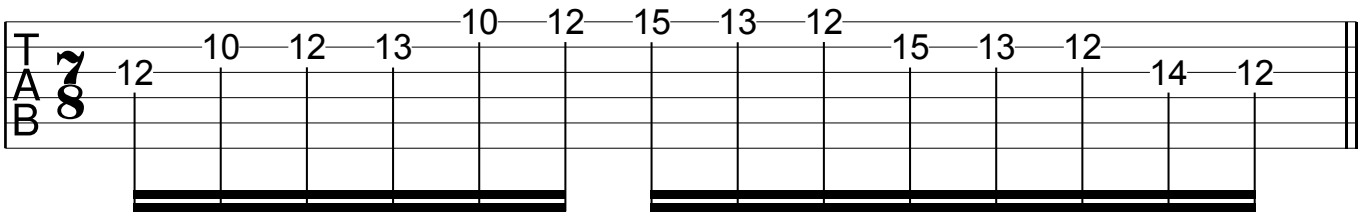


Example 4

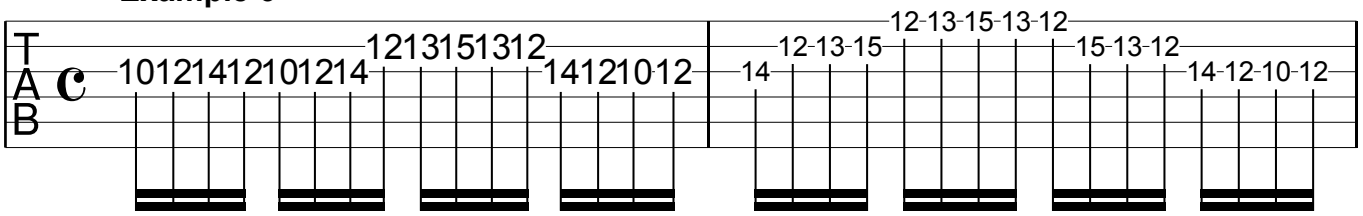


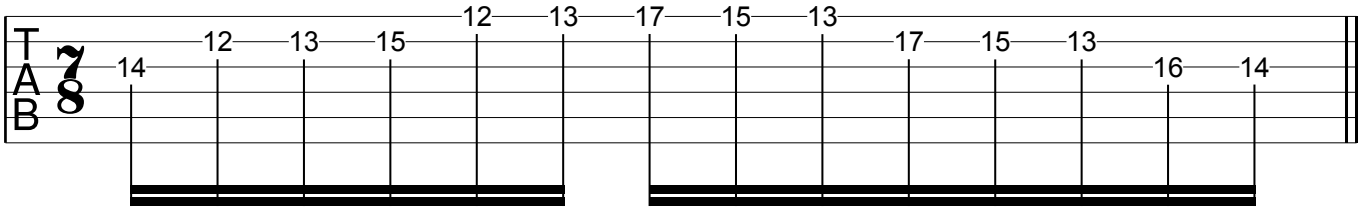
Example 5



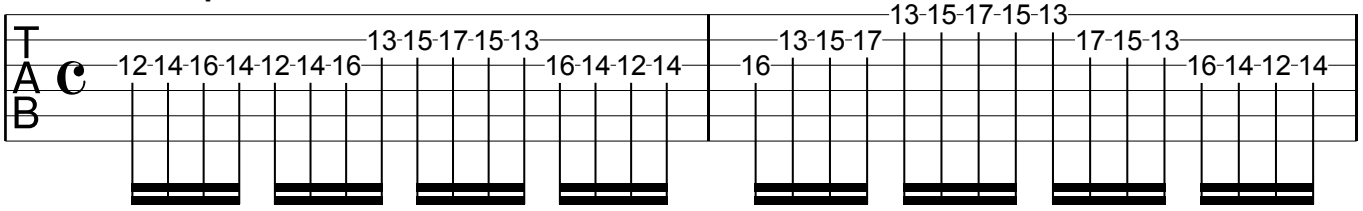


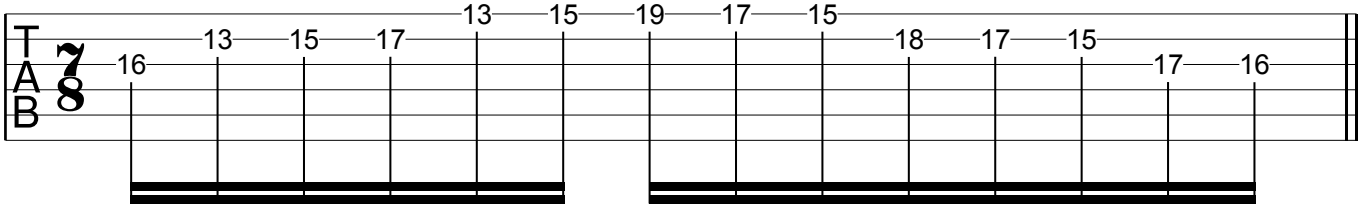
Example 6



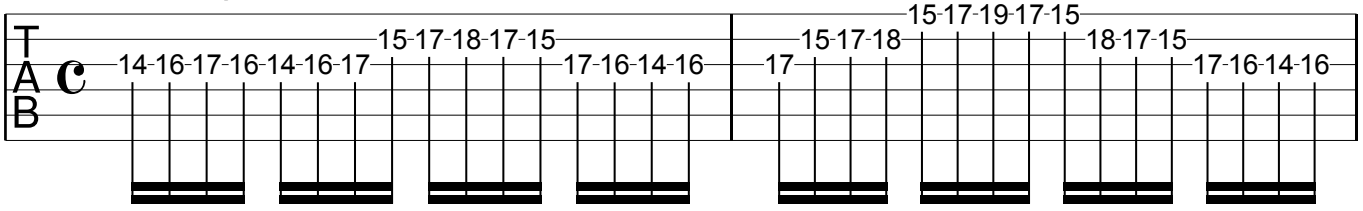


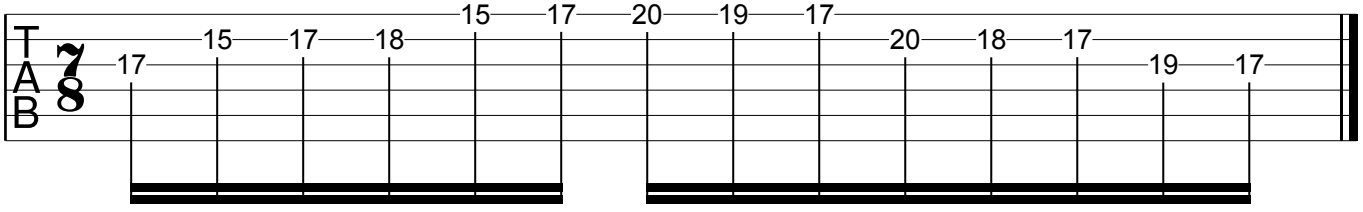
Example 7





Example 8

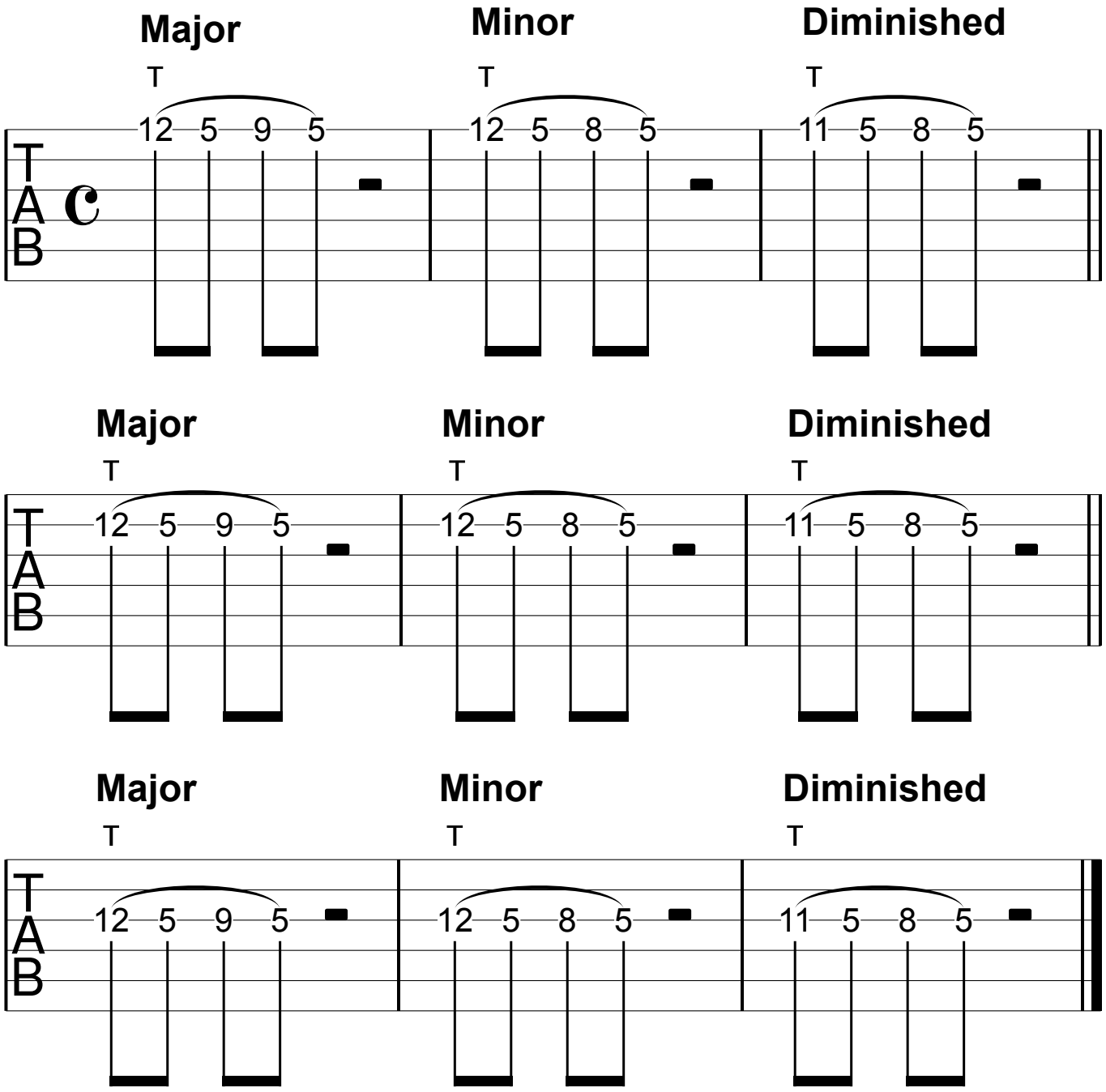




20.Intro to Tapping

These next examples are the basics of tapping. Tapping is basically legato but without a pick with your right hand serving the same purpose as your left hand. I personally use my middle finger to tap while my index and thumb still hold my guitar pick. Tapping is the same idea as hammer-on and pull-offs. You don't just remove your finger from the string once tapped, you "snap" it off. I "snap" towards my face to avoid me hitting unwanted treble strings (once you reach 2nd string and lower).

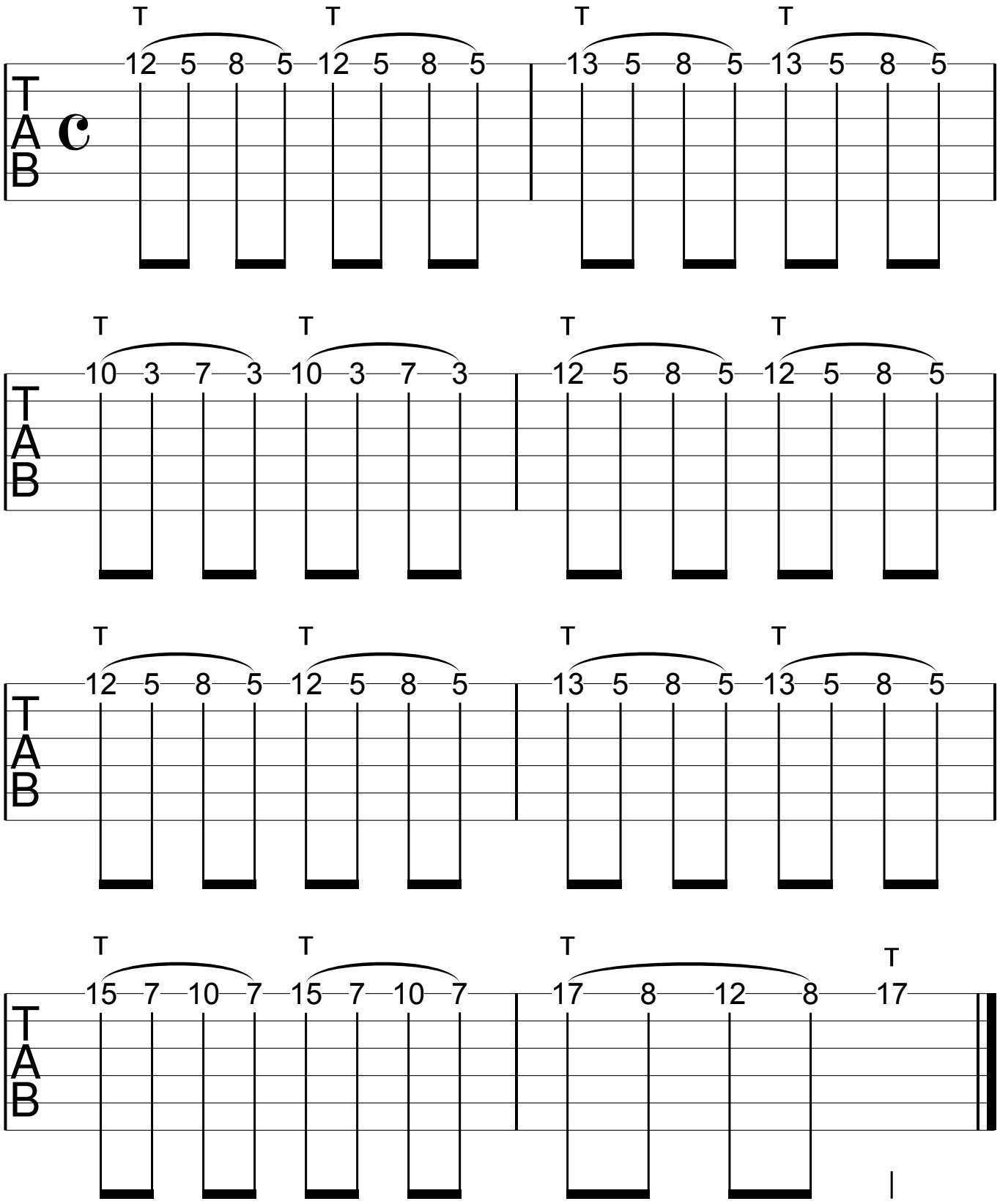
Listen to Eddie Van Halen play pretty much anything to get a taste of great tapping technique. I would recommend "Eruption" from the record "Van Halen I".


Major
Minor
Diminished
T
12 5 9 5
12 5 8 5
11 5 8 5
TAB
Major
Minor
Diminished
T
12 5 9 5
12 5 8 5
11 5 8 5
TAB
Major
Minor
Diminished
T
12 5 9 5
12 5 8 5
11 5 8 5
TAB

21.Tapping Example

This is a simple example on tapping. It sounds really cool so crank that gain and put some light reverb and/or delay. I challenge you to play it on all strings and in many different positions other than just fifth position. Also, since this is just an intro to tapping, you can alter this example to start on the fifth or eighth fret. The initial “tap” doesn’t need to be on beat 1.

Again, be creative and take this example even further but use this as a baseline. Gradually increase speed as you gain more clarity in your legato. Best of luck!


T T T T
12 5 8 5 12 5 8 5 13 5 8 5 13 5 8 5
T A B
T T T T
10 3 7 3 10 3 7 3 12 5 8 5 12 5 8 5
T A B
T T T T
12 5 8 5 12 5 8 5 13 5 8 5 13 5 8 5
T A B
T T T T
15 7 10 7 15 7 10 7 17 8 12 8 17
T A B

Conclusion

Thank you and congratulations for completing “A Modern Guitar Workbook”. I have spent hours upon hours properly writing these examples and have taken years to learn some of them and their application(s). It was very exciting to me when I decided that I would put a collection of exercises together. I hope that many become better guitarists from these, and I hope that you can create your own exercises that work best for you.

Work on these exercises for yourself over and over. You can never completely master them and only improve on various areas. As far as students are concerned, introduce the examples when you notice they are struggling with a certain technique. It should be used as a medicine for a technical difficulty as opposed to working on each exercise one after the other.

While there are many great techniques and applications in this book, this only scratches the surface of a gigantic iceberg in the realm of playing the guitar. Don’t look at this as a bad thing, rather be optimistic and eager to learn so much more than one book may offer…

About the Author

Jorge Salas is a versatile studio musician who has worked alongside some of the industry's top performers. His collaborative work and solo work has reached many audiences throughout the world. Aside from recording in many studios, writing, and performing, he is also an accomplished educator with 5 years experience in public school and 2 years experience in private school.
Upon completing a degree in music school, he was offered a job as a full-time music teacher and would pursue freelance music on the side.

Some collaborations include writing music with Khalid (Artist), John Karpowich (5 Time Grammy-Winning Producer), Mark Saenz (Former Lik and American Stone), Ryan Morales (Local Composer/Producer), Enrique Ponce (Film and Video Game Composer), and many others.

Jorge currently resides in El Paso, TX teaching High School Guitar class and doing session work.

Email: georgesalasmusic@gmail.com

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/c/JorgeSalasGuitar

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/jorgesalasguitar/

Guitar Pro Notation Software