

guitar

TECHNIQUE 2

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Introduction

Introduction

Guitar Technique 1 introduced you to the fundamental aspects of guitar technique. In Guitar Technique 2 we will build on the material presented in the first book, and focus on more advanced ways of approaching the instrument and music making in general. Let's examine some of the most important concepts found within this book.

The Improvising Soloist:

Once the basic technical foundations are in place, it is time for you to start focusing on developing the ability to express yourself and gain a deeper understanding of music and the music making processes. Most guitarists pick up the instrument because they are initially inspired by a specific performer, a performance, a style or simply by an innate need for self-expression. One of the ultimate goals for most musicians is to be able to express themselves fluently in their preferred style. In most contemporary music styles, improvisation and solo playing is an essential part of the journey towards full self-expression.

To fully grow and prosper as an improvising musician you will need to understand the processes involved with music making from a creative standpoint. Relevant questions to ask yourself when you are learning the art of improvisation :

1. How can music be created without simply restating something which is already a product of someone else's imagination?
2. How do you build your own vocabulary, which will eventually enable you to display your own voice and create your own musical Universe?
3. How do you structure a solo or an improvisation so it tells a complete and satisfying musical story?

The improvisational processes share many of the same basic structural components and strategies as found within the compositional processes, so mastery of any one of these disciplines will strengthen and support the other. This means that if you become an accomplished improviser, your compositional skills will also improve, and vice versa. We will in this book examine all the basic steps to start the journey of self-expression through improvised music, and we will go through all of the important steps allowing you to understand these processes.

Fingerstyle and Hybrid Picking Techniques:

It is this author's view that fingerstyle technique is an important aspect of the 21st century guitarist's toolkit, and is a technique every guitarist should have a basic grasp of. Fingerstyle technique has been the primary technique utilized by classical guitarists and lute players for hundreds of years. Although full mastery of the classical discipline may not be necessary, rudimentary fingerstyle proficiency will expand your expressive palette considerably. Hybrid picking (using a pick and fingerstyle simultaneously) is a more recent technical invention, and has in recent years become another important ingredient in the modern guitarist's toolbox. Both of these techniques will be explained in depth in this book.

Other Topics:

In addition to these two larger concepts (which runs throughout numerous units), we will in this book also focus on the following topics:

- The Natural minor scale in all the 5 patterns of the CAGED system
- Harmonizing the minor scale in thirds and sixths
- Introduction to chord voicings and chord inversion
- Introduction to seventh chords
- Continuation of the 'rhythms for scales' principle introduced previously
- Fretting and picking hand exercises
- Sweep technique
- Tapping technique
- Brief introduction to the harmonic minor scale
- Introduction to a number of short compositions and etudes

It is recommended that you continue working on the concepts and exercises demonstrated in the Guitar Technique 1 book. The majority of the material found in the entire Guitar Technique book series is intentionally created to be stylistically neutral and universal in nature. Although the books are presented in sequential order, this does in no way mean that the material presented in the first book will be exhausted once you start working on the second book. View the majority of the material presented in this book series as having long-term value, and you want to revisit all the concepts and approaches on a regular basis. You will also discover that the material contains additional layers of depth which may be incomprehensible for you the first time you work through the book. Hopefully, most of the material presented will be a valuable companion on your continued journey towards becoming a complete musician, and you may find that certain topics, exercises or approaches may resonate with you to such a degree that these will become parts of your practice routines throughout your entire career.

Los Angeles, 2014
Stig Mathisen, D.M.A.

Chapter 1: Melodic Fourth Intervals

In the Guitar Technique 1 book, we learned numerous basic scale drills. Scale drills are important, because they will force you to approach the same scale patterns from different angles. The most important aspect of any scale drill is really to drill your knowledge of the musical content, the intervallic relationship between the scale degrees and the underlying tonality and harmony at any given time. Scale drills will also allow you to get more mileage out of the same base material, and will help you cross-correlate several aspects of your knowledge base. In this unit we will apply sequences based on an interval of a fourth to the major scale patterns we have learned. Let us start by applying this principle to the C major scale in pattern 4:

Ex. 1.1 Pattern 4, Key of C Major, Melodic Fourth Intervals

T
A
B

Descending sequences contd. Return to the root

The most challenging aspect of applying wider intervals to scale drills is to keep track of the relationships between the starting notes of each individual sequence. In the beginning you may find this frustrating, but a good tip is to say/think out loud the starting pitch of each sequence: Tonic (then play the following note up a fourth), major second (then play the following note up a fourth), etc. This will help you keep track of both starting pitches for every sequence and will make you more aware of the process. The most important aspect of doing these types of exercises is to avoid relying on muscle memory, and to challenge you at all times.

Chapter 2: “Rhythms for Scales”

In Guitar Technique 1 we introduced a scale drill principle called “rhythms for scales.” The basic principle with this exercise is to apply a predetermined rhythm to scale patterns. The advantage to this approach is that it adds an additional twist to your scale studies, but it also helps you develop a more conscious relationship to rhythms, and will improve your overall rhythmic vocabulary and your awareness of rhythms. When you are comfortable with the basic scale drill (melodic fourth intervals), apply the following rhythms to the scale drill:

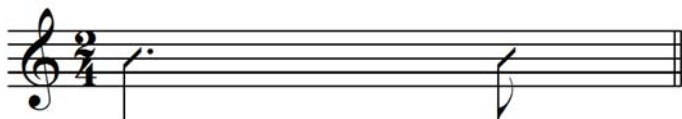
Ex. 1.2



Ex. 1.5



Ex. 1.3



Ex. 1.6



Ex. 1.4



Ex. 1.7



Chapter 3: Basics of Chord Voicings

We have previously learned how chords are built. A basic triad consists of three notes, stacked on top of each other at the distance of a third apart. Chords are usually arranged in two ways: *close voiced* or *open voiced*. A close-voiced chord is when all the notes are as close as they can possibly be placed, e.g. R-3-5-8

Ex. 1.8 Close Voiced C Major Triad

R + 3 + 5 + R = Close voiced triad

An open-voiced chord is when some of the notes in the chord are displaced by one or more octaves, e.g. R-5-8-3.

Ex. 1.9 Open Voiced C Major Triad

Close voiced triad Open voiced triad

Gap between the root and the fifth

In the previous example, the third is placed above the octave and not directly following the lowest root. Both of these types of voicings have their appropriate use. The textural quality of a chord will be greatly affected by how the voices are spread out. In addition, the register you are playing in will greatly affect the sound of a given voicing (for example, a close-voiced triad can sound very muddy in the lowest register on a piano and very thin in the highest register, but full and vital in the mid range).

The stylistic setting and the character of the music being performed is another factor which will influence your choices for voicings, as well as the construction of the melody. We will look at several of these elements in depth later in this course, but we will start by learning all the close-voiced diatonic triads with roots on the sixth string. These will be similar to the dyads we have worked on in the first book (root + third), but we will now add the fifth to the dyads, making them triads.

Triads With Roots on the Sixth String

Here are all the four basic triad types, with the roots on the sixth string:

Ex. 1.10 Major Triad

4 3 1

Ex. 1.11 Minor Triad

4 2 1

Ex. 1.12 Augmented Triad

3 2 1

Ex. 1.13 Diminished Triad

4 2 1

In Guitar Technique 1 we learned the basics of what the diatonic system is plus the chords which can be built within this system. We will now apply the basic *triad shapes* we have just learned to the diatonic chord row in the key of G. First, let's review the notes of the major scale, playing all the scale members along the sixth string.

Ex. 1.14

	G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em	F#°	G
--	---	----	----	---	---	----	-----	---

	R	2	3	4	5	6	7	R
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

T								
A								
B	3	5	7	8	10	12	14	15

Note that the name of the chords which can be derived from each scale member is included in the notation. Let's now add full triads to each scale degree.

Ex. 1.15

Chord names: G, Am, Bm, C, D, Em, F#° , G

Triad names: Ima, II mi, III mi, IV ma, V ma, VI mi, VII° , I ma

TAB: 0 2 4 5 7 9 10 12 / 2 3 5 7 9 10 12 14 / 3 5 7 8 10 12 14 15

Make sure you relate to and memorize the order of chords within the diatonic row. Apply this principle to multiple keys. In addition, practice the triads as arpeggios. This could be done in the following manner:

Ex. 1.16 Diatonic Chord Row as Arpeggios, Key of G Major

Chord names: G, Am, Bm, C, D, Em, F#° , G

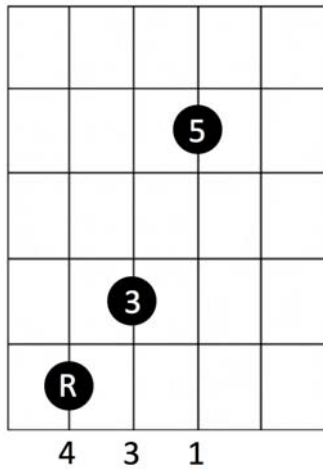
Triad names: Ima, II mi, III mi, IV ma, V ma, VI mi, VII° , I ma

TAB: 3 2 0 5 3 2 / 7 5 4 8 7 5 / 10 9 7 12 10 9 / 14 12 10 15 14 12

Triads With Roots on the Fifth String

Triads will have the exact same shape when they have their root on the fifth string:

Ex. 1.17 Major Triad



Ex. 1.18 Minor Triad

