

FINGER EXERCISES

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Finger exercises are a very important element of a guitar players practice regimen. They can be utilized as warm up exercises when practicing or before live gigs. When finger exercises are done properly, and consistently integrated into your practice regimen, they build strength, dexterity, picking accuracy, finger mobility and speed, they tie the pick and fret hands together and help clean up your playing. They may seem boring, but they work, and work fast. Add these to your practice regimen every day and just by completing the exercises your playing with benefit immensely.

The various practice patterns are written out below and they will increase in difficulty with each new set. Remember, Rome was not built in a day, so it will take some time to master each one. Play each exercise slow, clean, with no overtones, dinks, sloppiness, or missed notes. Play them slow at first to get used to the patterns. Then slowly bring up the speed. When you are ready you can play to the click of a metronome to ensure that you are playing in time. Set the metronome at a comfortable speed. Then slowly bring up the speed of the metronome. I cannot emphasize enough to always play slow, clean, and in time rather than fast and sloppy. Go very slow at first.

Working these exercises ten minutes daily will increase your picking accuracy, speed, finger strength and overall finger dexterity. These can be completed while watching television, or waiting for something to download on your computer. Whenever you have a spare five minutes pick up the guitar and blast a few sets down the neck a few times.

The exercises below are written out in tablature. The numbers are the fret numbers that you will play. The finger pattern is the order of your fingers that you will be using during the entire exercise. Start each exercise on the low E string at the fret indicated and play every note on the fretboard with the given finger pattern. Keep your fingers as close to the fretboard as possible. Do not let your fret hand come way off the fretboard and out of position. Utilize strict alternate picking – up, down, up, down, etc. Remember to keep your thumb anchored on the back of the neck and not have it slide up and out of position. Continue with the finger pattern up the fretboard utilizing all six strings all the way until your first finger hits the 12th fret on the high E string and then go back and repeat the exercise 2-4 more times if possible. When you get to the end of a given exercise it is important to repeat it. To build strength the exercise must be played over and over again, multiple times. You will feel the burn the more you implement these exercises. If you feel pain, stop, shake your hand out, give it a rest, and confirm that you are utilizing the proper technique. Then start again after a little rest period

Exercise I – finger pattern 1,2,3,4

At this point shift up one fret and start with 1st finger on the 2nd fret on the high E string

At this point shift up one fret and start with 1st finger on the 3rd fret on the low E string

Exercise II – finger pattern 4,3,2,1

Practice each pair of patterns below every day for 2 weeks or until down cold before moving on to the next pair. Remember to do each one 2-4 times each up and back on the neck. Try to master one set before moving on the next set, but keep doing the previous sets as you move forward. Keep at it every day!

- Set 1 - 1,2,3,4 and 4,3,2,1
- Set 4 – 2,1,4,3 and 3,4,1,2
- Set 7 – 1,3,4,2 and 4,1,3,2
- Set 10 – 2,4,1,3 and 3,1,2,4

- Set 2 - 2,3,4,1 and 3,2,1,4
- Set 5 – 1,2,4,3 and 4,3,1,2
- Set 8 – 2,3,1,4 and 3,2,4,1
- Set 11 – 1,3,2,4 and 4,2,3,1

- Set 3 – 1,4,3,2 and 4,1,2,3
- Set 6 – 2,1,3,4 and 3,4,2,1
- Set 9 – 1,4,2,3 and 4,2,1,3
- Set 12 – 2,4,1,3 and 3,1,4,2