

Arpeggios - Defined & Application

An arpeggio is the notes of a chord played individually. You can get creative with arpeggios and generate all kinds of unique sounds. Arpeggios can be utilized to outline chords, create melody lines, build riffs, add notes for color, and much more - the sky is the limit!

There are a few key points to consider when playing arpeggios. The first is you want to hear the arpeggio one note at a time. You don't want the arpeggio to sound like a strummed chord. You want to hear each note of the arpeggio individually.

The goal is to infer the color of the chord with the arpeggio. Kill each note after it is played by muting the strings so the notes don't bleed into each other.

Another key to good arpeggio playing is mixing arpeggios together with scales, modes, and licks. Mix them into your lead lines as per the video lessons from this course. Try creating musical phrases combining arpeggios with scales and licks.

Another key point is knowing where the arpeggios "live" within a scale. You want to be able to grab arpeggios quickly. Over utilizing the same three note triads up and down the neck can often sound a bit sterile and non-melodic. So be sure to mix the arpeggio in with other scales and licks.

Often when playing arpeggios you may need to utilize the same finger for two or more adjacent strings. You want to "roll" your finger down the strings from one adjacent string to the next. This rolling motion of the finger works best as opposed to barring your finger when playing arpeggios.

This rolling finger technique produces a smoother sound that is often utilized for sweep picking. The rolling of the finger lifts the pressure off the notes so each note sounds distinct and doesn't bleed into the next.

Illustrated on the next page are arpeggio examples. These examples can be played in any key by grabbing the root note off the low E, A, or D strings as per the illustrations. Root notes are illustrated in black ovals.

A major chord or major triad is constructed from the intervals of 1st, 3rd, and 5th degrees of the major scale. To play a major arpeggio just play those three notes one at a time and then repeat as per the illustrations.

A minor chord or minor triad is constructed from the intervals of 1st, b3rd, and 5th. Play the 1st, b3rd, and 5th, one at a time and you have a minor arpeggio.

First get familiar with the fingerings and the sound of each arpeggio. Then practice the examples in different keys all over the neck by moving the root notes. Then practice arpeggios by playing them over their corresponding chords utilizing the jam tracks. Get creative with them and remember...its all about the sounds.

KEY POINTS:

Arpeggios are the notes that make up a chord.

Be sure to sound each note of the arpeggio individually. You don't want the arpeggio to sound like a strummed chord.

Good arpeggio playing mixes arpeggios together with scales, modes, melodic phrases, and various licks.

Learn what scales your favorite arpeggios "live in".

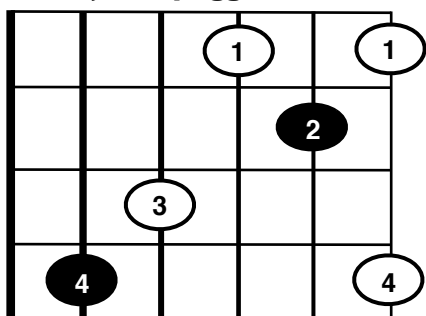
Arpeggio Examples

Illustrated below are some moveable arpeggios that you can add to your playing arsenal. Many of these can be utilized over the jam tracks. These arpeggios can be found quickly by locating low root notes on the low E, A, or D strings.

Remember when the chords are changing quickly you have to change arpeggios fast. Try treating each chord as a *separate event*, and play an arpeggio over each chord. Change arpeggios as the chord changes and be careful not to play over the wrong chord.

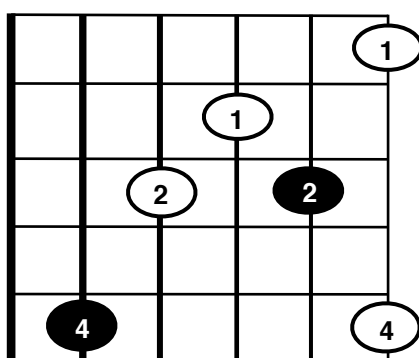
As per the list below, try adding a b7, or 9th for some extra color. Mix in the arpeggios with riffs and melodic phrases. Try the below arpeggios over each chord and remember to listen for the sounds and moods these arpeggios can create. Be creative and experiment, try other arpeggios and see which sound best to your ears.

major arpeggio - 1,3,5



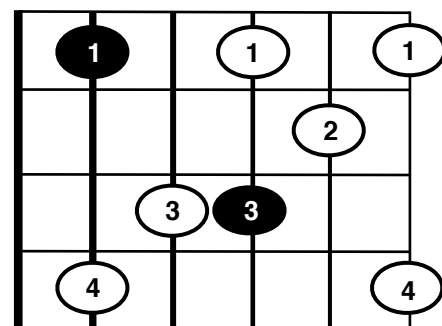
4th finger root A-string

minor arpeggio - 1,b3,5



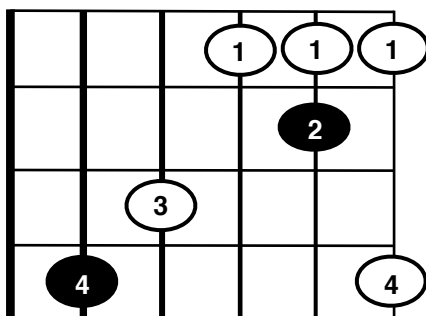
4th finger root A-string

minor 7th arpeggio - 1,b3,5,b7



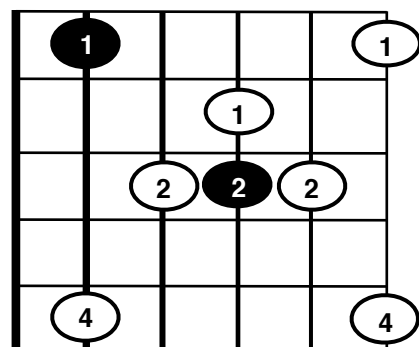
1st finger root A-string

maj7 arpeggio - 1,3,5,7



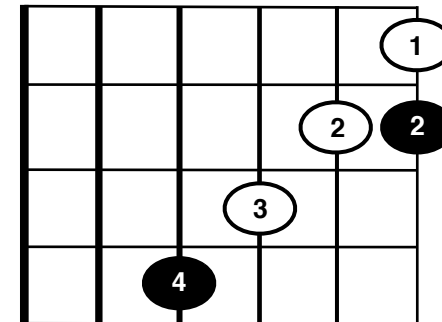
4th finger root A-string

maj7 arpeggio - 1,3,5,7



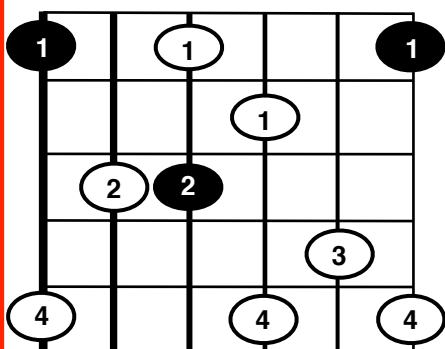
1st finger root A-string

maj7 arpeggio - 1,3,5,7



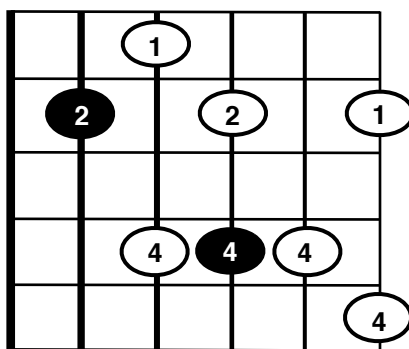
4th finger root D-string

7th arpeggio - 1,3,5,b7



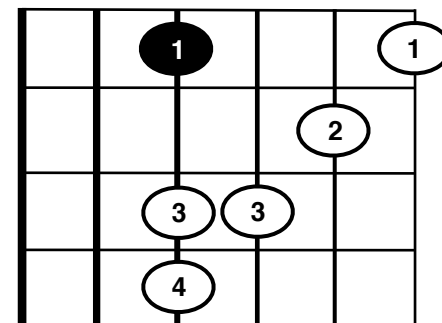
1st finger root low E-string

7th arpeggio - 1,3,5,b7



2nd finger root A-string

minor 9th arpeggio - 1,b3,5,b7,9



1st finger root D-string