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Major Arpeggios

An arpeggio is a chord played one at a time. For example, the C major arpeggio is C, E, G.

Arpeggio-style playing is one of the cornerstones of jazz improvisation. It is a method of really spelling the harmony you are on or spelling some other harmony you want to superimpose. Arpeggios also help the guitar player start playing along the fingerboard through different positions as opposed to the up-and-down, sticking-in-one-position, wearing-your-frets-out-in-one-spot approach.

Example 18 is a systematic presentation of a **one-octave C major arpeggio** in many practical fingerings. Try all the fingerings and then find the ones that work best for you. Because of the number of frets on different guitars, I have omitted the fingerings that repeat above the 12th fret; just use the fingerings that correspond below the 12th fret. You should play this exercise across your entire fingerboard. **Try playing this and all of the exercises in all keys.** A good way to do this is by using the **cycle of descending 5ths** (C, F, B $\flat$, E $\flat$, A $\flat$, D $\flat$, G $\flat$, B, E, A, D, G). Don't forget to use your metronome!

System 1 (Measures 1-5):

Measure	T	A	B
1			3 0 3 3 0 3
2			3 2 0 1 0 2 3
3			3 2 5 5 5 2 3
4			3 7 5 5 7 3
5			3 7 5 10 5 7 3

System 2 (Measures 6-10):

Measure	T	A	B
6			8 7 5 5 7 8
7			8 7 10 10 7 8
8			8 12 10 10 12 8
9			8 12 10 15 10 12 8
10			5 5 3 8 3 5 5

System 3 (Measures 11-15):

Measure	T	A	B
11			5 5 8 8 5 5
12			5 9 8 8 9 5
13			5 9 8 13 8 9 5
14			10 9 8 8 9 10
15			10 9 12 13 12 9 10

System 4 (Measures 16-20):

Measure	T	A	B
16			10 14 12 13 12 14 10
17			10 14 12 17 12 14 10
18			13 12 13 12 13 14
19			13 12 15 20 15 12 13
20			13 17 15 20 15 17 13