

Finger Style Strategies

This page outlines a few simple strategies to use when playing chord progressions in finger style. After you have studied these examples apply the concepts to chord progressions you want to play. Having commenced playing in finger style you could increase the dynamics of the progression by moving into one of the rhythms we have learned. Moving between finger style and strumming is an effective way to add 'light and shade' to the music we play on the guitar.

First, let's begin by playing an arpeggio with a chord over two beats. Remember to play the bass note of the chord with your thumb. The bass may be on string 6,5 or 4 as in this example

4/4 G C D C

T 0 0 0 1 2 3 2 1

A 0 0 3 2 0 1 0 2 0 1

B 3 3 3 3

If we needed the arpeggio to stretch over a full bar we could play the following

4/4 G C C C

T 0 0 0 3 1 1 0 1 1 0 2

A 0 0 0 0 3 2 0 1 1 0 2

B 3 3 3 3

However, when the bass note is on string 4 we need to use a different arpeggio to fill the bar

4/4 D Dmaj7 Dmaj7 Dmaj7

T 2 2 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

A 0 2 3 2 2 3 2 0 2 2 2 2 2

B 0 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

A piano style 'pedal point' way of playing our chords can be used for how ever many beats we need to play. More notes together on a single beat also produces a fuller sound

4/4 G Em Am C D

T 0 0 0 0 1 1 1 0 2 3

A 0 0 0 0 2 0 2 0 2 2 0 0

B 3 0 0 0 0 0 0 3 0 0

Sometimes we will need to change chords on an up beat and so we might do the following

4/4 G Am7 G/B C

T 0 0 1 3 0 1 0 1 0 1 0

A 0 0 0 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

B 3 0 0 2 3 2 0 1 0