

## PICKING CONCEPTS



There a number of options when it comes to picking :-

### 1) Alternate picking.

This is the most traditional pick method. It's simply picking down - up - down - up regardless of what your fretting hand is playing. □ ∇ □ ∇ etc.....

This works very nicely when you use scale patterns that consist of 2 notes per string such as the minor and major pentatonics.

Things get a bit more demanding when you play patterns that contain uneven numbers of notes per string. This is because you end up with what's called outside picking.

pick ↓ ○ = fret 7 A string

○ = fret 4 D string

pick ↑ outside picking

To get an idea of that, check out the circled notes. Fret 7 on the A string is a down stroke going to the adjacent fret 4 note on the D string using an upstroke. The up stroke to the D string is outside picking.

Monsters of this technique include John McLaughlin, Steve Morse and Al Di-Meola to name a few.

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### 2) Economy picking

A.k.a. speed picking, economy picking is a concept that's been around for a long time however it's been become increasingly a mainstream technique for many rock, fusion and jazz players over the last 3 decades or so.

The idea is to pick in one direction when going across adjacent strings. This capitalizes on inside picking which in turn minimizes the picking hand movement which in theory enables faster picked passages

Here's an extended version of the A major scale shown on page 1.

The diagram shows a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The scale is written across five lines (T, A, B, G, D). Above the staff, a series of 'v' and '∧' symbols indicate the picking direction for each note. Below the staff, fret numbers are written for each note. Some fret numbers are circled in red, and arrows point from these circles to a legend below.

The legend defines the symbols used in the scale notation:

- A downward-pointing pick symbol (∧) is labeled "pick".
- An upward-pointing pick symbol (v) is labeled "pick".
- A circle with a dot in the center is labeled "inside picking".
- Specific examples are given:
  - Circle with dot = fret 7 A string
  - Circle with dot = fret 4 D string
  - Circle with dot = fret 7 G string (inside picking)
  - Circle with dot = fret 5 B string

Here's a 3 note per string version

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Australia's own Frank Gambale is one of the undisputed kings of economy picking.

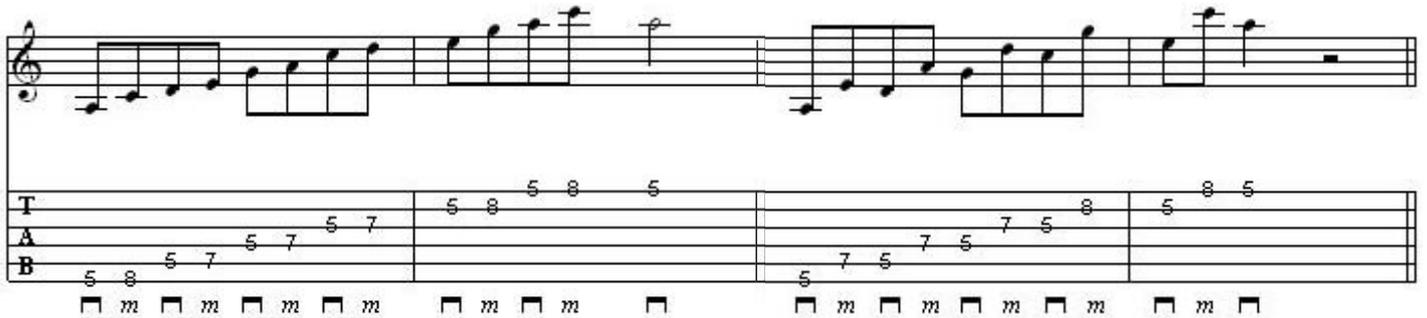
## 3) Hybrid picking

Hybrid picking is where a combination of pick and fingers are used. It's a useful approach that's used in all types of music from blues, folk, jazz, country and rock.

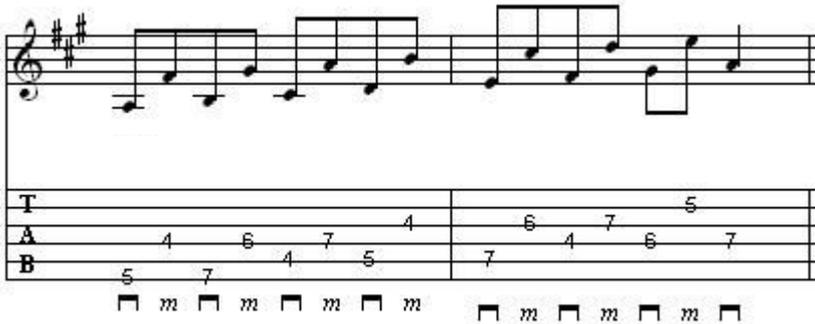
Your pick is being held between your thumb and 1st fingers. This is how the others are indicated

 = pick down. *m* = 2nd finger *a* = 3rd finger (ring) *c* = 4th finger (pinky)

Here are 2 versions of the A minor pentatonic alternating between pick and 2nd finger (*m*).



Hybrid picking really comes into its own when using larger note jumps.



This line is an A major scale played with intervals a 6th apart from each other.

While this type of line can and often is played with the last 2 techniques, hybrid picking for many is the best choice.

Here's another line using more digits.



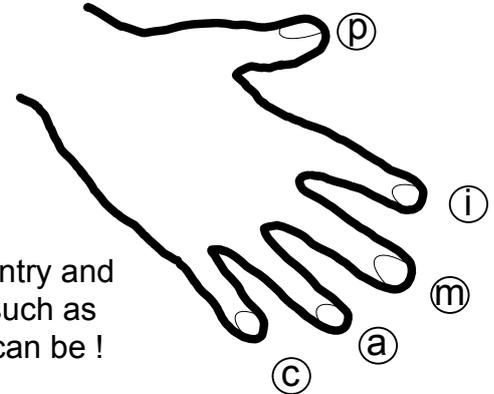
Again it could be played with alternate or economy picking so feel free to experiment.

Carl Verheyen and Bret Garsed (another aussie) are both dazzling practitioners of hybrid picking.

## 4) Fingerstyle

Fingerstyle has been touched on in lesson 17 however in this context we're looking at it as a vehicle for single note improvisation rather than as a chord accompaniment technique. It's the next logical step from hybrid picking.

This approach is the traditional method for classical, folk, country and flamenco players. Listen to any world class flamenco player such as Paco De Lucia to hear how devastatingly fast this technique can be !



It should be noted that while still classified as fingerstyle, many contemporary guitarists, particularly country players ( like Scotty Anderson or Brent Mason ) tend to use thumpicks. Both have dazzling speed and fluency.

The catch ? - it takes a lot of work to develop the fine motor skills and coordination to develop this method. Pretty much as it does with hybrid picking. And like hybrid picking the really cool thing is the seamless transition possible from chords to scales. The moral - be patient.

Human ingenuity being what it is has given us anomalies such as the great Wes Montgomery who played only with his thumb, or the equally freakish Jeff Beck who as a rock player, seemingly should be using a pick but doesn't.

Ditch the pick and try going through all the hybrid picking examples on the last page substituting your thumb ( *p* ) in place of the pick (  $\square$  ).

Here's typical 'banjo roll' G major scale.

Suggested listening - all the above, plus Lenny Breau, Tommy Emmanuel and Mark Knopfler.