

The image shows a logo for 'TRAVIS PICKING BOOT CAMP' in a distressed, metallic font. The logo is set against a background of a dark wooden surface and the body and neck of an acoustic guitar. The guitar's body is light-colored wood, and the neck is dark wood with frets and a white dot on the fretboard.

TRAVIS PICKING BOOT CAMP

Travis Picking Bootcamp

Do you love the music of Merle Travis, Chet Atkins and Thom Bresh?

The Travis picking style is based off of a few fundamental techniques.

For the next few sessions, we'll be doing a short series on Travis Picking.

You'll learn...

- **Proper Travis Picking Technique**
- **Finger Independence and Palm Muting**
- **Alternating Bass on 6th, 5th and 4th String Chords**
- **How to Play "Freight Train"**

Developing Thumb Independence


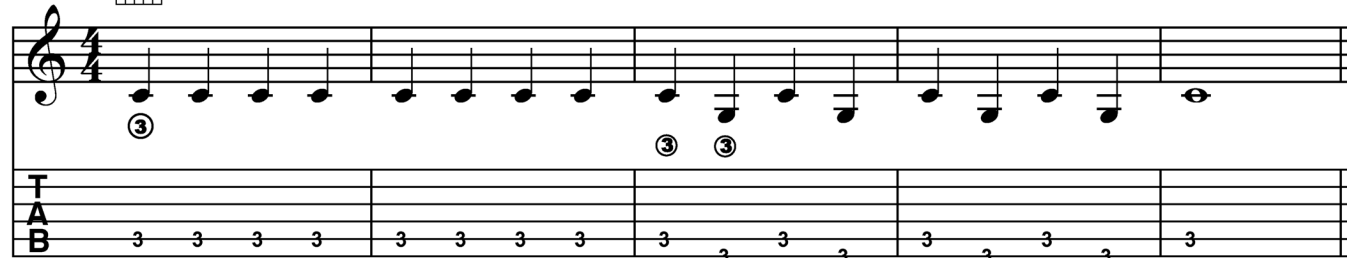
The main pulse – the engine - of Travis picking lies with the thumb. Some players playing Travis picking use a thumb pick and some players just use their thumb.

The thumb will be playing the ROOT and FIFTH of the chords. The string that the root is on can be on the 6th, 5th or 4th strings. Depending on which string the root is on determines where the fifth can be found.

Step One: Alternating the Bass – 5th String Roots


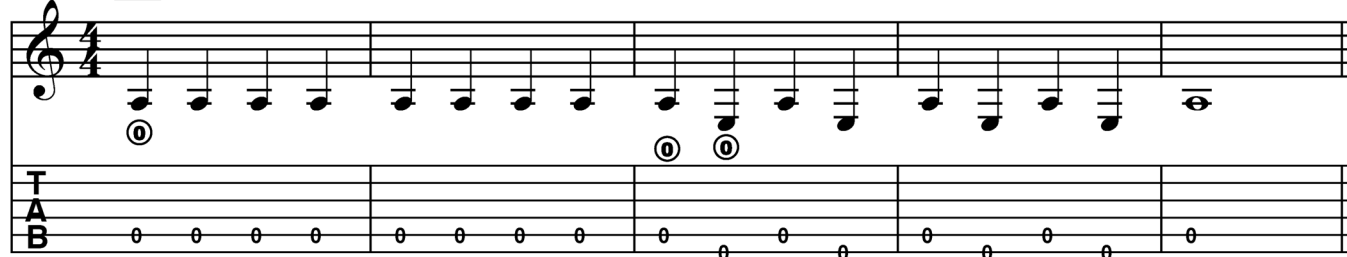
Let's start with basic chords with roots on the 5th strings – C Major, A Minor, B7. Play through the exercises slowly trying to get a clear sound with the thumb. Form the chord shown – even though you are only playing the root note at this point. Finger notations are circled notes.

C


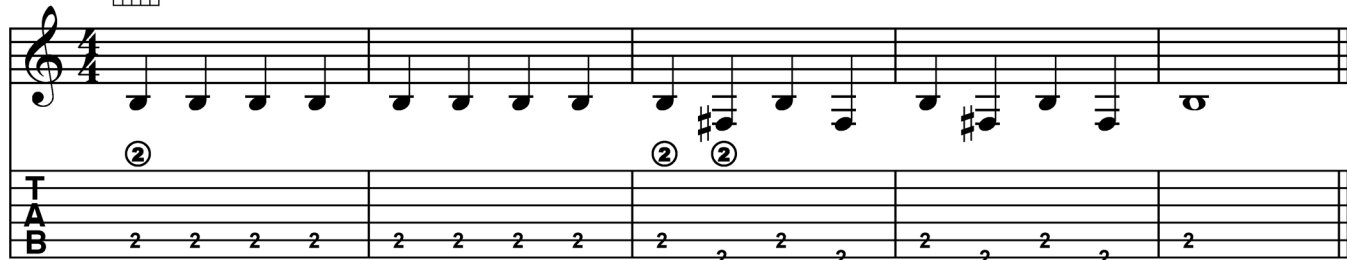
T
A
B 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Am






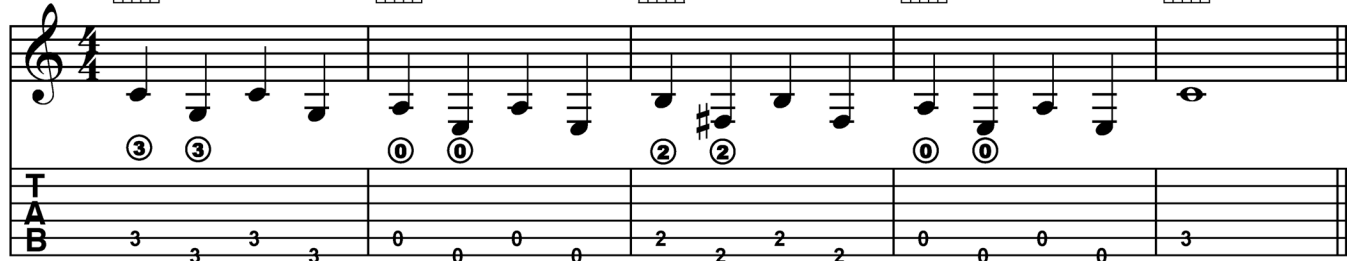
T
A
B 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

B7

T
A
B 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

C Am B7 Am C

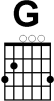








T
A
B 3 3 3 3 0 0 2 2 0 0 3

Alternating the Bass - 6th String Roots

Now let's move to chords with roots on the 6th string – G Major, E Minor, F Major. Each exercise is a different combination. Form the whole chord shown.

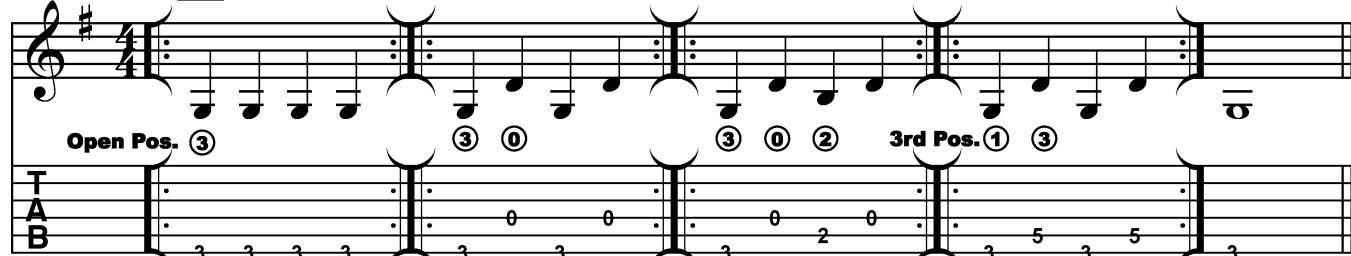
G

Open Pos. ③



3rd Pos. ① ③

3fr.



Tab: 3 3 3 3 | 3 0 0 | 3 0 2 | 3 5 3 5 | 3

F

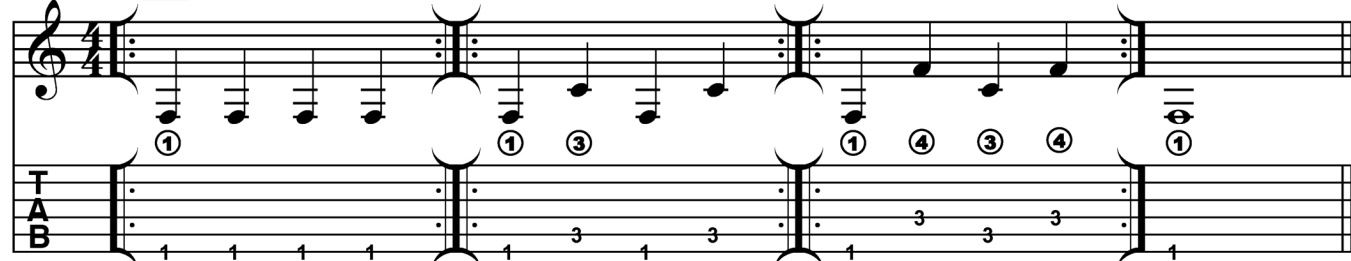



①

① ③

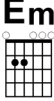

① ④ ③ ④

①



Tab: 1 1 1 1 | 1 3 1 3 | 1 3 3 3 | 1

Em

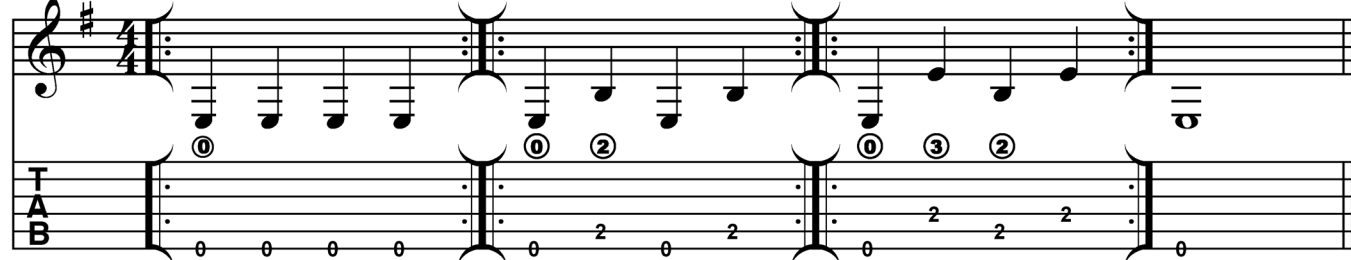



①

① ②






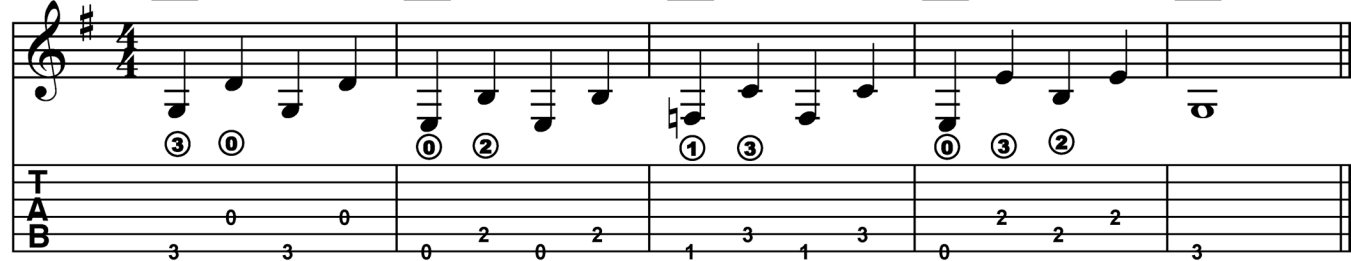
① ③ ②

①



Tab: 0 0 0 0 | 0 2 0 2 | 0 2 2 2 | 0

G **Em** **F** **Em** **G**

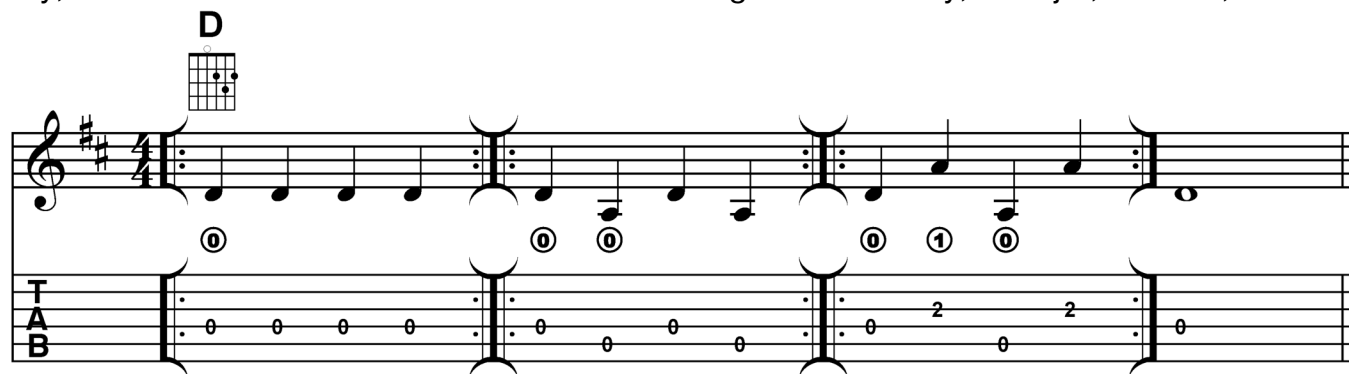







Tab: 3 0 | 0 2 | 1 3 | 0 3 2 | 3

Alternating the Bass – 4th String Root

Finally, let's move to chords with roots on the 4th string – the D Family, D Major, D Minor, D7.


D



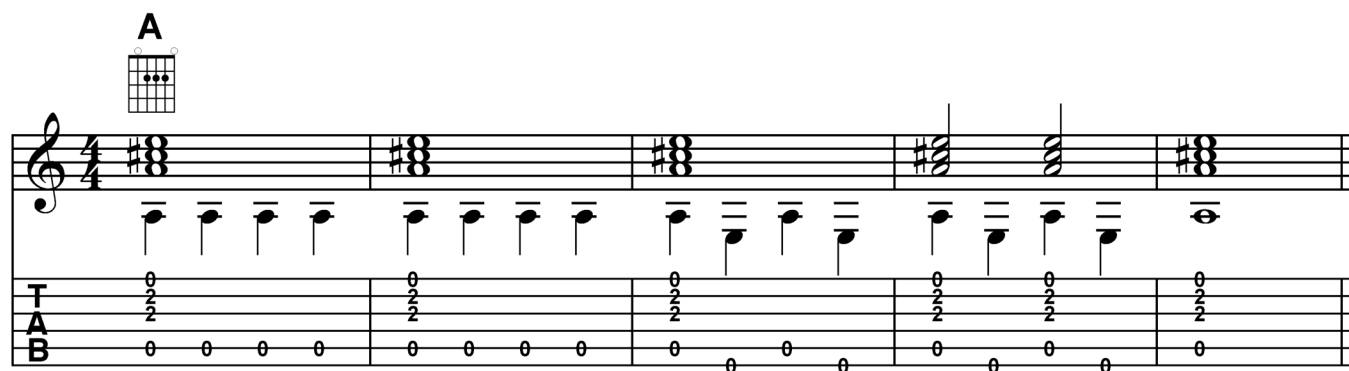
Step Two: Adding Chords to the Bass Line

Now, let's add the rest of the chord to our moving bass line.

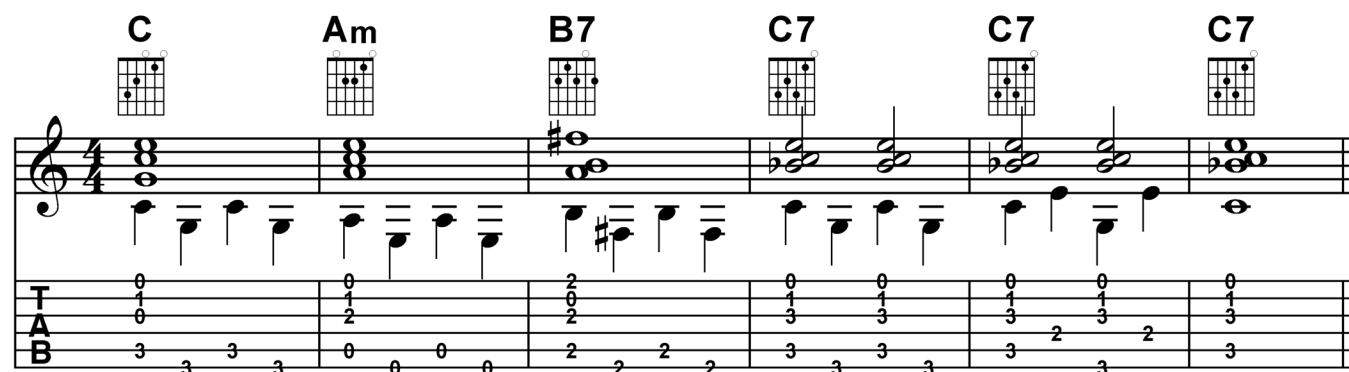
C



A



C Am B7 C7 C7 C7



Sheet music for Travis Picking Bootcamp, featuring guitar notation and tablature across four systems. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

System 1: Chords G, G7, Gm (3fr.).

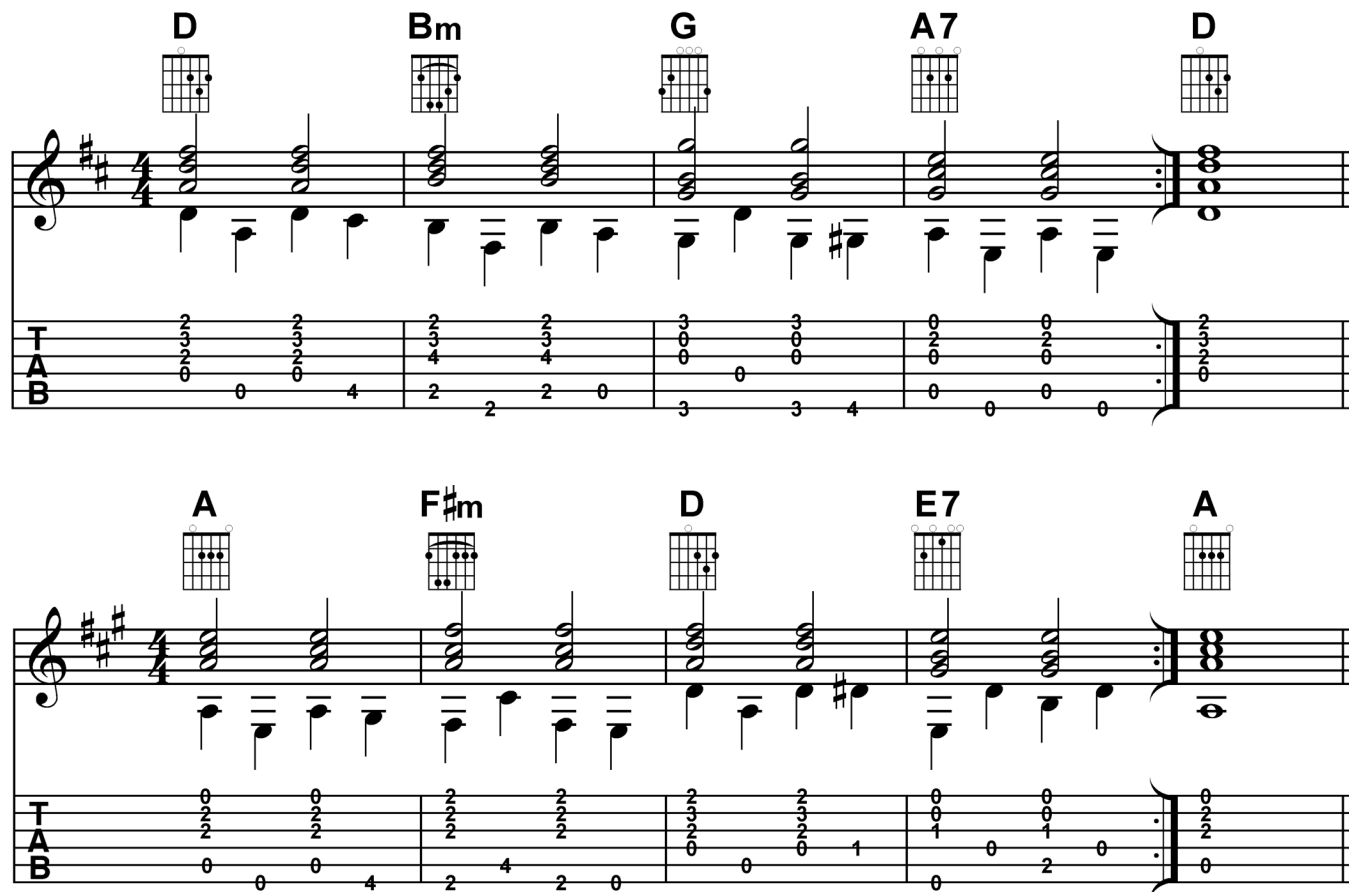
System 2: Chords F, C7, F, C7, F.

System 3: Chords E7, A7, B7, E7.

System 4: Chords G, Em, C, Am, D, G.

The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar notation shows chords and melodic lines, while the tablature (TAB) shows fret numbers and picking patterns.

Now, add some fourth string chords walking through a I-vim-IV-V7 progression in D and A.


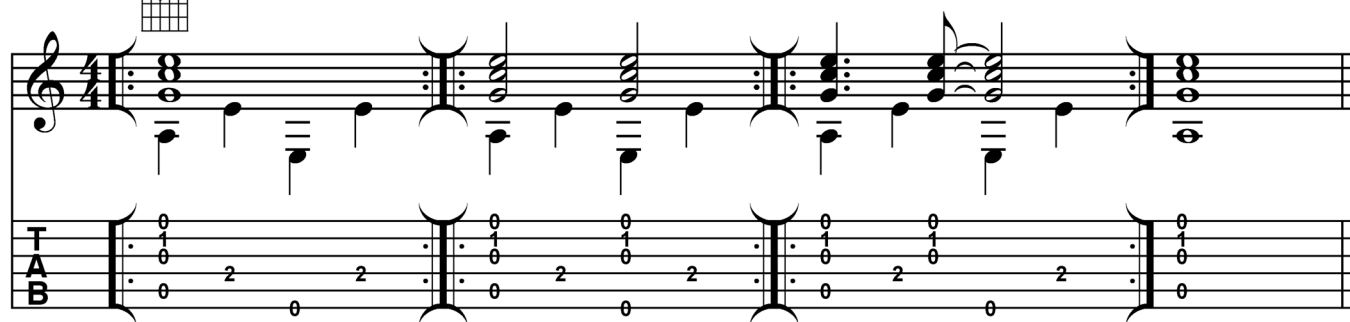


Step Three: Adding Syncopation to Chords

Now, let's add some syncopation to the chords by displacing them from the bass rhythm.


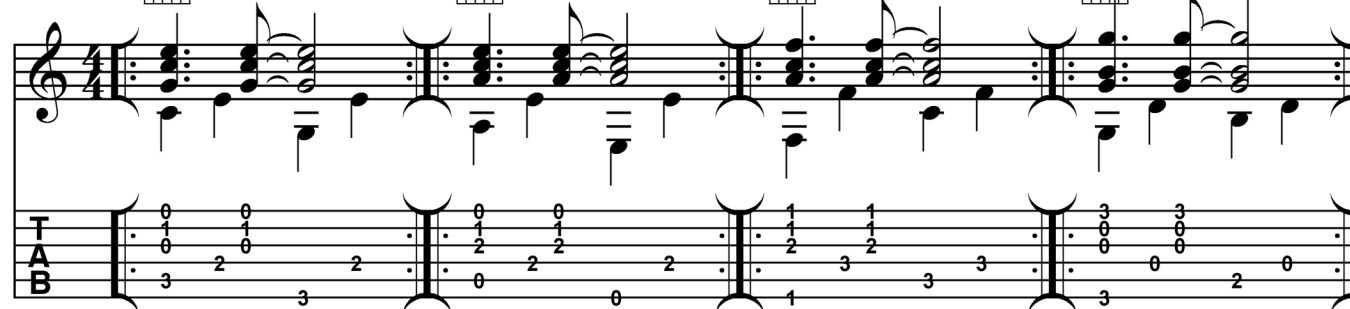


Am7


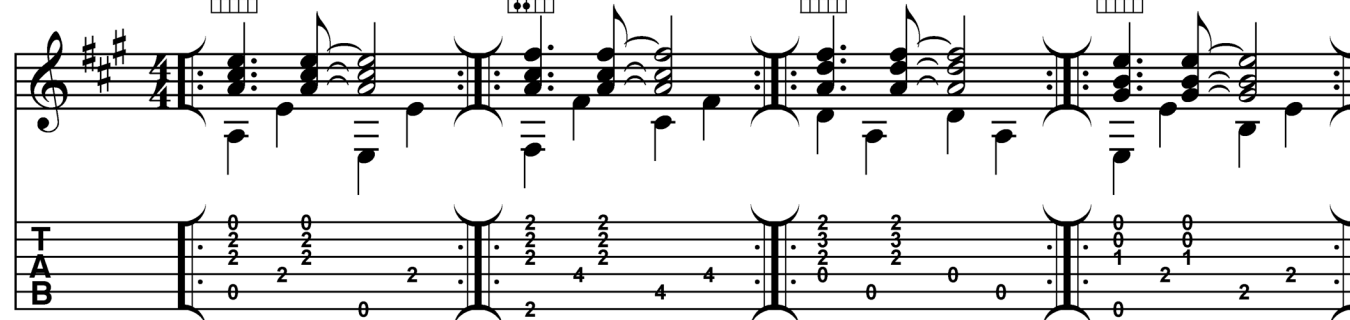



The next exercises go through the I-vim-IV V7 pattern in the keys of C, A, G, and D.


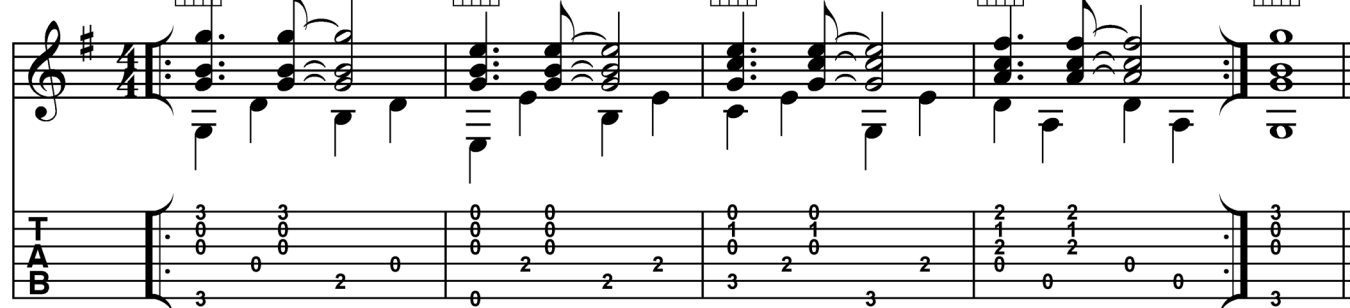
C **Am** **F** **G**

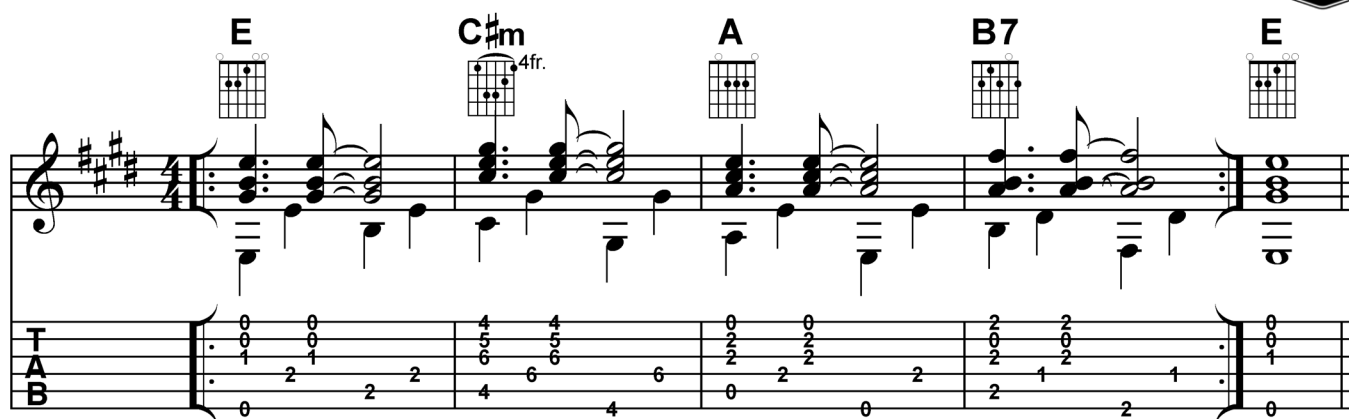



A **F#m** **D** **E**

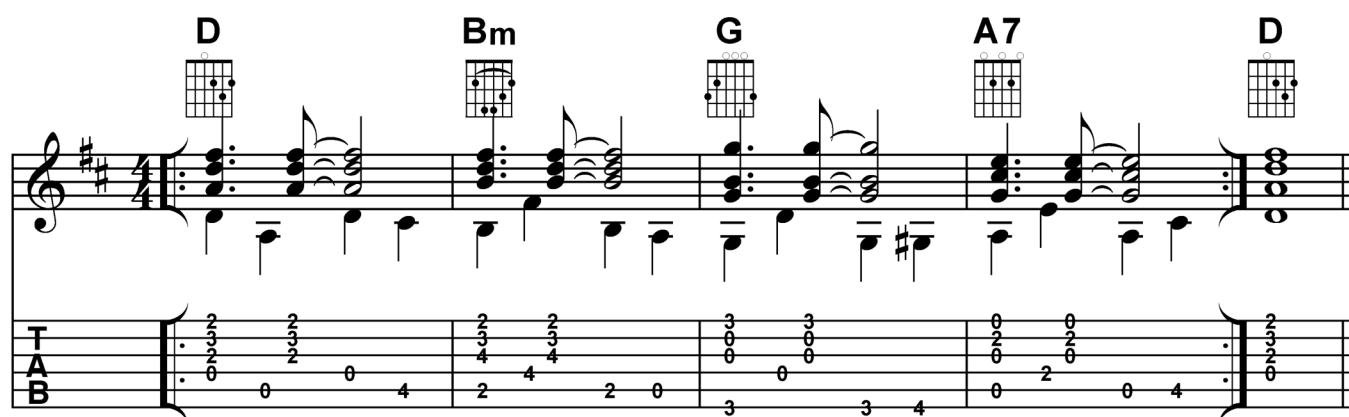



G **Em** **C** **D7** **G**



For our final I-vim-IV-V7 progression in D, let's add some bass movement between chords.

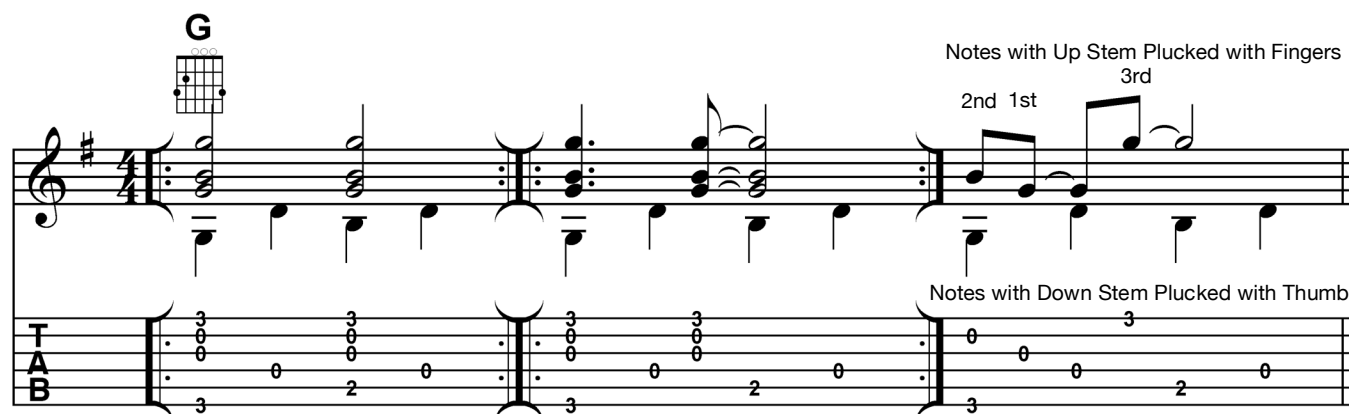


Step Four: Breaking the Chord Apart

The next step is to break the chord apart forming a syncopated arpeggio.

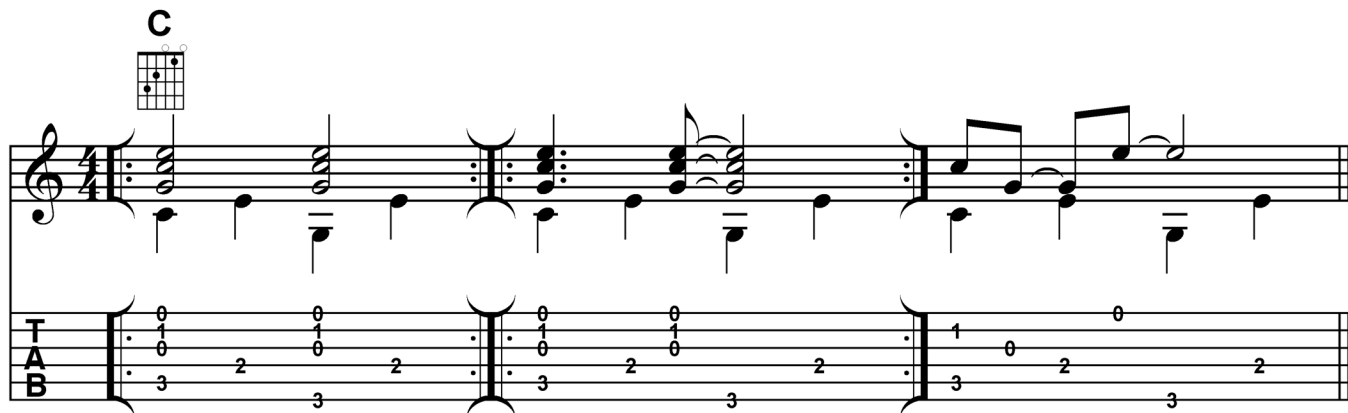
Starting on the 6th string open G chord, practice the following exercise repeating each measure multiple times.

Then change the chord to other 6th string chords like G, G7, E, E7, Em, or F.



Now, let's practice the same pattern on a 5th string chord like C.

C



Next, change to other 5th string chords like C7, A, Am, A7, B7, or Bm.

One final practice on a 4th string D chord. Notice the pattern changes on 4th string chords.

In the 3rd measure, we used the classical notation for fingers – p-i-m-a.

p = thumb, i = index finger, m = middle finger, a = ring finger

D



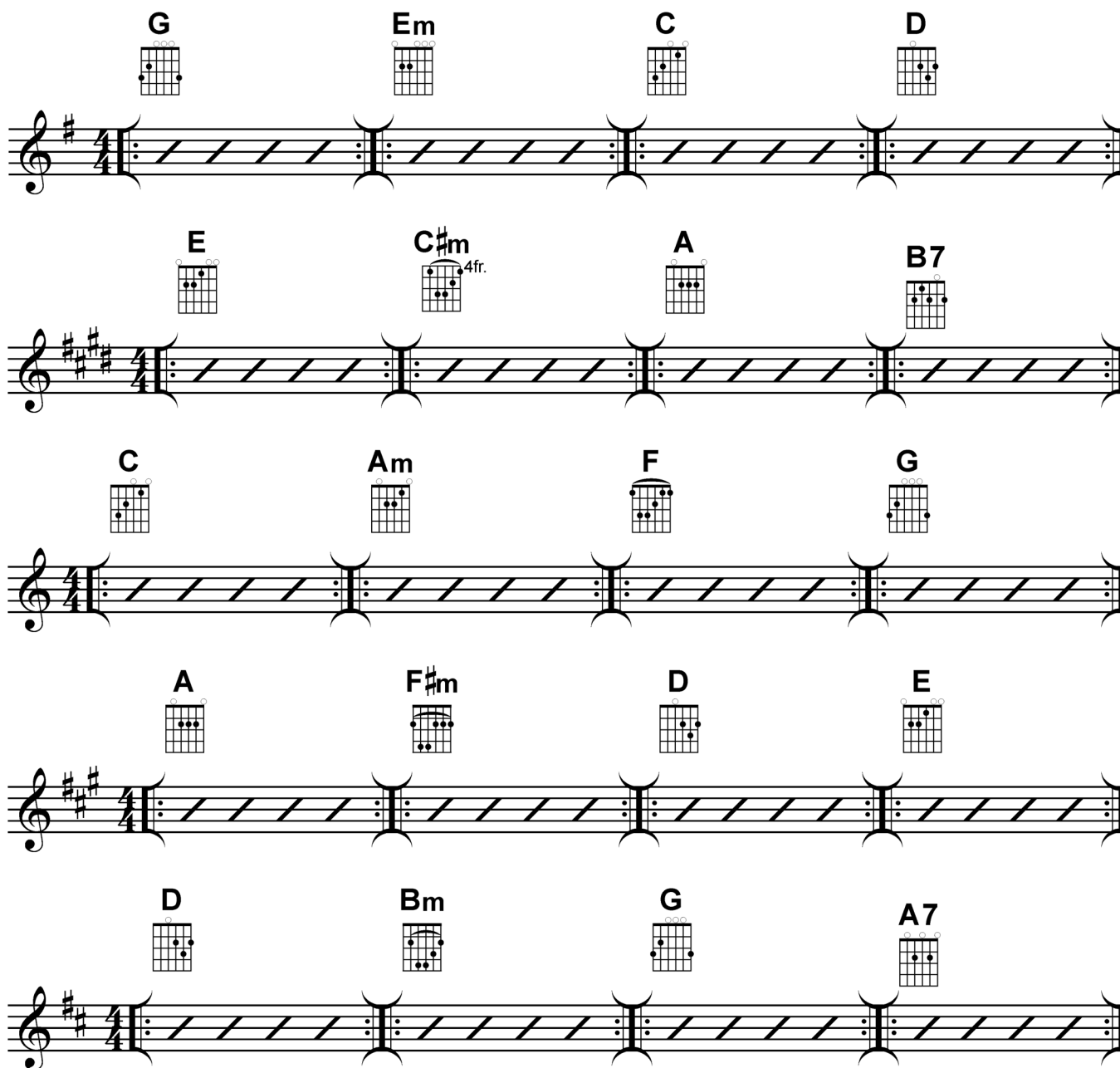
Finally, play this pattern on other 4th string chords like Dm, D7 or Dsus.

Breaking the Chord Apart & Mixing Chords

Now that you are familiar with the arpeggiated pattern, let's apply it to various chord combinations.

These next examples are written in slash notation to force you to play the correct pattern by memory.

If you're unsure about the proper bass line or pattern, look at the previous examples for reference.



The image displays five musical staves, each containing four measures of music written in slash notation. Above each measure is a guitar chord diagram. The staves are organized as follows:

- Staff 1:** G, Em, C, D
- Staff 2:** E, C#m (4fr.), A, B7
- Staff 3:** C, Am, F, G
- Staff 4:** A, F#m, D, E
- Staff 5:** D, Bm, G, A7

Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is 4/4. The slash notation indicates an arpeggiated pattern for each chord.