

The image shows a dark wooden background with a guitar body and neck on the right side. On the left, there is a dark rectangular box with the text "TRAVIS PICKING" in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below it, the words "BOOT CAMP" are written in a smaller, white, bold, sans-serif font, enclosed within a white, distressed rectangular border.

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.

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

G

Open Pos. ③

3rd Pos. ① ③

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

②

②

② ③ ②

②

TAB

0 0 0 0 | 0 2 0 2 | 0 2 2 2 | 0

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

③ ②

① ③

② ③ ②

TAB

3 0 0 | 0 2 0 2 | 1 3 1 3 | 0 2 2 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

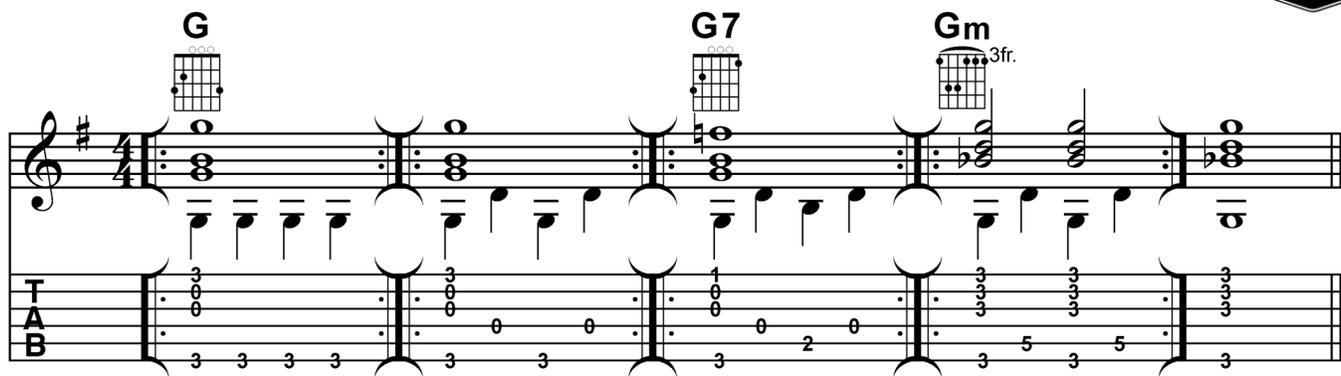
Now, let's add the rest of the chord to our moving bass line.

C

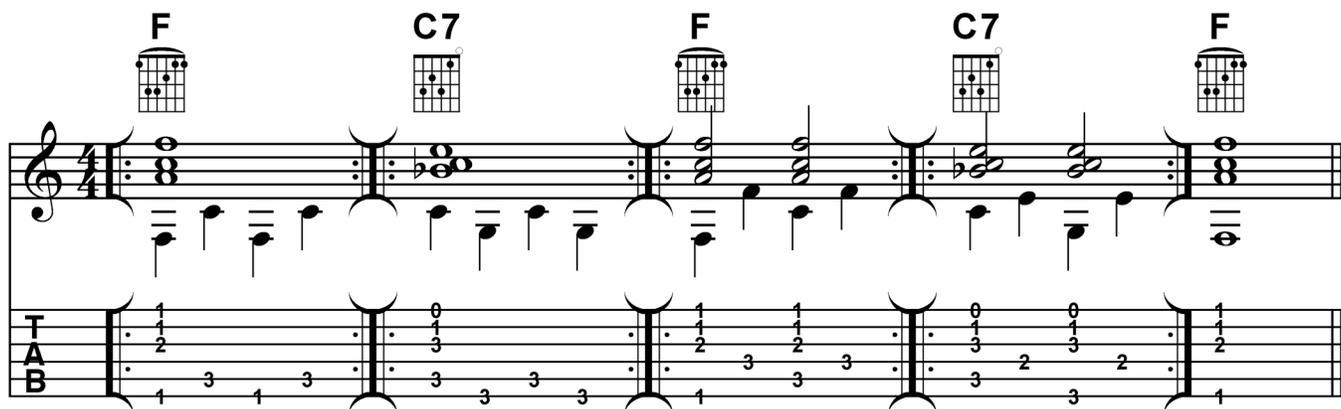
A

C **Am** **B7** **C7** **C7** **C7**

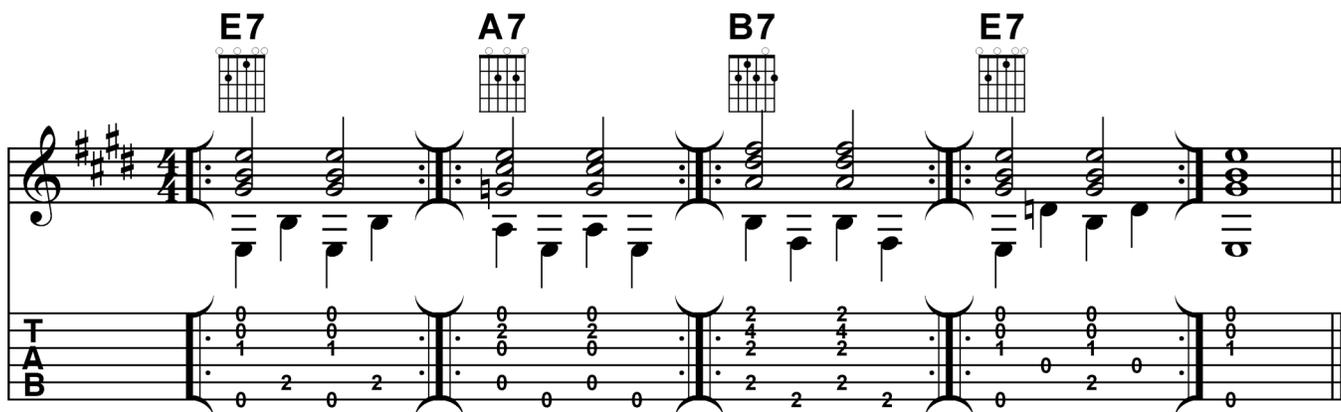
G **G7** **Gm** 3fr.



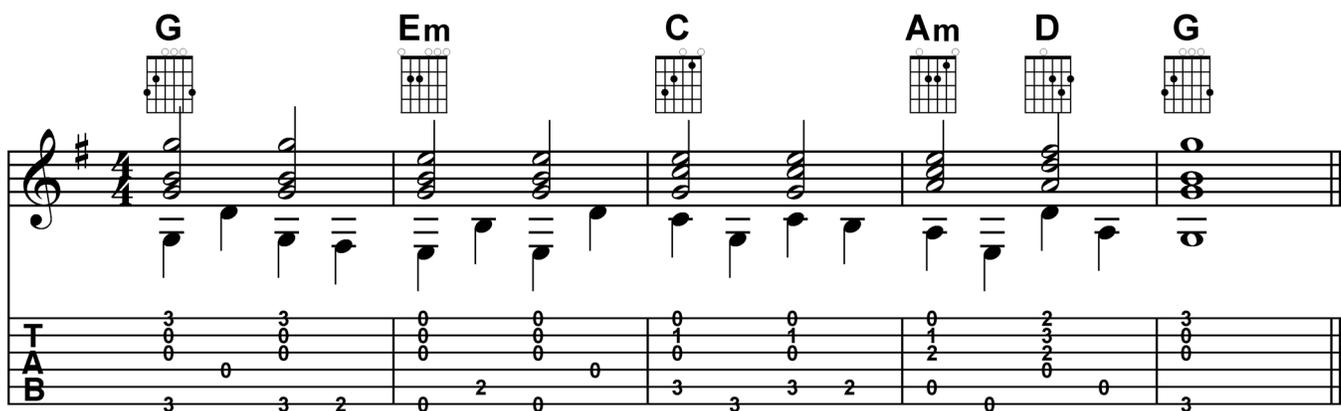
F **C7** **F** **C7** **F**



E7 **A7** **B7** **E7**

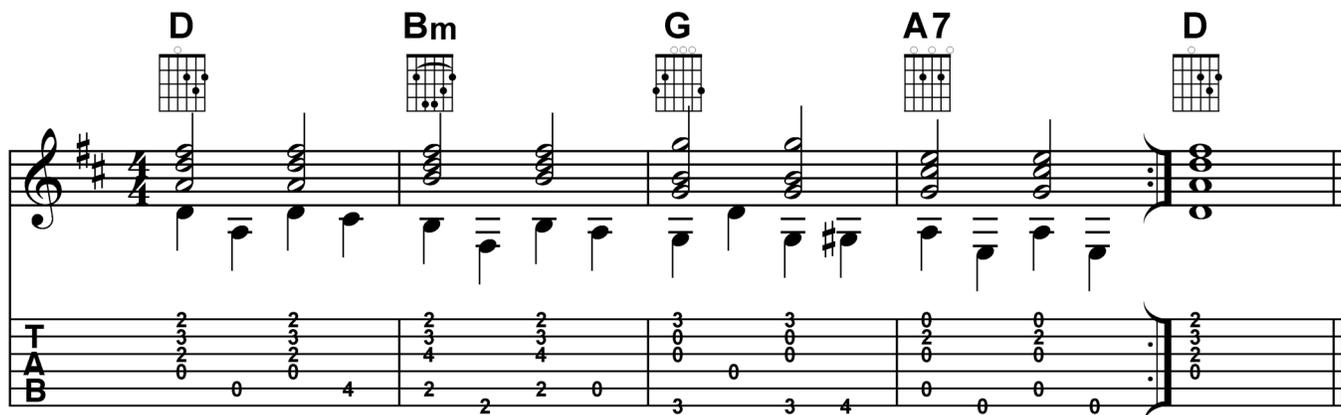


G **Em** **C** **Am** **D** **G**



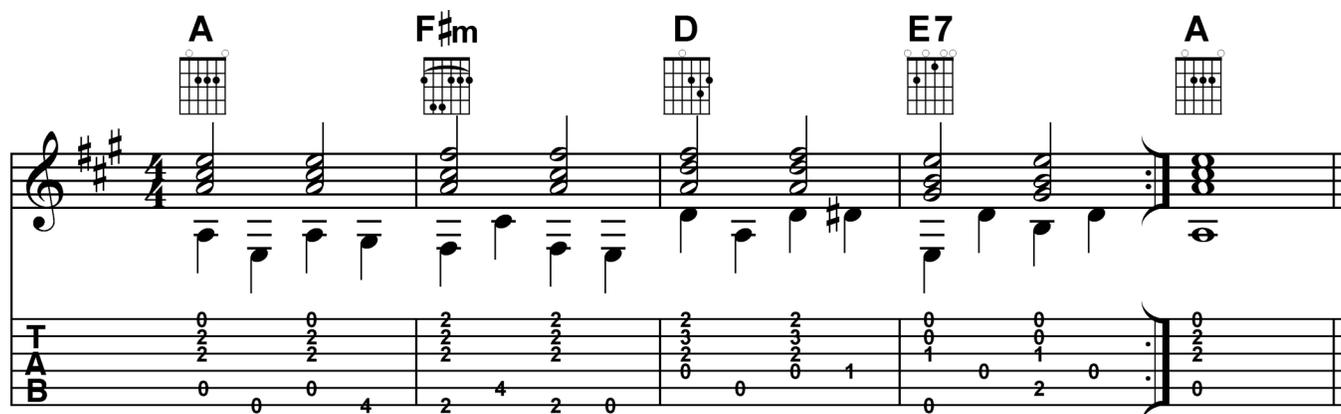
Now, add some fourth string chords walking through a I-vim-IV-V7 progression in D and A.

Chord progressions: D, Bm, G, A7, D



TAB: 2 3 2 0 | 2 3 2 0 | 2 3 4 2 | 2 3 4 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 3 2 0

Chord progressions: A, F#m, D, E7, A

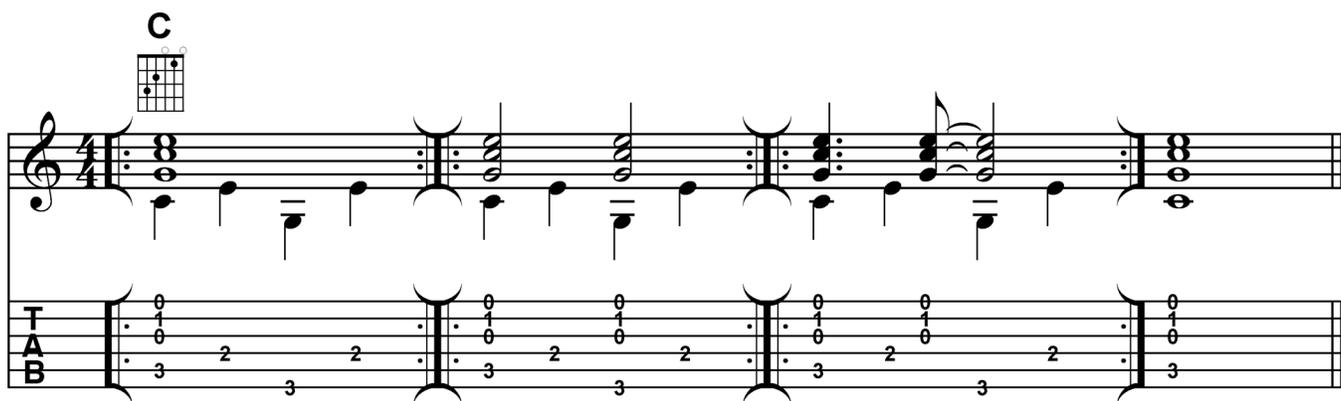


TAB: 0 0 0 4 | 2 4 2 0 | 0 0 1 0 | 0 0 2 0 | 0 0 0 0

Step Three: Adding Syncopation to Chords

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

Chord: C



TAB: 0 1 0 2 | 0 1 0 2 | 0 1 0 2 | 0 1 0 2 | 0 1 0 2

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

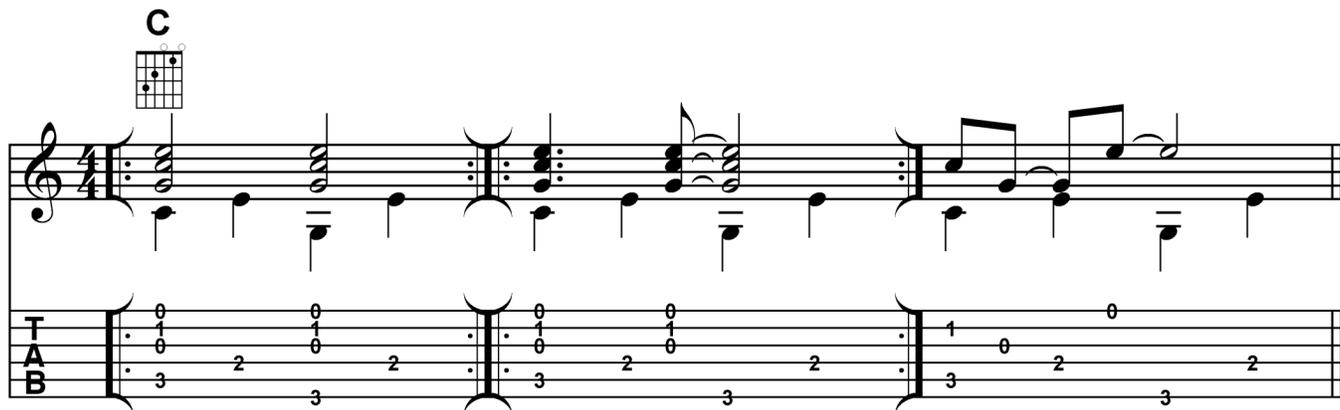
The next step is to break the chord apart forming a syncopated arpeggio.

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



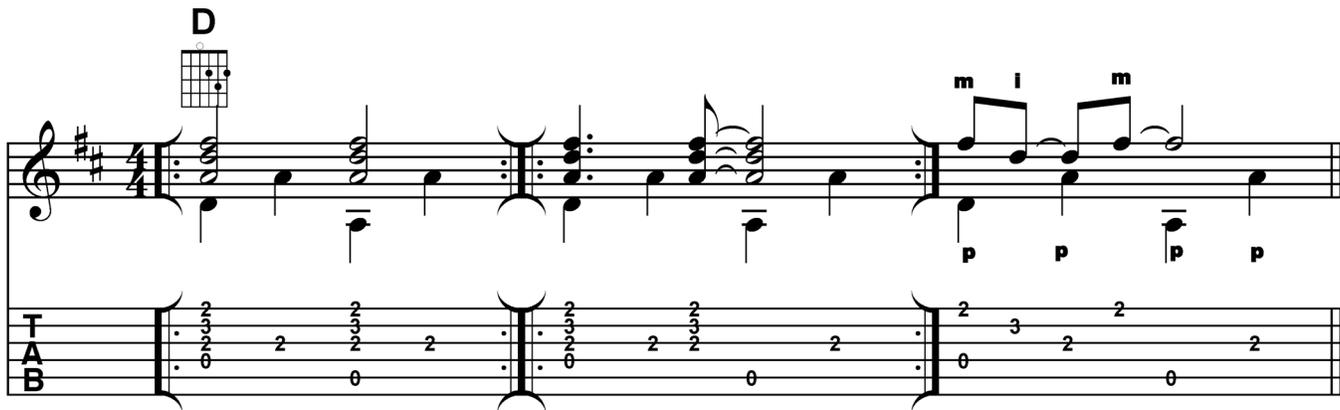
Next, change to other 5th string chords like C7, A, Am, A7, B7, or Bm.

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.

