

ARPEGGIOS

THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GUITAR

Welcome to Arpeggios! For a guitarist, chords are the foundation of their playing. But combinations of notes can be used in all areas of playing. And they don't need to always be played at the same time – as with chords.

If you take a combination of notes and play them sequentially – one after the other – you get an arpeggio.

In fact, the word “arpeggio” comes from the Italian word for harp and means “broken chord”.

Arpeggios can be played ascending and descending and are a great way to add to your soloing and understanding on the guitar.

This is a series on playing arpeggios that I hope will change how you view chords and soloing on the neck of the guitar.

Arpeggios can be made of a variety of note combinations using three, four or even more notes.

We'll start with the simplest arpeggio combination – three note combinations called a triad.

Here's what everything means...

- Numbers on TAB Staff: Show what fret you should be pressing down.
- Fingering Diagrams for Each Chord
 - “X” at end of Chord Diagram = Mute String
 - Open Circle at end of Chord Diagram = Open String
 - Open Diamond = Root of a Chord which can be Moved

Learn all you can and let's get started!



ARPEGGIOS

major triad arpeggios

Major Triad Arpeggios

There are four primary types of triad arpeggios – Major, Minor, Diminished and Augmented.

The starting note of an arpeggio can be any of the three notes (root, 3rd or 5th).

We will start out with Root Position arpeggios – starting on the root of the triad.

We'll also be using closed voicings.

CLOSED VOICINGS are voicings where all the notes in the triad occur within one octave and usually appear on adjacent strings.

Arpeggios will be grouped on the string that the root appears on. **Starting out the root will either be on the 6th, 5th or 4th strings.**

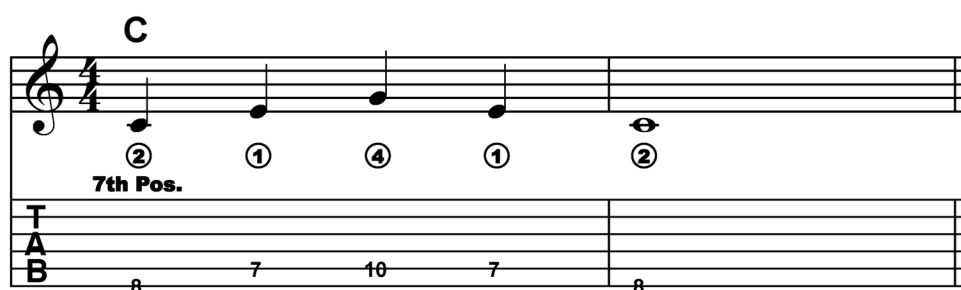
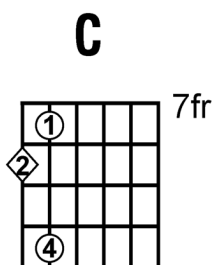
Major Triad Arpeggios (6th String Root)

The root of the arpeggio will be played by the 1st, 2nd, or 4th finger primarily. (The 3rd finger is less used as the starting note of an arpeggio on guitar.)

Let's start with the arpeggio starting with the 2nd finger playing the 6th string root.

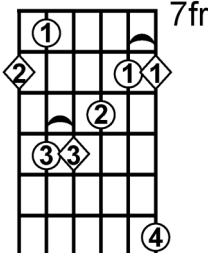
Here are two versions – a simple three note version and an expanded version.

The diamond indicates which note is the root. The circles numbers are the fingering.

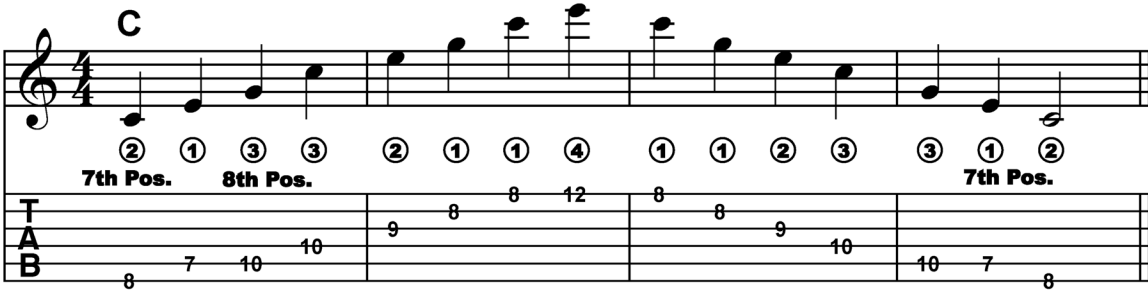


And here is the expanded version covering multiple octaves. Note the fingering changes when playing multiple octaves.

C

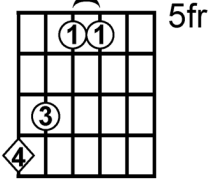


7fr

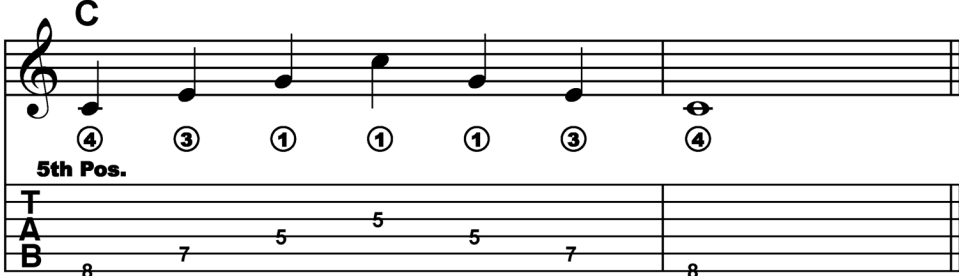


Next, let's look at the C major arpeggio starting with the 6th string root being played by the 4th finger. This arpeggio is in the 5th position.

C

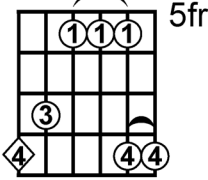


5fr

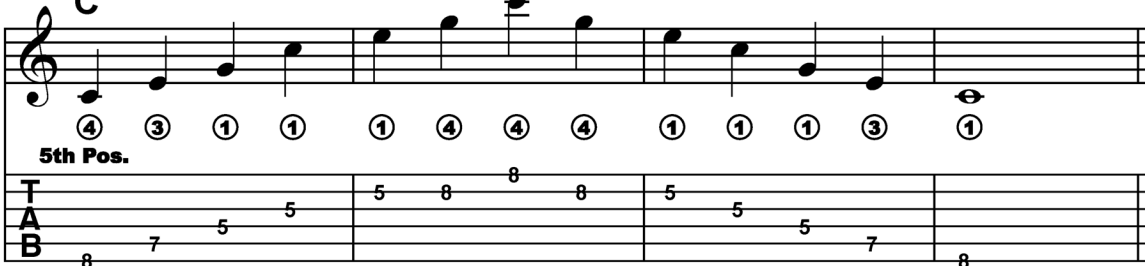


Here is the expanded version covering multiple octaves.

C

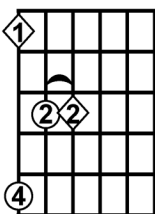


5fr

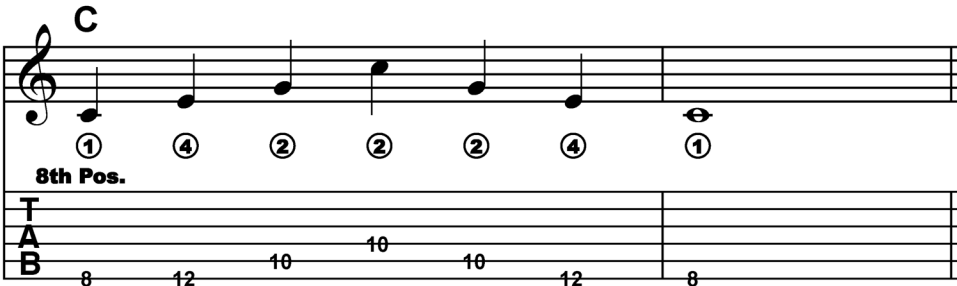


Finally, the C major arpeggio 6th string root being played by the 1st finger at the 8th position.

C

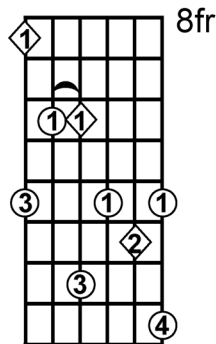


8fr

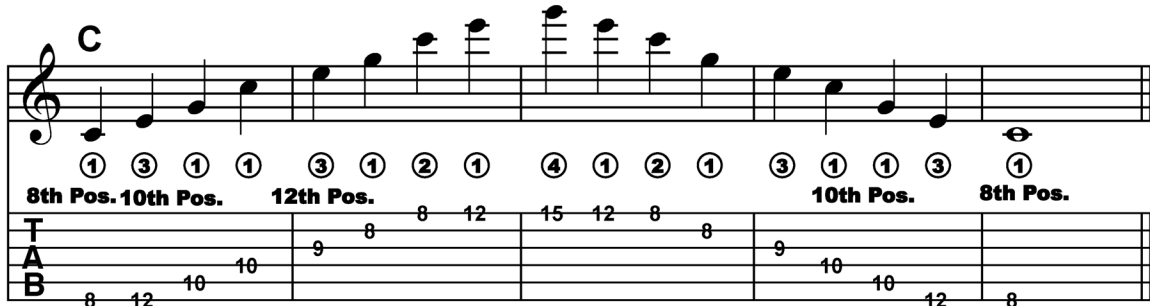


Here is the expanded version covering multiple octaves. Notice the fingering changes from the one octave version.

C



8fr

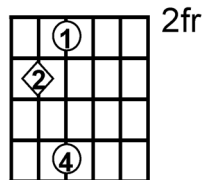


Major Triad Arpeggios (5th String Root)

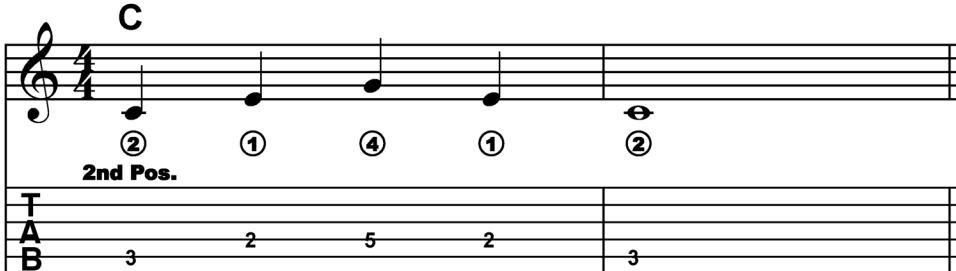
The root of the arpeggio will be played by the 1st, 2nd, or 4th finger primarily. (The 3rd finger is less used as the starting note of an arpeggio on guitar.)

Let's start with the arpeggio starting with the 2nd finger playing the 5th string root. Notice this is the same shape as the 6th string root form.

C

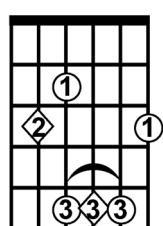
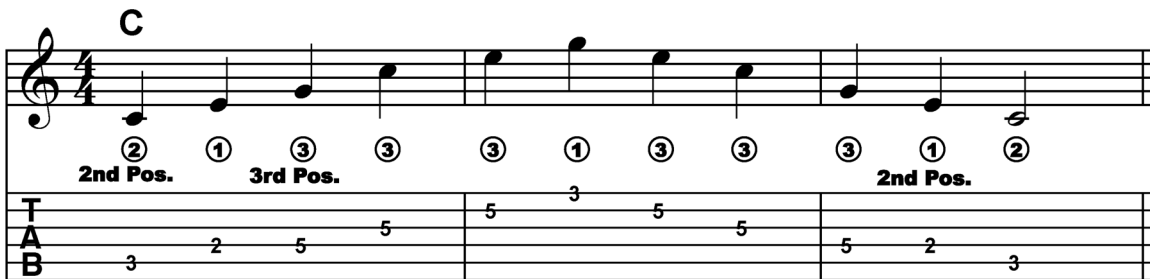


2fr



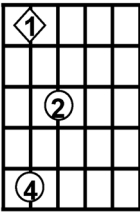
Here is the expanded version covering an octave and a fifth moving from the 2nd to 3rd position. Notice the fingering change.

C

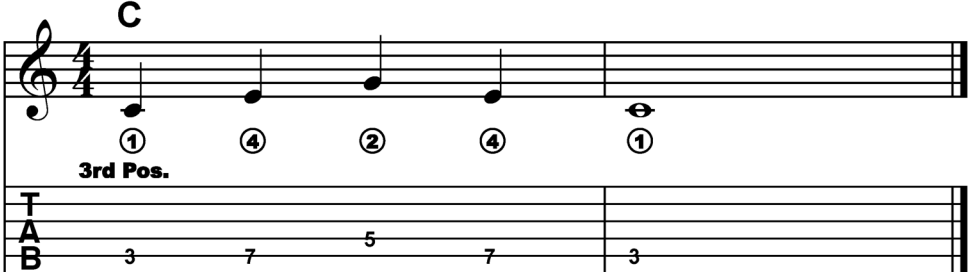



Next, look at the C major arpeggio starting with the 5th string root being played by the 1st finger. This arpeggio is in the 3rd position.

C



3fr

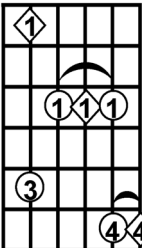


C

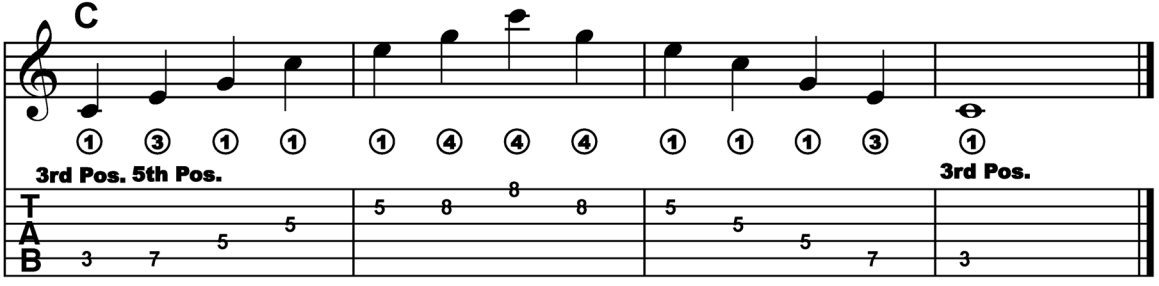
3rd Pos.

Here is the expanded version covering two octaves moving from the 3rd to 5th position. Notice the fingering change when the position shifts.

C



3fr

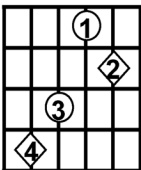


C

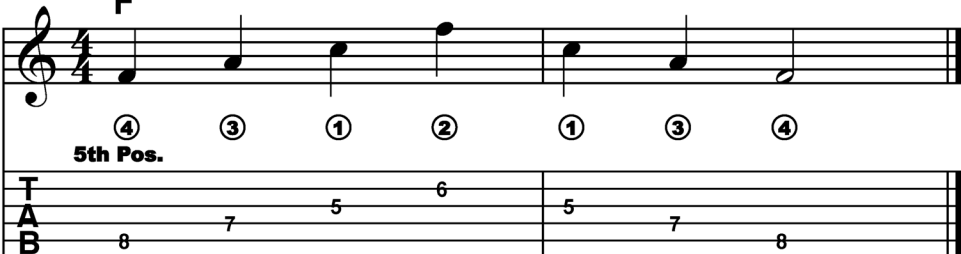
3rd Pos. 5th Pos.

For our final 5th string root arpeggio, let's switch to the key of F and go to the 5th position. The root is played by the 4th finger. This arpeggio is in the 5th position.

F



5fr

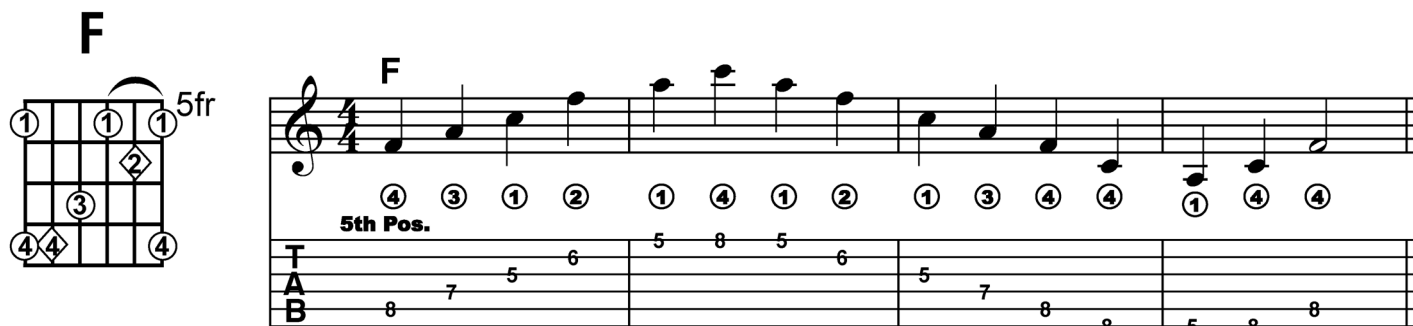


F

5th Pos.

The expanded version covers an octave and a fifth ascending then descends down to the 3rd and back to the root.

F



The diagram shows a 5th position F major arpeggio on a guitar fretboard. The notes are F (1st finger, 5th fret), A (2nd finger, 6th fret), and C (3rd finger, 7th fret). The musical notation shows the arpeggio in 4/4 time, starting on the 5th fret. The notes are F (quarter), A (quarter), C (quarter), F (quarter), A (quarter), C (quarter), F (quarter), A (quarter), C (quarter), F (quarter), A (quarter), C (quarter), F (quarter), A (quarter), C (quarter). The fret numbers are 5, 6, 7, 5, 6, 7, 5, 6, 7, 5, 6, 7, 5, 6, 7. The strings are T, A, B.

Let's Practice & Learn

Practice Challenge 1: Play through the 6th root major triad arpeggios...

A Major (6th String Root Expanded Arpeggios)

- Root on 1st Finger – 5th Position
- Root on 2nd Finger – 4th Position
- Root on 1st Finger – 2nd Position

Bb Major (6th String Root Expanded Arpeggios)

- Root on 1st Finger – 6th Position
- Root on 2nd Finger – 5th Position

- Root on 1st Finger – 3rd Position

C Major (6th String Root Expanded Arpeggios)

- Root on 1st Finger – 8th Position
- Root on 2nd Finger – 7th Position
- Root on 1st Finger – 5th Position

Continue up the neck as far as possible.

Practice Challenge 2: Play through the 5th root major triad arpeggios...

D Major (5th String Root Expanded Arpeggios)

- Root on 1st Finger – 5th Position
- Root on 2nd Finger – 4th Position
- Root on 4th Finger – 2nd Position

Eb Major (5th String Root Expanded Arpeggios)

- Root on 1st Finger – 6th Position
- Root on 2nd Finger – 5th Position
- Root on 4th Finger – 3rd Position

F Major (5th String Root Expanded Arpeggios)

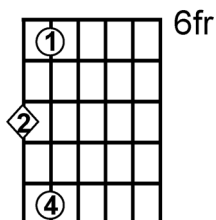
- Root on 1st Finger – 8th Position
- Root on 2nd Finger – 7th Position
- Root on 4th Finger – 5th Position

Continue up the neck as far as possible.

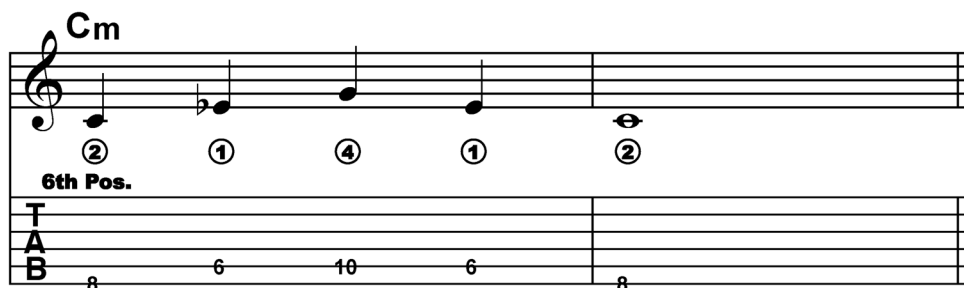
Arpeggios

Next, look at the C minor arpeggio starting with the 6th string root being played by the 2nd finger. This arpeggio is in the 6th position.

Cm

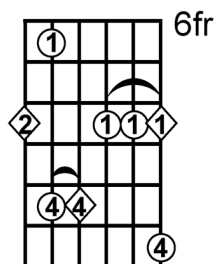


Cm

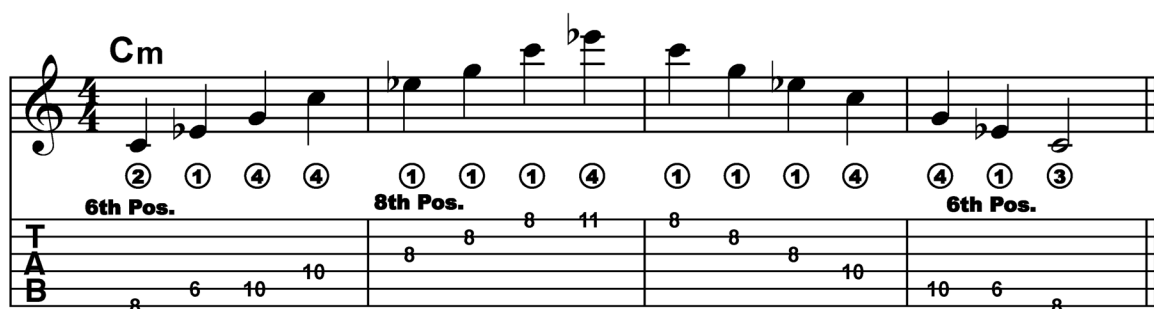


... and the expanded version of this one...

Cm

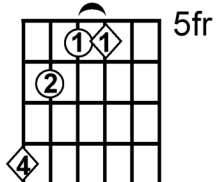


Cm

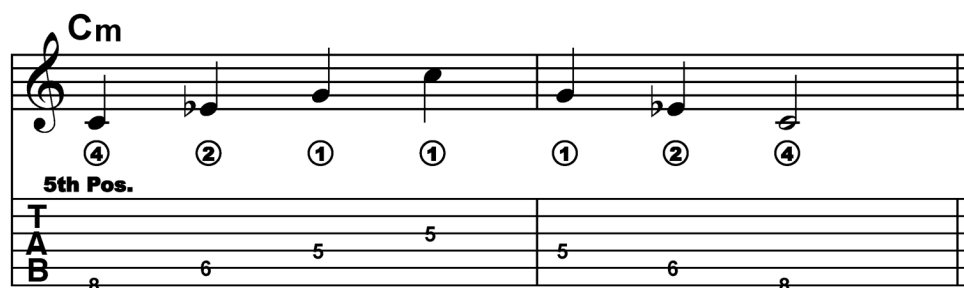


Finally, look at the C minor arpeggio starting with the 6th string root being played by the 4th finger. This arpeggio is played in the 5th position.

Cm

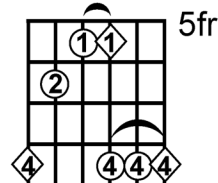


Cm

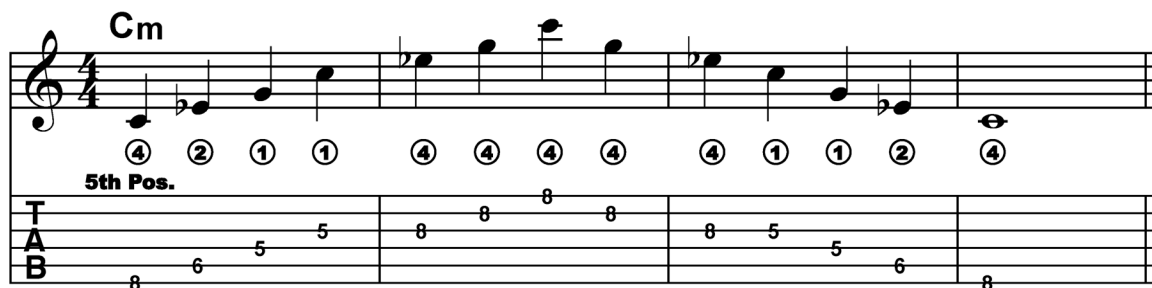


Lastly, the expanded version of the Cm triad with the 4th finger on the 6th string root. This is played in the 5th position.

Cm



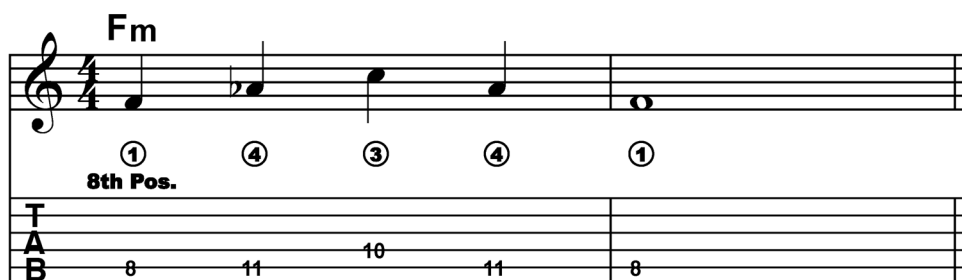
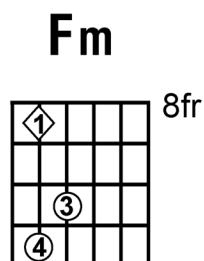
Cm



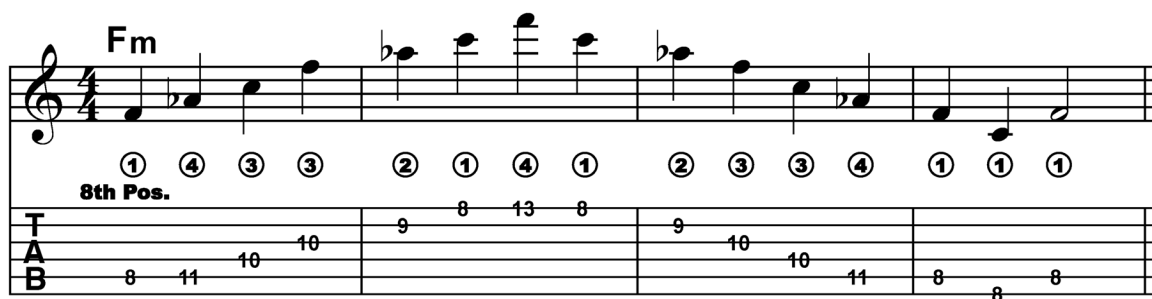
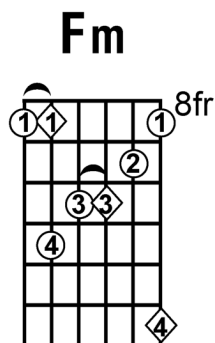
Minor Triad Arpeggios (5th String Root)

The root of the minor arpeggio, like the others, will be played by the 1st, 2nd, or 4th finger primarily. Let's switch to the key of Fm for these examples.

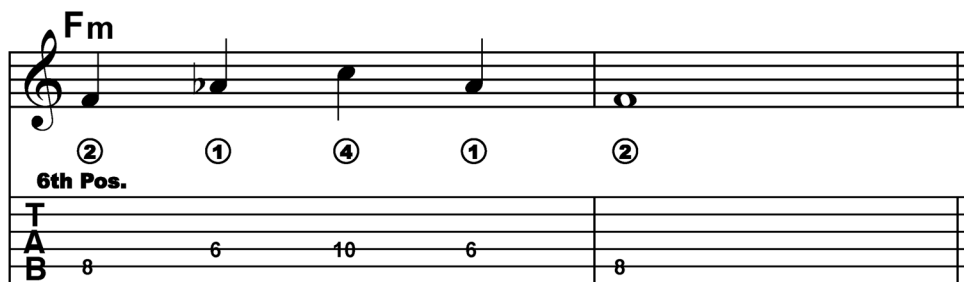
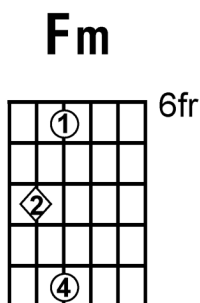
Let's start with the arpeggio starting with the 1st finger playing the 5th string root. Notice this is the same shape as the 6th string root form.



Here is an expanded version covering two octaves in the 8th position.

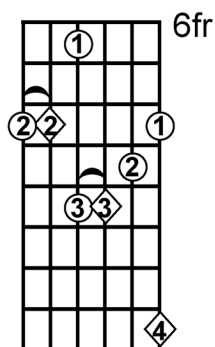


Next, look at the Fm arpeggio starting with the 5th string root being played by the 2nd finger. This arpeggio is in the 6th position.



... and the expanded version...

Fm



Fm

Let's Practice & Learn

Practice Challenge 1: Play through the 6th root minor triad arpeggios...

A Minor (6th String Root Expanded Arpeggios)

- Root on 1st Finger – 5th Position
- Root on 2nd Finger – 4th Position
- Root on 4th Finger – 2nd Position

C Minor (6th String Root Expanded Arpeggios)

- Root on 1st Finger – 8th Position
- Root on 2nd Finger – 7th Position
- Root on 4th Finger – 5th Position

Bb Minor (6th String Root Expanded Arpeggios)

- Root on 1st Finger – 6th Position
- Root on 2nd Finger – 5th Position
- Root on 4th Finger – 3rd Position

Continue up the neck as far as possible.

Practice Challenge 2: Play through the 5th root minor triad arpeggios...

D Minor (5th String Root Expanded Arpeggios)

- Root on 1st Finger – 5th Position
- Root on 2nd Finger – 4th Position
- Root on 4th Finger – 2nd Position

F Minor (5th String Root Expanded Arpeggios)

- Root on 1st Finger – 8th Position
- Root on 2nd Finger – 7th Position
- Root on 4th Finger – 5th Position

Eb Minor (5th String Root Expanded Arpeggios)

- Root on 1st Finger – 6th Position
- Root on 2nd Finger – 5th Position
- Root on 4th Finger – 3rd Position

Continue up the neck as far as possible.

ARPEGGIOS

major & minor triad arpeggios workout

Set 1: Major Triad Arpeggios Workout

6th String Roots

Play major arpeggio ascending and descending. 1st x – Quarter Notes, then 2nd x – Eighth Notes.
Play with metronome at the given bpm.

Root on 2nd Finger (Time: 3 Minutes)

- G Major Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- A Major Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- B Major Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- C Major Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- D Major Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- E Major Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- F Major Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm

Root on 4th Finger (Time: 2 Minutes)

- A Major Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- B Major Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- C Major Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- D Major Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- E Major Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- F Major Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- G Major Extended Arpeggio – 100bpm

Root on 1st Finger (Time: 3 Minutes)

- F Major Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- G Major Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- A Major Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- B Major Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- C Major Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- D Major Extended Arpeggio – 100bpm
- E Major Extended Arpeggio – 110bpm

5th String Roots

Root on 2nd Finger (Time: 2 Minutes)

- C Major Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- D Major Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- E Major Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- F Major Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- G Major Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- A Major Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- B Major Extended Arpeggio – 100bpm

Root on 4th Finger (Time: 2 Minutes)

- D Major Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- E Major Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- F Major Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- G Major Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- A Major Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- B Major Extended Arpeggio – 100bpm
- C Major Extended Arpeggio – 100bpm

Root on 1st Finger (Time: 2 Minutes)

- C Major Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- D Major Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- E Major Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- F Major Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- G Major Extended Arpeggio – 100bpm
- A Major Extended Arpeggio – 100bpm
- B Major Extended Arpeggio – 110bpm

Set 2: Minor Triad Arpeggios Workout

6th String Roots

Play minor arpeggio ascending and descending. 1st x – Quarter Notes, then 2nd x – Eighth Notes. Play with metronome at the given bpm.

Root on 1st Finger (Time: 6 Minutes)

- Fm Extended 1 & 2 Arpeggio – 70bpm
- Gm Extended 1 & 2 Arpeggio – 80bpm
- Am Extended 1 & 2 Arpeggio – 80bpm
- Bm Extended 1 & 2 Arpeggio – 90bpm
- Cm Extended 1 & 2 Arpeggio – 90bpm
- Dm Extended 1 & 2 Arpeggio – 100bpm
- Em Extended 1 & 2 Arpeggio – 110bpm

Root on 4th Finger (Time: 2 Minutes)

- Am Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- Bm Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- Cm Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- Dm Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- Em Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- Fm Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- Gm Extended Arpeggio – 100bpm

Root on 2nd Finger (Time: 3 Minutes)

- Gm Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- Am Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- Bm Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- Cm Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- Dm Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- Em Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- Fm Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm

5th String Roots

Root on 1st Finger (Time: 2 Minutes)

- Cm Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- Dm Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- Em Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- Fm Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- Gm Extended Arpeggio – 100bpm
- Am Extended Arpeggio – 100bpm
- Bm Extended Arpeggio – 110bpm

Root on 4th Finger (Time: 2 Minutes)

- Dm Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- Em Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- Fm Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- Gm Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- Am Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- Bm Extended Arpeggio – 100bpm
- Cm Extended Arpeggio – 100bpm

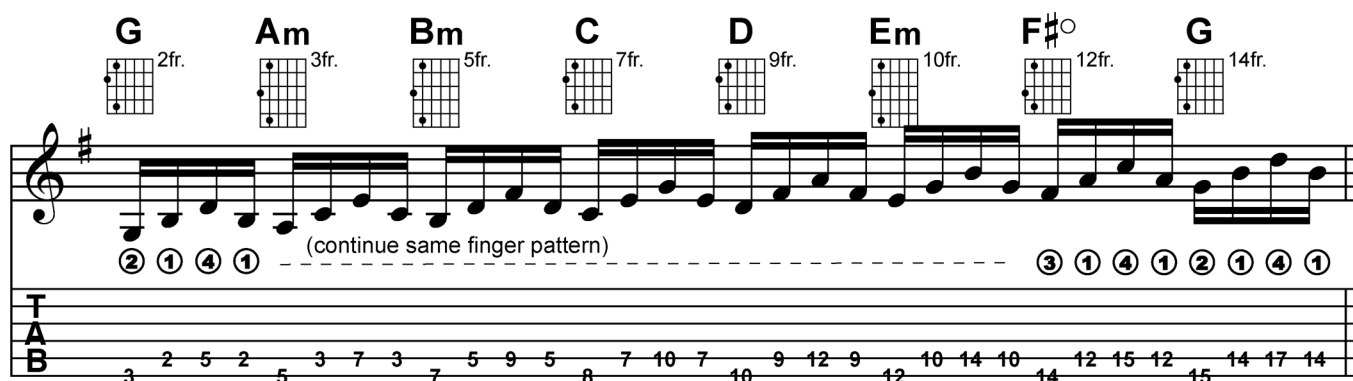
Root on 2nd Finger (Time: 2 Minutes)

- Cm Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- Dm Extended Arpeggio – 70bpm
- Em Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- Fm Extended Arpeggio – 80bpm
- Gm Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- Am Extended Arpeggio – 90bpm
- Bm Extended Arpeggio – 100bpm

Set 3: Arpeggios Up the Scale Workout

Play three note major and minor arpeggios up the harmonized major scale. The same finger patterns work for roots on the 6th, 5th, 4th, and 2nd strings.

Here is the G major scale in triad arpeggios up the neck.



Apply the same finger pattern and play in...

- C Major starting on the 5th string root C at the 3rd fret.
- F Major starting on the 4th string root F at the 3rd fret.
- D Major starting on the 2nd string root D at the 3rd fret.

ARPEGGIOS

jazz arpeggios and licks

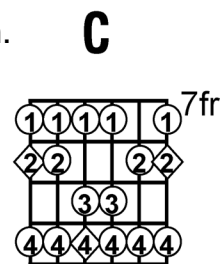
Four Note Jazz Arpeggios (in one position)

Up until this point, we have looked at 3 note (triad) arpeggios. Now, let's look at 4 note arpeggios which work particularly well in Jazz for soloing.

A helpful way to learn these Jazz arpeggios is by doing them in one position.

Here is the C major scale in the 7th position with the 2nd finger on the 6th string root.

If you play 4 note Jazz arpeggios in this position, a helpful pattern of major 7, minor 7, dominant 7 and half-diminished arpeggios starts to be seen.



Practice these ascending arpeggios focusing on the first note root of each arpeggio.

Cmaj7 Dm7 Em7 Fmaj7 G7 Am7 B \emptyset Cmaj7 Dm7 Em7

TAB

8 7 10 9 10 8 7 10 9 7 8 10 9 10 9 7 10 7 10 9 8 9 7 10 10 9 8 7 7 10 9 8 7 10 9 8 7 10

Next, practice them descending...

Em7 Dm7 Cmaj7 B \emptyset Am7 G7 Fmaj7 Em7 Dm7 Cmaj7

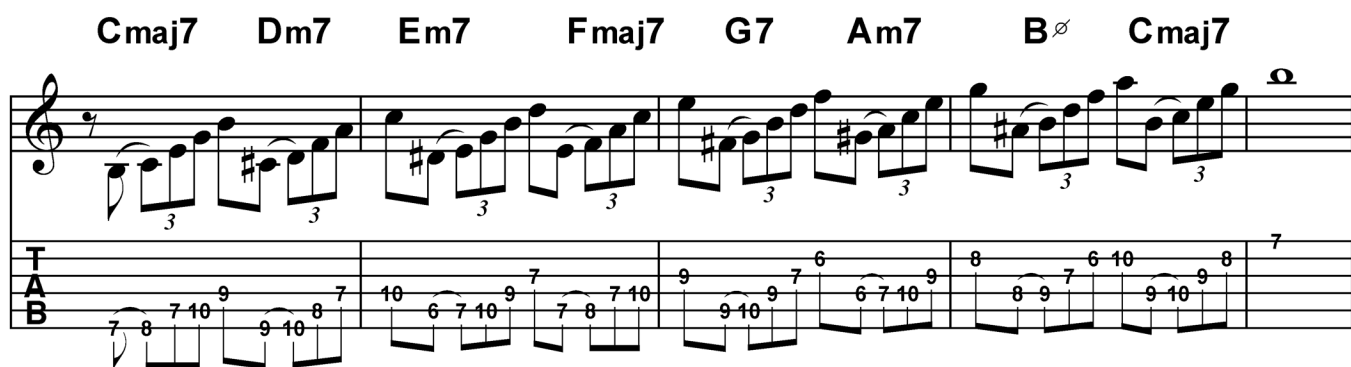
TAB

These 4 note combinations are a great place to start when soloing.

Building Licks from Arpeggios

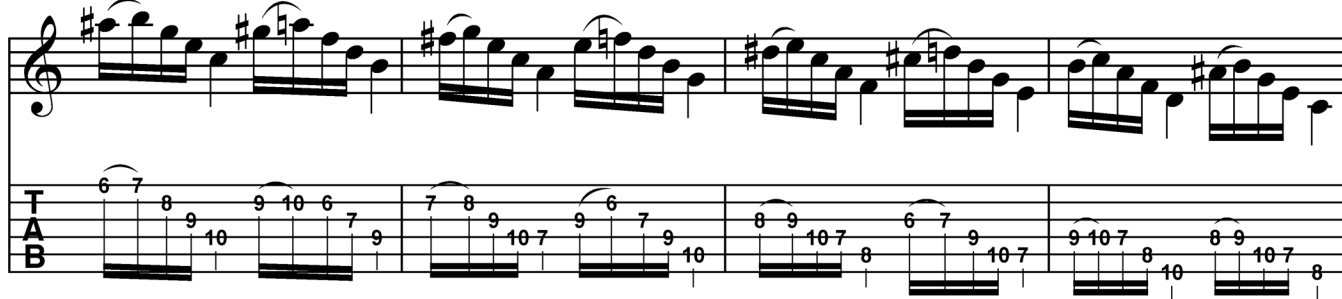
Arpeggios can be a great starting point for Jazz licks. A simple trick is to approach each arpeggio from a half-step below the root of each arpeggio then play a triplet up the arpeggio creating a bebop sounding lick.

Cmaj7 Dm7 Em7 Fmaj7 G7 Am7 B \emptyset Cmaj7



Another idea would be to play a half-step below the last note of each arpeggio descending down to the root...

Cmaj7 B \emptyset Am7 G7 Fmaj7 Em7 Dm7 Cmaj7



Practice these licks and arpeggios in a variety of keys to get the patterns down. Then use them to solo over a Jazz standard like "Autumn Leaves".


Expanding Arpeggio Licks (Ascending)

You can build on the arpeggios on the previous page to create a longer idea.


Let's begin simply by adding one note a scale step down from the ascending arpeggios triplets we did earlier. (The chords in parentheses are common chords that the main chords tend to resolve to.)

Use the track "Arpeggios Jam 1" for this example.

Cmaj7 (Am7) Dm7 (G7) Em7 (Am7) Fmaj7 (Dm7)

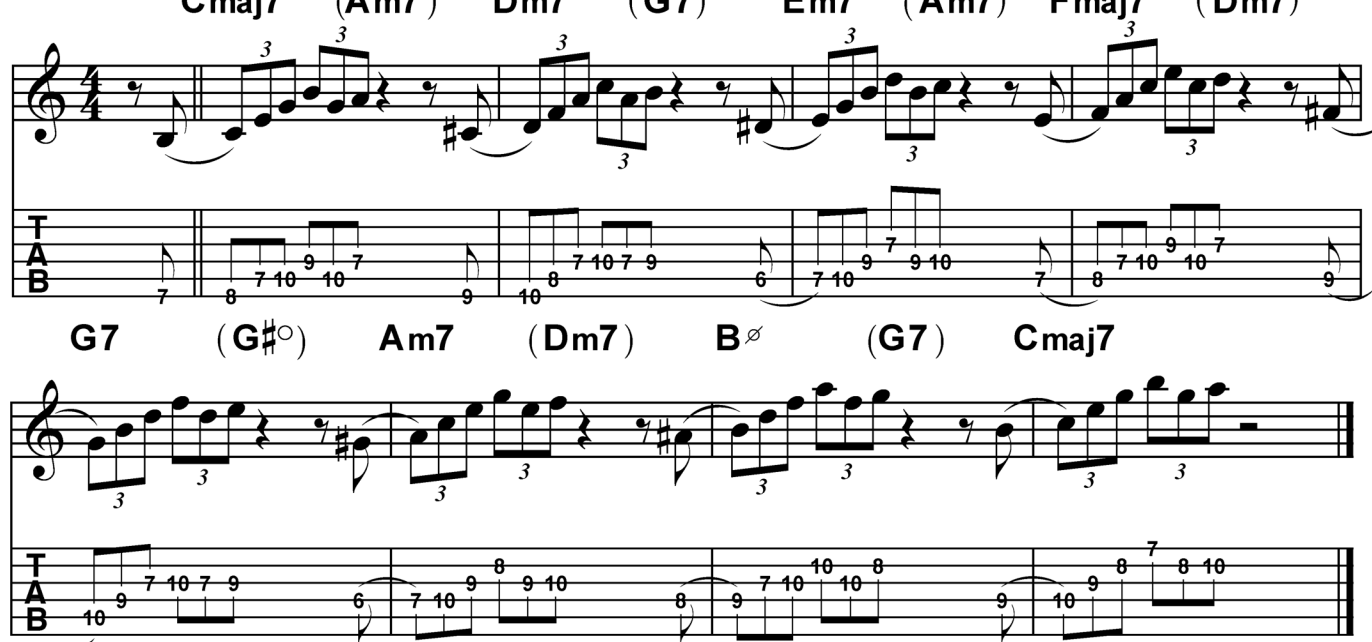


G7 (G#°) Am7 (Dm7) B° (G7) Cmaj7




Now, try adding one more note beneath the final note to create a triplet...

Cmaj7 (Am7) Dm7 (G7) Em7 (Am7) Fmaj7 (Dm7)



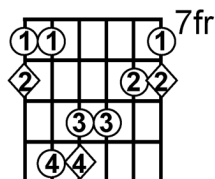
G7 (G#°) Am7 (Dm7) B° (G7) Cmaj7



Four Note Jazz Arpeggios (Expanded)

The four-note arpeggios we've covered can be expanded to include all of the arpeggio notes in one position. The root of each arpeggio is indicated by the diamond.

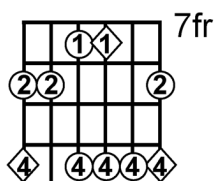
Cmaj7



Cmaj7

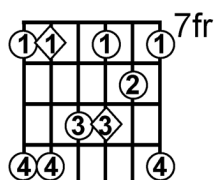
7th Pos.

Dm7



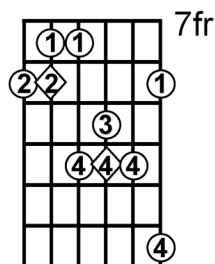
Dm7

Em7



Em7

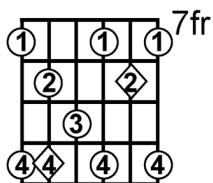
Fmaj7



Fmaj7

7th Pos. 8th Pos. 7th Pos.

G7



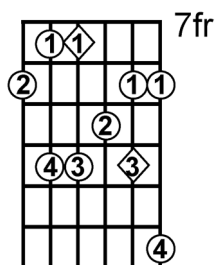
G7

① ④ ② ④ ③ ① ④ ② ① ④

T
A
B

7 10 8 10 9 7 10 8 10 7 9 10 8 10 7

Am7



Am7

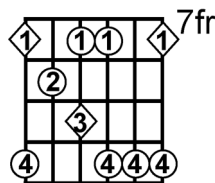
② ① ④ ① ③ ② ① ③ ① ④ ① ③ ① ② ③ ① ④ ① ②

7th Pos. 8th Pos. 7th Pos.

T
A
B

8 7 10 7 10 9 8 10 8 12 8 10 8 9 10 7 10 7 8

Bm7(b5)



Bm7(b5)

① ④ ② ① ③ ① ④ ④ ① ④

T
A
B

7 10 8 7 9 7 10 10 7 10 7 10 10 7 9 7 8 10 7