

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 & minor triads

Major and Minor Triads

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

Let's look at Major and Minor triad arpeggios first.

Inversions, Voicings & String Groupings Oh My!

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.**

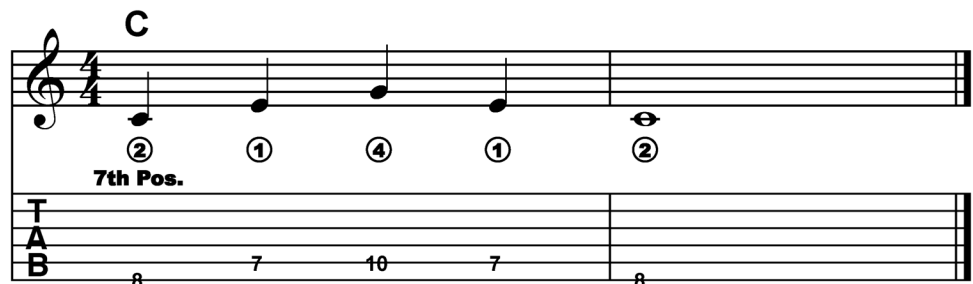
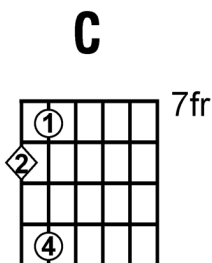
Major Triad Arpeggios (6th String Root)

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.

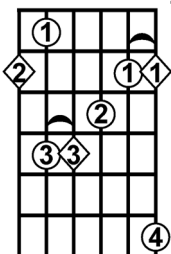
Here are two versions – a simple three note version and an expanded version.

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

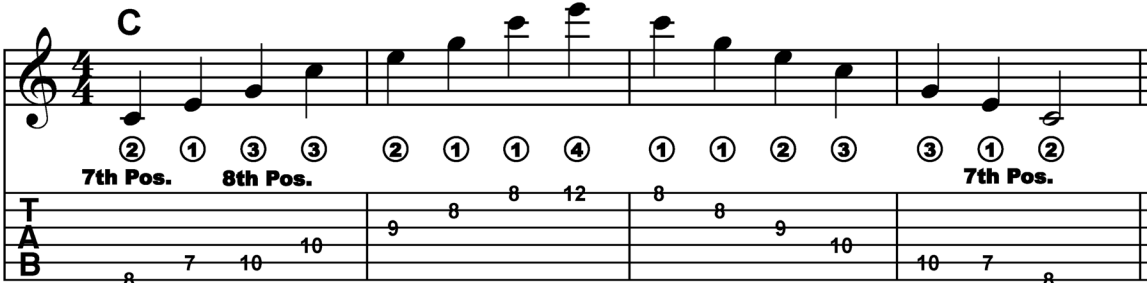


And here is the expanded version covering multiple octaves. Note the fingering changes when playing multiple octaves.

C



7fr

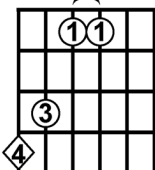


C

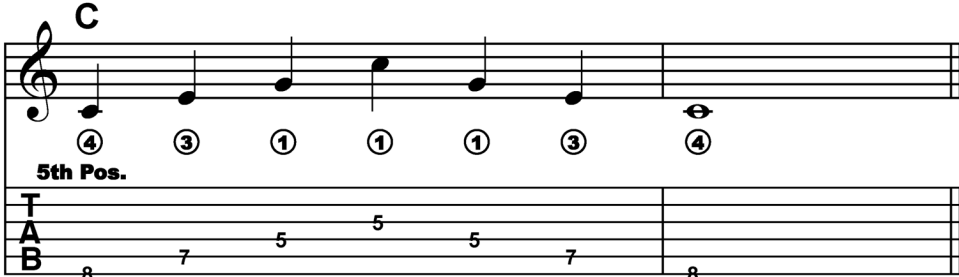
7th Pos. 8th Pos. 7th Pos.

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

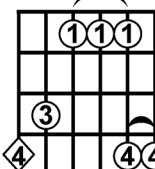


C

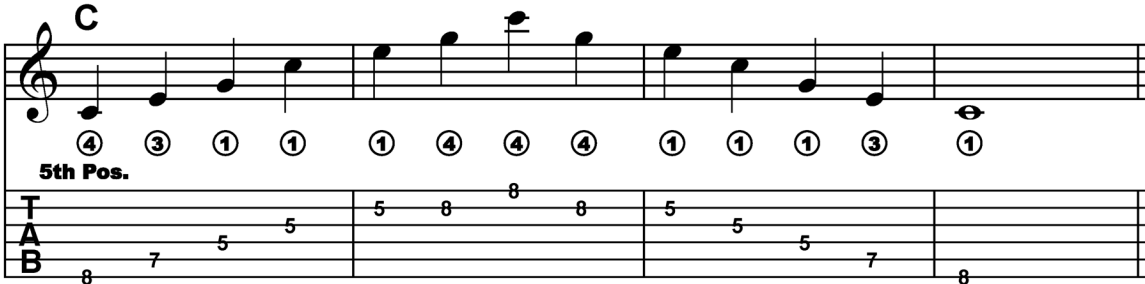
5th Pos.

Here is the expanded version covering multiple octaves.

C



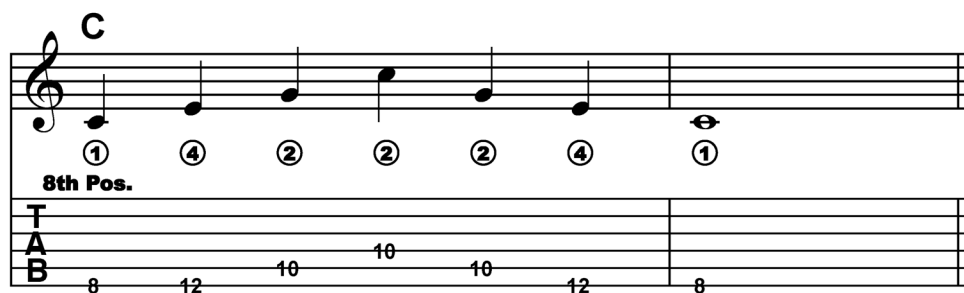
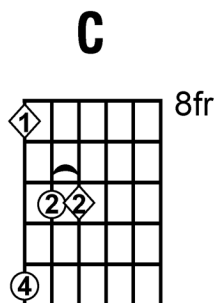
5fr



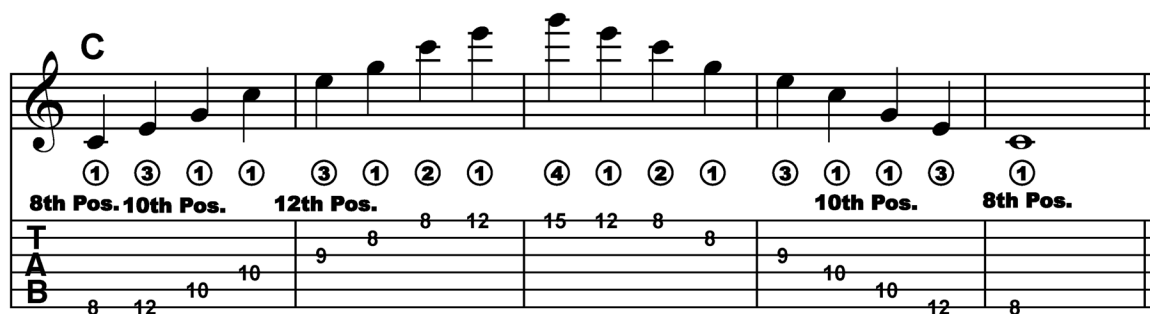
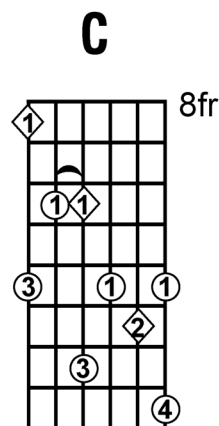
C

5th Pos.

Now look at the final C major arpeggio 6th string root being played by the 1st finger. This arpeggio is in the 8th position.



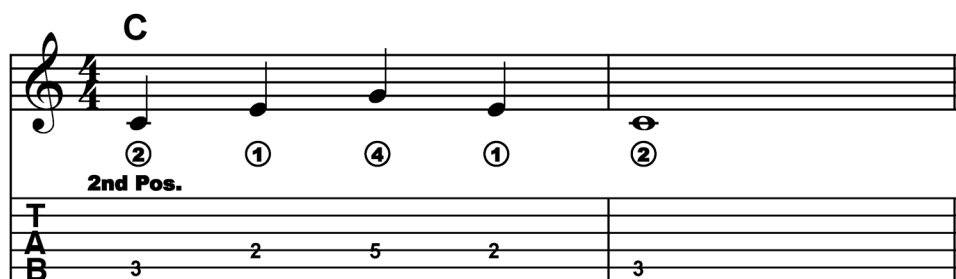
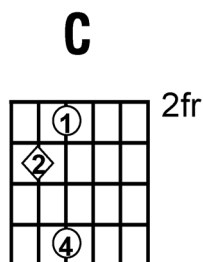
Here is the expanded version covering multiple octaves. Notice the fingering changes from the one octave version.



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.



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

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

4/4

3rd Pos.

T
A
B

3 7 5 7 3

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

① ③ ① ① ① ④ ④ ④ ① ① ① ③ ①

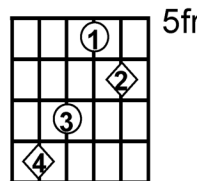
3rd Pos. 5th Pos. 3rd Pos.

T
A
B

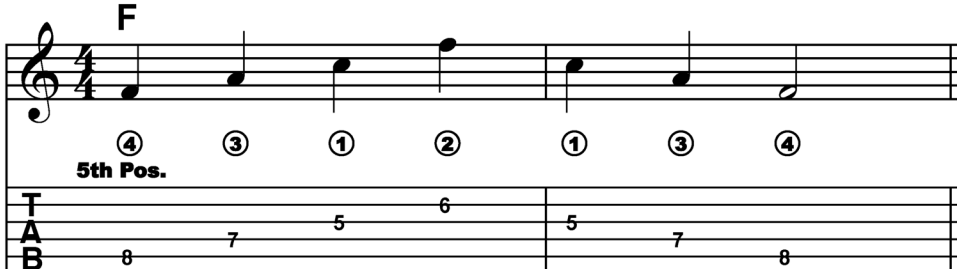
3 7 5 5 5 8 8 5 5 5 7 3

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



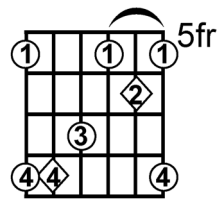
F

5th Pos.

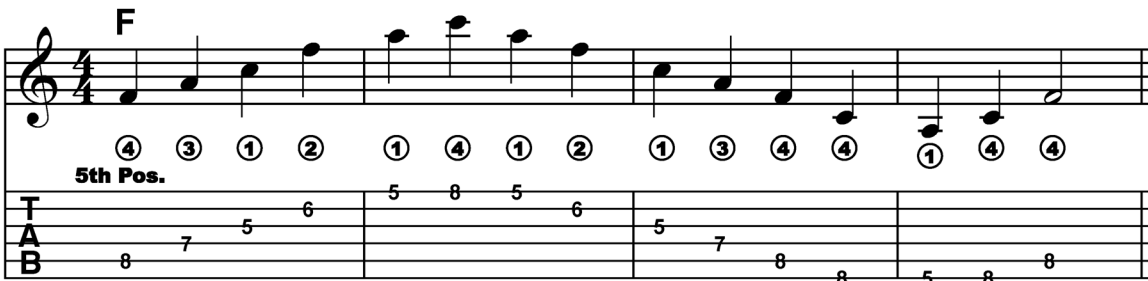
T
A
B

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

F



5fr



F

5th Pos.

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.

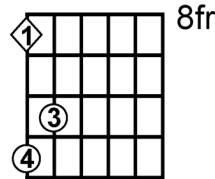
Minor Triad Arpeggios (6th String Root)

The 6th string root of the minor arpeggio will be played by the 1st, 2nd or 4th finger primarily.

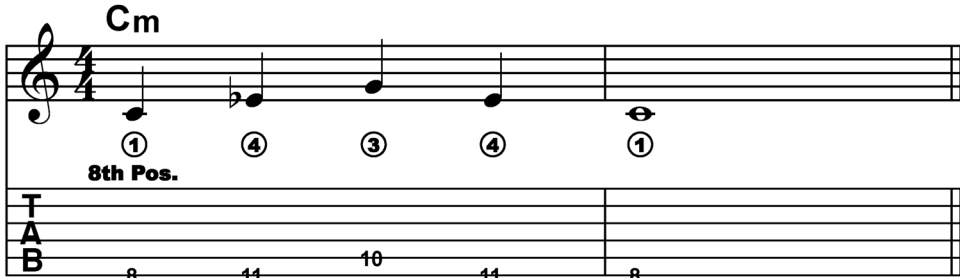
Let's start with the arpeggio starting with the 1st finger playing the 6th string root.

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

Cm



8fr



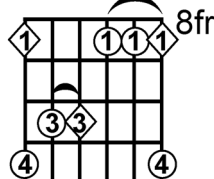
Cm

8th Pos.

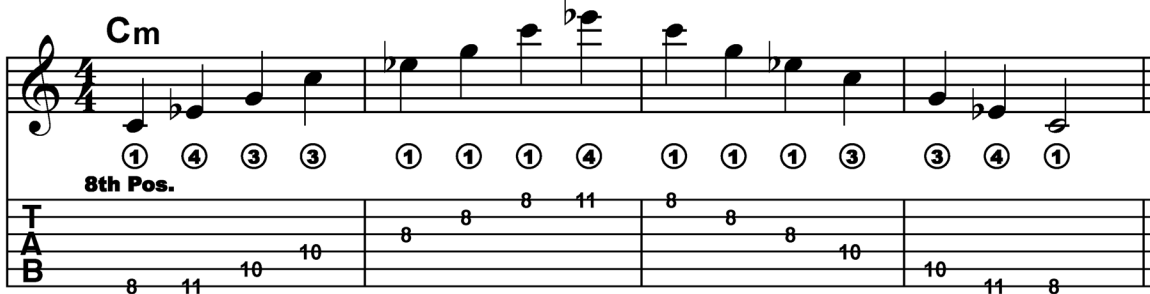
8 11 10 11 8

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

Cm



8fr



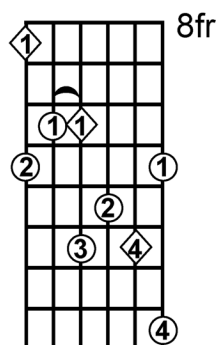
Cm

8th Pos.

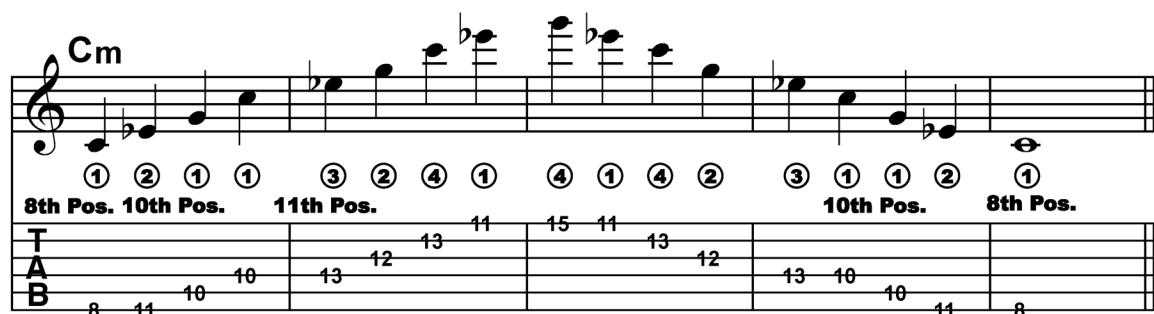
8 11 10 10 8 8 8 11 8 8 8 10 10 11 8

Here is a different expanded version covering two octaves and a half in the 8th & 10th positions.

Cm



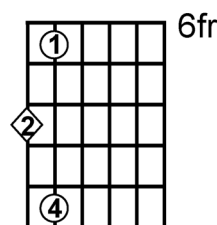
Cm



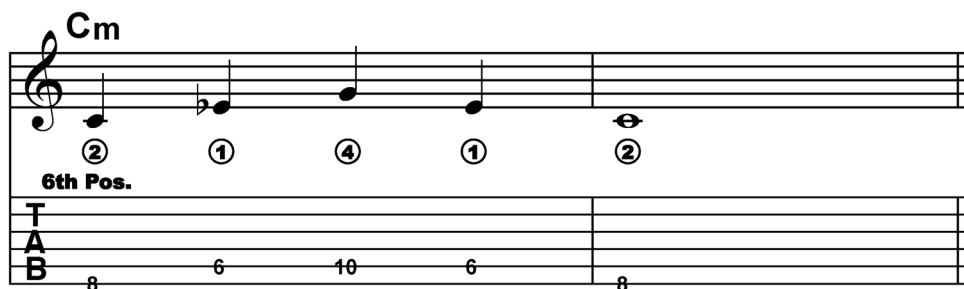
8th Pos. 10th Pos. 11th Pos. 10th Pos. 8th Pos.

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



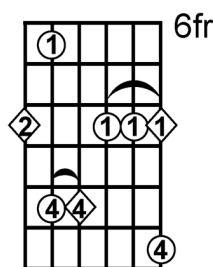
Cm



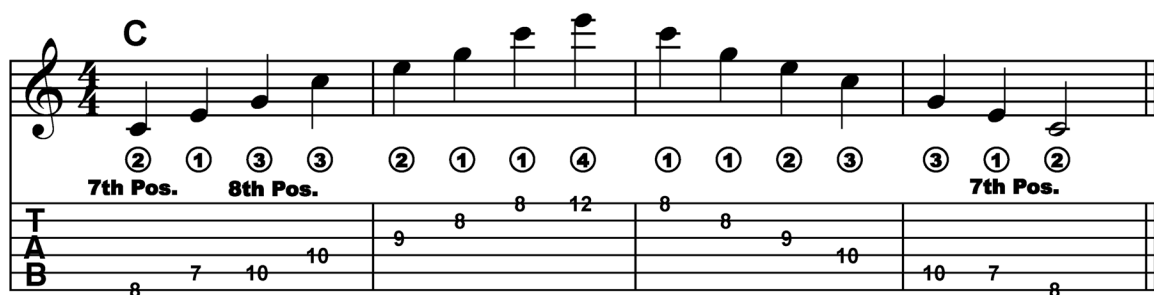
6th Pos.

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

Cm



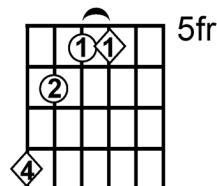
C



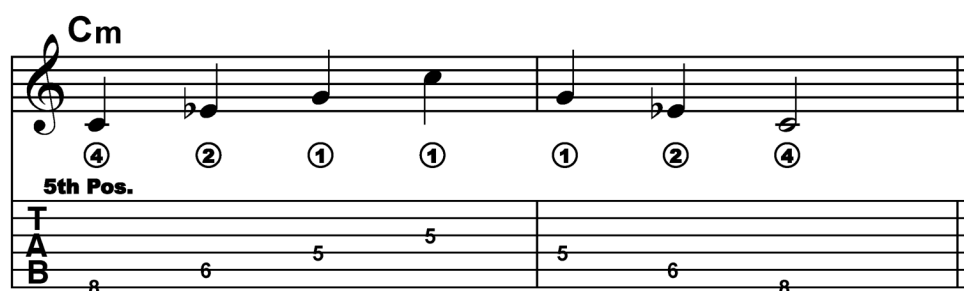
7th Pos. 8th Pos. 7th Pos.

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

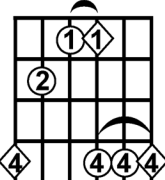


5th Pos.

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

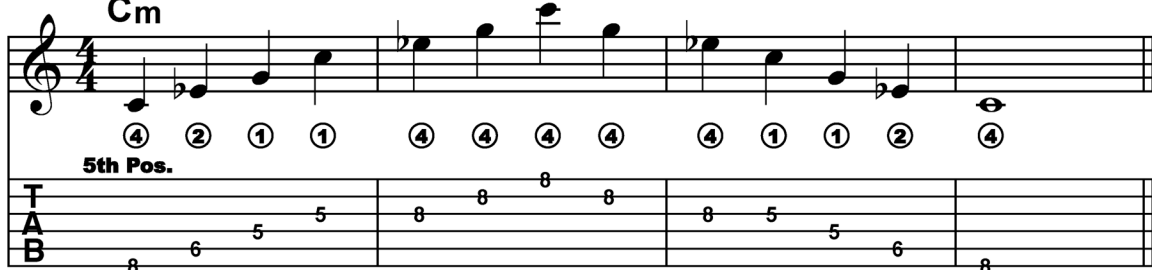
Cm

5fr



Cm

5th Pos.



T
A
B

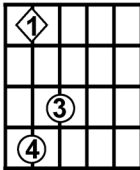
Minor Triad Arpeggios (5th String Root)

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.

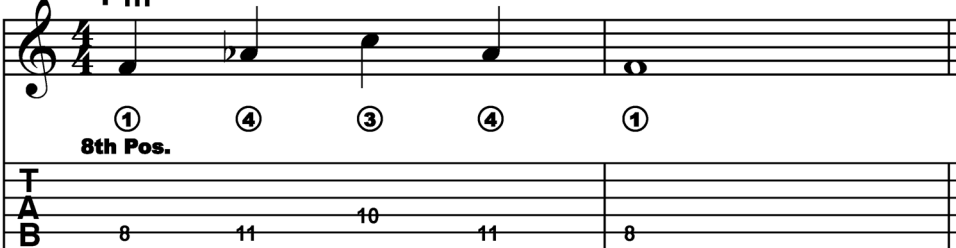
Fm

8fr



Fm

8th Pos.

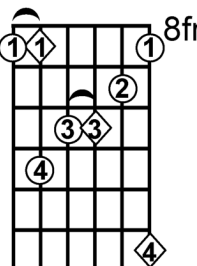


T
A
B

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

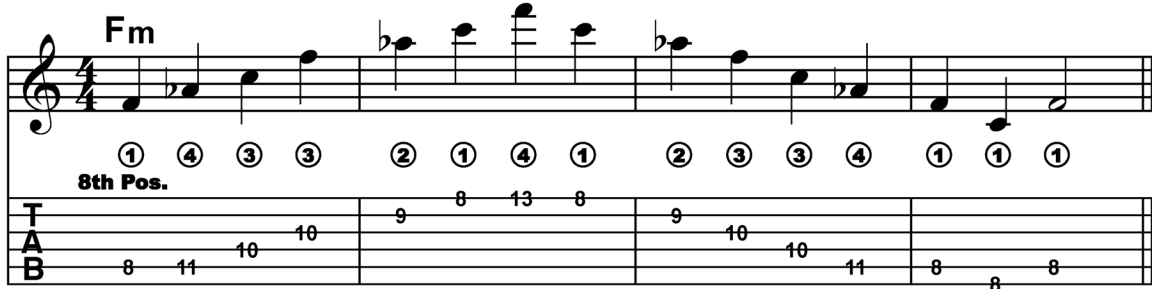
Fm

8fr



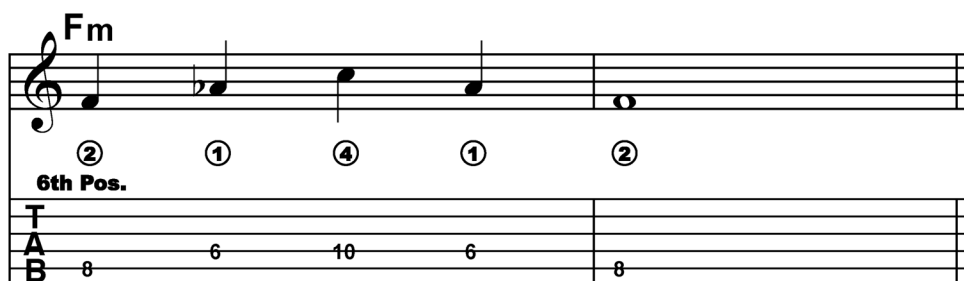
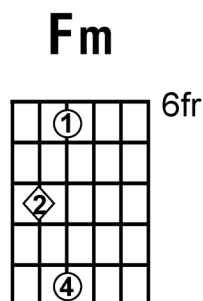
Fm

8th Pos.

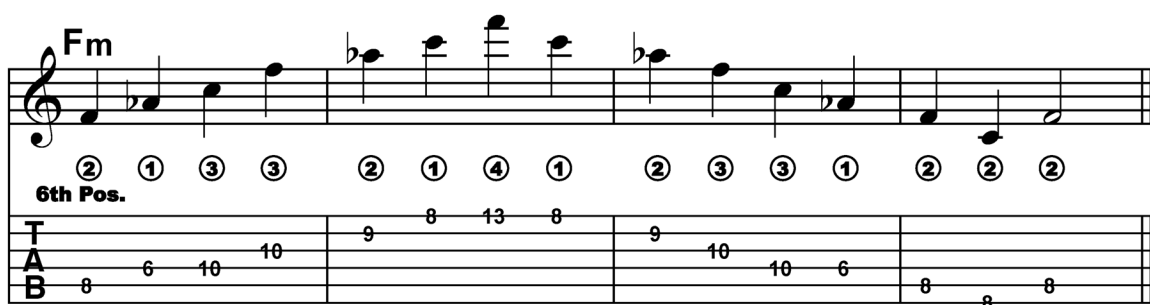
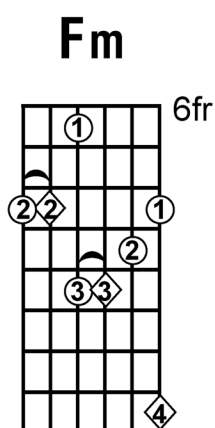


T
A
B

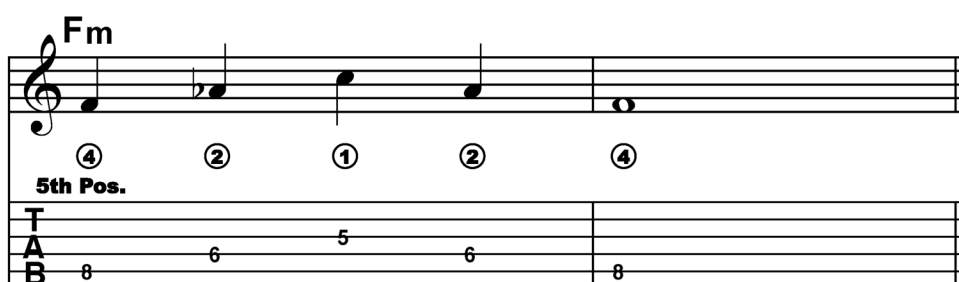
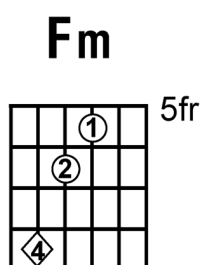
Next, look at the Fm arpeggio starting with the 5th string root being played by the 2nd finger. This arpeggio is in the 6th position.



... and the expanded version...

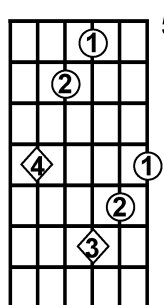


Finally, look at the Fm arpeggio starting with the 5th string root being played by the 4th finger. This arpeggio is played in the 5th position.

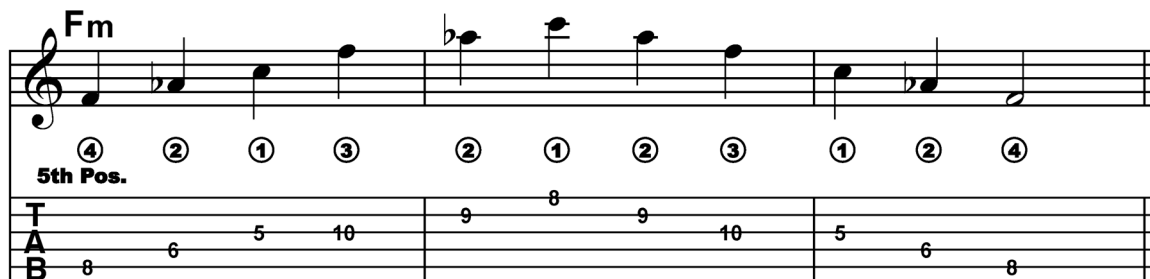


Finally, here is the expanded version...

Fm



5fr



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
- 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
- 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

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
- 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

- 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

Continue up the neck as far as possible.