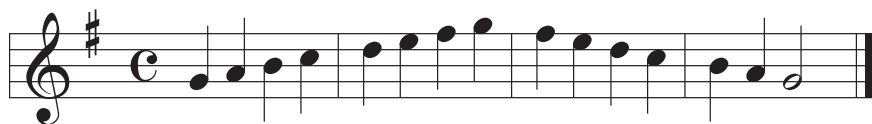


# Practice Routine for Scales

Always use a metronome to control your tempo when you are working on scale technique and maintain the same tempo regardless of the beat subdivisions.

Use the suggested formats for all scales in this book.

The scale fingerings in this book are generally demonstrated in either of the two formats shown below. Most commonly, I have written the scales in an eighth note rhythm.



Even if the scale is written in eighth notes, it may be best to imagine it as being written in quarter notes while you are initially working out the fingering.



Two-way stationary subdivisions of the beat. (4 note repetition)

1 Practice both picking methods.



2 Two-way stationary subdivisions of the beat (pairs)

Practice both picking methods.



Three-way stationary subdivisions of the beat (triplets)

3 Count in the manner shown below the notes. Notice that each beat is divided into three syllables.

Practice both picking methods.



1 & a 2 & a 3 & a 4 & a

A "triplet" is a group of three notes which is played in the time value that is normally allotted to two of that type of note. In the eighth note triplet, each note is equal to one third of the beat. The triplet is usually marked with a "3" either above or below the notes. The bracket is optional. **Triplets will be discussed in more detail in future lessons in this book.**

Notice that when you alternate the pick stroke on the triplets, the first group is struck down-up-down" and the next one is "up-down-up." For now, use this picking format.

(Lesson 2b. continued)

Four-way stationary subdivisions of the beat (sixteenths)

Notice that each beat is now divided into four syllables.

4

Practice both picking methods.

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a etc.

Sixteenth notes are twice as fast as eighth notes.

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The most common subdivisions of the beat are eighths, eighth triplets and sixteenths. It is rare to find thirty-second notes or even smaller time divisions in standard music. If the tempo is slow enough, you may be able to divide each beat into smaller fractions. Suppose that the suggested tempo for a particular song is 180 beats per minute. At this rate, you are already playing three quarter notes per second. If eighth notes occur, you would be playing six of them per second. This should not be impossible but when you try to divide each beat into sixteenth notes, don't be too surprised if the technique becomes a struggle.

It is of paramount importance to use the metronome. Set the tempo slow enough to allow for the four-way sub-division of the beat. As your technique improves, raise the tempo. Don't become a slave to speed but also avoid complacency.

Many students develop a "patent" tempo. In other words, it seems that everything that they play tends to move along at much the same speed. It is important to develop your velocity to the point that when you need the speed, it will be there naturally without taking a great deal of extra effort. Undoubtedly, in the future, you will encounter musical passages where the fingering will pose some problems. Don't expect to become the world's fastest player overnight or perhaps even in your life time. The exceptionally fast players often have better than average hand speed as a natural talent. We mortals usually have to work harder to achieve similar or lessser results than these "super-men" or "super-women."

A tip on picking fast: Most commonly, it is the picking rather than the fingering which is the problem. The guitar draws our attention to the fingering hand and the picking technique tends to take the second chair. As you increase the tempo, you will find that if you have a lot of thumb tip motion in your pick stroke, it will eventually impede your velocity. As you play more quickly, begin eliminating the thumb motion and let the wrist and arm take over the task. In Guitar Fundamentals Primer, it was suggested that you exaggerate the thumb tip motion. The main reason for having any thumb tip action is to allow you to relax the grip on the pick. Over a course of many years of teaching, I have found that students who begin to play immediately with only a wrist and arm action tend to hold the pick very rigidly. The sound that is created tends to be very "pingy." (It is difficult to describe a sound in words) The other common problem is that a rigid grip causes the pick to hook the string on the up stroke. There are some aspects to technique which can be best learned by observing another player who has some mastery of that technique. Using the pick, in general, is certainly one of these situations. Great players make the picking look effortless and nearly invisible.