

Like the foot, the pick has two basic motions: DOWN and UP. Down pick is designated by this sign: ▣
Up pick is designated by this sign: ▽

The first playing attack to be discussed will concern manipulating the pick with the thumb and index finger, the wrist remaining totally relaxed and motionless. This is a push with your thumb and a pull with your index finger in a circular down-up manner.

Place the pick on the top edge of the string. Push it over the string. Now pull it back using the index finger thereby striking the bottom edge of the string.



Practice the above routine on all open strings going through the down-up motion six times on each string.

Next, place the pick on the bottom edge of the string and pull it over the string. Then push it back with the thumb over the top edge.



This motion is to be practiced six times on each open string.

If at any time the tension build up in your arm, wrist or fingers becomes too great, stop, drop your arm to your side for a few seconds and then continue with the practice. The ability play relaxed must be learned at any cost.

The second playing attack to be discussed concerns the use of the wrist with the fingers remaining motionless. The down and up picking will still prevail.

In picking from the wrist, place the pick on the top edge of the 6th string. Now, with a light flick of the wrist, bring the pick to a stop on the 5th string. Allowing the pick to oscillate in the fingers will help to alleviate that "getting tangled in the strings" feeling. At any rate, do not hold the pick too rigidly.



Keep the pick "in" the strings.
Only the very tip of the pick is used.



(Editor: In several discussions with Tony, it became evident that his conclusion was much the same as mine. There does not seem to be any "perfect method" to the concept of picking and each player, over a course of time will establish his or her own way. It is also very difficult to describe in words what is really happening in the right hand. A teacher demonstration is generally the best at this point. Relaxing the picking hand is the ultimate goal. Tony also noted that most guitar instruction books spend little effort in describing the picking action and as a consequence, most guitar teachers seem to spend little time in urging students to develop a smooth picking technique. **G.A.)**

Whatever direction the pick is travelling in, it should be brought to a stop on the next string. This will help develop a proper picking arch. This will doubtlessly be modified by you when you have established "**your**" picking technique. The pick feeling should be one of rubbing the strings rather than tapping.

Remember to use the elbow to move the pick from string to string.

In general, picking the strings will be practiced as follows: 1. all down strokes (6 attacks) 2. All up stokes (6 attacks) 3. Down and up strokes (6 attacks) 4. Up and down strokes (6 attacks) Play each string 6 times starting on the first string and moving in succession to the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th. Then from the 6th to the 5th, 4th, 3rd, 2nd and 1st. The wrist or the index finger and thumb creat a pulse to attack each string in passing.