

# Part 6. Fingerpicking (from Advanced Instruction Book)

You do not have to play the Strumstick with a pick only, you can also use your fingers. The fingers give a little softer, less bright sound than a pick. The simplest way to use your fingers is to simple pluck a string with your thumb (use the side of your thumb, moving down) or with your 1st finger (use the tip of your finger, curling up across the string). This is a good way to play single notes, and to get used to using thumb and finger (you may use the 2nd finger, also).

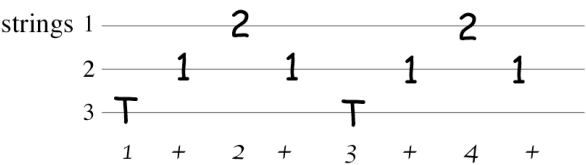
There are a few more complicated ways to use your fingers, let's look at a few of them. These patterns are most useful at first with chords; even simple melodies need certain strings played over and over, and that does not happen with these patterns. You can add bits of melody in, though, with some of the later ones.

These are diagrams for fingerpicking with the right hand. The horizontal lines are the strings. The top string, number 1 in the diagram, is the 1st string (closest to the ground) on the Strumstick. The diagram is "upside-down: because that is the way you see your fingers on the strings as you watch yourself play.

The bold numbers ( **T**, **1**, or **2** ) are thumb, 1st finger, or 2nd finger. The italic numbers on the bottom are the rhythm. Practice any one pattern slowly and steadily until it feels like you do not have to think about each note to keep it going. Then work on speeding it up a bit until it feels like it is "rolling along" all by itself. These patterns sound different (more sparkly) when they are at a faster speed than you will use when you first learn them.

## Arpeggio

### Pattern # 1



This pattern is a simple arpeggio, up and down. Do it while fingering any note or chord. You could change notes or chords as you go along, also.

**Arpeggio**  
**Pattern # 2**

strings 1 ————— 2 ————— 2 —————

2 ————— 1 ————— 1 —————

3 T ————— T —————

1 2 3 1 2 3

This is an arpeggio in 3 (3 beats to the measure). Count 1 2 3 1 2 3 , like a waltz.

**Arpeggio**  
**Pattern # 3**

strings 1 ————— 2 ————— 2 —————

2 ————— 1 ————— 1 —————

3 T ————— T —————

1 2 3 1 2 3

This is another arpeggio in 3

**Pattern # 4a** **Alternating**

strings 1 — 1 — 1 — 1 —

2 — T — T —

3 T — T —

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

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This is an alternating pattern.

**Pattern #4b** **Alternating**

Note you could use the 2nd finger instead of the 1st:

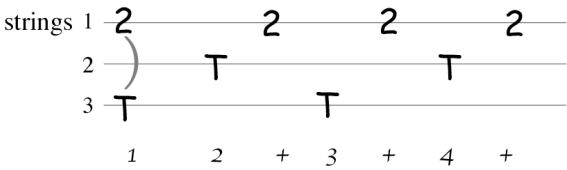
strings 1 — 2 — 2 — 2 — 2 —

2 — T — T —

3 T — T —

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

**Pattern # 5    Alternating**

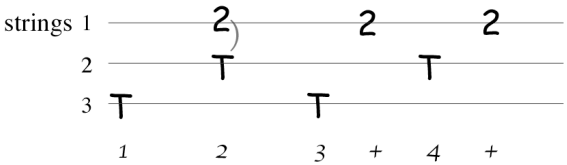


This is another kind of alternating pattern, starting with a “pinch” Thumb and 2nd finger play at the same time on the 1 beat. The curved line shows they are played together with a pinching motion. Note the rhythm.

**The “Pinch” -- > ) is useful for getting a melody note on the 1st beat.**

**Pattern # 6    Alternating**

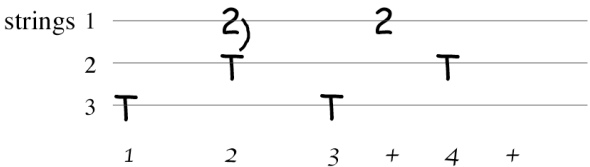
You can actually do the pinch on any beat (but don’t do the offbeat following it).



This pattern has some more space between notes, starts with a thumb, and a beat later does a pinch with 2nd and 1st strings. Count the Rhythm. Remember you could use finger 1 instead of finger 2 on the 1st string if you like.

**Important variation on any pattern! Skip the last “+”**

**Pattern # 6b    Alternating**



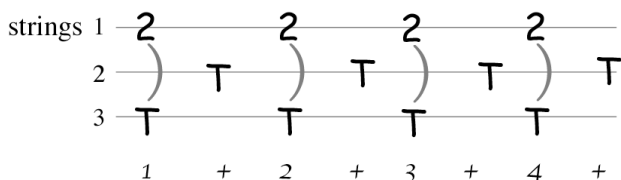
With any pattern: you can leave the last finger off the end (eliminating the last "+"). It gives a little more space, and a little more time to change chords if you are doing chords. A very useful variation.

After you have several of these patterns working smoothly, try mixing them up. Play one for a while, and then another as you go through a song.

If you try all these patterns, you may get the idea that you could make up more, using pieces of these, and changing the rhythm. You would be correct.

For really advanced fingerpicking, you combine patterns or pieces of patterns with a complex melody. Try this:

### Pattern # 7



A pattern like #7, played at a slow beat will give you lots of melody opportunity; pinch the 2nd string, too, try mixing in other patterns.

### Hammering-on and Pulling-off with fingerpicking:

Any time you pick a note, on any string, you can Hammer-on or Pull-off an extra note (usually a half beat later). [That is explained on page 13](#). You should be comfortable with the technique strumming before trying it with fingerpicking.

If you are fingerpicking, it is nice if there is no note a half beat after the note you pick, so there is a space to hear the Hammer-on note without it being covered up by another string getting picked. Pattern number 5 is especially useful, with the 1 beat space after the first pinch. However, you may try a Hammer-on, or Pull-off, or a Slide within any pattern. These effects add ornamental notes and can help when playing a melody while fingerpicking because it creates an additional note on a string that is not getting picked.