

STEP 4. PRACTICE ARPEGGIOS.

Practice "pima"

1. Set the thumb on the 5th string. Place the "a" finger between the 1st and 2nd strings. Place the "m" finger between the 2nd and 3rd strings. Place the "i" finger between the 3rd and 4th strings. **Consider this the "home position" for those fingers.** (Playing the inner strings instead of the first three strings makes the 1st string a boundary line for the "a" finger).

2. Pluck the 5th string with the thumb. Be sure the fingers stay in their home positions.

3. After plucking the 5th string, set the thumb on the 6th string.

4. **Pluck** the 4th string with "i". Be sure "m" and "a" stay in their home positions.

5. Allow the "i" finger to IMMEDIATELY **return** to its starting position in front of the string by releasing the tension created when the finger plucked the string. Think: let go, empty the finger of its tension, relax the finger. Use whatever phrase connects with you so that *gravity* pulls the finger back to its starting position. Do NOT forcibly push the finger back.

6. **Pluck** the 3rd string with "m". Be sure "i" and "a" remain in their home positions.

7 Allow the "m" finger to IMMEDIATELY **return** to its starting position in front of the string by releasing the tension created when the finger plucked the string. Think: let go, empty the finger of its tension, relax the finger. Use whatever phrase connects with you so that *gravity* pulls the finger back to its starting position. Do NOT forcibly push the finger back.

8. **Pluck** the 2nd string with "a". Be sure "i" and "m" are still in their home positions.

9. Allow the "a" finger to IMMEDIATELY **return** to its starting position in front of the string by releasing the tension created when the finger plucked the string. Think: let go, empty the finger of its tension, relax the finger. Use whatever phrase connects with you so that *gravity* pulls the finger back to its starting position. Do NOT forcibly push the finger back.

Keep repeating steps 2 through 9 VERY SLOWLY.

Set your metronome at 70 or 72 for a quarter note (crochet). Play whole notes (semibreves). In other words, *the metronome will tick four times for each note you pluck.*

This will seem like it is way too slow, but do it. It is important to be aware of the near-total relaxed state of the fingers and hand. The goal is to imprint on your brain that this is now the normal state of your hand when playing the guitar.

- During the time between plucking the strings, feel how loose the fingers feel just hanging there in position. Do not ignore this step of *feeling the near-total relaxation of the fingers*. It is as important as the actual strokes.
- Be certain your head is in a position where you can clearly see the movements of the fingers.
- Keep all three fingers ("ima") precisely positioned in front of their string in their home positions. **Especially watch the "a" finger. Sometimes it will fail to completely release its tension and therefore will not return to its starting position, or will follow-through too far, or even curl up.**

The PLUCK-RETURN technique should also be used when planting techniques are employed to play arpeggios.

VIDEO #5: ARPEGGIOS.



Tech Tip Free Stroke Pluck Return Video 5 ARPEGGIOS

CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com

Practice "pimami"

Use the same techniques as above for the "pima" pattern.

CAUTION: This arpeggio pattern is more difficult than the preceding pattern. When "m" plays the second-to-last note, it will tend to pull the "a" finger out of its home position. When "i" plays the final note, it will tend to pull the "m" and "a" fingers out of their home positions. Be vigilant! **Each finger should always stay in its home position except for the millisecond it takes the finger to pluck a string.**

Practice extremely slowly. It is important to be aware of the near-total relaxed state of the fingers and hand. The goal is to imprint on your brain that this is now the normal state of your hand when playing the guitar.

APPLY THE TECHNIQUE TO YOUR PIECES

To apply this technique to pieces you play, you must be able to focus nearly 100% on the right hand. Therefore, choose pieces you already play really well that you don't have to look at the left hand to play. BUT PLAY THEM OR PASSAGES FROM THEM VERY SLOWLY. Be sure you are using the PLUCK-RETURN technique on chords, intervals, single notes, and arpeggios.

VIDEO #6: REPERTOIRE.



Tech Tip Free Stroke Pluck Return Video 6 REPERTOIRE

CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com