

Lesson #6: Single-Note Patterns Using the Alternating Thumb Technique

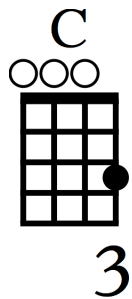
Continue in the style of pattern-based fingerpicking on the ukulele. In the previous lesson, you used the four-finger picking technique to play two patterns and a song. Now, take a look at patterns that use the alternating thumb picking technique, as explained previously in Lesson #4.

In this lesson, learn:

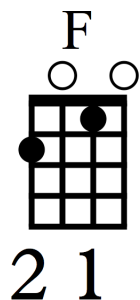
- Fingerpicking patterns that use the alternating thumb picking technique
- Practice patterns that expand your fingerpicking pattern “vocabulary”
- To fingerpick and sing *Auld Lang Syne*

Chords Used In This Lesson

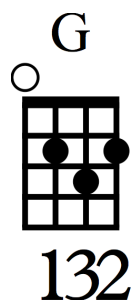
Make sure you’re familiar with the following chords used in this lesson:



To play a **C major chord**, place your ring finger on the 3rd fret of the bottom A-string. Let the top three strings ring open.



To play an **F major chord**, place your middle finger on the 2nd fret of the top g-string and your index finger on the 1st fret of the E-string. Let the C-string and A-string ring open.



To play a **G major chord**, place your ring finger on the 2nd fret of the bottom A-string, index finger on the 2nd fret of the C-string, and middle finger on the 3rd fret of the E-string. Let the top g-string ring open.

“Outside-In” Fingerpicking Pattern (Alternating Thumb Technique)

The alternating thumb technique is useful because it only uses your thumb, index, and middle fingers. For some (like guitar players), this technique can seem more intuitive because you use your thumb to pluck the C-string, which is the lowest tuned string on a standard-tuned ukulele.

This time, to play the “outside-in” pattern, use the alternating thumb picking technique, where you assign your thumb (represented by a *p*) to pluck the top g-string and C-string, index finger (represented by an *i*) to the E-string, middle finger (represented by an *m*) to the bottom A-string.

C

1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and

T
A
B

p m p i

In this example, notice the pattern is subdivided into eighth notes rather than played in quarter notes (like in Lesson #5). To count eighth notes, say “and” between the number counts like: *1 and, 2 and, 3 and, 4 and*.

The reason for using eighth notes in these patterns is because it adds a more complex and intricate sound to songs that are intended to be played at a slower tempo. From here on out, most of the patterns presented will be based around eighth note rhythms, like in the example above.

As you practice this pattern, aim to pluck each string as evenly in volume and tone as possible. For example, the strings you pluck with your thumb should be close to the same volume as the strings you pluck with your other fingers. Stay loose and relaxed!

Then, try your hand at switching between a C and G chord every measure:

C

G

1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and

T
A
B

p m p i

“Inside-Out” Fingerpicking Pattern (Alternating Thumb Technique)

Now, practice the “inside-out” fingerpicking pattern using the alternating thumb technique:

Make sure to practice these patterns with chord changes too. Practice switching between a C and an F chord while playing the “inside-out” pattern every measure:

Practice Fingerpicking Patterns

I encourage you to try to come up with your own fingerpicking patterns. As long as it’s done in good timing, it’s just a matter of rearranging the order in which you’re plucking the strings. Give it a shot and expand your patter “vocabulary” by practicing the following patterns. For the first two patterns, use the alternating thumb technique, and for the last two, use the four-finger picking technique:

Alternating Thumb Picking Technique (Practice Patterns 1 & 2)

C

4/4

TAB

3 0 3 0 3 0 3 0

p m p i

Detailed description: This block contains the first practice pattern for the Alternating Thumb Picking Technique. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature, showing a C major chord (C4, E4, G4) with a steady eighth-note melody. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with a 4/4 time signature, showing a C major chord (0, 2, 3) with a steady eighth-note bass line. The picking pattern is indicated by 'p m p i' below the first measure, where 'p' is the thumb, 'm' is the middle finger, and 'i' is the index finger. The sequence of notes in the bass line is 0, 2, 3, 0, 2, 3, 0, 2, 3, 0.

C

4/4

TAB

0 0 3 0 0 3 0 0 3 0 0 3

p i p m

Detailed description: This block contains the second practice pattern for the Alternating Thumb Picking Technique. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature, showing a C major chord (C4, E4, G4) with a steady eighth-note melody. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with a 4/4 time signature, showing a C major chord (0, 2, 3) with a steady eighth-note bass line. The picking pattern is indicated by 'p i p m' below the first measure, where 'p' is the thumb, 'i' is the index finger, 'p' is the thumb, and 'm' is the middle finger. The sequence of notes in the bass line is 0, 2, 3, 0, 2, 3, 0, 2, 3, 0, 2, 3, 0.

Four-Finger Picking Technique (Practice Patterns 3 & 4)

C

4/4

TAB

0 0 3 0 0 3 0 0 3 0 0 3

i p m a

Detailed description: This block contains the first practice pattern for the Four-Finger Picking Technique. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature, showing a C major chord (C4, E4, G4) with a steady eighth-note melody. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with a 4/4 time signature, showing a C major chord (0, 2, 3) with a steady eighth-note bass line. The picking pattern is indicated by 'i p m a' below the first measure, where 'i' is the index finger, 'p' is the thumb, 'm' is the middle finger, and 'a' is the ring finger. The sequence of notes in the bass line is 0, 2, 3, 0, 2, 3, 0, 2, 3, 0, 2, 3, 0.

C

4/4

TAB

3 0 0 3 0 0 3 0 0 3 0 0 3

a i p m

Detailed description: This block contains the second practice pattern for the Four-Finger Picking Technique. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature, showing a C major chord (C4, E4, G4) with a steady eighth-note melody. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with a 4/4 time signature, showing a C major chord (0, 2, 3) with a steady eighth-note bass line. The picking pattern is indicated by 'a i p m' below the first measure, where 'a' is the ring finger, 'i' is the index finger, 'p' is the thumb, and 'm' is the middle finger. The sequence of notes in the bass line is 0, 2, 3, 0, 2, 3, 0, 2, 3, 0, 2, 3, 0.

The above patterns just use a C chord. Be sure to practice these patterns using and switching to other chords as well.

Play “Auld Lang Syne”

To play *Auld Lang Syne* on the next page, use the “inside-out” pattern. When you get the hang of that, try any of the other patterns in the examples above to fingerpick the chords of this song.

As before, take the time you need to individually practice the chords and fingerpicking pattern used in this song. The more comfortable your fingers are with the chords and the pattern, the easier it will be to play the song steadily and smoothly.

Additionally, before trying to hum or sing the melody of the song, just practice playing through the song’s chord progression. When you’re comfortable with that, then try to add in a melody.

AULD LANG SYNE

TRADITIONAL
Arr. BRETT MCQUEEN

♩ = 78 C G C F

Should auld ac quain - tance be for got, And nev - er brought to mind? Should

1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and

TAB 4/4

0 0 3 0 0 3 2 3 2 0 0 3 0 0 3 0 1 0 1 0

p i p m p i p m

5 C G F C Chorus

auld ac quain - tance be for got, And days of auld lang syne? For

TAB 4/4

0 0 3 0 0 3 2 3 2 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 0 3 0 0 3

9 G C F

auld lang syne, my dear, For auld lang syne, We'll

TAB 4/4

0 0 3 0 0 3 2 3 2 0 0 3 0 0 3 0 1 0 0 1 0

2

13 C G F C

tak' a cup o' kind - ness yet, For auld lang syne.

T
A
B

0 0 3 0 0 3 2 3 2 0 1 0 0 1 0 3 0 0 0

Practice Objectives

Make it a goal to practice the following before moving to the next lesson:

1. Play the “outside-in” and “inside-out” patterns using the alternating thumb technique
2. Change chords smoothly while keeping the fingerpicking pattern consistent and steady
3. Learn and play the four practice fingerpicking patterns in this lesson
4. Fingerpick while singing/humming/whistling the melody to *Auld Lang Syne* playing the “inside-out” pattern using the alternating thumb technique
5. Play *Auld Lang Syne* using the other practice patterns
6. Try coming up with your own fingerpicking patterns

I think that’s enough for this lesson! When you’re ready, move to the next lesson. See you there!