

Lesson #8: Simultaneous Patterns Using the Alternating Thumb Technique

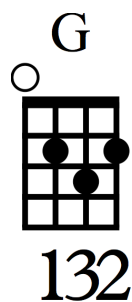
Like the last lesson, in this lesson, continue to focus on simultaneous pinched patterns, but this time, learn patterns that use the alternating thumb technique. Additionally, start to explore the world of syncopation to add some flair to your picking patterns.

In this lesson, learn:

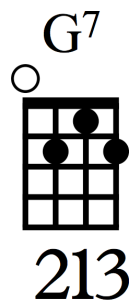
- Simultaneous pinched fingerpicking patterns that use the alternating thumb picking technique
- How to use syncopation to make your picking pattern “snappy” and “upbeat”
- Practice fingerpicking patterns
- To fingerpick and sing *In the Good Old Summertime*

Chords Used In This Lesson

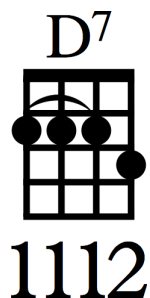
This lesson makes use of a handful of different chords:



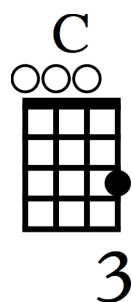
To play a **G major chord**, place your ring finger on the 2nd fret of the bottom A-string, index finger on the 2nd fret of the C-string, and middle finger on the 3rd fret of the E-string. Let the top g-string ring open.



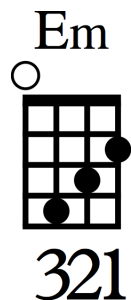
To play a **G7 chord**, place your ring finger on the 2nd fret of the bottom A-string, index finger on the 1st fret of the E-string, and middle finger on the 2nd fret of the C-string. Let the top g-string ring open.



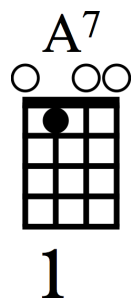
To play a **D7 chord**, use your index finger to barre the 2nd fret. This means you use your index finger to press and hold down all four strings at the 2nd fret. Then, place your middle finger on the 3rd fret of the bottom A-string. Alternatively, you might use your middle finger to barre the 2nd fret and use your ring finger on the 3rd fret of the bottom A-string (I prefer this way).



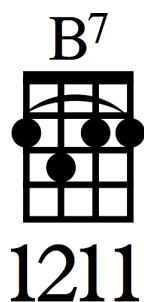
To play a **C major chord**, place your ring finger on the 3rd fret of the bottom A-string. Let the top three strings ring open.



To play an **E minor chord**, place your index finger on the 2nd fret of the bottom A-string, middle finger on the 3rd fret of the E-string, and ring finger on the 4th fret of the C-string. Let the top g-string ring open.



To play an **A7 chord**, place your index finger on the 1st fret of the C-string. Let the other three strings ring open.



To play a **B7 chord**, use your index finger to barre the 2nd fret. This means you hold down all four strings at the 2nd fret with your index finger. Then, place your middle finger on the 3rd fret of the C-string.

Simultaneous Pinched Fingerpicking Pattern (Alternating Thumb Technique)

With the alternating thumb technique, just use your thumb, index and middle fingers. For this first pattern, pinch the C-string and A-string with your thumb and middle finger on the first beat:

1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and

T 2 3 3 2 3 3 2 3 3 2 3 3

A 2 3 3 2 3 3 2 3 3 2 3 3

B 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 0 0

m i p i

p

When you've practiced that, try switching between a G and D7 chord. The D7 barre chord makes this change a little challenging. However, it makes good practice because these changes are common in many songs, as you'll see in the song for this lesson. Go slow at first:

G D7

T 2 3 3 2 3 3 3 2 2 2 3 2 2 2

A 2 3 3 2 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

B 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

m i p i

p

Patterns That Use Offbeat Syncopation

Syncopation is a fancy word that describes a rhythm where beats that aren't normally emphasized are stressed or accented. An *accented* beat is one that is played a little louder than other beats. For example, in a count of four (1, 2, 3, 4), the first beat is normally the strongest beat and is therefore accented or stressed more than the other beats.

Syncopation can happen in a few different ways. One way is by accenting the offbeat—beats that don't fall on the main counts of a measure. In a count of four,

the main beats would be: 1, 2, 3, 4; the offbeat would be the “and” eighth-note counts that fall in between the main beats.

It’s best to show an example of this. In the following pattern, a pinch happens on the “and” of the beat. Because of the multiple notes being pinched, the pattern inevitably sounds louder on these “and” beats, but you might also mentally think about plucking these pinches that fall on the offbeat just a little harder than normal:

The musical notation shows a 4/4 time signature with a G chord. The melody is written on a treble clef staff with quarter notes: G4, B4, D5, G4, A4, B4, D5, G4. The bass line is written on a bass clef staff with quarter notes: G2, B1, D2, G2, A2, B2, D3, G2. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, and 3 above notes. Pinches are indicated by 'p' and 'm' below notes. The pattern repeats every four measures.

Take your time practicing this picking pattern emphasizing the “and” beats. You use this pattern to play the song *In the Good Old Summertime* later in this lesson.

Practice Fingerpicking Patterns

Look at a few more patterns that place pinches on beats other than the downbeat (the first beat of the measure). Notice how this changes the feel and sound of the fingerpicking pattern.

Don’t forget to add in some chord changes as you practice these patterns. When you change chords, keep the pattern consistent and steady.

Practice Pattern #1

C

T A B

p i m i
p

Practice Pattern #2

C

T A B

m i m i
p

Practice Pattern #3

C

T A B

i m i m
p

Practice Pattern #4

The image shows a musical score for a guitar practice pattern. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef in 4/4 time, with a 'C' chord symbol above it. The melody is written in quarter notes, with a syncopated rhythm. The bottom staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with three strings labeled T (Treble), A (Middle), and B (Bass). The fretboard shows fingerings for the first four frets: fret 1 (i, m, i, m), fret 2 (0, 3, 0, 3), fret 3 (0, 3, 0, 3), and fret 4 (0, 3, 0, 3). The fingerings 'i' and 'm' are placed under the first and third strings, and 'p' is placed under the second and fourth strings.

Play “In the Good Old Summertime”

The song *In the Good Old Summertime* is a peppy, upbeat, feel-good song about summer and love. It’s been covered by famous musicians like Nat King Cole.

Use the syncopated pinched pattern you learned earlier to play this song. By stressing the offbeat in this song, you create an energetic sounding rhythm.

Please note there are a lot of frequent chord changes in this song. It’s important you’re comfortable switching to and from the chord positions outlined at the beginning of this lesson before attempting this song. As always, first practice the chords and then fingerpick through the chord progression of this song before trying to sing it.

IN THE GOOD OLD SUMMERTIME

Words by REN SHIELDS
Music by GEORGE EVANS
Arr. BRETT MCQUEEN

$\text{♩} = 104$ G G⁷ C G

In the good old sum-mer - time _____ In the good old sum-mer - time

1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and

p m p m p m p m
i i i i

5 Em A⁷ D⁷

Strol - ling thro' the sha - dy lanes With your ba-by mine _____ You _

9 G G⁷ C G

hold her hand and she holds yours and that's a v'ry good sign That

The score consists of three systems. Each system includes a vocal line, a piano accompaniment line, and a guitar tablature line. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The first system covers measures 1-4, the second covers measures 5-8, and the third covers measures 9-12. Chords are indicated above the vocal line, and fingerings are shown in the guitar tab.

13

B⁷

Em

A⁷

D⁷

G

she's your toot - sie woot - sie girl_ In the good old sum-mer - time

T
A
B

Practice Objectives

In the coming lessons, you look at other forms of syncopation as it appears in fingerpicking patterns to create even more interesting and complex-sounding rhythms. For now, home in on the following items before moving to the next lesson:

1. Take adequate time learning the chord positions in this lesson—be patient with the barre chords—they're tricky
2. Practice the simultaneous pinched pattern that uses the alternating thumb technique
3. Spend time practicing the syncopated fingerpicking patterns presented in this lesson
4. Try coming up with your own offbeat syncopated fingerpicking patterns
5. Fingerpick and sing *In the Good Old Summertime*

Things are starting to get more complex in the world of rhythmic fingerpicking. Great work so far and keep practicing!