

Lesson 4: The Tremolo

The approach used to play the previous arpeggios will also work for the tremolo. Begin with the fingers in the hand as discussed in Lesson 1, Exercise 1.

When the thumb plucks, release the tension holding the fingers "ima" in the hand and let them come out as a unit over the first string. As in the previous lesson, it is important that the fingers come out naturally, by releasing the muscle tension that was needed to keep them in the hand. Play the notes of the tremolo by bringing the a finger to the string and then plucking the string. When a plucks, m is drawn directly to the string. M plucks and i is drawn directly to the string. I plucks and p is placed on the bass note. Preparing the fingers in the tremolo will result in the second and third notes of the tremolo being shorter in duration than the first and last notes. Don't be alarmed, the notes will become even as you increase the speed. As before, it is important that when you prepare the finger on the string, it is in playing position. No adjustment should be required before plucking. After the finger has played the note leave it in the hand, at rest, until the thumb plucks. When the thumb plucks, release the tension in the fingers and let them come out and place them over the strings

Note: All the fingers are at rest in the hand before p plucks. When p plucks all of the fingers are released over the strings.



Some guitarist will find that as they increase the tempo to around 120 = the quarter note they seem to hit a wall tempo wise. If that should occur, do the following. Begin with ima over the first string. Pluck p and follow the steps previously explained. When i plucks release m and a over the string and place p on the bass note. Pluck p, place a, pluck a, and place m. Play m and release i to the string. Pluck i and place p releasing m and a over the string. Keep repeating this process. While this approach is a bit

more complicated, some students find this approach will produce a faster, more fluid tremolo than the first approach.

When practicing the tremolo it is important to always alternate your practice between a very slow tempo and at one that you can control. The tremolo is the most unforgiving technique to learn. Any unnecessary tension in your hands will adversely affect the speed and evenness of the tremolo.

For a more detailed discussion and additional exercises using this approach see, *Guitar Technique Volume 2* by Richard Provost available from GSP in San Francisco, CA.