

## ~ Getting Started With Sweep Picking - Part 2 ~

Today I will show you how to improve your sweep picking by cleaning up the fretting hand motions (the fretting hand has its own set of challenges to deal with), and we will begin to practice for improved coordination (a very important element of clean sweep picking) between your two hands.

Before we continue, I want to again restate the most important objective of good sweep picking which is:

“When sweep picking, you should only be able to hear ONE note at a time, and no two notes should ever be heard playing simultaneously.”

In order for this to happen when playing arpeggios, your fretting hand fingers need to be lifted slightly from each note after playing it.

This way, only one note will be pressed down at a time thus allowing only one note to be ringing at a time.

Check out the videos below of good and bad fretting hand motions

**[Video 1](#)** - As you can see, you only need to lift the fingers far enough to stop the notes from sounding after you have played them (do not exaggerate the motions). Your fingers shouldn't come up more than about half an inch (one centimeter) from the string.

**[Video 2](#)** – In this video, you can see that the fingers do not come up while playing and you can hear the terrible sloppy noise that results.

Many beginners do this because they try to fret all the notes of the arpeggio (as if playing a chord) at the same time.

This is NOT sweep picking, and this is obviously something you need to avoid doing.

In addition to keeping the notes clean and articulate, lifting the fretting hand fingers slightly also helps for your hand to not get tired as quickly while playing long arpeggio sections.

The reason for this, is because when lifting the fingers, you release the tension that was initially used to fret the notes. This helps your hand to stay relaxed while playing.

(Even though you are moving your fingers more by not keeping them pressed down, you are more relaxed overall because you release the pressure from the strings, and you also don't have the notes ringing together).

Practice the fretting hand finger motions by playing the following arpeggio:

[Hear it](#)

After playing the first note of the arpeggio, as you are moving your finger to the second note, the finger that played the first note must SIMULTANEOUSLY be releasing pressure from it.

In other words, DON'T wait until you put down the finger that is to play the second note on its string before beginning to release the first note. The two motions should occur at the same time, seamlessly. This will allow you to play very cleanly.

**Adding hammer ons and pull offs:**

Many arpeggio shapes require you to do a hammer on or a pull off on the lowest and the highest strings of the arpeggio respectively. In fact, these arpeggios are the ones you will see 95% of the time in most music that uses sweep picking.

Take a look at the example below:

1 4 2 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 2 4 1 4 2 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 2 1

T  
A  
B

7 12 10 9 10 8 12 8 10 9 10 12 7 12 10 9 10 8 12 8 10 9 10 12

v v

### [Hear it](#)

Notice that in this arpeggio you need to perform a hammer on the A string and a pull off on the high E string. To play this exercise well, you need to keep in mind the concepts of the fretting hand motions and the picking hand motions (that you learned in the last lesson on this topic).

Don't let the hammer ons and pull offs confuse you. The picking motions remain the same and the job of the fretting hand is not any different than playing regular hammer ons and pull offs.

Between now and the next lesson I want you to practice the two exercises given above with the focus on performing the correct fretting hand and picking hand motions (as well as muting all extra string noise from the low strings with your thumb).

Don't feel pressured to master both exercises or to play them at a very fast speed yet. Focus on smooth, clean and accurate playing at this point (just like in the audio examples above).

We will focus more specifically on speed building strategies for arpeggios in future lessons on this topic. As long as you can play at least at a slow speed and so cleanly, you will be ready to move forward.

This lesson's [Practice Generator](#) category is: Technical Skills (Lead Guitar) > Sweep Picking. Practice this lesson when this category comes up in your schedule.