

## ~ Getting Started With Sweep Picking – Part 3 ~

The advice in this lesson will show you how to avoid one of the common mistakes made by many guitarists who practice sweep picking: a sloppy playing of hammer ons and pull offs in arpeggios. This problem prevents many players from doing the technique really cleanly.

The element of the sweep picking technique that I want to discuss is very subtle, but because it is so subtle, many players ignore it or don't pay attention to it. When an arpeggio contains a hammer on and a pull off (as most arpeggio shapes do), many amateur players have a difficult time with playing these notes in the arpeggio cleanly. For example, in the arpeggio below:

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

1

T A B

V V V V V V V

The notes circled in red are hammer ons and pull offs. Most shapes use hammer ons and/or pull offs in order to achieve even note values that fit into a measure of music easily. Because of this, it is essential to work on getting this part of the arpeggio clean in order to perform sweep picking cleanly in general.

You are probably wondering: “Why is Tom bringing up a basic topic such as hammer ons and pull offs when I have already practiced these basic techniques many times?” Although the techniques may be “basic”, and although you may already be able to do them in different contexts, when they are performed in the context of sweep picking arpeggio, these techniques are often very difficult to play cleanly for 2 reasons:

1. Many players rush through the hammer ons (when ascending arpeggios) and pull offs (when descending arpeggios) in order to play as fast as possible. This distorts the rhythm of the arpeggio and the playing doesn't sound good. Listen to [an example of this](#) (note: this example is bad on purpose, this is exactly how you do NOT want your arpeggios to sound!)

2. It is also very common to not play these notes with the same volume/articulation that the rest of the notes (that are articulated with the pick) are played. As a result, these 4 notes of the arpeggio often sound sloppy and unclear. Listen to [an example of this](#) (note: this example is bad on purpose, this is exactly how you do NOT want your arpeggios to sound!)

Now, listen to [an example of this arpeggio played correctly](#). Notice that at both slow speeds, medium speeds and fast speeds, you can hear EVERY note of the arpeggio (including hammer ons and pull offs).

What I want you to do between now and the next lesson is to practice the following arpeggios below, focusing on the proper motions of the two hands (as discussed in lessons 1 and 2) and also on refining the hammer ons and pull offs making sure that they are just as clean and articulate as the picked notes.

I highly recommend that you record yourself playing this exercise. As you listen back, also check to make sure that your notes flow evenly and some of the notes in the arpeggios do not sound rushed.

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

TAB

□ □ □ □ □ V V V □ □ V V V V V

1 4 2 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 2 4 1 4 3 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 3 4

TAB

□ □ □ □ □ V V V □ □ V V V V □ □ □ □ □ V V V □ □ V V V V

1 4 3 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 3 4 1 4 3 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 3 4

TAB

□ □ □ □ □ V V V □ □ V V V V □ □ □ □ □ V V V □ □ V V V V

1 4 3 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 3 4 1 4 2 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 2 4

TAB

□ □ □ □ □ V V V □ □ V V V V □ □ □ □ □ V V V □ □ V V V V

[Hear it](#)

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