Dynamic Guitar Technique Part II
Arpeggio Exercises

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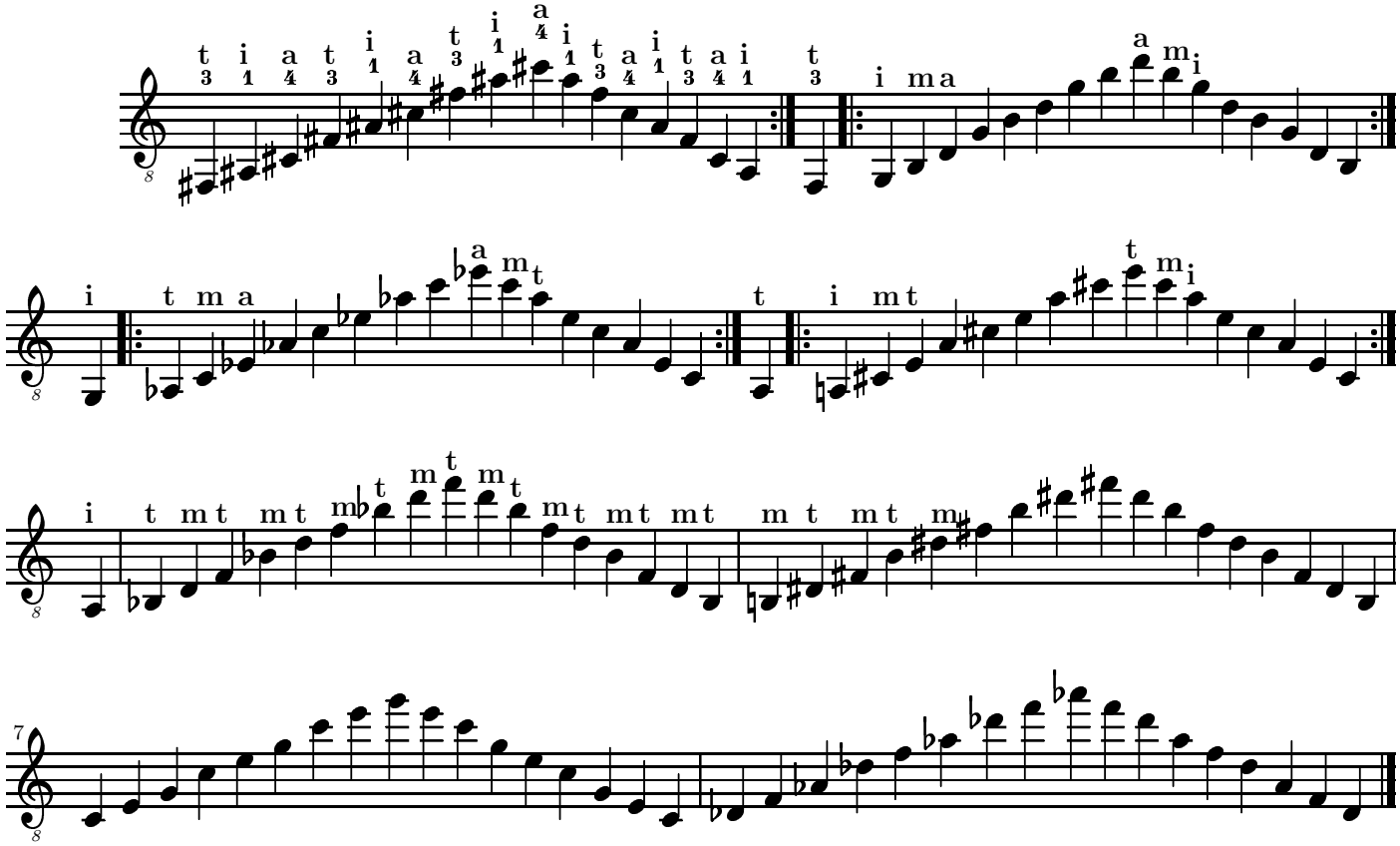
1 Introduction

Giuliani, Carcassi, Carulli, and others wrote some material of marginal value which they called "arpeggios". That wasn't arpeggio work at all, and it diverted attention from the fact that there was no real arpeggio study for guitar. Here it is, at last. Guitarists have *not* gotten along very well without it.

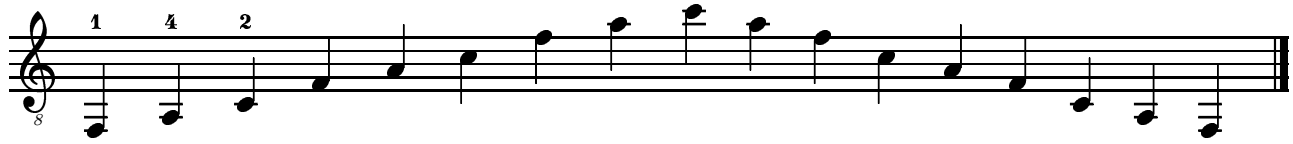
The first arpeggio is completely written out to serve as an example of how all the rest are to be done. Play the first three notes on the 6th and 5th strings. Then move to the 4th string and play the same three notes two frets or one octave higher in the same way with both hands on the 4th and 3rd strings. Then move to the 2nd string and play the same three notes again in the same way three frets or one octave higher yet on the 2nd and 1st strings. Descend the same way you came up, in reverse. The first note of every arpeggio is on the 6th string, the 4th note is on the 4th string, and the 7th note is on the 2nd string. The right hand fingering of the first three notes is carried through each bout, reversed when descending, until the last four where you alternate thumb and middle. The right hand patterns as given in the first example are applied to all the rest of the arpeggios, so each is played twelve times.

2 Major Arpeggios

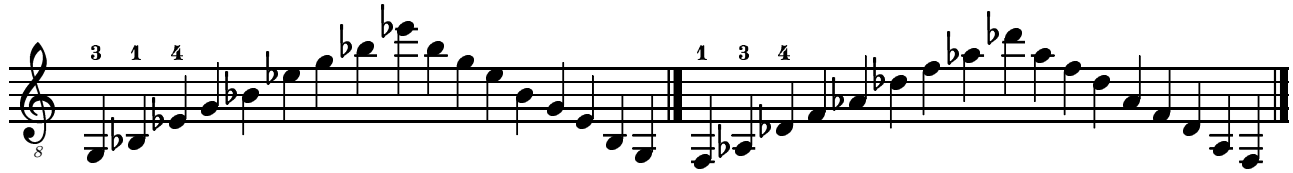
2.1 Root Position I



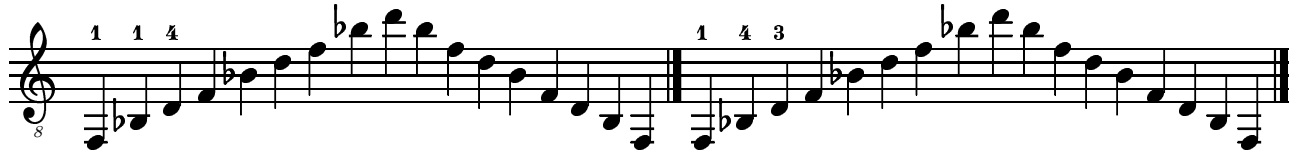
2.2 Root Position II



2.3 First Inversion I and II

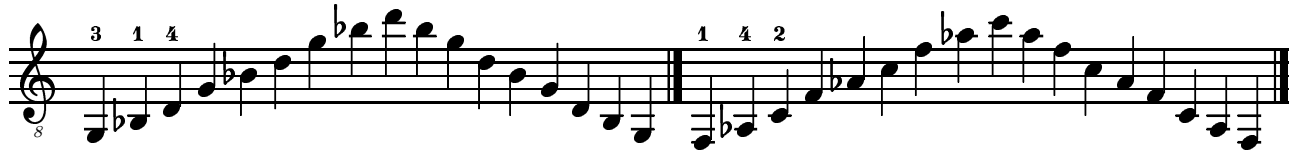


2.4 Second Inversion I and II

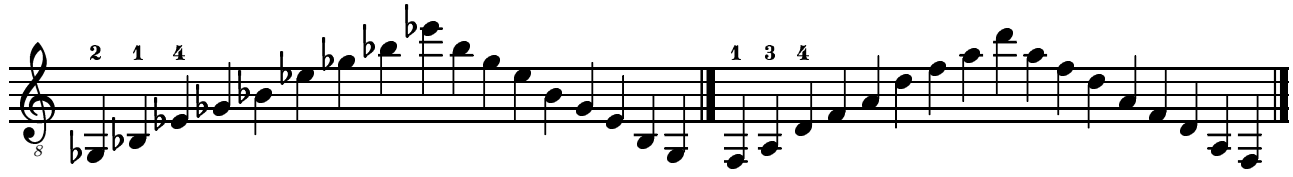


3 Minor Arpeggios

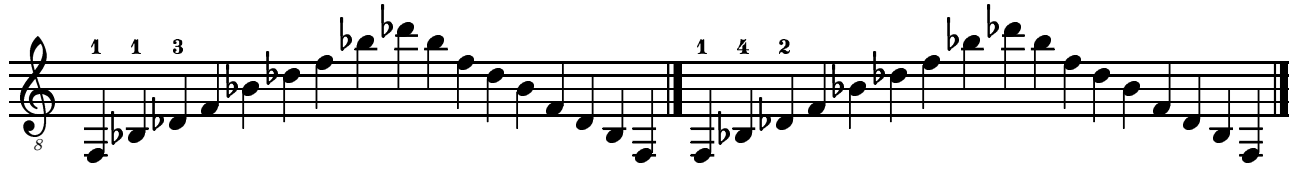
3.1 Root Position I and II



3.2 First Inversion I and II



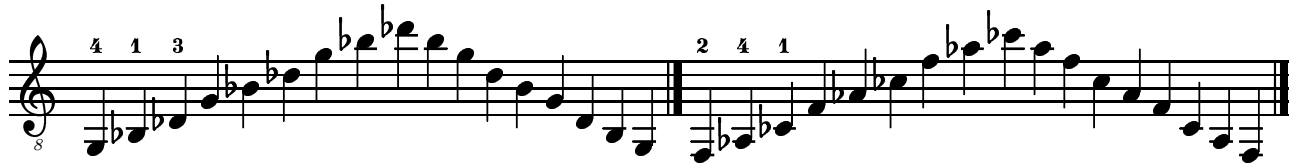
3.3 Second Inversion I and II



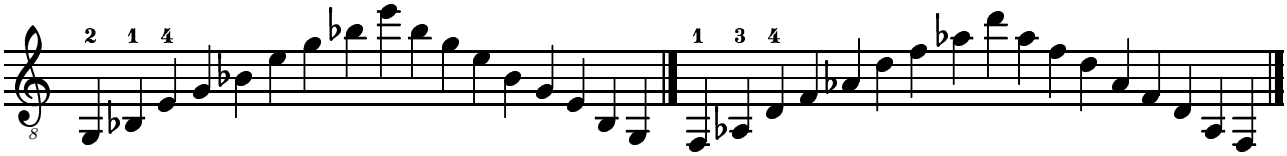
4 Diminished Triad Arpeggios

You will notice quickly that these are quite a bit more difficult. For serious students they are well worth the effort.

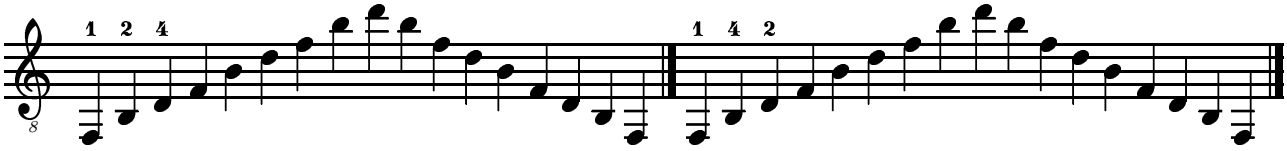
4.1 Root Position I and II



4.2 First Inversion I and II



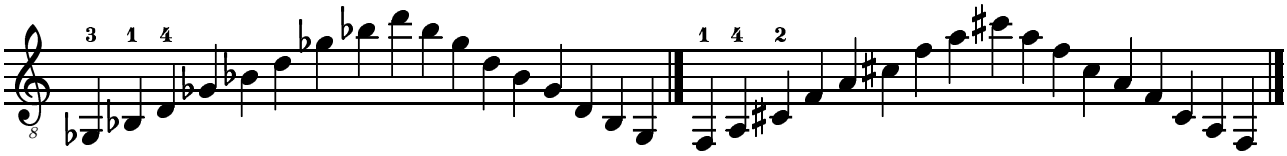
4.3 Second Inversion I and II



5 Augmented Arpeggios

These are by far the easiest. It makes sense to begin with them. You can use these to measure the others against, to help guage your progress.

5.1 I and II



6 Afterword

Arpeggios are extremely important practice for all guitar players. They strengthen the left hand while promoting stretch and flexibility. (unlike scales, which do very little for either.) You will gain the kind of strength that *moves*, not the kind that keeps you from moving. You will learn to extend the fingers with a confidence you never thought possible. You will improve at moving up and down the neck by reaching, which is often enough a better way than shifting.

You will have right hand work also, not only with patterns not used in scales but also with moving the patterns from string to string. Scale practice is very limited in that regard because you never have a single note on one string. You will practice crossing the thumb over the middle finger, and vice versa. That is a very important and neglected technique. It is the key to playing straight-ahead jazz finger style with equal speed and much more freedom to move than the pick affords you.

The arpeggio is repeated at the first four frets because the lower part of the neck deserves equal time but has fewer frets. The "I" forms have one note on the 6th, 4th, and 2nd strings. The "II" forms have two notes on the 6th, 4th and 2nd strings.

If your guitar doesn't have a nineteenth fret on the second string, it's only one note.

If you work hard on these, I promise miracles. Arpeggio work deserves almost as much time on your practice schedule as scales. It probably deserves a lot more right now if you have some catching up to do. You will greatly enjoy the results.[1]

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