

# ROCK LEAD GUITAR

## UNIT FOUR

### PICKING TECHNIQUE

The picking method discussed in this unit has been developed to be the most economical in terms of muscle use and most accurate at any speed. It can be used in any style of music and on any guitar.

What are you getting yourself into? Good question. Be prepared to put aside oodles of practice time if you plan to make any great strides in your picking technique. Everyone comes from a different background, so there's no set scale to determine exactly how long it takes to become proficient at this method. But to put it in a "ballpark figure", most people impress themselves in about 2 to 3 months of consistent 2 hour per day practice sessions. Remember, determination is the key. Don't give up, stay disciplined - you will get there.

#### **I. HAND PLACEMENT:**

How you hold your pick, how you position your hand, and how you attack the note all add up to how efficient your picking technique is. The key to speed and accuracy is relaxation. Try holding your pick between your thumb and first finger. Hold your guitar as you would be playing and plop your hand down onto the strings. That's it. That's how you should hold your hand.

A word about muting - for clarity sake, the majority of single note runs are muted. Therefore, keep your picking hand anchored on the bridge for easy muting access. More on this later.

# ROCK LEAD GUITAR

## I. HAND PLACEMENT:

Continued...

How you attack a note may be the single most important aspect of your picking technique. There are many ways to attack a note. Some are more efficient than others. Keeping speed and accuracy in mind, using the wrist (of the picking hand) to trigger the attack of the note is the most efficient, clean, and consistent of all ways. This means that the only thing moving on your entire arm is your wrist. It's like your pick is a key and you're turning it in a lock.

All this talk explains little about real application. So, here's a 5-step explanation to take you through the pick attack motion.

**STEP 1:** Ready to attack a note on the 3<sup>rd</sup> string, the pick is positioned a few millimeters directly above the 4<sup>th</sup> string.

**STEP 2:** The pick makes contact with the 3<sup>rd</sup> string at a 45 degree angle.

**STEP 3:** The pick has attacked the 3<sup>rd</sup> string and is resting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> string.

**STEP 4:** The pick comes back through the 3<sup>rd</sup> string at the same angle.

**STEP 5:** The pick is ready for the next attack (same as Step #1).

As you become familiar with the pick attack motion, take notice of the wrist movement. It's very possible that you've already been playing like this since it's a very natural movement. If so, go straight to the exercises. If not, go through the steps over and over... Take it very slow. Trying to go fast now big waste of time. One more thing to keep in mind is to never tense your forearm.



# THE JOY OF PICKING

By Nick Nolan

## EXAMPLE 6:

Handwritten notation for Example 6:

Handwritten notation above the staff:  $\pi \vee \pi \vee \pi \vee$  Sim...

Handwritten notation below the staff: P.M. - - - - -

The next few examples deal with applying your newly found chops.  
Remember don't tense that forearm!!

## EXAMPLE 7:

Handwritten notation for Example 7:

Handwritten notation above the staff:  $\pi \vee \pi \vee$  Sim...

Handwritten notation below the staff: P.M. - - - - -

# ROCK LEAD GUITAR

## III. HAND SYNCHRONIZATION: Continued...

EX.6

♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ...

7 4 5 7 5 4 7 4 5 7 5 4 7 4 5 7 5 4 7

The next few exercises deal with applying your newly found chops.

Remember, don't tense that forearm!!

EX.7

♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ...

7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5

# THE JOY OF PICKING

By Nick Nolan

## EXAMPLE 8:

"JET TO JET" (EXCERPT) BY: YNGWIE MALMSTEEN

8VA ———→

□ ∇ □ ∇ □ ∇ SIM...

P.M. ————

19 18 17 19 17 18 19 18 17 19 17 18 19 18 17 19 17 18 19 17 18 19 17 18

8VA ———→

P.M. ————

17 16 15 17 15 16 17 16 15 17 16 15 17 16 15 17 16 15 17 16 15 17 16 15

8VA ———→

P.M. ————

15 12 14 15 14 12 15 12 14 15 14 12 15 12 14 15 14 12 15 12 14 15 14 12

8VA ———→

P.M. ————

14 11 12 14 12 11 14 11 12 14 12 11 14 12 11 14 12 11 14 12 11 14 12 11

1/2

# THE JOY OF PICKING

By Nick Nolan

EXAMPLE 9:

"MEDITERRANEAN SUNDANCE" (EXCERPT) BY: AL DIMEOLA

Handwritten musical score for guitar, Example 9, titled "MEDITERRANEAN SUNDANCE" (EXCERPT) BY: AL DIMEOLA. The score is written on three systems of staves. Each system consists of a treble clef staff, a middle staff with a dashed line and "P.M." marking, and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The first system shows a melody in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff with fingerings 2 3 5 3 2 and 4 5 7 5. The second system shows a melody in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff with fingerings 7 8 10 8 7 and 7 8 10 8 7. The third system shows a melody in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff with fingerings 7 8 10 8 7 and 7 8 10 8 7. The score is handwritten and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings.

# THE JOY OF PICKING

By Nick Nolan

EXAMPLE 10:

## "THE SYNCHRO-SONG" BY: NICK NOLAN

EXAMPLE 10: "THE SYNCHRO-SONG" BY: NICK NOLAN

Chords: C, F, Dmi, G, E7, Ami, Dmi, G, C

Fingerings: 15 12 13 15, 13 12, 15 13, 12 13 15, 12 13 15 17, 17 13 15 17, 15 13, 17 15, 13 15 17, 13 15 17, 19

Fingerings: 19 16 17 19, 17 16, 18 17, 15 17 18, 16 17 19, 20 17 19, 20 17 19, 20, 20

EXAMPLE 11:

EXAMPLE 12:

EXAMPLE 11:

EXAMPLE 12:

Chords: C, F, Dmi, G, E7, Ami, Dmi, G, C

Fingerings: 15 12 13 15, 13 12, 15 13, 12 13 15, 12 13 15 17, 17 13 15 17, 15 13, 17 15, 13 15 17, 13 15 17, 19

Fingerings: 19 16 17 19, 17 16, 18 17, 15 17 18, 16 17 19, 20 17 19, 20 17 19, 20, 20



# THE JOY OF PICKING

## By Nick Nolan

EXAMPLE 13:

Handwritten notation above staff:  $\pi \vee \pi \vee \pi \vee$  Sim...

P.M. — — — — —

EXAMPLE 14:

Handwritten notation above staff:  $\pi \vee \pi \vee \pi \vee$  Sim...

P.M. — — — — —

EXAMPLE 15:

Handwritten notation above staff:  $\pi \vee \pi \vee \pi \vee$  Sim...

P.M. — — — — —

# ROCK LEAD GUITAR

## IV. BUILDING SPEED: Continued...

EX. 12

Handwritten musical notation for EX. 12. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It contains a sequence of eighth-note triplets, each marked with a '3' below it. Above the staff are rhythmic flags and the text 'SIM...'. Below the staff is a dashed line with 'P.M.' written on the left. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a sequence of eighth-note triplets, each marked with a '3' below it. Above the bottom staff are the numbers 4 5 7, 4 5 7, 6 6 8, 5 6 8, 6 7 9, 6 7 9, 5 6 8, and 5 6 8.

EX. 13

EX. 14

Handwritten musical notation for EX. 13 and EX. 14. EX. 13 is on the left, EX. 14 is on the right. Both are in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). EX. 13 has a sequence of eighth notes with a '6' above the first group. EX. 14 has a sequence of eighth notes with a '6' above the first group. Below the staves are rhythmic flags and the text 'T', 'A', and 'B'. Below the bottom staff are the numbers 12 13 14, 12 13 14, 14 12 14, 12 13 14, 13 14, 12 13 14, 14 12 14, and 12 13 14.

EX. 15

EX. 16

Handwritten musical notation for EX. 15 and EX. 16. EX. 15 is on the left, EX. 16 is on the right. Both are in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). EX. 15 has a sequence of eighth notes with a '6' above the first group. EX. 16 has a sequence of eighth notes with a '6' above the first group. Below the staves are rhythmic flags and the text 'T', 'A', and 'B'. Below the bottom staff are the numbers 15(17) 12, 15 12 15(17), 15 12 15(17), 15 12 15(17), 15 12, 15 12 14 12, 14 12, 15 12 14 12, 15 12 14 12, 14 12, 15 12 14 12, and 14 12.