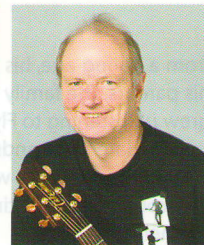




with Kevin Downing



## Economy Picking

**T**here are many different types of picking technique for guitar players to master and economy picking is a common one used by many top players. Economy picking is a combination of two picking types, the first is alternate picking, where a player plays continuous down and up strokes no matter what string they are playing on. The second is sweep picking, a more advanced technique, where a player will sweep across the strings in one seamless action always changing strings with a pick motion in the direction they are moving. The benefits of economy picking are that it reduces a lot of picking hand movement when playing; you can play fast(er) passages when you want, and it requires little effort to keep up once you have mastered it.

It is important to understand the concept before commencing the practical abilities. The concept is you play down and up strokes when playing on the same string, but when changing strings in an ascending motion - going from thicker to thinner strings - the pick will always

be a down stroke and shown with a symbol. When changing strings in a descending motion - going from thinner to thicker strings - the pick will always be an up stroke and shown with a symbol. Just remember the open end of the symbol is the way the pick is travelling.

It is best if you use a thicker pick and pick at a slight angle to the string. Many professionals I know use at least a 1mm pick and angle their pick between about 30-45 degrees, which results in a smooth and fast picking action. Using thicker picks and playing at an angle might take some time to get used to so allow for that. It is also crucial to only pick using the top 1mm of your pick instead of "digging in" and using 2-3mm, which results in a slow and inefficient technique.

You will also need to take it very slow to begin to get the action and coordination correct. You will find it is the right hand that gives the most trouble. Always use a metronome to keep track of your progress and never move the tempo up too quickly. If there are any flaws you are going too fast - so slow down

in a natural economy style. By observing the picking indications you can see when changing strings you are playing down strokes when ascending and up strokes when descending.

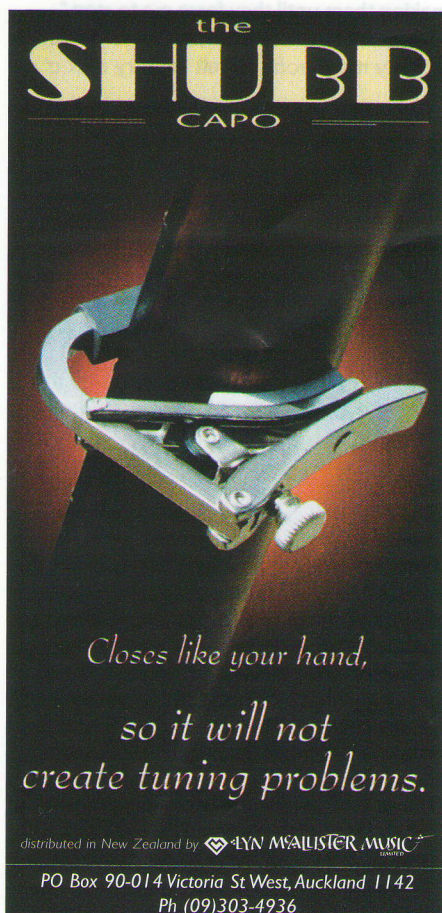
The G major scale in second position is the focus of **Example 2**. This one is a bit trickier to get right than the previous one because there are three notes on some strings and two notes on others. Make sure to observe the picking directions and take it very slow.

**Example 3** is more advanced and uses the popular three notes per string used by many of the world's top players. When playing three notes per string the fretting hand can use any fingering you are familiar with like 1, 2, 4 or 1, 3, 4 on each string. When you have an odd number of notes per string it makes it very easy to use this economy picking technique.

There are many other ways a player can use economy picking in their playing; however, they will be the subject of future Guitar Cool articles. Once you have got the above exercises in your brain and fingers, then it is time to start using the economy picking style in your own licks and riffs.

**Example 1** is an A minor pentatonic scale played at the 5th position. If you have been playing this scale for a while with the alternating picking technique you would have done a bit of economy picking already as it is

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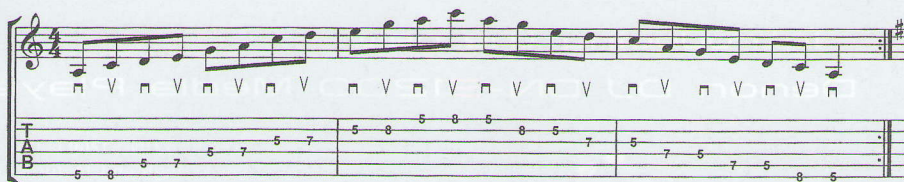
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Example 1



Example 2



Example 3

