

## Modal Scale and Arpeggio Combo Exercises 1

What I have done here is combine the Modal Scales with a Modal Arpeggio. **If** you have learned *and especially practiced* the scales and arpeggios from previous lessons, these will be easy; if not, hopefully they will be an incentive to go back and do so now! There *really are* practical uses for them, which I intend to show here; there will be much more to follow in the next several months, so get the basics down now. I know it may seem like pointless, boring drudgery; you will believe this until you buckle down and stick with them for a while, then suddenly find that your playing/understanding has mysteriously changed and improved (“*how did **that** happen?*”). Funny thing about practice. . . Practicing *songs* is great, but practicing *technique* will make songs easy!

*“Teach a person to play a **song** and they’ll play for a day; teach a person to play **music** and they’ll play for a lifetime.”*

I realize that songs represent the *only form of “practice” most of us **ever** learn* (myself included for the first several years of my playing); they *are* of course the reason we play. Practicing *technique* (scales, scales, and *more* scales, *oh boy!*) is an entirely different paradigm, and is the key to getting off the bored plateau that we inevitably find ourselves on. It’s up to you to decide exactly which—practice or boredom—is the *true* drudgery. I would venture to say that practicing technique is more important than practicing songs; you’ll have time for songs in your next payout or jam session.

Anyway, I digress (as I often do!); on to the subject at hand. The first page is simply each 3-3-3 Modal Scale ending with an arpeggio that returns to the starting note, but on a different string (first two bars). I then highlight the arpeggio with two different fingering patterns (but extended to the 11 in the second one). This is a great way to practice them as a matched set.

The top half of the second page adds an interesting twist to the scale/arpeggio combo. Showing the complete Modal set proves a very important fact; in most cases, you can apply a lick to the whole set (with minor modifications to make it work, i.e., the Phrygian and Aeolian patterns are just a little different in this particular case—can you find the modifications? And see the reason for them?).

The “Practical use examples” is where the rubber hits the road. What I have done here is to take each of the four notes of the G7 chord (G, B, D, F), and use the scale/arpeggio that starts with each note to represent the Dm7-G7 of a classic ii-V7-I (the last four bars of most of the songs we play). I finish with the same C chord lick for consistency, but with two different fingerings to best fit the ii-V7. As you are learning these, they may not sound particularly “jazzy,” but as you pick up speed and put some “feeling” into it, they should improve; you can make *anything* into jazz, but that is entirely up to you!

None of these exercises should be taken as “gospel”; all of them should be considered as options. Most of all, each should be thought of as just one of countless possibilities and a catalyst for other ideas that may present themselves to you as you work on them. I use them as exactly that; when I’m lost for something to practice, I play one of these stock patterns (or others that I have previously posted) and before I know it, the creative juices start flowing.

That word—“creativity”—opens up a whole new can of worms: Many musicians mistakenly believe that jazz will just “happen”—just play what’s in your head, and you’ll be fine. This “just let it happen” approach only works for the rare savant though (but is a big feature of “play-in-a-day” method sales pitches), especially with a complex fretted instrument. What is “in your head” will ultimately be limited by how well your fingers can follow orders. Without *some* prior “training,” how would your fingers know where to go?

Think of these exercises as “creative pathways,” meant to blaze a basic trail for creativity to follow. In addition to this, they can “stand in” (in the temporary—or permanent—absence of creativity), and can even *spark* ideas. I worked (playing tenor sax) with a great Bebop trumpeter for a while; he explained to me that most of what he played was “fluff”—worked-up improv patterns. He was so good at his fluff that he could relax and let his mind wander while playing a solo; when an idea popped into his head, he could just allow it to happen. This happened a couple of times a solo, and the rest of us could tell. I about fell over backward a few times; “*Wow, where did **that** come from?*” It was exciting and inspiring being on the bandstand with him. That is my personal goal as a “jazz banjoist.”

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Plectrum Banjo

Ron Hinkle

## Scale and Arpeggio

C Ionian Cmaj7

The first exercise shows the C Ionian scale and Cmaj7 arpeggio. The scale is written in treble clef with a C-clef on the first line. The arpeggio is written in bass clef with a C-clef on the first line. The scale consists of eight measures: four ascending and four descending. The arpeggio consists of four measures: two ascending and two descending. The notes are: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.

D Dorian Dm7

The second exercise shows the D Dorian scale and Dm7 arpeggio. The scale is written in treble clef with a D-clef on the second line. The arpeggio is written in bass clef with a D-clef on the second line. The scale consists of eight measures: four ascending and four descending. The arpeggio consists of four measures: two ascending and two descending. The notes are: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5.

E Phrygian Em7

The third exercise shows the E Phrygian scale and Em7 arpeggio. The scale is written in treble clef with an E-clef on the third line. The arpeggio is written in bass clef with an E-clef on the third line. The scale consists of eight measures: four ascending and four descending. The arpeggio consists of four measures: two ascending and two descending. The notes are: E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5.

F Lydian Fmaj7

The fourth exercise shows the F Lydian scale and Fmaj7 arpeggio. The scale is written in treble clef with an F-clef on the fourth line. The arpeggio is written in bass clef with an F-clef on the fourth line. The scale consists of eight measures: four ascending and four descending. The arpeggio consists of four measures: two ascending and two descending. The notes are: F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5.

G Mixolydian G7

The fifth exercise shows the G Mixolydian scale and G7 arpeggio. The scale is written in treble clef with a G-clef on the second line. The arpeggio is written in bass clef with a G-clef on the second line. The scale consists of eight measures: four ascending and four descending. The arpeggio consists of four measures: two ascending and two descending. The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5.

A Aeolian Am7

The sixth exercise shows the A Aeolian scale and Am7 arpeggio. The scale is written in treble clef with an A-clef on the third line. The arpeggio is written in bass clef with an A-clef on the third line. The scale consists of eight measures: four ascending and four descending. The arpeggio consists of four measures: two ascending and two descending. The notes are: A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5.

B Locrian Bm7(b5)

The seventh exercise shows the B Locrian scale and Bm7(b5) arpeggio. The scale is written in treble clef with a B-clef on the second line. The arpeggio is written in bass clef with a B-clef on the second line. The scale consists of eight measures: four ascending and four descending. The arpeggio consists of four measures: two ascending and two descending. The notes are: B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5.

### Scale and Arpeggio with a twist

C Ionian: 5 7 9 6 8 10 9 12 | 10 9 10 9 12 9 12 9

D Dorian: 7 9 10 8 10 12 | 10 14 12 10 12 11 14 10 14 11

E Phrygian: 9 10 12 10 12 13 12 15 | 14 12 13 12 14 12 16 12

F Lydian: 10 12 14 12 13 15 14 17 | 15 14 15 14 17 14 17 14

G Mixolydian: 12 14 16 13 15 17 15 19 | 17 15 17 16 19 16 19 16

A Aeolian: 2 4 5 3 5 6 5 8 | 7 5 6 5 7 5 9 5

### Practical use examples: Dm7-G7-I (ii-V7-I)

B Locrian (Dm7): 4 5 7 5 6 8 7 10 | 9 7 8 7 10 7 11 7

D Dorian (Dm7): 7 9 10 8 10 12 10 14 | 12 10 12 11 14 10 14 11

F Lydian (Dm7): 10 12 14 12 13 15 14 17 | 15 14 15 14 17 14 17 14

G Mixolydian (Dm7): 12 14 16 13 15 17 15 19 | 17 15 17 16 19 16 19 16