

Two and Three Octave Major and Minor Arpeggios

Practice and mastery of major and minor arpeggios is one of the most productive ways to refine technique and to increase fretboard skills. As an initial focus, memorize each of the four patterns below. Each of the patterns is transposable: for example, after learning the C major pattern, start on the note C# (at the 4th fret of the A string). Use the fingering pattern you learned for C major: by doing this you will be playing a C# major arpeggio.

Then, in the same way, transpose this pattern to play 2 octave arpeggios of B, C#, D, Eb, E and F major. Each of the four patterns can be learned and transposed in the same fashion. In this way you can play a complete set of all twelve major and minor arpeggios on your guitar.

Major Arpeggios - Two and Three Octaves

C Major:

Place the 4 string bar carefully and, with a gentle lateral stretch, place the 3rd finger on the note "G" on the second string. Try to hold the bar down at the 5th fret, although if you feel too much resistance, it is better to release it until it is called for again in the descending pattern.

In the descending arpeggio, gradually bring your left elbow closer to the side of your body. This helps with the proper position of the 3rd and 4th fingers for the last two notes of the pattern.

G Major:

Use special care when you ascend beyond the 12th fret. The guitar should have enough "tilt" to make the transition to the higher notes seamless and smooth. Also the Left Hand thumb works better if it is low on the guitar neck.

Transpose the G major pattern above to play 3 octave arpeggios of F#, G#, A, Bb and B major. The first note you play, for instance, when you start on the 6th string F# on the 2nd fret, begins the F# major arpeggio. The fingering pattern of the G major arpeggio above is identical, except the starting point is the 2nd fret, rather than the 3rd fret.

Minor Arpeggios - Two and Three Octaves

C Minor:

This musical score for C Minor features a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a sequence of arpeggios with fingerings (1-5) and accidentals (b). Roman numerals III, V, and III are placed above the staff. The bass staff shows fingerings 3, 6, 5, 5, 4, 3, 8, 8, 5, 5, 6, 3 for the corresponding notes. The piece concludes with a repeat sign.

G Minor:

This musical score for G Minor features a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains a sequence of arpeggios with fingerings (1-6) and accidentals (b). Roman numerals III, V, X, VII, and BV are placed above the staff. The bass staff shows fingerings 3, 6, 5, 5, 8, 7, 8, 11, 10, 15, 15, 8, 7, 8, 5, 5, 6, 3 for the corresponding notes. The piece concludes with a repeat sign.

These transposable fingering patterns represent a broad cross-section of what is encountered in guitar music - for classical and other styles as well. Over time you may wish to explore different patterns and other chord types as well.