

Guitar

The Basics

Column #26 – Hybrid Picking Concepts

Hybrid picking is a great device in both soloing and in chord playing. It gives you certain freedoms to switch between hard picking and "hybrid" picking, in both using a pick and fingers together.

So, what you are doing is holding your pick as usual, between thumb and first finger, and then employing your 2nd and 3rd fingers as complimentary picking tools to create a variety of alternate ways to play a thing, or to add finger picking elements into the passage. It can even be used as part of your soloing approach in a given song.

We will begin with something fairly straight-forward to get you started. In **Ex. 1**, play all three notes of each chord at the same time. Your pick will play the lowest note, on the fourth string, and your 2nd finger will play the third string while your 3rd finger will play the second string. The last measure has you moving everything over one string.

Take your time and work to get all three notes to sound at the same volume - which will take a little practice in lightening up on the pick, and plucking a little harder with the fingers.

In **Ex. 2**, you are going to alternate between the one picked note and two "plucked" (with fingers) notes on each chord. Do the same thing, pay attention to volume between picked and plucked notes. Once you have this comfortable, bring in the metronome and play along. Increase the tempo slowly to increase the speed at which you can do this clean and clearly, and smoothly!

EX. 1 A E D A E/G# A E A/C#

D/F#

T	10	9	7	5	5	3	2	0	
A	9	9	7	6	4	2	2	1	2
B	11	9	7	7	6	4	2	2	4

Picking hand:

3rd finger
2nd finger
Pick

EX. 2

T	10	9	7	5	5	3	2	0
A	11	9	9	7	7	7	6	1
B	11	9	7	7	7	6	4	2

T	0	2	3	5	5	7	9	10
A	2	1	2	2	4	2	6	4
B	4	2	2	2	4	2	6	7

In the next diagram, Ex. 3, you will now pick the first note and pluck the second and third notes in a triplet feel, three notes per beat. Take your time. And again, bring in the metronome once it is smooth, even if played slowly.

EX. 3

First system of musical notation for Exercise 3. The treble clef staff shows a sequence of eighth-note triplets in a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The fretboard below indicates fingerings for the Treble (T), Middle (A), and Bass (B) strings.

T																			
A	11	9	10	9	9	7	7	7	6	5	6	4	5	2	3	2	2	1	0
B																			

Second system of musical notation for Exercise 3. The treble clef staff continues with eighth-note triplets and concludes with a whole note chord. The fretboard below shows fingerings for the Treble (T), Middle (A), and Bass (B) strings.

T																			
A																			
B	4	2	2	2	1	2	2	4	2	3	6	4	7	6	7	7	9	9	10

Getting the hang of this yet? Don't worry if it is taking more time. This is new to you who have never done this. Don't move to the next exercise until you are comfortable with the first and second one.

Okay, now a little solo based ideas. **Ex. 4** and **Ex. 5**. In **Ex. 4** you're going to play a typical Blues intro lick, now hybrid picked. **Ex. 5** is a little syncopated double-stop thing. Play through them and get them smoothed out and add in the metronome once you're comfortable.

Ex. 6 shows you a typical rock lick I'm sure you've heard before in solos such as "Free Bird". The pull-off can be played with a finger or with the pick, your choice - but learn both approaches! Put it to the metronome once you're comfortable.

EX. 6

And, speaking of Lynyrd Skynyrd... Here in Ex. 7 we have another lick from "Freebird" in which you pick, pull-off and hybrid pick. When played fairly quickly, this is a cool lick that is very easy to play.

EX.7

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is a treble clef staff in 4/4 time, containing a melodic line of eighth notes. The notes are: G4 (4th fret), A4 (5th fret), B4 (7th fret), C5 (8th fret), B4 (7th fret), A4 (5th fret), G4 (4th fret), F#4 (3rd fret), E4 (2nd fret), D4 (1st fret), C4 (open), B3 (open), A3 (open), G3 (open), F#3 (open), E3 (open), D3 (open), C3 (open). Above the first four notes are fingerings: 4, 1, 3, 1. Above the fifth and sixth notes is a 'P' (pick) symbol. Above the seventh and eighth notes is a 'V*' (hybrid pick) symbol. The bottom staff is a guitar staff with strings T, A, and B labeled. It shows fret numbers: 15-12, 14, 15-12, 14, 15-12, 14, 15-12, 14. The notes are beamed in pairs: (15, 12), (14), (15, 12), (14), (15, 12), (14), (15, 12), (14). There are dots on the B and E strings at the 12th fret.

* Hybrid pick this note with your 2nd finger

Now that you have a basic idea of how to use hybrid picking in rhythmic and single note fashion, explore the possibilities in songs you already know, and by experimenting with your own ideas and creations. If you have songs you've written, look at where hybrid picking might benefit the song or the instrumental solo section. In many ways, hybrid picking makes some parts far easier to play because they give you a break from frantic pick motion jumping all over the place, replacing it with in place finger use along with the pick.