AN APPROACH TO GUITAR FINGERING

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Most of the method books I've seen for guitar deal mostly with fingerings based on staying in a particular 'position,' or, less frequently, moving up and down individual strings. Here are some exercises showing fingerings for stepwise passages that will allow notes to sustain simultaneously wherever possible. This is something that's done easily on the piano—by holding down the sustain pedal or simply holding down the fingers. Getting smaller intervals (major and minor 2nds) to sound together on the guitar doesn't come so easily. The examples that follow make ample use of open strings and harmonics—you won't find many symmetrical patterns here.

I find this way of thinking interesting because it opens possibilities for dissonant or closely voiced chords not so commonly used on the guitar. It also will give a very different articulation for melodic passages. Hopefully, what's here will lead you on to other possibilities. There are many.

Note:

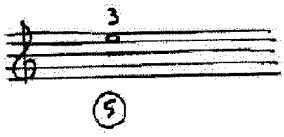
Numbers above the notes refer to left hand fingers (1-4)

O=open string

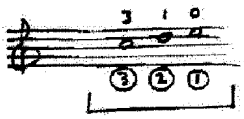
Circled numbers below the note refer to the string

An X designates a harmonic; I've used only those found on the 12th, 7th, and 5th frets [Example 1]

All notes within a bracket should sustain together [Example 2]



Example 1. (3rd finger, 5th string, harmonic on the 7th fret)

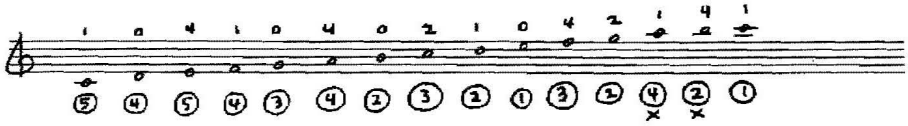


Example 2.

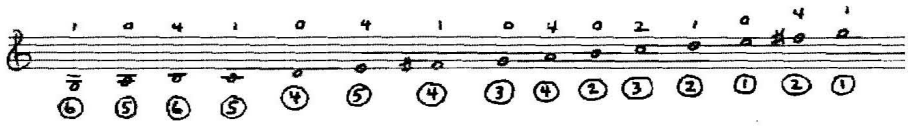
As a general rule, you should hold your fingers down until it's absolutely necessary to move, so that as much of what you're playing as possible will ring simultaneously.

Scales

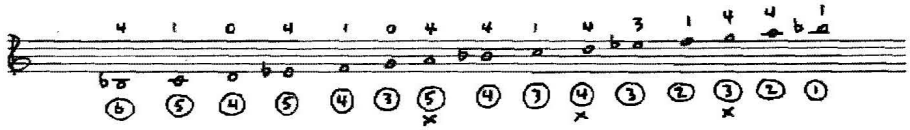
C MAJOR SCALE



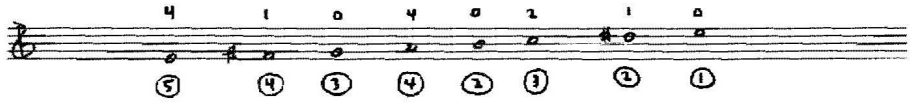
G MAJOR SCALE



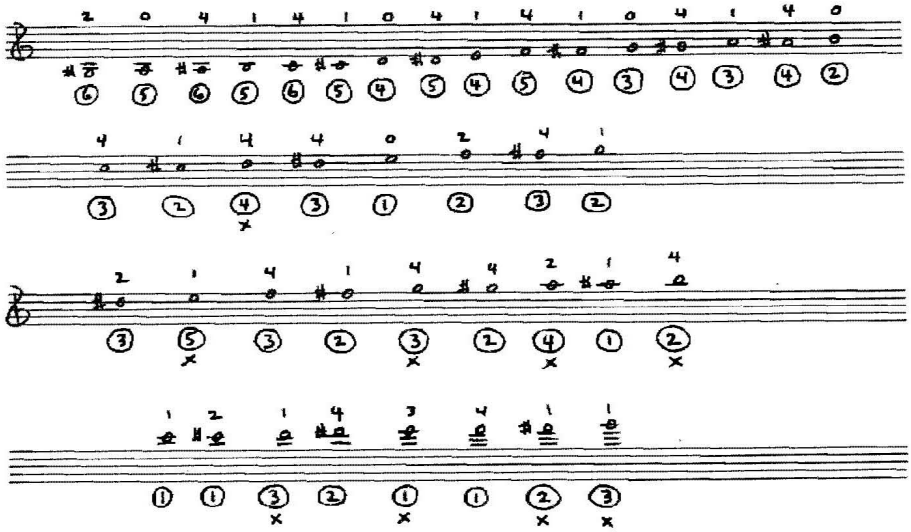
B♭ MAJOR SCALE



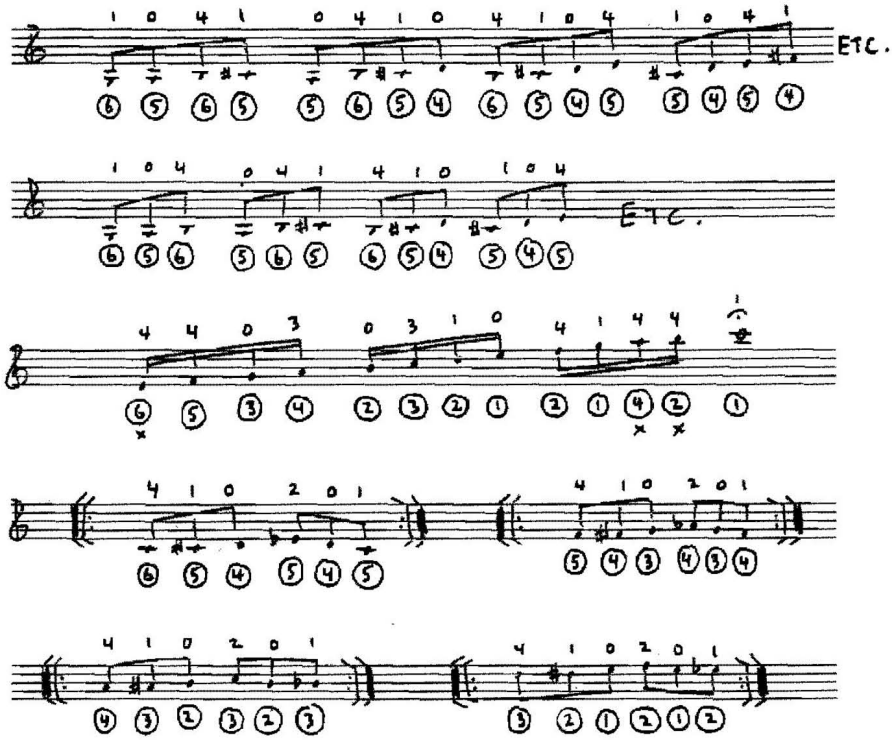
E HARMONIC MINOR SCALE



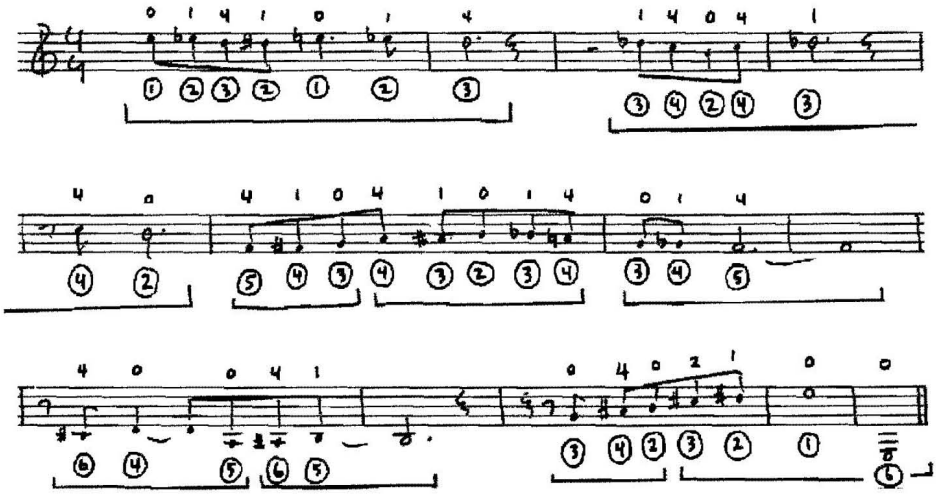
Chromatic Scale



Exercises



Etude #1



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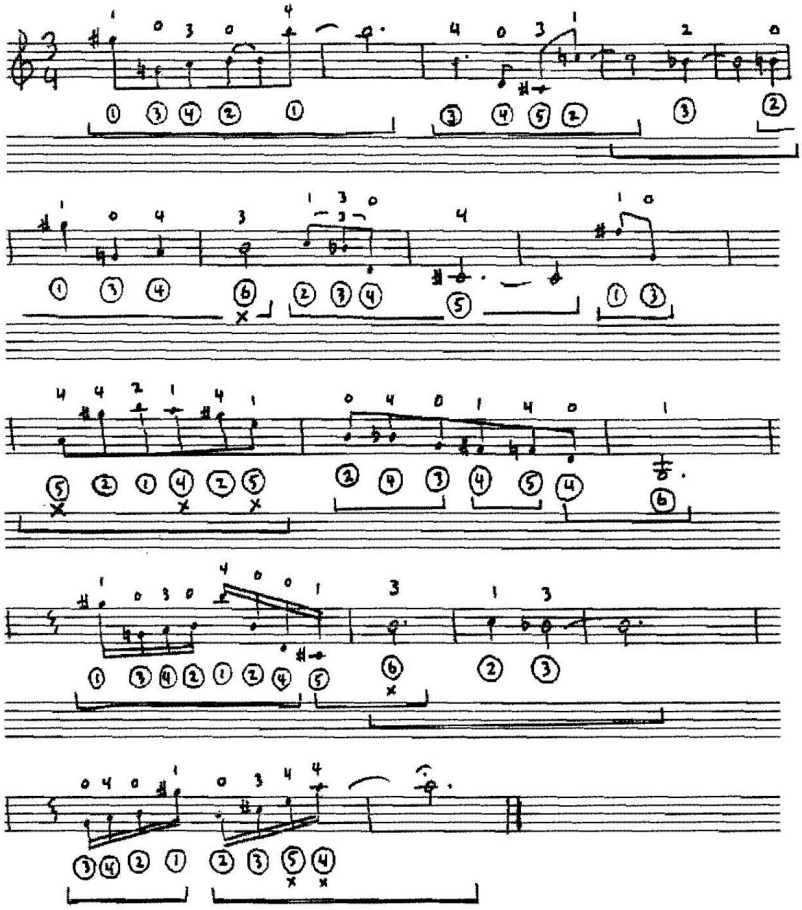
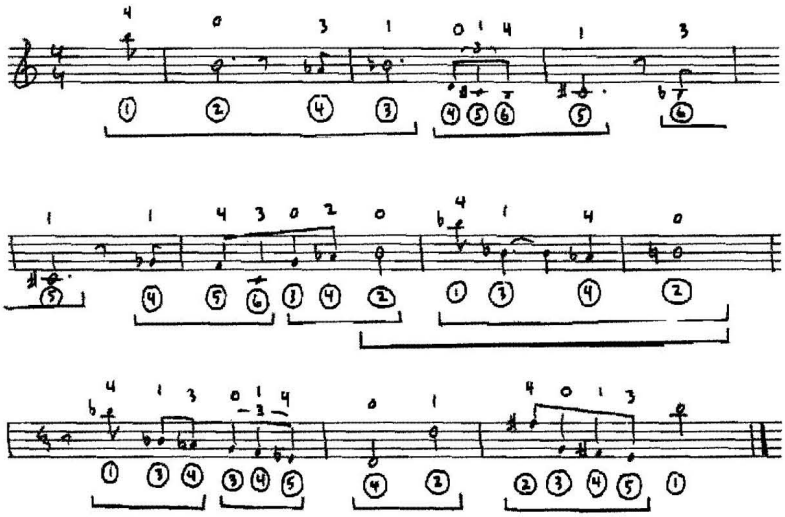
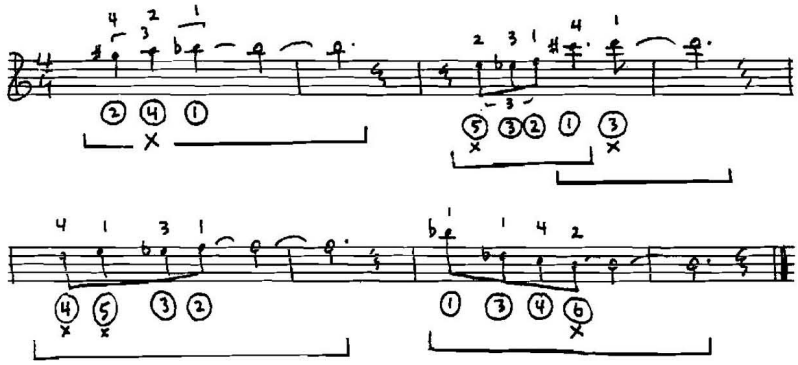
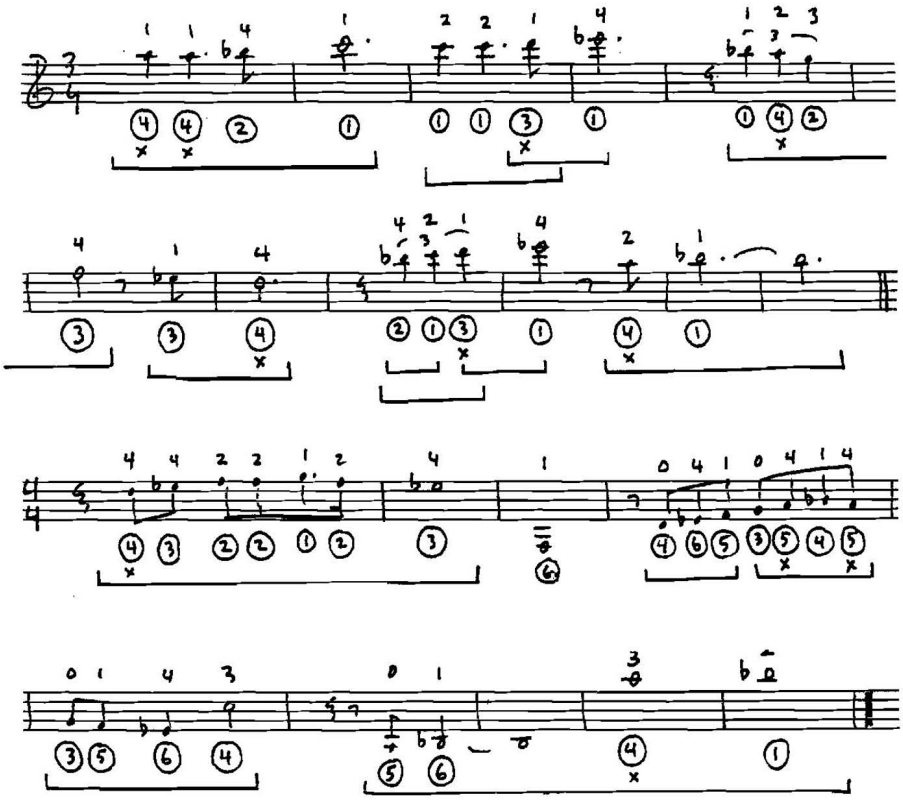


Etude #3



Etude #4



Etude #5