



Vintage Club 15

Resources

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17 June 2024

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Fingerstyle - recap

A quick show of hands of those attending the session suggested that a reasonable proportion had not previously attended the first two fingerstyle Vintage Clubs. We therefore went through a recap of the main techniques and had a quick look at a sample of some of the exercises.

- Thumb & fingers - assigned strings
- 6/8 patterns
- 4/4 patterns
- Canon-ish in C
- Single pinch static
- Double pinch static
- Double pinch moving (quarters & eighths)

All of this information and resources are available in the Clubs Archive - [Vintage Club #7](#) and [Vintage Club #10](#) so we do not need to repeat them here.

Busy thumb - introduction

The name most commonly given to the style we looked at is Travis Picking. Some musicians would advocate that Travis Picking is a distinct method with certain specific elements. In general usage though, it tends to be a broad, catch-all term for any fingerstyle technique that involves our thumb playing a note on all four beats of a bar in 4/4 time signature. We soon got to work developing our busy thumbs, playing on the 1, 2, 3, 4. In an unwavering, steady pulse. The thumb provides the rhythmic foundation for the fingers to work their magic upon.

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Tempo 60 bpm

For all of these exercises, we first played along without a set tempo. Once the technique was developed a little, we used a drum track set at 60 bpm. A metronome is perfectly good for this task. If you would like a drum track you can download a 100 bar mp3 [here](#). It lasts just over six minutes.

Busy thumb - no fingers

To begin the process of training our thumb to play on all four beats of a bar, we used muted strings that give a percussive sound. We alternated playing between the A string and the D string on the 1 and the 2 and again on the 3 and the 4. See TAB.

Muted strings

A guitar TAB diagram for a 4/4 time signature. The strings are labeled T (top), A, and B (bottom). The first measure shows a bar line with a '1' above it. The second measure has an 'X' on the A string with a '2' below it. The third measure has an 'X' on the B string with a '3' below it. The fourth measure has an 'X' on the A string with a '4' below it. The fifth measure has an 'X' on the B string with a '4' below it. The sixth measure has an 'X' on the A string with a '4' below it. The seventh measure has an 'X' on the B string with a '4' below it. The eighth measure has an 'X' on the A string with a '4' below it. The ninth measure has an 'X' on the B string with a '4' below it. The tenth measure has an 'X' on the A string with a '4' below it. The eleventh measure has an 'X' on the B string with a '4' below it. The twelfth measure has an 'X' on the A string with a '4' below it. The thirteenth measure has an 'X' on the B string with a '4' below it. The fourteenth measure has an 'X' on the A string with a '4' below it. The fifteenth measure has an 'X' on the B string with a '4' below it. The sixteenth measure has an 'X' on the A string with a '4' below it. The seventeenth measure has an 'X' on the B string with a '4' below it. The eighteenth measure has an 'X' on the A string with a '4' below it. The nineteenth measure has an 'X' on the B string with a '4' below it. The twentieth measure has an 'X' on the A string with a '4' below it. The twentieth measure is marked with '8x' at the end.

We then applied the technique whilst holding a C major chord.

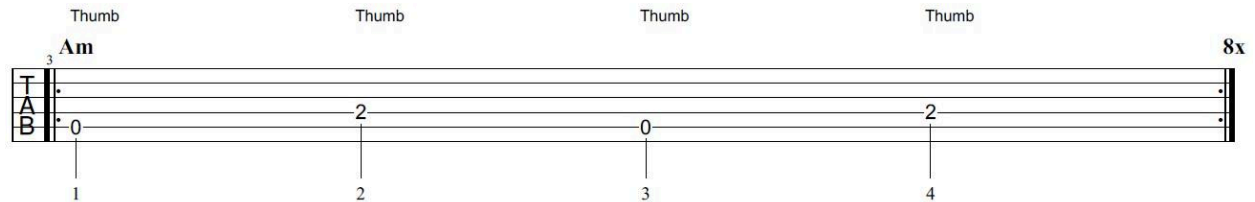
Thumb

A guitar TAB diagram for a 4/4 time signature. The strings are labeled T (top), A, and B (bottom). The first measure shows a bar line with a '2' above it and a 'C' below it. The second measure has a '2' on the A string with a '2' below it. The third measure has a '3' on the B string with a '3' below it. The fourth measure has a '2' on the A string with a '2' below it. The fifth measure has a '3' on the B string with a '3' below it. The sixth measure has a '2' on the A string with a '2' below it. The seventh measure has a '3' on the B string with a '3' below it. The eighth measure has a '2' on the A string with a '2' below it. The ninth measure has a '3' on the B string with a '3' below it. The tenth measure has a '2' on the A string with a '2' below it. The eleventh measure has a '3' on the B string with a '3' below it. The twelfth measure has a '2' on the A string with a '2' below it. The thirteenth measure has a '3' on the B string with a '3' below it. The fourteenth measure has a '2' on the A string with a '2' below it. The fifteenth measure has a '3' on the B string with a '3' below it. The sixteenth measure has a '2' on the A string with a '2' below it. The seventeenth measure has a '3' on the B string with a '3' below it. The eighteenth measure has a '2' on the A string with a '2' below it. The nineteenth measure has a '3' on the B string with a '3' below it. The twentieth measure has a '2' on the A string with a '2' below it. The twentieth measure is marked with '8x' at the end.

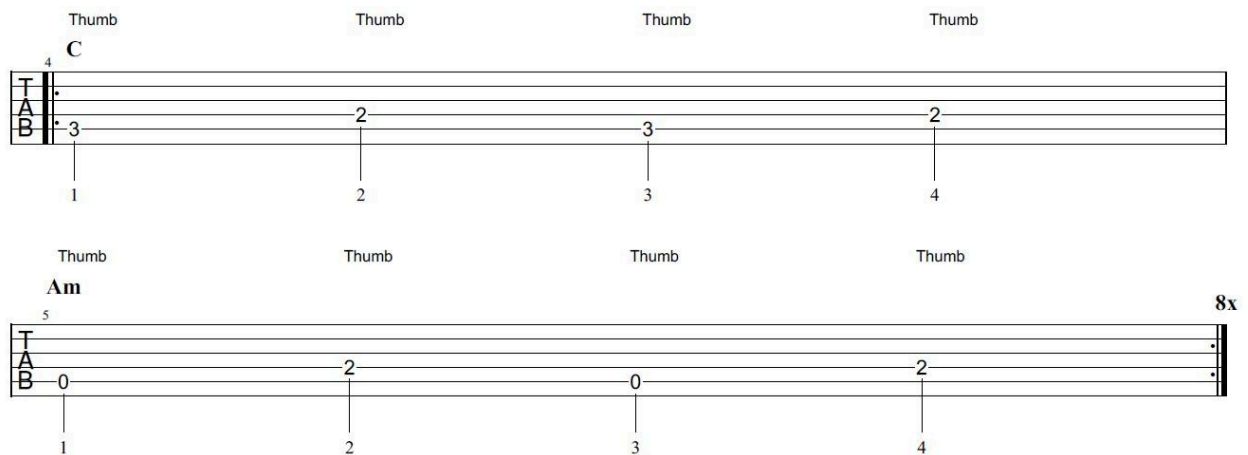
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We repeated this with an A minor chord.



Then we played repeats of a two-chord progression C → Am.



There is an amp3 audio track [available here](#) of all four of these exercises.

Note that the TAB shows only eight repeats for each set of exercises. These are arbitrary limits. If you are learning this technique for the first time then increase the number of repeats, push them way up, far beyond eight. Repetition is crucial in training your thumb to perform its essential role. The busy thumb must be automated. If you need to spend a lot of time at his stage of learning then do so. It is vital that you are comfortable using your thumb to play on every beat before progressing.

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Pinch - Inside - Outside - Inside

This is where we combine a busy thumb with some nimble finger work. This is where the greater fun begins. And some hard work and concentration too.

First, some crucial information to know as we move towards playing with busy thumb plus fingers.

- We will play in a 4/4 time signature
- We count what we play (using a numbered system) as 1 _ 2 & 3 & 4 &
- We can also count using the syllables of: PINCH _ IN SIDE OUT SIDE IN SIDE
- Our notes, through the duration of a bar, are one quarter then three eighths
- We PINCH on the count of 1 using our thumb and our middle (2nd) finger
- The PINCH plus both IN counts plus the OUT count are always played with our thumb (equivalent to the 1, 2, 3, 4)
- All of the & counts are played with a finger
- We ignore (at this stage of learning) both E strings
- Our thumb plays A and D strings alternately
- Our index (1st) finger plays the G string after both counts of IN
- Our middle (2nd) finger plays the B string on the PINCH and the & after OUT

We might better understand how this works with some diagrams.

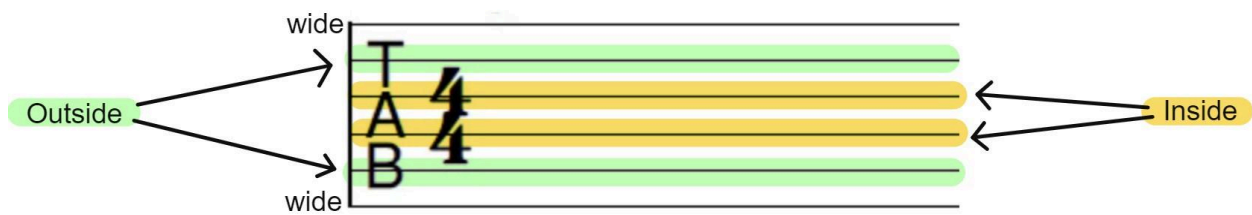
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Defining Outside and Inside

Given that we are not going to play with either of the E strings, we focus only on A, D, G and B strings. With this perspective, the A and B strings are named as OUTSIDE. They are on the extreme edges of our playing space. The D and G strings are INSIDE. They are both within the bounds of our playing space. The colour-coding is:

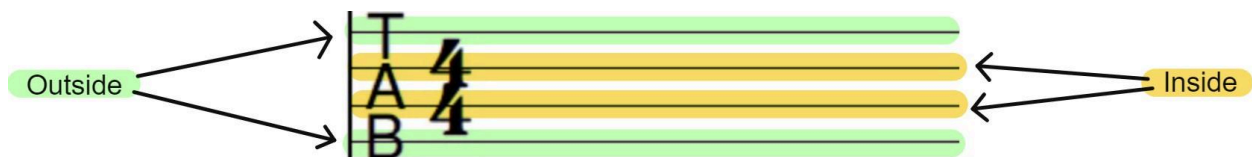
Green = OUTSIDE

Yellow = INSIDE



Note that the E strings have been named 'wide' in the diagram. In future they will be needed - at which time they can be viewed as having transient 'outside' status for the PINCH on the count of 1 and / or the OUTSIDE on the count of 3 &. That noted, we simply maintain our focus on the four strings and know that more is still to come as we progress in this technique.

With E strings removed we can carry this image in our heads.



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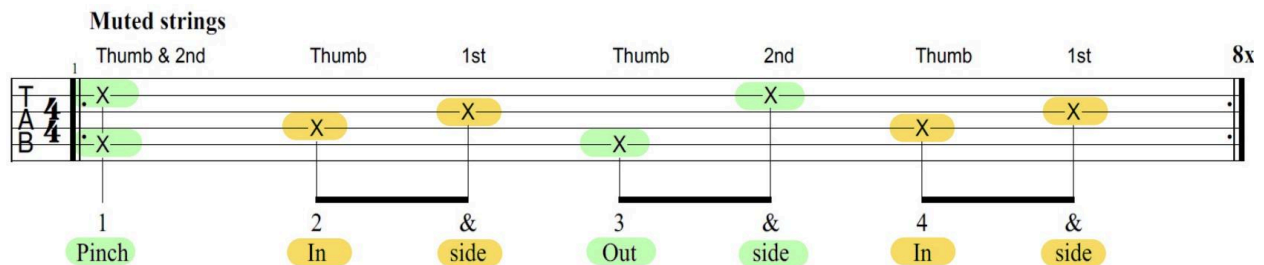
One bar on muted strings

The diagram below shows exactly what is happening and when.

Green = OUTSIDE

Yellow = INSIDE

- Thumb and 2nd finger PINCH on the count of 1. This lasts for a full quarter beat
- Thumb then 1st finger play successive 8ths on the INSIDE on the count 2 &
- Thumb then 2nd finger play successive 8ths on the OUTSIDE on the count 3 &
- Thumb then 1st finger play successive 8ths on the INSIDE on the count 4 &



There is an audio mp3 track for this pattern [available here](#). Listen to it carefully and follow the TAB. Make sure you can understand the pattern and can move your thumb and fingers to match the mechanics. Ensure that you can play each and every section of the bar at whatever slow pace you need to make it work.

As before, I have notated eight repeats on the TAB but that is a very low figure. Practice this pattern over and over and over and over. Play it for hundreds of repeats. This must be automated before you move on and apply it to chords and chord progressions.

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C major and A minor chords

The next step taken was hearing how the Pinch - Inside - Outside - Inside pattern sounds with a single chord. We played firstly with a C major chord grip. Then we played with an A minor chord grip. We did not change chords at this stage, we simply formed and held a single chord and concentrated on our picking. Note that the green and yellow colour-coding has been omitted from all the TAB below. If it helps, print the TAB and use a highlighter pen to add it to your document.

C major Audio mp3 track [available here](#)

Thumb & 2nd Thumb 1st Thumb 2nd Thumb 1st 8x

1
C
TAB 4/4
1 1 3 2 0 3 1 2 0

1 Pinch 2 In & side 3 Out & side 4 In & side

A minor Audio mp3 track [available here](#)

Thumb & 2nd Thumb 1st Thumb 2nd Thumb 1st 8x

2
Am
TAB 4/4
1 2 0 2 1 0 2 2

1 Pinch 2 In & side 3 Out & side 4 In & side

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Chord progression C → Am

Once we are comfortable with the Pinch - Inside - Outside - Inside pattern, and once we have a feeling and level of comfort playing it with each chord separately, it is time for us to move on to playing the same two-chord progression C → Am in a repeating loop. There is an audio mp3 of this available here.

	Thumb & 2nd	Thumb	1st	Thumb	2nd	Thumb	1st
	C						
	1	2	&	3	&	4	&
	Pinch	In	side	Out	side	In	side
	Thumb & 2nd	Thumb	1st	Thumb	2nd	Thumb	1st
	Am						
	1	2	&	3	&	4	&
	Pinch	In	side	Out	side	In	side
							8x

Once again, the TAB indicates eight repeats. Once again, view this as the very bare minimum. To build a practice routine, aim to play eight consecutive bars smoothly without error. Then pause briefly and try again. And so on.

With the ability to play Pinch - Inside - Outside - Inside and to play a chord progression, we are ready to take the next step. It is a bigger one. Let's go for it!

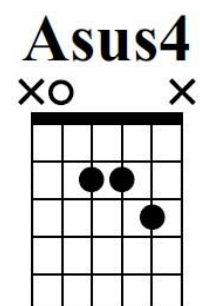
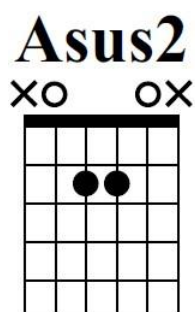
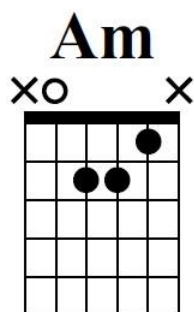
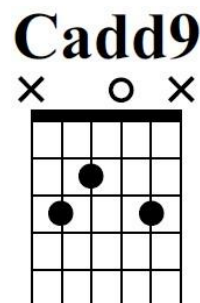
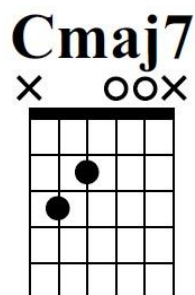
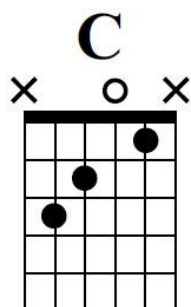
Dusty Wind

Yes! It is that classic of the 1970s. A bona fide dreamer song for so many aspiring fingerstyle guitarists.

To avoid copyright issues the TAB will show the chords set above the Pinch - Inside - Outside - Inside pattern that we have been learning. That pattern takes us all the way through the sixteen bar intro to the song.

The sixteen bars can be viewed as four groups of four. We start with four bars based around C, then play four bars based around Am, then play four bars based around C and complete with four bars based around Am.

These are the chords we need.





We need to think of C major and A minor as the foundation for all of the chords. Our middle and ring fingers will remain static within those chord shapes. Our index and little fingers will do some work on the B string. Our index finger is placed on fret 1 for C and Am. Our little finger is placed on fret 3 for Cadd9 and Asus4. Both our index and little fingers are lifted off for Amaj7 and Asus2.

This chord progression gives a repeating sequence of notes (fret 1, open, fret 3) on the B string due to the chord changes.

	1	open	3	1	
	open	3	1	open	
	3	1	open	3	
	1	open	3	1	

The chord progression is:

	C	Cmaj7	Cadd9	C	
	Asus2	Asus4	Am	Asus2	
	Cadd9	C	Cmaj7	Cadd9	
	Am	Asus2	Asus4	Am	

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Dusty Wind - TAB - NOT TAB

There are two versions below. One with four bars per row and one with two bars per row. Both contain the same progression, the latter is less cluttered so may be easier to read.

Remember this pattern: Pinch - Inside - Outside - Inside. Use it on every chord.

Muted strings

1 Pinch
2 In
& side
3 Out
& side
4 In side

8x

C
1 Pinch
2 In
& 3 side
& 4 Out
& side
In side

Cmaj7
1 Pinch
2 In
& 3 side
& 4 Out
& side
In side

Cadd9
1 Pinch
2 In
& 3 side
& 4 Out
& side
In side

C
1 Pinch
2 In
& 3 side
& 4 Out
& side
In side

Asus2
1 Pinch
2 In
& 3 side
& 4 Out
& side
In side

Asus4
1 Pinch
2 In
& 3 side
& 4 Out
& side
In side

Am
1 Pinch
2 In
& 3 side
& 4 Out
& side
In side

Asus2
1 Pinch
2 In
& 3 side
& 4 Out
& side
In side

Cadd9
1 Pinch
2 In
& 3 side
& 4 Out
& side
In side

C
1 Pinch
2 In
& 3 side
& 4 Out
& side
In side

Cmaj7
1 Pinch
2 In
& 3 side
& 4 Out
& side
In side

Cadd9
1 Pinch
In side
Out side
In side

Am
1 Pinch
In side
Out side
In side

Asus2
1 Pinch
In side
Out side
In side

Asus4
1 Pinch
In side
Out side
In side

Am
1 Pinch
In side
Out side
In side

C **Cmaj7**

1 Pinch 2 In & side 3 Out & side 4 In & side 2 1 Pinch 2 In & side 3 Out & side 4 In & side

Cadd9 **C**

3 1 Pinch 2 In & side 3 Out & side 4 In & side 4 1 Pinch 2 In & side 3 Out & side 4 In & side

Asus2 **Asus4**

5 1 Pinch 2 In & side 3 Out & side 4 In & side 6 1 Pinch 2 In & side 3 Out & side 4 In & side

Am **Asus2**

7 1 Pinch 2 In & side 3 Out & side 4 In & side 8 1 Pinch 2 In & side 3 Out & side 4 In & side

Cadd9 **C**

9 1 Pinch 2 In & side 3 Out & side 4 In & side 10 1 Pinch 2 In & side 3 Out & side 4 In & side

Cmaj7 **Cadd9**

11 1 Pinch 2 In & side 3 Out & side 4 In & side 12 1 Pinch In side Out side In side

Am **Asus2**

13 Pinch In side Out side In side 14 Pinch In side Out side In side

Asus4 **Am**

15 Pinch In side Out side In side 16 Pinch In side Out side In side

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