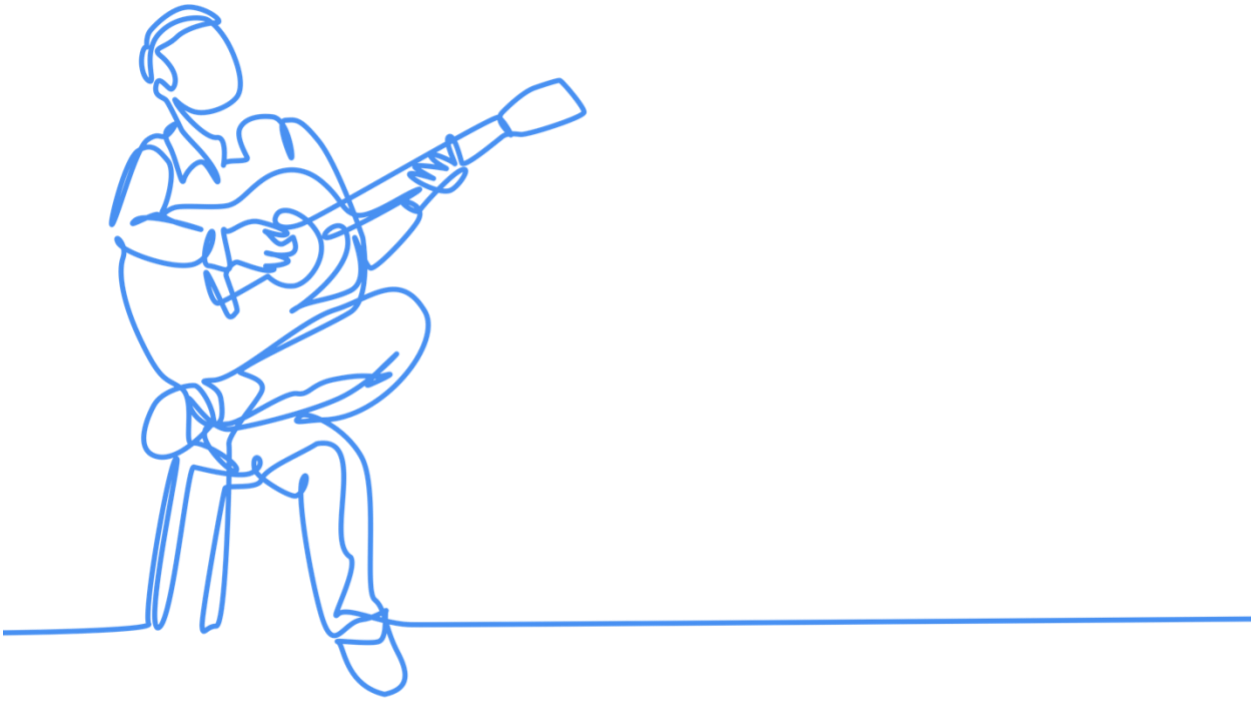
LEARN BLUES FINGERPICKING

INTERMEDIATE COURSE

2.4 Targeting Chord Tones



Patrick O'Malley

Targeting Chord Tones

Approach

Position 2 is the area of the guitar fretboard between the 2nd and 5th fret. In this lesson, we are going to learn 4 new riffs that target some of the chord tones of E. This helps to outline our chord.

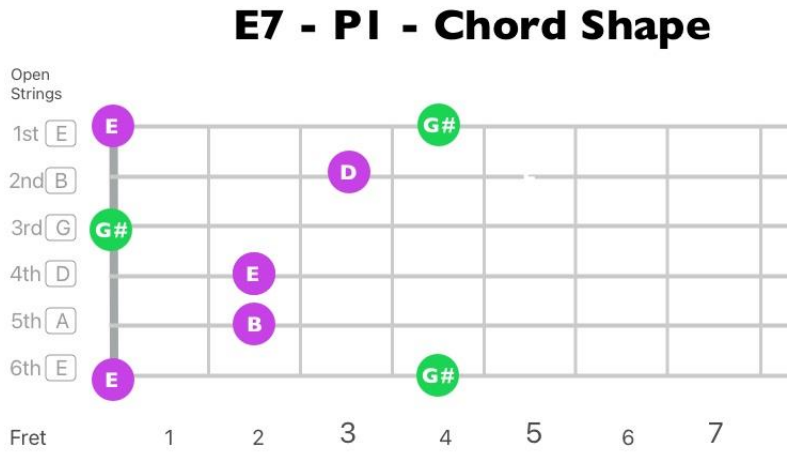
Playing some chord tones (individual notes from a chord) might sound like a complex thing to do. However, we are going to take it nice and easy. We'll just play a riff using our E blues scale and then as a final note, we will sometimes play a chord tone.

Doing this will help our musical line make sense to the listeners ear. The formula is simple. We know that an arpeggio is a way of playing the notes of a chord individually. If you fret a G chord and play each string one by one, that's an arpeggio!

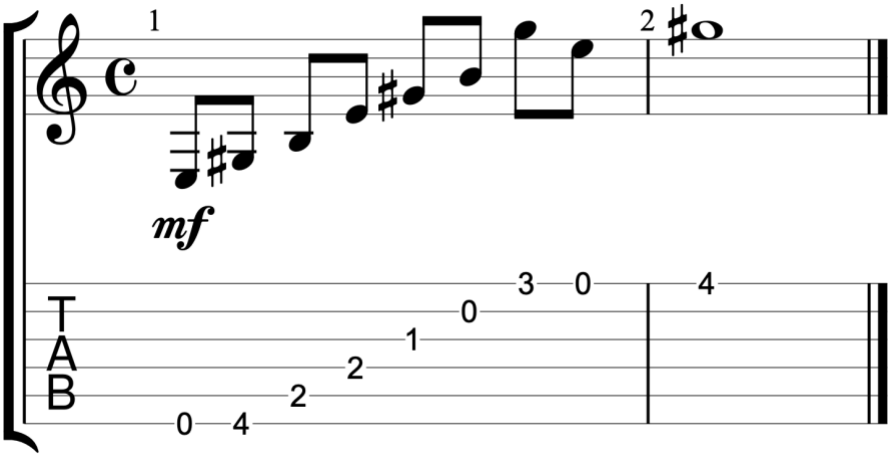
We are going to learn some arpeggios for E7 and that way, we know that any of those notes is a chord tone of E7 (and thus a great choice of note to end on if we are playing over E7). We will look at E7 arpeggios now in the 1st and 2nd position and use those to pick out a final note for the riffs that follow.

E7 Arpeggio Position 1

Here is a chart showing each note of E7 in position 1 (note the thickest string is at the bottom). I like charts like this because they help me visualize, but I will provide tab also

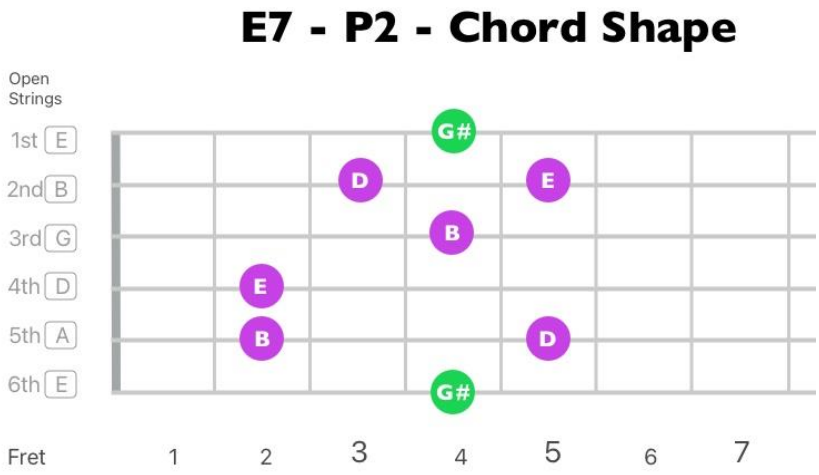


Here is a tab version of how you might play that arpeggio ascending:



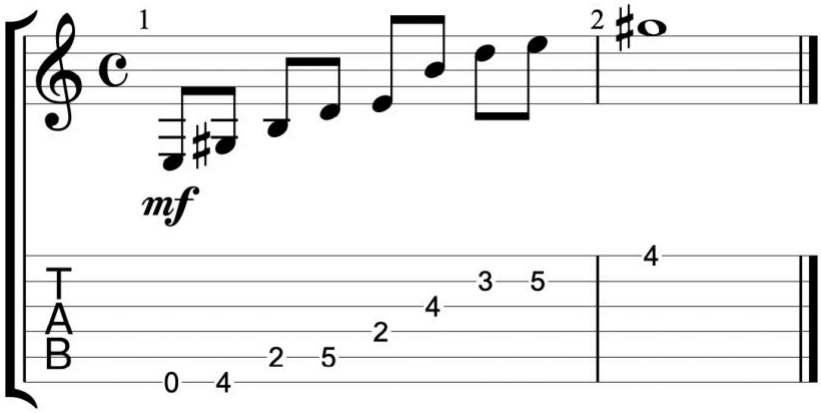
E7 Arpeggio Position 2

Let's examine the E7 arpeggio in Position 2. Here is the chord shape diagram:



I have put in the names of each note as well as show the position of this arpeggio on the fretboard. Focus primarily on visualizing this shape and playing it on the guitar.

Don't worry too much about the names of the notes. That's something that can come with time. One thing you will see is that all these notes are either E, G#, B or D. That's how we make chords of E7 all over the guitar neck – we find combinations of these notes that we can fret at the same time.



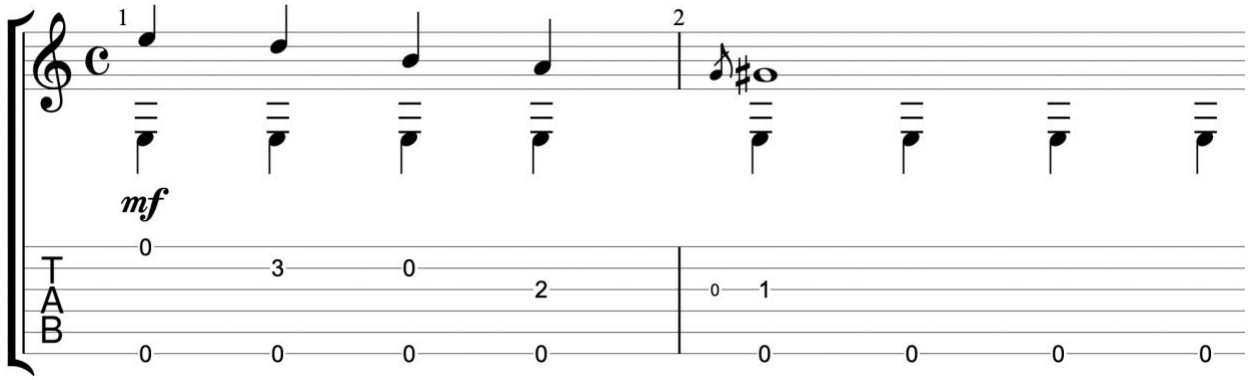
Riff A

For the first half of this riff, play one note per bass.

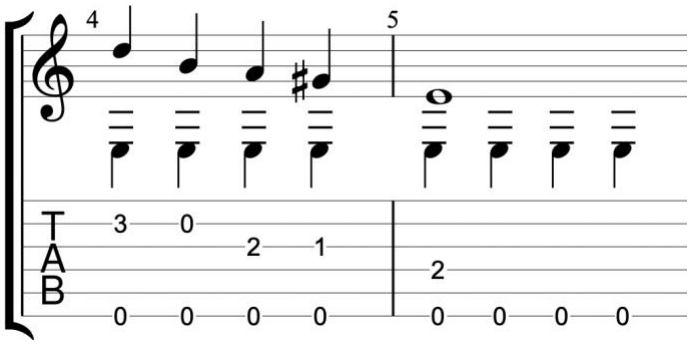
Note that we let a note ring for all of the second bar – the 3rd string at the 1st fret.

Check the arpeggio diagram – this is the G# and it is a chord tone of E7.

Use your ears as you play this – just listen and feel what it sounds like to end on this note and how it really sounds outside the scale, yet perfect for an E7 context.



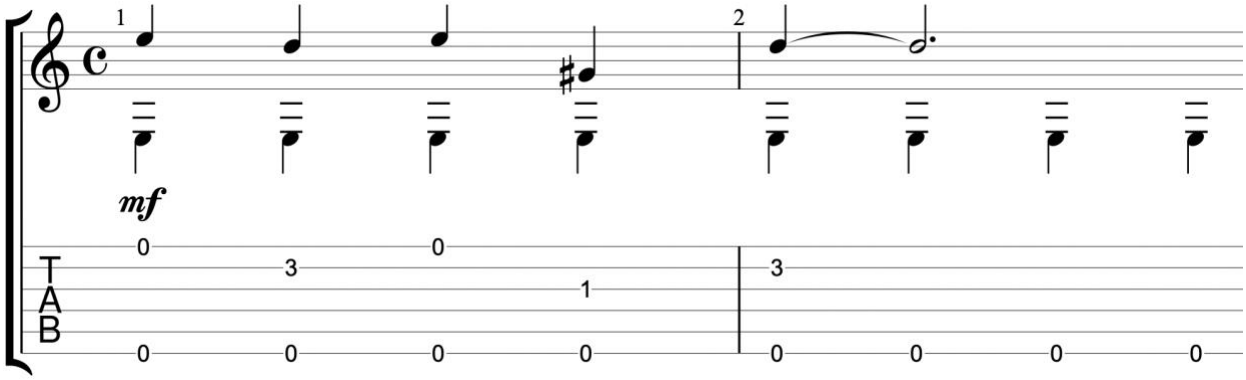
The second half of this riff keeps descending the scale and then ends on the E note (the 4th string at the 2nd fret) which is an E note.



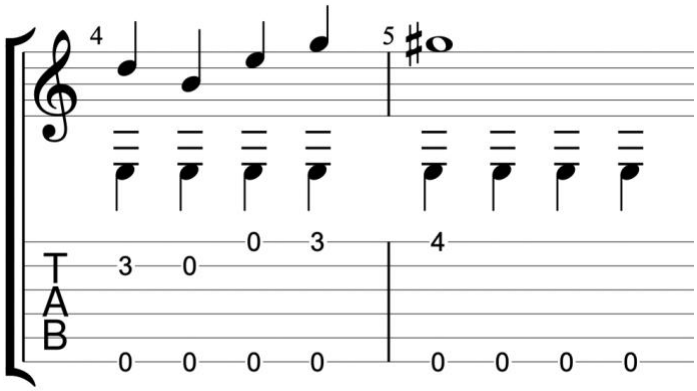
Riff B

We again play one note per bass and let a note ring for all of the second bar.

This note is also part of our E7 arpeggio



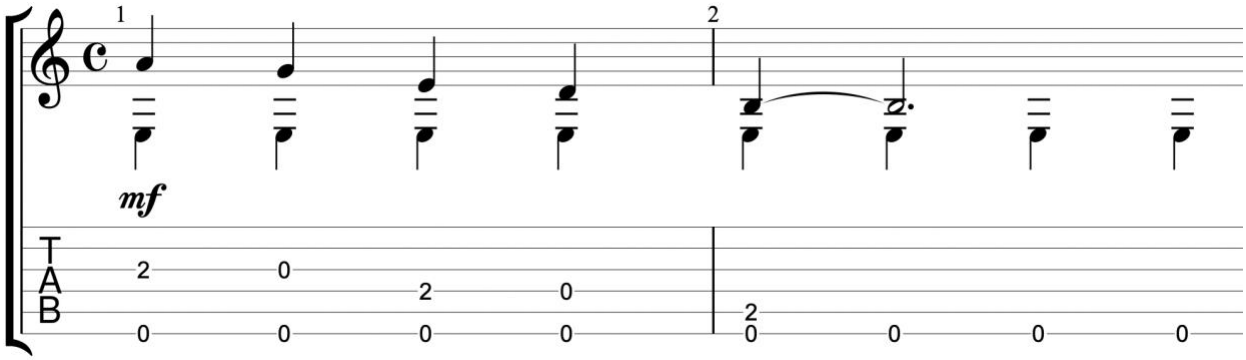
The second half of this riff lets the major third (the G# - a chord tone) end the riff



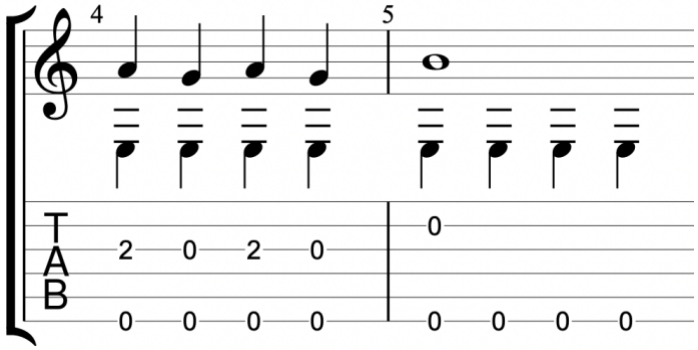
Riff C

We now play on the 3rd and 4th strings.

This is where Led Zeppelin, Lenny Kravitz or the Stone Roses might have a riff! We play one note per bass and let a chord tone ring.



We again play one note per bass, and we let the same note ring (a B note, except an octave higher now as the open 2nd string). Hopefully you can hear how that all ties together

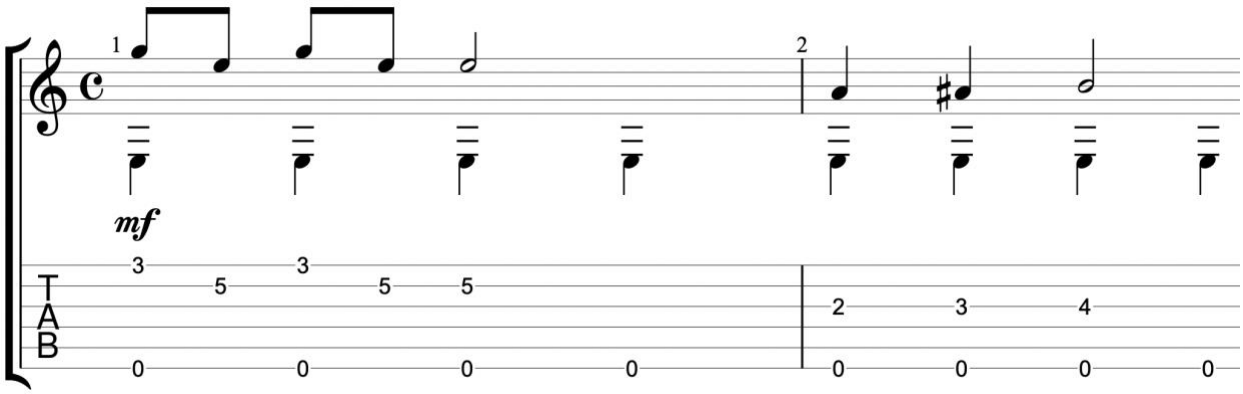
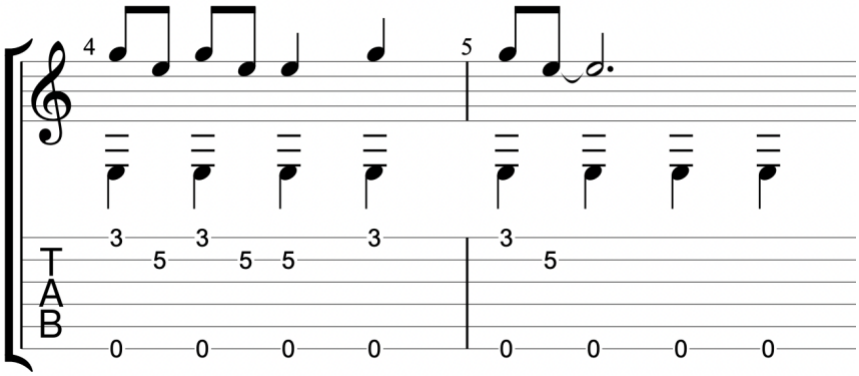


Riff D

We have 2 notes per bass note here (call them eighth notes if you like!)

Focus on making that sound clean with good timing.

We end on a B note – a chord tone



The second half of this riff has a different. We end on an E note – the root and obviously a chord tone too!