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EASY

JAZZ GUITAR SOLOING

Part of the Matt Warnock Guitar Easy Guitar Series

Easy Guitar Soloing

Your stress free guide to soloing in the jazz guitar style.

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About the Author

How to Use This eBook

Welcome to Easy Jazz Guitar Soloing. It's great to have you here!

One of the biggest problems I see jazz guitarists face when soloing is they learn scales and arpeggios, etc., but they don't sound like jazz.

This is because they've bought into the myth that playing scale A over chord B equals jazz.

While scales and arpeggios are essential for a jazz sound, they're not the end of your studies, but the beginning.

This is where this eBook and the material in this eBook come into play.

These exercises show you exactly how to take scales, arpeggios, and other essential jazz concepts and turn them into jazzy sounding solos.

Along the way you learn by soloing with each and every concept in this eBook.

This is the best way to approach any of the exercises and concepts below.

Start by learning the concept, playing the written examples on guitar in one key, and then expand them out from there.

This means working concepts in different positions, in different scales, and most importantly, applying them to your soloing practice.

Because soloing is an essential exercise with any of these concepts, there are slow backing tracks included for many of these exercises.

Make good use of those backing tracks as you have fun soloing over any exercise while learning new concepts in the process.

Jazz guitar soloing practice doesn't have to be boring, overly technical, or intimidating.

In fact it can be down right fun to learn while bringing new levels of creativity into your practice routine.

If you're new to jazz guitar soloing, start on page 1 and work your way down the exercises from there.

If you're an experienced soloist stuck in a rut, feel free to skip around until you find the right exercise for your current stage of development.

It takes time and effort to become a high-level jazz guitarist.

But, if you enjoy practicing, see definitive results, and go beyond just learning scales and arpeggios, you'll enjoy every step of the journey.

Have fun with these exercises, take your time on the tough ones, and enjoy your journey to becoming the best jazz guitarist you can be.

Cheers,
Matt

Outlining the Changes – Arpeggios

The next step to learning how to solo in a jazz style without much stress is to work on jazzy sounding arpeggios.

Often guitarists will learn arpeggios and use them in their solos only to sound accurate but a bit plain.

The reason for this is that they're using root-3-5-7 arpeggios, which just mimic the chord tones in their solos, and don't add any other notes.

Running arpeggios is fine, but it does sound like an exercise if you don't go further than 1-3-5-7 shapes in your solos.

This chapter shows you how to create colorful arpeggios over essential jazz chords and progressions.

As well, it introduces you to the chromatic ornaments that jazz guitarists use to create exciting and engaging arpeggio phrases.

In this chapter you're given sample fingerings for these arpeggios, enough to get you started.

But, you can also apply these concepts to any arpeggio shape you know, and should do that to take things further in your playing.

Jazzy Major ii V I Arpeggios

Here's how you build a jazzy m7 arpeggio, in this example over a Dm7 chord.

To create a jazzy m7 arpeggio you play a maj7 arpeggio from the b3rd of that chord.

This means playing Fmaj7 over Dm7 to create a rootless Dm9 sound.

Here's how that looks so you can get a feel for how this concept sounds and sits on the fretboard.

Notice that when you take the root note D away from a Dm9 arpeggio you're left with Fmaj7.

That's how you get to the maj7 arpeggio from the b3 of any m7 chord to produce the m9 sound.

Audio Example 18

The image shows musical notation for Audio Example 18. It consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar fretboard diagram. The treble clef staff is labeled **Dm7** above it. The first measure contains a Dm9 arpeggio with notes D (R), F (b3), A (5), C (b7), and E (9). The second measure contains an Fmaj7 arpeggio with notes F (b3), A (5), C (b7), and E (9). Below the staff, the guitar fretboard diagram shows the fret positions for these notes: D (5th fret), F (8th fret), A (7th fret), C (5th fret), and E (5th fret).

To create a V13 sound, you play a maj7#11 arpeggio from the b7 of any dominant 7th chord.

This means playing Fmaj7#11 over G7 to create a G13 sound, as you see and hear below.

Notice that this is only 1 note different from the iim7 arpeggio.

There, you played Fmaj7, here you play Fmaj7#11, only the C has moved to a B in this new arpeggio.

This is important to know because it allows you to outline both chords, iim7 and V7, without moving your hand.

Practice this arpeggio in a few keys to get the sound of it in your ears.

Then, play the Fmaj7 arpeggio above, followed by the Fmaj7#11 arpeggio below to see how one leads to the other on the fretboard.

Audio Example 19

G7

b7 9 3 13
 Fmaj7#11

T 5
 A 4
 B 8 7

To create the jazzy maj7 arpeggio, you play a m7 arpeggio from the 3rd of that chord.

This means playing Em7 over Cmaj7 for example, creating a rootless Cmaj9 arpeggio in the process.

Here's how this looks on paper to get a sense for how this arpeggio sounds and sits on the guitar.

Audio Example 20

Cmaj7

R 3 5 7 9 3 5 7 9
 Cmaj9 Em7

T 3
 A 2 5 4 3
 B 3 2 5 4 3

Now that you know what arpeggios to play over the major ii V I progression you learn fingerings for those arpeggios on the guitar.

To begin, here are arpeggios from the 5th string over a ii V I in C major.

When you can play these shapes in C, move them to other keys to take them further in your studies.

Lastly, put on a backing track and solo with these shapes over ii V I's in various keys.

Audio Example 21

The image shows a musical score for a ii V I progression in C major. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are: Dm7 (D-F-A-C), G7 (G-B-D-F), and Cmaj7 (C-E-G-B). The bottom staff shows guitar fingerings for the 5th string. The first two bars are for Dm7 and G7, and the last two bars are for Cmaj7. The fingerings are: 8-7-10-9 for Dm7, 8-7-9-9 for G7, 7-10-9-7 for Cmaj7, and 9-8-7-10 for the final Cmaj7 chord.

You now move these arpeggios to the 4th string root as you outline the same major ii V I progression.

Notice that there's no room for a two-octave shape under the Cmaj7 chord.

Because of this, you play up and down a one-octave arpeggio in those two bars to fill that space.

After you can play these shapes in a few keys, use them to solo over various major ii V I progressions in your studies.

Audio Example 22

Dm⁷ **G⁷** **Cmaj⁷**

Fmaj7 _____ Fmaj7#11 _____ Em7 _____

T 5 5 3 5 3

A 2 4 4 3 4

B 3 3 2 5 4 5

Here are the same arpeggios on the top-three strings.

Work this in multiple keys and then add them to your solos over a major ii V I backing track.

From there, mix these shapes with the previous arpeggios to cover more of the fretboard in your soloing lines and phrases.

Audio Example 23

Dm⁷ **G⁷** **Cmaj⁷**

Fmaj7 _____ Fmaj7#11 _____ Em7 _____

T 12 12 10 12 10

A 10 10 9 12 12 12

B 10 13 12 10 12 12

Jazzy Minor ii V I Arpeggios

You only need to learn one new arpeggio to outline the minor ii V I arpeggios.

This is because when you see a m7b5 chord, you just play the m7b5 arpeggio that goes with that chord.

As well, you already learned how to play over m7 chords in the previous section, and the same rule applies here.

That means that the only chord you have to address in a minor ii V I is the V7alt chord.

When soloing over a V7alt chord, you can play a dim7 arpeggio from the 5th of that chord.

This means playing Bdim7 over E7alt to produce an E7b9 sound.

Here's how that works.

You take a 7b9 arpeggio, drop the root and you're left with a dim7 chord, such as the G#dim7 chord below.

If you raise the root up an octave, G#, you get a Bdim7 arpeggio, a dim7 from the 5th of E7alt.

This is important because it allows you to outline both the iim7b5 and V7alt chords without moving your hand.

In a minor ii V I in Am for example, you play Bm7b5-Bdim7-Cmaj7 over the three chords, Bm7b5-E7alt-Am7.

Outlining each in the process without moving your hand.

Audio Example 24

E7^{ALT.}

R 3 5 b7 b9 3 5 b7 b9 5 b7 b9 3
E7b9 _____ G#dim7 _____ Bdim7 _____

T 6 6 4
A 7 7 7
B 7 6 9

Now that you know what arpeggios to use over a minor ii V I, you take those shapes to the fretboard.

Here's an example of how to play those arpeggios starting on the 5th-string root note.

You can also play these shapes on the 6th-string root, but they tend to sound muddy.

If you do take them to the 6th string, make sure to adjust your tone so each note comes out clearly on your guitar.

Work this example in Am, then in other keys when you're ready.

From there, put on the backing track and solo over a minor ii V I using these shapes as the basis for your lines.

Audio Example 25

Bm7(b5) **E7 ALT.** **Am7**

Bm7b5 _____ Bdim7 _____ Cmaj7 _____

T: _____
 A: _____
 B: 2-5-3 2-5-3 3-2-5-4 5-5-3-7

Here are the minor ii V I arpeggios on the 432 string set.

Notice that here there's no room for a two-octave arpeggio over Am7, so you go up and down that shape instead.

Have fun exploring these arpeggios in other keys and then adding them to your soloing practice routine over minor ii V I changes.

Audio Example 26

Bm7(b5) **E7 ALT.** **Am7**

Bm7b5 _____ Bdim7 _____ Cmaj7 _____

T: _____
 A: _____
 B: 9-12-10-10 9-12-10-9 10-9-12-12 13-12-12-9

Here are the minor ii V I arpeggios on the top 3 strings to add to your practice routine.

After you can play these shapes from memory take them to other keys.

Then, add them to your soloing workout over a backing track as you mix them with the shapes you learned earlier.

Audio Example 27

The musical notation for Audio Example 27 consists of a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a guitar fretboard diagram below it. The melodic line is divided into four measures, each with a chord label above it: **Bm7(b5)**, **E7^{ALT.}**, **Am7**, and **Cmaj7**. The notes in the melodic line are: Measure 1: B2, C3, D3, E3; Measure 2: E3, F#3, G3, A3; Measure 3: A3, B3, C4, D4; Measure 4: D4, E4, F4, G4. The guitar fretboard diagram shows the bass and middle strings (T, A, B) with fingerings for each measure: Measure 1: T (4), A (7), B (6), 5; Measure 2: T (4), A (7), B (6), 4; Measure 3: T (5), A (5), B (8), 7; Measure 4: T (8), A (7), B (8), 5.

Arpeggio Ornaments

Now that you know how to play jazzy sounding arpeggios, you take it a step further by adding ornaments.

Ornaments use notes outside the arpeggios tones to create tension and release in your lines.

Tension and release is essential when soloing in the jazz style, and these ornaments are a fast track to getting that sound in your playing.

Work each of these ornaments with a metronome over various arpeggios, positions, and keys.

From there you can put on a backing track and add each of these ornaments to your jazz guitar solos.

Have fun with these sounds as you take your arpeggio soloing chops to the next level.

Approach Notes Below

The first ornament in this section is the approach note below any arpeggio note.

Here, you play one fret below any note in the arpeggio to create tension, then resolve that tension into the arpeggio note from there.

Start by playing the example below over Dm7.

When that's comfortable, move to other arpeggios and keys as you explore approach notes further in your studies.

Lastly, put on a backing track and add approach notes to your soloing lines and phrases.

Audio Example 28

Dm7

T
A
B

4 5 7 8 6 7 4 5 6 7 7 8 4 5

Passing Notes

Passing notes are used to connect two diatonic notes, in this case arpeggios notes, in your lines.

Here's an example of passing notes being applied to a Dm7 arpeggio, where you have two arpeggio notes on one string.

When you have only one note on a string passing notes don't apply.

Start by learning this ornament over Dm7, then take it to other keys, other arpeggios, and other positions from there.

Finally, add passing notes to your arpeggio lines and phrases when soloing over jazz tunes and progressions.

Audio Example 29

The image shows a musical example for a Dm7 arpeggio with enclosures. The top staff is a treble clef with a Dm7 chord symbol. The bottom staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with strings T, A, and B labeled. The diagram shows a Dm7 arpeggio (D-F-A-C) with enclosures (chromatic notes) for each note: D (E, C#), F (E, E), A (G#, G), and C (B, B). The fretboard diagram shows the following fret numbers: 5-6-7-8 for the D note, 7-5-6-7 for the F note, 6-5-7 for the A note, and 8-7-6-5 for the C note.

Enclosures

Enclosures feature two chromatic notes for every note in the arpeggio.

They're built by playing one fret above, then one fret below, before landing on your target note.

Here's an example of enclosures applied to a Dm7 arpeggio.

After this exercise is comfortable, take enclosures to other keys and arpeggios in your studies.

From there, put on a backing track and add enclosures to your arpeggio lines over tunes and progressions.

Audio Example 30

The image shows a musical score for a Dm7 arpeggio. The top staff is a treble clef with a Dm7 chord symbol above it. The notes are D4, F4, A4, and C5, each with a blue dot indicating a target note. The bottom staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with two strings (T and B) and four frets. The notes are D4, F4, A4, and C5, each with a blue dot. The fingerings are: 6-4-5-9-7-8 for the first measure, 7 for the second measure, 6-4-5-8-6-7-6 for the third measure, 4-5 for the fourth measure, 8-6-7 for the fifth measure, 9-7-8 for the sixth measure, and 6-4-5 for the seventh measure.

4123 Pattern

I like to call this pattern “4123,” as those are the fingers you use to play the notes in the pattern.

Start by picking a target note in the arpeggio.

Then, place your fourth finger one fret above that note. From there, just play 4123 fingers with one finger per fret.

That’s the pattern.

Here it is applied to a Dm7 arpeggio.

Work this pattern over Dm7 first, then take it to other arpeggios and keys from there.

When ready, put on a backing track and add this pattern to your arpeggio lines and phrases.

Audio Example 31

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Audio Example 31. The first system is for a Dm7 chord, indicated by the chord symbol 'Dm7' above the staff. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a melody of eighth notes. Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with two strings (Treble and Bass) and fret numbers 6, 3, 4, 5, 9, 6, 7, 8. The second system shows a trill pattern on the same strings, with fret numbers 8, 5, 6, 7, 9, 6, 7, 8, 6, 3, 4, 5.

Trill Pattern

The last ornament is a trill pattern that plays the target note three times, surrounded by two chromatic notes.

The entire pattern is:

Target-Fret Above-Target-Fret Below-Target

Because it's a five-note pattern you play this trill with four 16th notes followed by a quarter note.

For the fingering, I prefer 2-3-2-1-2 or 3-4-3-2-3, but you can experiment with others and see what fits best.

Start by learning this trill over the Dm7 arpeggio below.

Then, take it to other arpeggios and positions as you expand it in your studies.

Lastly, put on a backing track and add this trill to your arpeggios lines over tunes and progressions when soloing.

Audio Example 32

Dm7

T
A
B 5-6-5-4-5-8-9-8-7-8 7-8-7-6-7 5-6-5-4-5 7-8-7-6-7-5-6-5-4-5

T
A
B 7-8-7-6-7 8-9-8-7-8 5-6-5-4-5

Major ii V I Arpeggio Exercises

Now that you know how to apply and ornament these jazzy arpeggios, you take them to a major ii V I progression.

The first exercise runs up each arpeggio in the progression.

After you can play this exercise in C, take it to other keys, and then other positions, to expand it in your playing.

From there, put on a ii V I backing track and solo over those chords using the arpeggios below.

Audio Example 33

The image shows musical notation for a major ii V I progression. The top staff is in treble clef and contains four measures of eighth notes: D4-E4-F4-G4, A4-B4-C5, D5-E5-F5, and G5-A5-B5. Above the staff are the chord symbols Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, and a final measure with no symbol. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains four measures of arpeggio patterns with fingerings: 8-7-10-9, 8-7-9-9, 7-10-9-7, and 9-8-7-10.

In the next exercise you reverse the previous workout as you play down each arpeggio in a major key ii V I.

Go slow, start without any tempo, and when ready add a metronome to your workout.

From there, take this exercise to other keys and positions to expand it further in your playing.

Audio Example 34

Chord progression: Dm^7 G^7 C^{maj7}

Melody (Treble Clef):

- Measure 1: D_4 (quarter), E_4 (quarter), F_4 (quarter), G_4 (quarter)
- Measure 2: A_4 (quarter), B_4 (quarter), C_5 (quarter), B_4 (quarter)
- Measure 3: A_4 (quarter), G_4 (quarter), F_4 (quarter), E_4 (quarter)
- Measure 4: D_4 (quarter), C_4 (quarter), B_3 (quarter), A_3 (quarter)

Guitar Fretboard Diagram (Strings T, A, B):

- Measure 1: T (9), A (10), B (7)
- Measure 2: T (9), A (9), B (7)
- Measure 3: T (10), A (7), B (8)
- Measure 4: T (7), A (9), B (10)

You now alternate each arpeggio as you play up the first and down the second arpeggio throughout the progression.

After you can play this exercise in a few keys and positions, put on a backing track and solo with these shapes in different keys.

Audio Example 35

Chord progression: Dm^7 G^7 C^{maj7}

Melody (Treble Clef):

- Measure 1: D_4 (quarter), E_4 (quarter), F_4 (quarter), G_4 (quarter)
- Measure 2: A_4 (quarter), B_4 (quarter), C_5 (quarter), B_4 (quarter)
- Measure 3: A_4 (quarter), G_4 (quarter), F_4 (quarter), E_4 (quarter)
- Measure 4: D_4 (quarter), C_4 (quarter), B_3 (quarter), A_3 (quarter)

Guitar Fretboard Diagram (Strings T, A, B):

- Measure 1: T (3), A (2), B (5)
- Measure 2: T (5), A (4), B (2)
- Measure 3: T (2), A (5), B (4)
- Measure 4: T (5), A (3), B (4)

The final variation has you play down the first arpeggio then up the second as you navigate the progression.

After you can play the exercise in C, take it to other keys, then other positions, to get the most out of it in your workout.

Audio Example 36

The image shows a musical score for a four-measure phrase. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a melody of quarter notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. Above the staff, the chords are labeled as Dm7, G7, and Cmaj7. The bottom staff shows a bass line with fingerings: 5, 5, 2, 3, 3, 2, 4, 5, 5, 3, 4, 5, 2, 5, 4, 3.

The Tune Up Tune Study

Here's a sample solo that uses the arpeggios and ornaments that you learned up to this point in the chapter.

Start by learning the study as written, getting it up to speed with the audio example and backing track when ready.

From there, write out your own Tune Up Tune study using only arpeggios and ornaments from this chapter.

After that, put on the backing track and solo in real time using only melodic devices from this chapter.

Audio Example 37

Em⁷ A⁷ Dmaj⁷

10-7 8-7 7-9 5-6 5-6 5-6 7-6 5-7 8-6-7

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

6-7 5-6-7 5-4-7 6-7 3-4 5-4-7 4-5-4-5 4

Cm⁷ F⁷ Bbmaj⁷

5-6-5-4-5 7-8-7-6-7 7-8-7-6-7 4-5 5-6 6-7-4 5-6-7

Em⁷ A⁷ Dmaj⁷

4-1-2-3-2 3-4 2-2 2-2 5-3 4-5 2 3-1-2

Minor ii V I Arpeggio Exercises

Now that you know what arpeggios to use in a minor ii V I, you bring them all together in a progression.

Notice that you use the Cmaj7 arpeggio over Am7, the same m7 arpeggio concept from the major ii V I section.

Start by working each arpeggio up, from the root to the 7th, over the entire progression.

Practice this exercise in a few positions, then take it to other keys to expand it from there.

Lastly, put on a backing track and solo with these arpeggios, and the ornaments you learned earlier, over a minor ii V I in multiple keys.

Audio Example 38

The musical notation for Audio Example 38 consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar-specific bass line. The treble staff shows a sequence of notes: B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3. The bass line shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B. The progression is divided into four measures: 1. Bm7(b5) with fret numbers 2, 5, 3, 2 on strings T, A, B. 2. E7ALT. with fret numbers 2, 5, 3, 1 on strings T, A, B. 3. Am7 with fret numbers 3, 2, 5, 4 on strings T, A, B. 4. Am7 with fret numbers 5, 5, 3, 7 on strings T, A, B.

You now reverse the previous exercise as you play down every arpeggio in the progression.

Seeing any arpeggio from the top down is tough for many guitarists.

Because of this, go slow, use a metronome, and work this exercise in multiple positions and keys to get the most out of it in your studies.

Audio Example 39

Musical notation for Audio Example 39. The exercise is written for guitar, showing a treble clef staff and a bass staff. The progression consists of four measures, each with a specific chord indicated above the staff: $Bm7(b5)$, $E7_{ALT.}$, and $Am7$. The bass staff shows fingerings for the strings (T, A, B) across the four measures.

In the next exercise you play up the first arpeggio and down the second, alternating through the progression from there.

Work this exercise in a number of keys and positions before taking it to your soloing work out as you expand this idea in the woodshed.

Audio Example 40

Musical notation for Audio Example 40. The exercise is written for guitar, showing a treble clef staff and a bass staff. The progression consists of four measures, each with a specific chord indicated above the staff: $Bm7(b5)$, $E7_{ALT.}$, and $Am7$. The bass staff shows fingerings for the strings (T, A, B) across the four measures.

You now play down the first arpeggio and up the second.

Make sure to run this exercise at different tempos, with different arpeggios shapes, and in multiple keys in your studies.

Audio Example 41

The musical notation for Audio Example 41 consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar fretboard diagram. The treble clef staff shows a melodic line with notes on the first, second, and third strings. The fretboard diagram shows the fret numbers for the treble (T), middle (A), and bass (B) strings. The notes are: 10, 10, 12, 9, 9, 12, 10, 9, 13, 12, 12, 9, 9, 12, 12.

Chord symbols above the staff are: $Bm7(b5)$, $E7_{ALT.}$, and $Am7$.

Blue Bossa Study

You now learn a solo study over Blue Bossa using the arpeggios and concepts from this chapter.

Learn this solo one phrase at a time, then connect all the phrases to play the solo as a whole.

If you dig any of the phrases, take them out of the solo, work them in 12 keys, and use them in other musical situations.

After you have this solo under your fingers over the backing track, write out your own arpeggio study over Blue Bossa.

Then, put on the backing track and work on soloing in real time using only the arpeggios and concepts from this chapter.

Audio Example 42

Cm⁷ **Fm⁷**

T
A
B

Dm^{7(b5)} **G⁷ALT.** **Cm⁷**

T
A
B

Ebm⁷ **Ab⁷** **D^bmaj⁷**

T
A
B

Dm^{7(b5)} **G⁷ALT.** **Cm⁷** **Dm^{7(b5)}** **G⁷ALT.**

T
A
B

About the Author

I grew up listening to classic rock and blues, and I still love those styles of music. But, it's soloing I really love, and that's what drew me to jazz.

My love of jazz has taken me from small town Canada around the globe.

I studied at three of the top jazz programs in the world, starting with McGill University, then Western Michigan, and finishing with a Doctorate from the University of Illinois (UIUC).

I've taught over 6000 private jazz guitar lessons, and my students range from beginners, to Professors at NYU, and everything in between.

I've also taught jazz guitar, popular music, and music business at universities in Canada, the US, the UK, Brazil, and Nepal.

I've played over 2500 gigs in 8 countries and shared the stage with Randy Brecker, Stefon Harris, and Slide Hampton.

Some of my favorite gigs were at:

- Lincoln Center (NY)
- International Association for Jazz Education Conference (NY)
- NuJazz Festival (Brazil)
- Savassi Jazz Festival (Brazil)
- International Jazz Day Festival (Nepal)

Jazz has been in my life for 20 years, and every day I'm glad I found this great music. Because of this, I want to share this love of jazz and guitar with you. You never know where it'll lead you.

For the best free jazz guitar lessons on the web, visit mattwarnockguitar.com