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Learn Right Hand Guitar Fundamentals To Help Strengthen Your Playing.



In this lesson '[My Guitar Lessons](http://www.MyGuitarLessons.co.uk)' are going to learn some of the **fundamentals** for good right hand technique. The techniques presented here for picking and strumming are more guidelines than rules. There are many incredible guitarists all over the world who use different techniques than the ones presented in this lesson. Just look at this lesson as a good place to start out with your picking and strumming. Try not to be frustrated with yourself if you are not getting the hang of this right away. There are players who spend years working on their right hand technique. I would encourage you to look up some videos of your favourite players and see what their right hand technique is like.

Let's start off by looking at what kind of pick to use and how to hold the pick. Picks come in a wide variety of shapes sizes and thickness's It is a good idea to go down to your local music store and buy a variety of picks so that you can see what works best for you. If you don't want to buy a ton of different picks, I recommend starting with a nice medium thickness. A good medium pick will work well for most people and most styles of music.

Curl your index finger on your picking hand and place the pick on fleshy part of the finger between the fingertip and first joint. Now bring your thumb down and lightly pinch the pick to hold it in place. You should have a firm grip on the pick but your hand, fingers, and arm should still be pretty relaxed. If you ever feel any excess tension in your picking hand you should stop and relax. Tension can lead to tendinitis, cramps, or other injuries that you really don't want to deal with.

Place the pick on the low E string and use a downward motion with your wrist to pick the string with a down stroke Now use an upward motion with your wrist to pick the string with an upstroke. Go back and forth with upstrokes and down strokes a few times. Try to move the pick just enough to make the string sound. If you are making wide pick strokes, it will be harder for you to come back to pick the next note. Most of the picking motion comes from the wrist but there are really good players out there who use their elbow or fingers to obtain most of their picking motion. Using the wrist for the picking motion is not a rule, just a guideline.

The angle of the pick on the string is something that you need to be aware of. Some players angle the pick up or down and some keep the pick parallel with the string. This is more of a personal preference but I have found that most players angle the pick downward.

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Let's look at [an](#) exercise that really focuses on helping you to develop your picking technique. This exercise uses alternate picking the entire time. That simply means that no matter how many times you pick, you always alternate up and down strokes. Never have two upstrokes or two down strokes in a row. All you are going to do is start on the low E string and pick that string open three times. Down Up Down. Move to the next open string and pick that string three times. Up Down Up. Continue playing three notes on each open string using alternate picking. Changing from string to string is the hardest part of this exercise. Don't be frustrated if you don't get it right away. Start this exercise out slowly and build up speed only when it is clean and clear. We have provided you with the notation and tab for this exercise. Be sure to pay attention to the upstroke and down stroke indicators on the tab.

Strumming is the next right hand technique that we will look at. I once heard a great guitar player say that good strumming technique is like pretending that you have some honey on your finger and that a feather is stuck to the honey. If you try to shake off the feather that is pretty much the exact motion that you want when you are strumming. Most of the motion comes from the wrist, but the fingers and elbow help out a bit too.

If you know an E chord, make it and try strumming all six strings up and down. Imagine that the feather is stuck to the pinky of your strumming hand. This may seem silly but it really works well. Make sure to practice often, relax, and check out some videos of your favourite players.