

## Developing Lead Guitar Techniques (Hammering On and Pulling Off)

Lesson Objectives.

- Develop a library of Lead Guitar Playing Techniques.
- Develop the technique of **Hammering On** and **Pulling Off**.
- Integrate these techniques into playing guitar **Licks**.

### Developing Finger Technique

Part three of our course contains a series of lessons focusing exclusively on developing **Lead Guitar** playing and the associated techniques.

**Hammering On** and **Pulling Off** are techniques used very commonly in Lead guitar playing.

The names are descriptions of precisely what our fingers do when we use these techniques. Let's go through the key skills methodically.

### Hammering On

Firstly we will deal with the Hammer On.

The Hammer On is played by picking a note and then creating the next note by fretting the note in such a way that the note plays without picking it. In effect we 'hammer' the finger onto the fingerboard with speed and accuracy causing that note to play despite not being picked. The important thing to remember with the Hammer On is that it is executed with speed and accuracy, not force!

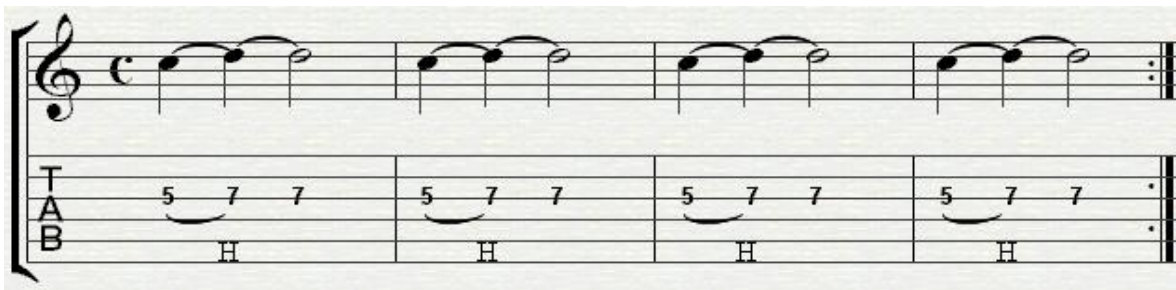
In the following example we will fret the note on the 3rd string at the 5th fret with our first finger. This note will then be plucked with the plectrum. We then play the note on the 7th fret on the 3rd string by Hammering on with our 3rd finger. This creates a different sound from a note being plucked with the plectrum.

This technique is used in all forms of guitar playing but is particularly common in rock and metal as certain types of note runs can be played faster and smoother when we don't have to pick all the notes.

Watch the video of the technique in action and then play along with our first exercise.

#### Exercise 1

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#### Analyser

Please note that there is no analysis available for the lead guitar examples throughout part 3 of the Essential Guitar Skills Course. This is because MIDI does not enable meaningful capture of the techniques played on guitar.

## Pulling Off

A Pull Off is the reverse of the Hammer On.

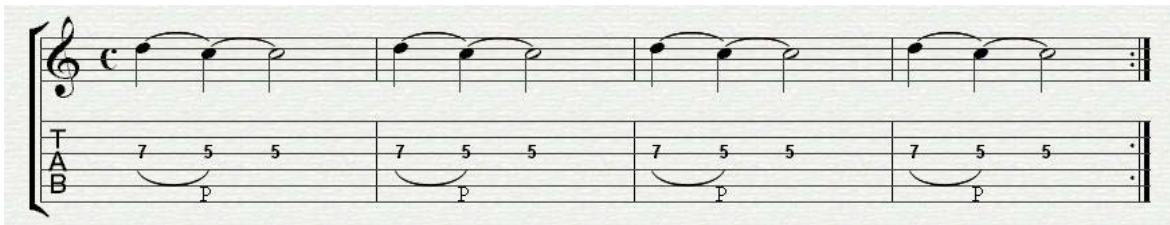
We start with both the finger we are going to 'pull' and the note we are going to pull off to on the guitar.

In the following example finger 3 is on the 3rd string at the 7th fret. Finger 1 is on the 3rd string at the 5th fret. We pick the string and pull our 3rd finger downward which sounds the note at the 5th fret. In effect we have plucked the string with our 3rd finger instead of the plectrum.

Watch the video of the technique in action and then play along with our play along exercise.

### Exercise 2

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## Technique

A common mistake made with Hammering On and Pulling Off is to Hammer and Pull too hard with too much tension in the left hand.

The Hammer On should start with the finger no more than about half an inch from the fingerboard. As mentioned above, the finger should then be hammered onto the fingerboard with speed and accuracy rather than effort or strength.

The Pull Off should have a downward motion toward the string immediately below.

The following exercise has been devised to perfect the techniques required for both Hammering On and Pulling Off.

## Objectives

- **Minimum Movement of Left Hand Fingers.**
  1. Keep them hovering exactly over their target frets.
  2. Try to move the fingertip less than half an inch on the Hammer On' s.
- **Each Note should be Loud and Clear.**
  1. If the Hammer On is too quiet, ensure that the finger is landing squarely on the note.
  2. The numbers refer to the fingers of the left hand. For example, 13 means fingers 1 and 3.

## Developing Technique Exercises

The following exercise works on the basis of one finger per fret. That is to say that if the 1st finger is placed on the 5th fret then the 2nd finger will be on the 6th fret the 3rd finger on the 7th fret and the 4th finger on the 8th fret.

We are going to work on all combinations of the four fingers for Hammering On and Pulling Off across all six strings.

### String One

Start with finger 1 on the 1st string (top E) at the 5th fret.

- Play the note.
- Hammer On the 2nd finger at the 6th fret on string 1.
- Pull the 2nd finger off the string in a downward motion which again creates the sound of the first finger on the 5th fret.

Three notes were sounded, the 5th fret, 6th fret and 5th fret again, even though the guitar string was only plucked once.

When the 6th string has been played, come back up the guitar from string 6 to string one and move on to the next finger combination.

### String Two

Now move over to the 2nd string. Again using fingers 1 and 2 at frets 5 and 6 place both fingers on the string. This time we will start with a Pull Off followed by a Hammer On then another Pull Off.

When playing the Pull Off, let the Pulling finger rest against the 1st string. This is essential in this exercise as it creates a downward motion on the Pull Off maximising the sound with minimal effort.

When playing lead guitar it is not practical to continually rest on the next string but resting in this exercise will develop the correct downward motion for the Pull Off in your playing.

As we carry on down the strings we are alternating between starting with a Hammer On and a Pull off creating the following finger order;

**121 212 121 212 121 212**

When playing this exercise ensure that there is no tension in the hand at all. The whole hand should be relaxed with the relevant finger being the only part of the hand that moves on the Pull Off. Do not move the wrist or the hand!

These are the finger combinations as they should be practiced.

**Fingers** 1 and 2 1 and 3 1 and 4 2 and 3 2 and 4 3 and 4

As well as being an excellent exercise for Hammering On and Pulling Off this also serves as a very good warm up exercise for the Left Hand.

Watch the video of the technique in action and then practise to the metronome in the GuitarXtractor.

**Exercise 3**  
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The exercise above shows the tab for fingers 1 and 2.

The table below shows the frets which will be used when playing the exercise with the other finger combinations.,

Fingers	Frets
1 and 3	5 and 7
1 and 4	5 and 8
2 and 3	6 and 7
2 and 4	6 and 8
3 and 4	7 and 8

## Developing Technique

Here are two licks using Hammering On and Pulling Off.

As always make good use of the multimedia files to help you understand the techniques involved in the exercises.

### Exercise 4 lesson021.igshopo.04



### Exercise 5 lesson021.igshopo.05

