

Travis-Style Fingerpicking Pattern #1

79

Tempo: Moderate to fast shuffle

All Travis-style picking is based on a steady, on-every-downbeat, alternating thumb/bass pattern. The index and middle fingers play the higher strings on or off the beat, picking melody or rhythmic fills. The thumb/bass pattern never wavers. For a more authentic Travis, or Chet Atkins, sound, damp the bass notes with the palm of your right hand.

The key-of-A pattern above, is the same as the preceding key-of-E pattern, turned into a moveable lick. It's based on the barred E chord. Both *Travis-Style Fingerpicking Patterns* are also rockabilly patterns. They work well in songs like "Blue Suede Shoes" (Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley), "That's All Right, Mama" and "Good Rockin' Tonight" (Elvis Presley), "Crazy Little Thing Called Love" (Queen), and "All My Loving" (the Beatles), as well as country hits like "My Baby Thinks He's a Train" (Roseanne Cash) and "Heartbroke" (Ricky Skaggs).

EQUIPMENT NOTE: The *Travis-Style Fingerpicking Patterns* sound good on acoustic or electric guitar, but use an electric to get the Travis sound. For a rockabilly sound, play an electric guitar with "slap-echo": digital or analog delay (see **EQUIPMENT APPENDIX**) will recreate that Sun Records sound.

Travis-Style Fingerpicking Pattern #2

79

Tempo: Moderate to fast shuffle

This is a variation of *Travis-Style Fingerpicking Pattern #1*. Use it as a repeated pattern or combine it with #1 and make a two-bar phrase.

Fingerpicking Rock Ballad #2 41

Tempo: Slow to moderately slow rock ballad

Em

flatpicking

T
A
B

fingerpicking T I M I M I T I

This is an alternative pattern to *Fingerpicking Rock Ballad #1*. It works in songs with the type of beat, such as “Play With Fire” and “As Tears Go By” (the Rolling Stones) and “Lady” (K. Rogers).

EQUIPMENT NOTE: Same as *Fingerpicking Rock Ballad #1*.

Fingerpicking Rock Ballad #3 42

Tempo: Slowly, with a half-time feel

G

flatpicking

T
A
B

fingerpicking T M I T M I T M I T M

This one can also be played with a flatpick. It fits rock ballads like “Every Rose Has Thorn” (Poison), “Sailing” (Christopher Cross), “Fire and Rain” (James Taylor), “Killing Me Softly With His Song” (Roberta Flack), and “Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door” (Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton).

EQUIPMENT NOTE: Same as *Fingerpicking Rock Ballad #1*.

Rockabilly Fingerpicking #3 37

Tempo: Moderate to fast shuffle

First Position

First Position

Moveable

T A B

0 2 0 2 0 2 5 7 5 7

T M I H T M I H

This is the same as *Rockabilly Fingerpicking #1*, with a hammer-on added. Try mixing it with #2.

EQUIPMENT NOTE: Same as *Rockabilly Fingerpicking #1*.

Rockabilly Fingerpicking #4 37

Tempo: Moderate to fast

First Position

First Position

Moveable

T A B

0 3 0 5 8 5 7 7

M T I T M T M T I T M T

This is yet another of the countless variations on this theme.

EQUIPMENT NOTE: Same as *Rockabilly Fingerpicking #1*.

Rockabilly Fingerpicking #1 36

Tempo: Moderate to fast shuffle

First Position **Moveable A**

T A B

0 2 0 2 0 2 5 7 5 7 5 7

T M T I T T M T I

This is played in first position in the key of E. The key-of-A pattern next to it is the same moved up five frets. It is based on a barred E chord. Move it up two frets, and it's a B lick; up more fret, it's a C lick, etc.

This pattern and the other rockabilly patterns that follow can be heard in songs like "Blue S Shoes" (Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley), "That's All Right, Mama" and "Good Rockin' Tonight" (Elvis Presley), "Crazy Little Thing Called Love" (Queen), and "All My Loving" (the Beatles), as well as country hits like "My Baby Thinks He's a Train" (Roseanne Cash) and "Heartbroke" (Ricky Skaggs).

Rockabilly fingerpicking is based on the style of Merle Travis and Chet Atkins. Travis and Atkins embellished the raggy blues fingerpicking style of rural blues players and made their patterns moveable (see *Rural Blues Fingerpicking, Rag Style* in the **BLUES** chapter). As in raggy blues, rockabilly patterns feature a steady, alternating thumb bass. Many rockabilly pickers simulate fingerpicking by playing the bass notes with a flatpick and the treble notes with the middle finger.

EQUIPMENT NOTE: All the *Rockabilly Fingerpicking* patterns sound good on acoustic or electric guitar, but for an authentic rockabilly sound, play an electric with a "slapback" echo effect (see **EQUIPMENT APPENDIX**).

Rockabilly Fingerpicking #2 36

Tempo: Moderate to fast shuffle

First Position **Moveable A**

T A B

0 0 2 0 2 0 5 5 7 5 7 5

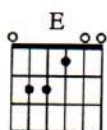
M T I H T M T M T I H T M T

This is a variation of *Rockabilly Fingerpicking #1*. Use it as a repeated pattern or mix it with the first pattern.

Rockabilly Fingerpicking #1 36

Tempo: Moderate to fast shuffle

First Position



Moveable A



0 0 2 2 0 2 0 2 5 7 5

T M T I T T T M T

This is played in first position in the key of E. The key-of-A pattern next to it is the moved up five frets. It is based on a barred E chord. Move it up two frets, and it's a B lick, more fret, it's a C lick, etc.

This pattern and the other rockabilly patterns that follow can be heard in songs like "Shoes" (Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley), "That's All Right, Mama" and "Good Rockin' Toni Presley), "Crazy Little Thing Called Love" (Queen), and "All My Loving" (the Beatles), country hits like "My Baby Thinks He's a Train" (Roseanne Cash) and "Heartbroke" (Ricky

Rockabilly fingerpicking is based on the style of Merle Travis and Chet Atkins. Atkins embellished the raggy blues fingerpicking style of rural blues players and made moveable (see *Rural Blues Fingerpicking, Rag Style* in the **BLUES** chapter). As in raggy b abilly patterns feature a steady, alternating thumb bass. Many rockabilly pickers simulate f ing by playing the bass notes with a flatpick and the treble notes with the middle finger.

EQUIPMENT NOTE: All the *Rockabilly Fingerpicking* patterns sound good on acoustic guitar, but for an authentic rockabilly sound, play an electric with a "slapback" echo (**EQUIPMENT APPENDIX**).

Rockabilly Fingerpicking #2 36

Tempo: Moderate to fast shuffle

First Position

E

Moveable

A

0 0 2 0 2 2 0 2 5 5 7 5

T M T I H T M T T M T I H T M T

Fingerpicking Rock #3 35

Tempo: Moderate rock

T I M I T I M I

This simple pattern is a steady backup lick behind a straight rock beat, as in “Tired of Waiting for You” (the Kinks) and “Mama Told Me (Not to Come)” (Three Dog Night).

EQUIPMENT NOTE: Often played on electric guitar enhanced by flanger, chorus, or tremolo.

Fingerpicking Rock #4 35

Tempo: Moderate rock

T I T M T I T M

This folk-rock pattern resembles *Fingerpicking Rock #2*, but with a rock beat. As played in “Mr. Tambourine Man” (the Byrds), and “I Am a Rock” (Simon and Garfunkel).

EQUIPMENT NOTE: Often played on acoustic guitar, acoustic or electric twelve string, or electric six string enhanced by chorus or flanger.

34

Tempo: Moderately slow to moderate rock

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, starting with a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff, and the bass line is indicated by a series of numbers (0, 1, 3, 0, 3) on a five-line staff. The second system continues the melody and bass line, with the melody staff showing a repeat sign at the end. The bass line staff shows the continuation of the numbers (0, 1, 3, 0, 3) and includes a final measure with a double bar line.

This fingerpicking pattern is appropriate for swamp rock tunes like “Born on (Creedence Clearwater Revival), “Polk Salad Annie” (Tony Joe White), and “Little Sister” (Elvis Presley, Dwight Yoakam). If you leave out the tablature numbers that are in parenthesis, you can easily adapt the pattern to a flatpick.

EQUIPMENT NOTE: Though this is an acoustic style, it sounds very funky on electric guitar.

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Tempo: Moderately fast rock

This cut time fingerpicking pattern works in tunes like “Dust in the Wind” (Kansas), “Let It Be” (the Beatles), and “It’s All Over Now” (the Rolling Stones). It is the same as *Acoustic Fingerpicking Rag Style #1*.

Rural Blues Fingerpicking Pattern Rag Style #1 3

Tempo: Moderate to fast shuffle

Treble staff: C, Bb, A, G, F, E, D, C
 Bass staff: T, A, B
 Rhythm: T T M T I T M

Fingerpicking blues guitarists Blind Blake, Willie McTell, Mance Lipscomb, Mississippi John Hurt, Blind Boy Fuller, Furry Lewis, and Gary Davis are often called “ragtime blues” players because their bouncy, rhythmic style seems to come from the popular ragtime dance music of the early part of the twentieth century. They all played a steady alternating thumb/bass, as in the previous pattern. Classic tunes in the style include “That Will Never Happen No More” (Blind Blake), “Warm It Up for Me” (Willie McTell), and “Candy Man” (John Hurt). Rockers who have played in this style include Eric Clapton (as in “Can’t Find My Way Back Home”) and the Rolling Stones (“It’s All Over Now”).

Rural Blues Fingerpicking Pattern Rag Style #2 3

Tempo: Moderate to fast shuffle

Treble staff: C, Bb, A, G, F, E, D, C
 Bass staff: T, A, B
 Rhythm: T M T I T M I T M T I T

This is one of many possible variations of #1. For more possibilities, see the *Travis Fingerpicking Patterns* in the **COUNTRY** section. Merle Travis’ style was derived from this blues genre.