

SHREDDED METAL

DIATONIC ARPEGGIOS

For this issue I'm going to go back to basics a bit and show you some standard ways of playing arpeggios for all the chords within a given key. When you build a chord off every note in a scale, while staying within that scale, you end up with all the possible *diatonic* chords within that key. For these exercises, I've chosen the common metal key of E minor. The notes of an E natural minor scale are: E-F#-G-A-B-C-D. When you build a chord from the E root note – by using the first, third, and fifth degrees while staying within the scale – you get the notes E, G and B. This is a minor triad (1-b3-5) and it is referred to as the Im chord. Moving on to the second note, you build the chord by once again using the first, third and fifth degrees, but now using F# as the 'root' note whilst staying within the scale. This creates a diminished triad (F#-A-C or 1-b3-b5) – the Ildim chord. Building a chord from the third degree yields a G major triad (G-B-D or 1-3-5), and so on throughout the rest of the notes. The resulting diatonic harmony for natural minor as triads is: Im-Ildim-bIII-IVm-Vm-bVI-bVII. The exercises here demonstrate three different ways of playing diatonic arpeggios in the key of E natural minor.

EXERCISE 1

The first series of arpeggios starts on the fifth string root note. Practice each slowly and get comfortable with each shape. In the notation I've included my suggested picking style, however, feel free to use whatever is comfortable to you. I've also notated these shapes using sixteenth note quintuplets (five notes per beat).

Exercise 1 shows diatonic arpeggios in E minor, starting on the fifth string root note. The exercise is divided into two rows of four measures each, labeled 1 through 7. Each measure contains a guitar staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are written as sixteenth note quintuplets. Below each staff is a tablature line with fret numbers. The measures are labeled with chord names: 1. Im, 2. Ildim, 3. III, 4. IVm, 5. Vm, 6. VI, 7. VII. The notation includes pick strokes and slurs over the quintuplets.

EXERCISE 2

The next group of arpeggios start on the fifth string again but with your first finger. This allows an extra note to be added, and so I've notated these as sixteenth note triplets. Watch the large stretch involved for the diminished triad. Once you're comfortable with the basic shapes, you may wish to work on building up the speed.

The image displays seven arpeggio patterns for Exercise 3, each consisting of a musical staff and a guitar TAB staff. The patterns are numbered 1 through 7 and correspond to the following chords: IIm, IIIdim, III, IVm, Vm, VI, and VII. Each pattern is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The musical staff shows the notes and triplet markings, while the TAB staff shows the fret numbers and triplet markings. Each pattern ends with a bar line and a 'V' symbol indicating a repeat or continuation.

EXERCISE 3

The last group of diatonic arpeggios for E minor starts on the sixth string E root note, and I've notated these as sixteenth note septuplets (seven notes per beat). Notice that for the IIIdim chord, the most comfortable fingering involves skipping a string. Also note that once getting to the Vm chord (B minor) it starts to get a bit cramped, so I transposed the rest of the arpeggios down an octave.

The image displays seven diatonic arpeggio patterns, numbered 1 through 7, each corresponding to a specific chord in a natural minor scale (Im, IIdim, III, IVm, Vm, VI, VII). Each pattern is shown in two staves: a standard musical staff and a guitar TAB staff. The TAB staff includes fret numbers and a dashed line with a 'V' indicating a barre. The patterns are as follows:

- 1 Im:** Musical staff shows a sequence of eighth notes. TAB: 12 15 14 12 15 12 12 14 14 15 12.
- 2 IIdim:** Musical staff shows a sequence of eighth notes. TAB: 14 17 15 16 17 14 17 14 16 15 17 14.
- 3 III:** Musical staff shows a sequence of eighth notes. TAB: 15 14 17 16 15 19 15 16 17 17 14 15.
- 4 IVm:** Musical staff shows a sequence of eighth notes. TAB: 17 20 19 17 17 20 17 17 19 19 20 17.
- 5 Vm:** Musical staff shows a sequence of eighth notes. TAB: 7 10 9 7 7 10 7 7 9 9 10 7.
- 6 VI:** Musical staff shows a sequence of eighth notes. TAB: 8 7 10 9 8 12 8 8 9 10 10 7 8.
- 7 VII:** Musical staff shows a sequence of eighth notes. TAB: 10 9 12 11 10 14 10 11 12 12 9 10.

Make sure to practice these in different keys. Also, by changing the tonic chord to any of the other notes, these shapes will give you the diatonic harmony for all of the major modes (not just natural minor/Aeolian as I've shown here). Learning these basic diatonic arpeggio patterns is a very good practice exercise, and getting them under your fingers is a useful tool to have at your disposal – especially when it comes to improvisation, solo construction, and outlining chord progressions.