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**Jazz Guitar Study Series**

# **THE FINGERBOARD WORKBOOK**

**Concepts In Logical Fingering**



Published by  
**JAMEY AEBERSOLD JAZZ®**  
P.O. Box 1244  
New Albany, IN 47151-1244  
[www.jazzbooks.com](http://www.jazzbooks.com)

ISBN 978-1-56224-038-7

**Cover Design**  
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## INTRODUCTION

The Fingerboard Workbook presents a number of basic concepts in logical fingering patterns. Guitarists generally visualize the fingerboard both in terms of basic **scale patterns** and of **arpeggio relationships** to various chord functions. Connecting these two visual elements into flowing lines often produces erroneous fingering. Here are some rules which will help you in forming the most economical fingering concepts for traversing the neck.

1. The term **position** means one finger to each consecutive fret without shifting the hand. Playing from position offers a stable base to move **to** or **from** (Example 1). Position limitations may be extended by sliding either the **first** or **fourth** finger out of position by one fret (Example 1a). Slides with the **first** finger are preferable to stretching the **fourth**, and offer the possibility of **slurring**.

2. One way to move to a new position is by using **extended fingering**, sometimes combined with a **one-fret slide** (Example 2).

3. Another way to move on the neck is by a **skip** or **jump**, usually of two or three frets. The safest finger for this is the **first** (Example 3). To skip with the **fourth finger** is risky. However, there are exceptions, usually when playing in the upper positions where the frets are smaller, and executing a skip to the highest note of a phrase (Example 3a).

4. When Skipping to an **arpeggiated phrase**, the skip should be to the finger which would ordinarily play that particular note in the arpeggio (Example 4).

5. For **triad arpeggios** within a phrase, the finger-to-fret principal will usually apply (Example 5). When playing **seventh chords** it is frequently necessary to use extended fingering. These are best kept on three adjacent strings to facilitate picking. (Example 5a).

6. For moving long distances on the neck, the use of consecutive **first** and **fourth** fingers on adjacent strings is comfortable in dealing with **diminished**, **minor eleventh** or **major ninth** phrases (Example 6).

7. **Sequences** (repeated phrases moving up and down in pitch) are usually best **not** played in position. After finding a good fingering for the first phrase, the sequential phrases should use the same fingering (Example 7).

An analysis of one of the exercises is given on pages 9 & 10. This shows the components which should be recognized before attempting to play a new exercise, enabling the player to read in groups of notes rather than by consecutive single notes. This recognition will also aid in the placement of various phrases on the neck.

The first seven exercises on **major chords** are given without fingering so that the student may devise his own fingering and shifting. The same exercises are then repeated with fingering. These are not exclusive fingerings since there are several logical ways to finger any of the exercises. Fingerings have been kept to a minimum since they tend to distract from the notes being read.

When a fingering is given, stay in that position (finger to a fret) until the next fingering moves to a new position.

The exercises, with the exception of the **cycle of fifths** section, have been written with continuous **eighth notes** so that the shifting must be done on the move. When played against a gradually increased metronome speed, they will prove beneficial as an aid to technique. All studies, except those in the **keys of G and C**, are written in **flat keys**. To play the studies in **sharp keys**, change the signature (**four flats to three sharps**, etc.). A **sharp** on the written music then becomes a **double sharp**, a **natural** becomes a **sharp**, and a **flat** becomes a **natural**. Remember that a **bar line** cancels any added accidentals in the previous bar, and that an accidental on any given note does **not** apply to its octaves. Another important point: The finger tip should be rolled, not lifted, when consecutive notes appear on adjacent strings of the same fret.

These few principles will prove helpful in visualizing the neck while providing technical challenge for the student.

Ex. 1. Second position -- one finger to each consecutive fret.

Cmaj9

Musical notation for Ex. 1. Second position, Cmaj9. The staff shows a sequence of notes with fingerings: 2, 3, 4, 2, 3, 4, 1, 3, 4, 1, 4, 2, 1, 2, 4. A circled 2 is at the bottom left.

Ex. 1. Third position

E♭maj

Musical notation for Ex. 1. Third position, E♭maj. The staff shows a sequence of notes with fingerings: 4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 2, 1, 3, 2, 1, 4, 2, 1. A circled 1 is at the bottom left.

Ex. 1a. Positions may be extended by a one fret slide with either the first or fourth finger.

Cmaj

Musical notation for Ex. 1a. Cmaj. The staff shows a sequence of notes with fingerings: 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 3, 1, 1, 1, 1, 4, 1. A circled 2 is at the bottom left.

Ex. 1a.

E♭maj

Musical notation for Ex. 1a. E♭maj. The staff shows a sequence of notes with fingerings: 1, 1, 2, 1, 3, 1, 1, 3, 1, 1, 1, 3, 1. A circled 2 is at the bottom left.

Ex. 1a.

F7

Musical notation for Ex. 1a. F7. The staff shows a sequence of notes with fingerings: 4, 2, 4, 1, 2, 2, 1, 4, 4, 2, 4, 1, 1. A circled 2 is at the bottom left.

Ex. 1a.

Gm7

C7♭9

Musical notation for Ex. 1a. Gm7 and C7♭9. The staff shows a sequence of notes with fingerings: 1, 2, 1, 4, 4, 1, 2, 4, 4, 1, 3, 1, 1. A circled 3 is at the bottom left.

Ex. 2. Extended type fingering coupled with one finger slides.

**Ebmaj**

Ex.2. Cmaj

Ex.3. Skips with the first finger. Gmaj

Ex.3. Am11

Ex.3. Dbmaj9

Ex. 3a. Skips with the fourth finger in the higher positions.

**Cmaj**