

An Introduction to Two Finger Picking

Here is a simple way to play in a two finger "up-picking" style. If you're a clawhammer player that hasn't done much, or any, finger-picking, this is a good entry in that it's really easy to relate it to the clawhammer style. Which I hope I can do for you below.

In this style we are only going to use our thumb, and index fingers. The index finger will only play on the first string, making that note almost a second drone string. The thumb will play every thing else. In clawhammer, the thumb only plays on beat 2 and 4, for instance the "a" (4th beat) of boom chuck-a, or the "ta" and "a" (2nd and 4th beat) of chat-ta-noo-ga. In this up-picking style, it's the exact opposite, with the thumb playing on beats 1 and 3, and the index finger picking on beats 2 and/or 4 (on the first string). Below are the most common patterns and how they might sound playing the first couple bars of the song "Ground Hog".

"The Pinch" Boom-Chuck

4/4

0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0

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Here's the first pattern. We'll call it the "pinch". Remember that the index finger only plays the first string, so you can just assume that everything else is played with the thumb. The rhythm for this is "boom-chuck", just like a guitar might play. It allows you a melody note on beat 1.

Here's how the first couple bars of the song "Groundhog" might look just using that technique

4/4

0 0 0 0

0 0 3 0

0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0

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3/4

0 0 0 0

3 0 1 0

3 0 2 0

0 0 0 0

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shoulder up your gun and whistle foo your dog

shoulder up your gun and whistle for your dog

"Boom-Chuck-A"

0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0

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This pattern is the up-picking equivalent to our basic strum. It allows us a melody note on beat 1, or if you add a hammer on, pull off, or slide, it gives us a melody note on the second beat, and a "chattanooga" (or four beat) rhythm.

Here's how the first couple bars of the song "Groundhog" might look just using that technique

0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0

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3/4

0 0 0 0

3 0 1 0

3 0 2 0

0 0 0 0

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