



Am Scale Exercises

Here's a scale in Am that you can practice. Notice that the notes are numbered. Play them in the given order, until you can play this scale fast and clean. Emphasis on the CLEAN! "Fast-and-Sloppy" is a lousy nickname to earn.

Open notes:

Numbers 3, 5 and 7 are open notes.

How to practice: Place your ring finger on 1, and your middle finger on 2. Play them in order, then remove your fingers to play 3 as an open note. Then put your ring finger on 4, then play 5 open. Play 6 with your middle finger, then play 7 open. Play 9 with your middle finger.

Thumb or finger?

On your picking hand (your right hand, for most of you), try using your index finger on the three highest strings, then changing to your thumb to play note number 9. You'll develop greater dexterity. If you have a low-G, it adds a little bass punch to the scale.

Alternate strokes:

When playing notes 1 – 9 with your right index finger, alternate with up and down strokes. Continue alternating during the transition to the next string.

Bigger scales:

The lettered dots are also in the Am scale, but in a higher octave. Experiment by making your own pattern, and numbering the dots yourself.

Rhythm chords:

Try playing this scale over the following chord progression:

Am – Dm – Am – Dm

Practice Tip:

Try getting a partner to play this rhythm pattern, while you play the scales. Then trade roles, so that you are playing the chords while your partner plays the scales.

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