

# Ragtime Fingerpicking

## Rhythm Tutorial



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Key of tutorial: C and G

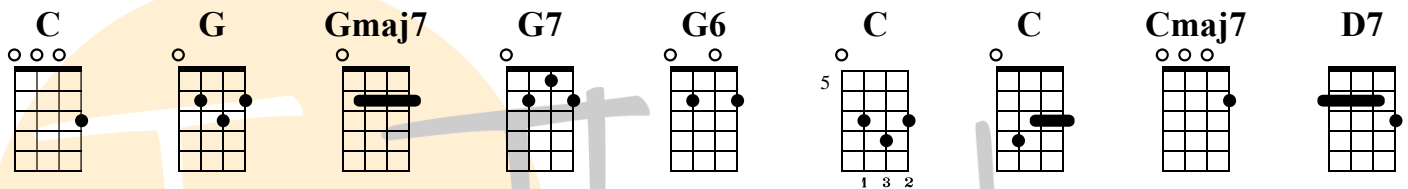
Tempo: Medium Swing

Chords needed for beginner exercise: C and G

Chords needed for intermediate exercise: G, Gmaj7, G7, G6, Cmaj7, D7

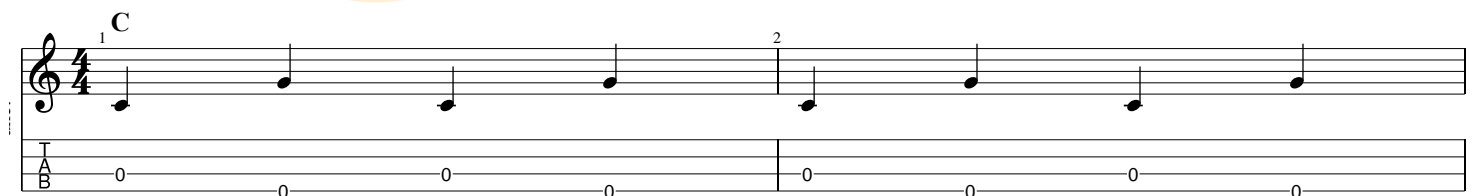
Video Tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18g4vbYgpgc>

Chord Shapes:

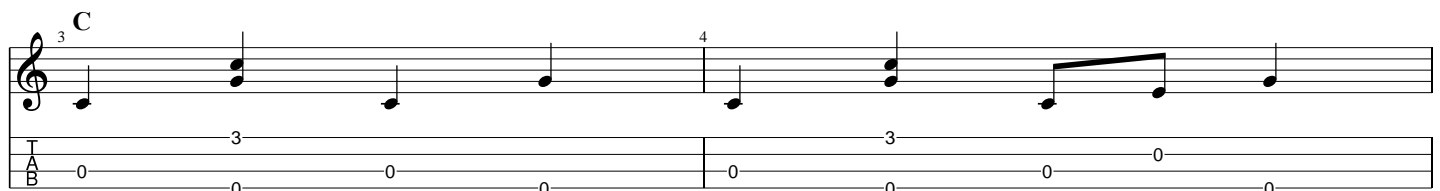


Ragtime Rhythm - what is it? Ragtime fingerpicking is characterized by an alternating bass that is played by the thumb with the melody played over top. It can be a very sparse style of playing with some measures being only the bass. Syncopation and non-chord tones are added over the bass line to give the fingerpicking dynamics and interest.

The best place to start is the alternating bass. Perform this until it becomes second nature, you want your thumb to be able to move independently of the rest of your hand. Practice this while you are watching the game, laying on the sofa, just relaxing, but really run through this motion a lot.



Adding Melody and syncopation. In the first measure we add melody on the 2nd beat and the second measure we add syncopation after the third beat. Practice each measure slowly and independently and then combine them, but only after you feel comfortable with each one individually.



Now the G chord. Note the bass notes get flip flopped, that is because our G chord has the G note on the G string, pay attention to where the root note is, the root note should be the tone you play on the 1 and 3.

Adding melody and syncopation - here we add melody and syncopation in the first measure and in the second measure we add melody over the 3rd and 4th beats. So far everything has been chord tones. Experiment with chords you know, mix them up and play around with them, have fun, try these ideas over familiar chord progressions as well.

Putting it together for our first easy piece

- On the first beat of the second measure we have a non-chord tone. We play the D note over the C chord. If you are composing your own ragtime pieces you should know that these non-chord tones give a melody interest.
- We travel from the D to the C note via pull off, try and time this so it happens on the off beat and stays with the groove.
- The G note on the 4th measure uses 6th, a larger interval, to work its way up the fretboard. This is both cool and easy, CCR does this all the time. Here is a tutorial on that specific move <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sn-GGXYbLTs>
- The second half is the same as the first half with the exception of the last measure. This is a fun and easy way to finish this style of music. An alternative to C G C would be C B C, moving a half step down and back is another classic ragtime style finish to a song.

## The harder piece

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 18-21) features a chromatic bass line: G (18), F# (19), F (20), and E (21). The chords above are G, Gmaj7, G7, G6, C, and C. The second system (measures 22-26) continues the chromatic bass line: D (22), C# (23), C (24), B (25), and A (26). The chords above are G, Gmaj7, G7, G6, Cmaj7, D7, and G. Fret numbers are indicated below the bass staff for each note.

- This piece is based around a chromatic movement that moves the G down to an F#, F, and E. This is also root, 7th, b7th, 6th in interval talk.
- Note the E note is played on the &, giving the last chromatic movement syncopation and surprise.
- The 3rd measure is the G shape that we know and love moved up to the root on the E string 8th fret making it a C chord. This shape is fantastic because the C has a G note in it, so we can use the open G string, I use this particular shape a lot.
- After that we use the A shape for the next C chord but we do so again with the open G string.
- Bars 5 and 6 and just 1 and 2 repeated, establishing out motif and vibe for the song.
- Measures 7 and 8 and exciting arpeggios of the Cmaj7 and D7 chord. These were a lot of fun to put together, I just looked for chord tones and tried to do something different. The D7 also has an E note, so technically it would be a D9 arpeggio.
- The end is the root note followed by a full strum of the chord, another fun way to finish a rag time piece.

Next step is to take your favorite chord progressions and apply these ideas to them to create something fun and new! Play them on Instagram and tag us @Tenthumbspro and we will share them on our story!