

Chapter 0: Single String Playing.

▲ Linear Vs. In-Position.

In this book, your journey towards fret board mastery will start linearly: 1 string at a time. In all music schools all over the world however, guitar is taught in position.

“In position” playing means: you stay in 1 location with your hand, each finger taking an adjacent fret.

For example:

When you play in 2nd position; your index is taking all the notes on the 2nd fret, your middle finger takes all the notes on the next (3rd fret), your ring finger takes all the notes on the 4th, and your pinky covers the 5th fret notes.



Now; there is something very wrong with this way of teaching guitar, YET, this is how stringed instruments are taught all over the world, including all the best and most prestigious music schools world wide.

There are actually 3 things wrong with this system of guitar fret board instruction.

1) Too many notes to deal with.

Think about that: there are only 7 notes in a scale. (do re mi fa sol la si/ti). However; with “in position” playing, there’s not 7, but 24 notes thrown at you all at once. (4 fingers covering 6 strings times). Logically this is way too much information to start with for any guitar student.

When however you focus on 1 string at a time, you only deal with 7 notes at a time.

2) No visible organization/structure.

All the notes are all over the place on a guitar neck in position. It is close to impossible to see any logical structure connecting the notes on the different strings. Because of the lack of a clearly visible note organization over multiple strings, it is challenging for a guitar

student to understand what is going on in the beginning stages, and it thus takes a considerable amount of time to memorize the note locations. People tend to memorize information much faster if there is a clearly visible logic behind things.

However: when you focus on 1 string at a time, you have ALL the advantages that piano players have. There is a reason why students who start out on piano in music schools, ALWAYS can play songs on their instrument in no time, and always are the most advanced students in terms of understanding everything about music theory and harmony, and being able to apply all the theory on their instrument right away. When piano players put their hands down on their instrument, they see all the music theory linearly spread out under their finger tips. You do NOT have this advantage as a guitarist when you think in position; you however DO have that same advantage when you think like a piano player on a guitar: LINEAR.

There is only 1 country in the world where students of stringed instruments learn linear. As a matter of fact; the musicians in this country have long lasting careers, sometimes of many decades, playing one string only their entire musical careers. That country is India. It is always striking to see Indian musicians play their sitars: they are all over the place, playing all their melodies on 1 string only. Yes, the instrument does have multiple strings indeed, but all the other strings are hit to create a constant drone, harmonically supporting the constantly evolving melodies that are played on top of the hypnotic drone.

While these musicians play 1 string only, it is worth noting that:

- Indian music is the oldest on the planet (it has been around for a couple of thousand years),
- Indian music is also the most complex and theoretically most involved music, and to top it all off:
- Indian music keeps on further developing and reinventing itself.

Do you think it is a coincidence that music with such a background and complexity is played by musicians who play and think their instruments linearly?

3) Conceptually too complex:

There are too many directions and dimensions to worry about "in position". This ties in to previous points discussed.

In position: you play 2-3 notes on one string, then go to the next string (vertical), where you play a couple of notes linear again, then vertical again to the next string, linear again for 2-3 notes on that string, then vertical again to the next string, and so on. You basically have to think too many dimensions simultaneously, which is much harder than linear thinking.

One string at a time, your only options are: left to right and right to left.