

Basic Lead Tricks

There are many picking and fretting techniques that can be used to embellish a lead. The most basic of these are slides, bends, hammers and pulls. This section introduces you to the basic movements. *Hint: Try each exercise in 5th position.*

SLIDES

You can slide your finger(s) into any tone of the lead pattern as an embellishment. In most cases the length of the slide is a matter of personal taste. You can also slide from one fret to another playing the tones (legato) or just changing positions.

Practice each of the above slides. The number in parentheses is the relative fret position of where you start the slide using the finger number at the end of the slide.

HAMMERS AND PULLS

The hammer and pull techniques each describe exactly what your fingers do to make two sounds with one pick stroke. The hammer changes pitch higher by “hammering on” another finger to a higher fret. The “pull off” (not lift off) does the same thing in a lower tonal direction.

Practice the above hammers and pulls on each string, but especially string one, two and three. You can also practice other finger combinations such as two and three, two and four, three and four as well as combinations such as 1H2H3 and 4P3P1, etc.

BENDS

The bend technique is used to change the pitch of a tone by quarter tones (smear), half steps (one fret), whole steps (Full) and even more.

The numbers in parentheses denote the relative fret of the tone after the bend. When practicing each of these exercises, play the desired tone first by fretting it and try to bend the string to make the same sound. Also practice the bends on other strings.