

Just Jazz Guitar  
Charlie Apicella  
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ZOHO Music recording artists Charlie Apicella & Iron City are a staple of the New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia jazz scenes. Their third CD, "Big Boss," is their ZOHO debut and Apicella's first as producer. Charlie has authored lessons for prestigious magazines such as DownBeat and Just Jazz Guitar and has been profiled in Vintage Guitar magazine. His teaching credits include The New York Jazz Workshop and the summer programs of Jazz House Kids in Montclair, NJ and The Noel Pointer Foundation in Brooklyn, NY. Charlie Apicella is an Eastman Guitars Featured Artist and a ZT Amplifiers Official Artist.

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For a musician, the importance of a solid warm-up routine cannot be overstated. I look for exercises that are multi-faceted and offer benefits for my mental focus, physical stamina, and intellectual development. I have assembled a series of exercises that help me put on my game face in preparation for performing or an extended practicing session. Sometimes, after a string of several days in a row of gigs, I might only play through warm ups instead of undergoing a full practice session; this allows me to take a rest day, and the warm up routine becomes more of a warm down routine, much like walking after a cardio workout.

I call the cornerstone of my routine The Balanced Hands Approach. I start by stretching my fingers, wrists, arms, and back. One of the best tools for coordination and flexibility are a set of Chinese Boading balls, which are like a medicine ball routine for your hand muscles. The chimes they produce help you keep a rhythm and the sound can be hypnotic, helping clear the mind before you start playing.

The most important part of my routine is my full neck chromatic scale. Several years ago I read some advice by none other than NEA Jazz Master Jamey

Aebersold who wrote “You should know the chromatic scale from the lowest note on your instrument to the highest.” I composed this exercise in response to that suggestion.

## **The Full Neck Chromatic Scale**

### Example 1, Ascending

Positions: I define position playing as determined by the fret that the first finger is on, therefore, if your first finger is on string six, fret 5, all four of your left hand fingers are in fifth position, notated by the Roman numeral V.

Stretching: A stretch is when you add to the frets available in a position by stretching your fourth finger one or two frets higher. For example, if we are in fifth position, our fourth finger is on fret 8. This finger can reach fret 9, and we are still in fifth position.

Position Shift (Sliding): Keeping with that example, we can reach fret 9 by moving our first finger (and therefore all four fingers) up a half step to position six.

This exercise will help you master position playing by paying close attention to the notes which are reached with a stretch and those reached with a position shift. As with many aspects of the guitar neck, this exercise follows a repeated pattern.

Fingering Pattern 1: Starting with the second note, G in third position, the pattern is as follows:

(Fingers) 1, 1 slide up, 2, 3, 4, 4 stretch

(Next string) 1, 1 slide up, 2, 3, 4, 4 stretch

The only exception occurs from string three to string two.

### Example 2, Descending

Fingering Pattern 2: Starting with the second note, F in tenth position, the pattern is as follows:

(Fingers) 4, 4 slide down, 3, 2, 1, 1 stretch down

(Next string) 4, 4 slide down, 3, 2, 1, 1 stretch down

The only exception occurs from string two to string three.



## Descending, Use Flats

XI X IX
VIII
VII
VI
V

4 4 4 3 2 1 1 4 | 4 3 2 1 1 4 4 3 | 2 1 1 4 4 3 2 1

14 13 12 11 10 9 8 | 12 11 10 9 8 7 | 10 9 8 | 7 6 5 9 8 7 6 5

9
IV
III
II

1 4 4 3 2 1 1 4 | 4 3 2 1 1

4 8 7 6 5 4 3 | 7 6 5 4 3 2

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