

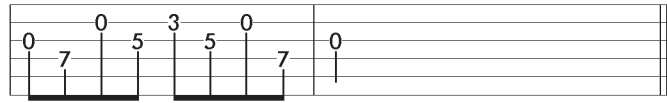
Intro to "Floaties"

"Floaties" is a term used by some to describe a way of playing melodic passages that involves alternating between open and fretted strings rather than playing the passage in a more straightforward fashion. For an example see the staff below. The first two measures show a fragment from the G major scale fingered in the most common manner, while the second set of measures shows the same notes played using floaties.

Standard fingering



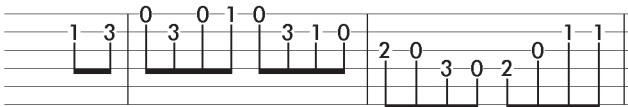
Using "floaties"



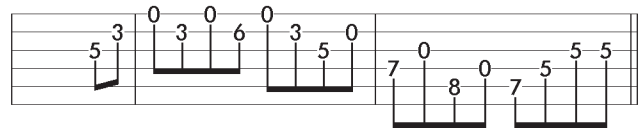
Although sometimes open and fretted strings are combined simply because that approach offers the simplest fingering, "floaties" as such are usually used to give the melodic passage a distinctly different *sound*. You can get a sense for the desired effect by playing the two passages above. Because the open strings keep ringing, the notes seem to flow into one another, creating a sort of waterfall effect.

Here's another set of examples that will help you get a feel for the possibilities of arranging with floaties. The passage below is a variation on the fiddle tune, St Anne's Reel. Again, the left hand version shows the more common fingering; the same passage using floaties is shown on the right. (Played in straight 8th notes starting on beat 4.)

C



C



Floaties can be applied to any melodic passage in which the right combination of open and fretted strings are available. The G major / E minor pentatonic scale, for example, lends itself particularly well to this sort of treatment because it includes so many open strings in standard tuning. Here's a short melodic passage using the E minor pentatonic scale played both ways. Neither is particularly difficult to finger, so the only reason to choose one over the other is your preference in terms of the sound.

