

Change Just This One Thing!

Mike Dana

Yosemite Jazz Guitar Workshop 2026

PROBLEM: “I practice my arpeggios, but when I try to use them in my playing, I don’t like how it sounds.”

SOLUTION: We’ll make one small change to the arpeggio...it’ll sound better each time! All examples over a ii V I in F... Gm7 C7 FMa7, all based in 5th position.

- **CHANGE THIS #1:** Don’t play 1 3 5 7 all the time. Mix up the order, try top-down, play a melody. (Ex. 1)
- **CHANGE THIS #2:** Start the arpeggio on 1+ or on 4+. Sounds way better! (Ex. 2)
- **CHANGE THIS #3:** Add a note (or two) at the end, so it sounds like a melody, not an arpeggio. (Ex. 3)
- **CHANGE THIS #4:** Add a note (or two) at the beginning (an *enclosure*). Chromatic notes sound great here! (Ex. 4)

Ready to go a little deeper?

- **CHANGE THIS #5:** For Major 7 chords, use the iii minor arpeggio (gives you a Maj9 sound) (Ex. 5)
- **CHANGE THIS #6:** For minor 7 chords, start on the b3, use the Major 7 arpeggio (gives you a min9 sound) (Ex. 5)
- **CHANGE THIS #7:** For dominant 7 chords, start on the 3rd, use the half-diminished arpeggio (gives you a 9th sound) (Ex. 5)
- **CHANGE THIS #8:** For dominant 7 chords, start on the 3rd, use the FULLY diminished arpeggio (gives you a b9 sound) (Ex. 6)

Deeper still?

- **CHANGE THIS #9:** Rather than playing 4 notes as 8ths, try triplets. (Ex. 7)
- **CHANGE THIS #10:** Change FMa7 1 3 5 7 (F A C E) to FMa7(#5) 1 3 #5 7 (F A C# E). These notes can be many other chords: Dm(Ma7), G13(#11), Db7(#5#9), Bm9(b5) (Ex. 8)
- **CHANGE THIS #11:** Change FMa7 1 3 5 7 (F A C E) to FMa7(b5) 1 3 b5 7 (F A B E). These notes can be many other chords: Dm6/9, G13, Db7(#5#9), Bm7(b5) (Ex. 9)
- **CHANGE THIS #12:** Change FMa7 1 3 5 7 (F A C E) to F⁰(Ma7) 1 b3 b5 5 (F Ab B E). These notes can be many other chords: F⁰, Ab⁰, B⁰, D⁰, G13(b9), Bb7(b5b9), Db7(#9), E7(b9). Try 3rd position. *These are all derived from the diminished scale, but that’s another topic.* ☺

Change Just This One Thing!


Ex. 1

Gmi⁷ C⁷ Fma⁷



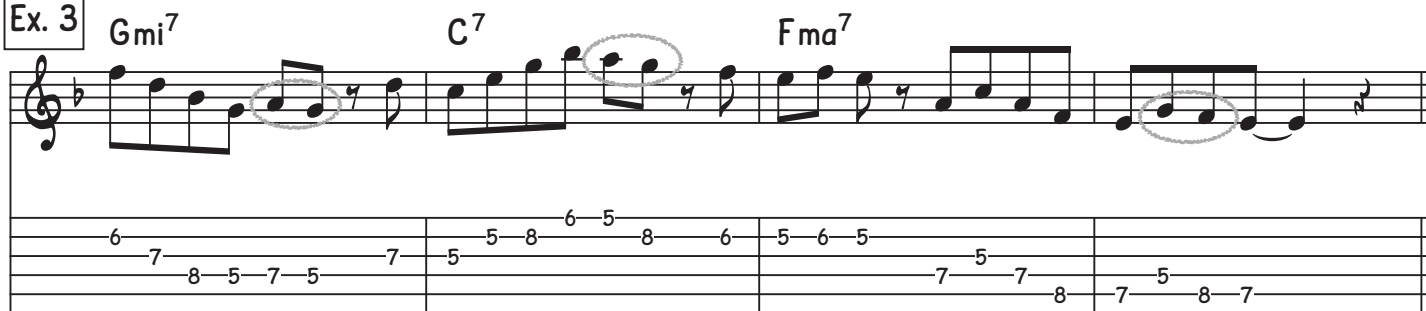
Ex. 2

Gmi⁷ C⁷ Fma⁷



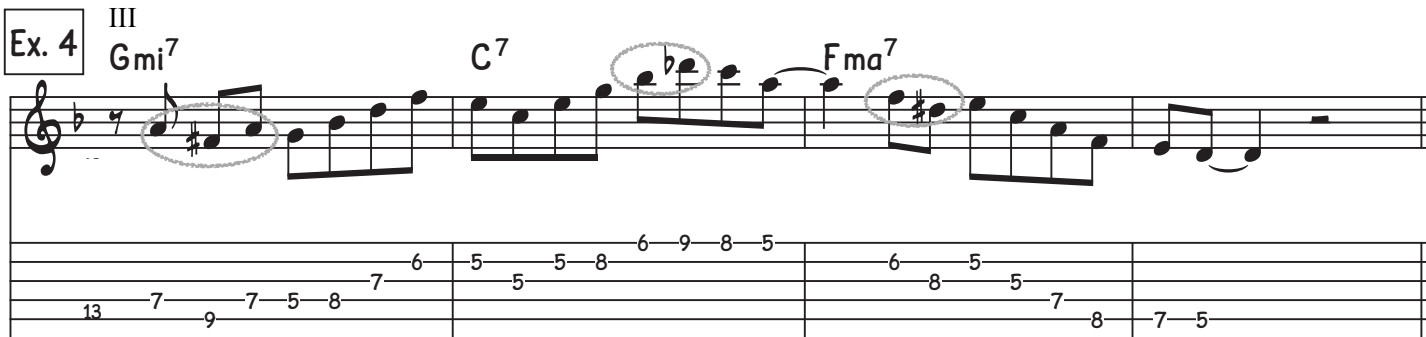
Ex. 3

Gmi⁷ C⁷ Fma⁷



Ex. 4

III Gmi⁷ C⁷ Fma⁷



Ex. 5 *Change p. 2*

Gmi⁷ C⁷ Fma⁷

(B^bma⁷ E^o Ami⁷)

Ex. 6 Gmi⁷ C^{7(b9)} Fma⁷ **Ex. 7** Gmi⁷ OR C⁷

(B^bma⁷ E^o Ami⁷ (Dmi⁷ B^bma⁷ Gmi⁷))

Ex. 8 Fma^{7(#5)}

Ex. 9 Fma^{7(b5)}

Ex. 10 *(double enclosures!)*