# Fretting-Hand Exercises

If training the picking hand by itself is important, than so is training the fretting hand. Scales and arpeggios are a wonderful way of doing this of course, but they don't cover everything. So in this short section, I'll show you a couple of simple exercises that will really wake up your fretting hand. These are also taken directly from Buddy Wachter's seminars.

Finger this chord shape. Since this is a fretting-hand exercise, deaden the strings with your picking-hand.
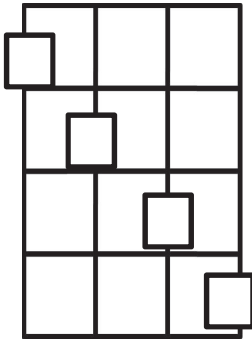

*One by one, lift each of your fingers away from the fretboard and tap several times. Lift the finger high and feel the stretch.

*Now, lift and tap two fingers at a time. This gets a little more complicated when it's your second and third finger. Don't just do adjacent fingers; try your first and third finger at the same time. Try all combinations of lift and tap.

*Now, lift your first and second finger and switch strings, back and forth several times. Try all combinations of lift and switch.

*Lastly, invert the whole chord shape and go through the whole routine again.
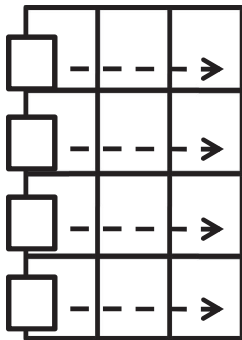
Now try this exercise: Start with all four fingers on the fourth string.

*One finger at a time, lift and tap each string (same fret) and back.

*Move one finger one string, then the next finger, then the next, etc. "Crawl" all the way across the fretboard and back like a spider.

Is your forearm burning yet? Good! That means you're working hard! For an additional training element, do these exercises with a metronome. These exercises are only examples; use your own imagination for more variations.

There is a dual purpose to all of this: #1, of course is the physical workout. You can only do these for a short duration at first.

The secondary and underlying purpose is to train your fingers to do new things. There are thousands of possible chords shapes on the plectrum banjo, and many of them are quite difficult. If your fingers have already been trained and exercised, new chord shapes will be easy to learn. And of course, chords that used to be difficult for you should get easier.