

2 THE FREE STROKE - TWO NOTES TOGETHER

Introduction

Having learnt the free stroke (*Tirando*) in the first section, we can now move onto developing the free stroke in a manner that will enable you to play two or more notes (eg chords) at a time. As a general rule we tend to play 'chordal' style music with the *Tirando* stroke, and notes which are more sequential (like a melody), with the *Apoyando* stroke, though there are times when this rule is broken of course. Also we'll learn some more note values, like quavers and quaver rests.

Music Notation

First, just to remind you:

A CROTCHET is equal to one beat, or counts. Another name, derived from the USA, is 'quarter notes', which is a more useful name.



A MINIM is equal to two crotchets and is called a 'half note' in American terms.

A SEMI-BREVE is the equivalent to four crotchets, and is called a 'whole note'.



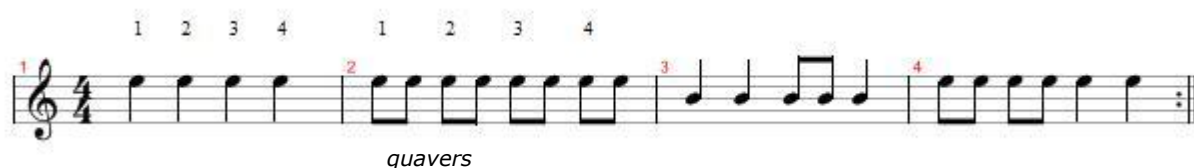
This shows the notes with their equivalent rests.

Remember that the semi-breve is 'suspended' and the minim is 'mounted'.



Introducing Quavers

Now we will learn about quavers - which are also called 8th notes. In other words two quavers are the same time length as 1 crotchet. Try playing along with this using the free stroke with alternating fingers.



And here is the quaver rest, shown beside the quaver note. Remember a quaver can have a single stick, going up or down, or be joined with another quaver to complete a beat value.



Remember that 2 quavers equal 1 crotchet, and 4 quavers would be the same time length as a minim.

The 'finger a string' rule

This is a rule that we can use for a short while. It will soon be broken, but it's helpful to get us going! It is that is the E[1] is played by the *a* finger, the B second string by the *m* finger, and the G third string by the *i* finger. The thumb plays the bass strings [E, A, or D].

Remember like all rules there will be many times when this is not adhered to and it is a guide only.

The following exercise is very important to the development of the right hand, and should be practiced every day. However, once learned, you can liven up things by adding your own variations on the strings, or over any chords that you already know.

Exercise 5

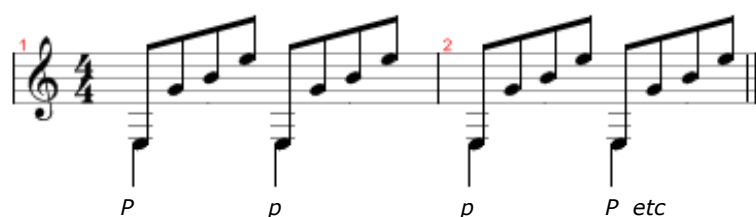


Exercise 6

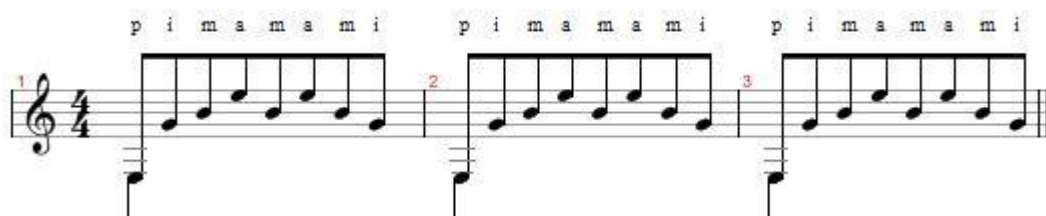
The bass strings are altered this time. Compare your playing to the track. The thumb is playing the E[6] then the A[5] then the D[4] and back to the A[5] etc. The fingers are playing different patterns of *i, m, a*

a)

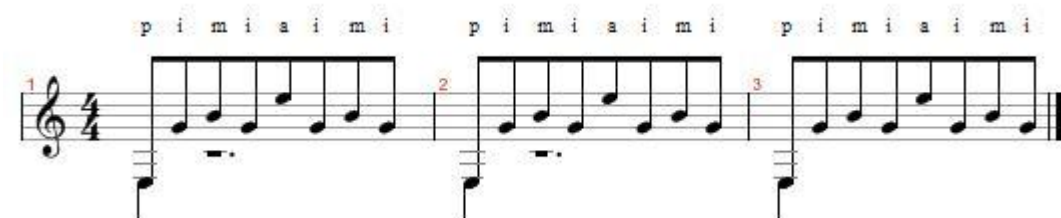
i m a i m a i m a etc



b)



c)



Top Tip

Try putting your fingers on the strings first before playing, and then try to not look at the fingers – but the music. Remember that you can't rest your fingers or thumb on the strings when playing, though.

Finger patterns - Two notes together

We'll now play some patterns, still on the open strings, but this time with two notes together.

Notes on the same stem are played at the same time. If the bass note is to be played at the same time, it will be placed directly below the trebles. Here's an example:



Exercise 7

In this first one, rest your thumb on the E (6) string.

a)



b)



c)



d)

**Top Tip**

Sit in front of a full length mirror and watch yourself playing these exercises – checking for any unnecessary hand movement. Remember it's your fingers that move, and not your hand! Practice playing both loudly and softly.

Two Notes Together With Bass Notes

Now we try the open string exercise with the bass notes (sticks going down the way) played with the *P*. If you put your thumb back onto the bass string, on the third beat, it will 'damp' it and provide the correct length of note.

Try these open string exercises.

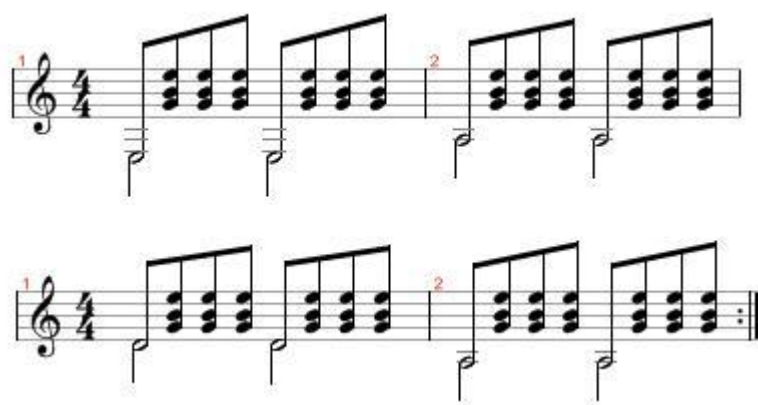


Three notes together

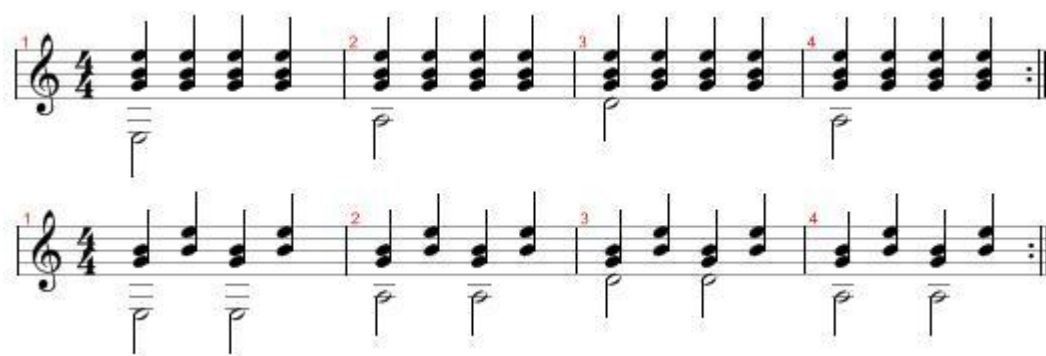
Playing three notes together is much the same: use the three fingers of the right hand, *i, m, a* and play simultaneously. Notice this time that the bass notes are not damped, but ring on for two beats and are played again.

Exercise 8

a)

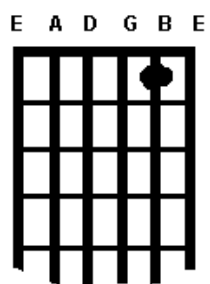


b)

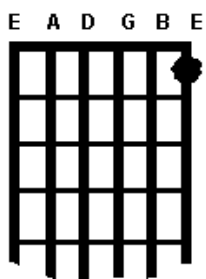


Patterns on Fingered notes

We'll now play the fingered notes: C on the second string and F on the first. They are played with the first finger of the left hand.



C



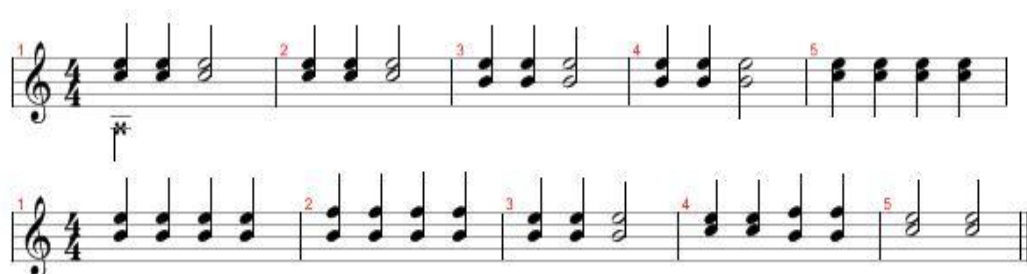
F

Top Tip

Remember it is important to form a 'bridge' with the finger, and come down on the string almost vertically, so as not to interfere with the sounding of the other notes.



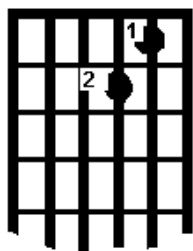
Exercise 9



Now put finger 2 on the A, on the G[3]string, but keep your finger on the C, on the B [2] string. Be careful that the finger 2 note on the A, does not obstruct the sound of the finger 1 note (the C)

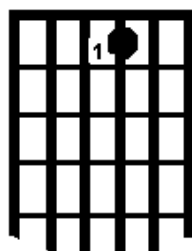
Then change and put the 1st finger, behind the first fret on the G string, to make a G#.

E A D G B E



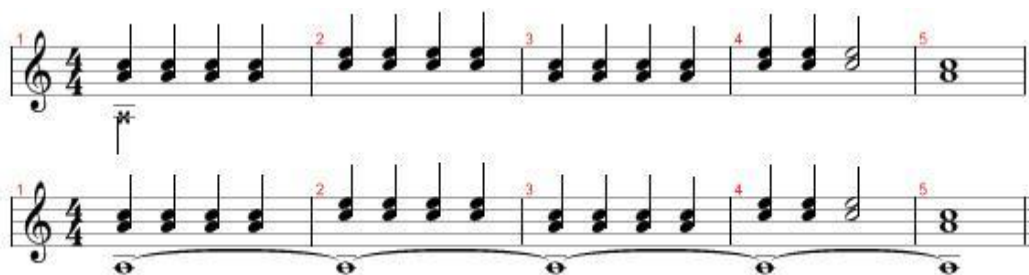
A and C

E A D G B E



G#

Exercise 10



Exercise 11

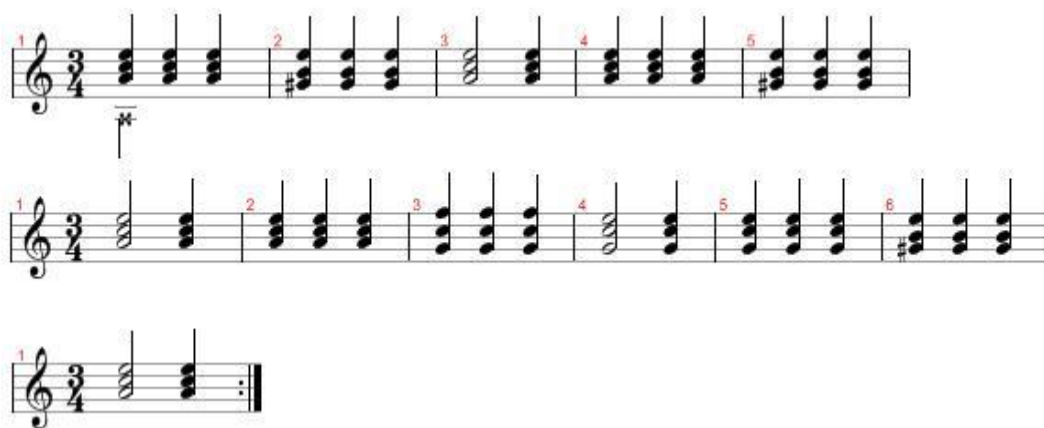
These exercises are played as an accompaniment to a tune. First time around, the track plays what is written in the music. You keep playing and repeating the piece. (Note the indication of speed, *Largo*, meaning slow)

Largo

Now we have another chordal exercise with the 3 notes played, with *i* and *m* and *a*.

(Remember you can rest your thumb on the E [6] to steady your hand)

Exercise 12



Top Tip

Remember to keep your right hand fingers curved and quite stiff and play through the notes.

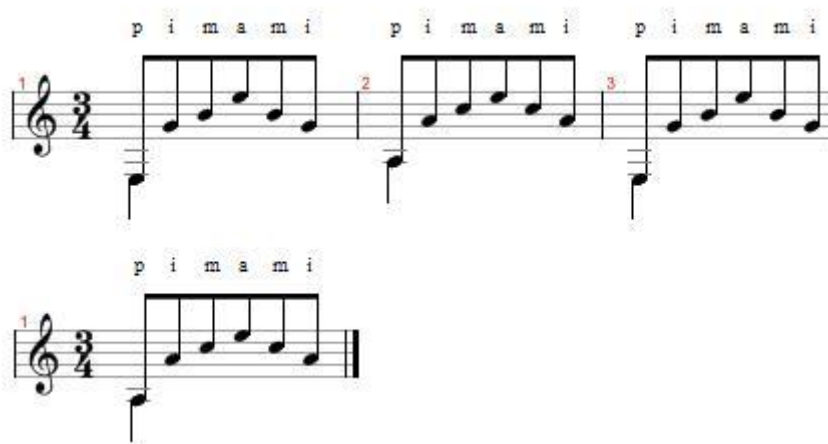
Finger patterns and left hand notes

Now we'll play some right hand finger patterns, but now with some fingered notes. These exercises are very useful to gain fluency. Although you are playing quite simple chords with the different sequences across the strings it sounds more complex than it really is.

(Note: We are actually now playing chords or parts of chords, which we will learn more about in the next section.)

Exercise 13

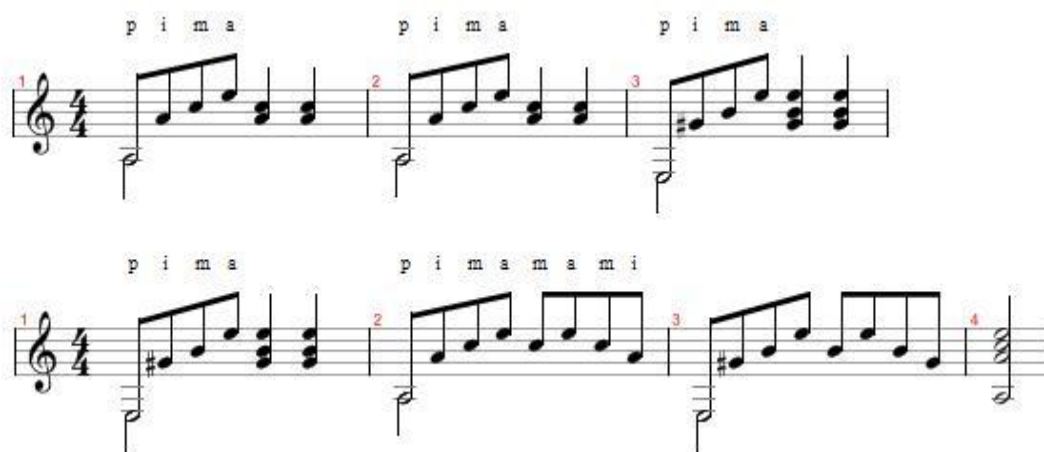
a)



b)



c)



Key points

Keep practicing these exercises as you move forward through the course.

- Remember it is the right hand that makes the sounds! The left hand fingers simply hold down the notes, but it is the right hand that provides the volume and quality of tone.
- If your nails are the right length and shape, you should now be capable of producing a variety of musical tones.
- Remember to keep your hand steady and try to keep the movement of your fingers to a minimum whilst at the same time maximizing the strength of the note.

END OF SECTION 2

Well done. You have managed a major step forward if you can play these exercises fluently. Have patience, and don't worry if you have to play slowly at first to produce a clear rendition - you can always speed up later!

By completing this section you should now be able to play:

- **using Tirando (free stroke) on open and fingered notes**
- **across the strings, in a variety of patterns without looking at your hands**
- **quavers in 4/4 and 3/4 time signatures**
- **two to three notes together, with open and fingered notes**
- **bass notes as well as trebles with the free stroke**