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GETTING STARTED SEATING POSITION

If you have ever seen a classical guitarist play, you know that we sit while we play and that our position is unique among guitarists. The position has developed over centuries of guitar playing and

: experimentation. While each guitarist
 : is unique, and therefore sits slightly
 : differently from others, the following
 : four goals we all share lead us to
 : have more in common than not.
 :

The goals of the seating position:

1. Minimize tension in the body and hands.
2. Provide easy access to the entire length of the fingerboard.
3. Give easy access to all six strings.
4. Securely support the instrument without the use of the hands.

As you learn proper seating, you may experience some slight discomfort, or feel unsure about it. Just because it doesn't "come naturally" to you doesn't mean it

: isn't making the best use of your
 : body. Be patient! Be observant
 : of other players, and check your
 : position often.
 :

Getting Into Position

Follow these steps and you will be on your way to having a correct seating position.

1. Put a footstool in front of the front left leg of an armless chair with a flat seat.
2. Stand with your feet on either side of the footstool, facing away from the chair. Sit on the very left front-edge of the chair.
3. Place your left foot on the footstool, keeping your leg perpendicular to the floor. Place your right foot and knee out to the right.
4. Place the lower curve of the guitar snugly on your left knee so that:
 - a. The upper edge of the back of the guitar is in the center of your chest.
 - b. The head of the guitar is eye level, and just barely in front of you.
 - c. The right side of the guitar is resting on the inside of your right thigh.
5. Place your right forearm on the outer edge of the guitar, aligned with or just to your right of the bridge, depending on your size.



START MAKING MUSIC!

To produce a musical sound from your guitar, you will need to develop a good technique for striking the strings. The most fundamental aspect of striking the strings is the right-hand position.

Right-Hand Position

The muscles that control the fingers are attached at their ends to the elbow joint and pass through the wrist on their way to the fingers. Since we are always concerned about making guitar playing as easy and stress-free as possible, we want to avoid pulling on these muscles unnecessarily. For that reason, it's important to keep your wrist straight (aligned with the arm). Use a mirror to observe your wrist position.

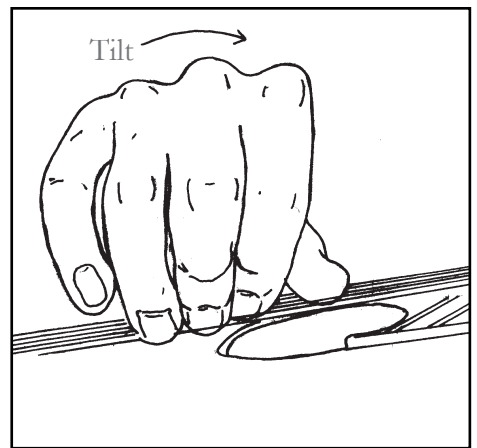
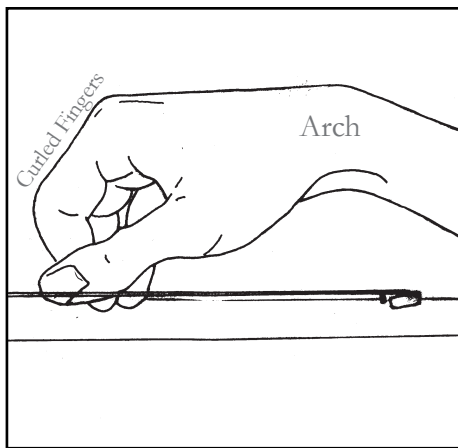
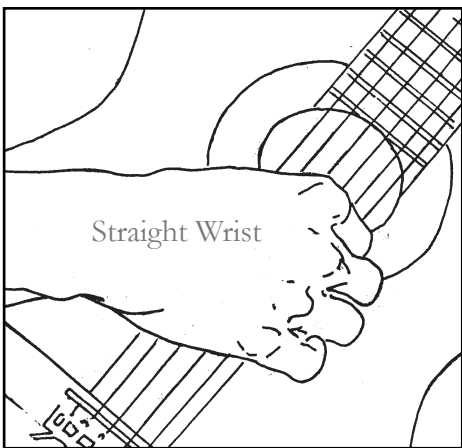
We need room to operate the fingers freely, so arch the wrist very slightly, so that the top of the wrist is just further from the soundboard than the knuckle joints. Do not overdo this! Your wrist should be almost flat. Bending your wrist too much can cause serious problems.

The two fingers we use most, *i* (index) and *m* (middle), are of different lengths: *i* is shorter than *m*

for almost everybody, so rotate or tilt the arm towards *i* (on an axis that runs through *m* to the elbow) so that you can just barely see the knuckle of your *a* (ring) finger when you look down at your hand. Not only will this help to equalize the length of *i* and *m*, but it will help you play on the left side of your nail, and simplify your thumb stroke, too.

MINI GUITAR LESSON Summary of the Right-Hand Position

- Straight wrist — Use a mirror to check.
- Arch — The top of your wrist should be slightly further out from the soundboard than your knuckle joints.
- Tilt — The *a* knuckle joint should be just barely visible when you look down at your hand.

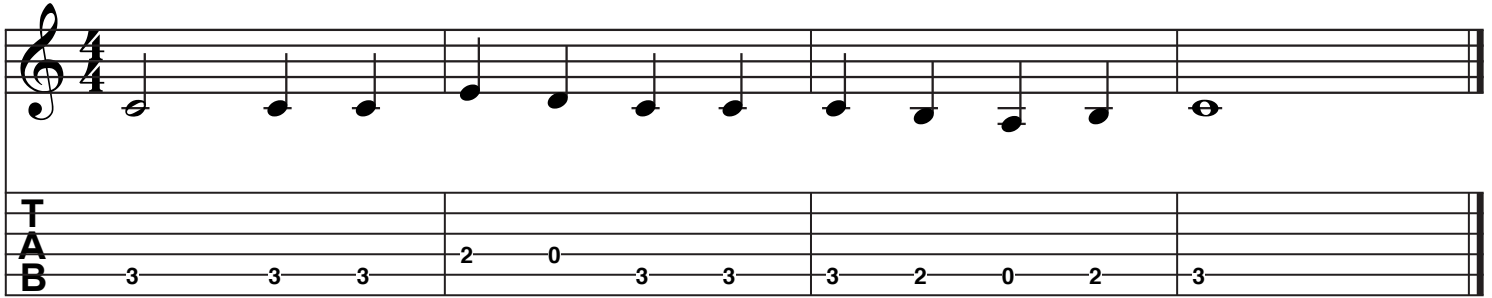


Basic Finger Position

Being careful to position your arm and wrist correctly, place *i* and *m* on the 2nd and 3rd strings, respectively. Move your arm and hand so that your fingers are slightly curled. Your *i* finger, which is positioned on the 3rd string, should be positioned so its middle joint is curled above the 2nd string. The *m* finger, which is on the 2nd string, will be positioned so its middle joint is curled above the 1st string. The other fingers, *a* and *c* (pinkie), will also be lightly curled. Your thumb, *p*, should rest lightly against the tip of *i*. The overall effect should be that of a loosely held fist...as if you were holding a ball.

PIECES ON THE 4TH AND 5TH STRINGS

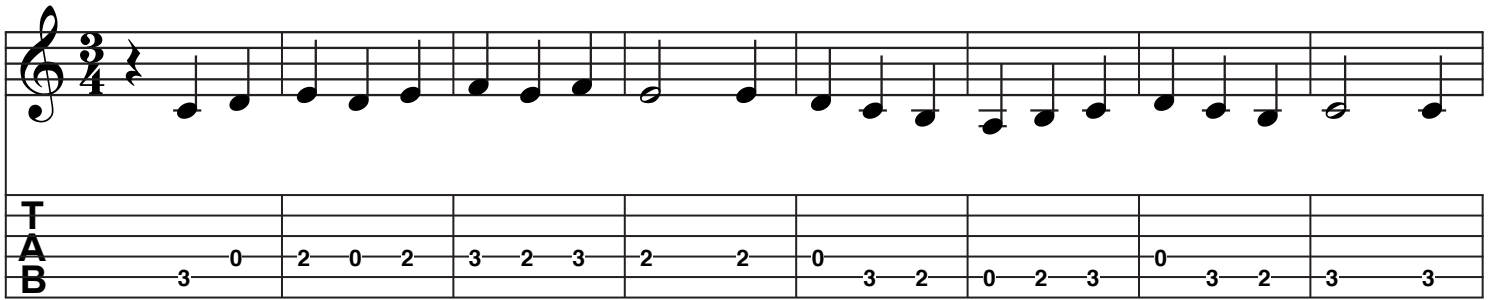
Variation on a Melody by Fernando Sor  Track 16



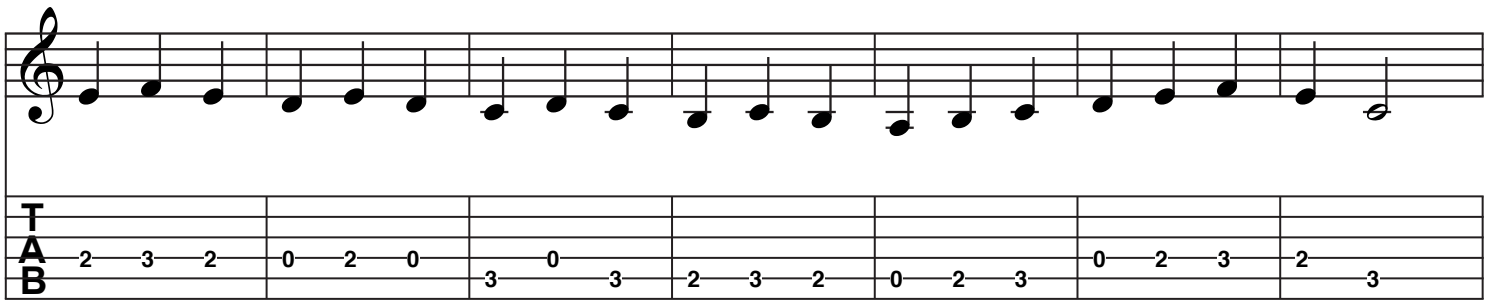
Musical notation for Variation on a Melody by Fernando Sor. The piece is in 4/4 time. The notation consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in a single line. Below the staff is a tablature section with three lines labeled T, A, and B. The tablature contains the following fingerings: 3 3 3 | 2 0 3 3 | 3 2 0 2 | 3.

A Melody from Canarios  Track 17

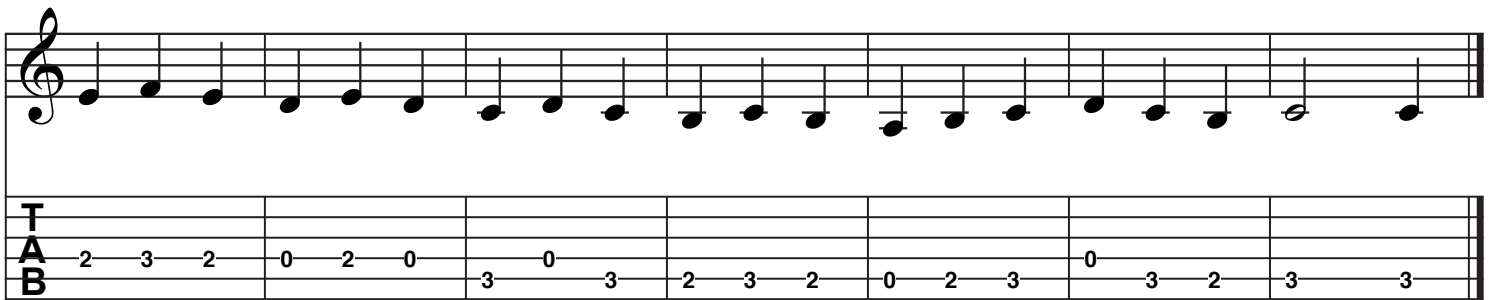
by Gaspar Sanz



Musical notation for A Melody from Canarios. The piece is in 3/4 time. The notation consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written in a single line. Below the staff is a tablature section with three lines labeled T, A, and B. The tablature contains the following fingerings: 3 0 | 2 0 2 | 3 2 3 | 2 2 | 0 3 2 | 0 2 3 | 0 3 2 | 3 3.



Musical notation for A Melody from Canarios (continued). The notation consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is written in a single line. Below the staff is a tablature section with three lines labeled T, A, and B. The tablature contains the following fingerings: 2 3 2 | 0 2 0 | 3 0 3 | 2 3 2 | 0 2 3 | 0 2 3 | 2 3.



Musical notation for A Melody from Canarios (continued). The notation consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is written in a single line. Below the staff is a tablature section with three lines labeled T, A, and B. The tablature contains the following fingerings: 2 3 2 | 0 2 0 | 3 0 3 | 2 3 2 | 0 2 3 | 0 3 2 | 3 3.



Theme from Asturias (Leyenda)



“Leyenda” is perhaps the most famous classical guitar piece, although it was originally composed for the piano.

MINI MUSIC LESSON

Introducing Sixteenth Notes

Four sixteenth notes = equal one quarter note

You will notice that each eighth note in this piece has two stems, one going up (sixteenth notes) and one going down (eighth notes). This is a convenient way to show two things:

1. The continuous sixteenth-note rhythm; and
2. The bass notes and treble notes have the distinctively different roles of melody (bass) and accompaniment (treble).

Use *m* on the open B string and *p* in the bass throughout.

by Isaac Albéniz

Introducing High A, B, C, D, and E on the 1st String

Your shifting technique will allow you to learn some higher notes on the 1st string. These notes have ledger lines above the staff. Since each looks uniquely different from

the others, they are easy to read. A has one ledger line, B sits just above one ledger line, C has two, D sits just above the second ledger line, and E has three.

High A is on the 5th fret of the 1st string. Use your 1st finger.

High B is on the 7th fret of the 1st string. Use your 3rd finger.

High C is on the 8th fret of the 1st string. Use your 4th finger.

High D is on the 10th fret of the 1st string. Use your 1st finger.

High E is on the 12th fret of the 1st string. Use your 3rd finger.

5fr. A
7fr. B
8fr. C

10fr. D
12fr. E

5fr.
6fr.
7fr.
8fr.
9fr.
10fr.
11fr.
12fr.

A
B
C
D
E

The actual choice of which finger to use on any note is based on the context. We may choose one over another for the sake of ease, or for a smoother sounding connection

between the notes. The fingerings suggested above are just there to get you started. Assume that you will always be evaluating fingering choices.

Alternate *i* and *m* rest strokes in Examples 39, 40, and 41.

Ex.39

5fr. *i*
7fr. *m*
8fr. *i*
10fr. *m*
12fr. 3

1 3 4 1 3 1 4 3 1

5 7 8 10 12 10 8 7 5

ARPEGGIO STUDIES FROM GIULIANI'S 120 RIGHT-HAND STUDIES

Written in the first part of the 19th century, Mauro Giuliani's *120 Right-Hand Studies* have stood the test of time as among the most important exercises for classical guitar students.

Training the Left Hand

The following studies have some three-note combinations for the left hand that may seem awkward at first. Learn them slowly. Try to develop a plan for the movements between the chords. Move gracefully and slowly. If a movement is timed well—starts at the earliest possible moment and

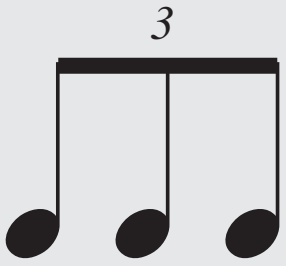
moves no faster than is necessary to arrive at the new note at precisely the right time—it will be smooth and easy. Generally, left-hand movements are only difficult and “jerky” looking when they are mistimed. Think of your left-hand fingers as dancers, and develop a beautiful choreography for


them. Remember that in an arpeggio, although you must ultimately hold down all of the notes of a chord together, your fingers can arrive on their notes one at a time. You don't have to grab them all at once. That's just one more reason why arpeggios are a great guitar technique!

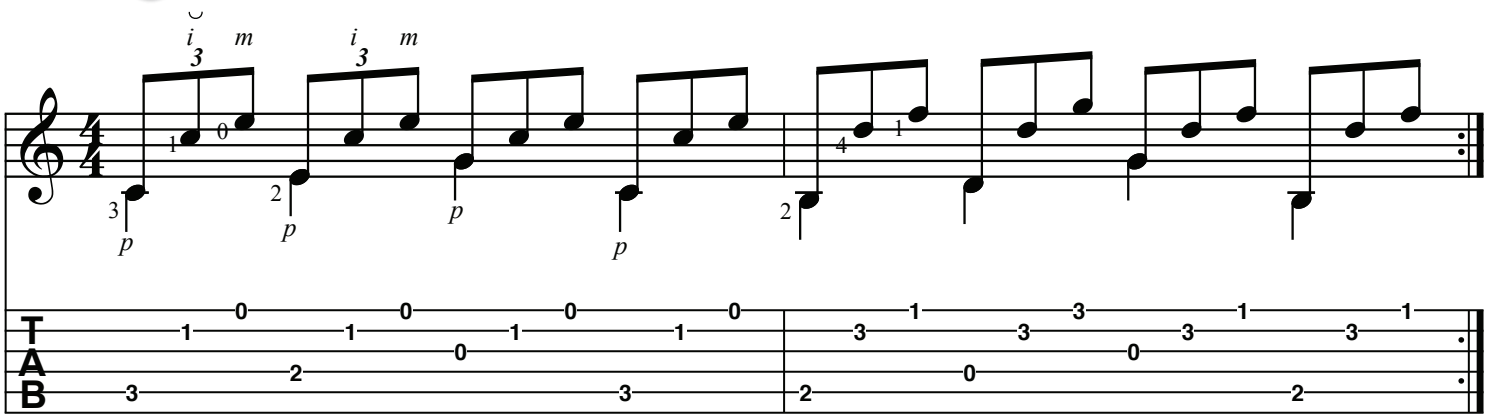
INTRODUCING TRIPLETS


When three notes are grouped together with the figure “3” above or below the notes, the group is called a *triplet*. The rhythmic value of the triplet is equal to the value given to two of the same kind of note.

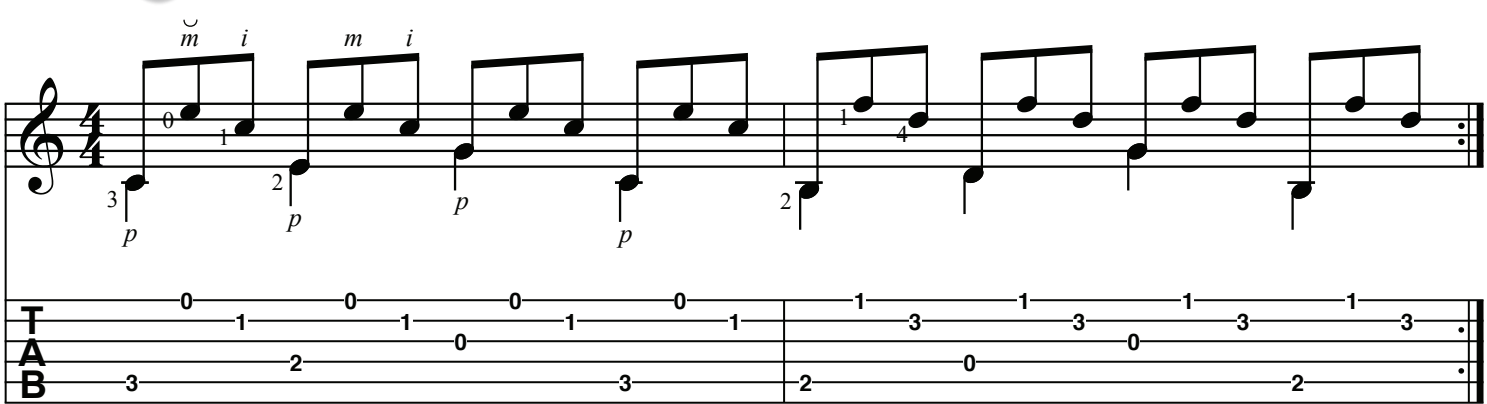
In $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{4}{4}$ time, two eighth notes get one count, so an eighth-note triplet will also get one count.



Ex.44  **Track 67** Giuliani No. 2



Ex.45  **Track 68** Giuliani No. 3



Key Signatures

Key signatures appear at the beginning of every staff. They tell us which notes are sharp or flat in a piece. In the popular classical guitar melody that follows, an F# and a C# appear in the key signature. That means every F and C in the piece is played as a sharp unless marked with a natural sign \natural .

Largo from the Concerto in D Major Track 79 Both Parts Track 80 Accompaniment

You can play the “Largo” with a string orchestra accompaniment that comes with the audio for this book. *Largo* is an Italian word meaning slow and stately.

At **A**, use a *barre* (hold two or more strings with one finger) to finger the C# and F# at the same time. Barres are often indicated with a Roman numeral to show the fret, and a small Arabic numeral to show how many frets are being barred. To do a barre, lay the left side of your 1st finger across the 1st and 2nd strings at the 2nd fret.

Largo by Antonio Vivaldi

Key Signature \sharp \sharp

mf

7fr.

T
A
B

T
A
B

T
A
B



TAB
 3 0 0 0-3 7-3 0 | 3 2 2 0 3-2 0 | 3 2 0 2 | 0-2-0-2-0-2-0 0-2-0-2-0-2-0

TAB
 2-3-2-3-2-3-2 2-3-2-3-2-3-2 | 0 2 0 3-2 0 0 3 | 3 2-3 5 3 2-5 2

TAB
 0 0 3-7-3 2-0 5 5-7-5-3-2-0 | 7 7 9-7-5-3-2-0 | 3 2-0 2 2-8

TAB
 5-7-5-7-5-7-5 5-7-5-7-5-7-5 | 0-5-7-5-7-5-7-5 5-7-5-7-5-7-5 | 2 3-5 0 3 3



More Dynamic Signs

This sign is a *crescendo*. It means “getting gradually louder” and is abbreviated as *cresc.*



This sign is a *decrescendo*. It means “getting gradually softer” and is abbreviated as *decresc.*



DROP D AND G TUNING

Many pieces written for classical guitar, or arranged for classical guitar, require certain strings to be tuned differently than normal. We call these *alternate tunings*. The most common alternate tuning is called *Drop D* tuning, which calls for tuning the 6th

string down one whole step, from E to D. For “Maple Leaf Rag,” we first go into Drop D, and then also lower the 5th string one whole step from A to G to create *drop G* tuning. The easiest way to get into an alternate tuning is with an electronic

tuner—either a dedicated device or a downloaded app. For this particular tuning, it is easy to match the 6th string D to the open 4th string D an octave higher, and the 5th string G to the open 3rd string G, also an octave higher.

Excerpt from Maple Leaf Rag



Here are the notes played on the 6th (low D) and 5th (low G) strings in “Maple Leaf Rag.”

	D	E \flat	G	A
T				
A				
B	0	1	0	2

⑤=G
⑥=D

by Scott Joplin

Allegro

Measures 1-3 of the musical score. The treble staff shows a melody in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bass staff shows accompaniment with tablature. The first measure starts with a forte (f) dynamic. The second measure has a repeat sign. The third measure ends with a fermata.

Measures 4-6 of the musical score. The treble staff continues the melody. The bass staff includes a 'H' (harmonic) marking above the 4th string in measure 5. The piece concludes with a final note in measure 6.