

How to Choose Right-Hand Fingerings, Part 2

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Thumb or Fingers to Play on Wound Bass Strings?

When the fingernails of "i", "m", or "a" play on the wound bass strings (4th, 5th, or 6th string), the tone suffers. We hear the nails scrape across the string windings. However, the thumb nail produces a very full, round tone on the bass strings with little noise. This is due to the different angle of attack. It is a good idea to take this into consideration when we choose right-hand fingerings.

For example, in the introduction of Francisco Tárrega's *Capricho Árabe* we have this passage.

Example #22:

Capricho Árabe (Francisco Tárrega)

The musical score for Example #22 shows measures 9, 10, and 11 of the introduction to Francisco Tárrega's *Capricho Árabe*. The treble clef staff contains the melody, and the bass staff contains the bass line. A red arrow points from measure 10 to measure 11, indicating a change in right-hand technique from 'Thumb rest stroke' to 'Then "im" rest stroke'. Fingerings are indicated by circled numbers: 4 in measure 9, 6 in measure 10, and 5 and 6 in measure 11. The bass line includes fingerings such as 0, 4, 2, 5, 8, 7, 14, 14, 12, 11, 12, 14, 12, 11, 8, 7, 10, 8, 7, 5, 3, 2, 0, 4, 1, 0, 3, 1, 0, 6.

Many players play the entire passage with "im" rest stroke. However, I think the first two measures of slower "exposed" notes sound a little thin and scratchy that way. I prefer to play those measures with the thumb rest stroke for a very strong, full, macho sound. Then, I switch to "im" rest stroke for the fast scale.

To me, that is an obvious choice. Likewise in Matteo Carcassi's *Etude No. 3, op. 25* we have this passage at the end of the second section of the piece.

Example #23:

Etude #3 (Matteo Carcassi)

The final four notes on the wound 4th string can be played with "im". But again, the result is a thin, scratchy sound. The obvious better choice is to play the four notes with the thumb for a full, solid sound.

Let's go back to *Capricho Árabe* and examine the theme in d minor. Traditional arpeggio-style fingering might suggest the following choices.

Example #24:

Capricho Árabe (Francisco Tárrega) original fingering

Some players may find the tone of the intervals played on the upbeats with "im" to be a bit thin. They might choose the following fingering where the thumb instead of "i" plays the 4th-string A's, adding a little more substance to those intervals.

Example #25

Capricho Árabe (Francisco Tárrega) original fingering

Measures 15 and 16 of *Capricho Árabe* by Francisco Tárrega. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The guitar part is shown with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains the melody, and the bass staff contains the bass line. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *m* (mezzo-forte). The original fingering for the melody in measure 15 is: 1 (m), 2 (i), 3 (p), 4 (m), 5 (i), 6 (p), 7 (m), 8 (i), 9 (p), 10 (m), 11 (i), 12 (p), 13 (m), 14 (i), 15 (p). The bass line in measure 15 is: 1 (5), 2 (6), 3 (5), 4 (6), 5 (8), 6 (5), 7 (6), 8 (8). The bass line in measure 16 is: 1 (5), 2 (6), 3 (5), 4 (6), 5 (8), 6 (5), 7 (6), 8 (8).

Neither fingering is right or wrong and the difference in sound between them will vary from player to player. Some players will hear a big difference, others will hear almost no difference at all. When there is little difference in sound between two fingering options, choose whichever is easiest or more natural to play.

Speed is also a factor in considering whether to use the fingers or the thumb to play the wound bass strings. We can use traditional arpeggio-style fingering in the following measures from Antonio Lauro's *Vals Venezolano No. 3*.

Example #26:

Vals Venezolano No. 3 (Antonio Lauro) Revised by Alirio Diaz

Measures 6, 7, and 8 of *Vals Venezolano No. 3* by Antonio Lauro, revised by Alirio Diaz. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp). The guitar part is shown with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble staff contains the melody, and the bass staff contains the bass line. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Dynamics include *p* (piano), *i* (mezzo-forte), and *a* (forte). The original fingering for the melody in measure 6 is: 1 (p), 2 (i), 3 (a), 4 (p), 5 (i), 6 (a), 7 (p), 8 (i), 9 (a), 10 (p), 11 (i), 12 (a), 13 (p), 14 (i), 15 (a), 16 (p). The bass line in measure 6 is: 1 (7), 2 (8), 3 (5), 4 (7), 5 (5), 6 (7), 7 (5), 8 (7), 9 (5), 10 (7), 11 (5), 12 (7), 13 (5), 14 (7), 15 (5), 16 (7). The bass line in measure 7 is: 1 (7), 2 (8), 3 (5), 4 (7), 5 (5), 6 (7), 7 (5), 8 (7), 9 (5), 10 (7), 11 (5), 12 (7), 13 (5), 14 (7), 15 (5), 16 (7). The bass line in measure 8 is: 1 (7), 2 (8), 3 (5), 4 (7), 5 (5), 6 (7), 7 (5), 8 (7), 9 (5), 10 (7), 11 (5), 12 (7), 13 (5), 14 (7), 15 (5), 16 (7).

Or, we could replace the use of "i" on the wound 4th string with "p" for a thicker sound on those notes.

Example #27:

In Example #19 the "i" finger plays the 4th string and sounds scratchy:

Study 11 from *Twelve Studies, Opus 6* (Fernando Sor)

As fingered by Andrés Segovia

1 *i m a i m a i m a i m* 2 *a i m a i m a i m a i m*

3 *p i m a i m a i m a i m* 4 *a p i m p i a p i m p i*

5 *p i m a i m a i m a i m* 6 *a i m a i m a i m p i m*

7 *p i m a i m a i m a i m* 8 *a p i m p i a p i m p i*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a guitar study in D major (one sharp, F#) and 4/4 time. It consists of eight measures. Measures 1 and 3 start with a piano (p) dynamic and a half rest. Measures 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 start with a half rest. The melody is written in the treble clef. The bass staff shows the fretting hand with numbers 0-3. The treble staff shows the picking hand with numbers 1-2. The score is divided into four systems, each containing two measures. The first system contains measures 1 and 2, the second contains measures 3 and 4, the third contains measures 5 and 6, and the fourth contains measures 7 and 8. The piece ends with a final half rest in measure 8.

In Example #20 the thumb plays the 4th string and the tone is much improved:

Study 11 from Twelve Studies, Opus 6 (Fernando Sor)

"m" on all melody notes

p p i m p i m p i m p i 2 m p i m p i m p i m p i

3 p p i m p i m p i m p i 4 m p i m p i m p i m p i

5 p p i m p i m p i m p i 6 m p i m p i m p i p i m

7 p p i m p i m p i m p i 8 m p i m p i m p i m p i

Again in Example #21 the thumb plays the 4th string producing a fuller tone:

Study 11 from Twelve Studies, Opus 6 (Fernando Sor)

Basic arpeggio fingering: "a" plays 1st string, "m" plays 2nd string, "i" plays 3rd string

1 *p p i m p i a p i a p i* 2 *a p i m p i m p i m p i*

3 *p p i m p i a p i a p i* 4 *a p i m p i a p i m p i*

5 *p p i a p i a p i a p i* 6 *a p i m p i m p i p p i*

7 *p p i a p i a p i a p i* 8 *a p i m p i a p i m p i*

So we see the question of whether to use fingers or the thumb to play notes on the wound bass strings is an important factor to consider in choosing right-hand fingerings.

Voices Can Affect Right-Hand Fingering Choices

In music consisting of two or more parts or voices, we usually reserve the thumb to play the bass part. The bass part usually falls on the wound bass strings. Once again, the thumb will usually produce a full and weighty sound on notes that fall on those strings. Also, the thumb by its nature and size is strong and naturally plays the bass part with authority.

Domenico Scarlatti's *Sonata in A* (L. 483) as arranged by Christopher Parkening is a good example.

Example #28:

Sonata in A (Domenico Scarlatti, arr. Christopher Parkening) (L. 483)

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a treble staff and a guitar staff (T, A, B strings). Measures 17-20, 21-24, and 25-28 are shown. The bass line is primarily played with the thumb ('p'). In measure 23, a red box highlights the bass line where the thumb plays the 3rd string E and the 3rd string D#. In measure 25, a red box highlights the open G string.

Very clearly, the thumb should play the bass line. However, at measure #23 the bass line climbs up onto the 3rd string. Some guitarists would use "im" to play the E and G and the D $\sharp$ and G. In my opinion, that would not be as good a choice as continuing to use "p" on the 3rd-string E and 3rd-string D $\sharp$. Using the thumb to play the bass notes on the 3rd string maintains the weight and fullness of the bass voice throughout the phrase. Likewise at measure #25, I wouldn't suddenly use a finger to play the open G. I would use the thumb.

But a very different situation occurs in Fernando Sor's popular *Exercise No. 17* from *Twenty-Four Very Easy Exercises, Opus 35* (Study No. 6 in Andrés Segovia's "20 Studies for the Guitar by Fernando Sor").

Example #29:

No. 17 from *Twenty-Four Very Easy Exercises, Opus 35* (Fernando Sor)

Blue notes=melody or upper voice

Red notes= bass or lower voice

The music is clearly notated in two voices. The notes with the stems pointing up (blue notes) comprise the melody or upper voice, and the notes with the stems pointing downward (red notes) comprise the bass or lower voice. Interpreting it as such would mean playing all the notes of the lower voice with the thumb.

Example #30:

No. 17 from *Twenty-Four Very Easy Exercises, Opus 35* (Fernando Sor)

Blue notes=melody or upper voice played by "i" "m" and possibly "a"

Red notes= bass or lower voice played by "p"

However, some would make the case that Sor notated the music in a shorthand style and that he really intended the piece to be played in *three* voices. The notation would be as follows. Notice the addition of the tenor or middle voice in black.

Example #31:

No. 17 from *Twenty-Four Very Easy Exercises, Opus 35* (Fernando Sor)

Blue notes=melody or upper voice
 Black notes=tenor or middle voice
 Red notes= bass or lower voice

It could then be fingered in more of an arpeggio-style as Segovia indicates in his edition with the thumb playing the bass, "i" the middle voice, and "m" and "a" handling the melody.

Example #32:

No. 17 from *Twenty-Four Very Easy Exercises, Opus 35* (Fernando Sor)

Blue notes=melody or upper voice played by "m" and "a"
 Black notes=tenor or middle voice played by "i"
 Red notes= bass or lower voice played by "p"

Neither approach is right or wrong. It is a matter of interpretation as to whether the piece is in two or three voices. Even then, the performer could use either style of fingering regardless of whether he was hearing the piece in two or three voices. Personally, if I were hearing it in two voices, using the thumb on the lower voice would win out for clarity. If I were hearing it in three voices, I could go either way.

A similar situation occurs in the theme of Leo Brouwer's very beautiful *Un Dia de Noviembre*. Brouwer clearly notates the theme in three voices. As shown here, the blue notes are the melody, the black notes the middle voice, and the red notes the bass voice. The right-hand fingering is arpeggio-style.

Example #33:

Un Dia de Noviembre (Leo Brouwer)

Arpeggio-style fingering.

1 *a i m i a i* 2 *a i a i* 3 *a i a m* 4 *a m i m m i*

5 *a i a i a i* 6 *a i a m i a i* 7 *m i m i m i* 8 *m i p i*

Until measure #8, "p" plays only the bass notes, "i" plays most of the notes in the middle voice, and "m" and "a" play most of the melody notes. This arpeggio-style configuration produces good separation between the three voices.

However, some may not care for the scratchiness and thinness of tone the "i" produces on the wound 4th string which it plays repeatedly. They might decide to forgo the separation of voices and go for a richer overall tone. They would choose to have the thumb play all the notes on the wound bass strings (shown here in red).

Example #34:

Un Dia de Noviembre (Leo Brouwer)

Thumb plays the wound bass strings regardless of voice.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the piece "Un Dia de Noviembre" by Leo Brouwer. The notation is for guitar, featuring a treble clef staff and a bass staff with strings T, A, and B labeled. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The first system consists of three measures. Above the treble staff, fingerings are indicated: "m or i" for the first measure, "1 m" for the second, and "m i" for the third. Dynamics include "p" (piano) and "f" (forte). The second system consists of five measures. Above the treble staff, fingerings are indicated: "a i i i m" for the first, "a i a i a i" for the second, "m i" for the third, "a or m i" for the fourth, and "m or i" for the fifth. Dynamics include "p" and "f". The bass staff shows string numbers (0-5) and fret numbers (1-4). A box above the first measure of the second system contains the text "Or: m i m i". A box above the third measure of the first system contains the text "Or: a m a".

Neither fingering is right or wrong. It is a question of personal preference largely dependent in this example on the individual player's touch. If the player produces a terrible tone with "i" on the wound bass strings, using the thumb instead would greatly improve the overall effect. But, if the player has a heavy touch with the thumb, the over emphasis of the notes on the 4th string would not sound good. The player would be better off using "i" to play the notes on the 4th string and reserve the thumb only for the bass voice.

Finger Alternation and String Crossings

I point out in my technique tip [To Alternate or Not to Alternate—THAT is the Question: Right-Hand Finger Alternation](#), we are taught from our very first guitar lessons to alternate our fingers. All beginning guitar methods emphasize the importance of alternating "im" or "ma" or "ia". Finger alternation is another important element of choosing right-hand fingerings. In a rapid passage, repeating a finger can trip you up completely, cause tension in the hand, or result in sluggish rhythms.

In the opening measures of Robert Johnson's *Alman* are several dotted rhythms. To play the rhythms crisply, it is essential to alternate the fingers.

Example #35:

Alman (Robert Johnson)

The musical score for 'Alman' by Robert Johnson is presented in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a single staff with a treble clef. Fingerings (i, m) are indicated above certain notes, and string changes (1, 2, 3, 4) are marked above the staff. Below the staff is a tablature for the guitar, showing fret numbers for the Treble (T), Alto (A), and Bass (B) strings.

String	Measure 1	Measure 2	Measure 3	Measure 4
T	0 1 0 1 3	1 0 1 3 0	0 2 3 5 7 8	7 5 4 0 2
A	2 2 0	0	3 2 0	0
B	0 3	3	3 2 0	4 0 0

But what about fingerings for the rest of the notes? It's time to talk about string crossings or changes. In the basic arpeggio example given at the beginning of this technique tip, note that regardless of which strings are being played, the fingers are most comfortable making string crossings or changes as follows (important: "higher" and "lower" refer to pitch, *not* the up and down spatial physical relationship to floor):

lower to higher string:

i to m
m to a
i to a

higher to lower string:

m to i
a to m
a to i

Here is an excerpt from *The Christopher Parkening Guitar Method, Volume 1*. I have marked the spots where there are changes of strings (string crossings).

Example #36:

Tarantella (Sicilian Traditional) from The Christopher Parkening Guitar Method, Volume 1

Many times, an efficient way to do right-hand fingering is to begin at the string cross. Choose a good fingering for the string cross.

Example #37:

Crossing from the 1st string to the 2nd string,
"m" to "i" is the best choice.

Then, *work backwards*. Assuming you want to alternate the fingers, if the 1st-string open E in measure #13 is "m", then the G before it will be "i". The F before that G will be "m". The F before that F will be "i". The first F of measure #12 will be "m". The last E in measure #11 will be "i". And so on until you arrive at the very first note.

Example #38:

Finger the preceding notes by working backwards

First, determine that "m" to "i" is the best choice for the string cross.

Then, find the next string cross and enter the best fingering for it. In this case going from measure #5 to measure #6, the best choice is "i" on the D on beat 4, "m" for the open E, and "i" for the C on beat 1 of measure #6 (green). Given that and working backwards, "m" works great for the D on beat 3 of measure #5 (purple). This just so happens to fit in perfectly with the preceding fingering alternation and string crosses.

Example #39:

Crossing from the 2nd string to the 1st string and back to the 2nd string, "i" to "m" to "i" is the best choice.

Working backwards and wanting to alternate fingers, the preceding D will be played by "m"

Finally, enter a good fingering for the last string cross from measure #7 to measure #8. The best fingering is "m" for the C and "i" for the A (brown). Then work backwards from there (orange). Everything just happens to work out beautifully. We get all good string crosses and "mi" finger alternation is maintained throughout.

Example #40:

1 *m i m i* 2 *m i m i* 3 *m i m i* 4 *m* 5 *i m i m* 6 *i m i m* 7 *i m i m* 8 *i*

Finger the preceding notes by working backwards

For the final string cross from the 2nd to the 3rd string, "m" to "i" is the best choice.

TAB

5 5 0 0 | 5 5 0 0 | 1 1 1 3 | 0 | 3 3 3 0 | 1 1 1 3 | 0 0 0 1 | 2

0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0

If one had started with "i" on the first high A, "im" finger alternation could of course be maintained, but all the string crosses would be backwards, or bad string crosses. This is why right-hand fingering should be carefully worked out.

Choices are usually not as clear cut and fingerings don't usually work out as perfectly as in the preceding example. Let's look at the following elementary and seemingly simple example from *Study No. 1* from Fernando Sor's *Introduction to the Study of the Guitar, Opus 60*. If we decide we want to maintain strict alternation and start with "i", we end up with nine bad string crosses and five good string crosses. I would consider that bad fingering.

Example # 41:

Study #1 from Introduction to the Study of the Guitar, Opus 60 (Fernando Sor)

Starting with "i"—strict alternation

G=good string cross

B=bad string cross

1 *i m i* 2 *m i m* 3 *i m i m* 4 *i m i m* 5 *i m i* 6 *m i m i* 7 *m i p* 8 *i i* *a m* *p*

G G B B B G B B G G B B B B

T 1 0 1 0 1 3 0 3 1 0 3 1 0 1 0 1 3 0 2 1 2 3 0 0 0

A 0

B 0

3

We can fix the bad string crosses by repeating "m" a couple times and throwing in a couple "a" fingers. It is no longer strict alternation but we end up with all good string crosses. If the piece is not very fast, repeating a finger is okay.

Example #42:

Study #1 from Introduction to the Study of the Guitar, Opus 60 (Fernando Sor)

Starting with "i"—bad string crosses "fixed" (red)

i m i m i m i m a m i m i m a i m p i m

TAB
1 0 0 1 0 0 1 3 0 3 1 0 3 1 0 0 1 0 3 0 2 1 2 3 0 0 0 3

Another choice would be not to use "a" and instead put up with a few bad string crosses. After all, bad string crosses are part of life—you can't always avoid them, you just have to deal with them.

If the tempo was fast, you probably would not want to repeat any fingers. It would be better to deal with a few bad string crosses. Or, introduce the "a" finger if it doesn't slow you down or cause additional complications.

On the other hand, we could finger the passage beginning with the "m" finger instead. That produces nine good string crosses and five bad crosses. Definitely an improvement over starting with "i".

Example #43:

Study #1 from Introduction to the Study of the Guitar, Opus 60 (Fernando Sor)

Starting with "m"—strict alternation

G=good string cross

B=bad string cross

Example #44: Musical notation for a sequence of notes. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The sequence consists of 8 measures. Above the staff, fingerings are indicated: 1 m i m 2 i m i 3 m i m i 4 m i m i 5 m i m 6 i m i m 7 i m p 8. Below the staff, string crosses are indicated: B B G G G B G G B B G G G G. The bottom staff shows the guitar's fretboard with strings T, A, and B. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-3, and string crosses are indicated by '0' for open strings and '3' for the third fret.

If we didn't want to repeat any fingers or introduce the "a" finger, this might be the way to go.

Or, to go an entirely different direction, we might reinterpret the voicing and notation of the passage. Although Sor notated the passage as if it is one voice, some might argue that the piece is actually in two voices. If that is the case, one could use "mi" for the upper voice and the thumb for the lower voice.

Example #44:

Study #1 from Introduction to the Study of the Guitar, Opus 60 (Fernando Sor)

Notated in two voices

One bad string cross

Example #45: Musical notation for a sequence of notes. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The sequence consists of 8 measures. Above the staff, fingerings are indicated: 1 m i 2 m i 3 m i m i 4 m i m 5 i m 6 i m i m 7 i m 8 a m i. Below the staff, string crosses are indicated: p p p p p p p p. The bottom staff shows the guitar's fretboard with strings T, A, and B. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-3, and string crosses are indicated by '0' for open strings and '3' for the third fret.

It definitely makes some musical sense and the fingering works out very well with general alternation resulting in only one bad string cross.

Now, let's return to the *Alman* by Robert Johnson. We determined that we wanted to alternate fingers for the quick dotted rhythms (red).

Example #45:

Alman (Robert Johnson)

1 *m i m i* 2 3 *m i m m i m* 4

T 0 1 0 1 3 1 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 2 3 5 7 8 7 5 4 0 2

A 2 2 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

B 0 0 0 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Given the variables we have learned to consider so far, the rest of the notes could be fingered as follows. Red, black, and purple fingerings are all useable.

Example #46:

Alman (Robert Johnson)

i or *p* 1 *m* *m* or *a* *i* *m* or *a* *m* *i* 2 *m* *i* or *a* *m* *i* *m* *m* *i*

"p" might produce better tone on wound 4th string and more substantial upbeat

Don't need to repeat "m" if "a" is used

Don't need to repeat "m" if "a" is used

Don't need to repeat "i" from previous chord if "a" is used

"m" maintains same tone quality in melody. "i" could be used if alternation desired.

T 0 1 0 1 3 1 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 2 3 5 7 8 7 5 4 0 2

A 2 2 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

B 0 0 0 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Adding slurs and changing fingerings to facilitate finger alternation and string crossings

Slurs may be added and fingerings altered to produce good string crossings and good finger alternation on fast passages. For instance, in Fernando Sor's *Exercise No. 13* from *Twenty Four Very Easy Exercises, Opus 35* (*Study No. 2* in "Segovia's Twenty Studies for the Guitar by Fernando Sor") we have a fast short scale as a bridge from Part II to Part III. As fingered, we have a bad string cross.

Example #47:

Exercise No. 13 from Twenty Four Very Easy Exercises, Opus 35 (Fernando Sor)

[illegible]

Here are two ways to fix it.

Example #48:

Play the B on the 3rd string

Good string cross

24

m i m i m i m i

③

3

0 2 4 1 2 3 4

3 0 2 4

3

T
A
B

This musical exercise, titled 'Good string cross', is for guitar. It begins at measure 24. The notation includes a treble clef, a 2/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth notes: m (middle C), i (first space), m (first line), i (second space), m (second line), i (third space), m (third line), and i (fourth space). A circled '3' indicates a triplet of these eighth notes. The bass line features a triplet of eighth notes on the open string (0), followed by a quarter rest, and then a sequence of eighth notes: 0, 2, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4. The guitar part is written on a six-line staff with a T (treble), A (alto), and B (bass) clef. The bass line notes are 0, 2, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4. A green '3' is placed below the first three notes of the bass line, indicating a triplet.

The "Segovia solution"

Add slurs

Good string cross

The image shows a musical score for a guitar exercise titled "Good string cross". The score is written on a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The tempo is marked "24". The key signature has one sharp (F#). The exercise consists of a single melodic line in the treble clef and a bass line in the bass clef. The melodic line starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G (0), a quarter note A (2), a quarter note B (0), a quarter note C# (1), a quarter note D# (2), a quarter note E# (3), and a quarter note F# (4). The bass line starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G (0), a quarter note A (0), a quarter note B (2), a quarter note C# (1), a quarter note D# (2), a quarter note E# (3), and a quarter note F# (4). The exercise is marked with a green "3" at the beginning and a green "3" at the end, indicating a triplet. The title "Good string cross" is written in green above the staff.

On the left we change the left-hand fingering. On the right we add some slurs. Either or both methods may be used to facilitate good string crosses and maintain finger alternation.

Finger alternation and string crossings can be important factors in choosing right-hand fingering. String crossings can be facilitated by changes of left-hand fingering, addition or deletion of slurs, and careful choices of finger alternation.

For detailed information on choosing friendly fingerings for string crossings, see my technique tip [Good String Crosses Gone Bad](#).

For additional information on finger alternation, see my technique tip [To Alternate or Not to Alternate—THAT is the Question: Right-Hand Finger Alternation](#)

End of Part 2

More to come:

Fingering for fast scales

Tremolo fingerings

Use of the pinky

Thumb-index lute fingering

Fingering for harmonics

Using the thumb to play double stops