

Rasgueados, Part 2

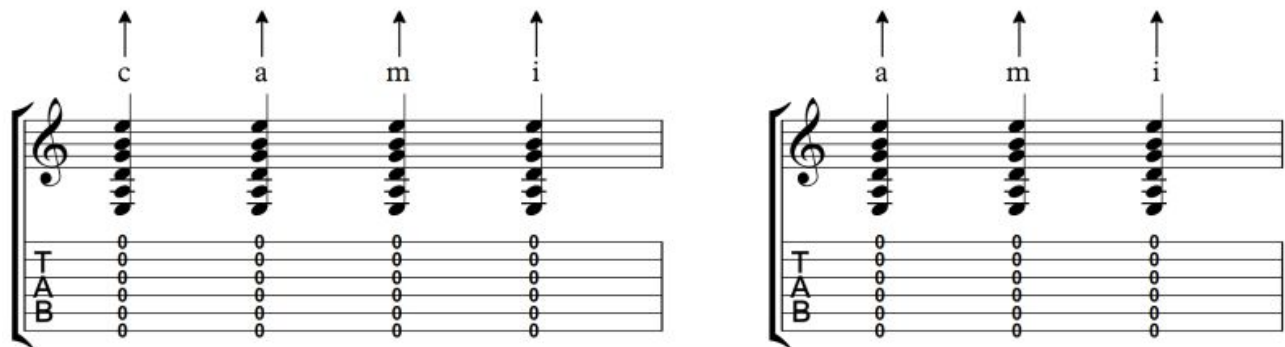
By Douglas Niedt

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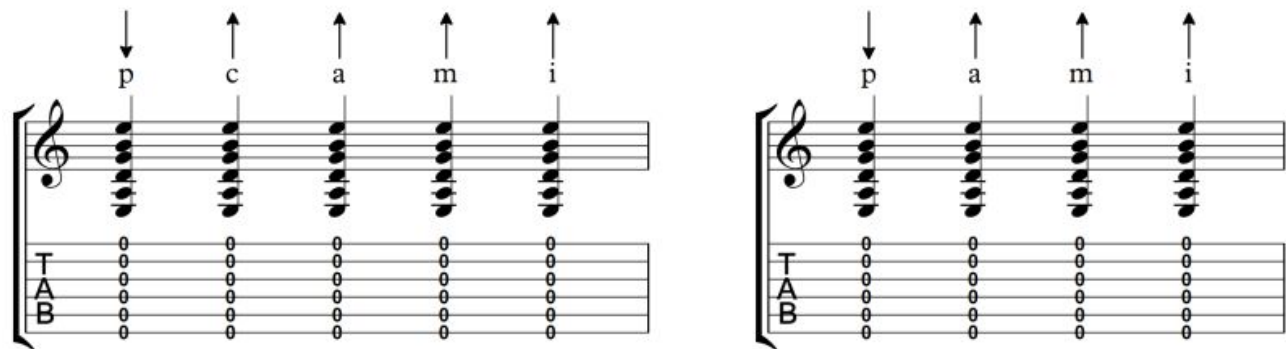
THE BLENDED RASGUEADO—the rasgueado for classical guitarists

Remember, this rasgueado is the style you will use in most classical guitar repertoire. As you will recall, the blended rasgueado is a little lighter in sound than the separated rasgueado. It doesn't have a machine-gun-like aggressive attack. The downstrokes are no longer separate and distinct hits. Instead, *each stroke begins before the preceding stroke is complete*, thereby producing a continuous or flowing blended sound.

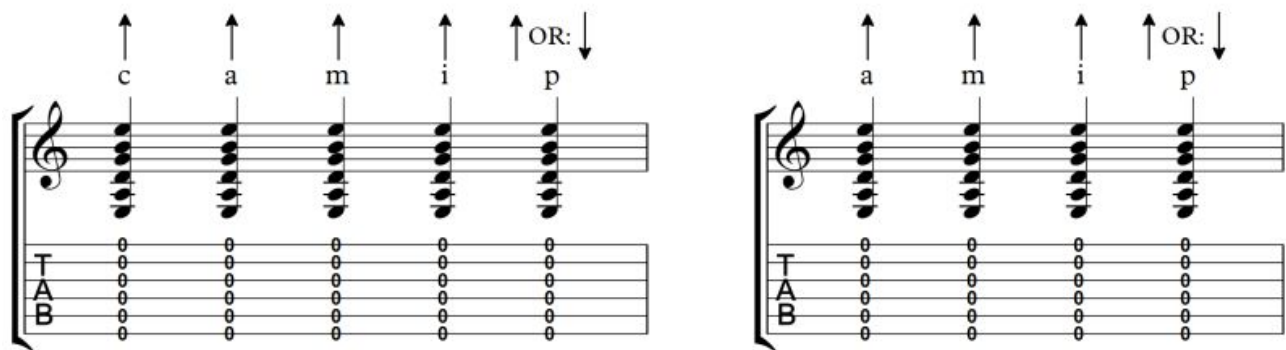
For classical guitarists, the most common patterns are "cami" and "ami".



Occasionally a thumb upstroke can be added to the beginning of either pattern:



Or, a thumb downstroke or upstroke can be added to the end:



But again, in classical playing the "cami" and "ami" basic patterns are the most common and can be used very effectively and easily in pieces such as:

Leyenda (Asturias), *Sevilla*, *Malagueña* by Isaac Albéniz

Fandanguillo, *Ráfaga*, *Garrotin* and *Soleares* from *Hommage à Tárrega* by Joaquín Turina

The Miller's Dance by Manuel de Falla

Pieces by Joaquín Rodrigo

Basic Points to Remember

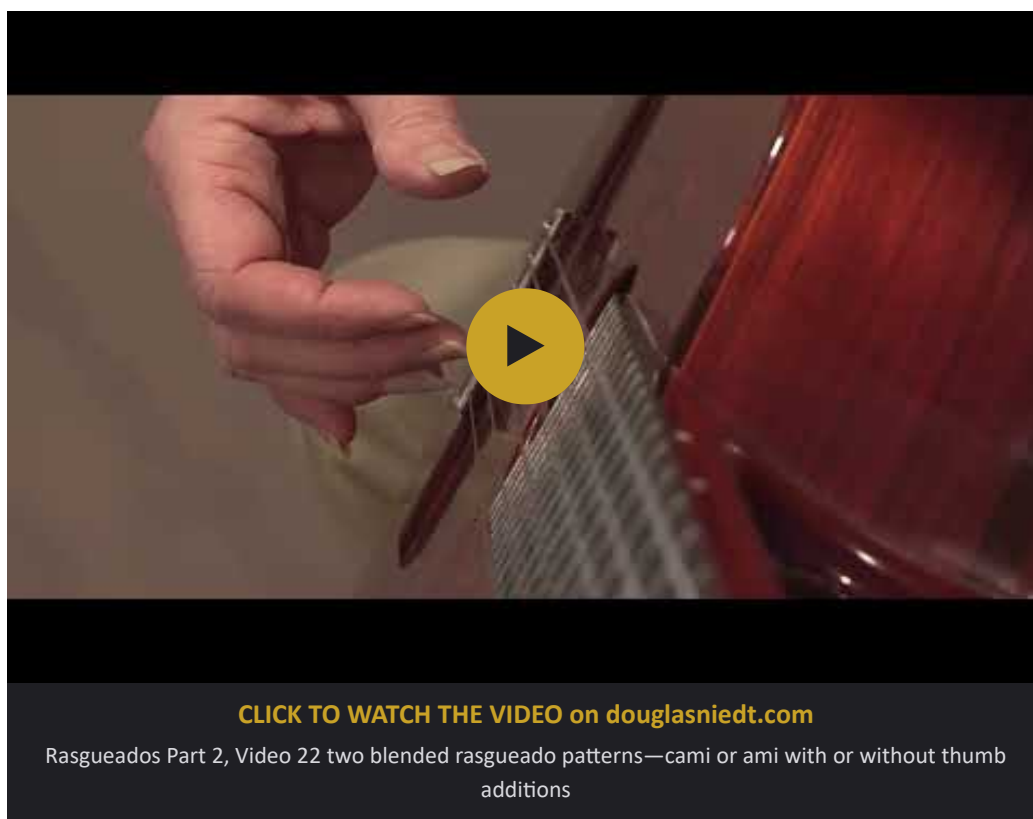
In the blended rasgueado, the thumb is not bent at the tip. It may:

1. Rest on a bass string
2. Rest on the guitar
3. MOST COMMON: hover in the air above the bass strings.

The fingers are not locked against the thumb or the palm. They are in an open and loose position.

Watch me demonstrate (Video #22).

Be sure to watch the video on full screen. Click the symbol to the right of "HD" in the lower right-hand corner after the video begins playing. Hit escape "ESC" on your keyboard to return to normal viewing.



A Shortcut to Success (a shortcut being weeks instead of months)

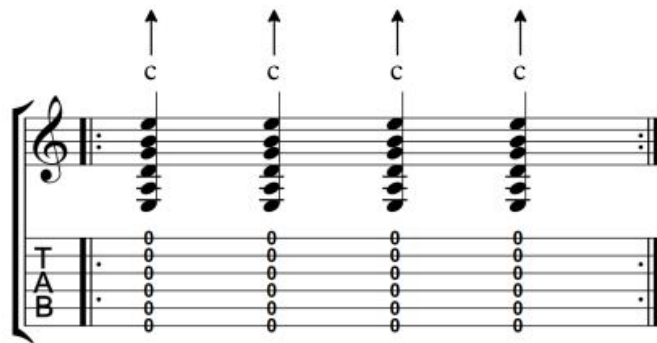
Although it is a blended rasgueado, we still need to hear that it is made up of separate finger strokes. As I pointed out earlier, one way to learn to play a well-executed blended rasgueado is to first develop the independence of the fingers by practicing the flicked separated rasgueados described in Part 1 of this technique tip.

But if you are not interested in going through the process of learning separated rasgueados (which you might not ever use in classical playing) try the following preliminary exercises to build your finger strength and independence to learn to play the blended rasgueado.

Step 1. Practice your downstrokes

First we need to develop some strength and independence in each finger, especially the "a" and "c" fingers by practicing forceful downstrokes.

Begin each practice session by developing the strength of the "c"(pinky) finger downstrokes.



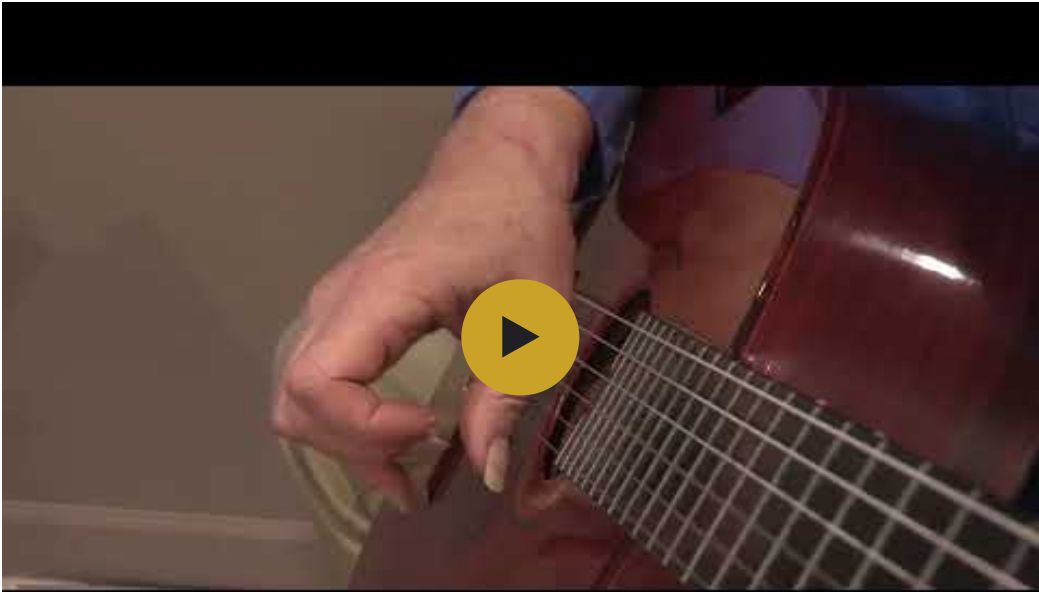
Practice slowly at first and be sure you are playing quick strokes, not strums. Do not be concerned if you are not hitting all six strings. Play as loud as you can. Ideally, the "ima" fingers should be curled loosely into the hand. If that is too difficult, let the fingers hang downward for now. (But eventually you will have to be able to keep "ima" curled). If you are keeping the "ima" fingers curled, try to only let "c" fire—don't allow the "a" finger to move forward with the pinky.

If you can, keep the thumb hovering in the air close to the bass strings. Do not use the arm to help make the strokes. The power must come solely from the finger. If the arm is moving, plant the thumb on the 6th string or on the guitar to help eliminate the arm movement. But eventually, on all these exercises, you will have to be able to do them without the thumb planted.

Practice 4-12 strokes. Don't over practice. The finger will tighten up and the movements will slow and become very sluggish.

Watch me (Video #23).

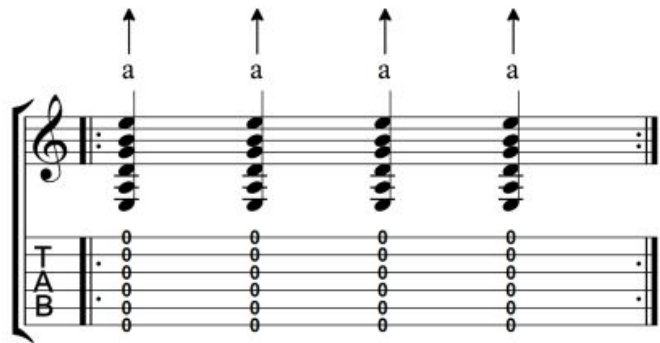
Be sure to watch the video on full screen. Click the symbol to the right of "HD" in the lower right-hand corner after the video begins playing. Hit escape "ESC" on your keyboard to return to normal viewing.



CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com

Rasgueados Part 2, Video 23 Finger Downstrokes With c Finger

Next, practice the "a" finger.

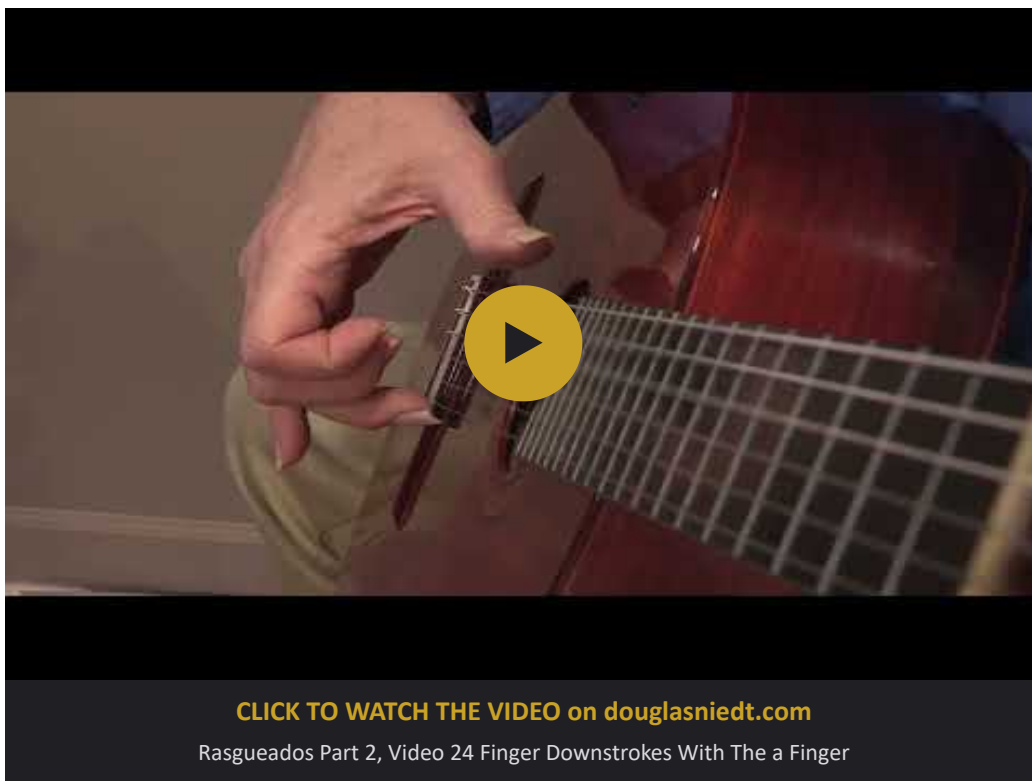


Allow the "c" finger to move freely with "a". Do not be concerned if you are not hitting all six strings. Ideally, the "i" and "m" fingers should be curled loosely into the hand. If that is too difficult, let the fingers hang downward. (But eventually you will have to be able to keep "im" curled). If you are keeping the "im" fingers curled, try to only let "a" fire—don't allow the "m" finger to move forward with the "a" finger. The rules for the thumb continue to apply.

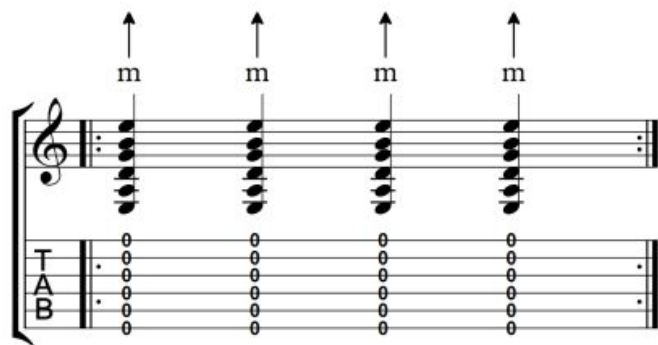
Practice 4-12 strokes.

Watch me(Video #24).

Be sure to watch the video on full screen. Click the symbol to the right of "HD" in the lower right-hand corner after the video begins playing. Hit escape "ESC" on your keyboard to return to normal viewing.



Next exercise the "m" finger.

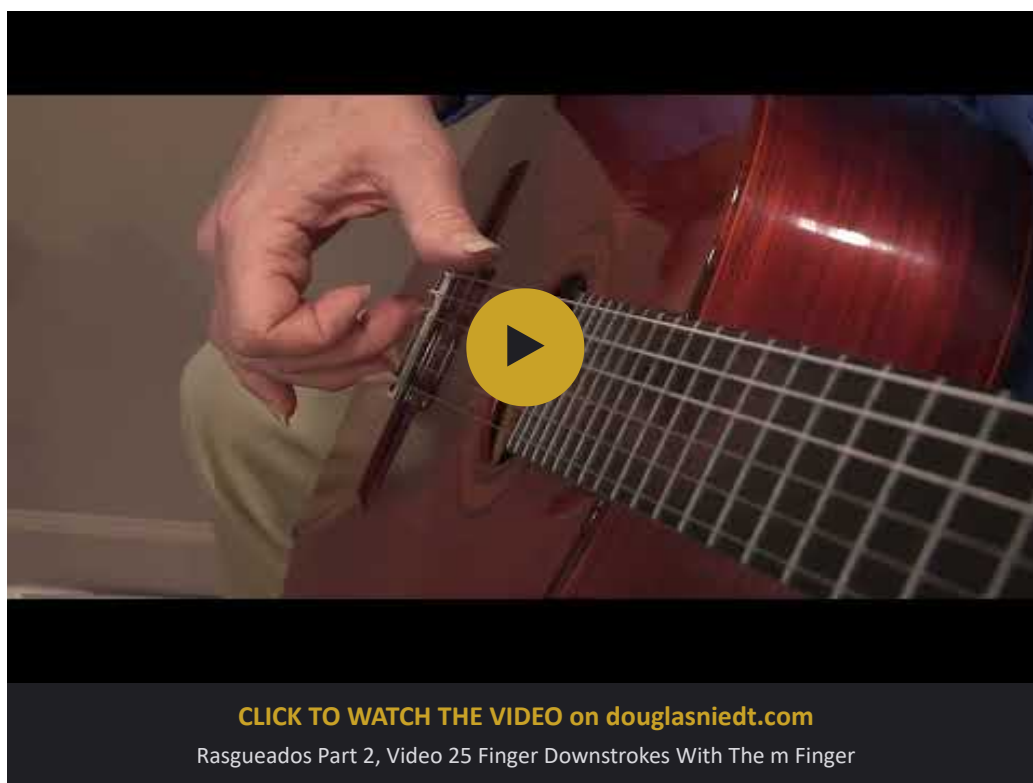


Allow "a" and "c" to move freely with "m". Do not be concerned if you are not hitting all six strings. Ideally, keep "i" curled loosely in the hand. If that is too difficult, allow "i" to hang downward. (But eventually you will have to be able to keep "i" curled). If you are keeping the "i" finger curled, try to only let "m" fire—don't allow the "i" finger to move forward with the "m" finger.

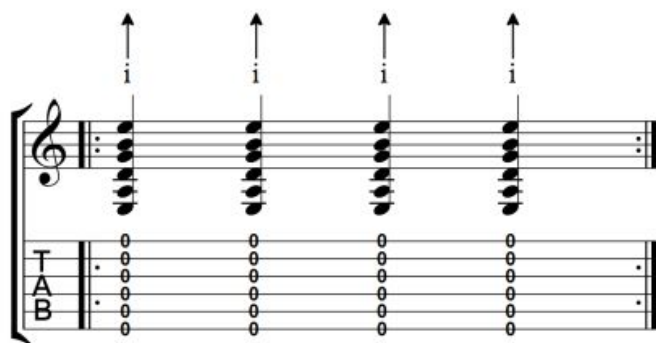
Practice 4-12 strokes.

Let me show you (Video #25).

Be sure to watch the video on full screen. Click the symbol to the right of "HD" in the lower right-hand corner after the video begins playing. Hit escape "ESC" on your keyboard to return to normal viewing.



Finally, practice your down strokes with i.

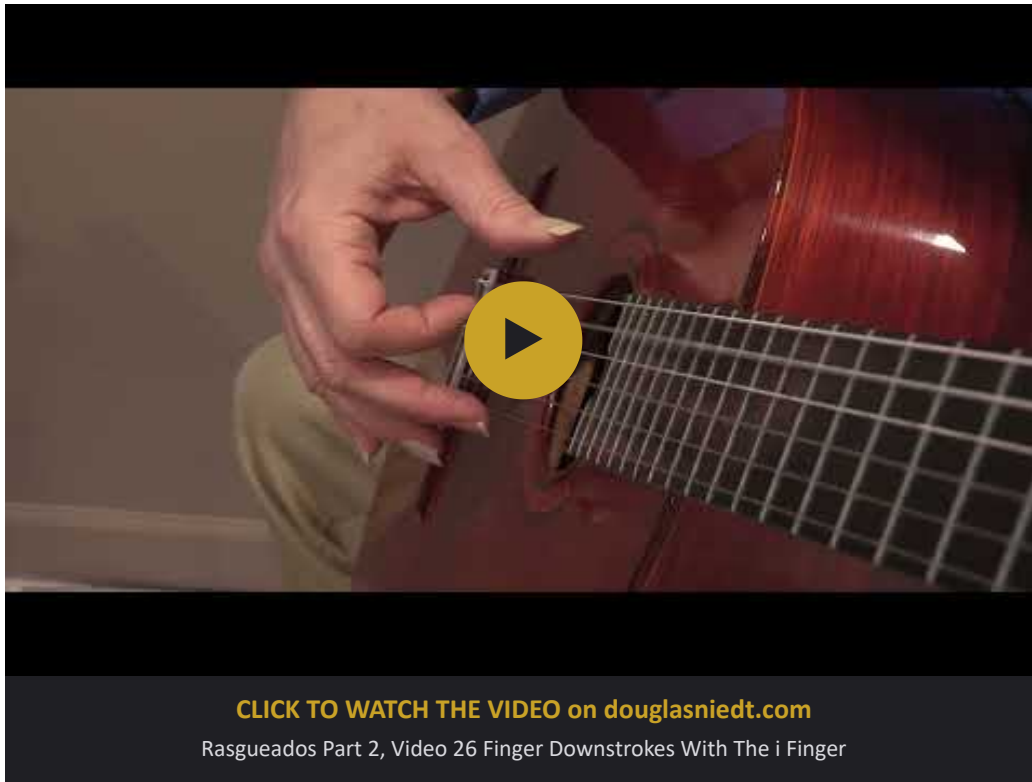


This one is fairly easy. Do not be concerned if you are not hitting all six strings. Allow cam to hang downward as i makes its strokes.

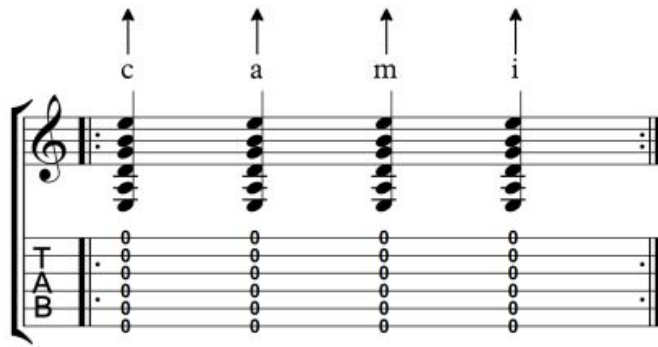
Practice 4-12 strokes.

Watch (Video #26).

Be sure to watch the video on full screen. Click the symbol to the right of "HD" in the lower right-hand corner after the video begins playing. Hit escape "ESC" on your keyboard to return to normal viewing.



Step 2. Now it is time to practice a four-stroke pattern with all downstrokes.

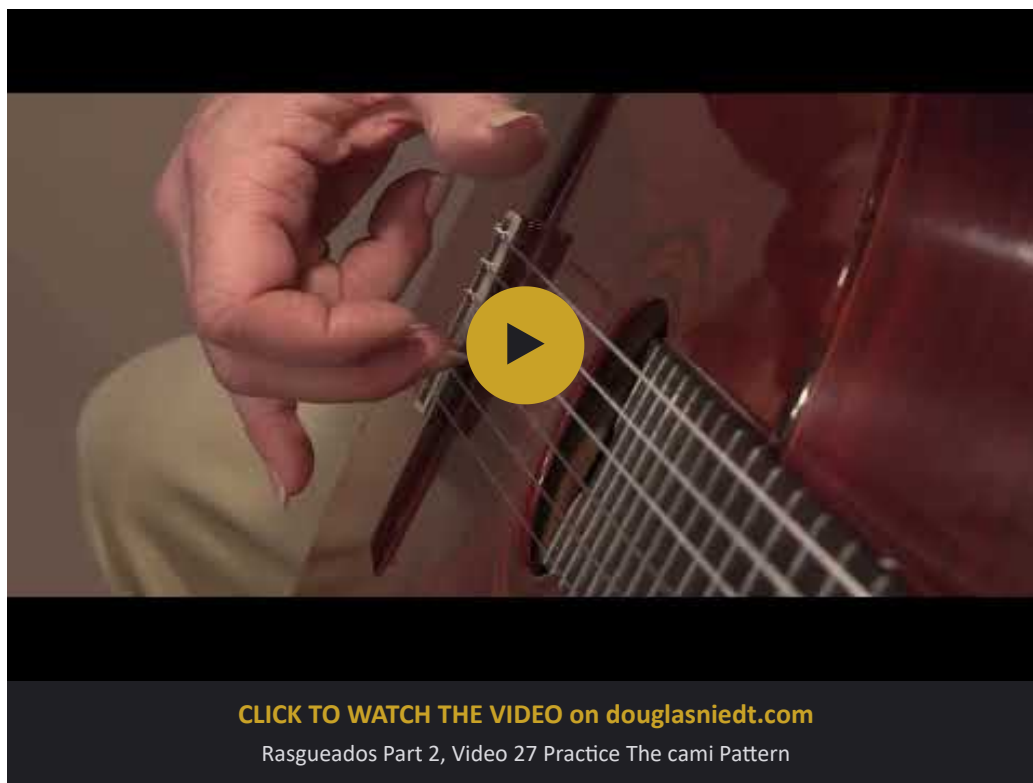


Play slowly and evenly. Make quick, forceful strokes with each finger. Do not be concerned if you are not hitting all six strings with every finger. Ideally, begin with all four fingers curled loosely into the hand and only allow one finger out at a time. After "i" completes its stroke, recurl the fingers loosely into the hand. If that is too difficult, don't worry about it and focus on volume and quick decisive strokes. Do NOT allow the arm to help. If that is happening, plant the thumb on the 6th string or on the guitar to encourage the fingers to make the strokes. Try to repeat the pattern 5-10 times.

IMPORTANT: Although it may be too difficult to do at first, eventually you will have to be able to do this pattern with the fingers curled loosely into the hand allowing only one finger to fire at a time. The thumb will hover above the bass strings.

Watch me demonstrate (Video #27).

Be sure to watch the video on full screen. Click the symbol to the right of "HD" in the lower right-hand corner after the video begins playing. Hit escape "ESC" on your keyboard to return to normal viewing.

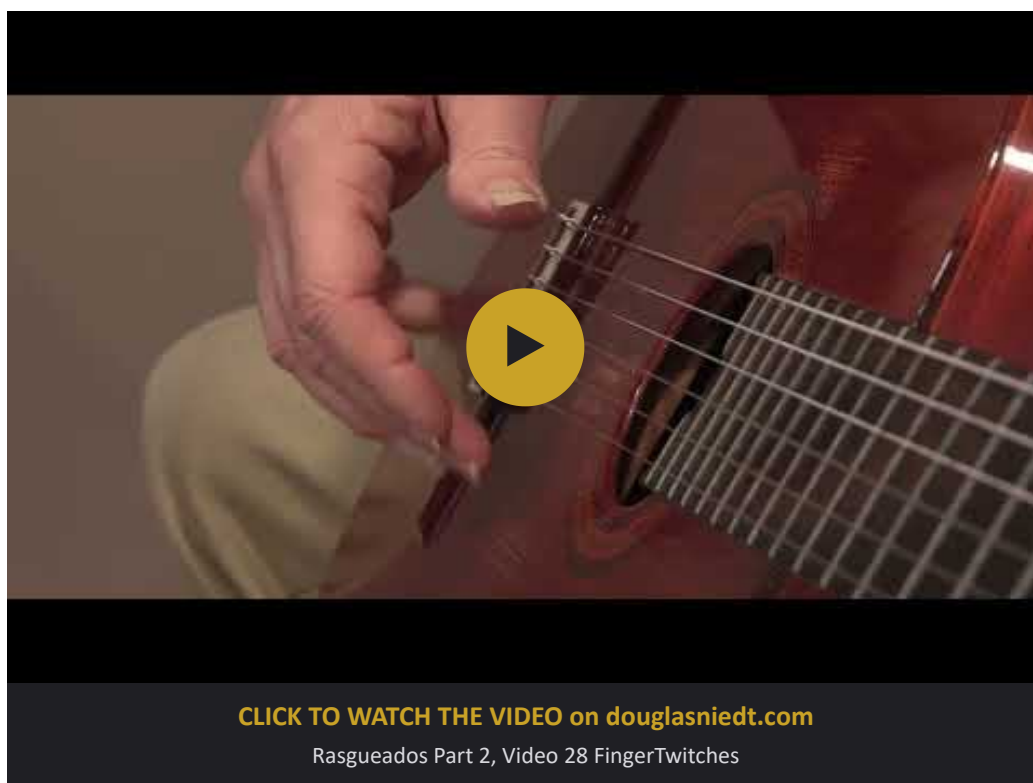


Step 3. Practice finger twitches

Practice very fast down-up strokes with each finger. Think of the strokes as involuntary finger twitches, not conscious efforts. Practice each finger for about 5 seconds. Do not be concerned with how many strings you strum. You will probably hit 3-5 strings, more on the downstrokes and fewer on the upstrokes. *Allow unused fingers to hang downward.* If you find the arm is helping to make the strokes, plant the thumb on the 6th string or the guitar to help eliminate arm movement. The power for the finger twitches must come only from the fingers. Even though conscious effort should be minimized, we want a slight emphasis placed on the downstrokes. Therefore, begin and end each finger-twitch sequence on the downstroke.

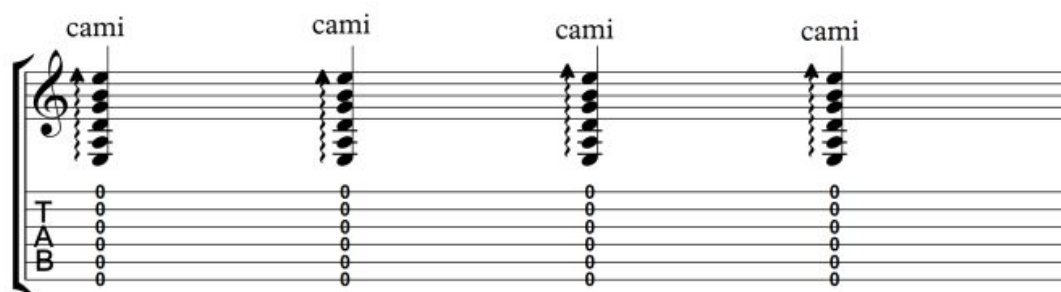
Watch the video (Video #28).

Be sure to watch the video on full screen. Click the symbol to the right of "HD" in the lower right-hand corner after the video begins playing. Hit escape "ESC" on your keyboard to return to normal viewing.



Step 4. Practice fanning out the fingers

Go for it. Fan out the fingers across the strings, "cami".



cami cami cami cami

TAB

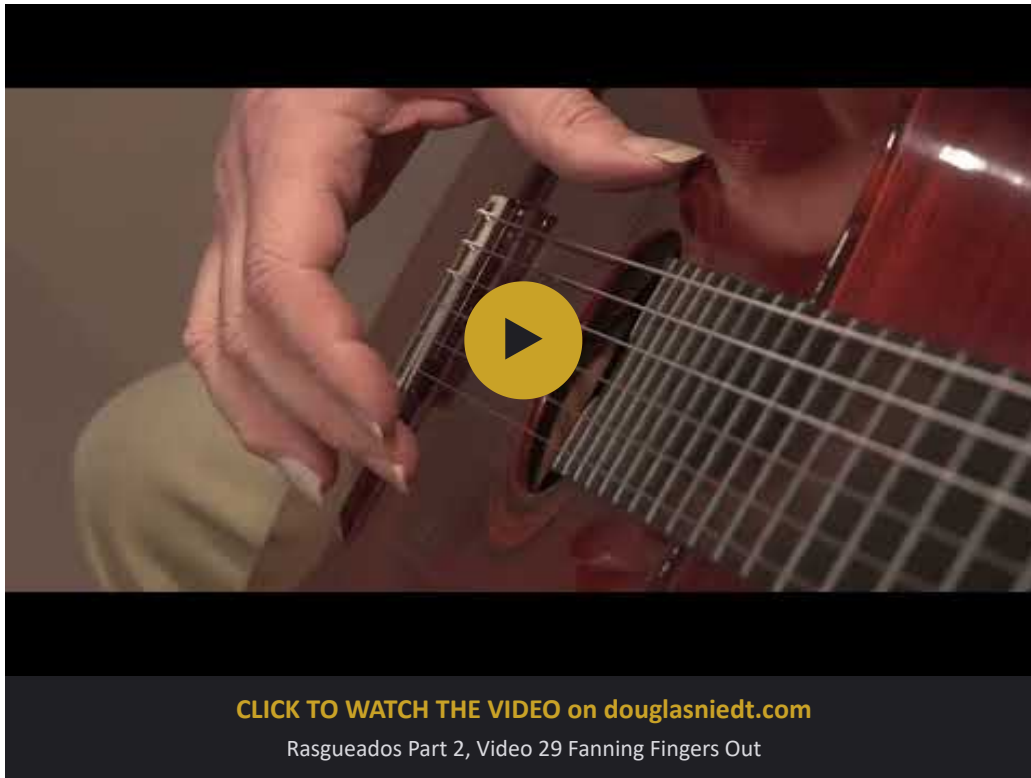
Again, each finger will not be a totally separate hit as in the separated rasgueado. The goal is to produce a rasgueado in which the strokes are blended, but there is still awareness that it is made up of four individual finger movements. Keep the arm and hand steady. Try it with the thumb planted and not planted. Use whichever works best. Eventually you will play without planting the thumb.

It will not be possible to practice with a metronome and gradually bring the pattern up to tempo. Practice it slowly and build up a bit of speed, but then just go for it. Make it happen. If it doesn't happen, try the three-note pattern "ami".

[illegible]

Let me show you how (Video #29).

Be sure to watch the video on full screen. Click the symbol to the right of "HD" in the lower right-hand corner after the video begins playing. Hit escape "ESC" on your keyboard to return to normal viewing.

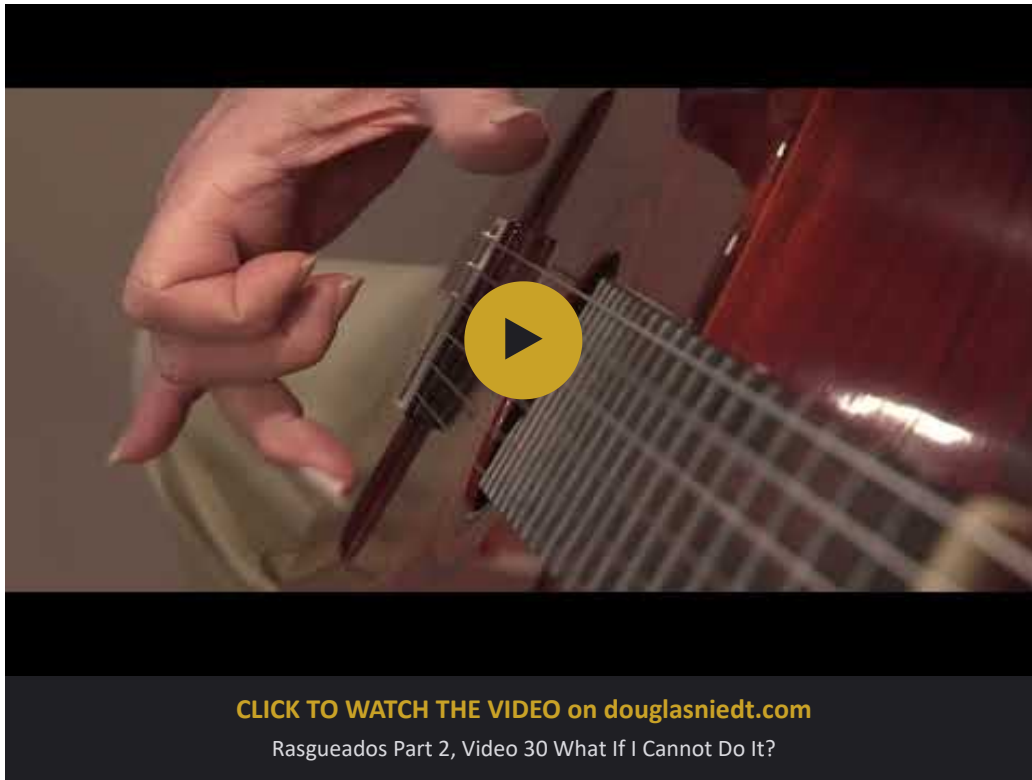


I'm unable to fan out the fingers. What do I do?

If you are unable to do the 4-note or 3-note fan pattern, it is probably an indication that you need to keep working on the downstroke exercises and finger twitch exercises. Although it may be too difficult to do at first, on the downstroke exercises (Step 1) and the four-stroke downstroke pattern (Step 2) you will have to develop the ability to keep the fingers curled loosely into the hand until it is time for each to play its stroke. Once a certain level of finger independence and strength has been achieved, you should be able to fan the fingers out evenly across the strings and produce a nice blended rasgueado, either "cami", "ami", or both.

I'll show you what to do (Video #30).

Be sure to watch the video on full screen. Click the symbol to the right of "HD" in the lower right-hand corner after the video begins playing. Hit escape "ESC" on your keyboard to return to normal viewing.



Practice these basic exercises every day for a maximum of 10 minutes. You should see results in 3-4 weeks.

END OF PART 2