

Rasgueados, Part 3

By Douglas Niedt

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The Rasgueado Redondo or Continuous Roll

For Classical Guitarists using the blended rasgueado technique:

For classical guitarists, the continuous rasgueado is usually done with the blended rasgueado technique using “cami” or “ami”. This first version consists of an equal number of down strokes and up strokes.

FOR THE CLASSICAL GUITARIST:
THE CONTINUOUS RASGUEADO OR "CIRCULAR" ROLL

Thumb may hover above the strings
or can be planted on the guitar.

The diagram illustrates two variations of the continuous rasgueado technique for classical guitarists. Each variation is shown with a musical staff and a corresponding guitar tablature. The first variation uses the letters 'a', 'm', 'i', 'a', 'm', 'i' with arrows indicating up and down strokes. The second variation uses the letters 'c', 'a', 'm', 'i', 'c', 'a', 'm', 'i' with arrows indicating up and down strokes. The tablature for both versions shows the same sequence of fret numbers (0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0) for the six strings.

The blended technique is much easier to do than the separated technique used by flamenco guitarists described below. The blended continuous rasgueado can be done with or without wrist/arm rotation. Some teachers describe it as having a “circular” attack. The thumb can hover above the bass strings or rest on the guitar.

I like to use this technique in Joaquín Turina’s *Ráfaga*.

Ráfaga (Joaquín Turina)

rasgueado

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
T	0	0	3	3	5	3	0	0	3	5	3	5	3	5	3	5	0	0	0	0
A	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

To understand the details of the execution of the blended continuous roll and how to practice the pattern, watch Video #1.

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

Video 1 Blended rasgueado continuous roll

A blended continuous rasgueado can also be produced by using an up stroke with the thumb followed by all down strokes with the fingers.

MORE CONTINUOUS BLENDED RASGUEADOS

A favorite of Pepe Romero
(All six strings are not played
by any one finger.)

↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓
p c a m i p

As a continuous rasgueado:

↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓
p c a m i p c a m i p c a m i p c a m i p

Same as the above, but without the *c* finger:

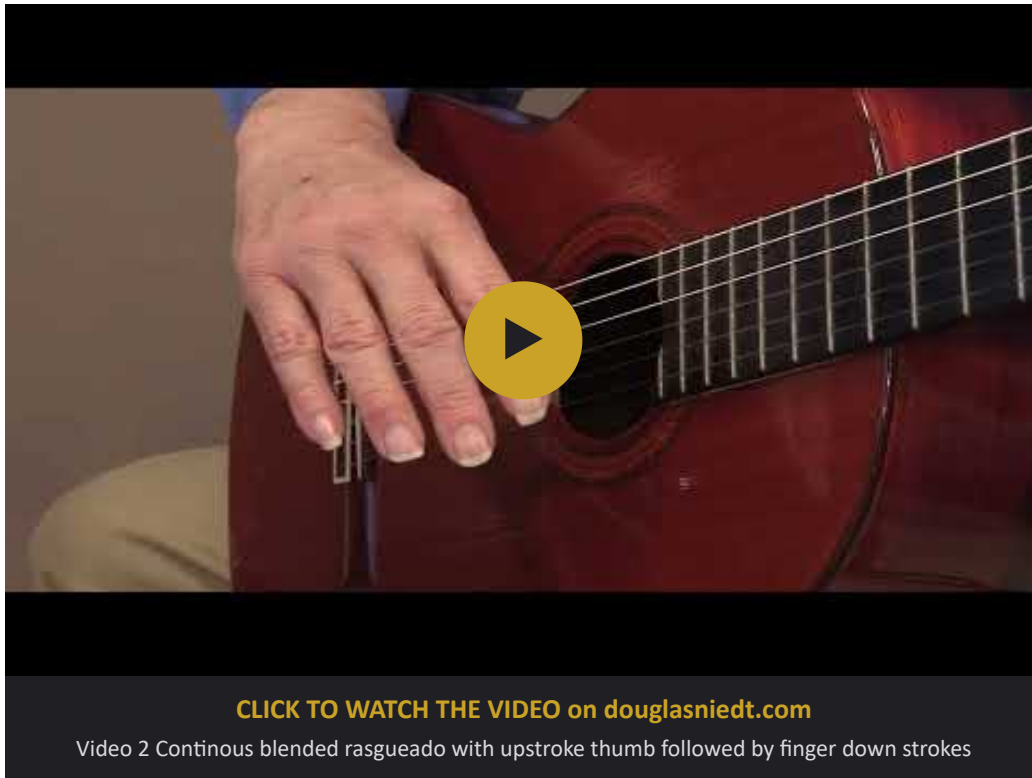
↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓
p a m i p

As a continuous rasgueado:

↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓
p a m i p a m i p a m i p a m i p

Watch me demonstrate how to play these rasgueados in Video #2.

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.



The flamenco style using the separated rasgueado technique:

If we combine two or more repetitions of the 5- hit or 4-hit separated rasgueado, we have a Rasgueado Redondo or continuous roll. One of the difficulties of this technique is not to have a gap between the repetitions. The key is that on the “i” downstroke the other fingers should *begin a pronounced re-curling movement into the hand*. Then, as “i” completes its upstroke, all four fingers (if you are doing the 4-hit version, only “ami”) should be locked behind the thumb (or tucked into the palm) ready to begin another repetition of the pattern.

FLAMENCO TECHNIQUE:
THE SEPARATED 5-HIT CONTINUOUS RASGUEADO

Begin re-curling of *cam* fingers No Gap Begin re-curling of *cam* fingers No Gap Begin re-curling of *cam* fingers No Gap Begin re-curling of *cam* fingers No Gap

c a m i c a m i c a m i c a m i c

At this point, the *cam*/ fingers should be locked behind the thumb or tucked into the palm.

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THE SEPARATED 4-HIT CONTINUOUS RASGUEADO

Begin re-curling of *am* fingers Begin re-curling of *am* fingers Begin re-curling of *am* fingers Begin re-curling of *am* fingers

a m i i a m i i a m i i a m i i a

At this point, the *am*/ fingers should be locked behind the thumb or tucked into the palm.

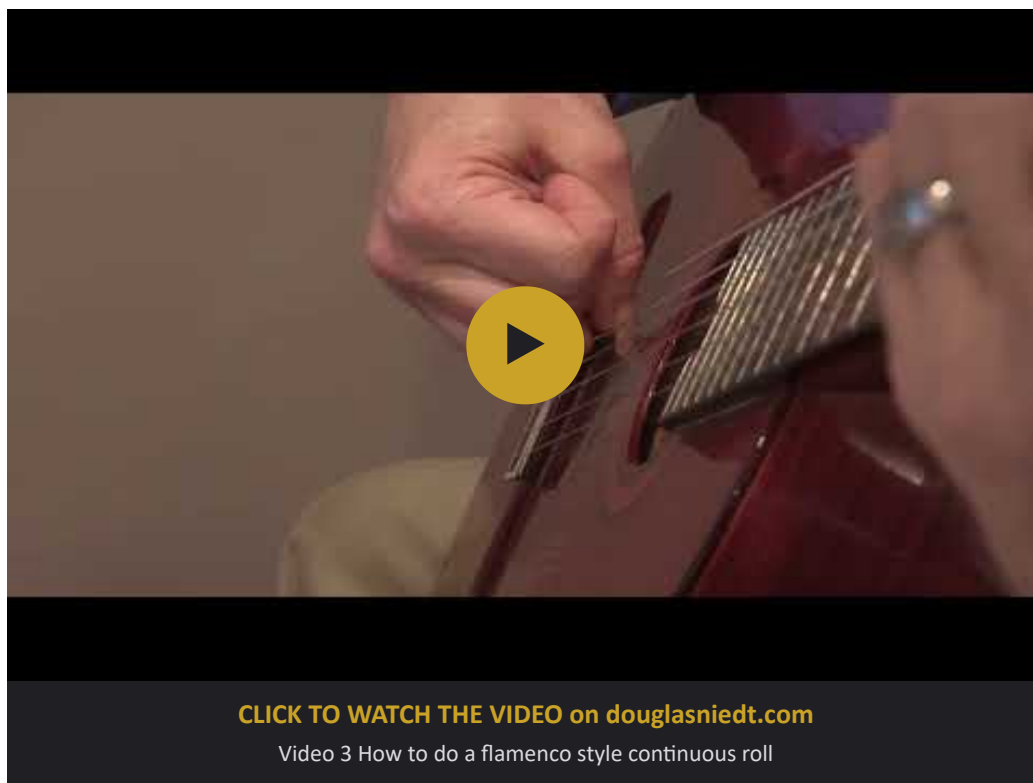
At this point, the *am*/ fingers should be locked behind the thumb or tucked into the palm.

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Let me show you how to learn the flamenco-style separated continuous rasgueado patterns in Video #3.

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.



Refinement exercise for the 5-hit continuous rasgueado

To improve the evenness of the volume of the attacks and develop finger independence, practice the pattern with rotating accents. Accent in groups of 4. This can be practiced with or without a metronome. This makes each finger a “leader” of accenting beat one of each group of four.

REFINEMENT EXERCISE FOR THE SEPARATED 5-HIT CONTINUOUS RASGUEADO

Accent groups of 4:

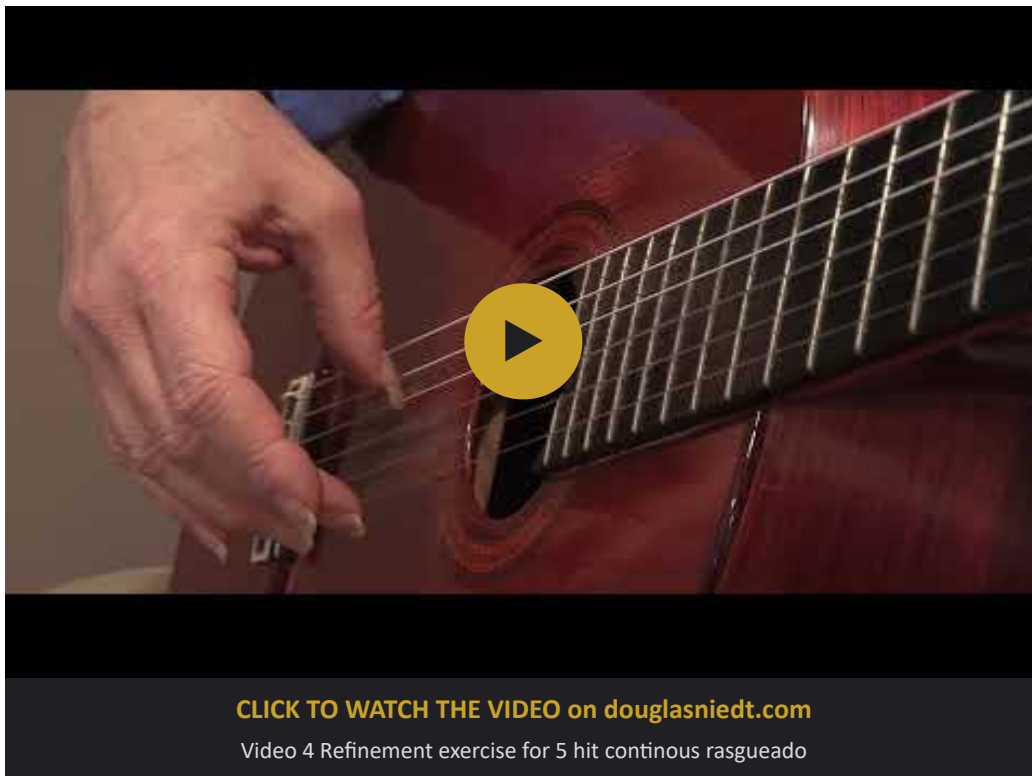
> ↑ c ↑ a ↑ m ↑ i > ↓ i ↑ c ↑ a ↑ m ↑ i ↓ i ↑ c ↑ a > ↑ m ↑ i ↓ i ↑ c > ↑ a ↑ m ↑ i ↓ i > ↑ c

5 5 5 5

T
A
B

Watch me demonstrate this exercise in Video #4.

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.

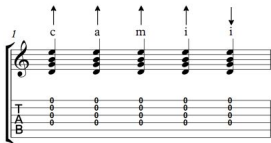


More Rasgueados

Below are many patterns used by flamenco players. But there are even more! Few of these would ever be used in the classical repertoire, but they are still interesting and fun to learn.

BASIC 5-HIT FLICKED RASGUEADO

The thumb is planted.
A favorite of Sabicas.



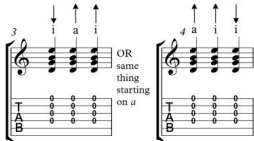
BASIC 4-HIT FLICKED RASGUEADO

The thumb is planted.
Used by Mario Escudero and Diego del Gastor

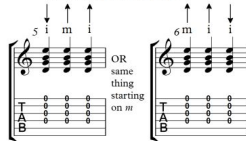


SHORT FLICKED RASGUEADOS

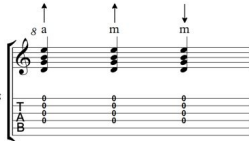
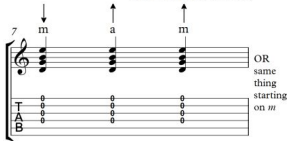
The thumb is planted. Allow *m* to hang freely.
Do not tuck it into the hand.



Same as preceding two but with *am*.
Allow *c* and *a* to hang freely.



These are good for exercising *m* and *a* but are not actually used as rasgueados.
They are the same as the preceding two but done with *ma*.
Allow *c* and *i* to hang freely.



MODERN STYLE LIGHTER RASGUEADOS

The up stroke with *p* is done with some thumb movement plus rotation or kick of the arm/wrist.

The *m* (or *a*) down strokes are produced with finger movement plus wrist/arm rotation.

The wrist/arm rotation gives the *m* (or *a*) finger a little bit of a push.

But don't rotate too much or *i* will be pushed out of position.

Be sure the *i* finger is tucked into the hand for its stroke.

The thumb is not planted.
Used by Serranito and Sabicas.

Same as m9 but with *ai*. The thumb is not planted.
Used by Paco de Lucía, Sabicas, and current players.

A favorite pattern of Paco Peña.
The thumb is not planted.

FAN RASGUEADOS (RAGEO ABANICO)

Juan Maya Marote developed a new way of using the hand and fingers.

The thumb is not planted. The fingers are passive and loose, not held outward.

The energy comes from the forearm and wrist, with pronounced hand-wrist-forearm rotation.

1. Up stroke with the thumb. Push up with the muscle of the back joint opening up a gap between *p* and *i*. But at the same time, give it a kick (rotational movement) from the wrist and arm.
2. Down stroke with the fingers. Push fingers open. At same time give it a "half-kick" (smaller rotational movement) with the wrist/arm. If you give it full kick (rotate too far) the thumb will be out of position for its downstroke that follows.
3. Down stroke with the thumb. Use the back joint of the thumb plus a half kick with the wrist/arm.

DON'T MOVE THE ARM UP AND DOWN. The rotational movement of the arm is like turning a key to open a door. Twist or rotate in place.

It is important to program the fingers with deliberate pronounced movements at slow practice speeds.

The traditional pattern:

Alternative patterns. The *ima* and *imac* fingers play simultaneously as one finger.

LIGHTER FAN-STYLE RASGUEADOS

Same as preceding fan rasgueados except *one* finger plays the downstroke instead of two, three, or four.

A favorite of Juan Martin and the Gypsy Kings. Same as preceding measure but beginning with *m* downstroke. A favorite of Paco de Lucia.

PEPE HABICHUELA RASGUEADO

The original pattern. Same patterns with *a* and *m*. Not used as a rasgueado but good for *m* exercise. Same as m21 starting on *a* down. Same patterns with *a* and *i*. Same as m23 starting on *a* down.

GUILLERMO RIOS RASGUEADO

To learn Rios pattern, practice this exercise. Same as m26 with *m*. Good for exercise.

Final Thoughts

One of the main purposes of learning and practicing the separated (flicked) rasgueado techniques is to improve your ability to play a good *blended* rasgueado. Remember, it is the *blended rasgueado* that you will use almost 100% of the time in classical guitar repertoire. Learning the separated flicked technique will improve your finger independence to play a good blended rasgueado.

To learn any rasgueado pattern, it is important to practice it slowly, developing the individual finger movements and finger independence. Program every single motion into the hand. Take your time. Don't over practice. At first, it is best to practice rasgueados 5-10 minutes every day. If you practice 30 minutes, there is a good chance you will hurt yourself and then you will have to stop practicing for several days for the hand to recover. Practicing consistently a little bit every day will help you learn a rasgueado more quickly.

Here are a few pieces in which rasgueado techniques may be incorporated:

Fandanguillo, Ráfaga, and Soleares (Joaquín Turina)

Leyenda and Sevilla (Isaac Albéniz)

The Millers Dance (Manuel de Falla)

Popular and classical versions of *Malagueña*