

Classical Guitar Technique

THE METRONOME IS YOUR FRIEND, Part 4 of 4 (conclusion)

How to use the metronome to improve practice and performance

By Douglas Niedt

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Use the Metronome to Improve Your Use of Rubato and Other Changes of Tempo

In Italian, the word "rubato" means robbed or stolen. In music therefore, "Tempo Rubato" means robbed or stolen time. It refers to playing a piece with expressive and rhythmic freedom by altering the tempo. Various forms of it are found in music throughout history from early Gregorian chant to popular music of the present day. The use of rubato is a huge topic and I will save it for a future technique tip. In this discussion, I refer to it in its most general sense of playing with rhythmic freedom as opposed to strict metronomic time.

Those of us who heard the great Andrés Segovia in concerts or listen to his recordings, are very familiar with his style of playing with very expressive rhythmic freedom. Different schools of guitar playing use rubato in different amounts and different ways.

Here is the first section of Tárrega's famous piece *Lágrima*, an excellent example of a piece well-suited to being played in tempo rubato style.

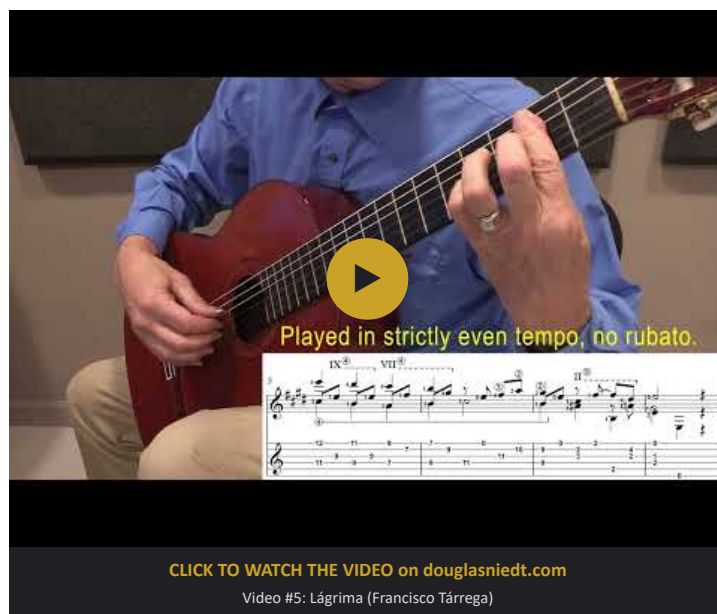
Lágrima (Francisco Tárrega)

The image displays the musical score for the first section of 'Lágrima' by Francisco Tárrega. The score is written for guitar, featuring a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (measures 1-4) shows a melody in the treble clef and a bass line in the bass clef. The second system (measures 5-8) includes fingering numbers and fret numbers (IX, VII, II) above the staff. The bass line continues with fret numbers.

In Video #5, watch me play *Lágrima* precisely in an even tempo and then in tempo rubato style:

Video #5: *Lágrima* (Francisco Tárrega)

The difference between playing a piece at an even tempo and tempo rubato style.



Unfortunately, many guitarists incorporate rubato and other tempo changes into their pieces with one of two flawed processes:

Failure #1. Chinese Whispers

In this scenario:

1. Our aspiring guitarist learns a piece such as *Lágrima* with rhythmic freedom from the outset. The metronome is never heard in the practice room!
2. Our aspiring guitarist listens to how their favorite guitarist plays it. Their favorite guitarist plays *Lágrima* with rubato, with fairly free rhythms and variations in tempo.
3. Our aspiring guitarist attempts to imitate his favorite guitarist. In doing so, he unknowingly alters and adds to the rhythmic freedom of his favorite guitarist.
4. Our aspiring guitarist adds a few more rhythmic and tempo changes of his own.
5. Our aspiring guitarist's rendition of *Lágrima* is now in near chaos rhythmically when compared to how Tárrega wrote it.
6. If our aspiring guitarist listens to one or two other favorite guitarists play the piece and borrows their ideas...well, God help us all.

The process resembles the children's game "Chinese Whispers" or "Telephone" where a message is whispered from person to person and by the time it gets to the last person, it bears little resemblance to the original message.

Failure #2. Incorporating rubato, rhythmic freedom, ritards, accelerandos, etc. according to the guitarist's lack of technical ability to play the passage or piece in correct rhythm.

In this scenario:

1. Our aspiring guitarist slows down or lingers before and during difficult chord changes, stretches, or shifts. The amount of tempo variation is determined by his lack of ability to play the passage, not by a musically-informed choice.

2. Our aspiring guitarist makes a ritard because he cannot play the passage in tempo. Or, the amount of ritard is determined by his lack of ability to play the passage, not by a musically-informed choice.
3. Our aspiring guitarist speeds up in easier passages. Or, the amount of accelerando applied is limited by his lack of ability to play the passage, not by a musically-informed choice.

A solution

One solution to both failures is to learn to play the piece or passage strictly in tempo with the metronome.

If the guitarist can play the piece at a steady tempo, he is less likely to be led too far astray when he listens to or tries to copy his favorite guitarist.

And, the manner and degree to which he chooses to speed up or slow down, linger, or how he makes a ritard or accelerando will be determined more by musical choices, musicianship, and interpretative prowess, rather than by his inability to play the passage!

A metronome is a tool by which we learn to control the time element of our playing. In the case of the more elastic tempo rubato, we cannot create a musical rubato style or steady accelerando or ritard unless we have first developed a solid sense of what it means to play absolutely evenly. Tempo variations such as ritards and accelerandos are supposed to be *adjustments* to the underlying tempo, not changes of the rhythm itself.

Use the Metronome to Improve Shifts

When making a shift, the hands, fingers, and arm naturally want to begin their movements early to give themselves more time to securely land at their destination. They tend to anticipate the beat rather than understanding they must arrive at their destination ON the beat. This is true even with guide fingers moving one or two frets.

To fix this problem, practice shifts on scales or from passages of the pieces you are learning. Set the metronome at various speeds to sensitize the playing mechanism so that the fingers land on their destination precisely on the metronome click, not early.

But be careful. Metronome practice of shifts can produce a habit of tensing up before the shift. Consciously keep all the muscles of the playing mechanism loose and relaxed before and after the shift. They should only engage for the microsecond required to make the shift.

Use the Metronome to Improve Your Vibrato

I do not recommend using the metronome to practice vibrato. I find that learning to vary vibrato speed in a fluid manner is best done sans metronome. Practicing vibrato with the metronome tends to induce excessive tension into the left forearm and elbow.

Use the Metronome to Prevent Rhythm Problems Caused By Ornaments

Ornaments (trills, acciaccaturas, mordents, etc.) sound best when they do not interfere with the underlying rhythm of the measure in which they occur.

Guitarists sometimes make one of two mistakes in playing an ornament:

1. In an effort to squeeze the ornament into its allotted time space, the guitarist starts the ornament too early. Subconsciously, the fingers tell the player to start early so that the notes that follow the ornament are not late.
2. The guitarist starts the ornament at the right moment, but the notes that follow the ornament are late.

Practicing the passage with the metronome and a few special practice techniques can correct both of these problems.

In the *Allegro Spiritoso* from *Twelve Progressive Lessons for the Guitar, Op. 1 No.10*, we have a passage with an ornament (a mordent) squeezed in between even sixteenth notes:

Allegro spiritoso from Twelve Progressive Lessons for the Guitar, Op. 1 No. 10 (Mauro Giuliani)



The challenge is not to allow the ornament to upset the rhythm of the even sixteenth notes around it.

Whenever you come across a passage with ornaments:

Always learn the passage without the ornaments first.

In this case:

Allegro spiritoso from Twelve Progressive Lessons for the Guitar, Op. 1 No. 10 (Mauro Giuliani)

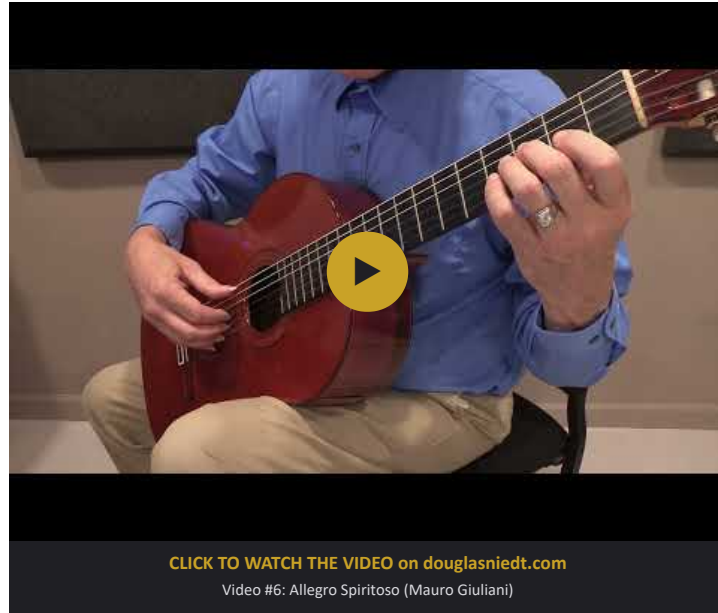
Practice **without** the ornament first.



Here is what I mean. Watch me demonstrate in Video #6:

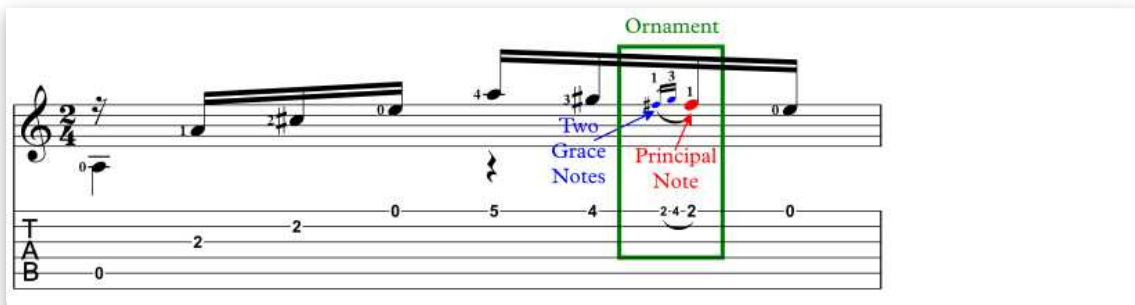
Video #6: *Allegro Spiritoso* (Mauro Giuliani)

Always learn a passage without the ornaments first.



Practice it until you can play it without the ornament confidently and evenly at the desired tempo.

But first, let's differentiate between a grace note and the principal note:

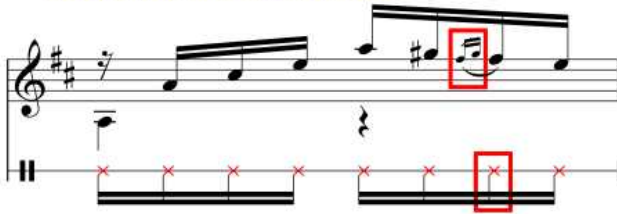


Remember, in most guitar music the first grace note of an ornament is played ON THE BEAT. Any other grace notes and the principal note fall AFTER the beat.

This is the standard notation used for this type of ornament in guitar music. Notice that it *appears* that the small grace notes are played before the seventh sixteenth note metronome click in the measure:

Traditional, standard notation for the ornament.

Notice that it *appears* that the small grace notes are played before the metronome click.



But no. The first grace note (the small-size F#) furthest to the left of the principal note (the large-size F#) is plucked *on the click*. Any other small-size grace notes and the principal note are executed *after* the click.

Here is the measure with the ornament written without grace notes in standard notation as it should be played:

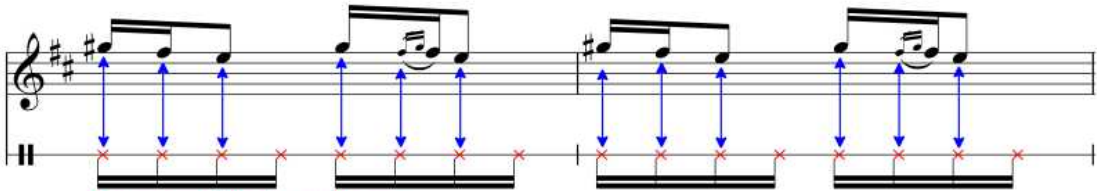
Now, follow these next steps. Depending on how much difficulty you have with a passage, some of these steps may sometimes be skipped. But this is the complete practice routine.

1. Shorten the passage to a small chunk, beginning with the note before the ornament. Subdivide to the smallest note value. In this case, sixteenth notes. *Shift the beat so that the first click is on the note before the ornament.* Practice at a slow tempo first. Play the passage alternately without and then with the ornament.

Make sure you pluck the open E's that follow the ornaments **PRECISELY ON THE CLICKS**:

Fragment from:
Allegro spiritoso from *Twelve Progressive Lessons for the Guitar, Op. 1 No. 10* (Mauro Giuliani)

Beat is shifted to begin on the note BEFORE the ornament.
Subdivision into sixteenth notes.
Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.



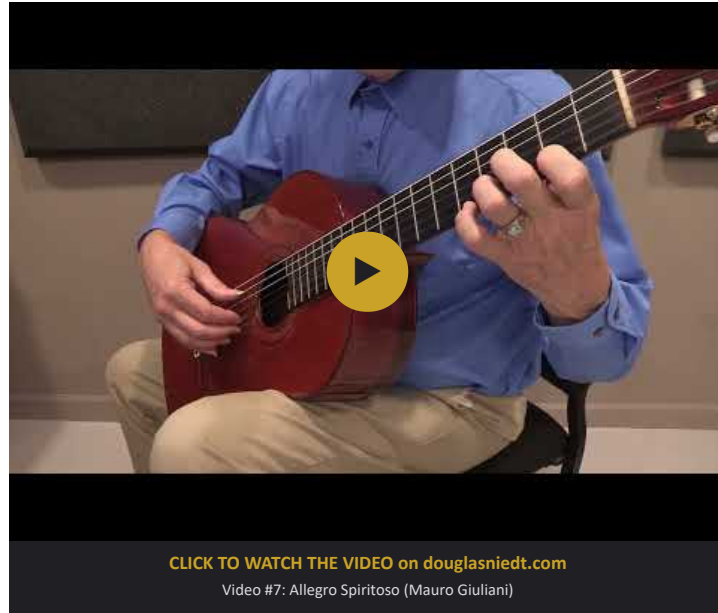
Metronome clicks sixteenth notes.

Shifting the click helps prevent the ornament from being played too early and provides a destination click on which to play the note after the ornament (in this case the open E).

Watch me demonstrate in Video #7:

Video #7: *Allegro Spiritoso* (Mauro Giuliani)

How to shift the beat. Subdivision into 16th notes.



2. Enlarge the chunk to a half or a full measure. Practice at a slow tempo first. Play the passage alternately without and then with the ornament:

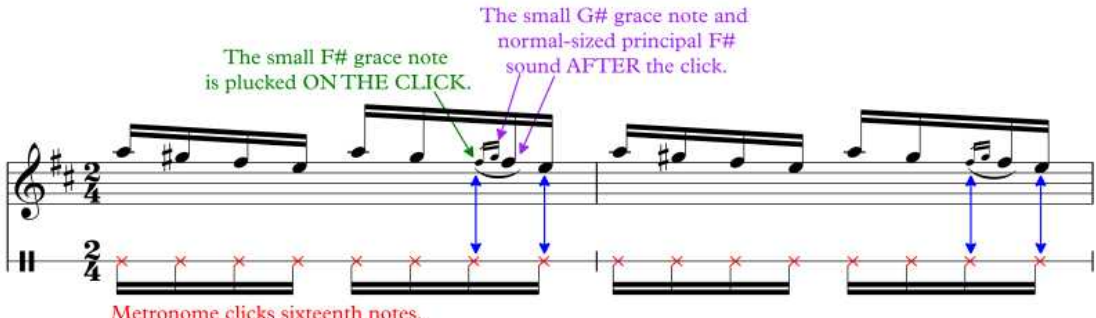
Allegro spiritoso from Twelve Progressive Lessons for the Guitar, Op. 1 No. 10 (Mauro Giuliani)

Half of the measure. Subdivision into sixteenth notes.
Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.

The small F# grace note is plucked **ON THE CLICK**.

The small G# grace note and normal-sized principal F# sound **AFTER** the click.

Metronome clicks sixteenth notes.



The sixteenth notes should sound absolutely even regardless of whether the ornament is present.

Listen and watch me demonstrate in Video #8:

Video #8: *Allegro Spiritoso* (Mauro Giuliani)

Practice half of the measure without the ornament and with the ornament. Subdivision into 16th notes.



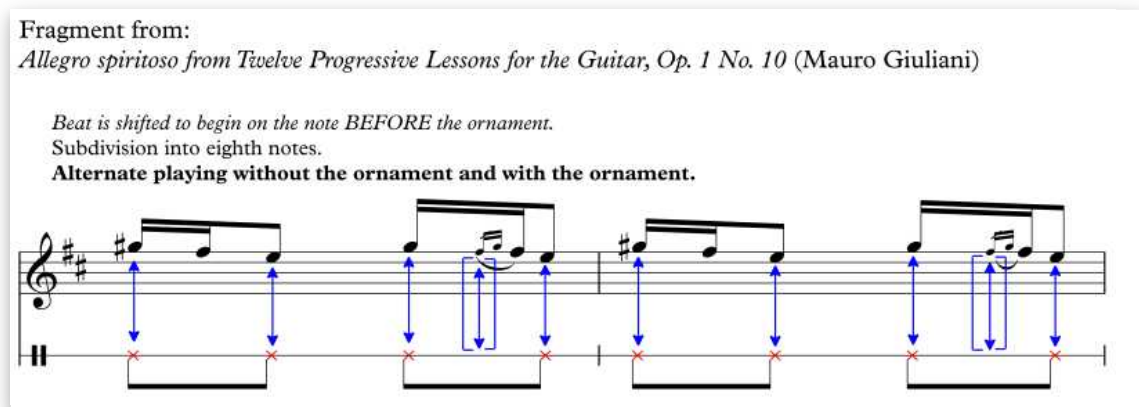
CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com

Video #8: *Allegro Spiritoso* (Mauro Giuliani)

3. Subdivide to the next larger note value, in this case, eighth notes. Go back to practicing the small chunk, beginning with the note before the ornament. *Shift the beat so that the first click is on the note before the ornament.* Practice at a slow tempo first. Play the passage alternately without and then with the ornament:

Fragment from:
Allegro spiritoso from *Twelve Progressive Lessons for the Guitar, Op. 1 No. 10* (Mauro Giuliani)

Beat is shifted to begin on the note BEFORE the ornament.
Subdivision into eighth notes.
Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.



In Video 9, watch me shift the beat again, but this time subdividing into eighth notes:

Video #9: *Allegro Spiritoso* (Mauro Giuliani)

How to shift the beat. Subdivision into 8th notes.



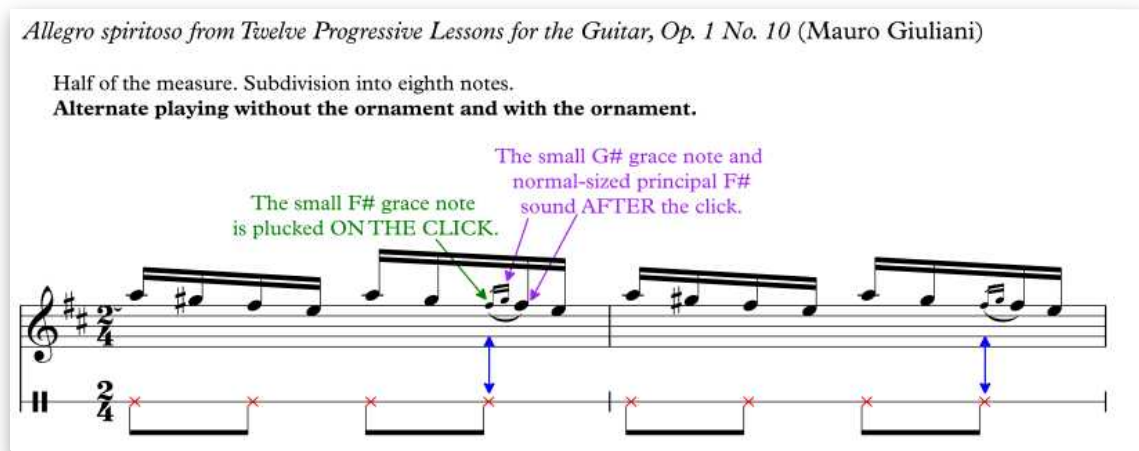
CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com

Video #9: *Allegro Spiritoso* (Mauro Giuliani)

4. Enlarge the chunk back to the half or full measure with the same larger note value subdivision (in this example, eighth notes). Practice at a slow tempo first. Play the passage alternately without and then with the ornament:

Allegro spiritoso from *Twelve Progressive Lessons for the Guitar, Op. 1 No. 10* (Mauro Giuliani)

Half of the measure. Subdivision into eighth notes.
Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.



The small F# grace note is plucked ON THE CLICK.

The small G# grace note and normal-sized principal F# sound AFTER the click.

Once again, the sixteenth notes should sound absolutely even regardless of whether the ornament is present.

Let me show you in Video #10:

Video #10: *Allegro Spiritoso* (Mauro Giuliani)

Practice half of the measure without the ornament and with the ornament. Subdivision into 8th notes.

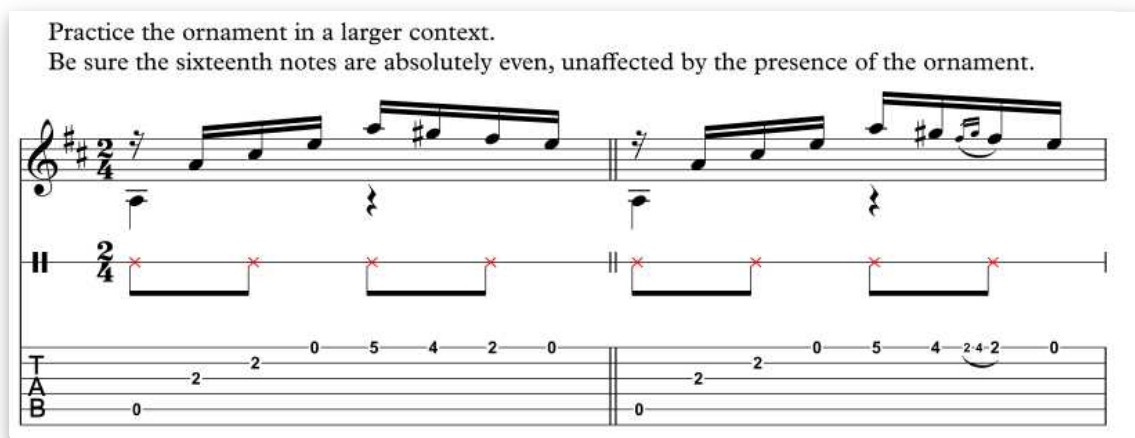


CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com

Video #10: *Allegro Spiritoso* (Mauro Giuliani)

5. For more context, play the entire measure or a larger chunk with the same previous note value subdivision (in this example, eighth notes) alternatively without and with the ornament to be sure the notes before and after the ornament are still rhythmically precise.

Practice the ornament in a larger context.
Be sure the sixteenth notes are absolutely even, unaffected by the presence of the ornament.



TAB

Watch me demonstrate the entire measure without and with the ornament in Video #11:

Video #11: *Allegro Spiritoso* (Mauro Giuliani)

Practice the entire measure without the ornament and with the ornament. Subdivision into 8th notes.

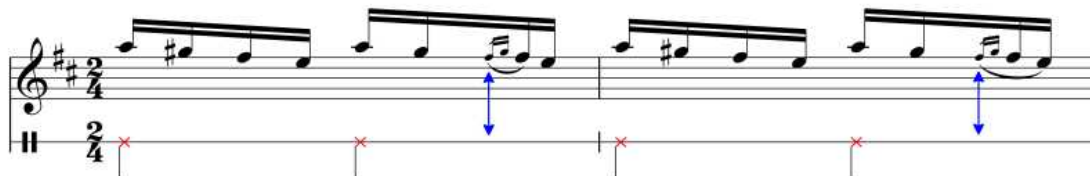


6. Finally, if appropriate, subdivide to a larger note value. In this example, it would be quarter notes. Subdivision to larger note values may not apply in many situations depending on the metronome settings (sometimes they will be too slow to follow) or how fast you can play the passage.

Allegro spiritoso from Twelve Progressive Lessons for the Guitar, Op. 1 No. 10 (Mauro Giuliani)

Half of the measure. Subdivision into quarter notes.

Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.



Let's look at this same process on *Capricho Árabe* by Francisco Tárrega. It is filled with ornaments, including many mordents. Here is measure #16:

Capricho Árabe (Francisco Tárrega)

⑥ = D

16

T
A
B

Once again, the challenge is not to allow the ornament to upset the rhythm of the even sixteenth notes around it.

As we learned in the Giuliani example above, whenever you come across a passage with ornaments, **always learn it without the ornaments first**. In this case:

Capricho Árabe (Francisco Tárrega)

Without the ornament.

No ornament.

⑥ = D

16

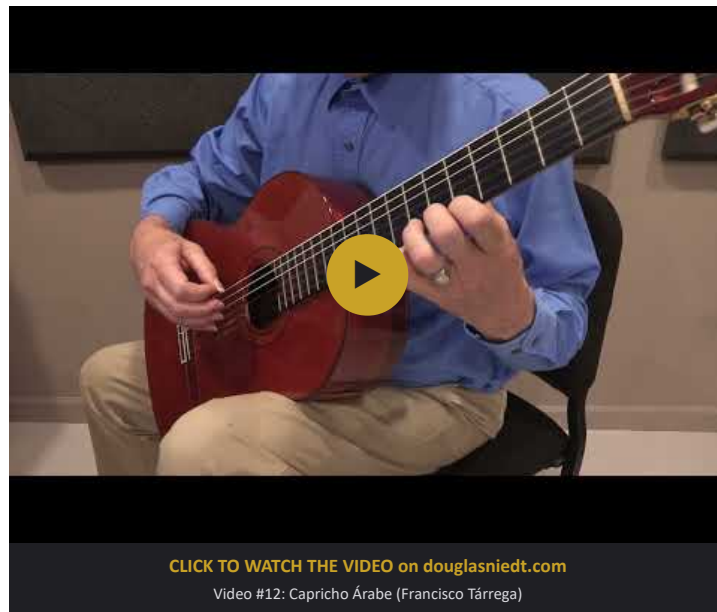
T
A
B

Practice this measure until you can play it without the ornament confidently and evenly at the desired tempo.

Here is what I mean. Watch me demonstrate in Video #12:

Video #12: *Capricho Árabe* (Francisco Tárrega)

Always learn a passage without the ornament first.



Remember, in most guitar music the first grace note of an ornament (and any notes below or above the principal note) is played **ON THE BEAT**. Any other grace notes and the principal note fall **AFTER** the beat.

Here is how the ornament is notated in *Capricho Árabe*. This is the standard notation used for this type of ornament in guitar music. Notice that it appears that the small grace notes are played before the 13th sixteenth note metronome click in the measure:

Capricho Árabe (Francisco Tárrega)

Traditional, standard notation for the ornament.

Notice that it *appears* that the small grace notes are played before the metronome click.

Metronome clicks sixteenth notes.

T 5 6 5 6 5 8 5 6-8-6 5 6 8
A 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7
B 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

But no. The grace note (the small-size Bb furthest to the left of the principal note (the large-size Bb) and any notes beneath the principle note (in this case the open 5th-string A) is plucked on the click. Any other small-size grace notes and the principal note are executed after the click. Perhaps a more visually accurate notation would look like this:

Capricho Árabe (Francisco Tárrega)

This is a more visually accurate depiction of how the ornament is played.

The small Bb grace note is plucked ON THE CLICK.

The small C grace note and normal-sized principal Bb sound AFTER the click.

Metronome clicks sixteenth notes.

Here is the measure with the ornament written without using grace notes in standard notation as it should be played:

Capricho Árabe (Francisco Tárrega)

This is the standard notation for how the actual rhythm of the ornament should be played.

This is the ornament.

Metronome clicks sixteenth notes.

As with the Giuliani example, continue with these next steps. You may not have to do every step in every situation, but this is the complete practice routine.

1. Shorten the passage to a small chunk, beginning with the note *before* the ornament. Subdivide to the smallest note value. In this case, sixteenth notes. *Shift the beat so that the first click is on the note before the ornament.* Practice at a slow tempo first. Play the passage alternately without and then with the ornament.

Make sure you pluck the Bb grace notes and the A's that follow the ornaments **PRECISELY ON THE CLICKS**:

Fragment from: *Capricho Árabe* (Francisco Tárrega)

Beat is shifted to begin on the note BEFORE the ornament.
Subdivision into sixteenth notes.
Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.

Metronome clicks sixteenth notes.

Shifting the click helps prevent the ornament from being played too early and provides a destination click on which to play the note after the ornament.

Watch me demonstrate how to shift the beat to practice the ornament in Video #13:

Video #13: *Capricho Árabe* (Francisco Tárrega)

How to shift the beat to practice the ornament. Subdivision into sixteenth notes.



CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com

Video #13: Capricho Árabe (Francisco Tárrega)

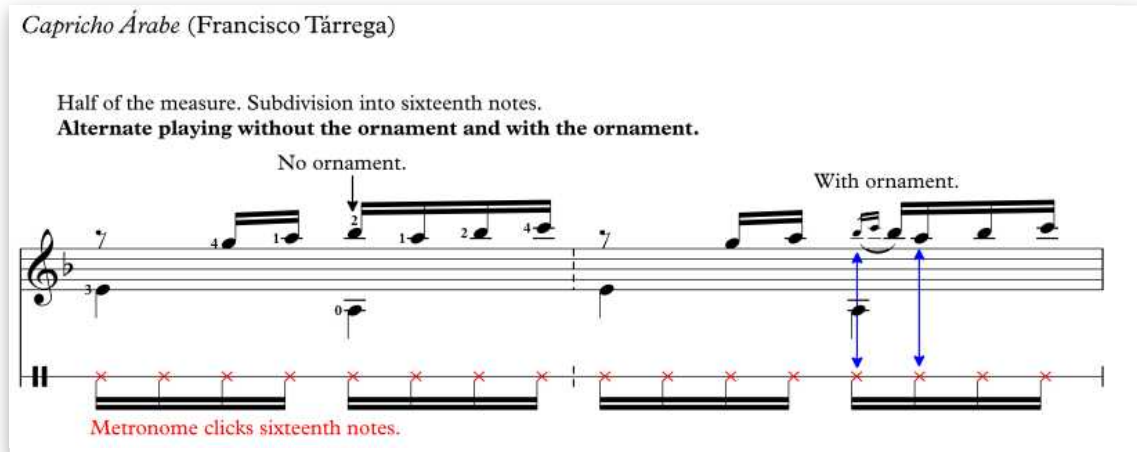
2. Enlarge the chunk to a half or a full measure. Practice at a slow tempo first. Play the passage alternately without and then with the ornament:

Capricho Árabe (Francisco Tárrega)

Half of the measure. Subdivision into sixteen notes.
Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.

No ornament.

With ornament.



Metronome clicks sixteen notes.

The sixteen notes should sound absolutely even regardless of whether the ornament is present.

Watch Video #14:

Video #14: *Capricho Árabe* (Francisco Tárrega)

Practice half of the measure without and with the ornaments. Subdivision into 16th notes.



CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com

Video #14: *Capricho Árabe* (Francisco Tárrega)

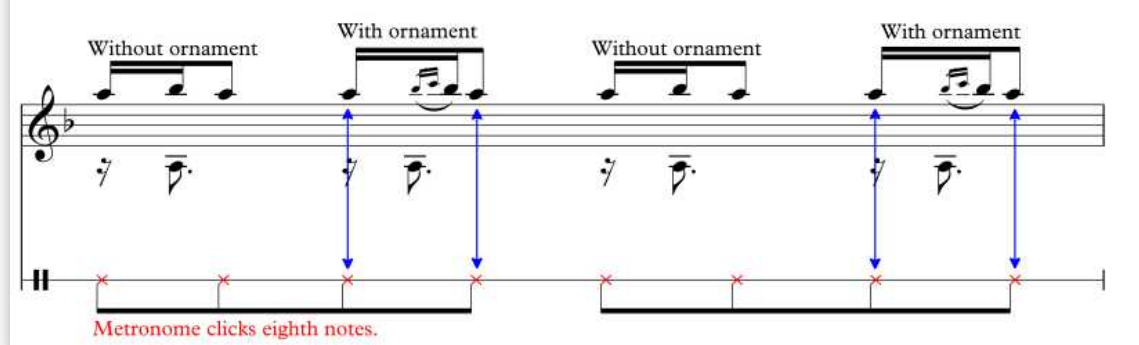
3. Subdivide to the next larger note value, in this case, eighth notes. Go back to practicing the small chunk, beginning with the note *before* the ornament. *Shift the beat so that the first click is on the note before the ornament.* Practice at a slow tempo first. Play the passage alternately without and then with the ornament:

Fragment: *Capricho Árabe* (Francisco Tárrega)

Beat is shifted to begin on the note *BEFORE* the ornament.

Subdivision into eighth notes.

Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.



Metronome clicks eighth notes.

Watch me demonstrate how to shift the beat while subdividing into eighth notes in Video #15:

Video #15: *Capricho Árabe* (Francisco Tárrega)

How to practice the ornament by shifting the beat. Subdivision into 8th notes.

CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com

Video #15: *Capricho Árabe* (Francisco Tárrega)

4. Enlarge the chunk back to the half or full measure with the same larger note value subdivision (in this example, eighth notes). Practice at a slow tempo first. Play the passage alternately without and then with the ornament:

Capricho Árabe (Francisco Tárrega)

Half of the measure. Subdivision into eighth notes.
Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.

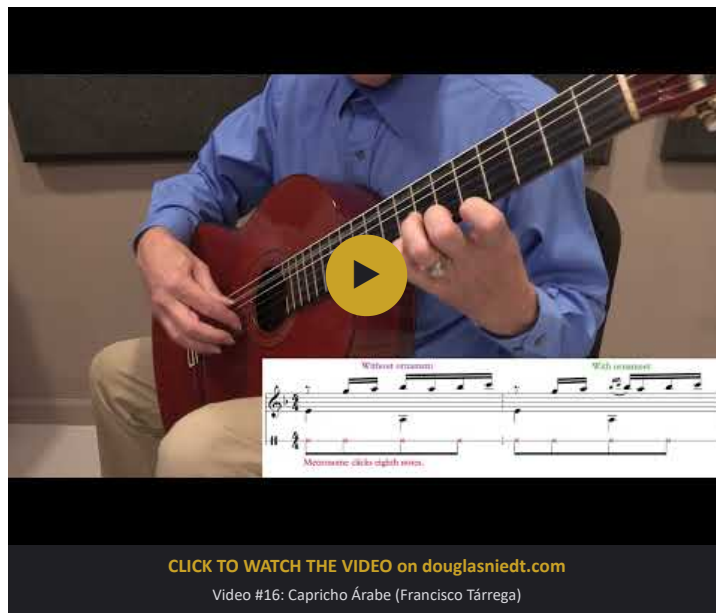
Metronome clicks eighth notes.

Once again, the sixteenth notes should sound absolutely even regardless of whether the ornament is present.

I will show you in Video #16:

Video #16: *Capricho Árabe* (Francisco Tárrega)

Practice half of the measure without and with the ornament. Subdivision into 8th notes.



CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com

Video #16: *Capricho Árabe* (Francisco Tárrega)

5. For more context, play the entire measure or a larger chunk with the same previous note value subdivision (in this example, eighth notes) alternatively without and with the ornament to be sure the notes before and after the ornament are still rhythmically precise.

Capricho Árabe (Francisco Tárrega)

The complete measure. Subdivision into eighth notes.

Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.

No ornament.

Metronome clicks eighth notes.

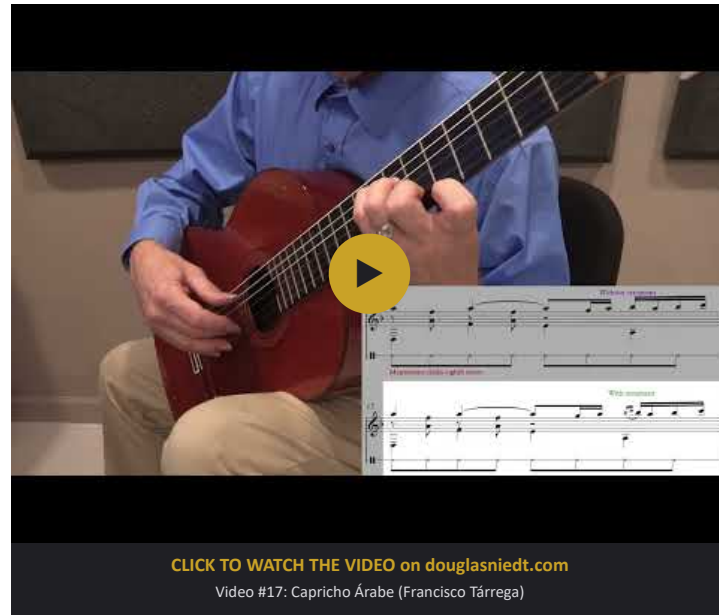
With the ornament.

With the ornament.

Watch me demonstrate in Video #17:

Video #17: *Capricho Árabe* (Francisco Tárrega)

Practice the complete measure without and with the ornament. Subdivision into 8th notes.



6. Finally, if appropriate, subdivide to a larger note value. In this example, it would be quarter notes. Subdivision to larger note values may not apply in many situations depending on the metronome settings (sometimes they will be too slow to follow) or how fast you can play the passage.

Capricho Árabe (Francisco Tárrega)

The complete measure. Subdivision into quarter notes.
Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.

No ornament.

Metronome clicks quarter notes.

With the ornament.

Let's have a look at an even simpler ornament, the acciaccatura (pronounced "ah-CHOCK-kah-TOO-rah") or "crush note". This is not to be confused with the American racehorse, also named Acciaccatura (I'm not kidding!). **Observe the same principles you learned above when playing mordents.** In this *Moderato* by Fernando Sor, we have a passage with acciaccaturas between even eighth notes (quavers). I have marked with color coding which notes are grace notes, principal notes, and accompaniment notes.

Moderato (Fernando Sor)

13

Acciaccatura

Acciaccatura

Grace Note

Principal Note

Accompaniment Notes

Accompaniment Notes

Metronome clicks eighth notes.

The challenge is not to allow the ornaments to upset the rhythm of the even eighth notes around them.

Whenever you come across a passage with ornaments, **always learn it without the ornaments first.** In this case:

Moderato (Fernando Sor) Without ornaments.

Principal Note

Principal Note

Accompaniment Notes

Accompaniment Notes

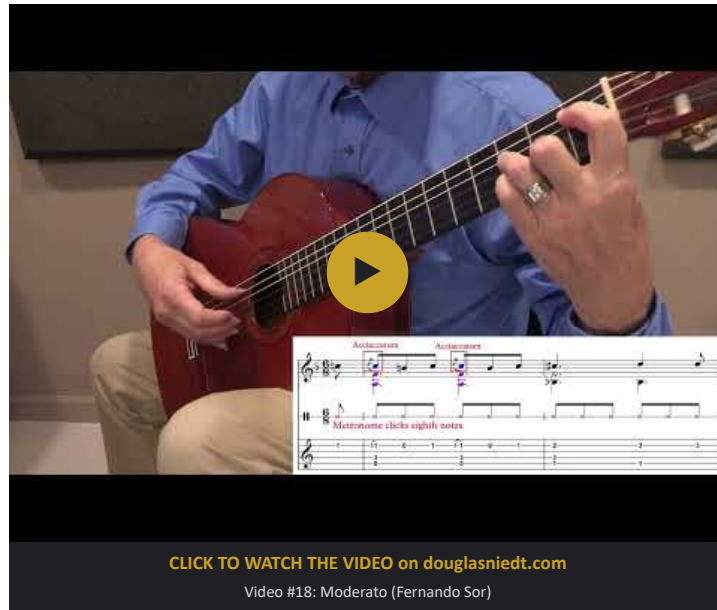
Metronome clicks eighth notes.

Practice this measure until you can play it *without* the ornament confidently and evenly at the desired tempo.

I will show you the general idea of this practice strategy in Video #18:

Video #18: *Moderato* (Fernando Sor)

Always learn a passage without the ornaments first.



CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com

Video #18: *Moderato* (Fernando Sor)

Remember, in most guitar music the acciaccatura (the small grace note) along with any notes beneath or above the principal note is played ON THE BEAT, not before the beat. The principal note falls AFTER the beat.

Notice again how the ornament is notated in the *Moderato*. This is the standard notation used for this type of ornament in guitar music. Notice that it *appears* that the small green grace notes are played before the chords (the first and fourth eighth note metronome clicks) in the measure:

Moderato (Fernando Sor)

Standard notation for the ornament.

Notice that it *appears* that the small grace notes are played before the metronome click.

But no. The grace notes (the green small-size D's to the left of the principal note (the large-size blue C's) are plucked on the *first* and *fourth* clicks. And, the two purple notes in the accompaniment (open 5th-string A and 4th-string F) are not played with the principal note C as it appears, but with the grace note! The principal note is executed with a pulloff after the click. Perhaps a more visually accurate notation would look like this:

Moderato (Fernando Sor)

This is a more visually accurate depiction of how the ornament is played.

The small D grace notes are plucked ON THE CLICK.

The normal-sized principal C's sound AFTER the click.

And here is the measure with the ornament (written without using the small grace note) in standard notation as it should be played:

Moderato (Fernando Sor) Without ornaments.

This is the notation for how the actual rhythm of the acciaccatura should be played.

Principal Note

Grace note

Accompaniment Notes

Metronome clicks eighth notes.

As with the Giuliani and *Capricho Árabe* examples with the mordents, continue with these next steps. You may not have to do every step in every situation, but this is the complete practice routine.

1. Shorten the passage to a small chunk, beginning with the note *before* the ornament. Subdivide to the smallest note value. In this case, eighth notes. *Shift the beat so that the first click is on the note before the ornament.* Practice at a slow tempo first. Play the passage alternately without and then with the ornament.

Make sure you pluck the D grace note with the open A and 4th-string F PRECISELY ON THE SECOND AND FIFTH CLICKS and the single C's that follow the ornaments PRECISELY ON THE THIRD AND SIXTH CLICKS:

Fragment. Moderato (Fernando Sor)

Beat is shifted to begin on the note BEFORE the ornament.

Subdivision into eighth notes.

Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.

Without ornament

With ornament

Without ornament

With ornament

Metronome clicks eighth notes.

Shifting the click helps prevent the ornament from being played too early and provides a destination click on which to play the note after the ornament.

Watch me demonstrate in Video #19:

Video #19: *Moderato* (Fernando Sor)

How to shift the beat to practice the ornament. Subdivision into 8th notes.



2. Play the passage alternately without and then with the ornament with the metronome subdividing the beat into eighth notes. Practice at a slow tempo first:

Moderato (Fernando Sor)

Subdivision into eighth notes.

Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.

The musical score is written for guitar. The top staff is in treble clef, 6/8 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a series of eighth notes, some of which are marked with a green star and a blue arrow pointing to them. A red double-headed arrow indicates the timing of the principal C note, which is marked with a green star and a blue arrow. The bottom staff is in bass clef, 6/8 time, with a key signature of one flat. It features a series of eighth notes, some of which are marked with a green star and a blue arrow. A red double-headed arrow indicates the timing of the principal C note, which is marked with a green star and a blue arrow. The score is divided into two measures, each containing a series of eighth notes and a principal C note.

The eighth notes should sound absolutely even regardless of whether the ornament is present.

Let me show you how it should sound in Video #20:

Video #20: Moderato (Fernando Sor)

Practice the passage without the ornament and with the ornament. Subdivision into 8th notes.

The video player shows a person in a blue shirt playing a red acoustic guitar. A large yellow play button is centered over the video. Below the video, there is a thumbnail of the musical score for the piece. At the bottom of the player, there is a text overlay that reads: "CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com" and "Video #20: Moderato (Fernando Sor)".

3. Finally, play the passage with a larger note value subdivision (in this example, dotted quarter notes). Practice at a slow tempo first. Play the passage alternately without and then with the ornament:

Moderato (Fernando Sor)

Subdivision into dotted quarter notes.
Alternate playing without the ornament and with the ornament.

The small D grace notes are plucked **ON THE CLICK**.

The principal C sounds **AFTER** the click.

Metronome clicks dotted quarter notes.

1	0	1	3-1	0	1
3			3		
0			0		

Once again, the eighth notes should sound absolutely even regardless of whether the ornament is present.

Watch me demonstrate in Video #21:

Video #21: *Moderato* (Fernando Sor)

Practice the passage without the ornament and with the ornament. Subdivision into quarter notes.

In a previous example, we played eighth notes at 120 bpm.
Here, we subdivide into dotted quarter notes.
 $120 \text{ bpm (eighth notes)} \div 3 = 40 \text{ bpm (dotted quarter notes)}$

CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO on douglasniedt.com
Video #21: Moderato (Fernando Sor)

Improve Your Performance of Ensemble Music, Duets, and Chamber Music

When two or more musicians perform as an ensemble, they are immediately bound together by one basic element: rhythm. Good rhythm and tempo are essential for any duo, ensemble, band, or orchestra to play together. The metronome can be an important tool to help musicians develop their rhythm skills and learn how to play together.

When you practice your guitar part of a duet or other piece of ensemble music, practice with the metronome as if it were your ensemble partner. Breathe and give a natural cue when you start, as if you were playing with another person.

A crucial ingredient of good ensemble playing is to listen to others, not to listen and focus on just yourself. To practice correctly with a metronome, you must listen carefully to its clicks, not just yourself. This is an overlooked but very important benefit of using a metronome. Practicing with a metronome increases your musical awareness outside of yourself, which will help you become a better ensemble partner.

And then, there is the issue of [HOLDING THE TEMPO](#), which I addressed in Part 1 of this technique tip. The last thing your ensemble partners want is a guitarist who cannot keep a steady rhythm, plays incorrect rhythms, or unknowingly varies the underlying pulse.

It may be shocking to hear, but I cannot tell you how many times I have been told by prominent conductors and chamber music musicians that I was the first guitarist they ever engaged who could hold a steady tempo and play rhythmically precisely. I don't say that to brag. I say that to point out that many well-known classical guitarists fail to measure up to the professional standards of other ensemble musicians. It is a serious gap in classical guitar pedagogy.

SUMMARY

I am certain you have learned an amazing amount of information from this exhaustive technique tip. And I am certain you wondered, "Will this technique tip ever end?" But, if you carefully read all four parts, you know what a powerful tool the metronome can be. You now know its power to dramatically improve your guitar playing.

You still may not like the metronome, but believe me, the metronome is your friend.