

For an example in a more difficult piece let's look at Bach's popular *Prelude in Dm BWV 999*. It is important to know which fingers or notes are played on the clicks in order to keep the basic arpeggio smooth and even.

Usually, the guitarist will feel the quarter note as the beat. And most players are certainly aware that "p" plucks on the first beat of every measure. But many players are somewhat unaware of the fact that the "m" finger plucks on the second beat of every measure:

*Prelude in D minor, BWV 999 (J.S. Bach)*

Be aware that "m" plucks on the second beat of every measure.

1

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

Metronome clicks quarter notes.

3

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

Knowing that "m" plucks on the second click of each measure and feeling it pluck precisely on the click helps keep the rest of the arpeggio rhythmically even.

[Let me demonstrate in Video #20:](#)



**Video #20: Prelude in Dm by J.S. Bach**

A great example of the importance of knowing which finger is plucking on which beat occurs in the fast E major section of Villa-Lobos' *Prélude No. 1*:

*Prélude No. 1* (Heitor Villa-Lobos)

*Più mosso*

0 0 4 7 7 0 5 7 5 4 0 4 2 4 2 0 0 0 4 7 7 0 5 7 5 4 0 4 2 4 2

TAB

[Watch me play it in Video #21:](#)



**Video #21: Villa Lobos Prelude 1, as written**

I cannot tell you how many times I have heard guitarists mangle this passage. It comes out sounding like this:

*Prélude No. 1* (Heitor Villa-Lobos)

The mangled version!

Pause Uncontrolled "roll"

Pause Uncontrolled "roll"

T  
A  
B

0 2 4 7 5 7 5 4 0 4 2 4 2

1 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

[Watch me demonstrate this mangled version in Video #22:](#)



**Video #22: Villa Lobos Prelude 1, mangled arpeggio**

The solution is to first subdivide the beat into eighth note metronome clicks:

*Prélude No. 1* (Heitor Villa-Lobos)

Subdivide into eighth notes.

"m" must be placed precisely on this click

"m" must be placed precisely on this click

*Più mosso* *p p p i* *m a*

Metronome clicks eighth notes.

T  
A  
B

This provides plenty of reference points to keep everything even and in order. Be aware that the "m" finger plucks on the third click in the 2/4 measures. Accent it and feel your "m" finger plucking precisely on that click. That will help you feel and control the rhythmic spacing of the notes before and after it.

In Video #23, watch me demonstrate how subdividing the beat into eighth notes helps keep the arpeggio even:



**Video #23: Villa Lobos Prelude 1, subdivide into 8th notes**

Next, to work up speed, subdivide up to quarter-note clicks.

Now, you must pay a little closer attention. Be aware that the "m" finger plucks on the second click in the 2/4 measures. Accent it strongly and feel your "m" finger plucking precisely on that click. If you speed up the tempo and always place "m" precisely on the second quarter-note click, the passage will stay in rhythm and can be played very cleanly and musically.

*Prélude No. 1* (Heitor Villa-Lobos)

Subdivide into quarter notes.

*Più mosso*

"m" must be placed precisely on this click

"m" must be placed precisely on this click

Metronome clicks quarter notes.

21

*p p p i* *m a*

*p p p i* *m a*

2/4 3/4 2/4 3/4

TAB

0 2 2 1 0 0 4 7 7 0 5 7 5 4 0 4 2 2 4 2 0 0 0 4 7 7 0 5 7 5 4 0 4 2 2 4 2 0 0 2 2 1 0 2 2 2 2 2 2

[In Video #24, watch me demonstrate how to subdivide the passage into quarter notes:](#)



**Video #24: Villa Lobos Prelude 1, subdivide up to quarter notes**

In the fast scale of the introduction of Tárrega's *Capricho Árabe*, many guitarists play the scale as fast as they can with no understanding of the metrical divisions in the scale:

*Capricho Árabe* (Francisco Tárrega). This fingering optional.

Subdivide into eighth notes.

11

⑥=D

1 2 4 2 1 2

6

⑤

The E falls on beat #3.

The A falls on the "&" of beat #3.

Metronome clicks eighth notes.

T

A

B

11—12—14—12—11—8—7—10—8—7—10—8—7—0—4—1—0—5—3—2—8

By the way, for total control and understanding of any difficult passage, always write in your fingering for both hands!

In this passage, you must be aware of:

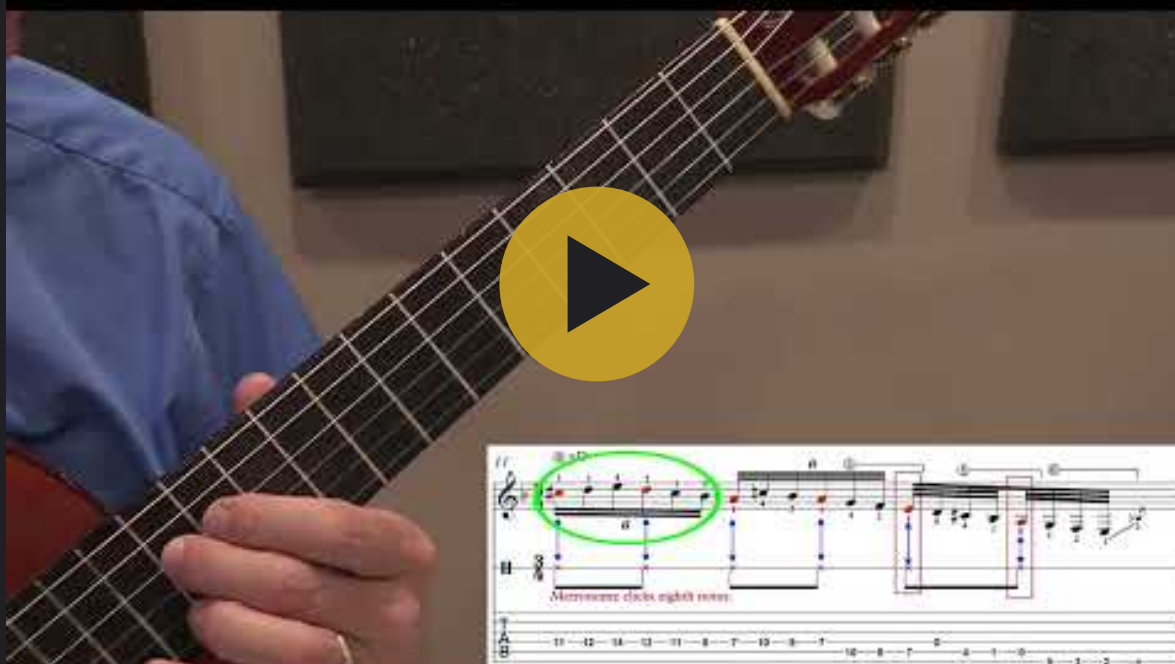
1. Which note is played on beat #3.
2. Which left-hand finger frets that note.
3. Which right-hand finger plucks that note.

AND,

1. Which note is played on the "&" of beat #3.
2. Which left-hand finger frets that note.
3. Which right-hand finger plucks that note.

Understanding the metrical accents of the passage and then practicing those accents with and without a metronome will help ensure the passage is played cleanly and musically at high speed with or without an accelerando.

[Watch me demonstrate these points in Video #25:](#)



**Video #25: Capricho Arabe. The fast scale subdivided into eighth notes**

Heitor Villa-Lobos' *Étude No. 1* is a very fast arpeggio. It can be played with several different right-hand arpeggio patterns. The most common is:

*Étude No. 1* (Heitor Villa-Lobos) Traditional right-hand fingering.

I prefer the following pattern I learned from Pepe Romero because it can be played much faster with better control by eliminating the "a" finger:

*Étude No. 1* (Heitor Villa-Lobos) Pepe Romero's right-hand fingering.

Regardless of which pattern you use, it is imperative that your right hand knows that there is an accent on the open B of beat #3 plucked by "m" in the traditional pattern. Or, if you use the Pepe Romero pattern, the accented open B is plucked by "i".

Many players do not feel or are unaware of this accent and the pattern overall is metrically ill-defined. Or, the notes are uneven in beat #3. Or, because beat #3 is nebulous, the player plucks with the thumb before or after the click on beat #4.

Watch me demonstrate how to use subdivision and the importance of knowing which note is played on beat #3 in Video #26. Also refer to the two musical examples below.



**Video #26, Villa Lobos Etude 1. Know which note falls on beat #3**

To increase their speed, most players set their metronome to click quarter notes:

*Étude No. 1* (Heitor Villa-Lobos)

Normal subdivision into quarter notes.

That is okay for intermediate speeds.

But at very fast speeds a better way to emphasize beat #3 is to click half notes, setting the metronome to click only on beat #1 and beat #3 (the opposite of subdividing down to a *smaller* note value).

That way the hand feels the evenness of the measure as a whole with "p" playing on the downbeat and "i" on the upbeat:

*Étude No. 1* (Heitor Villa-Lobos)

Subdivision into half notes.

*1*

Metronome clicks half notes.

Again, these points are demonstrated in the preceding Video #26.

## Practice a Passage with *Two* Different Metrical Subdivisions

Sometimes, practicing the same passage with two different types of subdivision works wonders to even out an arpeggio.

Let's look at *Étude in E Minor* by Mauro Giuliani.

Most guitarists would feel an eighth-note subdivision with groups of three notes and the emphasis on "p" and "a":

*Etude in E Minor* (Mauro Giuliani)

Common subdivision into eighth notes.

Metronome clicks eighth notes.

2

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

TAB

0 2 4 0 4 2 4 0 4 2 4 0 4 2 4 0 4 2

3

However, as the tempo of the piece is increased, the arpeggios may begin to gallop. To prevent that and to develop finger independence between "m" and "a", subdivide into eighth-note triplets feeling pairs of notes instead of groups of three. Accent "m" instead of "a":

*Etude in E Minor* (Mauro Giuliani)

Subdivision into eighth-note triplets helps keep the arpeggio even.

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

Metronome clicks eighth-note triplets.

2

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

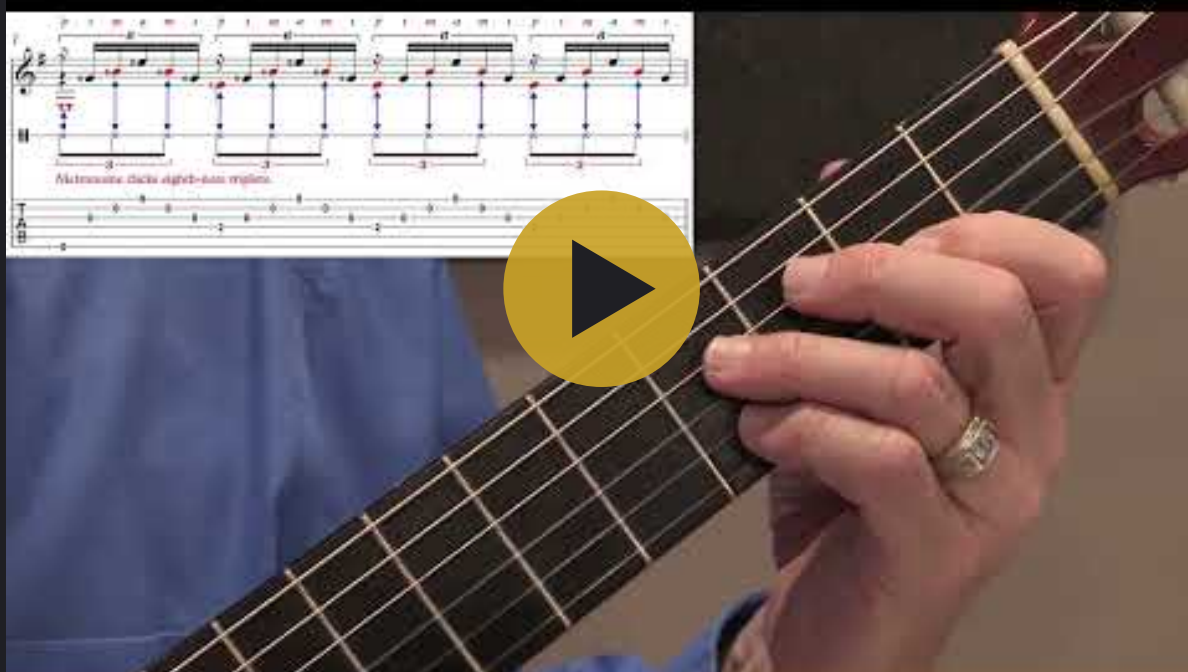
TAB

0 2 4 0 4 2 4 0 4 2 4 0 4 2 4 0 4 2 4 0 4 2

3

The image shows a musical score for guitar. At the top, the lyrics "p i m a m i p i m a m i p i m a m i" are written in red. Below the lyrics is a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. Below the staff is a fretboard diagram with six strings and a vertical line indicating the first fret. Blue arrows show the fretting hand's movement between frets. Red 'x' marks indicate the picking hand's position. Below the fretboard is a tablature (TAB) line with numbers 0, 2, 4, and 3 indicating fret numbers. The diagram shows a sequence of chords and single notes across the fretboard.

[Watch me demonstrate how to use two different metrical subdivisions on the Giuliani Etude in Video #27:](#)



**Video #27: Giuliani Etude in E minor. How to practice with two different metrical subdivisions**

As the tempo of the passage is increased, be sure to strongly accent and feel "m" rather than "a".

**Use this strategy of practicing with two different metrical subdivisions in the pieces YOU play. It will work on most arpeggios where the notes are in groups of three.**

Similar dual subdivision works well on the fast arpeggio section of Villa-Lobos' *Étude No. 11*.

Most guitarists subdivide the arpeggio into eighth notes with the clicks on "p" and "a". They feel the notes in groups of three:

### *Étude No. 11* (Heitor Villa-Lobos)

Common subdivision into eighth notes.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a guitar piece, specifically focusing on arpeggio passages. Each system includes a treble clef staff with notes and fingerings, a bass clef staff with metronome clicks, and a fretboard diagram below.

**System 1 (Top):**

- Treble Staff:** Four measures of arpeggio. Each measure contains a group of six eighth notes (three ascending, three descending). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 and 0 (open string). Red accents are placed on the first and fourth notes of each group. Above the staff, the syllables "p i m a m i" are written in red, with "p" and "i" under the first two notes and "a" and "m" under the last two notes of each group. A bracket labeled "6" spans the six notes.
- Bass Staff:** Metronome clicks are marked with red 'x' on a 2/2 time signature. Blue double-headed arrows connect the notes in the treble staff to the corresponding clicks in the bass staff.
- Fretboard Diagram:** Shows fret numbers for strings T (Treble), A (Acoustic), and B (Bass). The sequence of fret numbers is: 0, 14, 10, 10, 14, 14, 10, 10, 14, 11, 7, 0, 7, 11, 14, 10, 10, 14.

**System 2 (Bottom):**

- Treble Staff:** Four measures of arpeggio. Each measure contains a group of six eighth notes (three ascending, three descending). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 and 0. Red accents are placed on the first and fourth notes of each group. Above the staff, the syllables "p i m a m i" are written in red, with "p" and "i" under the first two notes and "a" and "m" under the last two notes of each group. A bracket labeled "6" spans the six notes.
- Bass Staff:** Metronome clicks are marked with red 'x' on a 2/2 time signature. Blue double-headed arrows connect the notes in the treble staff to the corresponding clicks in the bass staff.
- Fretboard Diagram:** Shows fret numbers for strings T (Treble), A (Acoustic), and B (Bass). The sequence of fret numbers is: 12, 8, 0, 8, 12, 12, 8, 0, 8, 12, 9, 5, 0, 5, 9, 12, 8, 0, 8, 12.

Red text below the first system reads: "Metronome clicks eighth notes."

But once again, to prevent galloping, it is a good idea to subdivide into eighth-note triplets instead. Feel the grouping of the notes in twos instead of threes. Accent "p,m,m" instead of "pa":

*Étude No. 11* (Heitor Villa-Lobos)

Subdivision into eighth-note triplets helps keep the arpeggio even.

The first system of the musical score for *Étude No. 11* by Heitor Villa-Lobos. It features a guitar part in 2/2 time and a metronome part. The guitar part consists of four measures, each containing an eighth-note triplet arpeggio. The notes are G4 (finger 4), A4 (finger 1), B4 (finger 2), and C5 (finger 4). The arpeggio is marked with a 'p' (piano) and an accent. The metronome part consists of four measures, each containing an eighth-note triplet. The notes are G4 (finger 4), A4 (finger 1), and B4 (finger 2). The metronome part is marked with a 'p' and an accent. The text 'Metronome clicks eighth-note triplets.' is written below the metronome part.

The second system of the musical score for *Étude No. 11* by Heitor Villa-Lobos. It features a guitar part in 2/2 time and a metronome part. The guitar part consists of four measures, each containing an eighth-note triplet arpeggio. The notes are G4 (finger 4), A4 (finger 1), B4 (finger 2), and C5 (finger 4). The arpeggio is marked with a 'p' (piano) and an accent. The metronome part consists of four measures, each containing an eighth-note triplet. The notes are G4 (finger 4), A4 (finger 1), and B4 (finger 2). The metronome part is marked with a 'p' and an accent.

This will help keep the arpeggio rhythmically even at high speeds and is also very good practice to develop independence between "m" and "a".

[In Video #28, watch me demonstrate how to use dual metrical subdivision in Villa-Lobos' Étude No. 11:](#)



**Video #28: Villa Lobos Etude 11. How to practice with dual metrical subdivision**

END PART 2.