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GETTING STARTED SEATING POSITION

If you have ever seen a classical guitarist play, you know that we sit while we play and that our position is unique among guitarists. The position has developed over centuries of guitar playing and

: experimentation. While each guitarist
 : is unique, and therefore sits slightly
 : differently from others, the following
 : four goals we all share lead us to
 : have more in common than not.
 :

The goals of the seating position:

1. Minimize tension in the body and hands.
2. Provide easy access to the entire length of the fingerboard.
3. Give easy access to all six strings.
4. Securely support the instrument without the use of the hands.

As you learn proper seating, you may experience some slight discomfort, or feel unsure about it. Just because it doesn't "come naturally" to you doesn't mean it

: isn't making the best use of your
 : body. Be patient! Be observant
 : of other players, and check your
 : position often.
 :

Getting Into Position

Follow these steps and you will be on your way to having a correct seating position.

1. Put a footstool in front of the front left leg of an armless chair with a flat seat.
2. Stand with your feet on either side of the footstool, facing away from the chair. Sit on the very left front-edge of the chair.
3. Place your left foot on the footstool, keeping your leg perpendicular to the floor. Place your right foot and knee out to the right.
4. Place the lower curve of the guitar snugly on your left knee so that:
 - a. The upper edge of the back of the guitar is in the center of your chest.
 - b. The head of the guitar is eye level, and just barely in front of you.
 - c. The right side of the guitar is resting on the inside of your right thigh.
5. Place your right forearm on the outer edge of the guitar, aligned with or just to your right of the bridge, depending on your size.



START MAKING MUSIC!

To produce a musical sound from your guitar, you will need to develop a good technique for striking the strings. The most fundamental aspect of striking the strings is the right-hand position.

Right-Hand Position

The muscles that control the fingers are attached at their ends to the elbow joint and pass through the wrist on their way to the fingers. Since we are always concerned about making guitar playing as easy and stress-free as possible, we want to avoid pulling on these muscles unnecessarily. For that reason, it's important to keep your wrist straight (aligned with the arm). Use a mirror to observe your wrist position.

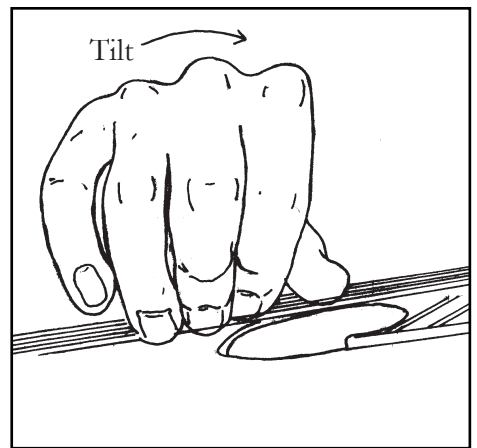
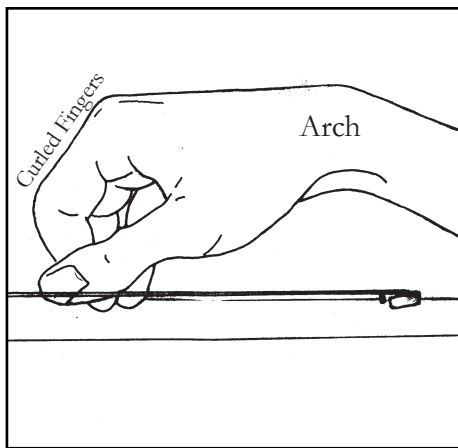
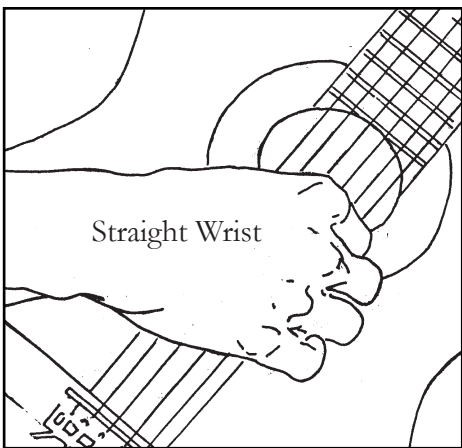
We need room to operate the fingers freely, so arch the wrist very slightly, so that the top of the wrist is just further from the soundboard than the knuckle joints. Do not overdo this! Your wrist should be almost flat. Bending your wrist too much can cause serious problems.

The two fingers we use most, *i* (index) and *m* (middle), are of different lengths: *i* is shorter than *m*

for almost everybody, so rotate or tilt the arm towards *i* (on an axis that runs through *m* to the elbow) so that you can just barely see the knuckle of your *a* (ring) finger when you look down at your hand. Not only will this help to equalize the length of *i* and *m*, but it will help you play on the left side of your nail, and simplify your thumb stroke, too.

MINI GUITAR LESSON **Summary of the Right-Hand Position**

- Straight wrist — Use a mirror to check.
- Arch — The top of your wrist should be slightly further out from the soundboard than your knuckle joints.
- Tilt — The *a* knuckle joint should be just barely visible when you look down at your hand.

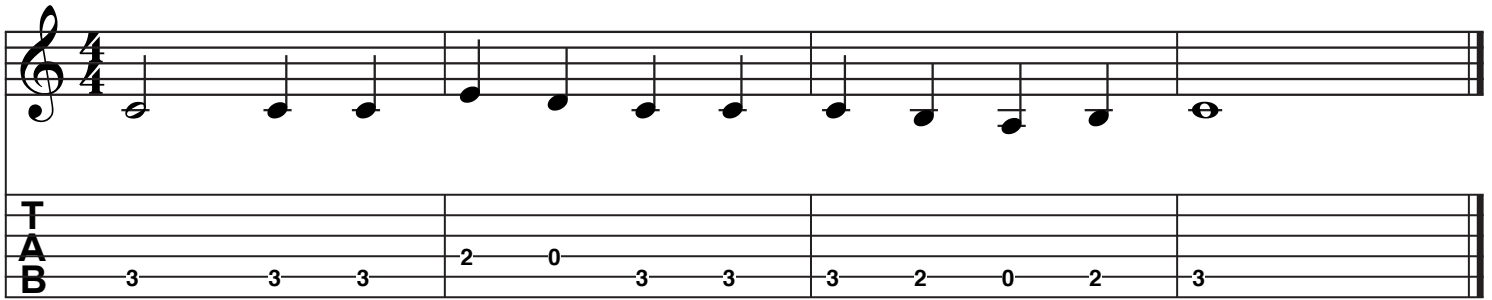


Basic Finger Position

Being careful to position your arm and wrist correctly, place *i* and *m* on the 2nd and 3rd strings, respectively. Move your arm and hand so that your fingers are slightly curled. Your *i* finger, which is positioned on the 3rd string, should be positioned so its middle joint is curled above the 2nd string. The *m* finger, which is on the 2nd string, will be positioned so its middle joint is curled above the 1st string. The other fingers, *a* and *c* (pinkie), will also be lightly curled. Your thumb, *p*, should rest lightly against the tip of *i*. The overall effect should be that of a loosely held fist...as if you were holding a ball.

PIECES ON THE 4TH AND 5TH STRINGS

Variation on a Melody by Fernando Sor Track 16

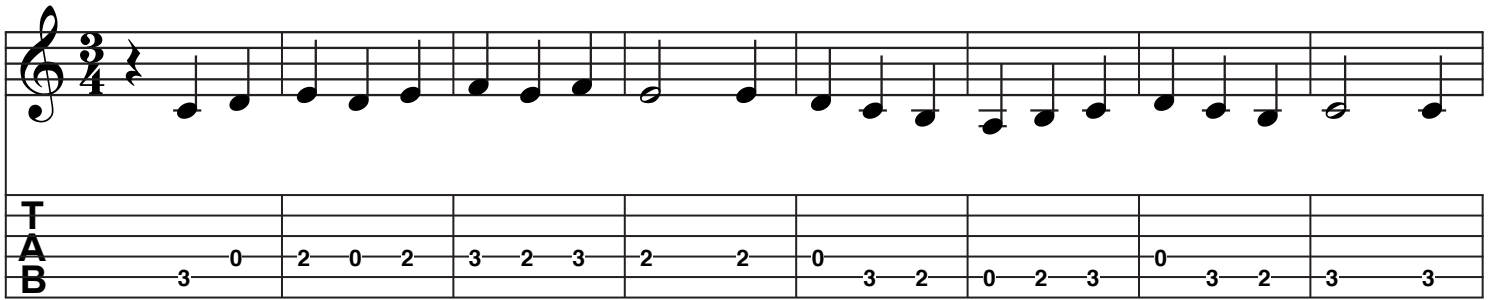


Musical notation for Variation on a Melody by Fernando Sor. The piece is in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The guitar tablature below shows the fingerings for the 4th and 5th strings.

T												
A												
B	3	3	3	2	0	3	3	3	2	0	2	3

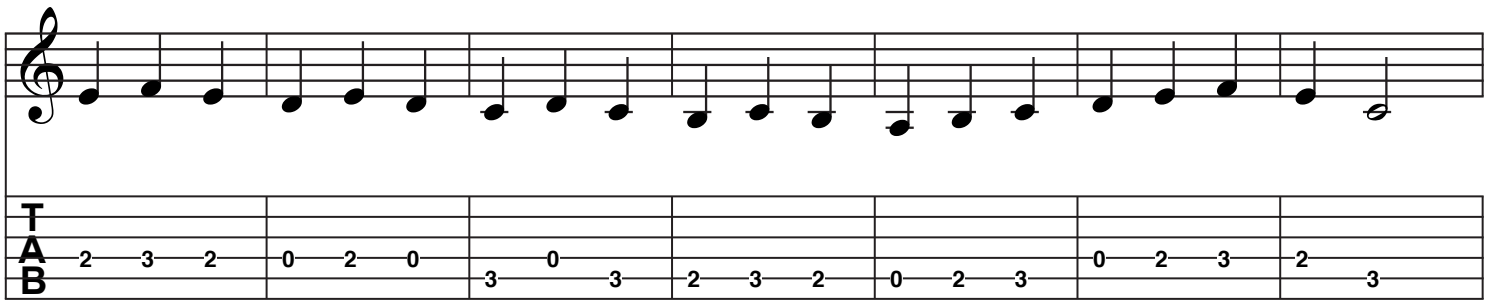
A Melody from Canarios Track 17

by Gaspar Sanz



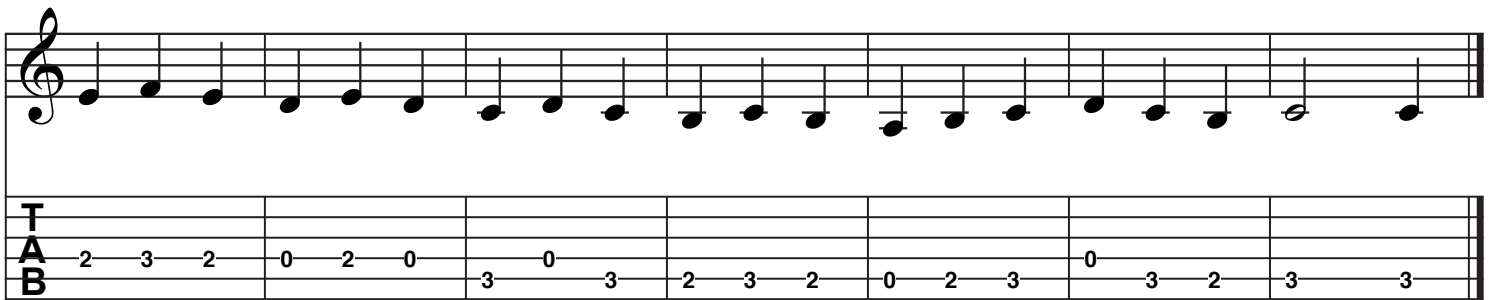
Musical notation for A Melody from Canarios. The piece is in 3/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The guitar tablature below shows the fingerings for the 4th and 5th strings.

T																					
A																					
B	3	0	2	0	2	3	2	3	2	2	0	3	2	0	2	3	0	3	2	3	3



Musical notation for A Melody from Canarios (continued). The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The guitar tablature below shows the fingerings for the 4th and 5th strings.

T																				
A																				
B	2	3	2	0	2	0	3	0	3	2	3	2	0	2	3	0	2	3	2	3



Musical notation for A Melody from Canarios (continued). The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The guitar tablature below shows the fingerings for the 4th and 5th strings.

T																				
A																				
B	2	3	2	0	2	0	3	0	3	2	3	2	0	2	3	0	3	2	3	3



Theme from Asturias (Leyenda)



“Leyenda” is perhaps the most famous classical guitar piece, although it was originally composed for the piano.

MINI
MUSIC
LESSON

Introducing Sixteenth Notes

Four sixteenth notes

=

equal one quarter note

You will notice that each eighth note in this piece has two stems, one going up (sixteenth notes) and one going down (eighth notes). This is a convenient way to show two things:

1. The continuous sixteenth-note rhythm; and
2. The bass notes and treble notes have the distinctively different roles of melody (bass) and accompaniment (treble).

Use *m* on the open B string and *p* in the bass throughout.

by Isaac Albéniz