

Lesson 4

Developing Scale Technique, Part 4

Positioning the Thumb

In the first two lessons, I had you always place the right hand thumb on a lower string. Positioning the thumb on a lower string when playing scales adds to the stability of the right hand and serves as a preparation for learning to use the thumb to mute out unwanted overtones. (More on this in a later lesson.) When playing scales, we usually keep the thumb on the second string below the one that we are playing. Exercise 1 is a simple exercise to get the feel of this technique. You will begin playing with the index finger always alternating between i and m.

Exercise 1:



Begin by placing the thumb on the sixth string and the index finger on the fourth string. Using rest strokes, play the notes in the first measure and stop. Place your thumb on the fifth string and the middle finger on the third string. Play the second measure and stop. Place your thumb on the fourth string and your middle finger on the second string. Play the third measure and stop. Continue this approach for each measure until you have completed the exercise. When you get comfortable with this exercise, slowly play this exercise without pause moving your thumb as you change strings. It is important that while focusing on moving your thumb, you are equally aware of the appropriate movement in the forearm. When you are comfortable playing the scale this way, go back and practice the exercise using free strokes. **Remember to always play slowly so you can comfortably execute the movements.** When practicing with free strokes, use the technique you learned in Lesson 1. When using rest strokes, use the technique learned in Lesson 2.

Good luck and happy practice.