



ROB'S
WARM UPS
& TECHNICAL
EXERCISES

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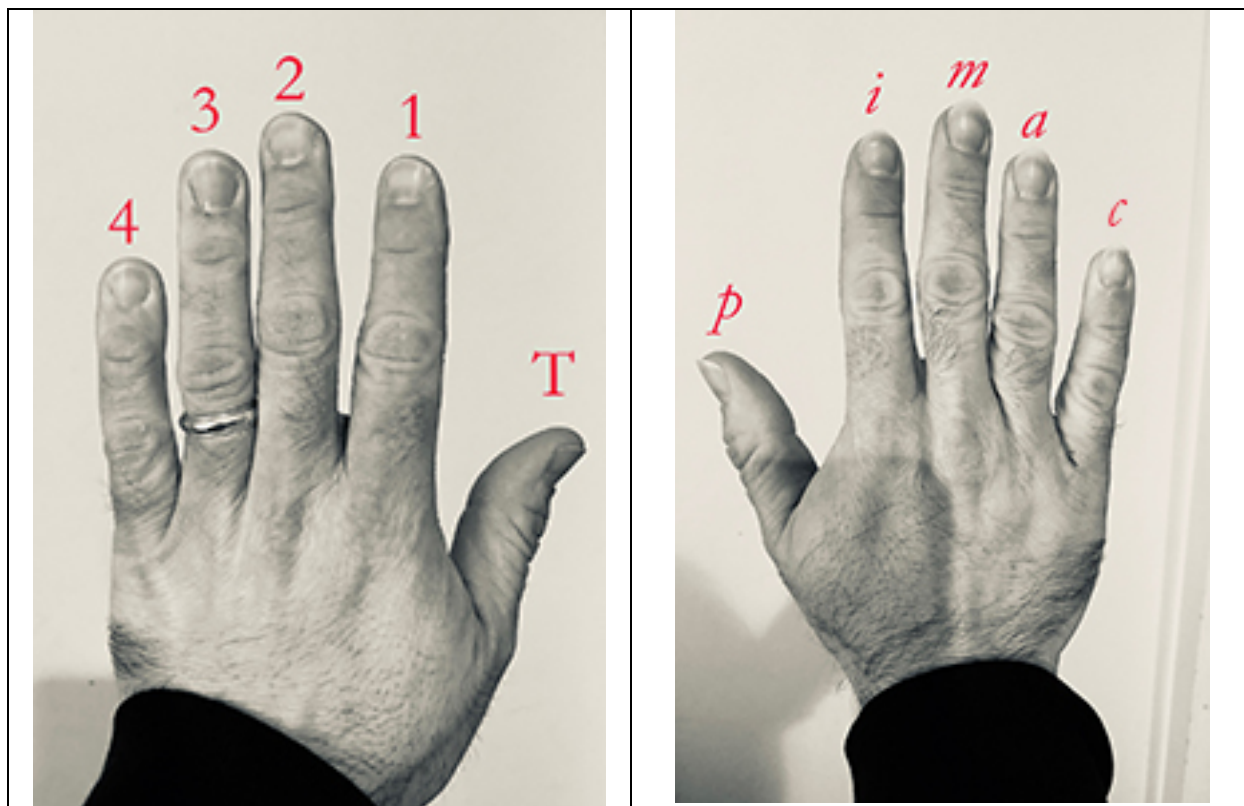
composer . guitarist

Table of Contents

Scales	4
Arpeggios	6
Tremolo	8
Slurs (Hammer-ons and Pull-offs)	11
Stretching	13
Finger Independence	15
Rasgueados	16

Rob's Warmup and Technical Exercises

Let's get this out of the way from the beginning...



For the left hand we will use numbers (1-4; T for thumb) and for the right hand we will use p for thumb, i for index finger, m for middle finger, a for the ring finger, and c for the cute little pinky finger.

I have included exercises that I have done since I first started playing classical guitar back in college. These exercises are intended to help with finger dexterity as well as overall technique. If at anytime you begin to experience pain, I would back off and take a break.

Scales

I love using the chromatic scale for warmup/technique because the pattern is easy to memorize and I can focus on my right hand.

I assign a left hand finger to a fret. So that means....
my first finger takes care of all of notes on the first fret, second finger takes care of all the notes on the second fret and so on.

Exercise 1:

The image shows two staves of musical notation for Exercise 1. The first staff is a treble clef with a chromatic scale starting on G4 and ending on G5. The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6. Below the staff is a TAB line with fret numbers: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 0. The second staff is a treble clef with a chromatic scale starting on G5 and ending on G6. The notes are: G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7. Below the staff is a TAB line with fret numbers: 1, 2, 3, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4.

Play through the scale ascending and descending as well as at different speeds. For classical/fingerstyle players, focus on the *a* finger on the right hand. This finger tends to be the weakest finger and developing that finger will help improve your overall technique dramatically.

I'll practice this scale:

i-m, m-i, m-a, a-m, p-i, p-m, p-a.

If you are using a pick: down-down, up-up, and alternate down-up and up-down.

You can make things interesting by practicing variations of the scale. For example:

Exercise 2:

Exercise 2 musical notation and guitar TAB. The scale is written in a treble clef staff with eighth notes. The first measure contains a triplet of G4, A4, B4. The second measure contains a triplet of G4, A4, B4. The third measure contains a triplet of G4, A4, B4. The guitar TAB below shows the fret numbers: 0-0-1-1-2-2-3-3 for each measure.

I will do the same thing with a three octave chromatic scale:

Exercise 3:

Exercise 3 musical notation and guitar TAB. The scale is written in a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The scale is divided into three sections, each with a Roman numeral label above it: V, IX, VIII, VII, VI, V, IX. The notes are: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 8, 9, 10, 5, 6, 7, 11, 7, 8, 9, 10, 6, 7, 8, 9, 6, 7, 8, 9, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. The guitar TAB below shows the fret numbers for each note.

Arpeggios

Etude No. 1 by Heitor Villa-Lobos has a great arpeggio pattern:

Exercise 4:

The image shows a musical exercise for guitar in 4/4 time. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3. Fingerings are indicated above the notes: p, i, p, i, p, m, i, a, m, a, i, m, p, i, p, i. The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with three strings labeled T (Treble), A (Middle), and B (Bass). The fret numbers are: T: 0, 2, 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 0; A: 2, 2, 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 0, 2; B: 0, 2, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 2, 2, 0.

This is a good arpeggio to practice because it uses the *a* finger, which as I mentioned earlier, really dictates how your overall technique is. You can play this arpeggio pattern with whatever chord you want or can even just use open strings.

The goal is speed (quarter note = 126) and clarity.

This etude has a complex pattern and it is best to break it up into small segments. Practice the segments separately and then combine them. Here is an example of how I would break it up:

Exercise 5:

The image shows the same musical exercise as Exercise 4, but with segments A, B, C, and D marked with brackets. Segment A covers the first five notes (G4-A4-B4-C5-B4). Segment B covers the next five notes (A4-G4-F4-E4-D4). Segment C covers the next five notes (C4-B3-A3-G3-F3-E3). Segment D covers the final five notes (D3-C3-B3-A3-G3-F3-E3). The guitar TAB below is identical to the one in Exercise 4.

Each segment is five notes and overlaps with the next segment. The more complex the music the smaller the segments. I would practice each segment individually and at different speeds. Including very slowly (sixteenth note = 72). Then I would combine them like this:

A/B, B/C, C/D.

Again at different speeds.

Then I would make the segments larger by playing A, B, and C; B, C, and D and then finally I would play the entire measure. I use this technique a lot whenever I am having technical difficulties with a piece.

Here is another arpeggio pattern I like to practice:

Exercise 6:

Like the Villa-Lobos example, I would break it up into smaller, overlapping segments.

Here is an arpeggio pattern that shifts:

Exercise 7:

This exercise works on shifting between positions with the left hand as well as gives the right hand an arpeggio pattern. I will practice it with both: *p*, *i*, *m* as well as *i*, *m*, *a*. Here is the descending version:

Exercise 8:

Exercise 8 musical score showing a treble clef, 6/8 time signature, and guitar tablature. The score includes fingerings (*a*, *m*, *i*) and dynamics (*m*, *i*, *p*) for the first two measures, and fret diagrams for 12fr., 8fr., 5fr., and 2fr. The tablature shows fret numbers 12, 13, 14, 8, 10, 9, 5, 5, 5, 0, 1, 2.

Tremolo

Tremolo is a cool technique that gives the illusion of multiple instruments playing at once. The most important thing to focus on is having an even sound throughout the pattern. Try it on the first string.

Exercise 9:

Exercise 9 musical score showing a treble clef, 4/4 time signature, and guitar tablature. The score includes fingerings (*a*, *m*, *i*) and dynamics (*p*) for the first measure. The tablature shows fret number 0 for all strings.

I would recommend using a metronome with two clicks per pattern and at a slow tempo. For example, eighth note = 60. Focus on keeping the hand relaxed and playing with an even sound. I would then gradually increase the tempo.

In addition, practice the pattern on other strings. The first string is the easiest because you don't have to worry about hitting another string with your right hand. I would recommend practicing this pattern on the second and third strings as well.

Try practicing tremolo with a chord:

Exercise 10:

This example uses an e minor chord. Any chord can be used and I will often practice the pattern using different chords just for the sake of variety.

Try using the tremolo pattern on a scale:

Exercise 11:

The example above uses a C major scale. You can also practice tremolo while playing the chromatic scale:

Exercise 12:

In the next example the chromatic scale is played in octaves (see exercise 22) with the thumb hitting the lower note and the fingers hitting the higher notes:

Slurs (Hammer-on/Pull-off)

For slurs, you want to make sure that the notes are played evenly in tempo as well as volume. For the second note of the hammer-on make sure to come down hard on the fingerboard. When playing these exercises focus on smoothness and clarity. I have included three hammer-on exercises. I recommend playing this pattern on all six strings.

Exercise 15:

Exercise 16:

Exercise 17:

For pull-offs, make sure that the second note sounds loudly. The term, pull-off, is a little misleading. You don't pull your finger directly off of the string because you would not get much sound. Instead you bring the left hand finger straight down. You can think about your finger falling off of a log. Here are two pull-off exercises:

Exercise 18:

Exercise 18 is a pull-off exercise in 3/4 time, D major. The treble clef staff shows a sequence of notes: G4 (finger 4), A4 (finger 3), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 2), D5 (finger 2), E5 (finger 1), F#5, G#5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F#6, G#6, A6, B6, C7. The guitar tablature staff shows the fretting for each note: 4-3, 3-2, 2-1, 4-3, 3-2, 2-1, 4-3, 3-2, 2-1, 4-3, 3-2, 2-1.

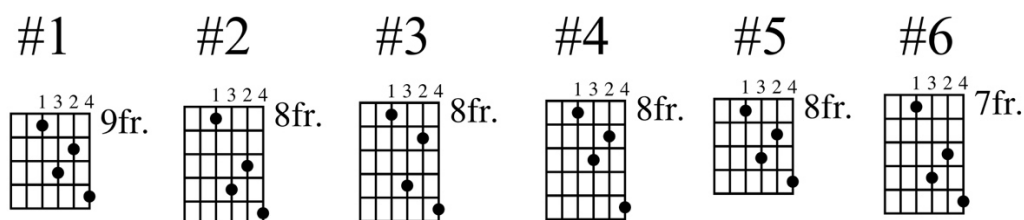
Exercise 19:

Exercise 19 is a pull-off exercise in 2/4 time, D major. The treble clef staff shows a sequence of notes: G4 (finger 4), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 1), D5, E5, F#5, G#5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F#6, G#6, A6, B6, C7. The guitar tablature staff shows the fretting for each note: 4-2, 3-1, 4-2, 3-1, 4-2, 3-1.

Stretching

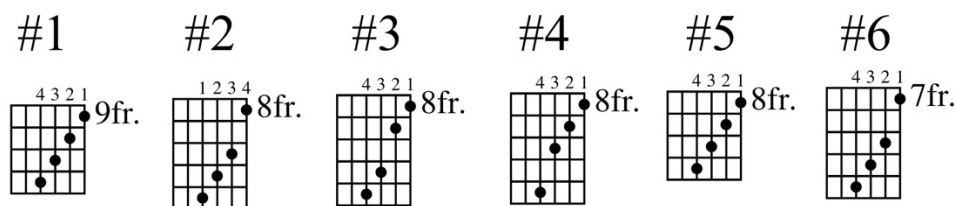
For this stretching exercise the point isn't take make a beautiful sound but to stretch the fingers. You can begin this exercise at any fret. Begin by playing number one. For the second one, you keep your second, third, and fourth fingers where they are at and move the first finger to the 8th fret. For number three you keep the first, third, and fourth fingers where they are at and move the second finger down to the ninth fret. You continue moving each finger down one-by-one until you end up with the same pattern that you started with (#5). Then you keep moving down the fingerboard (#6) until you can't play it anymore. The farther you go down, the wider the frets, so the more you stretch. Please take a break if you have any pain. "No Pain, No Gain" doesn't really work for learning an instrument.

Exercise 20:



Here is the same type of exercise with a different pattern:

Exercise 21:



Exercise 24

#1



#2



#3



#4



#5



#6



#7



#8



Exercise 25

#1



#2



#3



#4



#5



#6



#7



#8



Rasgueado

Practicing rasgueados (strumming) are great for warming up the right hand. There are a couple ways that I do them. One way is to start with a fist:



and then one-by-one fan a finger out starting with my pinky. As each finger fans out it will strike the strings.



Try practicing this with a G chord:

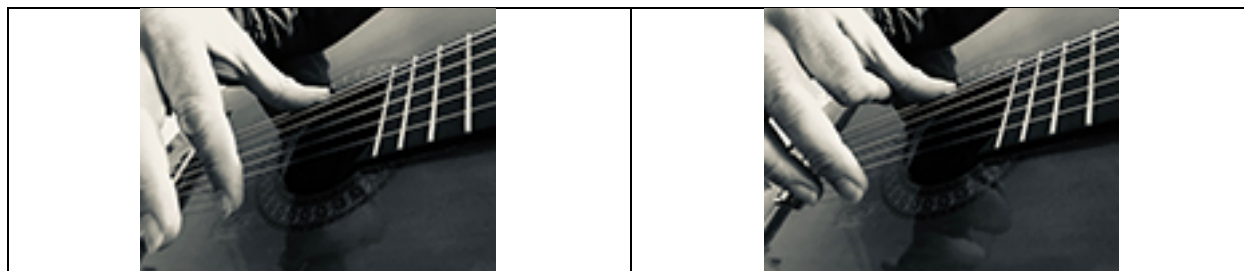
Exercise 26:

G

c a m i

T
A
B

Another type of rasgueado I will do is strum quickly with one finger. I will do this with any of my right hand fingers (including the pinky). Here is an example of me doing this type with my index finger (*i*):



Try it with the same chord we used in the previous example:

Exercise 27:

G

You want to move your finger back and forth as fast as possible.

If you have any questions feel free to contact me through my website: <http://robertlunn.com>
Happy guitar playing!!!