

KAI NAREZO
HOW TO PRACTICE
RASGUEADOS

GENERAL REMINDERS FOR PLAYING FLAMENCO

"IF YOU TAKE THE TIME TO MAKE THIS FEEL LIKE A NATURAL MOVEMENT –
NOT STRESSFUL, YOU'LL REALIZE IT'S NOT HARD."

ALWAYS FLICK OUT EVERY FINGER

It's important when doing any rasgueado, no matter what fingering combination, to **flick out every finger**.



BEND THE THUMB

One key adjustment that can be difficult for classical guitarists is **bending the thumb** to make space for the fingers, particularly while playing the fifth finger.

GENERAL REMINDERS FOR PLAYING FLAMENCO

LOOSEN THE FIST

Anytime we play with the back of the nail, we need to have a very **loose and relaxed hand**. A good image to think about is if a fly landed on your knee and you were to flick it away. There should be power, but no tension. It should feel like a natural movement.



INDEPENDENCE

Independence is one of the trickier aspects when learning rasgueados. To start working on this, take your loose fist away from the guitar, and just **practice independently flicking out each finger**, starting from the pinky. Once that is comfortable, take that motion to the guitar and **try 4, 3, 2 and 1 finger groupings**.

PRACTICING PATTERNS

THE UPSTROKE

The key to continuous rasgueados is in the **index finger's upstroke movement**. The last note in the subdivision should be done with an upstroke.



By practicing this, we can get a full rhythmic palette:

Sixteenth Notes
3 Triplets
Eighth Notes
5 Quintuplets

5TH STRING

An exercise to work on hitting the 5th string more consistently is to **mute the top 4 strings** and practice your various rasgueados, making sure the fifth string is always sounding. While it is generally important to hit the 5th string, it's not crucial to hit it with each finger every time.

PRACTICING PATTERNS

THE TRIPLET PATTERN

This next pattern involves the thumb. The pattern is as follows: up with the thumb, down simultaneously with m and a, and down with the thumb.



Starting Position

Flick up with thumb

Down with m a

Down with thumb

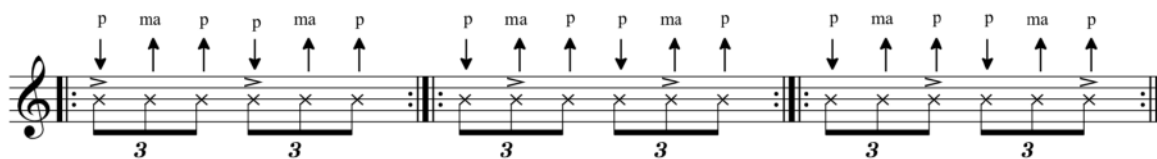
This motion involves rotating from the forearm – the wrist should stay relatively steady. Start by flicking the thumb up with the forearm. Then, keep the thumb where it is (hovering above the 6th string) and open the hand to flick the m and a fingers down. End the pattern by rotating the forearm back down, bringing the thumb through the string. **Think “up, open, down.”** Be sure to practice slow and evenly before speeding up.

Always watch for tension in the arm at the slow tempos.

PRACTICING PATTERNS

ACCENTS

To be sure the triplet pattern is evenly played, practice it slowly with different accents. Try placing an accent on either the first, second, or third triplet of each beat:



THUMB CATCH

One of the biggest issues people run into with this triplet stroke is the **thumb catching** on the strings during the downstroke. Practice slowly to find the thumb angle that works for your hand to avoid this catch.



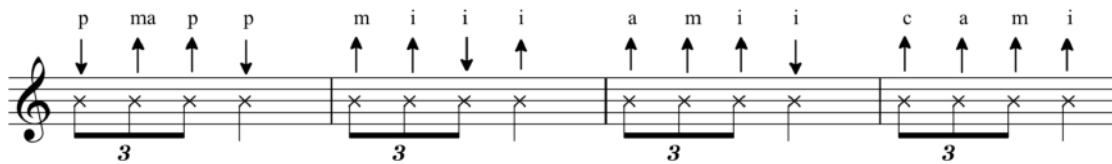
BE PATIENT

Working slowly is the quickest way of getting a smooth rasgueado. Be patient when working in the slow tempos so you can ensure an even sounding motion at faster speeds.

PRACTICING PATTERNS

CHOOSING THE TYPE

For each rhythm there are a number of different finger combinations. For example, a triplet with a downbeat could be done several different ways:

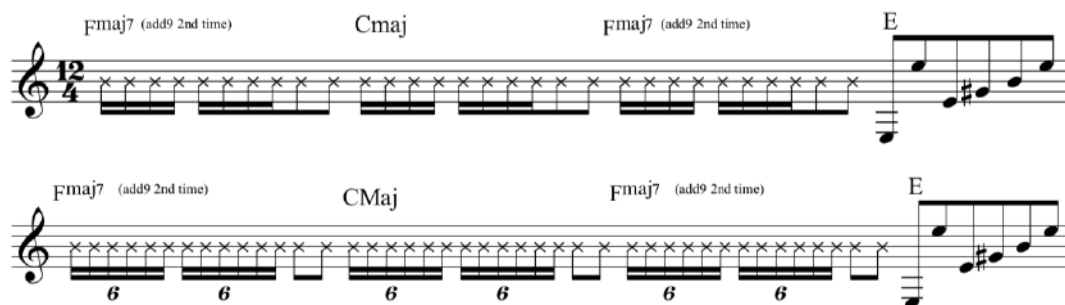


Choosing sometimes just comes down to a math problem of how many notes to play and what combinations are available to use. Many of the patterns are relatively interchangeable, so the more you become familiar with how each sounds the easier it will be to decide on which pattern to use for the situation.



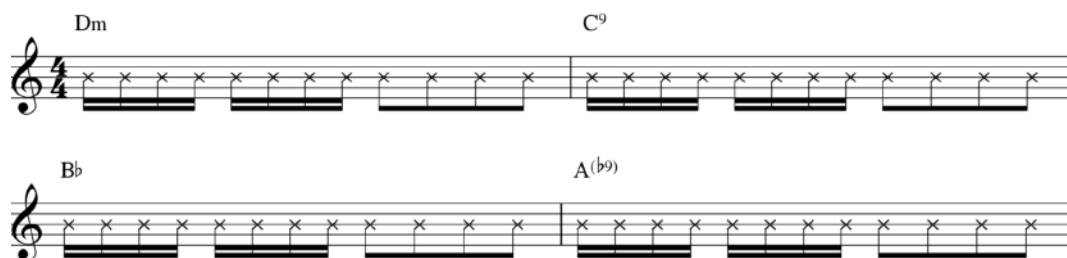
EXAMPLES

A good place to start incorporating these is in a form called Solearas. The form is 3 beats each of Fmaj7, C, Fmaj7, and E, over a 12 beat compas. The second time through each line, put a pedal G note in the top voice over the first three chords. This form can be subdivided differently to work on each rasgueado pattern – sixteenths, quintuplets, or sextuplets:



The image shows two musical staves in 12/4 time. The top staff is divided into four measures of 3 beats each, labeled with chords: Fmaj7 (add9 2nd time), CMaj, Fmaj7 (add9 2nd time), and E. The bottom staff is also divided into four measures of 3 beats each, labeled with the same chords. The first six beats of the bottom staff are marked with a '6' under each, indicating sextuplets.

Another form to try is the tango:







The image shows two musical staves in 4/4 time. The top staff is divided into two measures of 2 beats each, labeled with chords Dm and C9. The bottom staff is also divided into two measures of 2 beats each, labeled with chords Bb and A(b9).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you are interested in diving deeper into the techniques discussed here and Flamenco in general, check out Kai's Flamenco Fundamentals Course on tonebase.co!

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