

Slur Exercises

by

Christopher Davis

www.christopherguitar.net
www.classicalguitarblog.net



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Acknowledgements

Many of the ideas in this book are from my former teacher, Dr. Stanley Yates.
His insights into guitar pedagogy have been invaluable to me.

Introduction

Left hand slurs (hammer-ons and pull-offs) are an essential part of a guitarist's technical practice. This book presents three kinds of slurs: (1) simple slurs involving two fingers, (2) compound slurs with two fingers, and (3) compound slurs involving three or four fingers. The exercises are presented in groups that are easily practiced in ten minutes. Please be sure to read the practice suggestions below before beginning work on these exercises, and consult with your teacher, if you have one, about the best options for your technical practice.

This book does not explain how to do slurs properly. Please consult a qualified teacher for an explanation of proper slur technique.

About the Groups

Guitarists generally practice slurs by playing them on each string and in various positions across the fretboard. The completeness of this approach cannot be denied, but it is incredibly tedious to play all the possible finger combinations on each string and in five or six positions.

The groups in this book are condensed, and not meant to take longer than ten to fifteen minutes each. Groups 1A, 1B, and 1C present the various slur combinations on each string in one position. Groups 2A, 2B, and 2C move those same slur combinations up and down one string. Please note that groups 2A, B, and C are presented here on the second string, but can be done any string. Oftentimes there is one string on which it seems harder to do slurs. That should be the string on which you move the slur combinations around.

Groups 1A and 2A are simple slurs involving two fingers. Groups 1B and 2B are compound slurs with two fingers--basic trills. Groups 1C and 2C are compound slurs with three or four fingers (plucking the string with the LH first finger down and hammering on 2, followed by 3, for instance).

Should I Do Every Group Every Day?

No. Choose the groups you have the most trouble with and do them. There is also a progression built into the groups. Groups 1A and 2A are the easiest and groups 1C and 2C can be the most difficult. Starting with 1A and 2A and adding other exercises as your progress is a good strategy.

Slur practice can be very fatiguing. I would not recommend practicing more than two groups/day. I practice one group per day. As you master groups 1A and 2A, replace them with groups 2B and 2C.

Suggested Practice Schedules

All groups over the span of one week.

Day 1: Group 1A
Day 2: Group 2A
Day 3: Group 1B
Day 4: Group 2B
Day 5: Group 1C
Day 6: Group 2C
Day 7: OFF

Gradual progressions through the groups.

<u>Weeks 1-2</u>	<u>Weeks 3-4</u>	<u>Weeks 5-6</u>
Day 1: Group 1A	Group 2B	Group 1C
Day 2: Group 2A	Group 1B	Group 2C
Day 3: Group 1A	Group 2B	Group 1C
Day 4: Group 2A	Group 1B	Group 2C
Day 5: Group 1A	Group 2B	Group 1C
Day 6: Group 2A	Group 1B	Group 2C
Day 7: OFF	OFF	OFF

NOTE: the amount of weeks you spend on a set of groups is up to you. Move on when you feel comfortable with the exercises.

For a student having trouble with pull-offs and trills.

Day 1: Group 1A, second page; Group 2A, second page

Day 2: Group 1C, second page; Group 2C, second page

Day 3: Group 1B

Day 4: Group 2B

Day 5: Group 1A, second page; Group 2A, second page

Day 6: Group 1C, second page; Group 2C, second page

Day 7: OFF

There is really no limit to what you can do with these studies. This book is meant to give you some general ideas about practicing slurs. You can take the groups as they are or recombine them as you desire.

The general feature of all of the practice schedule examples above is the alternation of practicing slurs on different strings on one day and practicing them on one string in various positions the next. This is a good general strategy to consider when creating your own slur routine.

How to Practice Slurs with Slow/Fast Alternation

It's hard to go wrong with just playing the slurs with equal rhythms as they are written. There are, however, other options.

Alternating a slow version of the slur combination with a fast version is a great way to practice. Take this the slur exercise 1 2 from Group 1A:

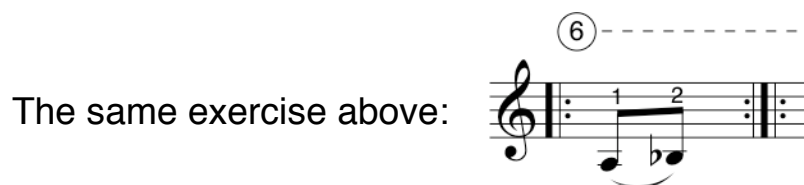
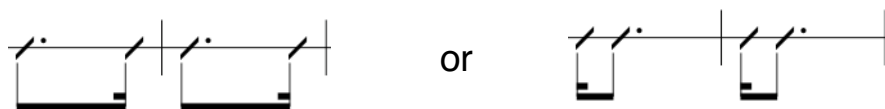


Here's that same exercise with a slow - fast alternation:



How to Practice Slurs with Rhythmic Variations

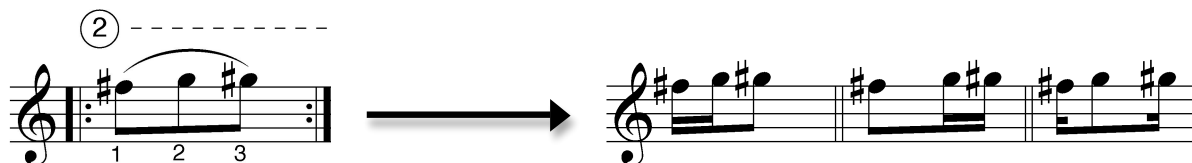
The slurs can also be practiced with various rhythms instead of just as written with all eighth notes equal. In group 1A and 2A, these rhythms can be used:



Rhythms for groups of three eighth notes:



Example:



Rhythms for groups of four eighth notes:



Example:



Rhythmic variation is a great way to smooth out unevenness in slurs (or anything really). All of these variations need not be practiced each day. Pick a few, work with them for a while, and then move on.

No Right Hand

Slurs can also be practiced without the right hand plucking the string. Play as normal, but start without a right hand attack. The first note of the slur will not sound, but the dynamic level and quality of the following notes can be observed for inconsistencies or flaws.

A Note to Beginners

If you have just started your guitar journey, these exercises are not for you. For more information on technical exercises for beginners, see here: <http://www.classicalguitarblog.net/2009/09/technical-exercises-for-the-absolute-beginner/>

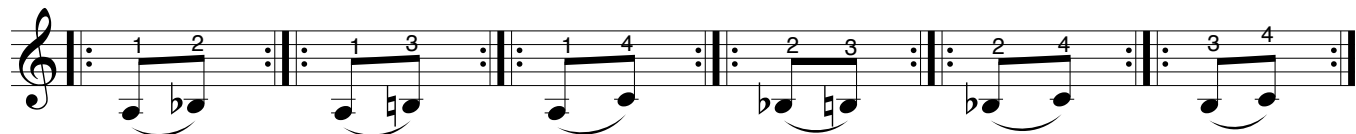
Conclusion

The general theme of this book is efficiency. As musicians, it is our solemn duty to do as little as possible to achieve our desired results. Choose the slur exercises and that give you the most trouble. In other words, "focus on your weak points."

I hope you enjoy the exercises! If you have any feedback about this book or questions, please feel free to drop me a line: cd@classicalguitarblog.net


Group 1A

⑥



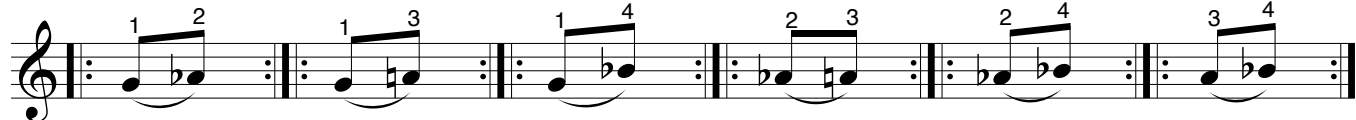
Staff 6: Six measures of eighth-note pairs with fingerings 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, and 3-4. The notes are G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8.

⑤



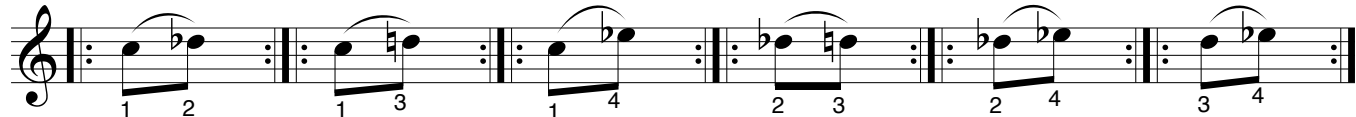
Staff 5: Six measures of eighth-note pairs with fingerings 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, and 3-4. The notes are G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8.

④



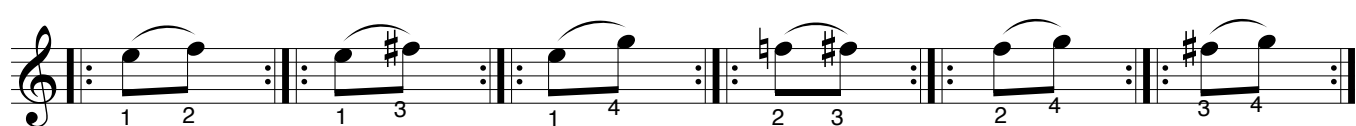
Staff 4: Six measures of eighth-note pairs with fingerings 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, and 3-4. The notes are G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8.

③



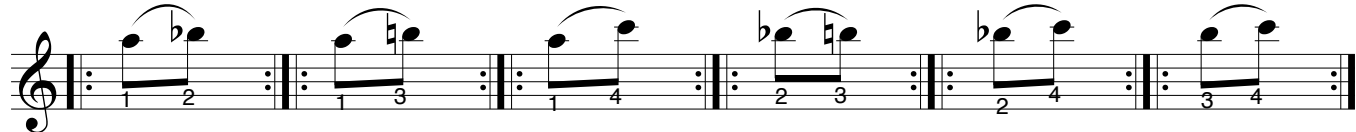
Staff 3: Six measures of eighth-note pairs with fingerings 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, and 3-4. The notes are G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8.

②



Staff 2: Six measures of eighth-note pairs with fingerings 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, and 3-4. The notes are G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8.

①



Staff 1: Six measures of eighth-note pairs with fingerings 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, and 3-4. The notes are G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8.

Group 1A

⑥

2 1 3 1 4 1 3 2 4 2 4 3

⑤

2 1 3 1 4 1 3 2 4 2 4 3

④

2 1 3 1 4 1 3 2 4 2 4 3

③

2 1 3 1 4 1 3 2 4 2 4 3

②

2 1 3 1 4 1 3 2 4 2 4 3

①

2 1 3 1 4 1 3 2 4 2 4 3

Group 1B

⑥

⑥

1 2 1 3 1 4 2 3 2 4 3 4

⑤

⑤

1 2 1 3 1 4 2 3 2 4 3 4

④

④

1 2 1 3 1 4 2 3 2 4 3 4

③

③

1 2 1 3 1 4 2 3 2 4 3 4

②

②

1 2 1 3 1 4 2 3 2 4 3 4

①

①

1 2 1 3 1 4 2 3 2 4 3 4

Group 1B

⑥

2 1 3 1 4 1 3 2 4 2 4 3

⑤

2 1 3 1 4 1 3 2 4 2 4 3

④

2 1 3 1 4 1 3 2 4 2 4 3

③

2 1 3 1 4 1 3 2 4 2 4 3

②

2 1 3 1 4 1 3 2 4 2 4 3

①

2 1 3 1 4 1 3 2 4 2 4 3

Group 1C

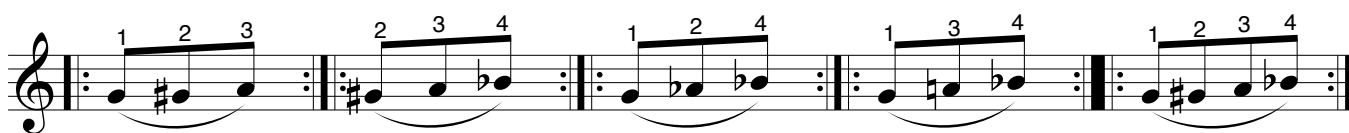
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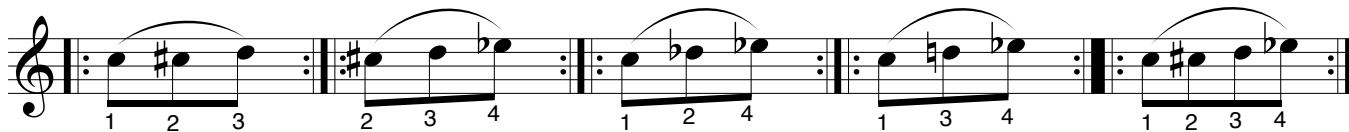
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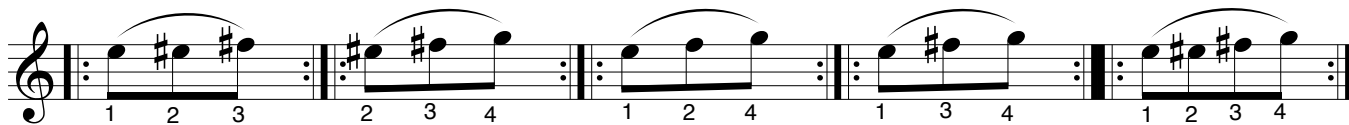
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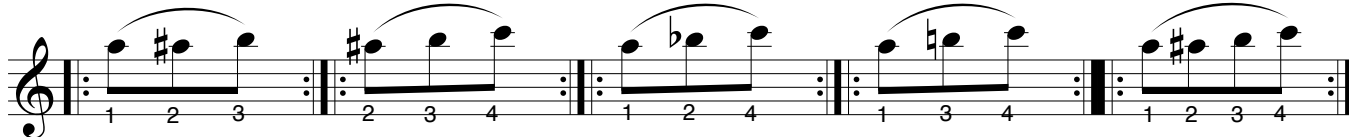
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2



1



Group 1C

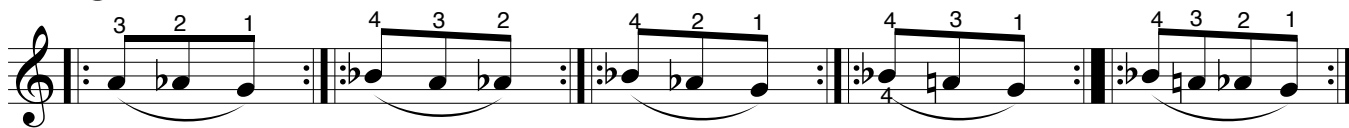
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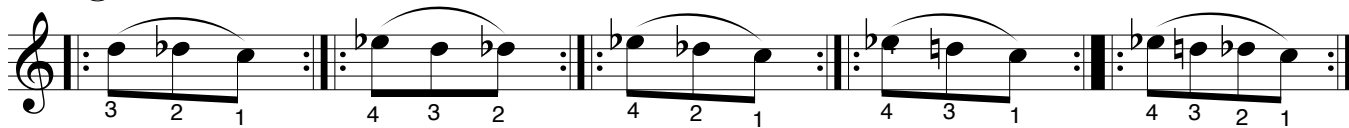
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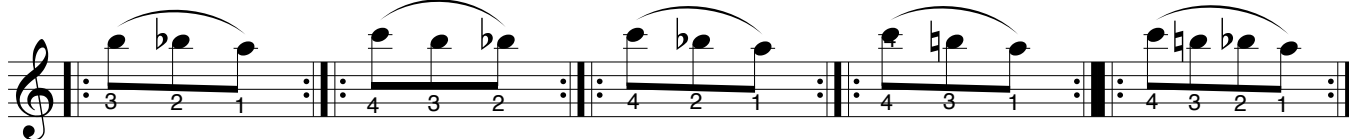
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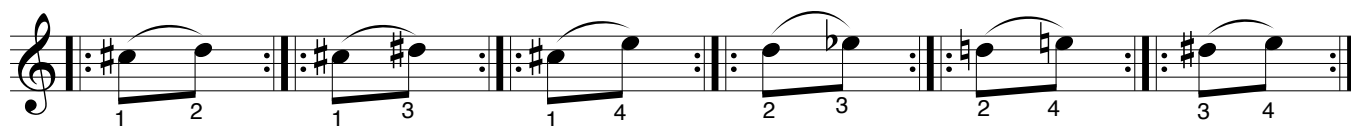
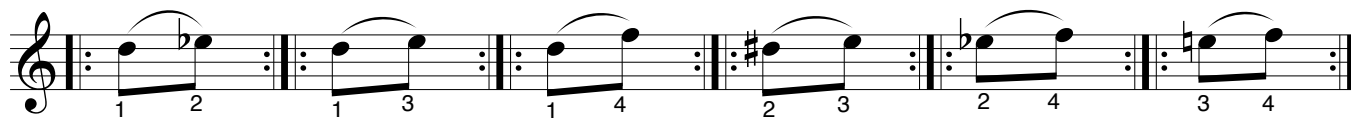
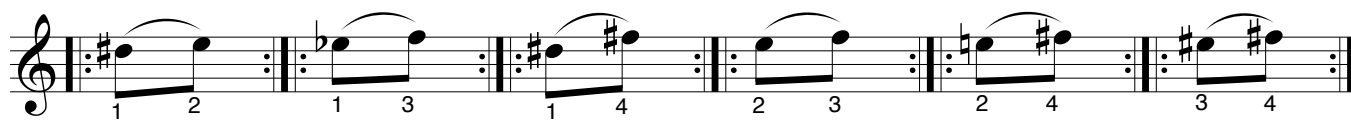
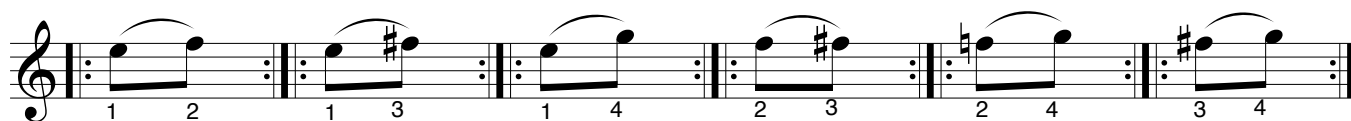
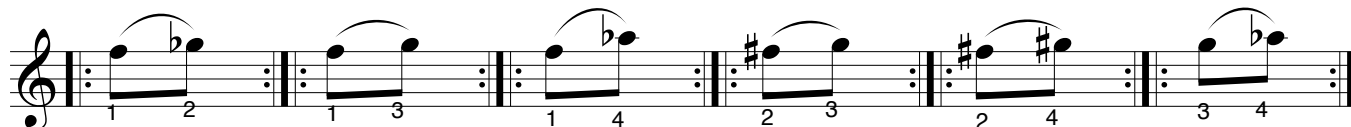
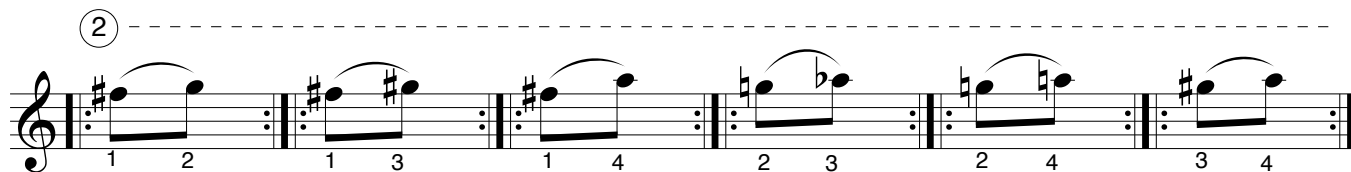
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1

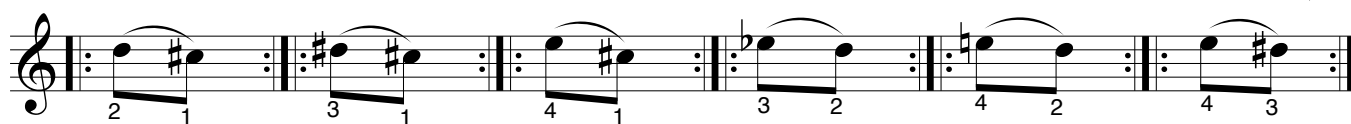
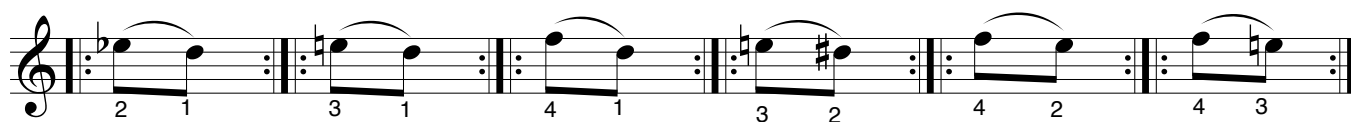
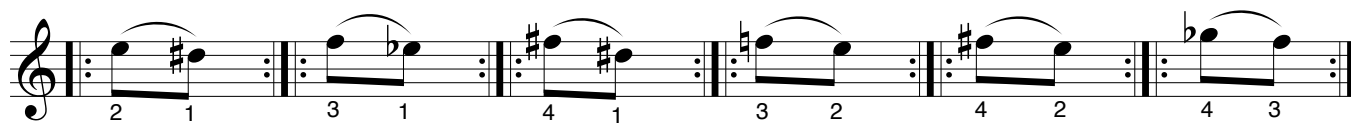
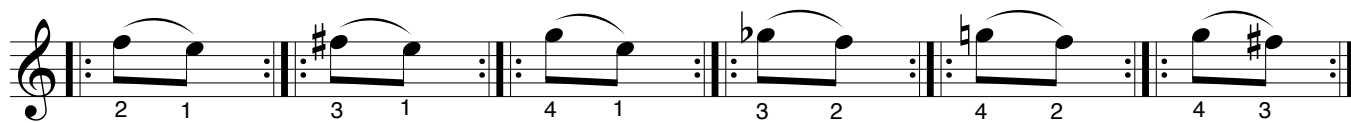
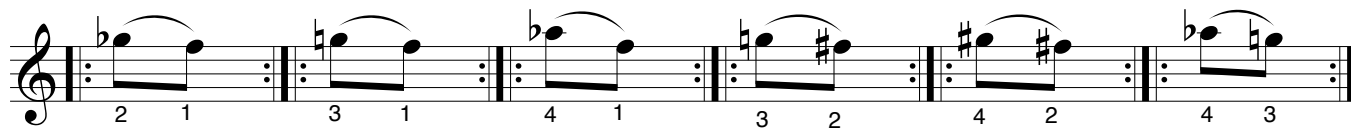
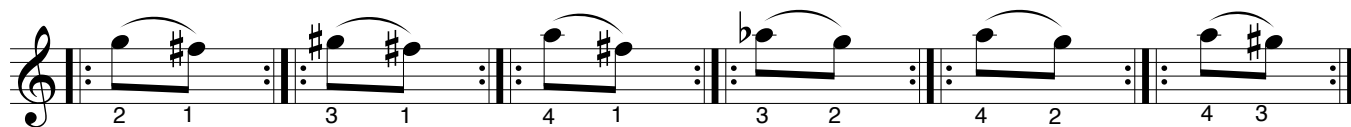


Group 2A



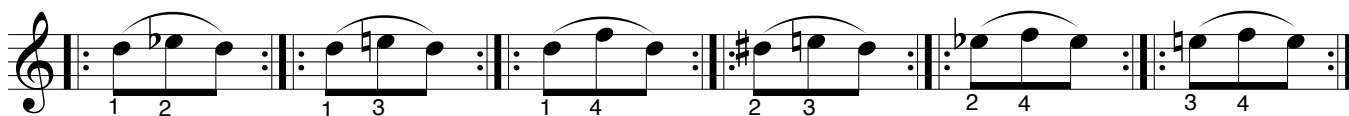
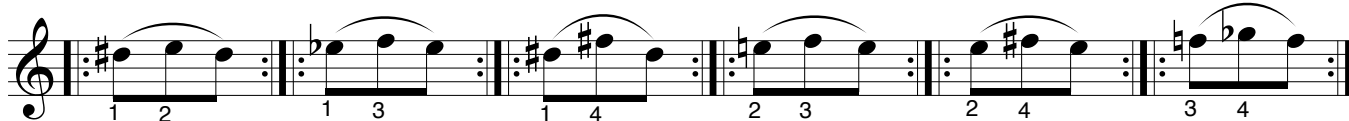
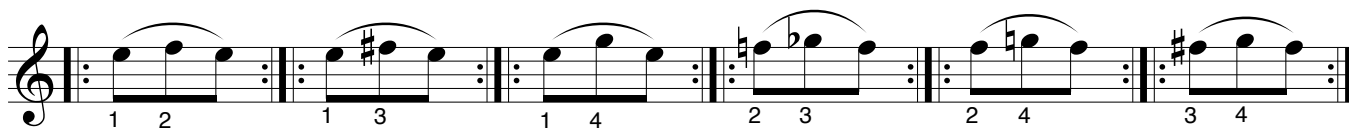
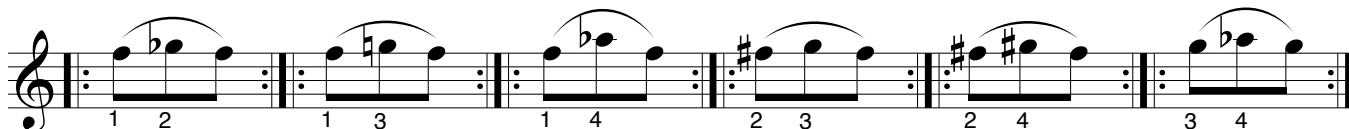
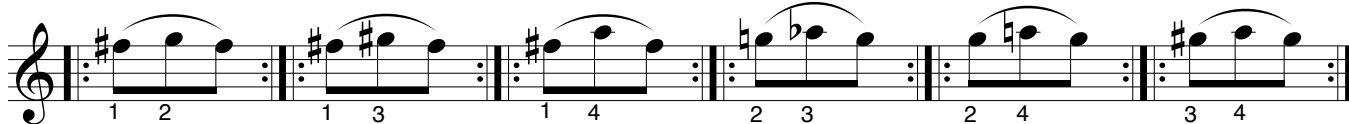
Group 2A

②



Group 2B

②



Group 2B

②

First musical staff with six measures of music. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: 2 1, 3 1, 4 1, 3 2, 4 2, 4 3. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Second musical staff with six measures of music. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: 2 1, 3 1, 4 1, 3 2, 4 2, 4 3. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

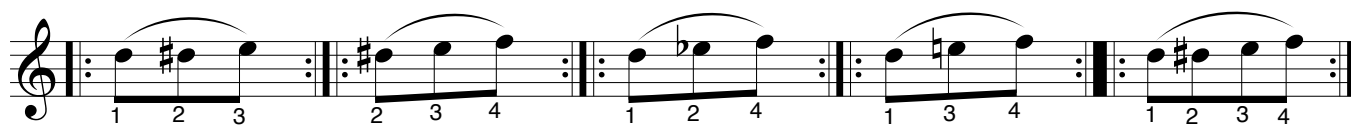
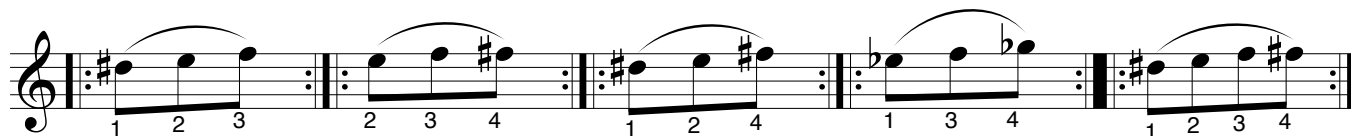
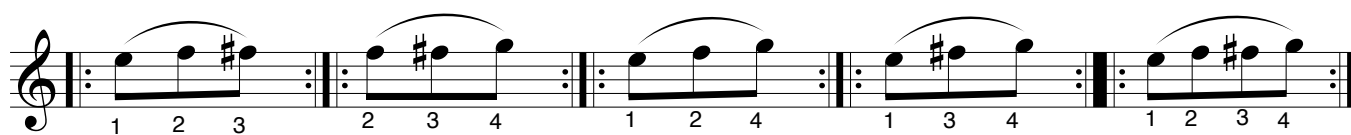
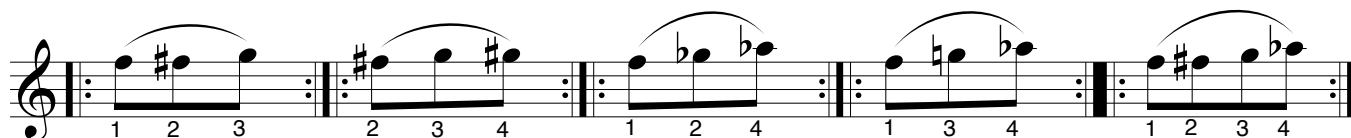
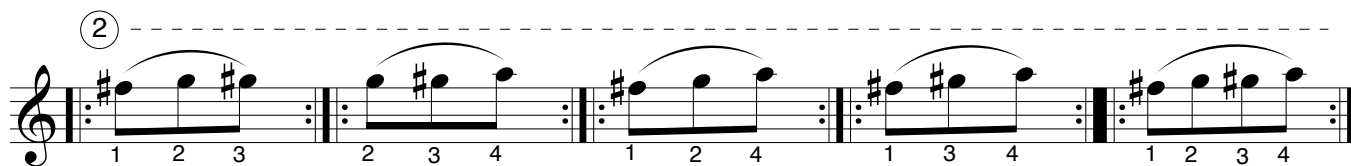
Third musical staff with six measures of music. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: 2 1, 3 1, 4 1, 3 2, 4 2, 4 3. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Fourth musical staff with six measures of music. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: 2 1, 3 1, 4 1, 3 2, 4 2, 4 3. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

Fifth musical staff with six measures of music. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: 2 1, 3 1, 4 1, 3 2, 4 2, 4 3. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

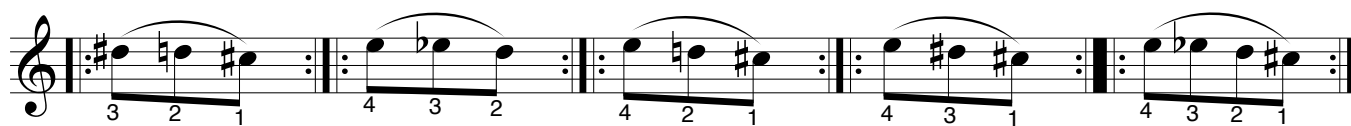
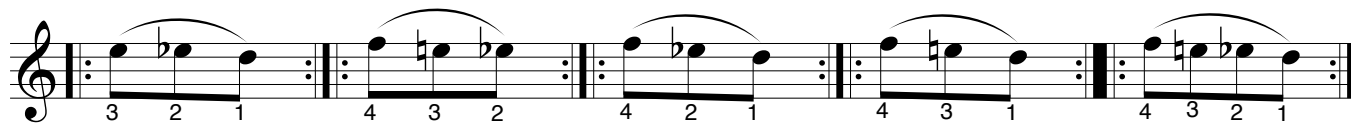
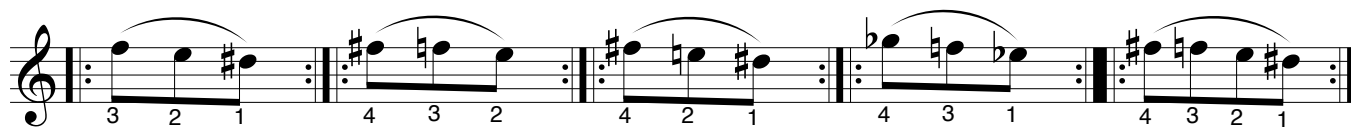
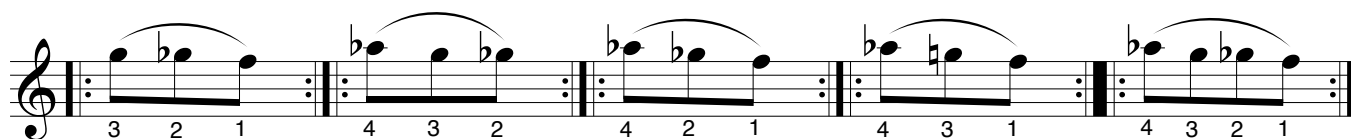
Sixth musical staff with six measures of music. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: 2 1, 3 1, 4 1, 3 2, 4 2, 4 3. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Group 2C



Group 2C

②



About the Author



Christopher Davis (www.christopherguitar.net) began his musical education in fifth grade on clarinet. At fourteen, inspired by Black Sabbath and Metallica, he picked up the guitar.

Chris holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Guitar Performance and Music Business from Drake University, and is currently pursuing graduate studies in guitar performance. His primary instructors have included Scott Dalziel, Phil DeLong, and Stanley Yates. Chris has performed in masterclass for world-renowned artists such as the Assad brothers and Christopher Parkening.