

Lesson 1 – The Free Stroke

In preparing for the free stroke, the right hand should be in a relaxed position. The thumb should be anchored on 5th string (for now). Keep the thumb straight. The wrist also should be kept fairly straight although some players – particularly classical guitarists tend to arch the wrist slightly. Either of these positions or a combination is fine. Try to avoid bending the wrist *back*.

For the purposes of this book the right hand fingers will be given the letter names as follows:

- *p* for thumb
- *i* for index
- *m* for middle
- *a* for ring

These letter names come from the Spanish words for the respective fingers and have become the accepted standard for naming the fingers of the right hand with numbers being reserved for the left hand fingers. At least *i* and *m* make sense...

Once the thumb (*p*) is in position, then the fingers can be placed on their appropriate strings (see figure 1):

- index finger (*i*) on the 3rd string
- middle finger (*m*) on the 2nd string
- ring finger (*a*) on the 1st string

When making a free stroke, the majority of the movement will come from the large knuckles with the other joints remaining somewhat loose and relaxed. The fingers should remain curved and gently spring back once the string has been struck. Please refer to the video for the actual process. The whole point of the free stroke is to strike the string, have the finger follow through without touching the other strings and then return to it's original position and prepare to strike the string again. This allows for greater speed and for the ability to sound any given string at any time for there will always be a finger ready to play a string.

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i, m, a

Moderate ♩ = 90

1

T 3
A 4
B 4

i m a i m a i m a i m a

5

a m i a m i a m i a m i a m i

9

i m a m i m a m i m a m i m a m i m a m

13

i a m a i a m a i a m a i a m a i a m a

17

m i a i m i a i m i a i m i a i m i a i