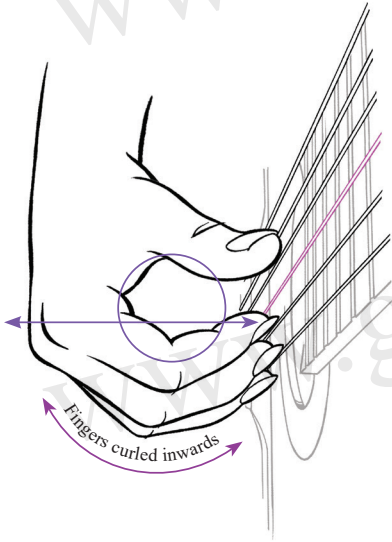


Free Stroke

Free stroke, also called *tirando*, is the stroke most frequently used by experienced guitarists. Although rest stroke produces a richer, louder tone and is used to add emphasis and bring out scale passages, free stroke is preferred for general use. It is also essential when playing chords and arpeggios (see next page). The main difference to rest stroke is that in free stroke the finger does not rest on, but lifts clear of the next string.

The 3 P's: Plant, Push, and Play

1.

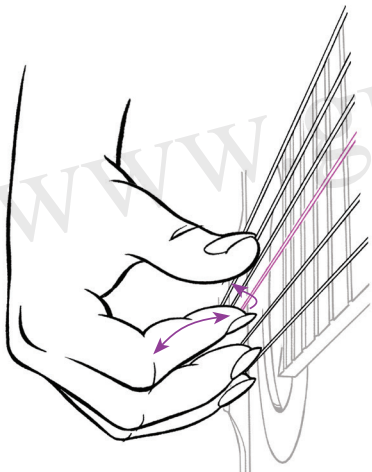


1. Plant

Place the thumb on string ④ and the fingers *i*, *m*, and *a* on strings ③, ②, and ① respectively. This is the basic default position of the right hand. It is known as the **full plant** because all the playing fingers are placed or 'planted' on the strings.

- The hand is shaped to form a 'hole in the hand', as if holding a small ball.
- The thumb is held away from the fingers.
- The main knuckle joint of the finger (the one nearest the palm) is positioned almost directly above the fingertip.
- Bend all finger joints so that the fingers curl in towards the palm.

2.

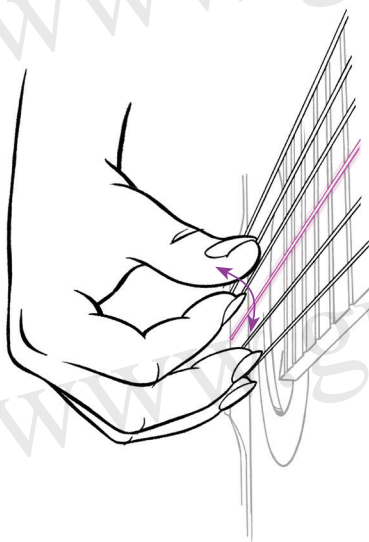


2. Push

The finger pushes the string *down* towards the soundboard and *back* towards the wrist.

- Push from the main knuckle joint, remembering to first position it directly above the fingertip.
- Relaxing the tip joint is useful in the early stages, particularly for promoting the downward direction of the stroke. At a later stage, however, when playing at greater speed, the tip joint should not flex too much or cave in; it will need to be held more firmly to allow the finger to move quickly through the string.
- Make sure that the string moves at least a few millimetres to the side. This will help you to produce a strong, full-bodied tone.

3.



3. Play

Playing is simply a question of releasing the string. Make sure that the string is released on the left side of your finger. This should be the easiest of the three free-stroke stages, assuming that the planting and pushing stages have been executed correctly!

- The finger swings through the string in an arc towards the wrist. It can be useful at first to exaggerate this *swinging* wrist-bound motion to help establish correct movement. In the end, however, your fingers will need to make small, controlled, 'piston-like' movements.
- If the finger movement has been mostly from the main knuckle joint, as it should be, the finger will return quite naturally to its original 'ready to play' position. You can encourage this reflexive spring-like movement by simply relaxing your finger once the string has been played.