VIOLIN PLAYING by ROBERT TRORY

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ESSENTIAL EXERCISES from BOOK ONE

I have written out this distillation of techniques covered in Book One of my **VIOLIN PLAYING** series as an aid to teachers and pupils who are joining the series at a later stage but who need to be sure that they have covered all the necessary ground.

Finger patterns.
There are four principle finger patterns with which around 85% of all violin playing is based in any possition.

- The first finger pattern has the semi-tone between the second and third fingers.
- The second finger pattern has the semi-tone between the first and second fingers.
- The third finger pattern has the semi-tone between the third and fourth fingers.
- The fourth finger pattern has no semi-tone.

The link between finger patterns and tonality provides a natural learning progression. The first finger pattern gives one-octave scales beginning on an open string. Adding the second finger pattern extends this to two octaves of G major, adds extra notes on the E string to D major and introduces one octave of C major. The third finger pattern in sharp keys introduces two octaves of A major and one octave of E major and B major; and in flat keys of Ab and Bb two octaves and Eb one octave. The fourth finger pattern occurs naturally at this point if fourth fingers are used.

This link between tonality and finger patterns teaches what I always refer to as the 'geography' of the violin. After all, if a pupil doesn't know where the notes are, how on earth can they play anything other than 'by ear' and guess work?

Book One of the series teaches the first finger pattern exclusively together with a good basic bowing technique. Learning where the strings are with bow arm, **without having to look at the violin**, is essential for confident playing.

The teaching of tonality linked to finger patterns gives each key a 'feel' of its own. Good control of the bow produces a solid reliable sound. The practise of scales and finger exercises encourages good intonation. And all of these elements develop the ability to sight read and enhance the enjoyment of playing.

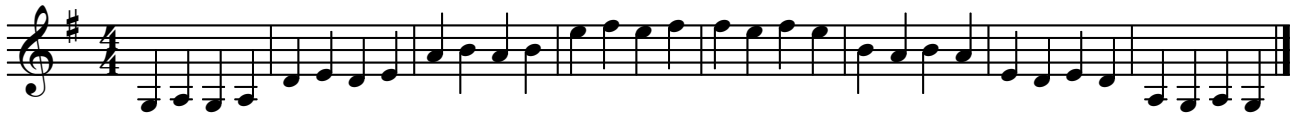
My books provide a structured learning programme combined with a multitude of violin duets to be played with the teacher. I hope you enjoy them.

Robert Trory

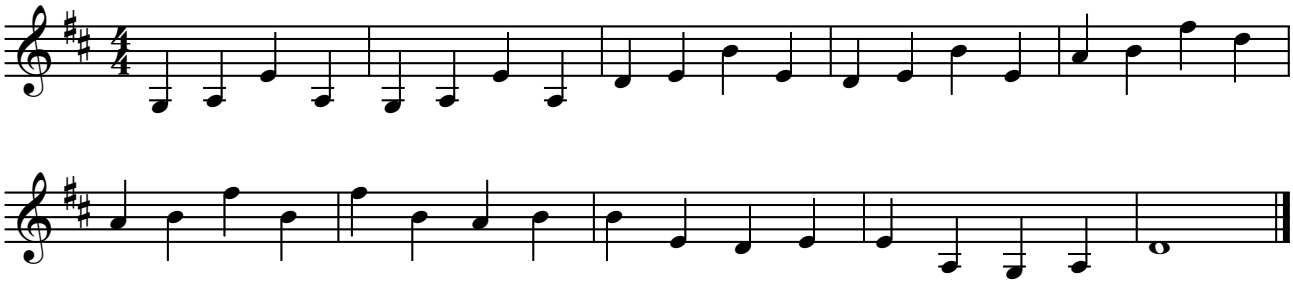
Finger Exercises

The first finger & thumb are the 'anchor' for the hand in any position. If the first finger is secure then the other fingers will be able to work well.

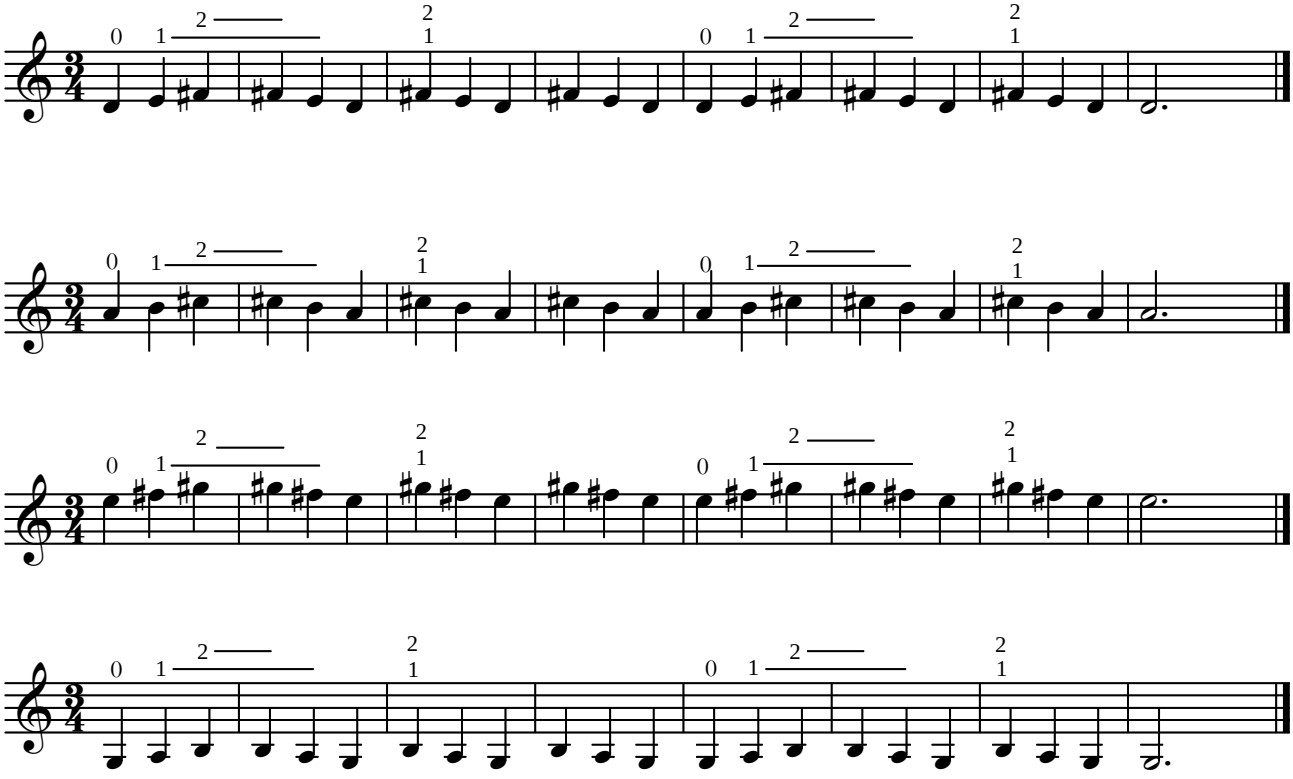
This first exercise is for the accurate placement of the first finger. There is usually a tendancy for the finger to go flat as it goes across to higher strings and sharp going the other way.



Exercise for lifting the first finger across the strings. When executing this exercise keep the arm under the violin still and take the first finger sideways across the strings lifting each time. Don't roll the finger across. Achieving mobility of the first finger is essential at an early stage.



Exercise for putting the first and second fingers down together a whole tone apart.



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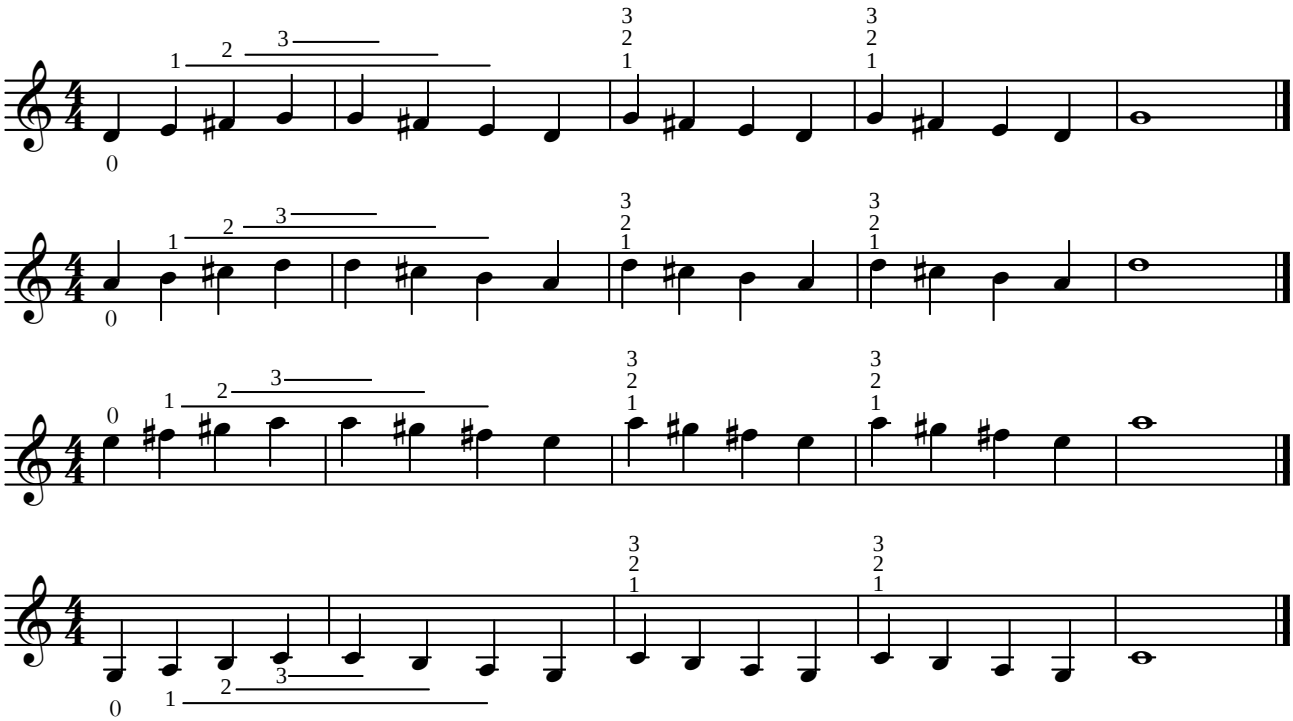
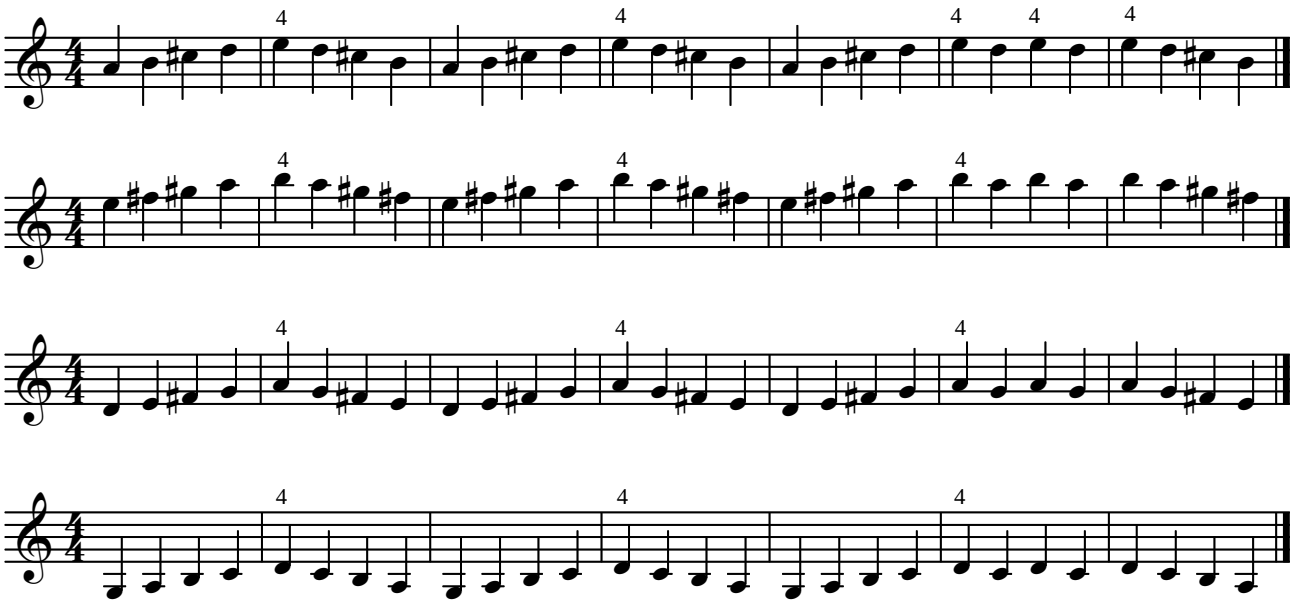
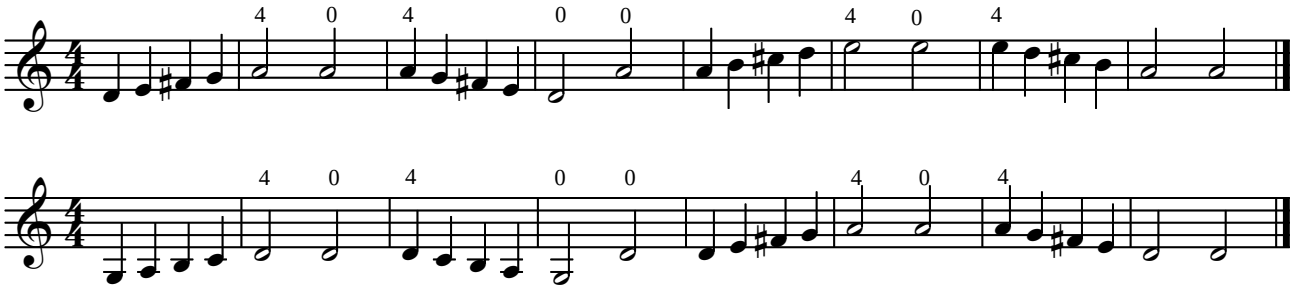
Exercise to help placing three fingers on the string at the same time and in the correct pattern.



Fourth finger exrecises. Developing the fourth finger at an early stage is essential.



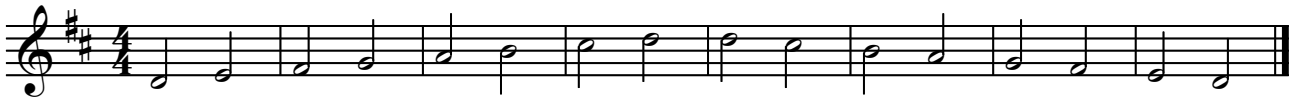
Checking the intonation of the fourth finger. This exercise is quite difficult at first. It develops the ability to hold the hand still and in shape whilst the fingers are not actually on the strings.



An insistence on practising scales at an early stage is to be advocated. Many pupils will only learn their scales when there is an exam coming up. Throughout my books there is a clear link between the four principle finger patterns and tonality. There is a natural association between finger patterns, key and the resultant scales. This makes the learning of scales a natural process. Scale practise also provides an opportunity to develop bowing ability.

Basic Scale

D major - one octave



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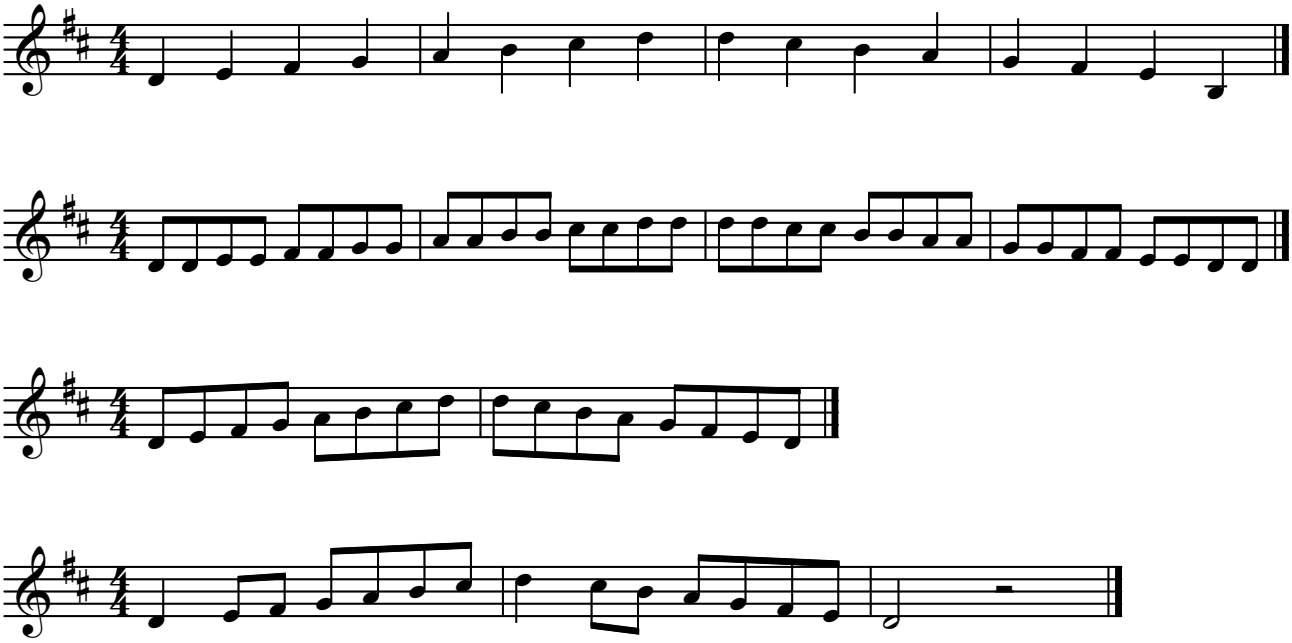

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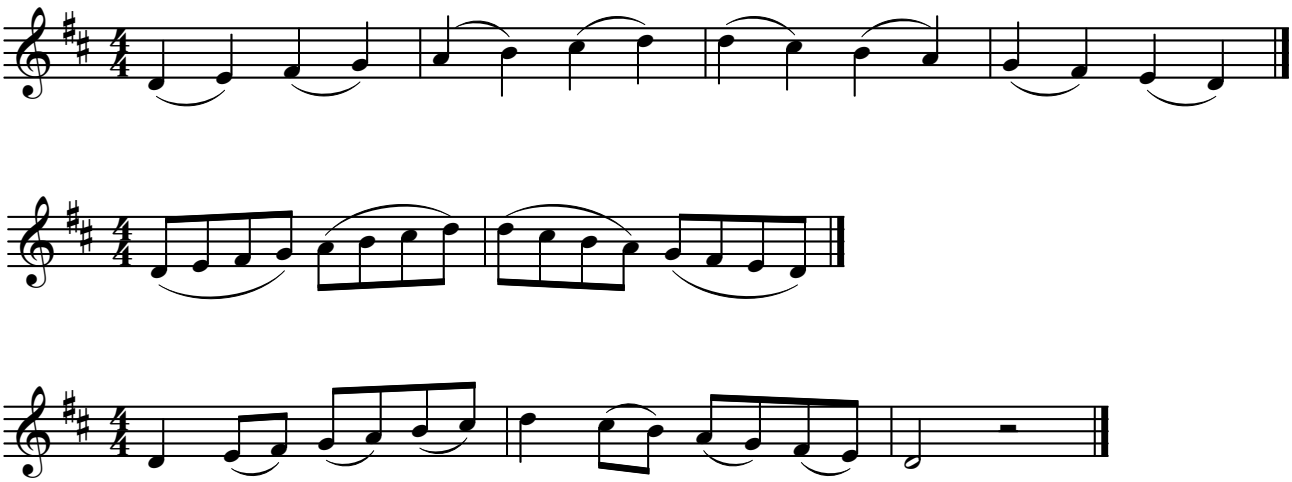

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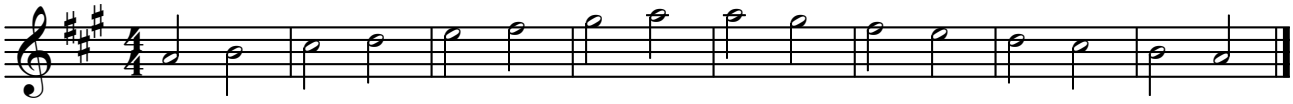
A major - one octave

Basic Scale



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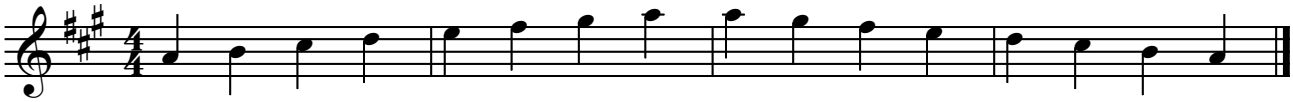

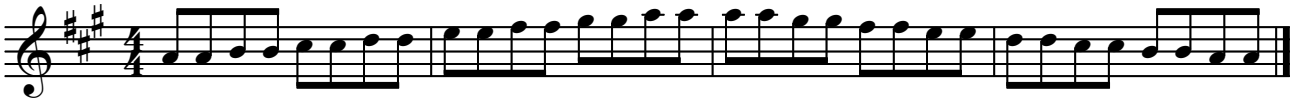

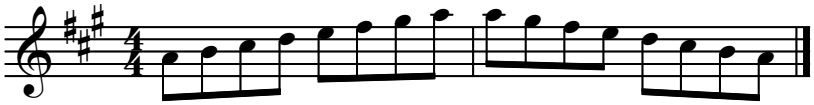

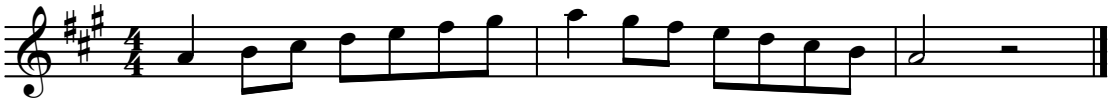

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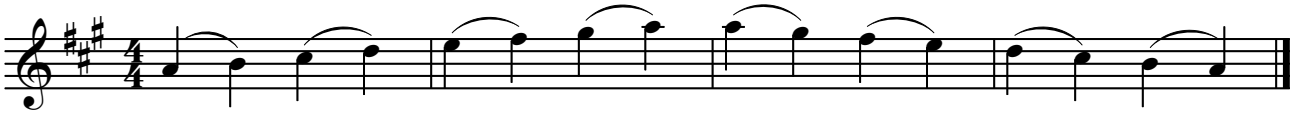

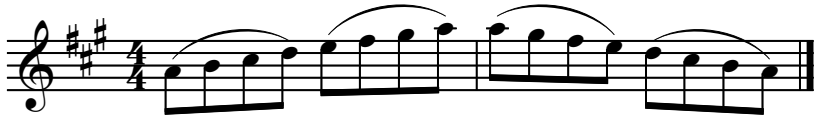

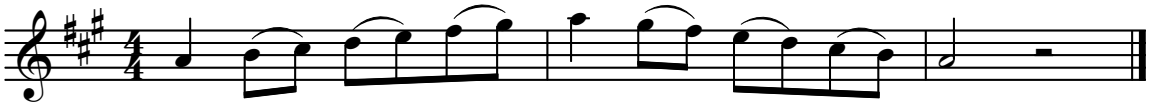

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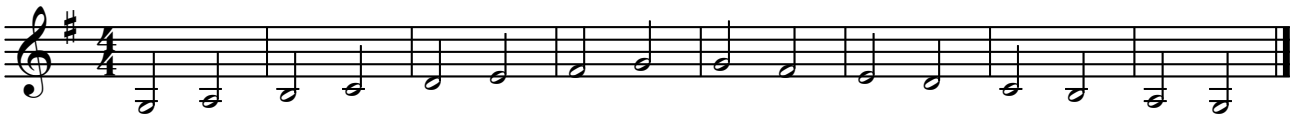
G major - one octave

Basic Scale



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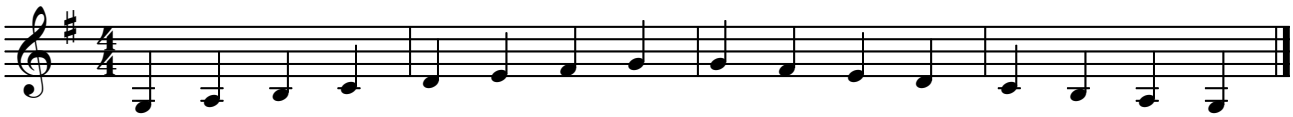

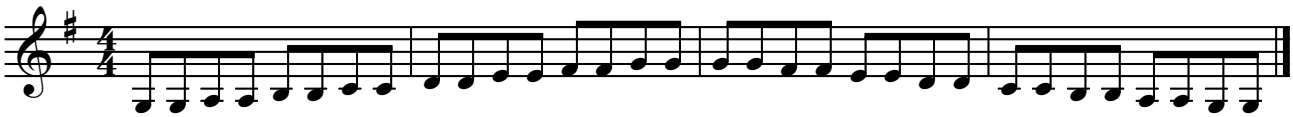

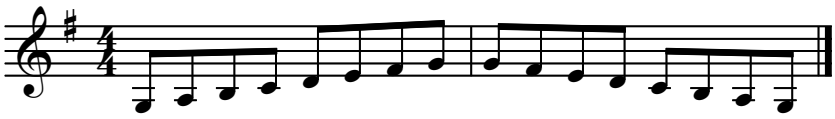

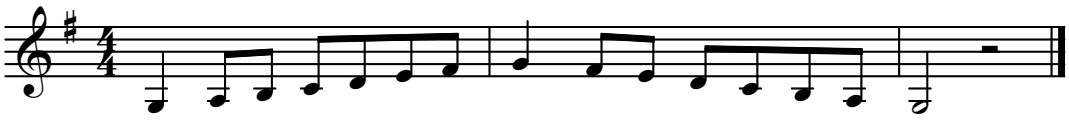

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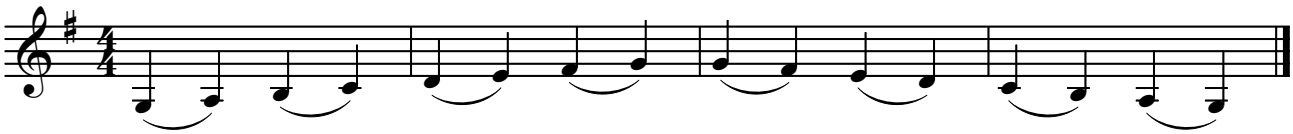

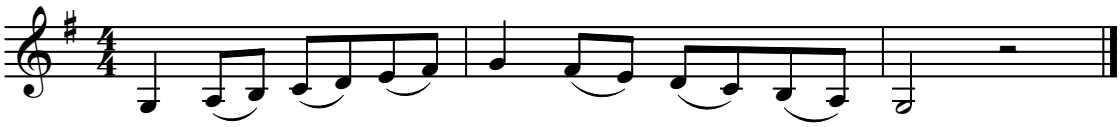

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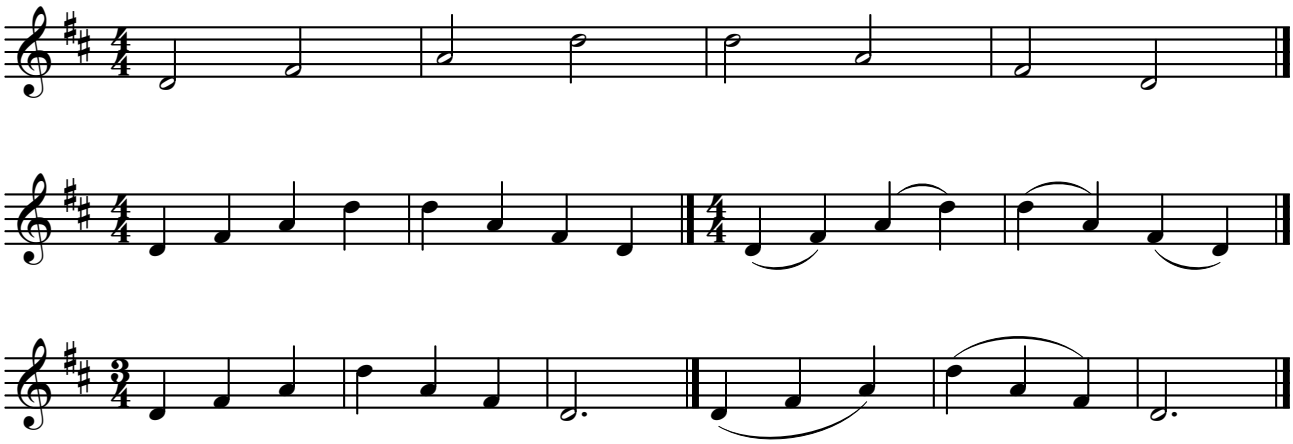
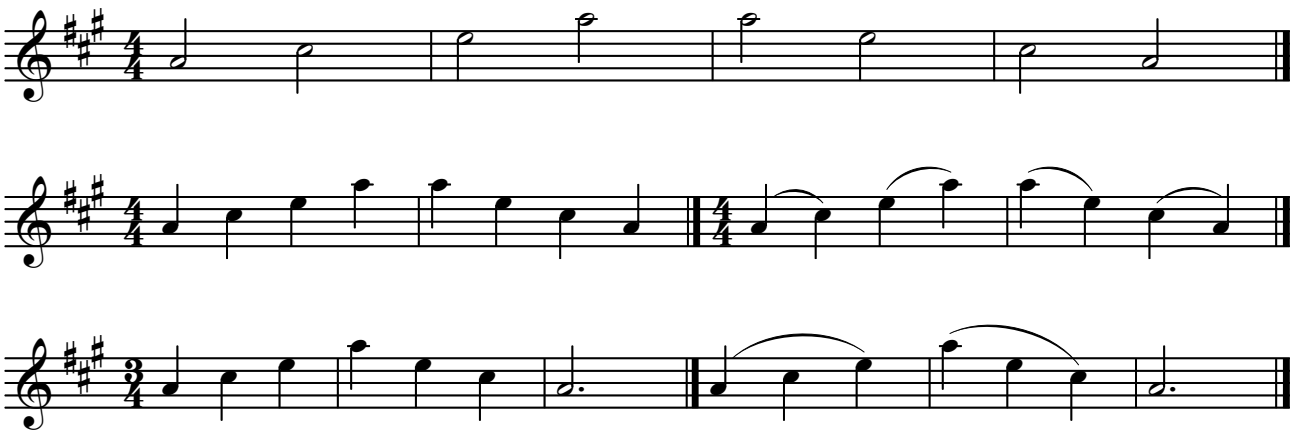
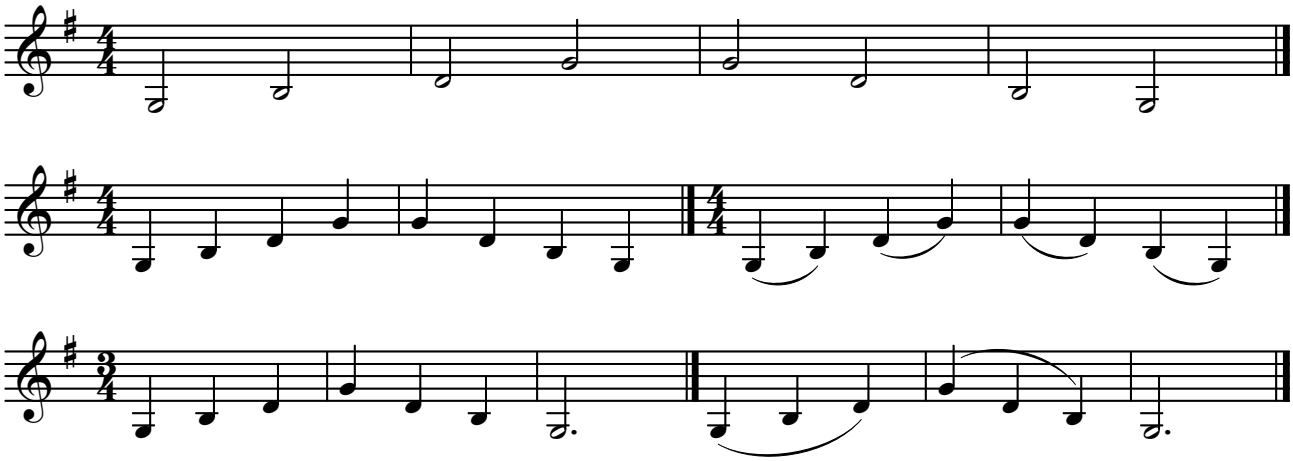
D major arpeggios



A major arpeggios



G major arpeggios



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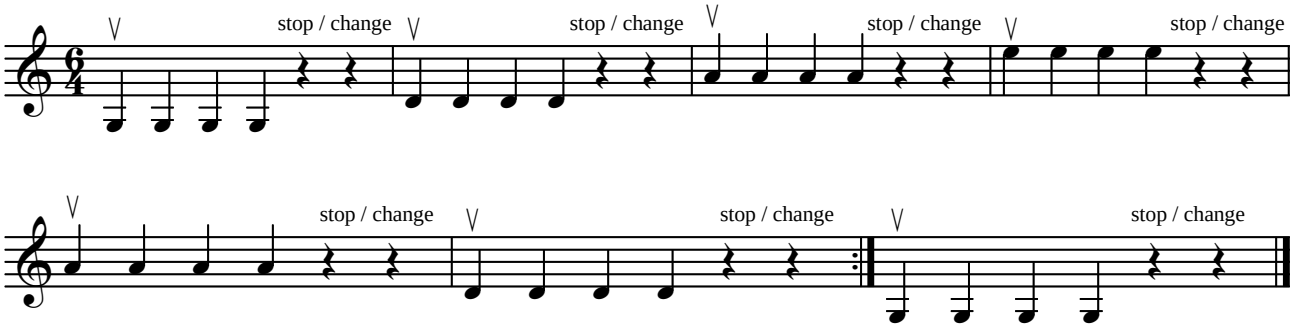
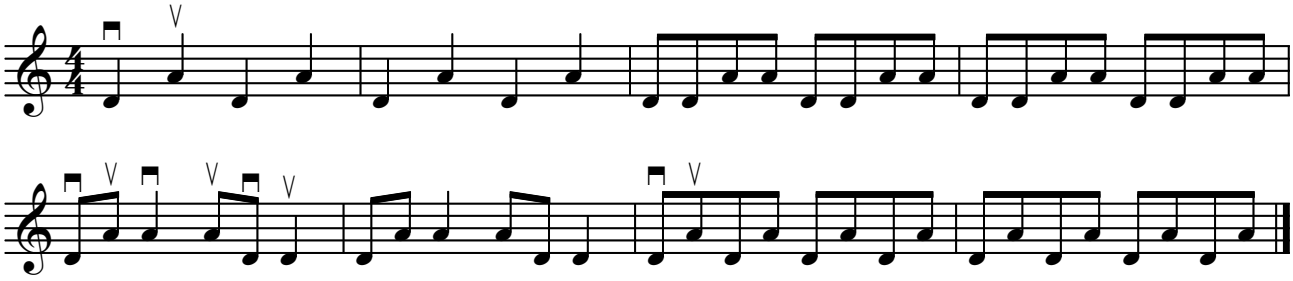
Exercises for the Bow

The Stop/Change Exercise.

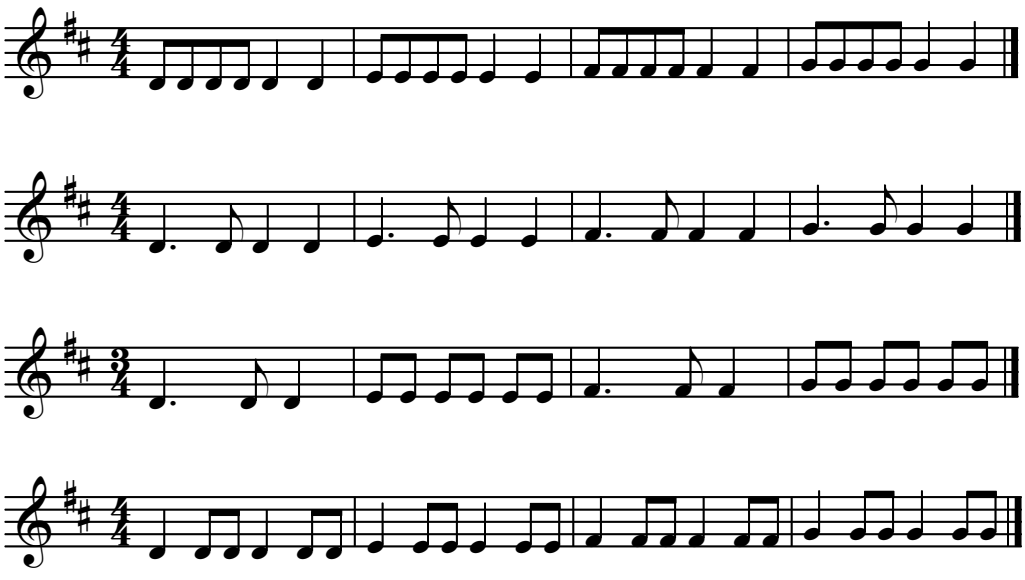
One of the most difficult things to learn is keeping the bow on one string - essential for making a good clean sound. This exercise teaches the right arm the four string positions. Begin each group of notes with an Up-bow and in the rests say to your self "Stop - Change". Stop the bow before changing strings so that the movement from one string to another takes place while bow is not moving. **Practice this exercise with the eyes closed!**
The exercise can then be developed with some elementary string crossing exercises where the bow is kept moving.



Repeat the following exercise on the D & G strings and on the A & E strings.



Practise the scales with different rhythms like this. Sometimes it helps to make up words that fit the rhythms. the first one could have the words *"I don't want to practise."*



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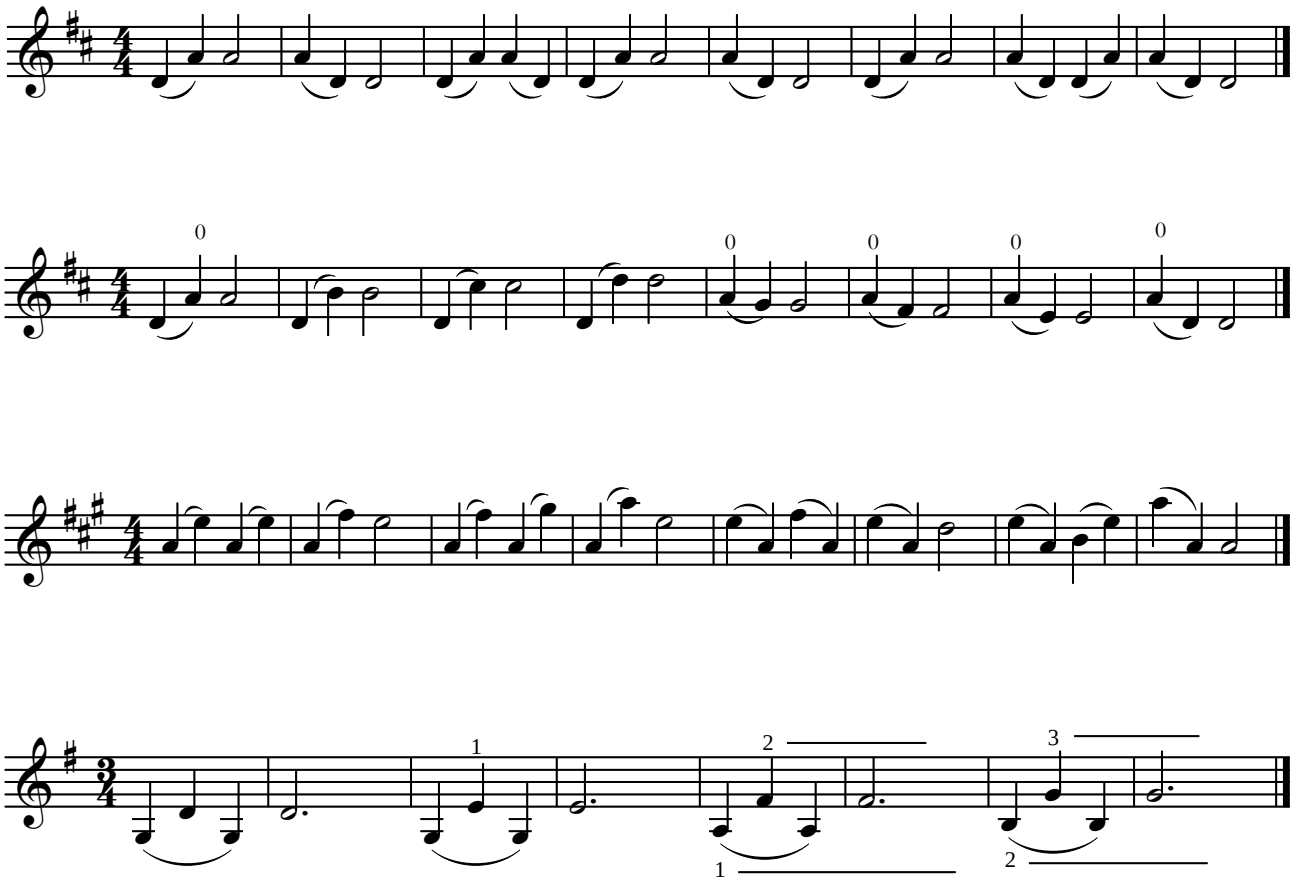
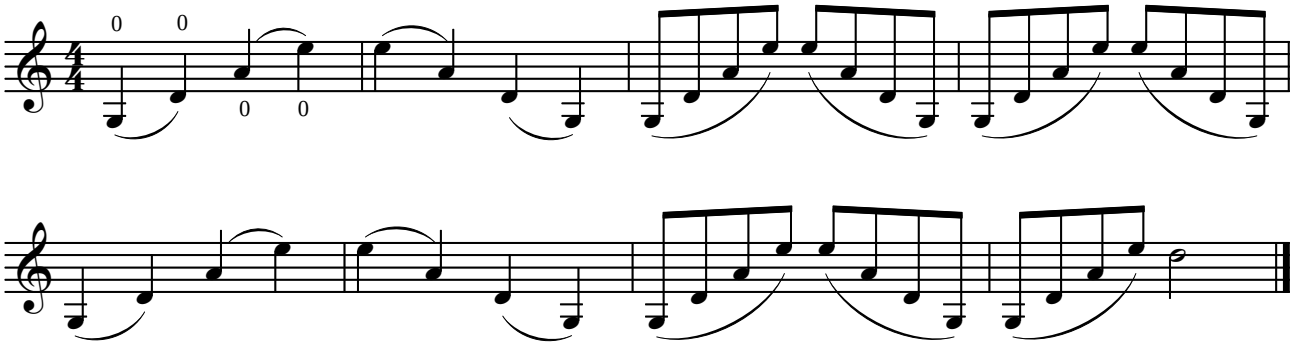
Slurring across strings.

Keep the bowing wrist as lose as possible to avoid a bump when you change strings.



When slurring across all four strings it is necessary to use more arm movement. Try to make this as smooth as possible.



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