

# Overlapping



Overlapping is a key aspect of left hand technique. In an ascending scale (for example), crossing from the fourth finger to the first finger, place the first finger *while* still playing the fourth finger. Then hold the fourth finger down until *after* the first finger note begins. Other finger combinations work in the same way.

## Exercise 1

Keep the finger that plays the second note of each bar (i.e. the note before the string crossing) down on the string longer than usual. Place the finger that plays the third note of each bar (i.e. the note after the string crossing) on the string earlier than usual.

- Hold down the finger playing the second note of each bar, until the beginning of the third crotchet beat of each bar. This is marked by a line. Lift the finger exactly on the third beat.
- Silently place the finger that will play the third note on the second crotchet beat of each bar. This 'prepared' finger is marked as an x-note.

In other words, at every string crossing the finger *before* the crossing, and the finger *after* the crossing, are held down together as a double-stop.

Lift the held-down finger exactly on the third beat

Place the x-note exactly on the second beat

Play in a variety of keys to cover different tone-semitone possibilities:



## Alternative

Instead of silently holding the fingers down, play them as double-stops. The exercise then sounds as follows:



## Exercise 2

Hold the fourth finger down as marked.

## Holding down the first finger

In descending scales, and other scale-type passages, the hand (and therefore the intonation) may be more stable if you do not lift the first finger for a few notes while the other fingers continue down the scale.

You may prefer to lift the first finger earlier than marked above, but it should still remain on the string until the fourth finger is ready on the lower string. This exercise exaggerates overlapping by holding the first finger down for longer than in normal playing.

## Exercise 3

Keep the first finger held down lightly on the string throughout.

Play these simple exercises through just a couple of times, and then play an ordinary scale across the strings. You may find that the left hand already feels noticeably smoother and more comfortable.

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Next month's BASICS features an intonation exercise for measuring the spaces between the fingers.