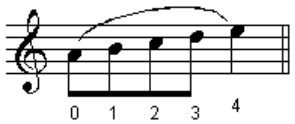
# Finger preparation

The term ‘finger preparation' refers to two specific cases:

**1** When going from a higher finger to a lower finger on the same string, the lower finger must be placed on the string before lifting the upper finger.

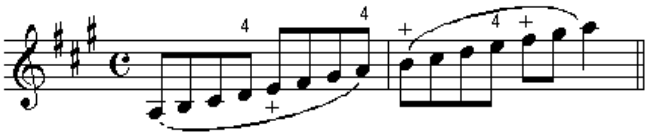
**2** When playing any finger on a new string, the finger must be placed ready on the new string before bowing the string.

In reality the only fingers that are ever not placed on the string before being sounded by the bow are ascending slurred notes:

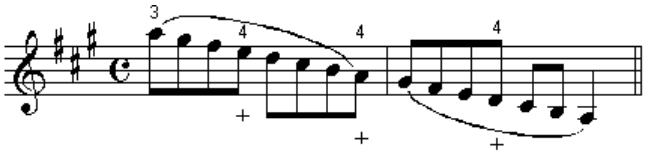



Here each finger falls onto the string and sounds directly. If the same notes were played with separate bows each finger would have to be placed before the bow stroke, but this is a simple question of co-ordination and is not strictly 'finger preparation'.

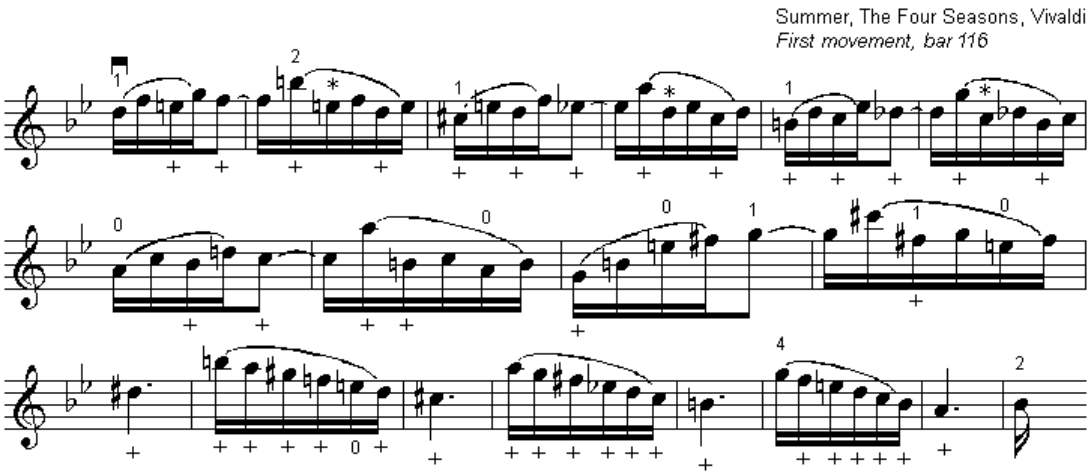
In an ascending scale a key finger to prepare is the first finger:



Descending, all the fingers need to be prepared, but a particular one to watch out for is the fourth finger:



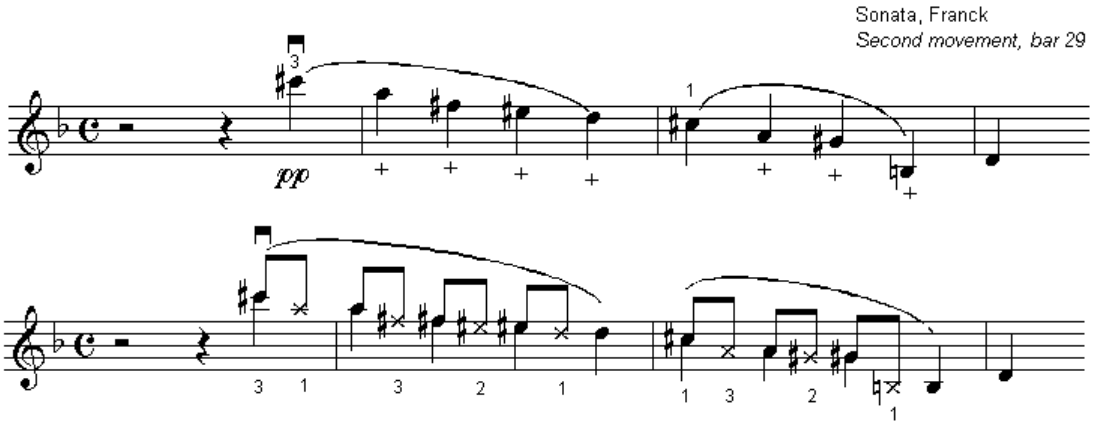
In this example from Vivaldi every prepared finger is marked with a cross. The notes marked with an asterisk are not really prepared fingers, even though they must be ready before the bow: in these cases the finger should be placed with the previous note almost on both strings at once as a perfect 5th, and then ‘rolled’ across to the A string.



## Practice method

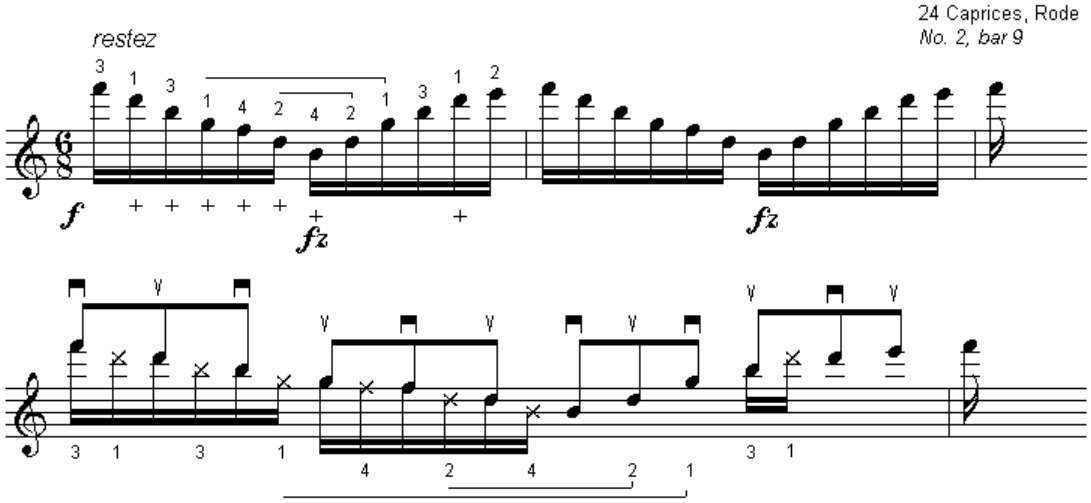
A simple way to practise preparing fingers is to place them exaggeratedly early, like a syncopation.

*Example 1.*

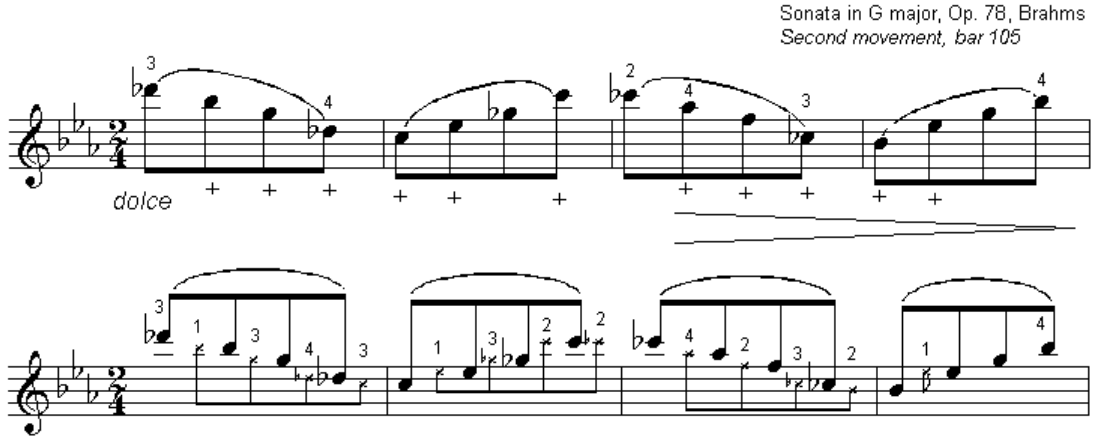



*Example 2.*

Hold the fingers down on the string, as marked by the lines:




*Example 3.*

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Next month's BASICS looks at how to practise fast passages so that every note is clear.