

# Left fourth finger

## Simple fourth finger exercise

- Raise and drop the fingers from the base joint so that the shape of the finger on the string, and in the air, is the same.
- Drop the fourth finger more on its tip for it to be more rounded.
- Hold the first finger down as marked.

Example

- Play the same notes on the other strings in other positions:

## Overlapping

During an ascending scale it is important that the fourth finger does not lift from the string too soon. Keep it on the string as the first finger plays its note on the next (higher) string.

This simple exercise exaggerates holding the fourth finger down until after the second finger has been played. After playing it a couple of times playing the scale normally with the fourth finger overlapping will feel entirely natural and automatic.

- First play slowly, and later speed up to a medium tempo:

Example

## Developing lightness and ease

It used to be thought that you did not have a good left hand technique unless you could hear the fingers banging on the fingerboard with a hard impact. While there may be good reasons sometimes to exaggerate the finger action, in general a *fast* finger action should be the norm rather than a heavy one. The fingers must move very quickly to create the different string-lengths, but always using minimum power and effort. A useful image for fast lift-off in the following exercise is of the string being red-hot:

♩ = 60-80

touching a 'red-hot' string

lift the fourth very fast

drop very fast

drop fast

lift fast

The exercise consists of six staves of music. The first staff has a tempo marking of ♩ = 60-80. It begins with a triplet of eighth notes (fingerings 3, 4, 4) and a quarter note (fingerings 3, 4). The second staff continues with a quarter note (fingerings 3, 4) and a quarter note (fingerings 3, 4), with annotations 'lift the fourth very fast' and 'drop very fast'. The third staff has a quarter note (fingerings 3, 4) and a quarter note (fingerings 3, 4), with annotations 'drop fast' and 'lift fast'. The fourth, fifth, and sixth staves show increasingly dense patterns of eighth and sixteenth notes, all under a single slur.

Example

## Extensions

The extension of the fourth finger out of its perfect fourth 'frame' can be likened to a 'fifth' finger, essential in countless passages in the ordinary repertoire:

'fifth' finger

Violin Concerto no. 4 in D, K218, Mozart  
First movement

The example shows a sequence of notes on a single staff. The notes are: G4 (finger 2), A4 (finger 4), B4 (finger 3), C5 (finger 4), and D5 (finger 3). The notes are grouped into pairs: (G4, A4), (B4, C5), and (D5, C5). The first two pairs are slurred together. The third pair is also slurred together. The notes are marked with fingerings 2, 4, 3, 4, 3.

Example

Extension exercises like these are very effective at building a clearer awareness of the geography of the fingerboard.

The first staff shows a sequence of notes: G4 (finger 4), A4 (finger 1), B4 (finger 4), C5 (finger 1), D5 (finger 4), E5 (finger 1), F5 (finger 4), G5 (finger 1). The notes are grouped into pairs: (G4, A4), (B4, C5), (D5, E5), and (F5, G5). The first two pairs are slurred together, and the last two pairs are slurred together. The notes are marked with fingerings 4, 1, 4, 1, 4, 1, 4, 1.

The second staff shows a sequence of notes: G4 (finger 4), A4 (finger 4), B4 (finger 1), C5 (finger 4), D5 (finger 1), E5 (finger 4), F5 (finger 1), G5 (finger 4). The notes are grouped into pairs: (G4, A4), (B4, C5), (D5, E5), and (F5, G5). The first two pairs are slurred together, and the last two pairs are slurred together. The notes are marked with fingerings 4, 4, 1, 4, 1, 4, 1, 4.

etc.

Example  $\flat$

Example