

Top 10 Technique Exercises

by Rafael Aguirre





Meet Your Instructor

Rafael Aguirre is an internationally acclaimed musician whose deep understanding of music, dazzling virtuosity and immensely diverse repertoire has taken him to 33 countries. The beginning of his extraordinary career was marked by winning thirteen first prizes at international competitions (including the Tarrega Competition and Pro Musicis, New York), and he is currently one of the most celebrated guitarists worldwide.

His performances have been hailed as “a blessing” (Mainz Echo); “the future of the concert guitar” (Kultur Port); “one of the most acclaimed ambassadors of the Spanish guitar” (El País).

Rafael performs regularly in prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall in New York, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Vienna Konzerthaus, Moscow Tchaikovsky Hall, Philharmonie am Gasteig in Munich, Hamburg Laeiszhalle, Palau de la Musica in Barcelona, King's Place London, and Saint Petersburg Philharmonia, to name a few.

He has been pre-nominated for a Latin Grammy and has received enthusiastic reviews by Gramophone, The Strad and Crescendo Magazine, also appearing on broadcasts by international radios such as the BBC, NPR, CBS, and more.

Learn more at www.rafael-aguirre.com

Introduction

Need some new exercises to spice up your technical routine? Try Rafael's top 10 technique exercises which addresses everything from the left and right hand, all the way down to the pinky!

Rafael incorporates different exercises he's developed for strengthening the pinky, an often forgotten digit in the classical

guitar world. On top of that, he also shares the rasgueado exercise he uses to help develop speed and thumb strength.

Put Rafael's top 10 exercises to work by printing out this PDF with each individual exercises written out and incorporating them into your practice. It's time to take your technique to another level!



Outline

A brief list of exercises and topics covered in this PDF.

#01

INTRO & LEFT HAND EXERCISES

After a quick introduction to his methodology, Rafael jumps in with two exercises for the left hand; "climbing" and a triplet scale.



#02

RIGHT HAND PINKY (C)

Rafael introduces four exercises to refine your right hand pinky technique and explains that strengthening it can help to balance the right hand and improve your technique as a whole!

#03

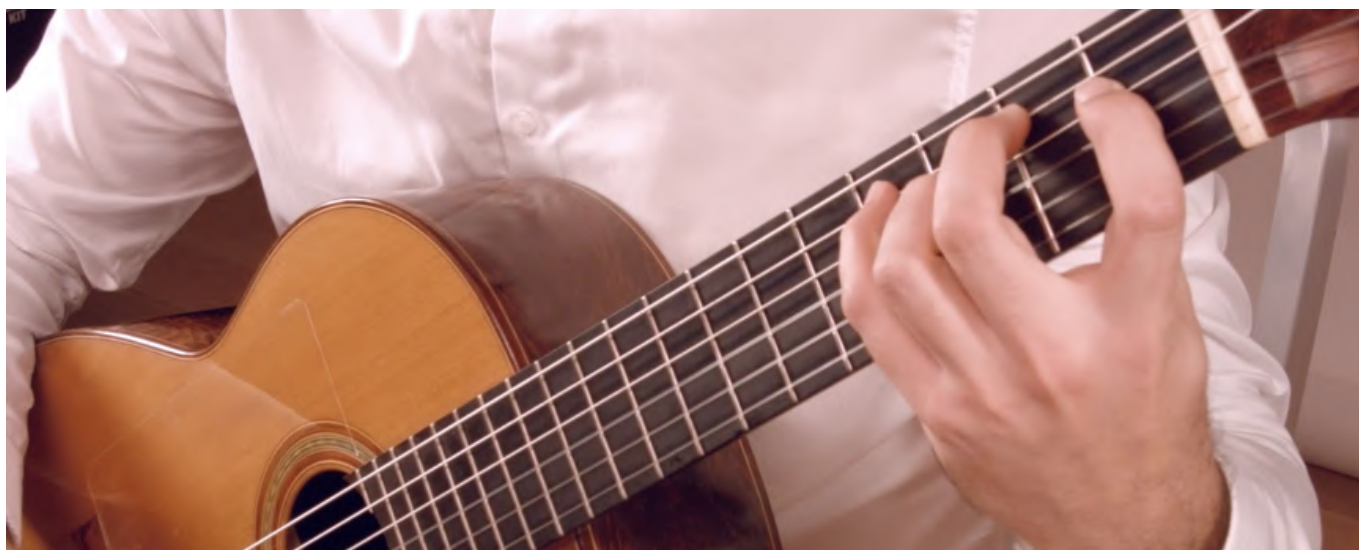
FLAMENCO TECHNIQUES

Borrowing ideas from Flamenco, Rafael shares two exercises that can help our thumb technique and rasgueados as well!

#04

PLAYING APOYANDO

The final two exercises focus on *apoyando* technique through an arpeggio study and a scale study inspired by the one and only Paco de Lucia!



#01 Intro & Left Hand

In this first section, Rafael briefly introduces his methodology and some basic left hand exercises!

METHODOLOGY

The following ten exercises are broken up into groups of two. Each group addresses one of the following technical areas: **left hand**, **pinky**, **right hand**, **rasgueados**, and **apoyando**.

"CLIMBING"

This exercise (see below) is for **developing strength in the left hand**. Start the pattern in the first position and move all the way up the fretboard, even past the twelfth fret! When in the air, make sure the fingers are always as close to the fretboard as possible. Focus on **one finger at a time** and keeping the movements as minimal as possible. When you get to the higher positions you will need to use more pressure to press the string down, especially when you speed up!



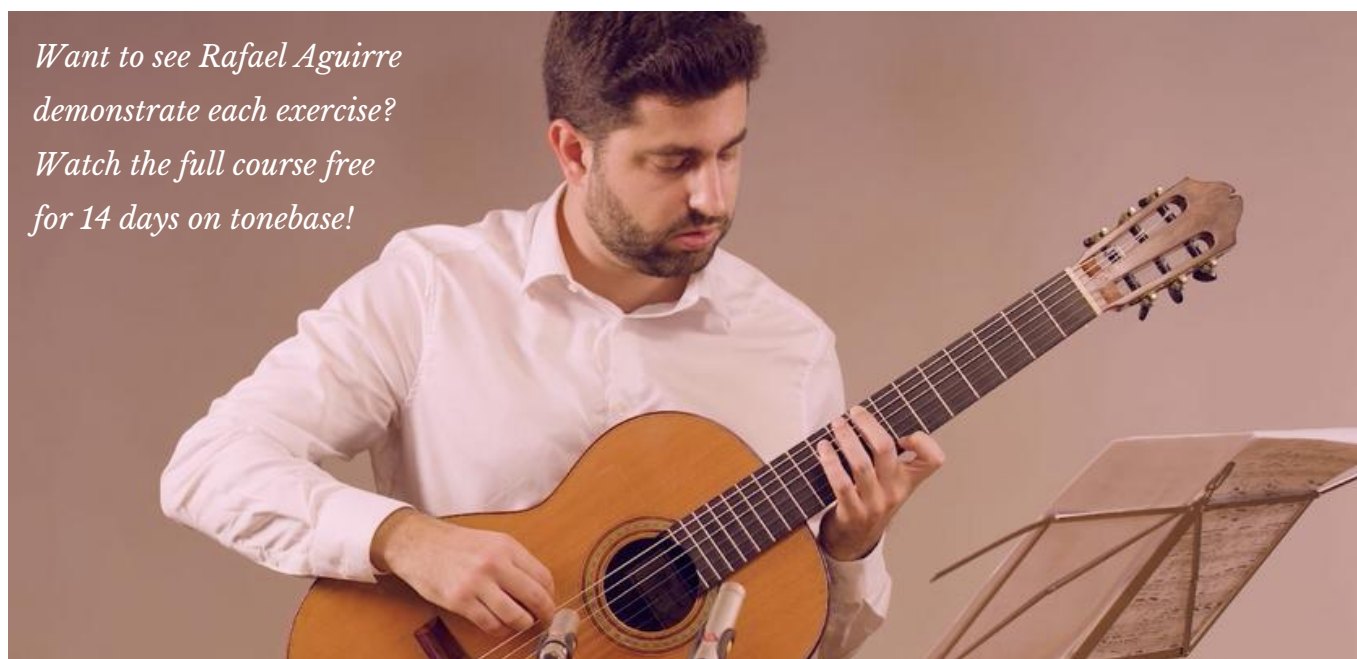


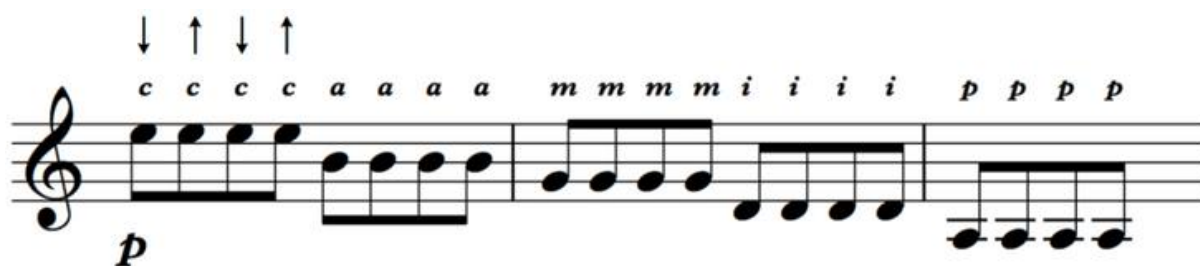
TRIPLET SCALE

Rafael originally learned this scale from listening to flamenco guitarists. He enjoys it because the triplet rhythm differs from traditional classical scales that are usually duplets. Start this exercise up on the 7th fret. When practicing, focus on the rhythm - as Rafael says, “**rhythm gives you coordination.**” Try varying the exercises by using different right hand finger combinations.

Let the first finger of the left hand be the anchor, try not to move it! Focus on keeping the other fingers as close to the fretboard as possible. Practice this about 20 times if you can. Remember, the purpose is to master your coordination, so you want to focus on making sure you play very rhythmically. You can also reverse this exercise and go upwards if you want to.

*Want to see Rafael Aguirre
demonstrate each exercise?
Watch the full course free
for 14 days on tonebase!*





#02 Right Hand Pinky

Developing the right hand pinky (c) can balance and strengthen your hand!

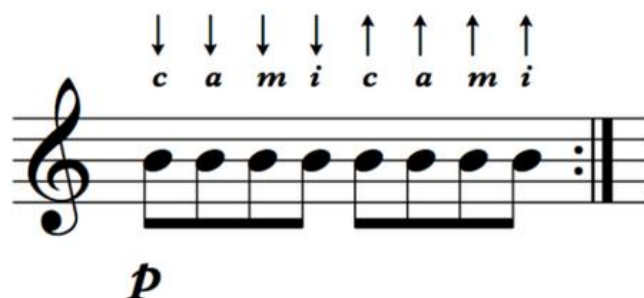
PINKY ARPEGGIO

Early in his career, Rafael discovered that developing the pinky finger (c) in the right hand really makes your overall hand a lot stronger. Since then, he has devised many different exercises (such as this as the one above) for developing the often forgotten finger.

When performing this exercise, make sure all the movements are controlled and relaxed. If you want to increase speed, the movements need to be small. Do this exercise every day, but make sure it's not for too long.

PINKY "TREMOLO"

Here is Rafael's second exercises for the pinky. Make sure you don't leave too much distance from the string and do this exercises *piano*.





"GO TO SLEEP"

This is a deceptively difficult exercise that improves flexibility in the right hand and helps you have a better position. Rafael recommends not doing this exercise more than a couple of minutes.

"Go to sleep"



Five Finger Tremolo

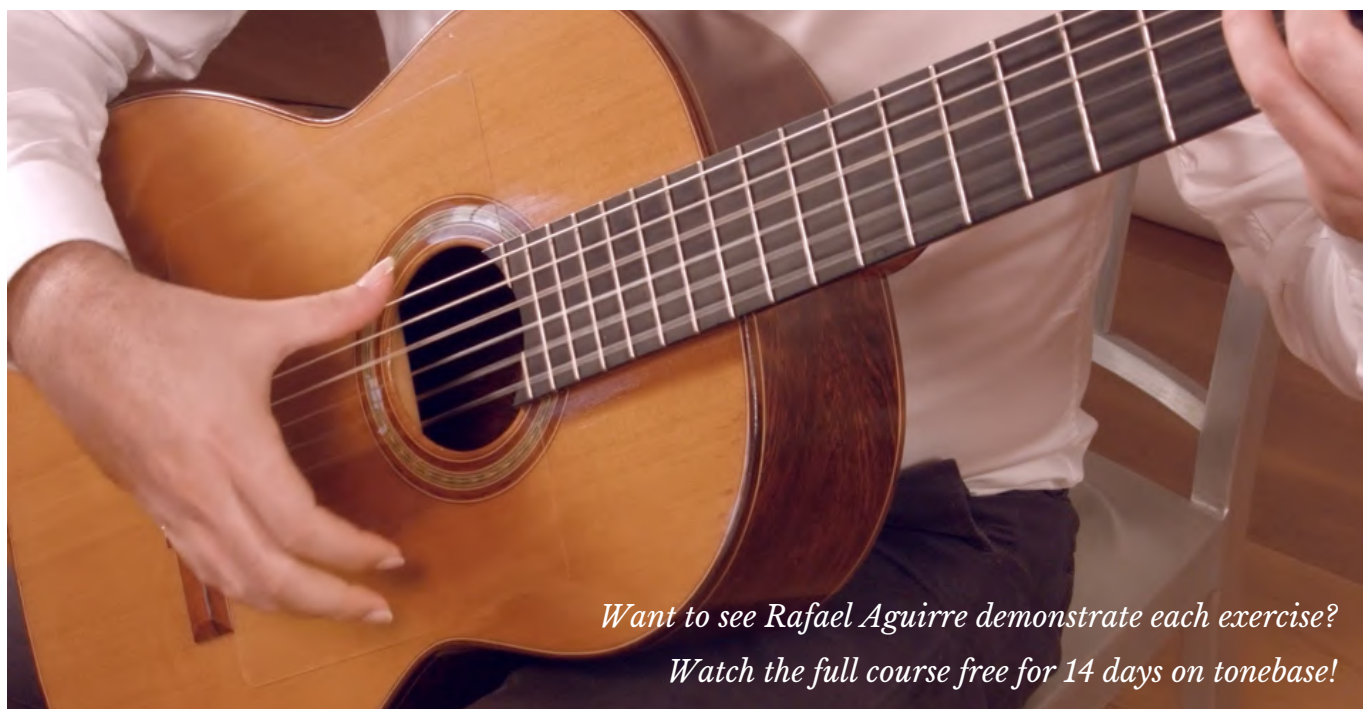


FIVE FINGER TREMOLO

This exercise (below) is a continuation of Rafael's pinky "tremolo," just now with the thumb.

As a general principle, Rafael recommends practicing tremolo as if you were a singer - **listen to every note and give it importance.**

Once you feel confident with this exercise on it's own, try practicing some tremolo pieces with it!



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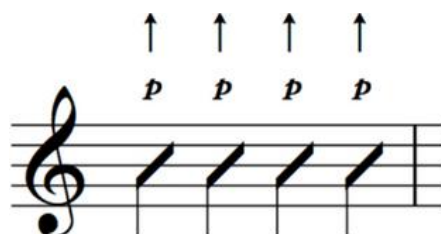
#03 Flamenco Techniques

*Borrowing techniques and exercises
from Flamenco helps further
strengthen the right hand!*

THUMB RASGUEADO

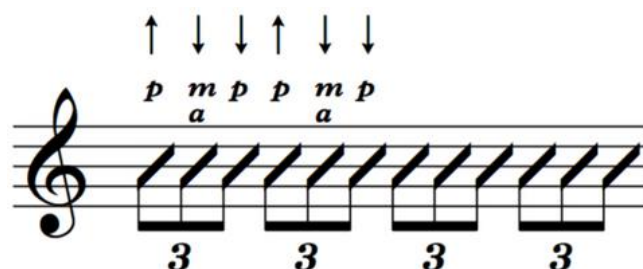
Rasgueados are great for not only scales, but also for developing other parts of the hand. In the following two exercises, Rafael teaches you the “alzapua” technique that is a similar motion to playing guitar with a pick. To start, this first exercise is great for strengthening the thumb.

Rafael stresses the importance of the thumb joints being “flat” at the end of the movement (see above) and releasing tension once each rasgueado is finished.



ADVANCED RASGUEADO

Once you feel confident with the thumb alone, try adding the other movements.



#04 Playing Apoyando

Rafael finishes things off with some rest stroke exercises!

APOYANDO ARPEGGIO

Try playing this exercise for 5 minutes a day, focusing on rhythm not speed.

Do the first line starting with your pinky and later switch to the second line starting with your index finger. All of this should be done apoyando or “rest stroke.”

Apoyando Arpeggio



Paco de Lucia Scale



PACO DE LUCIA SCALE

Otherwise known as "double apoyando", this final exercise comes from a specific scale Rafael heard on a famous recording by Paco de Lucia. Take it slow at first focusing on groups of four or even two, but as you go faster, focus on larger groups of eight or even sixteen.