THE FREE STROKE

For the sake of completeness we will consider briefly the other principal right hand movement known as the FREE STROKE.

The free stroke is easy to understand, since the movements are similar to those of the rest stroke except in the final phase. Instead of coming to rest, the finger just clears the adjacent string and comes to a halt in the air approximately above it.

Fig. 9 THE FREE STROKE.

The free stroke becomes important in the performance of chords and arpeggios, which are considered in detail after sufficient notes have been learned. For now, the stroke may be practiced experimentally to distinguish it clearly from the rest stroke.

CONCLUSION

This first section on basic technique is a very important one, since at the end of it you are really playing the guitar. Remember particularly to check the following:

1. Is your sitting position correct, as in the illustration?
2. Is your left arm relaxed?
3. Is your thumb behind the neck? Not bent at the joint?
4. Are your left-hand fingers as vertical as possible when you play?
5. Are your right-hand knuckles on a line with the strings?
6. Is your right wrist correctly arched?

If the exercises have been thoroughly practiced and you can comfortably co-ordinate the two hands, you are now ready for the challenge and enjoyment of beginning to play from music.
NOTES ON THE FIRST STRING

Open  First fret  Third fret
\( \text{E} \)  \( \text{F} \)  \( \text{G} \)

\( i \) = index  
\( m \) = middle

\( \updownarrow \)  count One beat  
\( \updownarrow \updownarrow \)  count Two beats  
\( \updownarrow \updownarrow \updownarrow \)  count Three beats  
\( \updownarrow \updownarrow \updownarrow \updownarrow \)  count Four beats

Four beats to a measure.
Three beats to a measure.

The diagrams above summarize the information necessary to play the exercises that follow. First memorize the three notes by playing them and saying aloud the letter names of the notes. Use rest strokes as learned in the previous section, and remember to alternate the fingers. With the left hand leave the fingers on where possible. For instance, when playing the progression F, G, F, the F should remain placed when you play the G. It is then ready when you want to play the F again.

COUNTING

Count the beats as you play, either out loud or in your head. It is the only sure way of measuring the time for each note, and if you form this habit at the very beginning you will progress much faster. Some people find that tapping the right foot helps to keep the beat even. The first beat of each measure should have a slight extra stress as it is the important downbeat (the conductor's baton always comes \textit{down} on the first beat). Remember that you can go as slowly as you like as long as you give each note its proper time value.
Exercise 1

With this and all later exercises you are only concerned with the upper staff. The lower one is for the teacher.

The numbers beside the notes indicate left-hand fingering, not the frets, although they often coincide.

You will learn the notes more quickly if you do not write the letters (E, F, G, etc.) underneath them.

Exercise 2
Exercise 3

Exercise 4

In this exercise the left-hand fingering has been omitted to ensure that you read from the notes rather than the numbers. Remember to keep up the alternation.
NOTES ON THE SECOND STRING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open</th>
<th>First fret</th>
<th>Third fret</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

= Quarter note rest

= Half note rest

= Whole note rest

RESTS AND DAMPING

Since a rest sign calls for a period of silence, it is necessary to be able to stop a string from sounding when a rest occurs.

With a stopped string (i.e. when a left-hand finger is used) all that is necessary is to release the pressure of the left hand finger from the fingerboard. The finger can still be in contact with the string; it is not necessary to take it off completely.

With an open string an easy way to damp the sound is to touch the string with the pad of the finger that would play next. For example, if you have just played the open first string with i, touch it with the pad of m to stop the sound. This may sound complicated, but is in fact very easy when you have done it a few times.
Exercise 5

In measure five, notice that the 1 finger is repeated. This is done sometimes after a long note or a rest, in cases when "changing step" results in smoother fingerling in the measures to come.

In measure nine the fourth finger of the left hand is used on the G; this makes the transition from G to D smoother than a jump of the third finger.
Exercise 6

Exercise 7
As before, the left-hand fingering is omitted to check your note recognition.
PICK-UP NOTES

Music does not always begin on the first beat of the measure. There are sometimes one or more notes which precede the first stressed downbeat, and these are known as "pick-up" notes. When a piece begins with an incomplete measure, the final measure will also be incomplete, and the two will add up to one full measure.

The counting is not difficult as long as you identify which beat of the measure you start on, and count it accordingly. The song that follows shows how to do this.

THE BANKS OF THE OHIO

Traditional
NOTES ON THE THIRD STRING

Open Second fret
\[ \text{G} - \text{A} \]

Eighth notes and their equivalent rests. A group of eighth notes beamed together.

COUNTING EIGHTH NOTES

Eighth notes are twice as fast as quarter notes, so a way has to be found to divide the main counts in two. This is done by inserting the word "and" between the main counts.

Quarter Notes
\[ \text{ONE} \quad \text{TWO} \quad \text{THREE} \quad \text{FOUR} \]

Eighth Notes
\[ \text{ONE and} \quad \text{TWO and} \quad \text{THREE and} \quad \text{FOUR and} \]

Notice that the number counts go at exactly the same speed in both examples, but the insertion of the "ands" in the second example gives the effect of doubling the time. Play and count the examples before going on to the exercises.
Exercise 10

This exercise is based on an extract from the song "Flow Gently Sweet Afton," music by James F. Spilman.