

# Lesson 1

## Free Stroke Development Exercises

### **Exercise No. 1: Controlled Release**

With your thumb placed on the 5<sup>th</sup> string, place your *i* finger on the 3<sup>rd</sup> string, *m* finger on the 2<sup>nd</sup> string and *a* finger on the 1<sup>st</sup> string. Make sure that your large knuckles are placed over the strings they are playing – for reference the large knuckle of the *i* finger should be over the 3<sup>rd</sup> string. Play *i*, *m* and *a* together allowing the fingers to follow through into the hand, remember to keep the tip joints of your fingers relaxed. Hold the fingers in the hand for a few seconds, feel the amount of energy needed to keep the fingers in the hand. Let go of that energy and release the fingers out of the hand. Check to make sure that you've released all the energy while maintaining proper right hand position. Place the fingers back on the strings and play again.

Playing the strings 4 times consecutively in this manner will create a single set. Repeat that set 3-5 times. As you become more comfortable, increase the amount of plays per set from 4 to 8, then to 16, etc...

### **Exercise No. 2: Quick Release**

With your thumb placed on the 5<sup>th</sup> string, place your *i* finger on the 3<sup>rd</sup> string, *m* finger on the 2<sup>nd</sup> string and *a* finger on the 1<sup>st</sup> string. Make sure that your large knuckles are placed over the strings they are playing – for reference the large knuckle of the *i* finger should be over the 3<sup>rd</sup> string. Like the previous exercise, play *i*, *m* and *a* together following through into the hand, remember to keep the tip joints of your fingers relaxed. Once the fingers have finished playing, allow them to release out of the hand immediately. The fingers should come to rest in front of the strings, and not place back to the strings. Take a moment to make sure you've released all the energy from the finger while maintaining proper right hand position. Place the fingers back on the strings and play again.

Playing the strings 4 times consecutively in this manner will create a single set. Repeat that set 3-5 times. As you become more comfortable, increase the amount of plays per set from 4 to 8, then to 16, etc...

The material from this lesson excerpt comes from Nick Cutroneo's book entitled *Free Stroke Development* published by GANEmusic Publications. If you wish to read the whole lesson, this book is available for purchase at <http://www.nickcutroneo.com>