

Douglas Niedt's GUITAR TECHNIQUE TIP OF THE MONTH

Yes, it's "Doug's Dirty Little Secrets"



(Doug subtitled his Tech Tip as "Doug's Dirty Little Secrets" after reading someone's posted message on a guitar web forum. The writer asserted that professional virtuoso guitarists all had secrets they kept to themselves and wouldn't tell anyone else, so no one would play as well as them!)



SIGN UP FOR THE GUITAR TECHNIQUE TIP OF THE MONTH

The "Guitar Technique Tip of the Month" is available in newsletter form, which can be emailed to you every month. FREE, no muss no fuss. No more checking to see if the new tip is out each month. VERY convenient.

[Sign Up For Douglas Niedt's Guitar Technique Tip of the Month](#)

ALSO; [Sign up to Receive Announcements](#) of New CDs, Videos, and Books by Guitarist Douglas Niedt



[BE SURE TO VISIT DOUG'S "SECRET VAULT"](#)

of Dirty Little Secrets.

It contains ALL of Doug's Previous
Guitar Technique Tips of the Month

A lot of people lift the first-string F as soon as the thumb begins to play the fifth string C:

You are on: www.DouglasNiedt.com

Incorrect execution
in slow motion:

Dead space

"Rolled" Chord
with p p i m a

Or strum with thumb *p p p p p*

🔊 [In slow motion, this incorrect execution sounds like this.](#)

In slow motion, the correct execution of the transition from the first-string F to the open E looks like this:

In Slow Motion: Hold F until you MUST lift to play open E

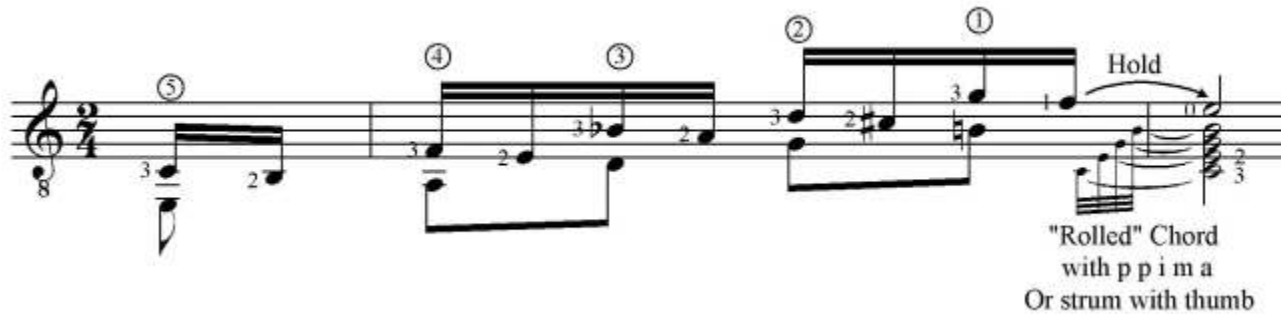
"Rolled" Chord with p p i m a

Or strum with thumb *p* *p* *p* *p* *p*

The diagram illustrates the transition from a first-string F chord to an open E chord in slow motion. It features a treble clef staff with a single note on the first line (F4). Below the staff, a thick horizontal bar represents the fretboard. Fingering numbers 1, 2, 3, 0, 0, and 0 are placed above the strings. Fingerings 'p', 'p', 'i', 'm', 'a', and '0' are placed below the strings. A large arrow above the staff indicates the transition from the F chord to the open E chord. Below the fretboard, a series of five 'p' notes are shown, representing a strumming pattern with the thumb.

🔊 [Correctly played, this is how it sounds in slow motion.](#)

At tempo, this is what the actual execution would look like on the printed page:



🔴 [Correctly played, it sounds like this.](#)

Notice that the transition from the single F to the open E of the chord is now seamless.

So here it is. This is the Technique Tip of the Month. When you want to connect a single note (usually the melody) to the high note (again, usually the melody) of a strummed or arpeggiated ("rolled") chord, do this: keep the single note held down until the moment when the right-hand thumb plays the high note of the chord (in the case of a thumb-strummed chord) or until the moment when the right-hand finger plucks the high note (in the case of a "rolled" chord).

Let's look at another example from the introduction of *Capricho Arabe* by Francisco Tarrega:

You are on: www.DouglasNiedt.com

⑥ =D Natural Harmonics
7th fret

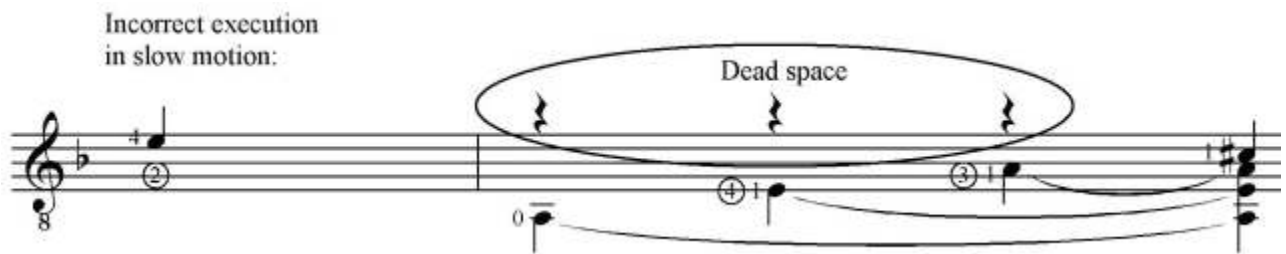


🔊 [Listen to the melody played with incorrect execution in measure 3 to 4.](#)

There is a large gap between the 16th note E to the C# of the A major chord in measure four. Because these are the melody notes, they should be connected or legato. (I am assuming we want the A major chord to be strummed or "rolled." If we pluck the notes of the chord simultaneously, there is no problem connecting the melody notes.)

Let's look at it in slow motion. Many people would incorrectly lift the E on the second string as they began to play the fifth string open A of the A major chord:

Incorrect execution
in slow motion:



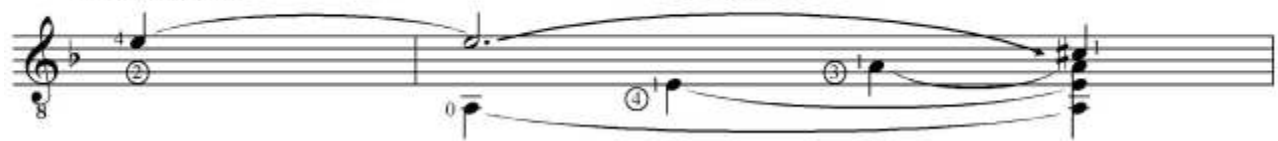
🔊 [That sounds like this.](#)

In slow motion, correct execution looks like this:

You are on: www.DouglasNiedt.com

In Slow Motion:

Hold E until you must lift to play C#



🔊 [It sounds like this.](#)

The actual execution of measures three to four would be notated like this:

⑥ =D Natural Harmonics
7th fret

Connect E to C#

"Rolled" Chord
Or strum with thumb

The image shows a musical score for guitar in 3/4 time. It starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The first measure shows a natural harmonic on the 7th fret of the D string, with fingerings 4, 5, and 6 indicated. The second measure contains a series of eighth notes. The third measure shows a 'rolled' chord with fingerings 1, 3, 4, and 1. The fourth measure shows a transition from E to C# with fingerings 1, 1, 1, and 1. The fifth measure shows a 'rolled' chord with fingerings 1, 1, 1, and 0. The sixth measure shows a final chord with fingerings 1, 1, 1, and 0.

🔴 [Correct execution of measure 3-4 at tempo sounds like this.](#)

Just to be sure, let's look at one more example. This is from *Maria*, also by Francisco Tarrega.

The image shows a musical score for guitar in 2/4 time. It starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The first measure shows a chord with fingerings 4 and 2. The second measure shows a chord with fingerings 4 and 3. The third measure shows a chord with fingerings 1, 3, 4, and 1. The fourth measure shows a final chord with fingerings 2, 3, 4, and 4. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

You are on: www.DouglasNiedt.com

Again we are assuming the final chord will be "rolled" or arpeggiated. If the notes were played simultaneously, connecting the melody notes would be easier.

🔊 [Listen to this example](#) and notice the gap in the melody from the high D at the end of the first measure to the high F of the chord in the second measure.

Incorrect execution in slow motion looks like this:

Incorrect execution
in slow motion:

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody is written on the treble clef staff, and the bass clef staff shows the accompaniment. The melody starts with a quarter note on G4 (finger 1), followed by a quarter rest. In the second measure, there is a quarter note on A4 (finger 3), a quarter note on B4 (finger 2), and a quarter note on C5 (finger 4). A circled area labeled "Dead space" is drawn above the staff, encompassing the gap between the end of the first measure and the beginning of the second measure. The circled area contains three jagged, lightning-bolt-like symbols, indicating a lack of melodic continuity. The bass clef staff shows a bass line with a quarter note on G3, a quarter note on F3, and a quarter note on E3.

🔊 [Incorrect execution in slow motion sounds like this.](#)

Correct execution in slow motion looks like this:

You are on: www.DouglasNiedt.com

In Slow Motion:

Hold D until you play F

🔊 [Correct execution in slow motion sounds like this.](#)

Correct execution at tempo would be notated like this:

The image shows a musical staff in 2/4 time. The first measure contains a quarter note G4 (finger 4) followed by a quarter note chord (G4, B4, D5) with fingerings 4, 2, 3. The second measure contains a quarter note G4 (finger 1), a quarter note chord (B4, D5) with fingerings 3, 4, and a quarter note G4 (finger 1). The third measure contains a quarter note chord (G4, B4, D5) with fingerings 3, 2, 4, and a quarter note chord (G4, B4, D5) with fingerings 3, 2, 4. An annotation 'Connect D to F' with arrows points to the D5 note in the second measure and the F5 note in the third measure. A circled '2' is above the second measure, and a circled '3' is above the first note of the third measure. The third measure is labeled '"Rolled" Chord' and ends with a double bar line.

🔊 [Correct execution at tempo sounds like this.](#)

You are on: www.DouglasNiedt.com

Just a couple caveats. Yes there are always those pesky caveats. This technique applies only when going from a single note to an arpeggiated ("rolled") or thumb- strummed chord. If the notes of the chord are plucked simultaneously, there is usually no problem connecting the single note to the chord. We are also assuming we *want* the single note to melt seamlessly into the top note of the following chord. But there may be instances where a break in the sound is desired and this technique would not be applied.

Try out these examples and look for others in the music you are playing. You will definitely hear a more legato and more musical melody.

You are on DouglasNiedt.com



SIGN UP FOR THE GUITAR TECHNIQUE TIP OF THE MONTHThe "Guitar Technique Tip of the Month" is available in newsletter form, which can be emailed to you every month. FREE, no muss no fuss. No more checking to see if the new tip is out each month. VERY convenient. [Sign Up For Douglas Niedt's Guitar Technique Tip of the Month](#). We promise you will NOT be sent anything else. This is just the Tech Tip. ALSO; [Sign up to Receive Announcements](#) of New CDs, Videos, and Books by Guitarist Douglas Niedt



[BE SURE TO VISIT DOUG'S "SECRET VAULT"](#) Doug's Dirty Little Secrets. It contains ALL of Doug's Previous Guitar Technique Tips of the Month