

# Practice Techniques for Conquering Difficult Passages

## 1 Tone and Intonation Exercises

Executing a passage of notes correctly goes beyond hitting the notes in tune and playing the rhythms accurately. Making sure every note speaks with a projecting, beautiful tone is important to the mechanics of good playing. Establishing your best tone for each individual note of the passage specifically addresses the mechanics of good bow technique: placement, weight, speed, and tilt. The greatest of these is placement. Having the optimal sounding point for each note is what will make the passage sparkle!

The following examples are derived from the 5th and 6th measure of the Minuet #1 by J.S. Bach

Step 1: Isolate 8 consecutive notes

Step 2: Remove rhythm and make equal note values:

**Repeat each example many times in a row.**

### Sustained Bowing

Play half notes (or whole notes). Listen for full resonant tone on each note.

1

connecting at the tip

2

connecting at the frog

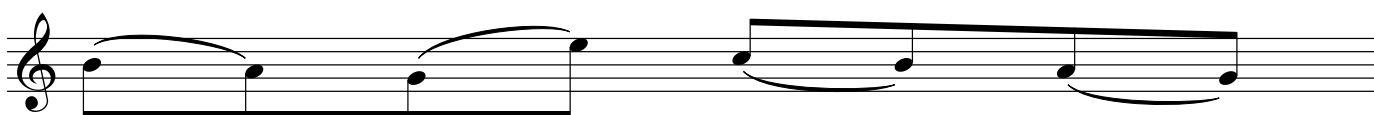
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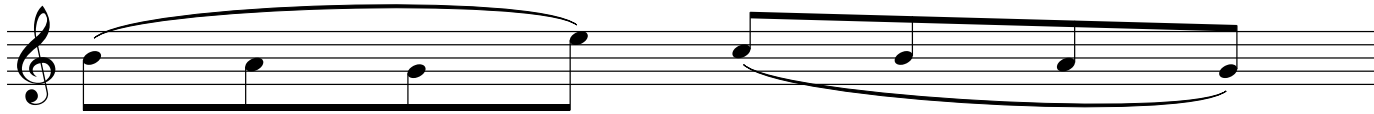
## 2 Developing Coordination: Bowing and Articulation

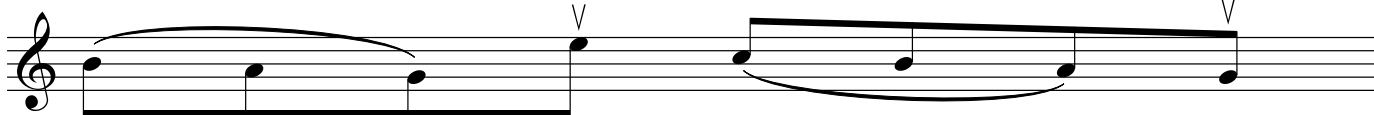
### Slur Patterns

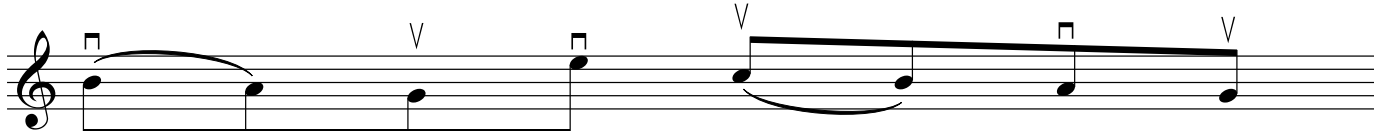
Varying bowing patterns and articulations places finger placement and bow changes in different places, thus reinforcing good coordination skills. The following examples are but a few of the many possibilities for bowing patterns. Come up with as many other variations as you can!

**Repeat each example many times in a row.**

4 


5 

6 

7 

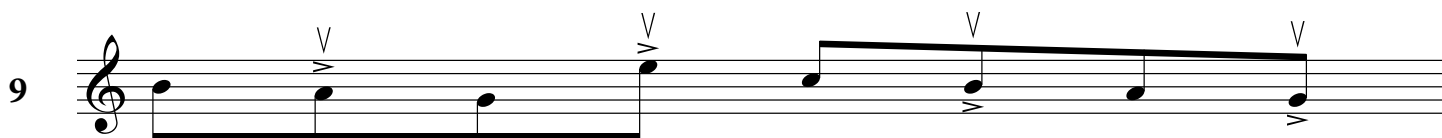
### Syncopated Bowing Pattern

This syncopated bowing pattern emphasizes changes on off beats, giving it a more “unatural” feel and a real coordination challenge.

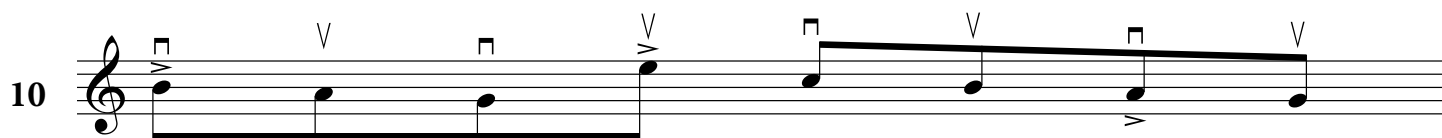
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### 3 Developing Coordination: Accents

Varying accent placement puts emphasis on the beats and their subdivisions. This method helps reinforce good steady rhythmic playing. These accents are placed on the weak subdivisions of the beat, thus improving “off beat” playing and reinforcing a solid tone on up bows.



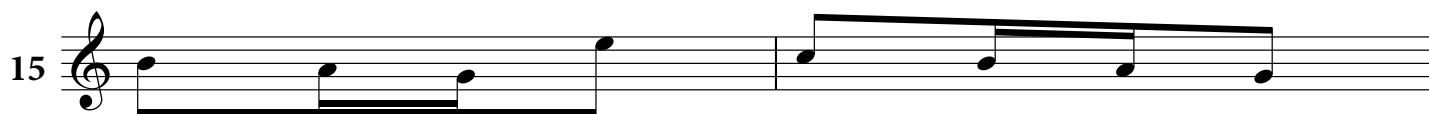
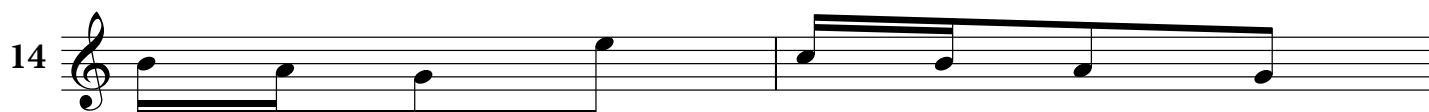
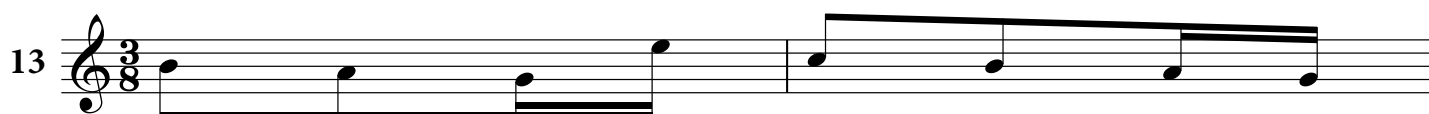
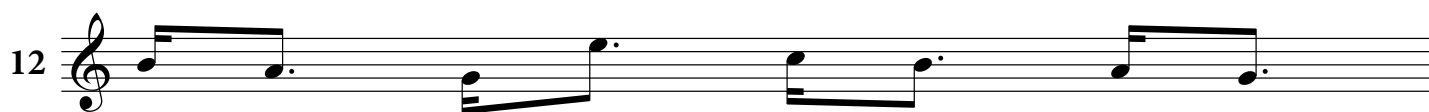
The accents in the following example create a fun syncopated Latin-style rhythm.



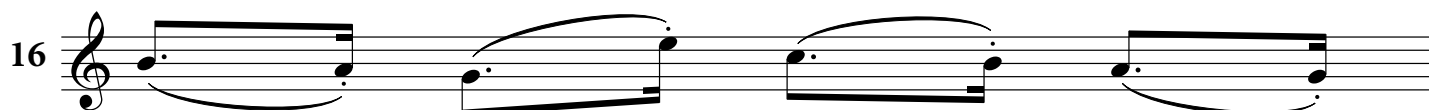
## 4 Building Speed

Applying various rhythmic patterns to a passages makes some notes go by quicker than they would in their normal tempo. This in turn makes the fingers have to move faster. Below are the most common practice rhythm patterns.

### Rhythmic Variations



Shake it up! Add different bowing patterns to the rhythmic patterns.



## Bursts

Bursts are super fast explosions of groups of notes with rests in between. The space allows for mental re-grouping. It also “builds in” points of relaxation and release of tension.



## 5 Fine tuning

Some passages lend better than others to finding double stops. In this passage from the Bach Minuet, the the lowest note “G” can be sustained to create double stops with each of the other notes that occur on the A string.

