Choosing Your Fingerings

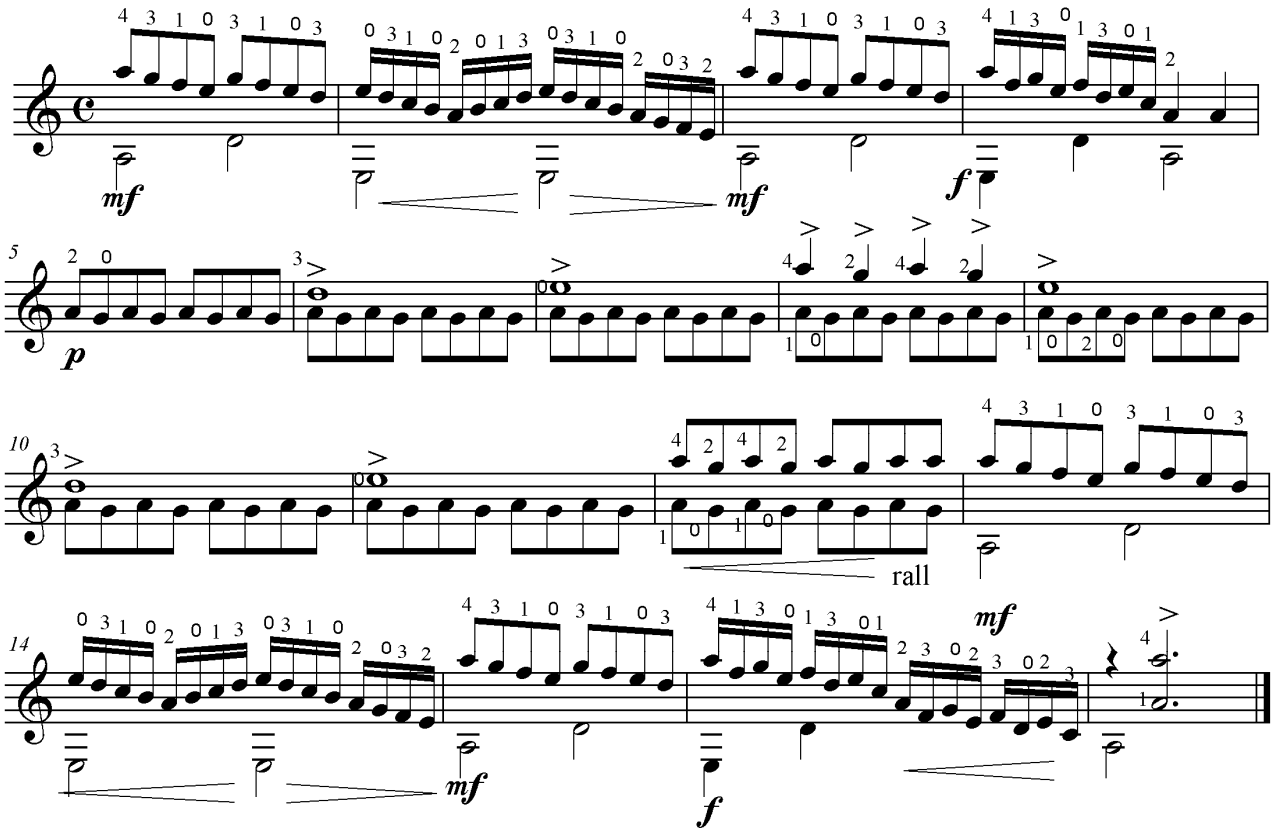
Having so many options for each pitch can be a bit overwhelming at first. With practice and experience you will begin to see that all of the options make things much more interesting and give you greater interpretive freedom. Cutting down on unnecessary shifts will also make your pieces easier to play.

To help you understand how a piece of music might be fingered in multiple ways, I have composed a short little tune called *Where U At?* and written in fingerings using each of the five patterns. Each version of the piece uses only one pattern but in reality you could play it using multiple patterns for even greater artistic effect.

Where U At? by Scott Morris

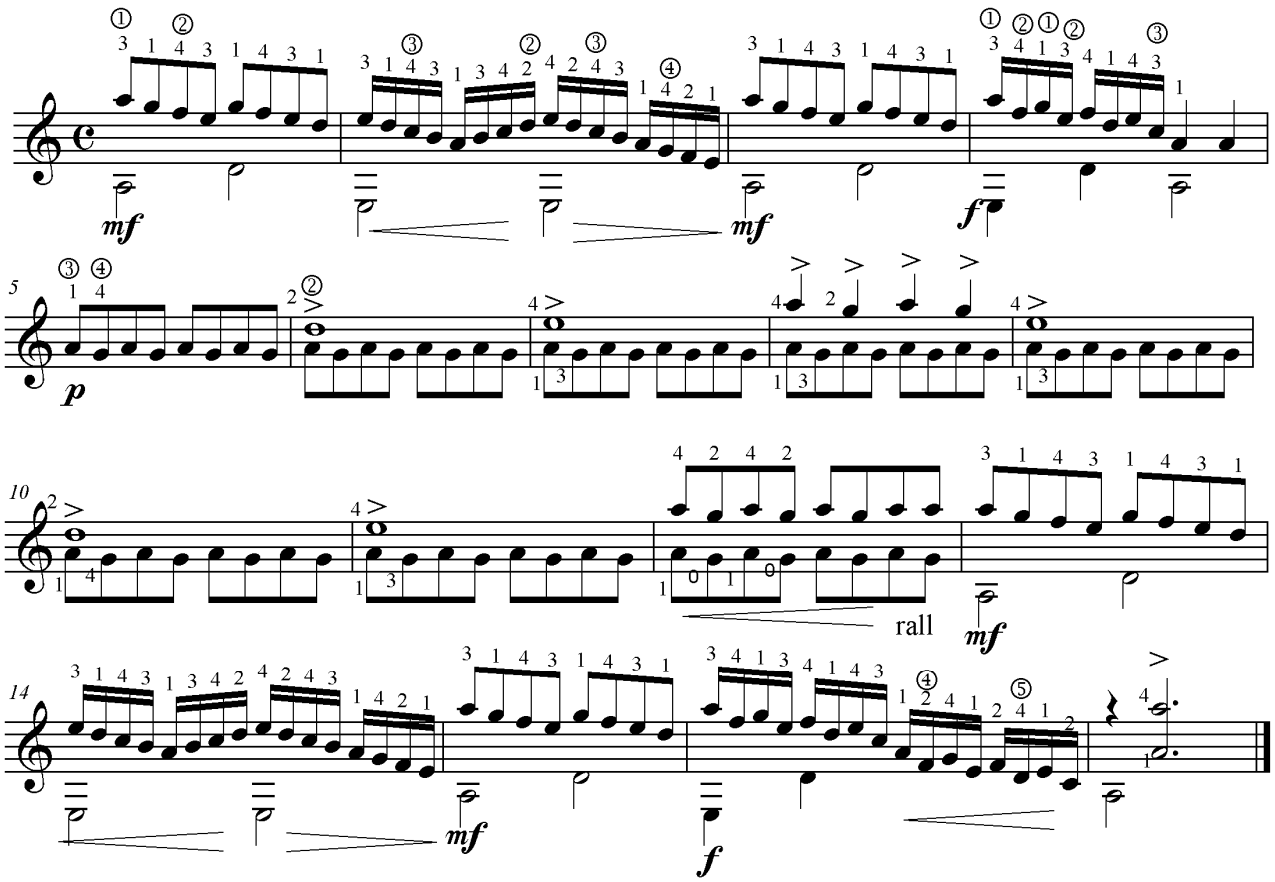
Let's first take a look at the music in first position. It is in the key of A minor (relative minor to C major) so Pattern One is the correct choice. Go slowly through the music paying very close attention to the left hand fingerings. It would be a good idea to review Pattern One in C major/A minor before you start.

Ex 1.24: *Where U At?* (Pattern One)

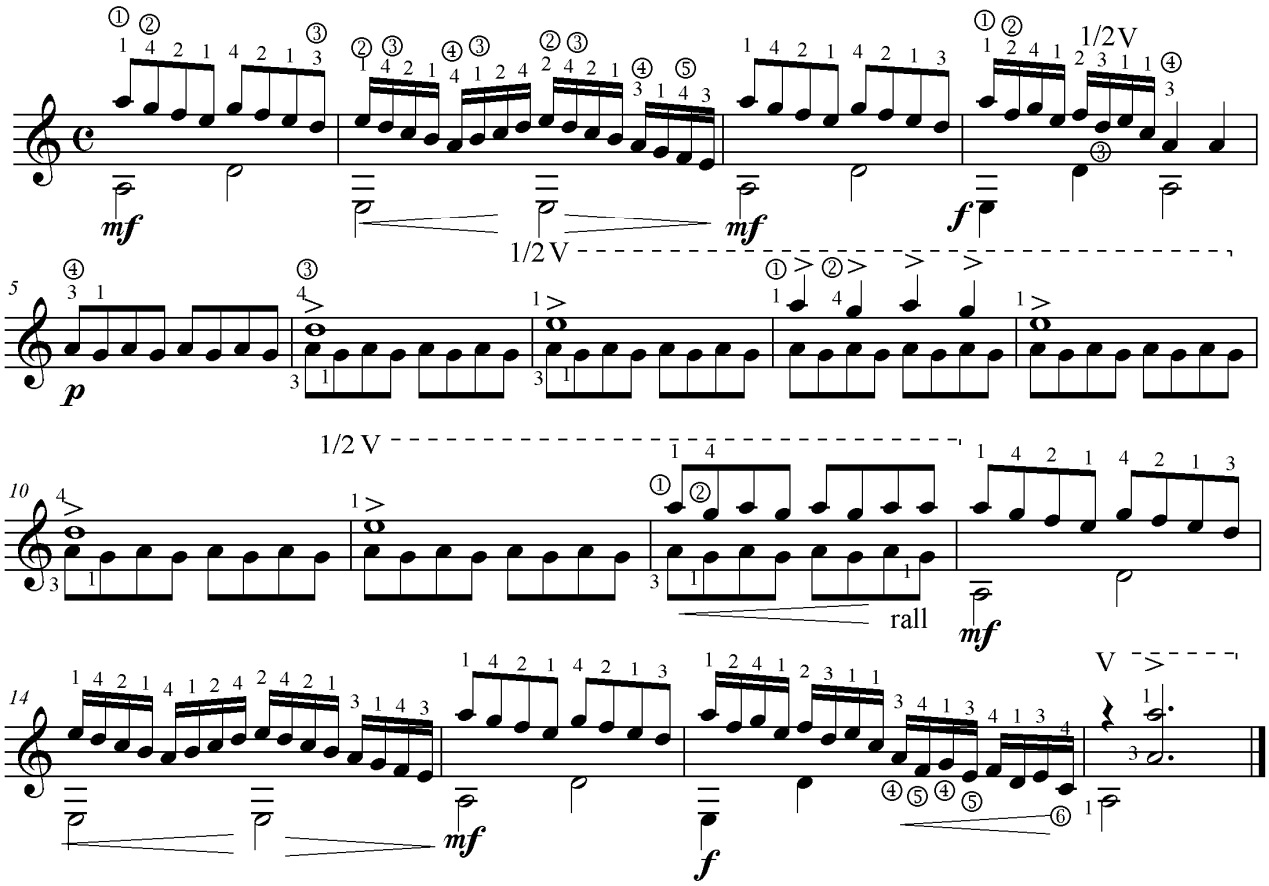


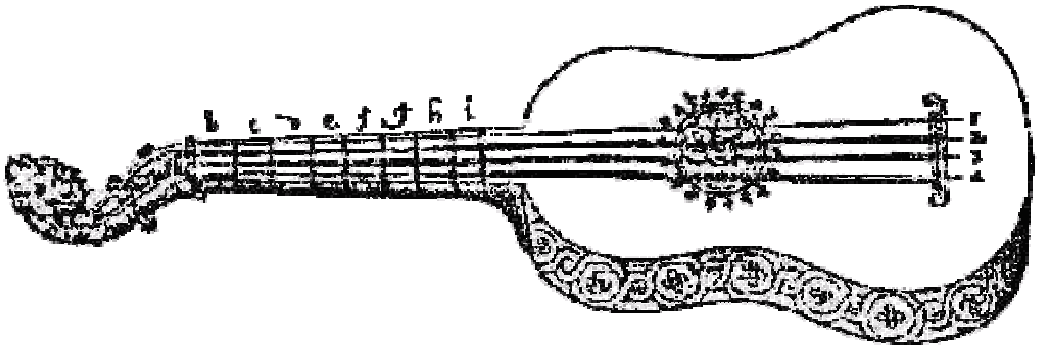
Ex 1.25: *Where U At?* (Pattern Two)

Now that we have seen how this piece would be played in first position, let's move it up the fretboard into second and third position using Pattern Two. Many of the notes in the bass line are still played using open strings in order to keep it from getting too awkward for the left hand. The G in the lower voice in measure 12 has also been left as an open string for practical purposes. Review Pattern Two in C major/A minor before you begin.



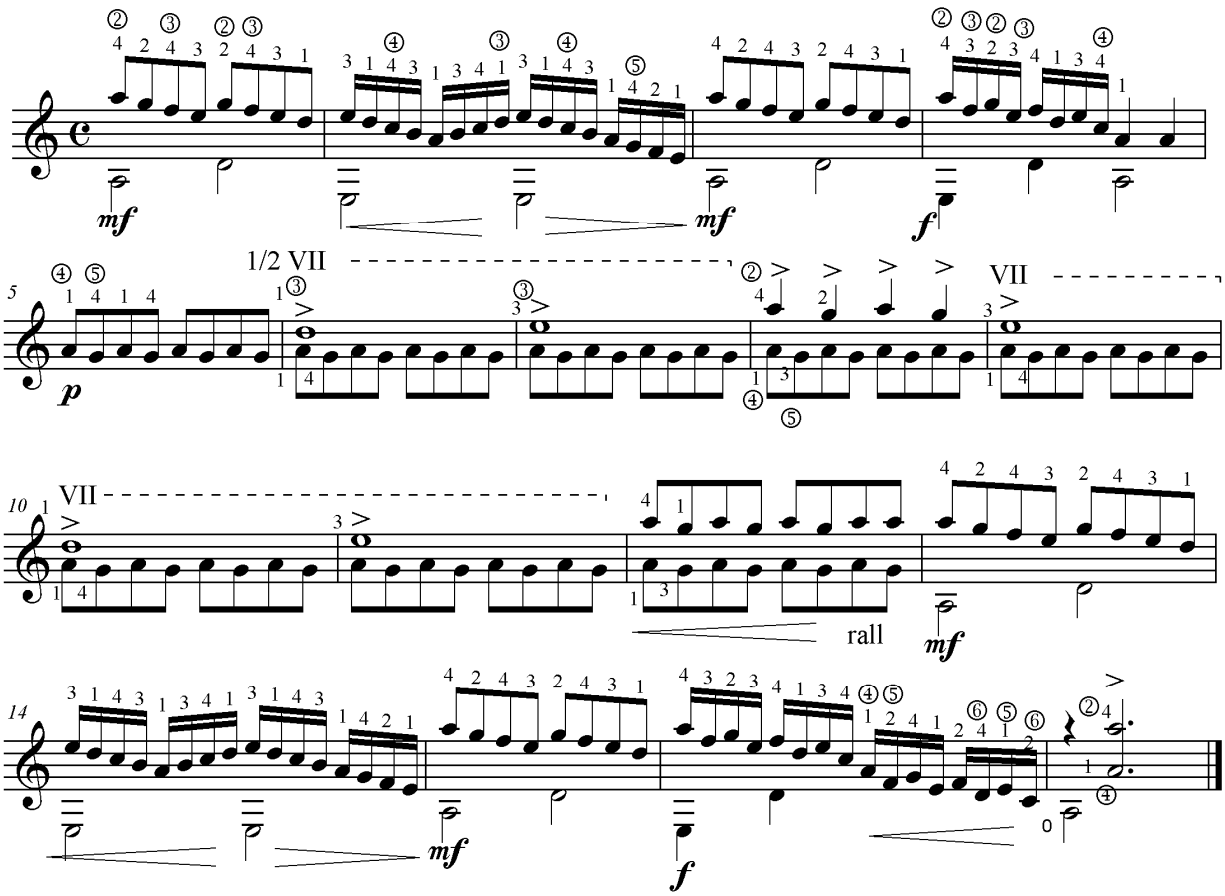
Ex 1.26: ***Where U At?*** **(Pattern Three)**
Now it is time to move up to fourth and fifth position using Pattern Three. It will be necessary to use a bar or *barré* with the first finger in a number of places. The bars have been notated with a Roman numeral V. The ½ V refers to the fact that you will only be baring a few strings rather than all six. Never put down a full-bar unless it is absolutely necessary. Review Pattern Three before you begin.





Ex 1.27: ***Where U At?*** **(Pattern Four)**

Pattern Four will guide you through the left hand fingerings in seventh position. As with the Pattern Three version, a number of first finger bars are needed and of course many of the notes in the bass line are played as open strings. Follow the fingerings closely and review Pattern Four a few times before you start.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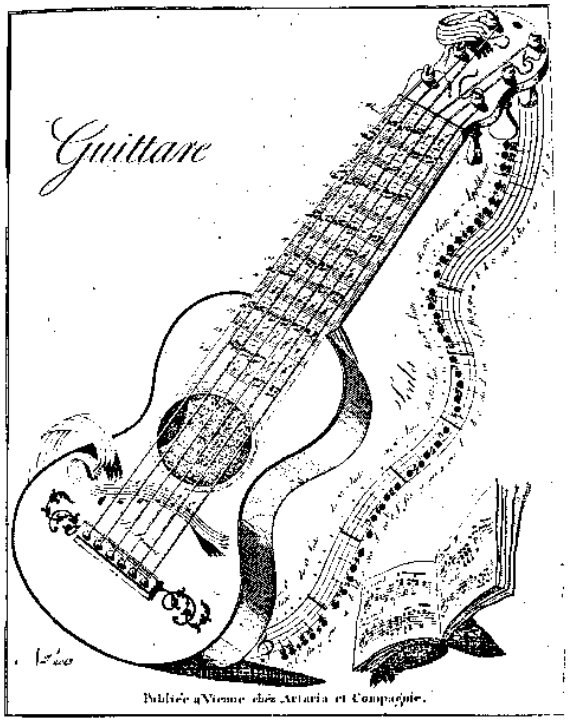
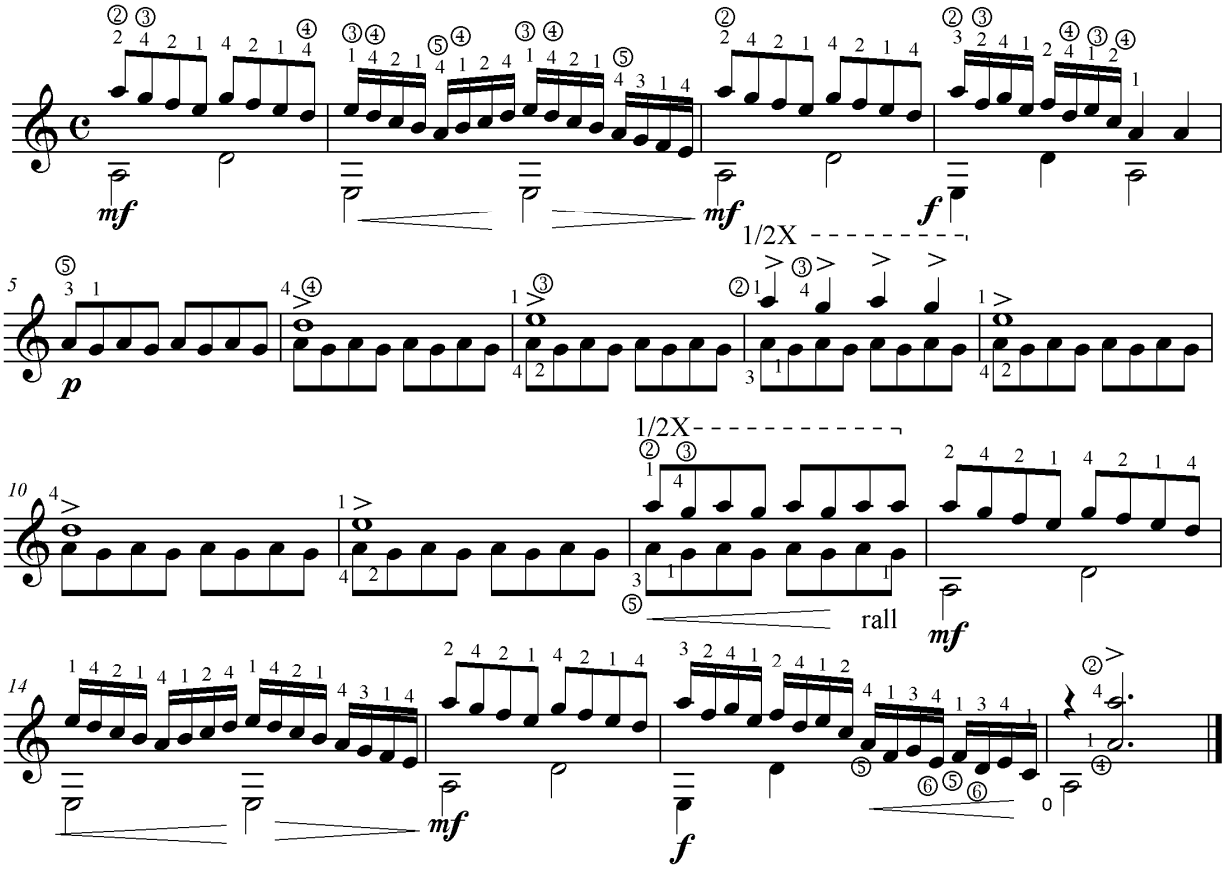

Guittare
Publiée à Vienne chez Artaria et Compagnie.

Ex 1.28: ***Where U At?*** **(Pattern Five)**
Pattern Five covers the notes in positions eight, nine and ten in the key of C major/A minor. Look out for the bars in measure eight and measure twelve. Review Pattern Five before you play.



Congratulations! You have completed your journey up the neck using all five patterns in C major/A minor. You might have noticed that certain fingerings were easier than others and that first position isn't always your only choice. It is also important to point out that the notes "sound" different as you move higher up on the fretboard. First position tends to sound "brighter" and higher positions sound "warmer". This was, of course, only an exercise for exploring and applying the five pattern approach. Most pieces cannot and should not be rigidly forced into only one pattern or position. The idea here is to know all of your options and make choices that best serve the music.

Let's look at a short work by the legendary virtuoso Paganini that moves back and forth between Pattern One and Pattern Three in C major/A minor.

Rondo in a Minor, M.S. 93 by Nicolo Paganini

Nicolo Paganini (1782-1840) is remembered as one of the most famous violinists of all time. It was not until fairly recently that his name has also become