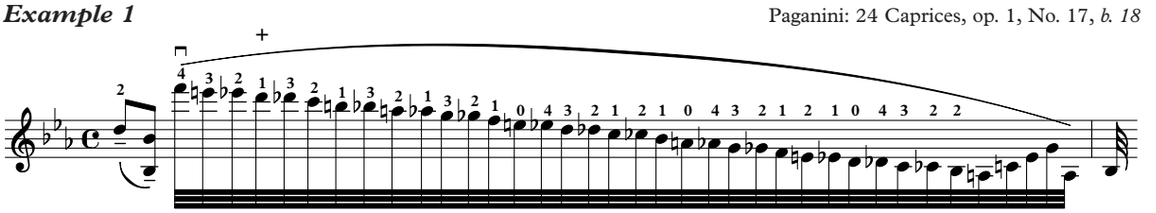
Chromatics: isolating the shift

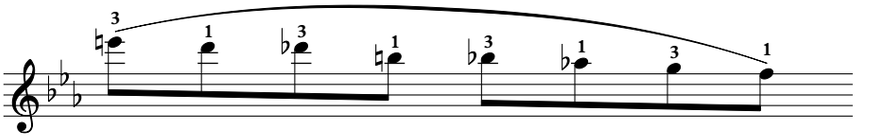
In the chromatic fingering 3–2–1 the contraction of the hand (a major second between the first and third fingers instead of a minor or major third) may disturb the shifts.

Example 1

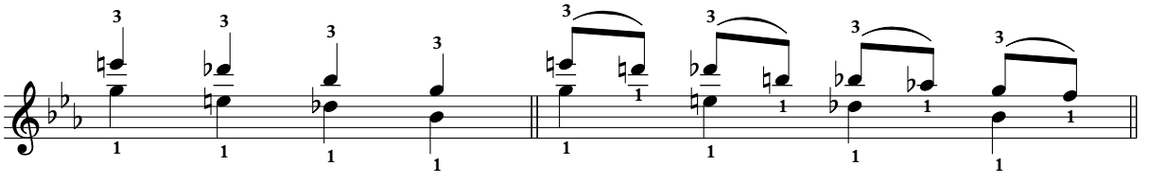
Paganini: 24 Caprices, op. 1, No. 17, *b. 18*



- Clarify the feeling of the distance between the first and third fingers by missing out the second finger:



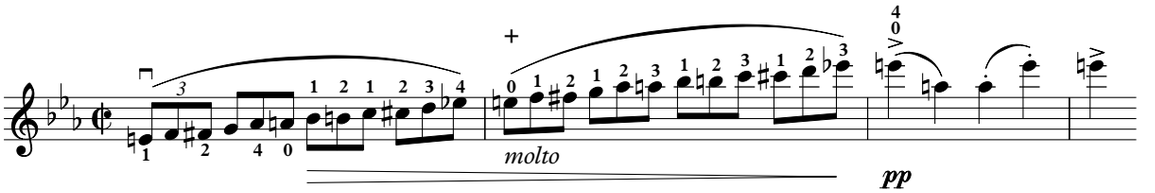
- Another way to practise this is to play double stops:



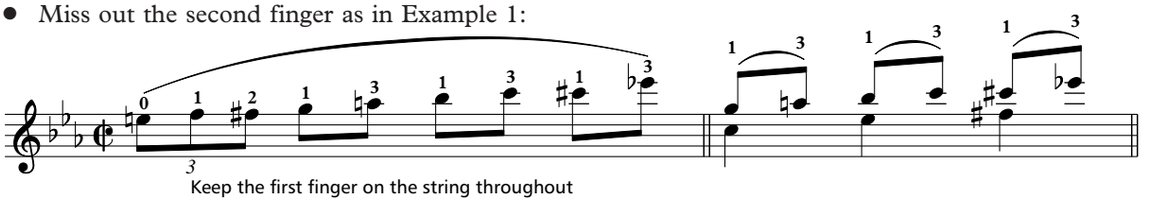
- Taking this a step further, practise sixths in scales and broken thirds, up and down the string, with the fingering 3–1. You can even do this with minor sixths, where the fingers are a semitone apart. Afterwards the contracted 3–2–1 fingering in the scale seems very wide in comparison.

Example 2

Grieg: Sonata in C minor, op. 45, *mov. 3*, *b. 192*

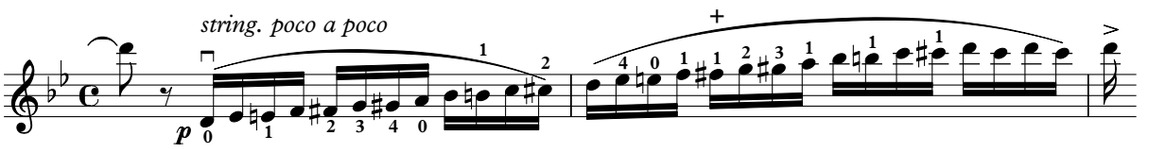


- Miss out the second finger as in Example 1:

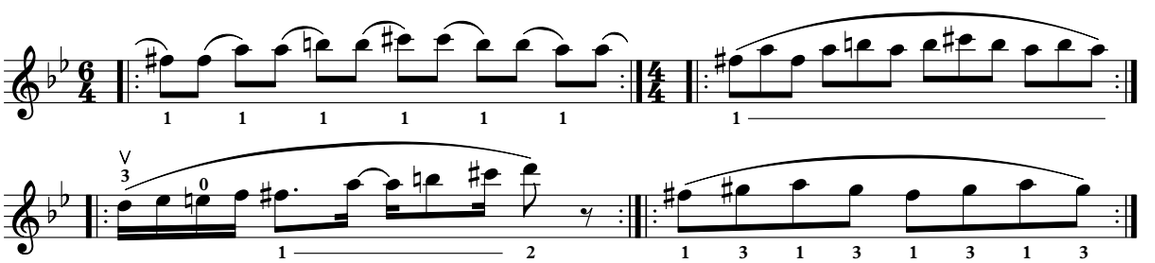


Example 3

Bruch: Concerto no. 1 in G minor, op. 26, *mov. 1*, *b. 90*



- Isolate the first finger in the second bar:

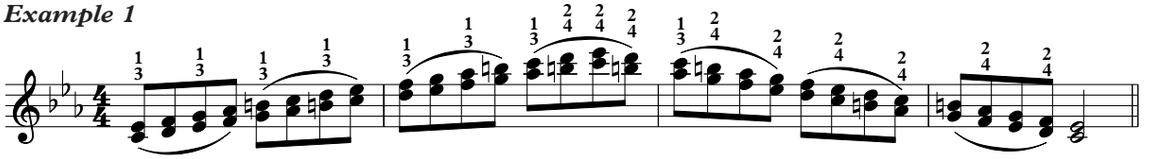


127 Short-cuts: thirds, sixths and fingered octaves

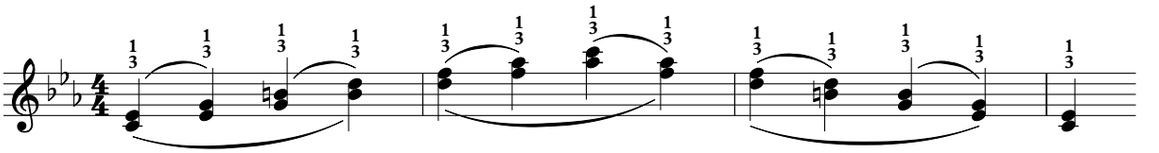
The time spent on preparatory exercises is usually repaid many times over by saving much more time than they take to do. After practising the following exercises, the scale will be more accurate, and feel much easier, than it would have been had you spent the same amount of time practising the scale itself.[1]

[1] See also *Double stops*, pages 218–228; *Thirds and fingered octaves*, page 251

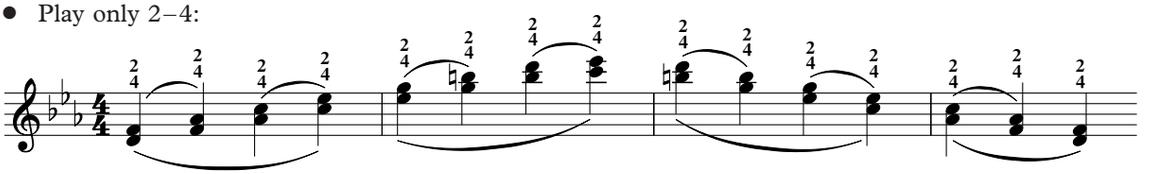
Example 1



- Play only the notes that are fingered 1–3 to feel the exact distances of each shift, e.g. in the first shift the first finger moves a major third and the third finger moves a minor third:

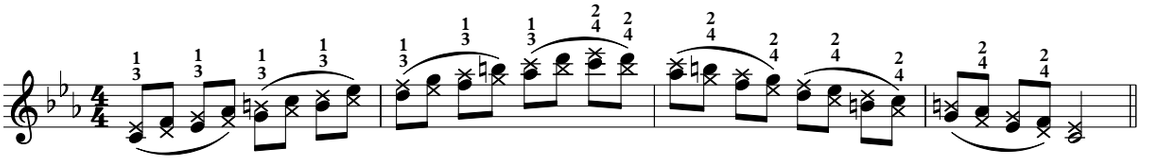


- Play only 2–4:

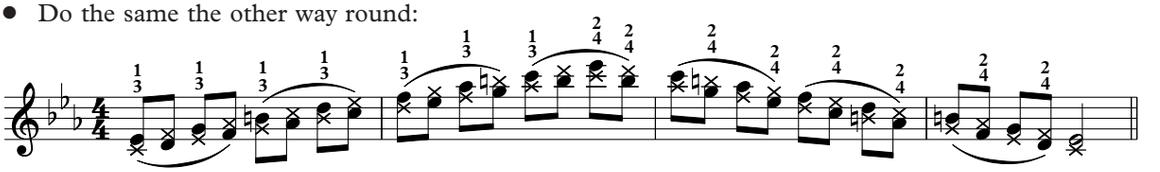


[2] See *Playing one string at a time while fingering both strings*, page 225

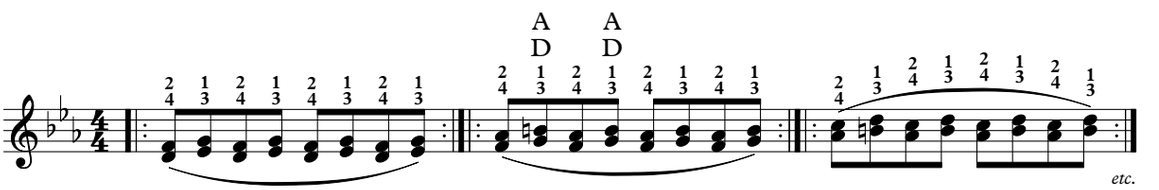
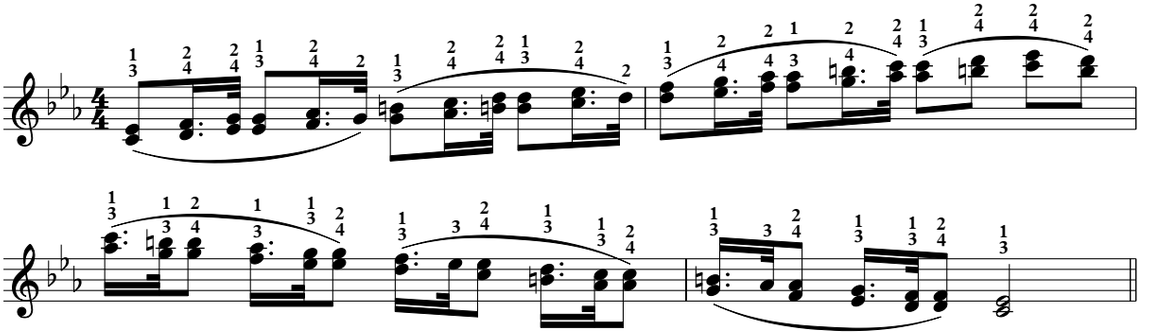
- First, play one string at a time while fingering both strings.[2] Then, place both fingers together but bow only the lower string of the first third, then the upper string of the next third, and so on. The silently placed notes are written as x-notes:



- Do the same the other way round:



- Practise each shift like *'Trilling' shifts* (page 183). Gradually speed up to as fast a tempo as possible:



- Practise each shift using substitutions (see page 159):