

Often you may want something less complete than the full double thumbing and you may use the following technique as variety in long passages. It is easier to fit melodies into this style for as the thumb is never found anywhere but on the 5th string, the index finger is free to play any of the others.

1. Index finger on the 1st string, or any string.
2. Thumb on the 5th string.
3. Index finger on the 1st string again, or any string.
4. Thumb on the 5th string.

It is, of course, best to combine the three styles along with the basic stroke, as the precise prickly double thumbing is well set off by the rougher basic stroke. If you are, however, attempting to make a smooth, monotonous accompaniment for a song, long passages of any of the variations will do admirably.

3. Simple "backward" double thumbing. Backward double thumbing is the same principle as the forward, but is in reverse. The thumb and index finger alternate strokes but now the thumb begins and has the two most important beats, 1 and 3. The simplest backward style corresponds to the forward style in the note immediately above. The rhythm is the same:

1. Thumb plucks down on the 3rd string.
2. Index finger plucks up on the 1st.
3. Thumb plucks down on the 2nd.
4. Index finger plucks up on the 1st.

4. Complex "backward" double thumbing. This corresponds to the complex forward style in section B-2 above.

1. Thumb plucks down on the 3rd string.
2. Index finger plucks up on the 1st.
3. Thumb plucks down on the 5th.
4. Index finger plucks up on the 1st or on the 2nd.

NOTE TO "BACKWARD" DOUBLE THUMBING: In general, the melody is best played by the thumb on the 4th, 3rd and 2nd strings, with the index finger sticking to the 1st (or to strings above that played by the thumb).

Since both these backward styles begin with the thumb, it is rather tricky to enter them effortlessly from the normal basic stroke, which begins on the index finger. You need an intermediate step, both an entrance into and an exit from the double thumbing. There are many such intermediary techniques, and those following are merely samples.

AN ENTRANCE: Play a few measures of basic stroke, then:

1. Index finger plucks up on 3rd string.
2. Nothing happens.
3. There is a choice of things to do on the 3rd beat:
 - (a) brush down with all the fingers or
 - (b) pluck with the thumb on the 5th string or
 - (c) pluck with the thumb on the 5th string and simultaneously, pluck with the index finger on the 1st, 2nd or 3rd string (you can even add another finger on another string here, making a full chord)
 - (d) leave the 3rd beat blank and fill the 4th as suggested below.
4. Nothing happens. Or, if the 3rd beat has been left empty, play a chord with all three fingers, or a single string with the index. . . anything but the thumb.

This should lead directly into backward double thumbing, as the thumb will have been freed from its usual 4th-beat duty and can take the ensuing beat 1.

The third variation in VI-A is an excellent lead in.