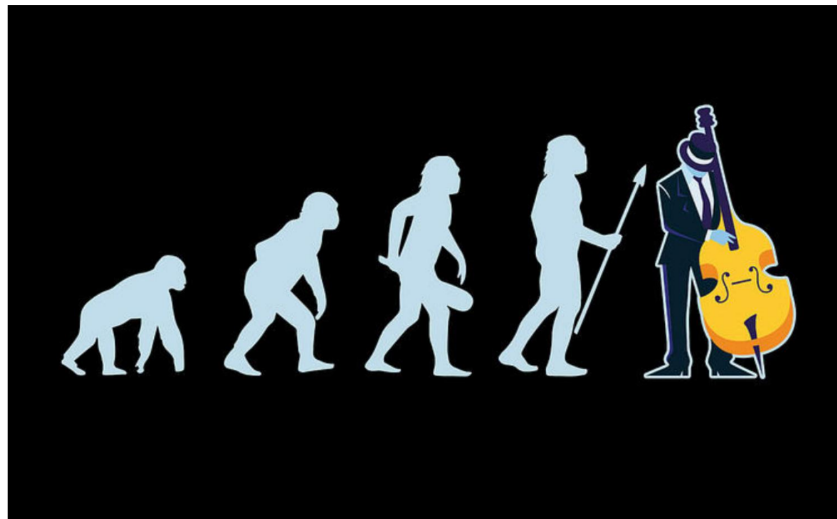


Evolution has brought us a long way as a species, but there are certain vestigial “talents” and behaviors that need to be repurposed or abated in order to use our bodies to the fullest in an artistic pursuit. One classic example is how the “fight or flight” response has taken on a more arcane expression in the modern world now that it is no longer essential for survival. Have you every stopped to consider why you raise and tighten your shoulders when faced with a stressful situation? This reflexive maneuver is designed to shield your jugular veins from attack by a vicious prehistoric predator. Now that we are no longer faced with imminent danger on a daily basis we need to recognize the disproportionate response that we are experiencing in stressful situations in which there is no mortal threat. No one (to my knowledge) has ever bled out due to an exam or performance. An understanding of the ancestral origins of this response can help to mitigate its application in non-life threatening situations now that we are aware that it is an automatic and ultimately inappropriate reaction.



Opposable thumbs are the boon of the evolving simian, but frequently the bane of the aspiring bassist. The instinct to grab, clutch, and squeeze with either hand can be overwhelming at times when faced with the technical challenges of playing the double bass. Awareness can go a long way toward helping to recognizing our intent. Thumbs have brought us a long way in the world, but there is no place for using them as part of a caliper when it comes to our technique.

I'd like to highlight one example in the left hand that will put us in a good position (pun intended) as we move forward to more advanced material. Examine your left hand in a

pantomime of a playing position with your palm facing you. Notice the neutral position of your thumb.



The usual admonition is to position your thumb behind your 2nd finger or between the first and second finger. Adopt this position. Reach over with your right hand, and feel the muscle at the base of your left thumb.



There is already a considerable amount of tension, and we haven't even started to depress the string yet! It puts the hand in a weak starting position that is only further weakened by the act of trying get the string to connect with the fingerboard.

Return your thumb to its neutral position. Now instead of moving the thumb, ROTATE your forearm so the that your palm is turned more toward the floor (about 45 degrees) instead of pointing back at you.



You should notice that with that rotation your thumb is now between your first and second finger! It also brings your hand into a position where the side of your thumb rather than the pad will be in contact with the neck making for a less sticky contact and also encouraging you to relax the thumb and use it as a fulcrum point rather than squeezing as you play. Also notice how your fingers are nicely draped over the strings. Combining this position with the concept of rotation (a subject for another day) will allow for solid contact without excess tension in the left hand. As always, experiment!

## **FREE INTRODUCTORY FRACTAL FINGERING COURSE**

Friday August 7 10AM PST

A Zoom link will be sent to all subscribers. If you would like to receive more info and you are not a subscriber, sign up at [www.fractalbassist.com](http://www.fractalbassist.com).

## **FRACTAL BASSIST Channel on YouTube (Coming Soon!)**

This invite-only YouTube channel will be a continuation, development and place to share these ideas and principles. Although the entire Fractal Fingering course and samples are available online and at [DiscoverDoubleBass.com](http://DiscoverDoubleBass.com), this channel will provide a forum for more in-depth content and to address questions on a more individual basis.

If you have any questions, comments, ideas you'd like explored, or inspiration you'd like to share please email: [davidallenmoore@fractalbassist.com](mailto:davidallenmoore@fractalbassist.com).

With Love,

D