

## Aspirational vs. Practical

Choosing an appropriate fingering for a passage is a process of negotiation. Oddly enough, it is the negotiation between your “current” self, your instrument/setup, and your “future” self. There are the skills we have, the skills we’d like to acquire, the limitations/issues with our current gear, etc. It can be challenging to find the ven diagram that satisfies all of these potentially competing needs. Many of the concerns are interrelated making the whole process a bit more delicately nuanced. These factors can include (but are not limited to):

- Intonation
- Musical Design
- Instrumental Considerations
- Technical/Physical Bias
- Skill Set
- Time for Preparation
- Personal Taste



## Intonation

Any fingering is only as good as your ability to play it in tune. Other considerations are rendered moot if it's OOT (Out Of Tune).

## Musical Design

When possible, it is nice to consider treating thematic material in a similar fashion. For example, you may want a fingering in Bach where the bass note is always on the same string. Coloring musical sequences with the same balance of string changes can also yield satisfying results. Fingerings should complement musical intention and facilitate phrasing choices.

## **Instrumental Considerations**

You may have a wolf tone on your bass on a particular note that makes certain fingerings impractical. See your local luthier, or change your fingering.

## **Technical/Physical Bias**

Some players prefer starting a passage with a string crossing. Others will choose to shift on one string. If it sounds good, it IS good.

## **Skill Set**

A passage may benefit from a fingering that uses the thumb below the octave. If this tool is not in your toolbox, the excerpt is not there to teach it to you. The excerpt is there to expose you to the tools and techniques you will need to acquire to perform successfully.

## **Time for Preparation**

The amount of time available to prepare a performance will determine whether or not it is practical to incorporate new skills into preparation or if it is better to stick with more seasoned approaches.

## **Personal Taste**

This has considerable overlap with “Technical/Physical Bias”, but has more to do with sound and aesthetic than kinesthetics.

## **Multiple Mozart Madness**

The first excerpt from the fourth movement of Mozart’s Symphony No. 40 lends itself particularly well to exploring multiple options. The first bar of the excerpt is especially challenging, and I have included music with 9 different approaches to the opening of the passage. Experiment with all of them, and see which ones feel more comfortable to the “current” you, which ones may be a fresh and appealing approach, and which ones may not be a good option for you based on the criteria above.

When we only have one way of playing a passage we can become desensitized to idiosyncrasies and short comings in our approach, and executing the same music with different strategies can help clear away the musical cobwebs and alert us to the areas that need the most attention.

Notes: This is NOT intended to be played straight through.  
The presence of “Madness” in the title is just an affinity for alteration. Each example is separated by a double bar line.



Double Bass

## Multiple Mozart Madness

Symphony No. 40, Mvmt. IV

Double bass sheet music for 'Multiple Mozart Madness' (Symphony No. 40, Mvmt. IV). The music is written in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The piece consists of five staves of music, each containing a sequence of notes and fingerings. The fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 and 0 (open string). The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The music is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The first staff begins with a double bar line and a first ending bracket labeled 'I'. The second staff has a double bar line and a first ending bracket labeled 'I'. The third staff has a double bar line and a first ending bracket labeled 'I'. The fourth staff has a double bar line and a first ending bracket labeled 'I'. The fifth staff has a double bar line and a first ending bracket labeled 'I'. The music concludes with a double bar line and a first ending bracket labeled 'I'.

Staff 1: I

Staff 2: I II I II II I II I II

Staff 3: II I II I II II I I

Staff 4: II II

Staff 5: II III II III II II II I II

## **FRACTAL FRIDAY TOPICS!**

Please submit comments or suggestions for future topics to  
[davidallenmoore@fractalbassist.com](mailto:davidallenmoore@fractalbassist.com)

**FRACTAL FORUM: NO forum on 12.25. Happy Holidays!**

**12/27 10 AM PT**

Every Friday on Zoom at 7PM PT!

Every SUNDAY on Zoom at 10AM PT!

Visit [www.fractalbassist.com](http://www.fractalbassist.com) to get the invite(s). Everyone is welcome at either or both times.

## **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,

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