Grip Licks in D minor

36 original jazz and blues licks for the xharp, a 6/6 cross-strung harp. Right hand, swing eighths, four bars each.

o = red row: C D E F♯ G♯ A♯ **x** = blue row: F G A B C♯ D♯

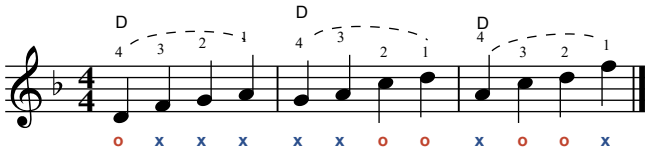
A grip is one placement of the hand. Set up to four fingers on four strings, play what the placement gives you, then move. The dashed arc over the notes is one placement, and its name says which grip it comes from.

Fingers. Thumb is 1 on the highest string of the placement, ring finger is 4 on the lowest. A number is printed the first time each string is played; after that the finger stays where it is.

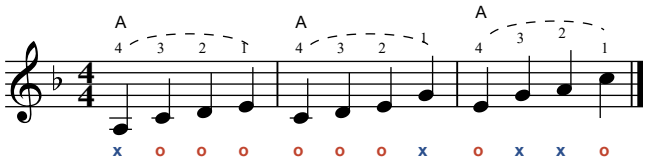
Two shapes cover everything. The D grip is red, blue, blue, blue, red. The A grip is the same shape with the colours swapped. Slide either one by a whole step or a major third and nothing changes but the sound: that is how the outside grips work.

How to practise. Play each grip in the chart up and down until the hand finds it without looking. Then take a lick one arc at a time over the left-hand fifths, slowly, before you swing it.

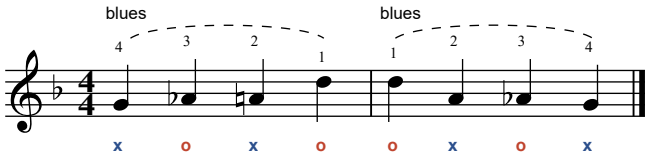
D low, middle, high



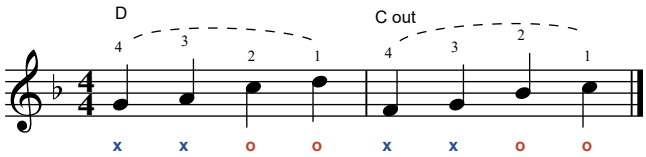
A the D grip, colours swapped



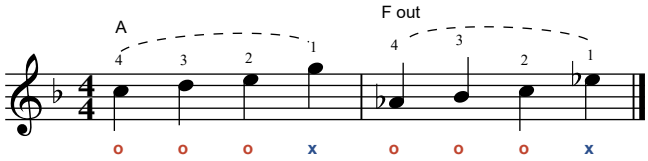
blues three neighbours and the thumb
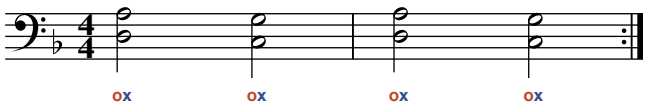


C out D grip a whole step down



F out A grip a major third down
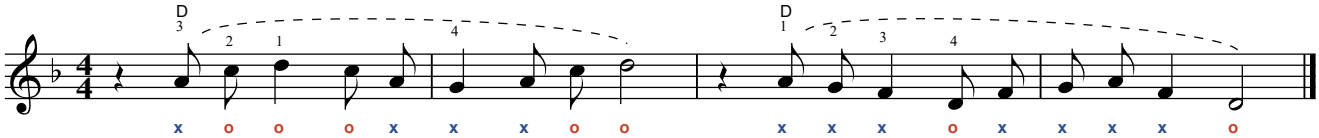


Left hand the fifth D–A slid down a whole step to C–G, every bar



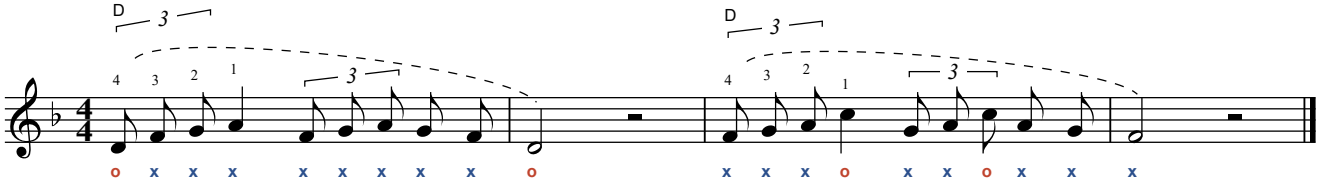
1 · The D grip

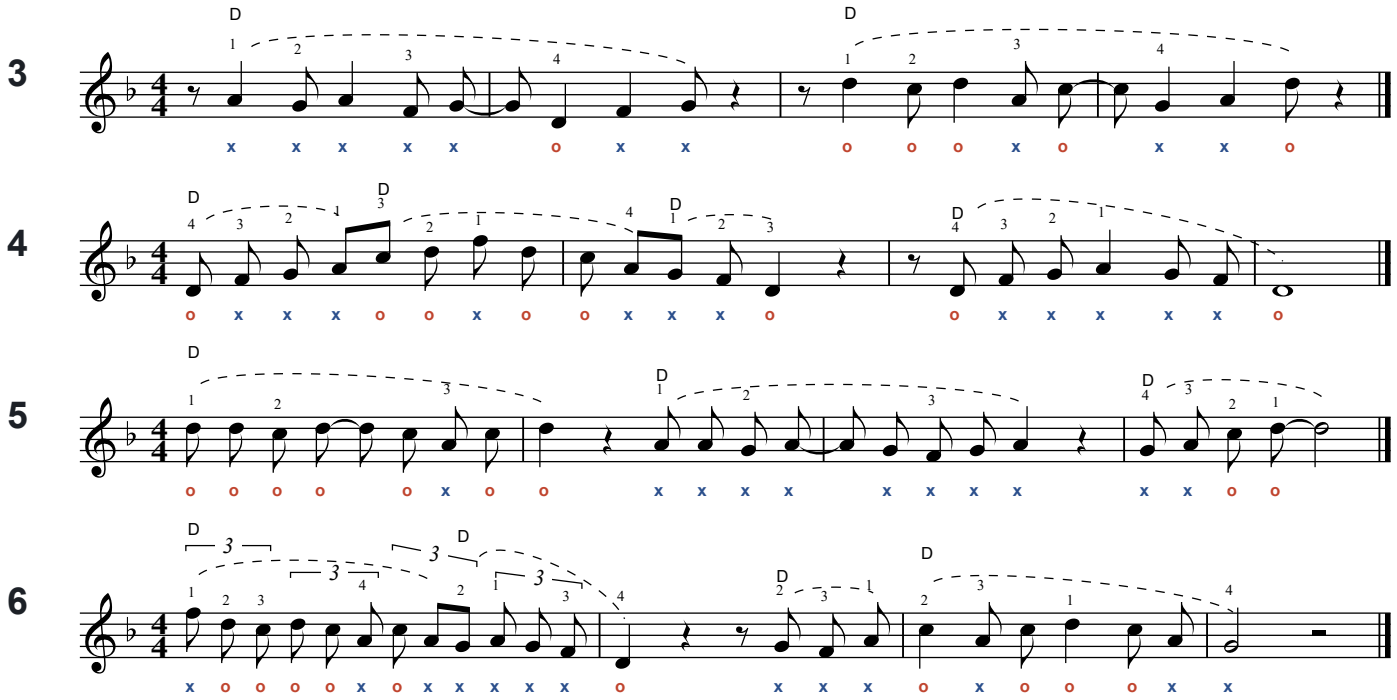
D F G A C: red, blue, blue, blue, red. Four strings at a time; the arc tells you when the hand moves.

1



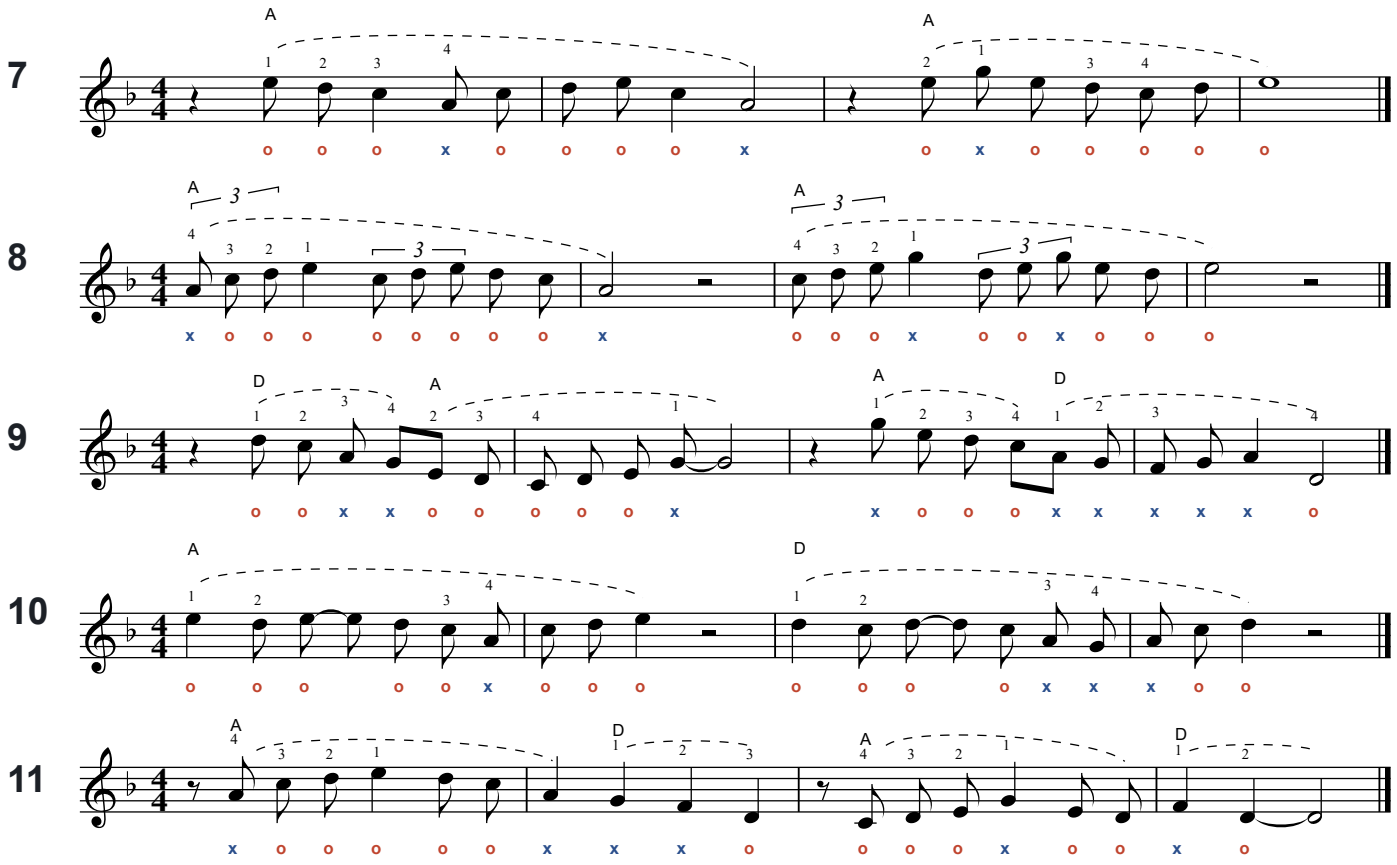
2

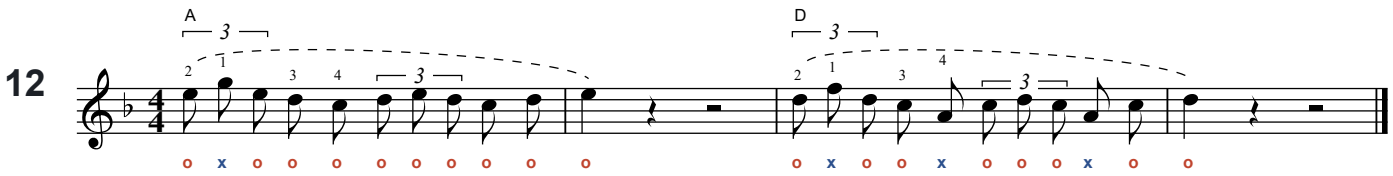




2 · The A grip
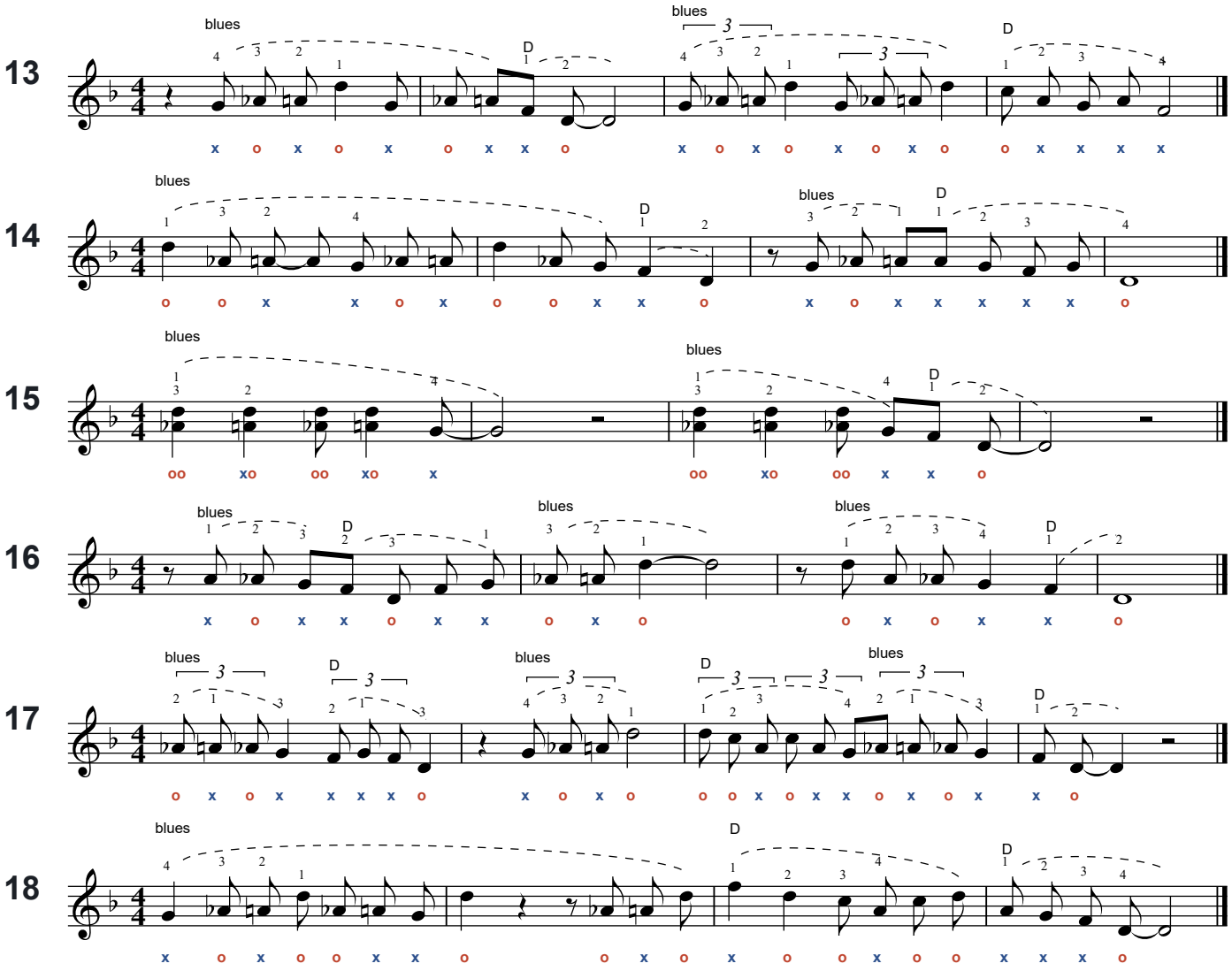
A C D E G: blue, red, red, red, blue. The D grip with every colour swapped.
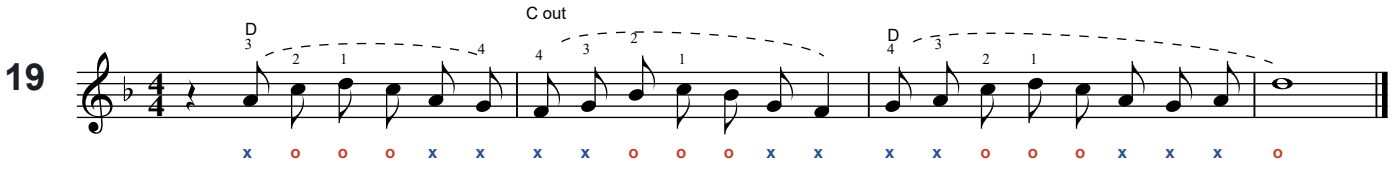




3 · The blues corner

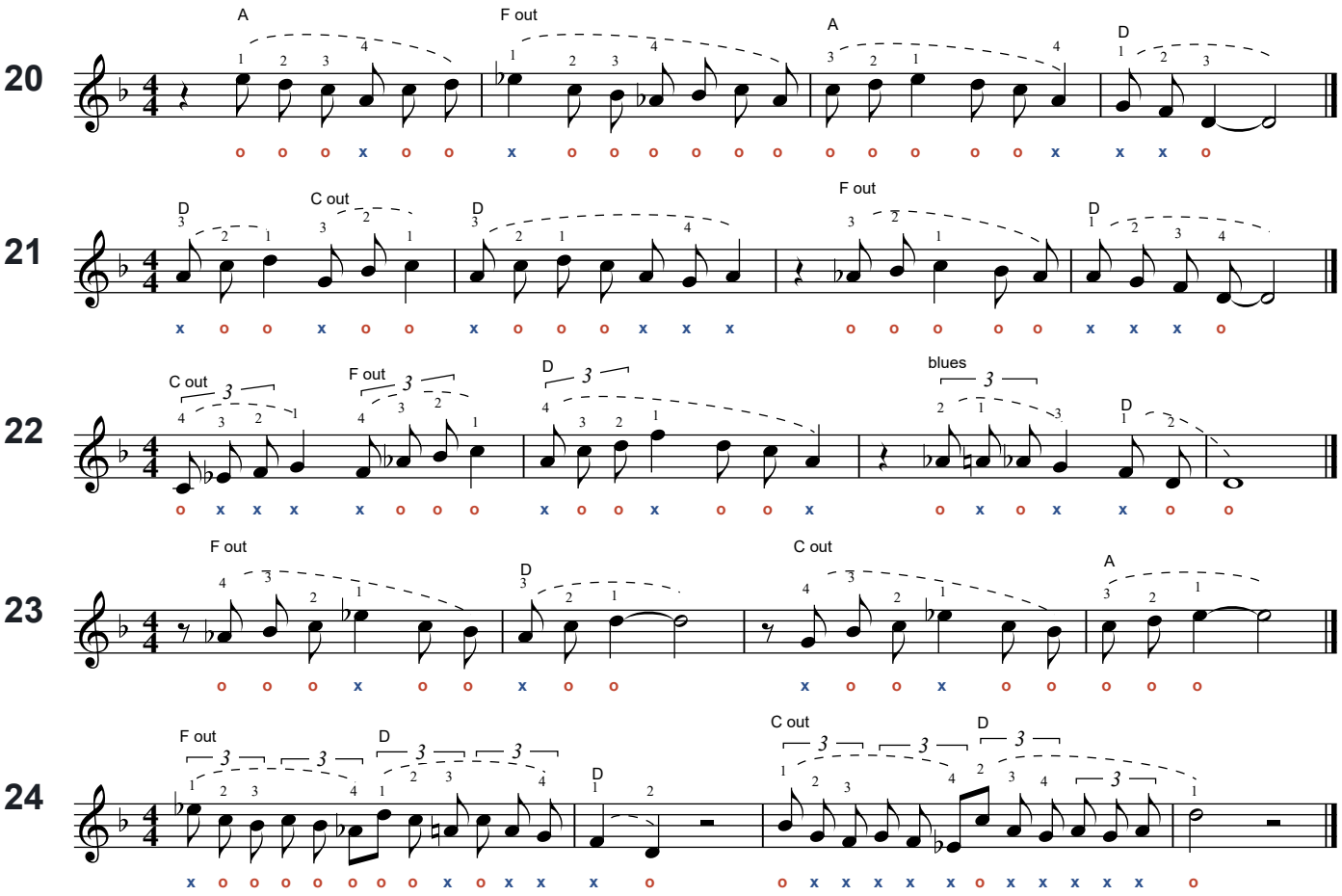
G A flat A: blue, red, blue, three neighbouring strings across the two rows, with the thumb on D above.



4 · Outside and back

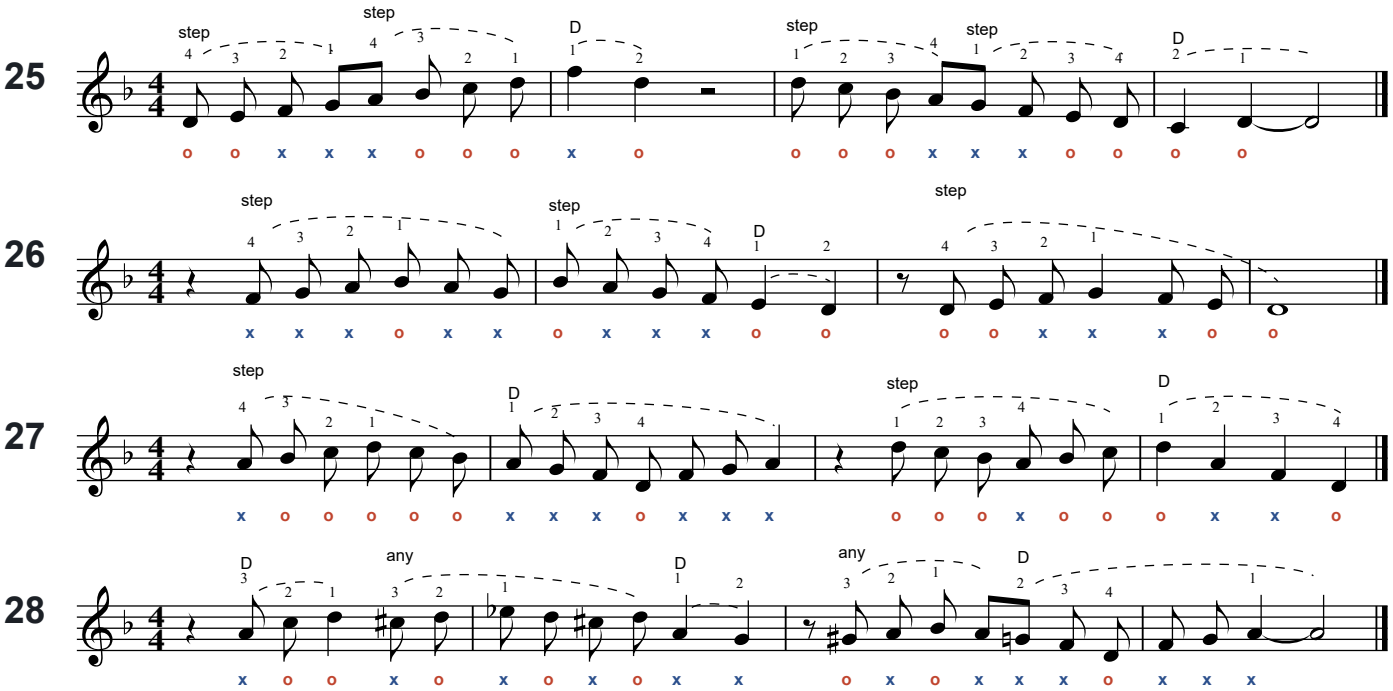
Slide the D grip down a whole step (C out) or the A grip down a major third (F out): same shape, same colours, outside the key. Then come home.

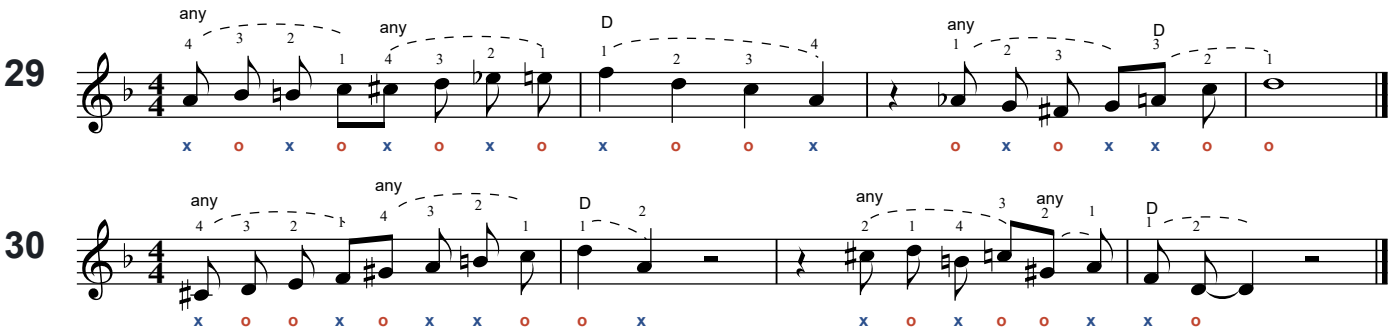




5 · Steps and the any-note rule

Scale steps fill the gaps in a grip; a half step into a grip note can come from any string.





6 · Putting it together

All the grips in one line. Sing the lick first, then find the placements.

