

-기가 무섭게

no sooner than, the instant

The fastest of the "as soon as" forms. 무섭게 means "fearsomely" — the second thing follows so quickly it is almost alarming.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Any verb	-기가 무섭게	앉다 → 앉기가 무섭게
Shorter form	-기 무섭게	앉기 무섭게
ㄹ stems keep the ㄹ	-기가 무섭게	만들기가 무섭게
Second clause	normally past	전화가 올렸다
Never takes tense	plain stem only	앉았기가 무섭게 is wrong
Neutral version	-자마자	앉자마자

WHEN TO USE IT

Attach -기가 무섭게 to a verb stem — no vowel rule, ㄹ stays, no tense in front. The 가 may be dropped: -기 무섭게.

The gap between the two events is as good as none: 자리에 앉기가 무섭게 전화가 올렸다. The speaker is exaggerating for effect, and the tone is usually one of mild exasperation.

It goes with things that actually happened, so the second clause is normally past. A plan or a command does not fit.

Compared with -자마자, which is neutral, this one is emphatic and vivid. 무섭게 is the emotional colouring.

IN USE

- 1 자리에 앉기가 무섭게 전화가 올렸어요.
No sooner had I sat down than the phone rang.
- 2 문을 열기가 무섭게 사람들이 밀려들었다.
The instant the doors opened, people poured in.
- 3 음식을 내놓기가 무섭게 다 없어졌어요.
The food vanished the moment it was put out.
- 4 퇴근하기 무섭게 비가 쏟아지기 시작했다.
No sooner had I left work than the rain came down.
- 5 새로 만들기가 무섭게 주문이 들어옵니다.
Orders come in the moment we make a new batch.
- 6 눕기가 무섭게 잠이 들었어요.
I was asleep the instant I lay down.

COMPARED WITH

-자마자

Same timing, different colour. -자마자 is neutral and works in any register; -기가 무섭게 is emphatic and slightly exasperated.

앉자마자 전화가 왔어요. (neutral) / 앉기가 무섭게 전화가 왔어요. (no sooner had I)

-자

-자 is the literary "as soon as," used in narration. -기가 무섭게 belongs to lively speech and personal accounts.

문이 열리자 사람들이 들어왔다. (narration) / 열기가 무섭게 밀려들었어요. (speech)

-고 나서

-고 나서 allows any interval; -기가 무섭게 insists there was none at all.

앉고 나서 전화했어요. (sat, then called) / 앉기가 무섭게 전화가 왔어요. (instantly)

WATCH OUT

X 자리에 앉았기가 무섭게 전화가 울렸어요.

O 자리에 앉기가 무섭게 전화가 울렸어요.

-기 never carries tense. The past goes on the final verb.

X 집에 도착하기가 무섭게 연락하세요.

O 집에 도착하자마자 연락하세요.

This ending reports what happened, not what should. For an instruction, -자마자 is correct.

X 새로 만들기가 무섭게 주문이 들어와요. — with 만드기

O 새로 만들기가 무섭게 주문이 들어와요.

The ≡ stays before -기, unlike before -는 or -(으)니까.