

Mandolin - First Steps 2

Tuning

First Advice: Don't Panic! Tuning is one of the first major challenges you'll face as a mandolin player; even professionals have difficulties from time to time, so don't get discouraged. These days almost everyone uses an electronic tuner. One of the advantages is that if you have difficulty with pitch, you may trust technology to help. It can keep the mandolin

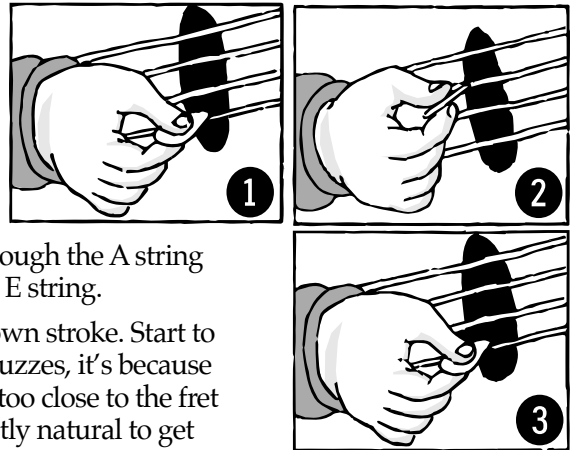
tuned within the range it was meant to be played (E-A-D-G). Tuning higher than that risks damage to your instrument. The cheaper electronic tuners may be a little tricky to use, resulting in frustration, but it might beat the frustration of feeling unable to tune at all.



The Down Stroke

There is a tendency for beginners to play very quietly, but it's as well to start off with a good, strong stroke. The right hand movement should be from the wrist, and the pick will be parallel with the strings. Now try this:

- 1) Rest the pick on the E string- don't strike any strings just yet; be comfortable just resting.
- 2) Now raise the pick with your wrist and run it down through the A string (both of the strings) so that it comes to rest again on the E string.

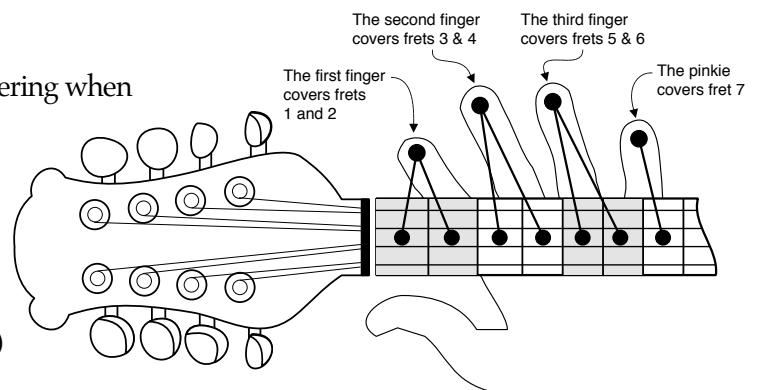


This exercise demonstrates the sound of a good, strong down stroke. Start to listen to the sound you make: if the sound is muffled, or buzzes, it's because you're not holding your finger down hard enough, or it's too close to the fret (the metal bars running across the fingerboard). It's perfectly natural to get these problems to begin with, so don't be disheartened.

Fingering

It is important that you use the correct fingering when you play individual notes. The 1st (*index*) finger plays the notes which occur in the 1st two frets; the 2nd (*middle*) finger plays notes which occur in frets 3 and 4; the 3rd (*ring*) finger frets 5 and 6, and the 4th (*pinkie*) fret 7.

You needn't be concerned about any notes higher than the 7th fret at this stage.)



Tablature

For a beginner, tablature is a simple method of learning tunes quickly, but it's a good idea to look at the. In the example below, you can see that the four lines of the tab correspond directly to the four courses of strings on your mandolin. Bring the mandolin up so that you are facing the fretboard: the 1st or top string would be the E, the 2nd A, 3rd D and 4th or bottom string would be the G. Now look at the tablature: the top line is the E string, the 2nd line the A, the 3rd the D and the 4th line is the G.

The numbers on the lines indicate the fret on which you are to place your fingers. The first number on the tab in the example is "0" and it is lying on the third line down, the D string. This means that you simply pick the D

string without placing your finger on any fret. When you play a string like this it is called playing it *open*; in this example you have just played an *open D string*. The next number along is another "0", but this time it's on the 2nd line, so play an open A string. Next is a "4"; place your middle finger on the D string at the 4th fret. The next three use open strings, first A, then D, the A again. See if you can play the rest of the example following the tablature.

Key of \square ; 4 \downarrow to the bar.