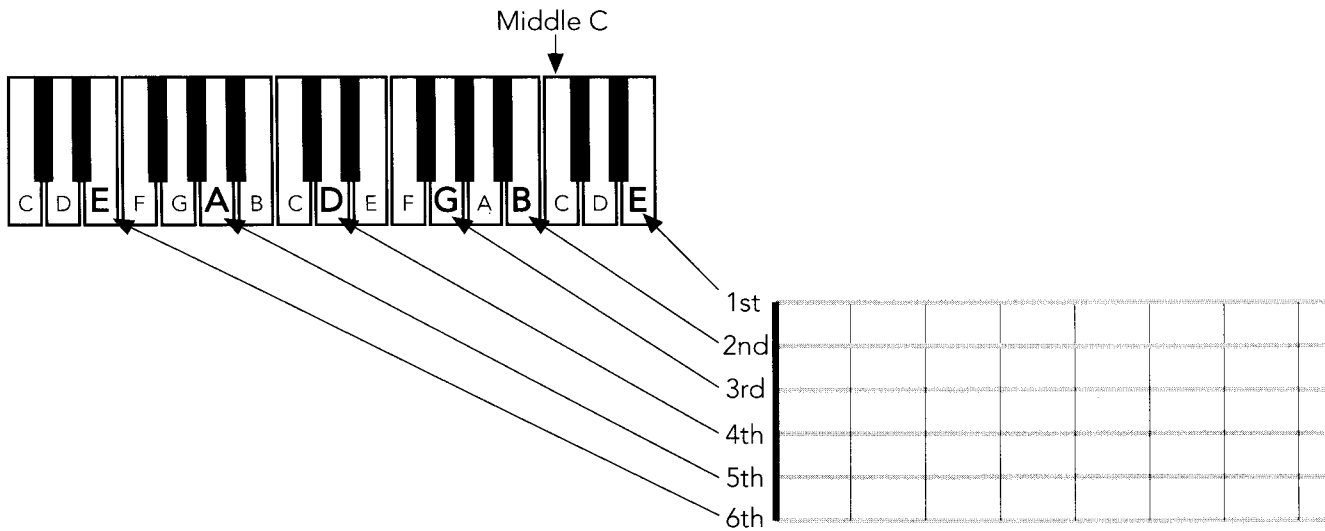


Tuning the Guitar

There are many ways to tune a guitar. While it is possible to simply use an electronic tuner, it is important to develop your *sense of pitch* (the ability to discern one musical sound from another). Using an electronic tuner at first can help you learn to hear pitch, as long as it doesn't become a crutch. Make sure to learn at least one of the two methods offered here.

Method #1

The strings of the guitar correlate to these notes on the piano.



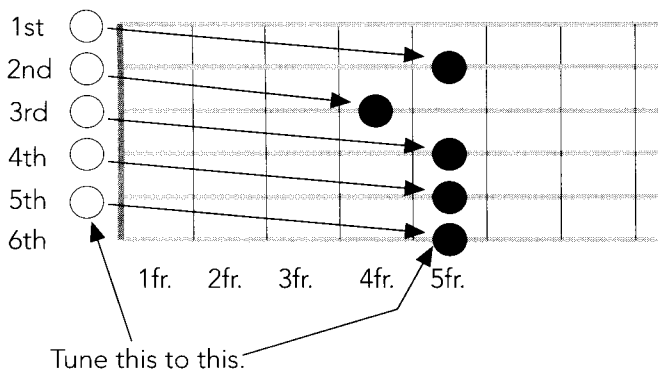
Simply compare the sound of each guitar string to the appropriate piano key, and slowly turn the correct tuning peg until the pitch of the guitar string matches that of the piano. It is best to tune the string low, and then slowly tune it up to pitch. Always listen to the string vibrate as you turn the tuning peg to make sure you don't turn it too far. If you don't have a piano at hand, you can tune to the tuning notes on the CD that comes with this book.



Track
1

Method #2

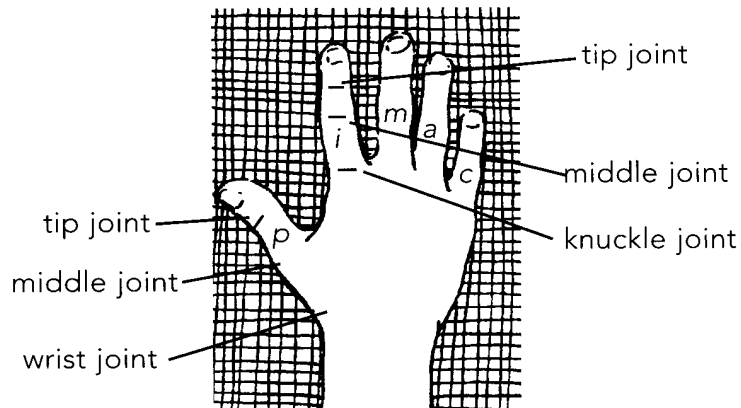
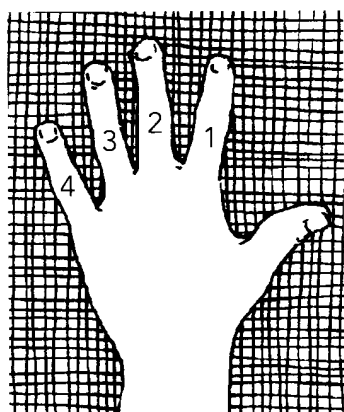
Using the piano (see the piano diagram above), an E tuning fork or an electronic tuner, tune the 6th string to E. Then, tune the 5th string to the 6th, the 4th to the 5th, the 3rd to the 4th and so on, as illustrated in this diagram.



This method, and others like it, is best because you can use it any time—even during a performance!

The Hands

We use our left hand fingers to play the notes on the neck, and our right hand fingers to strike the strings. You should become familiar with the names of the fingers and their joints. Every finger has three joints that act like hinges.



p = thumb
i = index
m = middle
a = ring finger
c = pinkie

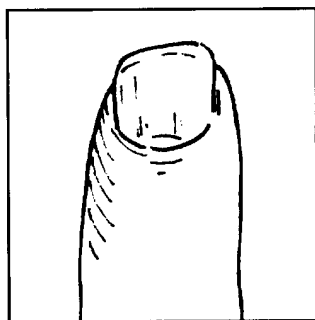
Some left-handed players choose to reverse the functions of the hands and the position of the guitar. This is a personal decision. Lots of left-handed players play conventionally. If you choose to reverse your guitar, you will need to reverse all the terminology in this and other instructional books.

Fingernails

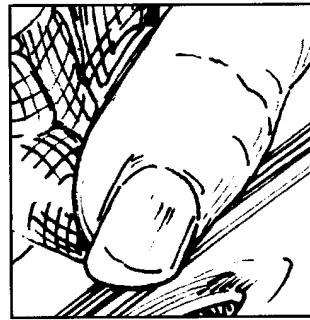
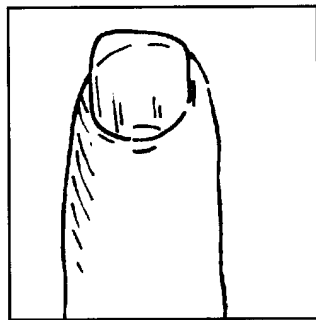
Classical guitarists use the fingernails of the right hand to strike the strings. As you progress—hopefully with the guidance of an excellent instructor—you will develop a fine sense for just how to place the nails on the strings. As you will learn, we place the left side of the nail on the string in combination with the flesh at the end of the finger.

It is very important for you to grow the nails of your right hand fingers and keep them healthy, clean and correctly shaped. They are your tools for playing, just as the violin bow is for the violinist, or the reed is for the clarinetist.

The two drawings below show common lengths and shapes for the thumb nail and the fingers.



or



Use a hard file like the one pictured on page 4 to shape the nail. Then, use either a buffer or "wet-or-dry" 600 grit sand paper to bring the edge of each nail to a high polish. They should be absolutely smooth! Nicks and bumps in the nails cause scratchy, unattractive sounds. It's not too soon to start caring for these very important tools.

The Seating Position

If you have ever seen a classical guitarist play, you know that we sit while we play and that our position is unique among guitarists. The position has developed over centuries of guitar playing and experimentation. While each guitarist is unique, and therefore sits slightly differently from others, common goals lead us to have more in common than not.

The goals of the seating position:

1. Minimize tension in the body and hands.
2. Provide easy access to the entire length of the fingerboard.
3. Give easy access to all six strings.
4. Securely support the instrument without the use of the hands.

As you learn proper seating, you may experience some slight discomfort, or feelings of insecurity. Just because it doesn't "come naturally" to you doesn't mean it isn't making the best use of your body. Be patient! Be observant of other players, check your position often and let a good teacher guide you.

Getting Into Position

1. Put a footstool in front of the front left leg of an armless chair with a flat seat.
2. Stand with your feet on either side of the footstool, facing away from the chair. Sit on the very left front-edge of the chair.
3. Place your left foot on the footstool, keeping your leg perpendicular to the floor. Place your right foot and knee out to the right.
4. Place the lower curve of the guitar snugly on your left knee so that:
 - a. The upper edge of the back of the guitar is in the center of your chest.
 - b. The head of the guitar is eye level, and just barely in front of you.
 - c. The right side of the guitar is resting on the inside of your right thigh.
5. Place your right forearm on the outer edge of the guitar, just to the right of the bridge.



The Guitar Fingerboard

The *musical alphabet* has only seven letters. Every *note* (musical sound) has one of these names: **A B C D E F G**

These seven letter names repeat themselves again and again:

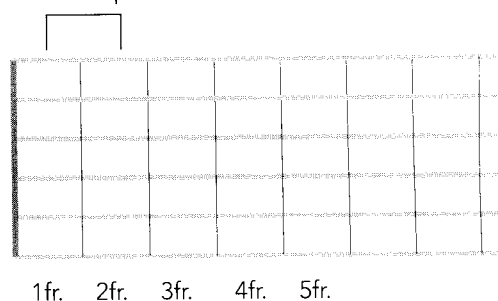
A B C D E F G A B C etc.

The distance between two notes with the same name is called an *octave*. They are in the same *pitch class*, but one will be higher or lower sounding than the other.

The distance from one note to the other in the musical alphabet is measured in *steps*. Steps come in two sizes:

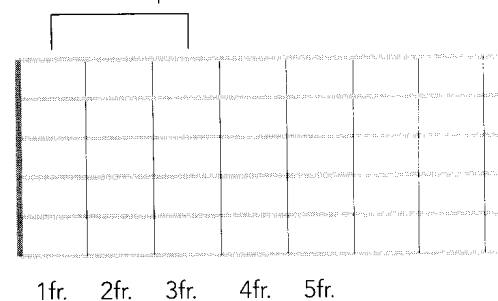
Half step: the distance from any fret to an adjacent fret. For instance, from the 1st fret to the 2nd fret is one half step.

Half step



Whole step: the distance of two frets. For instance, from the 1st fret to the 3rd fret is a whole step.

Whole step

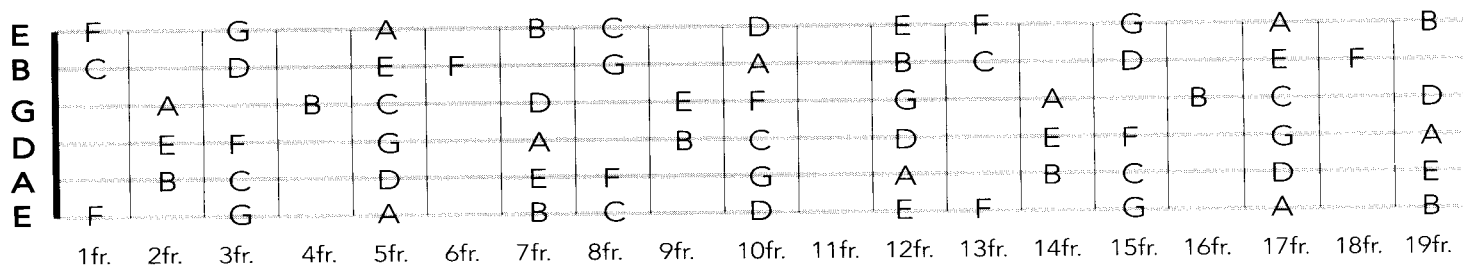


The notes of the musical alphabet (sometimes called the *natural notes*) have the following arrangement of whole and half steps:

A B C D E F G A
 W H W W H W W

W = Whole step
H = Half step

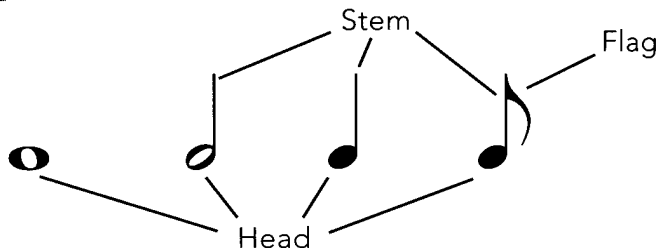
If you know the names of the open strings, you can use this information about the musical alphabet and whole and half steps to find any natural note on the fingerboard of the guitar.



Reading Music—Pitch

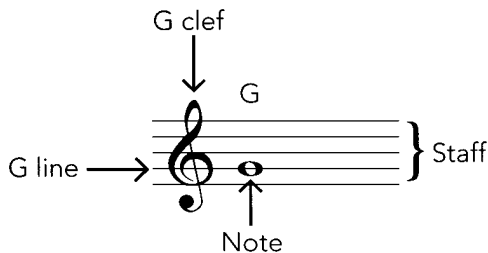
Notes

Pitch refers to the highness or lowness of musical sounds, called *notes*. Pitch is indicated by placing notes on a *staff*. Some have stems while others don't.

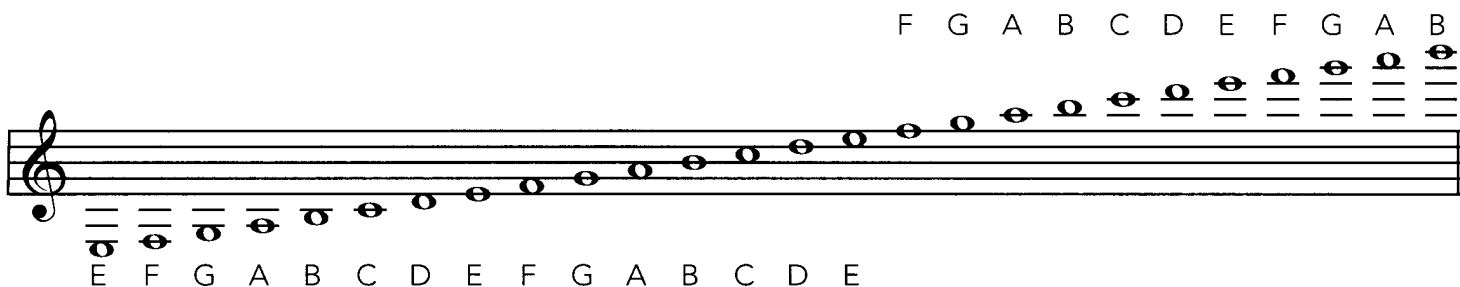


The Staff and Clef

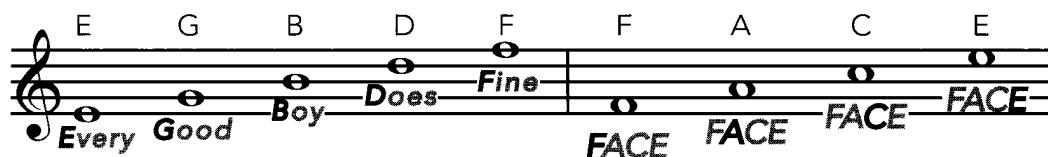
The *staff* has five lines and four spaces and is read from left to right. At the beginning of the staff is a *clef*. The clef indicates what notes correspond to a particular line or space on the staff. Guitar music is written in *treble clef*, which is sometimes called *G clef*. The ending curl of the clef circles the G line.



A quick and reliable way to begin reading music is to memorize the names of the lines and the names of the spaces separately. The higher or lower a note is written on the staff, the higher or lower it actually sounds. There are five line notes and four space notes. Notes below and above the staff have ledger lines. Ledger line notes are easy to read, since they each look very different from all the others.



Two other devices will help you memorize the line and space notes. The phrase **Every Good Boy Does Fine** will help you remember the line note names, from low to high: E, G, B, D, F. The word **FACE** contains the space note names from low to high.

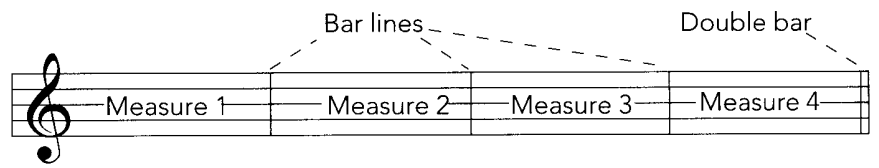


These notes sound and look like those of any other treble clef instrument, except that the guitar sounds an octave lower (12 half steps lower) than it's actually written. So, if you have experience reading music for other instruments written in treble clef, you're in luck! Each of these line or space notes corresponds with a note on the guitar neck.

Reading Music—Time

Measures

Measures divide music into groups of beats. A beat is an equal division of time. Beats are the basic pulse behind music. The vertical lines that cross through the staff are called *bar lines*. They show where one measure begins and another ends. *Double bars* mark the end of a section or small example.





Note Durations


As you know, the location of a note in relation to the staff tells us its pitch (how high or low it is). The duration, or value, is indicated by its shape.


Rests


So far we've covered five types of note values. They each have a corresponding duration of silence known as a *rest*. A *whole rest* means four beats of silence, a *half rest* means two beats of silence, and so forth.

 = Whole rest, 4 beats

 = Half rest, 2 beats

 = Quarter rest, one beat

 = Eighth rest, 1/2 beat

 = Sixteenth rest, 1/4 beat



A whole note lasts 4 beats.



A half note lasts 2 beats.



A quarter note lasts 1 beat.



An eighth note lasts 1/2 beat.



When two or more eighth notes appear consecutively, they are *beamed* together.



A sixteenth note lasts 1/4 beat. Consecutive sixteenth notes are beamed together.

Time Signatures

At the beginning of any piece you'll find a *time signature*. A time signature consists of two numbers, one on top of the other, which looks similar to a fraction. The top number indicates how many beats are in a measure. The bottom number tells you what kind of note gets one count.

$\frac{4}{4}$ ← 4 beats per measure
 $\frac{4}{4}$ ← Quarter note ♩ = one beat

$\frac{3}{4}$ ← 3 beats per measure
 $\frac{4}{4}$ ← Quarter note ♩ = one beat


The time signature you'll encounter most frequently is $\frac{4}{4}$. For this reason, it is often called common time and indicated with a **C**.


Basic Rhythms


You can get a great head-start on becoming adept at reading music by studying basic rhythms. Since performing rhythms involves a coordination of mental and physical skills, it's a good idea to practice without your guitar—even when you are an advanced player! Get started now by learning these beginning exercises.


Notice the counting numbers under the music. Recite these out loud as you clap your hands in the rhythm shown. Be sure to hold your hands together for the full duration of each note, and hold them apart during the rests. Use a metronome set to a slow tempo (speed) such as $\text{♩} = 48$. This will help you learn how to evenly fit two eighth notes or four sixteenth notes into the space of one beat.


A) 
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

B) 
1 2 (3) (4) 1 2 (3) (4) 1 (2) 3 (4) 1 (2) 3 (4)

C) 
(1) (2) (3) (4) 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

D) 
1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 & 3 &

E) 
1 2 & 3 1 & 2 3 & 1 & 2 & 3 1 2 & 3 &

F) 
1 & 2 3 & (4) 1 2 & (3) 4 & 1 & 2 (3) 4 & 1 2 & 3 (4)

Repeat sign. This indicates that the music should be repeated.

Chapter 2

Start Making Music!

To coax a musical sound from your guitar, you will need to develop a good technique for striking the strings. The most fundamental aspect of striking the strings is the right hand position.

The Right-Hand Position

The muscles that control the fingers are attached at their ends to the elbow joint and pass through the wrist on their way to the fingers. Since we are always concerned about making guitar playing as easy and stress-free as possible, we want to avoid pulling on these muscles unnecessarily. For that reason, it's important to keep your wrist straight (aligned with the arm). Use a mirror to observe your wrist position.

We need room to operate the fingers freely, so we arch the wrist very slightly, so that the top of the wrist is just further from the soundboard than the knuckle joints. Do not over-do this! Your wrist should be almost flat. Bending your wrist too much can cause serious problems.

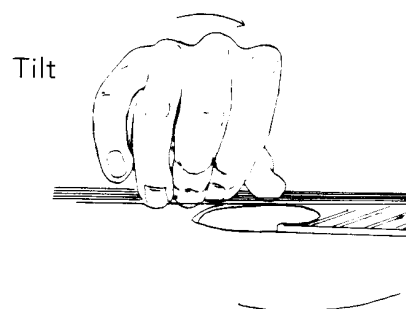
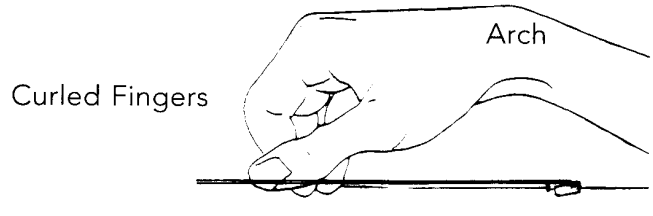
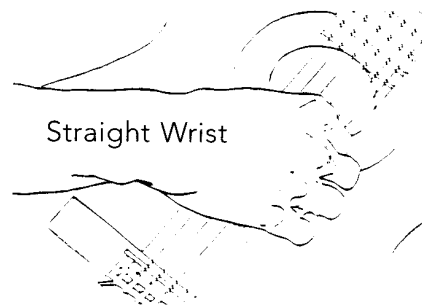
The two fingers we use most, *i* (index) and *m* (middle), are of different lengths: *i* is shorter than *m*. So, rotate or tilt the arm towards *i* (on an axis that runs through *m* to the elbow) so that you can just barely see the knuckle of your *a* (ring) finger when you look down at your hand. Not only will this help to equalize the length of *i* and *m*, but it will help you play on the left side of your nail, and simplify your thumb stroke, too.

Summary of the Right-Hand Position

- Straight wrist — use a mirror to check.
- Arch — the top of your wrist should be slightly further out from the soundboard than your knuckle joints.
- Tilt — the *a* knuckle joint should be just barely visible when you look down at your hand.

Basic Finger Position

Being careful to position your arm and wrist correctly, place *i* and *m* on the 2nd and 3rd strings respectively. Maneuver your arm and hand so that your fingers are slightly curled. Your *i* finger, which is positioned on the 3rd string, should be positioned so that its middle joint is curled above the 2nd string. The *m* finger, which is on the 2nd string, will be positioned so that its middle joint is curled above the 1st string. The other fingers, *a* and *c* (pinkie) will also be lightly curled. Your thumb, *p*, should rest lightly against the tip of *i*. The overall effect should be that of a loosely held fist...as if you were holding a ball.



The Thumb (*p*) Free Stroke (*Tirando*)

As you begin playing with your thumb (*p*), strive for a clear, strong tone. Tone refers to the quality of the sound you make — one of the most important considerations in learning to play classical guitar.

For now, rest *i* and *m* on the 3rd (G) and 2nd (B) strings respectively. Let's begin by playing the open 5th string (A).

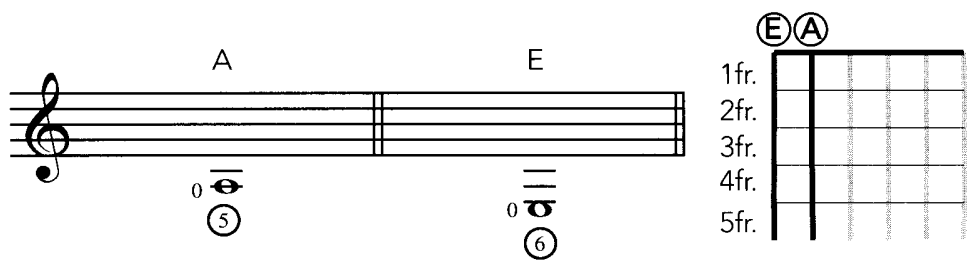
There are three steps to a good *p* stroke: extend, prepare and follow-through. Starting from an *at rest* position (resting against the tip of the *i* finger):

1. Gracefully and smoothly *extend* (move away from the palm) *p* from the wrist and tip joints. The wrist joint does most of the work. Don't work the middle joint at all.
2. Prepare *p* on the 5th string so that the nail and flesh are both touching the string. Your tip should not extend any further than is needed to get the nail on the string. For most of us, the tip joint will appear very slightly *flexed* (bent towards the palm) when we are on the string. Be careful not to overextend the tip, as if you were hitchhiking.
3. Dig into the string with the tip joint, supporting and pushing from the wrist joint, then floppily and freely follow through into the tip joint of *i*. Avoid any extra, circular motions.

Always make sure that the joints move together in the same direction. We always avoid circular movements in the right hand. As you can surely imagine, it takes extra effort for one joint to pull a finger out while the other pulls it in!

Introducing Low A and Low E (The Open 5th and 6th Strings)

Low A is the open 5th string.
Low E is the open 6th string.



Practice these introductory exercises very slowly, being careful to execute the three-step thumb stroke described above.

A)

Exercise A: A single staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef. It contains a sequence of notes: quarter notes on the 5th string (A) and 6th string (E) in pairs, followed by eighth notes on the 5th string (A) and 6th string (E) in pairs, and finally quarter notes on the 5th string (A) and 6th string (E) in pairs.

B)

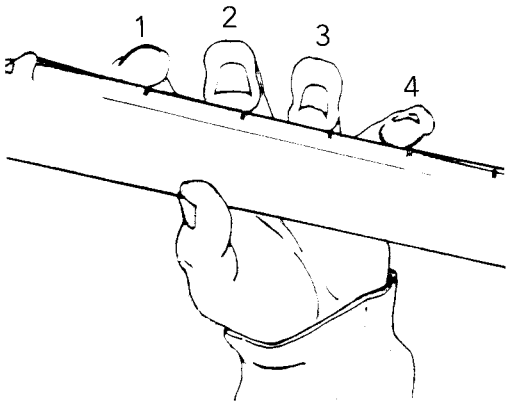
Exercise B: A single staff in 3/4 time with a treble clef. It contains a sequence of notes: quarter notes on the 5th string (A) and 6th string (E) in pairs, followed by eighth notes on the 5th string (A) and 6th string (E) in pairs, and finally quarter notes on the 5th string (A) and 6th string (E) in pairs.

The Left-Hand Position

The ideas behind the left-hand position are similar to those that govern the right-hand position. Your wrist should be aligned with your arm. The arch of your wrist should be minimal.

Place your thumb behind the neck, just under your 2nd finger.

Let's place all four left-hand fingers on the first four frets of the 6th string. Your 1st finger should be placed well to the left side of the fingertip and the 2nd finger just slightly so. The 3rd finger should be placed on the center of the fingertip, and your 4th finger will touch the string on its left side.



Notice that the fingers are very gently curled. It is not necessary to play on the very tips of the fingers all the time. For now, play a little bit below the very end of the finger, well away from the fingernails (which should be very short). Remember to always avoid extremes of flexion or extension when positioning the hands and fingers.

The fingers should always touch the strings just to the left of the frets, as close as possible to the fret wire without being on top of it. If you are too far from the fret, unattractive buzzes will result. If you are too far on top of the fret, the notes will sound muted.

Never press hard! You do not need to press the strings into the wood of the fretboard. You need only secure the string against the fret, thus shortening the vibrating length of the string and changing the pitch.

Fernando Sor

Born in 1778 and died in 1839, Fernando Sor is considered one of the most important composers for the guitar. Born in Barcelona, Spain, he also resided in London, Moscow and Paris. He composed over four hundred guitar pieces, and in 1827 published his famous guitar method.

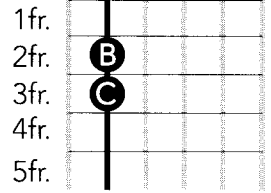
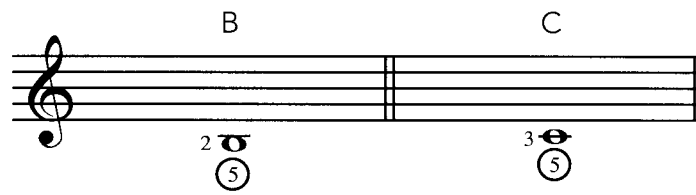


Introducing Low B and Low C on the 5th String

For now, keep *i* and *m* resting on the 3rd and 2nd strings respectively. Check your position frequently to make sure *i* and *m* remain lightly curled.

Low B is on the 2nd fret of the 5th string. Use your 2nd finger.

Low C is on the 3rd fret of the 5th string. Use your 3rd finger.



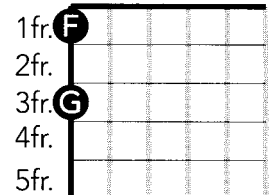
Pay very close attention to both the right and left hand positions as you play these exercises. Remember to always place left hand fingers directly to the left of the frets. The further from the frets you press, the more difficult it becomes to avoid disagreeable buzzing sounds.



Introducing Low F and Low G on the 6th String

Low F is on the 1st fret of the 6th string. Use your 1st finger.

Low G is on the 3rd fret of the 6th string. Use your 3rd finger.



How to Practice

The most important thing you will ever learn is how to learn! Fulfillment in your life with the guitar can easily become frustration if you lack a good approach to study. You will never learn to play well by practicing poorly. By the same token, you can reach the limits of your potential through good, methodical and regular practice.

How Long Should You Practice?

The amount of time you spend will reflect the depth of your interest, and what your aspirations are. If you want to become a great professional concert artist, you will spend many hours each day practicing, especially in your first few years. If you love the guitar but are pursuing it as a hobby, it is a good idea to find one hour a day to practice—although not necessarily in one sitting. It is important that your powers of concentration be at their best when practicing. Even many experts in the art of practicing an instrument find that their concentration wanes after about twenty minutes. Try practicing in three twenty-minute sessions, or even four fifteen-minute sessions. Anyone who really loves the guitar will want to pick it up several times a day for a few minutes, and a lot can be accomplished this way. You may find that your ability to concentrate for longer periods will increase, and, if your schedule allows, the total time that you practice will increase, too.

Set Goals

More important than how long you practice, or even what you practice, is *how* you practice. You should always have specific goals for your practice. For instance, "Today, I want to be able to play these two exercises smoothly and with confidence," or "Today I will review everything I did yesterday and learn these two new notes." If you find yourself never accomplishing your goals, try setting easier goals...it's important to try to succeed every day. Nothing breeds success like success! If you find yourself reaching your goals before an hour has passed, try setting higher goals for yourself. Never play aimlessly. Remember that you are always getting better or worse. Nothing you do on the guitar is ever meaningless.

Prepare - Repeat - Review

Everyone eventually establishes their own personal approach to practice. All successful approaches, however, follow a pattern similar to the one given here.

When learning a new piece or exercise, follow these five steps:

•Prepare

- Step 1. Take a very small portion of the piece, such as two measures, or a short phrase, and familiarize yourself with the rhythms by counting the beats aloud and clapping. Do this very slowly, since you will be playing slowly.
- Step 2. Familiarize yourself with the names of the notes in this short portion by pointing at each one and saying its name aloud.
- Step 3. Learn the left-hand fingerings in this short portion by pointing at the notes, picturing your left hand playing them on the guitar (*visualizing*) and saying the finger numbers out loud. Then name the fret numbers.

•Repeat

Step 4. When Steps 1-3 are easy for you, pick up your guitar and begin playing this portion of the piece very slowly. Make sure to play slowly enough to guarantee success; you should be able to think of the note names and visualize the fingerings before you play each note. If you are getting confused or making errors—if you feel rushed at all, slow down! Frustration is never fun, anyway. You may find that a metronome, set as slowly as it goes, may help you keep control over the speed at which you play. Repeat the passage as many times as is necessary to feel confident. Usually, confidence comes when something has been done well many times in a row. Your goal here is to develop habits of ease and confidence, and habits are formed through repetition.

•Review

Step 5. Repeat Steps 1-4 with the next small portion of the piece, and then play through all the sections you have learned thus far, until you can play through all of them in succession with confidence. The next day, when you continue your study of the piece, start by playing everything you learned today as slowly as possible, until confidence returns. Remember there is always attrition from day to day. In other words, if you master an exercise after an hour of practice today, it won't necessarily be mastered when you wake up tomorrow. It may take a little while to regain that progress. Three steps forward and one step back is normal for many of us. Stay in there! That's why review is so important.

Put this practice method to work as you learn the studies and pieces in this book. Have fun!

Mauro Giuliani

Probably one of the most brilliant guitar virtuosos ever to have lived, Mauro Giuliani was born in 1781 and died in 1829. His fame was such that the first classical guitar magazine ever published, in 1833, "Giulianiad," was named for him. He was born in Italy, but died in Vienna, where he spent most of his career. It was Giuliani's excellence that inspired Beethoven to say that "The guitar is a miniature orchestra in itself." Giuliani composed over three hundred works for guitar.

