

Woodstock Folk Guitar™ and Woodstock Kid's Guitar™

Tuning and Playing Instructions

By Happy Traum,
American folk music legend

To the parent or guardian:

The Woodstock Kid's Guitar is a beautiful-sounding guitar for children ages 6 and up. This booklet explains how to tune the guitar and provides your child with basic instruction on how to hold it and play it. Included are several simple songs that they can play on their guitar after learning just two or three chords. While the rest of this booklet is addressed to the child as the owner and player of the guitar, you may need to read and/or explain parts of it to them.

To the player:

Congratulations! You have a new guitar and are about to start on a wonderful musical adventure. But before you get going there are some important things you'll need to know about your new musical instrument.

Taking Care of Your Guitar

All musical instruments need special care in order to keep them in good working condition for many years to come. Here are the simple but important things you need to do for your new guitar.

1. When you are not using it, protect your guitar by keeping it in its cardboard box, or a guitar case if you have one.
2. Never leave the guitar near a heater, radiator, stove or other source of extreme heat. Never leave it outside in winter or in a very cold room either. If you take it in a car, don't leave it in the trunk on a hot day or a very cold day. These things can cause the wood of the guitar to warp or crack.
3. If your guitar gets dirty you can wipe it with a slightly damp (not wet) cloth or ask a grown-up for help in polishing it.

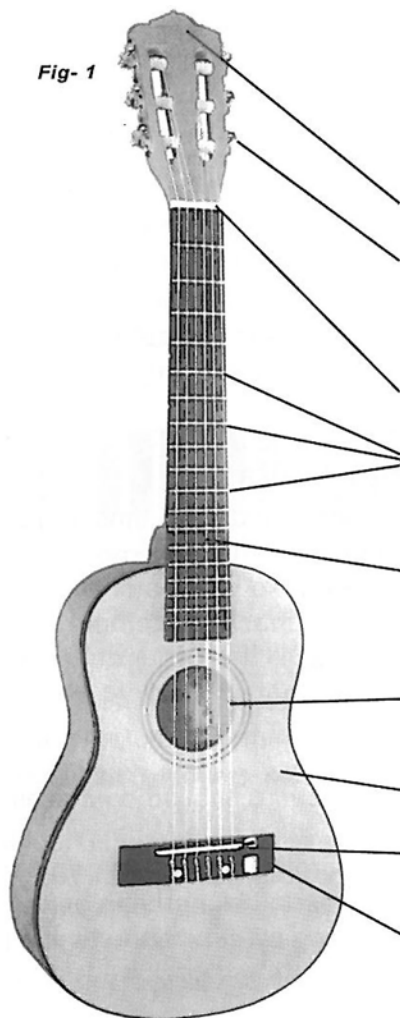
Parts of the Guitar

From time to time this booklet will refer to various parts of the guitar. It's good to know all the parts of a guitar, so let's take a few minutes and study the diagram on the next page.

Lesson One: What's What

Before you begin learning to play, it's important to know what to call the parts of your instrument and how each one works.

Fig- 1



1. **Head** - the head of the guitar holds the tuning pegs.
2. **Tuning Pegs** - there are six tuning pegs on a guitar. One holds the end of each string. Turning them raises or lowers the sound of the string.
3. **Nut** - the nut has six little grooves that guide the strings.
4. **Frets** - strings are pressed between the frets to sound different pitches.
5. **Fingerboard** - the frets sit on the fingerboard. you press your fingertips down on the strings against the fingerboard to make music.
6. **Sound Hole** - also called the "mouth." You strum the strings over the sound hole for a big, bold sound.
7. **Body** - the "body" of the guitar.
8. **Bridge** - this holds the saddle. Attach your guitar strings here.
9. **Saddle** - this guides the strings and lifts them above the fingerboard.

Holding the Guitar

Sit in a straight-backed chair (one without arms), and place the curve of the guitar on your right leg. The neck of the guitar should extend to the left in a horizontal position (so it's even with the floor). Rest your right arm over the top of the guitar so that your right hand falls naturally near the sound hole. This is the hand that will strum or pick the strings of the guitar.

Your left hand presses the strings to the fingerboard to change the notes. Press firmly with the tips of your fingers, making certain not to touch the neighboring strings. If your fingertips get sore at first, don't worry. They will get tough soon and develop calluses, which are pads of hard skin that protect your fingers and make it easier to play. To get the best tone, press the strings down just behind the fret, but not touching it.

To the Left-Handed Player

If you are left-handed, you can choose to play your guitar as described above, or you can reverse the guitar so that your left hand becomes the strumming or picking hand and the fingers of your right hand press on the strings. If you choose to play this way, you will probably want to reverse the strings on the guitar. If you reverse all the strings - so that the thickest string is at the top of the guitar as you hold it and the thinnest at the bottom - then the rest of the instructions on tuning and playing will be the same as for a right-handed player. Someone at your local music store will be able to show you how to re-string your guitar.

The Pick

You have received a plastic pick with your guitar. You can use this to strum the strings, or you can use your fingers. The guitar can be played either way. If you use the pick, hold it between your thumb and first finger with the pointy part facing the guitar. Grip it just tight enough so that it doesn't slip out of your fingers. Try not to strike the strings too hard.

Tuning Your Guitar

Guitars need to be tuned each time you play them, so it's important that you know how to do this. It's not easy, so you may need the help of your parent, teacher or other grown-up to get it right at first. Unless your guitar is in tune, the music will not sound right even if you are playing everything correctly.

When you pluck a string, that string makes a musical sound we call a note. When you tighten that string by turning the tuning peg one way, the note will sound higher than before. If you loosen the string by turning the tuning peg the other way, the note will get lower. Try doing this yourself.

The strings of your guitar should be tuned to these notes:

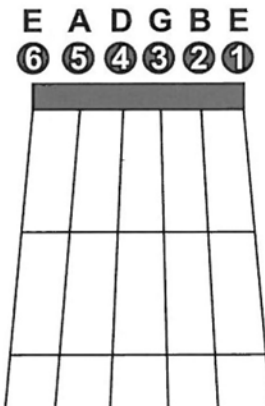


Fig. 2

On a piano keyboard, these same notes look like this:

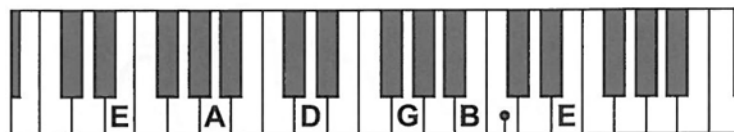


Fig. 3

MIDDLE C

Try playing each note on the piano, and then tune the string that corresponds to that key until the tones match. This may take some practice, but listen carefully and you'll get it.

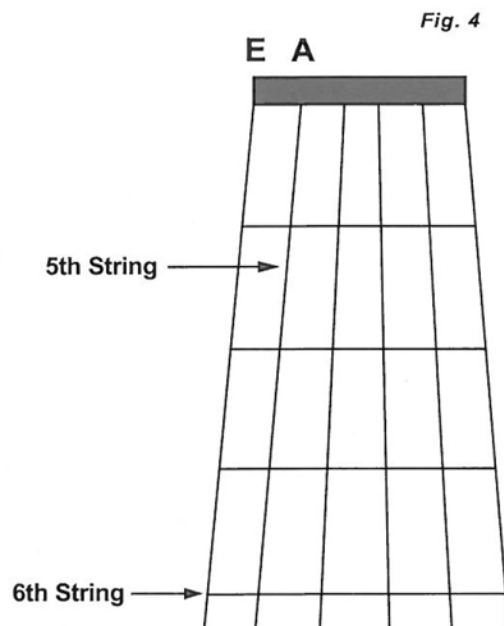
If you don't have a piano, you can get a guitar pitch pipe in a music store that has the notes you'll need for tuning the guitar.

If you do not have a piano or a pitch pipe, you can still tune your guitar.

Here's How:

Let's suppose the E or 6th string (the fattest one) is in tune (even if it's not). As long as it's not so loose that it makes a buzzing sound, or so tight it is stiff and hard to pluck, it will be OK.

Count up to the fifth fret on the 6th string and press the string down firmly to the fingerboard. That's an A note.



Pluck that string, and then pluck the open 5th string. The notes should sound the same. If they don't decide whether the 5th string is higher or lower than the one you are fretting on the 6th string. Then use the tuning peg that the 5th string is attached to and turn it one way or the other until it exactly matches the sound of the 6th string, fifth fret.

You can tune each string this way, by matching it to the one you've just tuned. Here's a chart to help you tune your guitar this way:

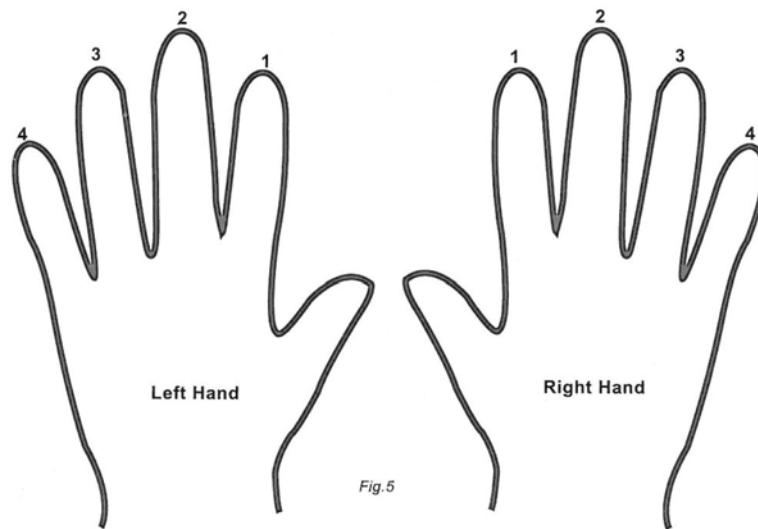
- 6th string pressed down at the fifth fret = **A** (open 5th string)
- 5th string pressed down at the fifth fret = **D** (open 4th string)
- 4th string pressed down at the fifth fret = **G** (open 3rd string)
- 3rd string pressed down at the fourth fret = **B** (open 2nd string)
- 2nd string pressed down at the fifth fret = **E** (open 1st string)

Just remember if you tune your guitar this way, it will probably not be in tune with other instruments. If you want to play with your friends, you can re-tune your guitar to their instruments.

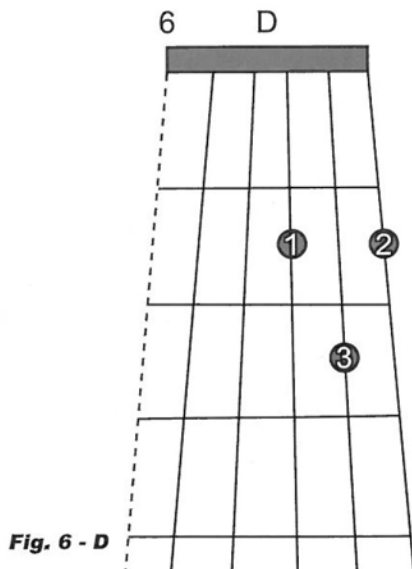
Your First Chords

Here are some diagrams that show where your fingers should go in order to play chords on the guitar. If you learn these three chords you'll be able to sing and play hundreds of fun songs.

The dot tells you which string to press down, and at which fret. The number in the dot tells you which finger to press with. ("1" is your index or pointer finger, "2" is your middle finger and so on - Fig. 5). When you see a dotted line, it means that you should not strum that string with that particular chord.



The first chord diagram (Fig. 6) shows you how to play the D chord. Your second (middle) finger presses the 1st string at the second fret; your first (index) finger presses the 3rd string at the second fret; and your third (ring) finger presses the 2nd string at the third fret. Do not strum the 6th string.



Try holding down the D chord. Now, using your thumb or the pick, strum down, playing each string separately. Make sure each note rings out cleanly, without getting a muffled or buzzing sound.

If it sounds OK, strum down so all the strings play almost at the same time. What you are hearing is called a chord.

Fig. 6 - D

Now try strumming down in rhythm, counting evenly ONE... TWO... THREE... FOUR... ONE... TWO... THREE... FOUR...

Now try playing the second chord, A7. Practice changing from the D to the A7, making sure that your notes are still ringing clearly.

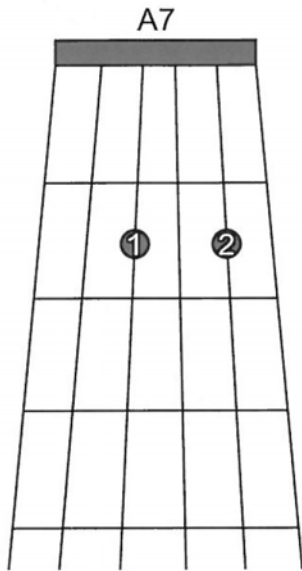


Fig. 7 - A7

When you can play both chords without too much trouble, try playing and singing the following songs, which can be found at the end of this booklet. Strum your strings slowly and evenly.

"He's Got the Whole World In His Hands"

"Oh, My Darling, Clementine"

"Aunt Rhody"

"Froggie Went A-Courtin'"

"Michael Finnegan"

"Oh, Dear, What Can The Matter Be?"

Adding the G Chord

When you have learned one more chord, you can play many, many songs. There are two ways to play the G chord - "Easy G" and "Full G." If you have small hands, you might want to try "Easy G" first. Remember not to strum the 5th and 6th strings when you play "Easy G."

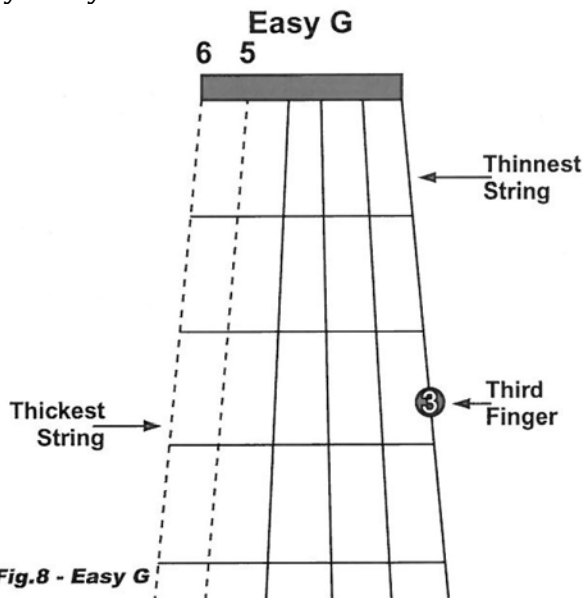


Fig. 8 - Easy G

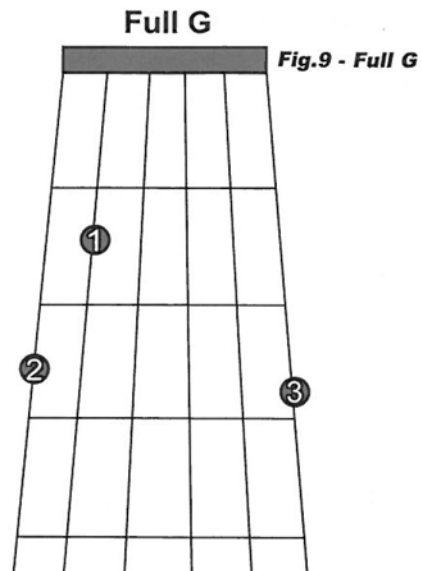


Fig. 9 - Full G

When you know how to play "Easy G," then practice "Full G" until it sounds good to you.

Here are some songs you can now play using all three chords:

"Good Morning"

"Michael, Row the Boat Ashore"

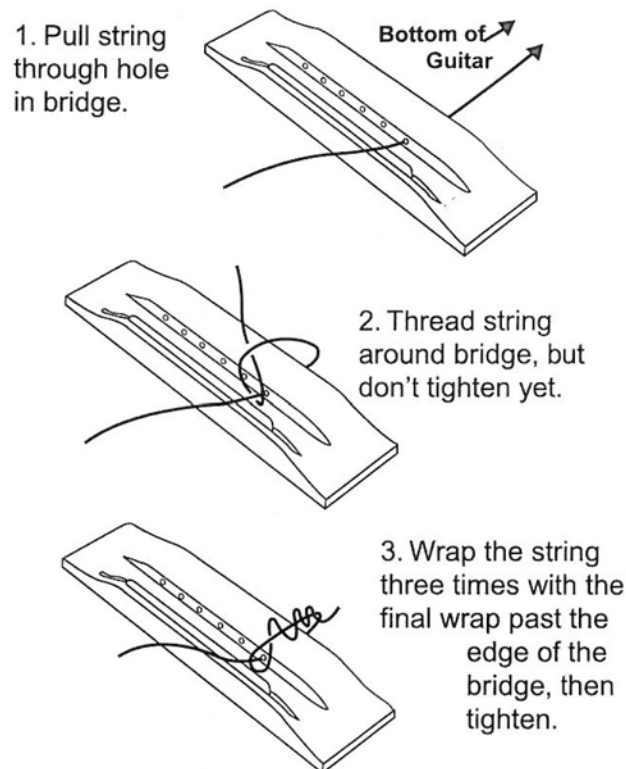
"Comin' Round the Mountain"

"Amazing Grace"

"When the Saints Go Marchin' In"

Changing your guitar strings:

Whoops, you've broken a string! Not to worry - we've supplied you with an entire set of spare strings. First, remove what's left of the broken string. Then, select the string of the same gauge (or thickness) from the set of spare strings and secure one end of the string to the bridge as shown in the diagrams below.



Next, thread the other end of the string through the hole in the tuning peg. Leave a little "tail" sticking out of the hole. Then, while keeping some tension on the string, tighten it by turning the tuning peg in a clockwise direction and bury the "tail" with wraps of the string as it winds around the tuning peg. Once the string is secured, you can use a pair of wire cutters to trim off any excess at either end. Then, tune it according to the instructions provided. New strings tend to stretch. You will probably have to retune it several times before it stays in tune.

About the Author

Happy Traum's involvement in traditional and contemporary music has brought him recognition as a performer, writer, editor, folklorist and recording artist. He has appeared on numerous recordings, both as a soloist and as an accompanist, and has toured extensively throughout the US, Canada, Europe, Australia and Japan.

Happy is undoubtedly one of America's best-known and best-loved guitar teachers. He is the author of nearly two dozen guitar instruction books, including "The Children's Guitar Guide" and "The Young Guitarist," and is the co-founder (along with his wife, Jane) of Homespun Tapes®. This dynamic and growing mail order company has a catalog of over 400 different music instruction lessons on video tape, audio cassettes and CDs, taught by top professional performing musicians. Happy produces all of the lessons, and brings to Homespun his many years of experience as a guitarist and popular member of the music community.

The Woodstock Music Collection®, by Woodstock Percussion, is a unique assortment of musical instruments and gifts from around the world. Every item in the Music Collection is fun, easy to play, and most will harmonize with one another. Ask your retailer about other fabulous instruments in the Woodstock Music Collection or our world famous, precision-tuned Woodstock Chimes®. All are gifts that sound great!

Homespun Tapes, one of the world's largest and most well-respected producers of music instruction videos, has made a lively, fun-filled video guitar course called "Kid's Guitar: Play in 10 Easy Lessons." Taught by the renowned children's performer and teacher Marcy Marxer, this Parent's Choice award-winning video helps you get in tune, teaches you all the basic chords and strums, and helps you develop a good musical ear. Before long you will be playing and singing many well-known songs for your family and friends.

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Ages 6+