

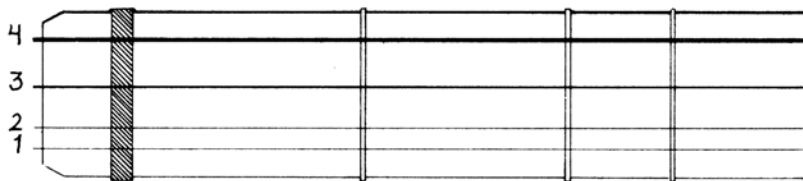
To avoid entering a stage of mumbo jumbo, let's make sure we're all talking about the same thing at the same time. Don't be baffled by unfamiliar terms, because we will use them in context, and as we go along you'll find they will all fall readily into place.

Our teaching technique is based on the four-string diatonic scale (eight-note) dulcimer like the one in the nomenclature illustration. We'll start with tuning. And in order to tune, we'd better find out which string is which and how to restring in case one breaks.

Place your dulcimer on your lap, with the head of the instrument to your left. (If you are left-handed, we apologize, but you'll have to reverse everything from here on in. However, you may be used to doing this.)

Your dulcimer may not look anything like the one in the nomenclature illustration, but in general, it will have the same parts. Your dulcimer may have more frets, a differently shaped headstock (peg-head), smaller sound holes, a different kind of bridge, and no strap peg. But it does have strings, and we'll number the strings, number 1 being closest to you, lightest to thickest.

We call the first two strings either the "unison" or "melody" strings and number them 1 and 2. The middle string is number 3, and the bass or octave string, numbered 4, is on the bottom. If you have a dulcimer strung in another manner, it would be best to standardize to this string arrangement for the purposes of this book.



COMMON FOUR-STRING ARRANGEMENT

Some four-string dulcimers are strung equidistantly. You can make a set of unisons by bringing the second string closer to the first. Using a pocket knife or fine-toothed saw, simply cut an additional groove