

(X+3)  
X  
X  
X

As you know, tuning your .010 unisons up to G may break them, so if you are going to use this traditional tuning a great deal, you'd best get slightly thinner (.009 gauge) extra-light strings. If you tune your unisons down to a G below middle C on the piano, use two .012's for unisons, as well as for the middle string.

Once again, the first note of your scale is at the third fret, and in this tuning your third fret actually will be C. The middle string will be C, and the bass will be an octave below G.

Some people tune the Ionian mode with all the strings the same, and the effect is quite pleasing for Scotch, English, or Irish ballads that require a strong bagpipe-like drone behind the melody line. This tuning looks like this:

(X)  
X  
X  
X

If you are tuned into the Mixolydian mode with D as your keytone for the unisons, you will automatically be in the key of G when you lower your middle string one note to tune into the Ionian. This is handy when you are playing with other musicians who like the key of G.

There are literally hundreds if not thousands of Irish, Scottish, English, French, German, Scandinavian and certainly American folk songs that you can play in the Ionian mode. We recommend Jean Ritchie's and Lynn McSpadden's dulcimer books as two of many that contain songs written in music tablature that is easy to understand. At the back of this book you'll find a listing of these and other titles.