

It's a good idea to have your fingernails cut short so that your contact with the strings is uniform. Also, take care to exert a steady fingertip pressure on the strings to produce the clearest sound. It's best to leave the index finger free for adding short slides, embellishments, and other notes while fingers two and three hold down the chord position itself. Some people use the thumb for making embellishments or reaching out for other notes, but we find this terribly awkward and don't recommend it.

For demonstration purposes we'll use the area around the third fret. As you move your chord configuration onto other frets, you'll find that they may become more major or minor, depending on the interval between the notes...but as you experiment with diads, you'll learn what sound is where on the fretboard. In the Mixolydian mode you won't run into any absolutely discordant tonalities, although some relationships will sound more pleasing than others. In the minor modes you will find discordances—but, then again, remember it is our cultural musical conditioning that causes us to judge these tones as discordant. If someone complains, say you're working on avant-garde jazz dulcimer!

FINGERTIP CHORDS



This position is basic to playing diads on the unisons and middle string as well as the middle and bass. Most likely your ring finger is not very strong, so exercising this position may be a bit painful at first. Remember to press down firmly and accurately, because if you don't the chord will sound weak and watery. If your chords sound a bit sharp, it may be because your bridge is not accurately adjusted, so