

note your unisons are tuned to. If you have trouble, refer to the fretboard illustrations in Chapter Four. You might also want to purchase a book on music theory or work with a guitarist who can help you with working out chord progressions. In any event...it's up to you from here on in.

If you have a lute dulcimer, your chords will be very full and robust. Perhaps you may not want to keep tuning to an "open chord" like the Mixolydian mode, so why not place your strings at other values that enable you to form full-tone chords?

If you want to tune to a D-major triad, tune your unisons to D as usual, your middle to A as usual, and your bass string to an F-sharp. This tuning satisfies our definition of a triad, and all we've done is modified the tuning a little.

The same technique can be used with other starting tones, so see what happens when you get into it.

Invariably, your fingers will get sore and initially your hand will feel cramped from maintaining a steady pressure in unaccustomed finger positions. One way to exercise your fingers and hand is to learn the deaf-mute alphabet. Your hand will grow stronger from exercising the positions of this hand alphabet, which is explained in most dictionaries.

But there's nothing that beats practice for strengthening your hands and fingers. If you want to become proficient at playing chords on the dulcimer, you just have to keep on strumming—and the rewards will be commensurate with your devotions.