

## Basics of Music Notation

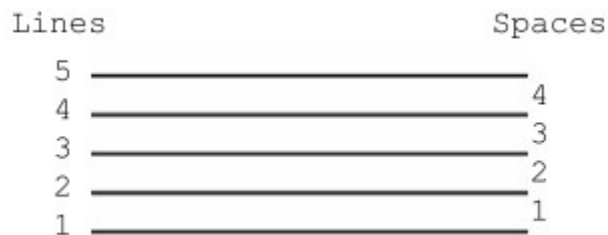
### PITCHES


Within the Western music tradition music has generally been transmitted in two ways, 1) through ear, (modeling and emulation), or 2) through a symbol system of musical notation. We will talk about learning by ear in another video, but for this video we will deal with issues surrounding how to read and play from standard musical notation.

OK... here is a music staff.



You will notice that there are 5 lines and 4 spaces in the staff. The lines and spaces are numbered from bottom to top.



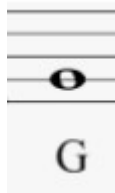
Symbols that look like this (  ) are placed on the staff. These symbols represent pitches on the guitar. In other words, these symbols tell you where to play a particular note—what string and fret to play. For instance, the symbol/note found in the second line indicates to play string three open (not fretted). String six is closest to the ceiling when the guitar is in playing position—string 1 is closest to the ground.



Numbers are often placed beside or above a note, indicating what fret to play (we'll talk about fretted notes shortly). For instance, the below note has a zero beside it indicating to play string three open.



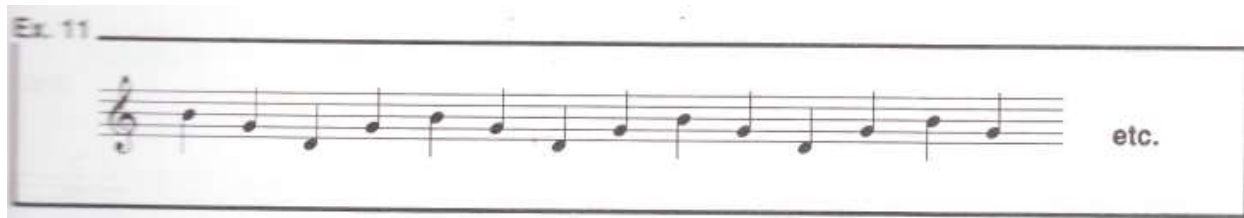
Each note also has a letter name. The note we've been discussing is called G.



This week we will learn to play three open strings—string 4 (D), string 3 (G) and string 2 (B)



Play the following exercise using only open strings. Place your right-hand thumb (P) on string 4, index finger (i) on string 3, and middle finger (m) on string two. This is a fixed finger position; one finger per string.



## **FRETTING**

We will learn to fret one note this week. Before proceeding, carefully review “Left Hand Training” in the technique tab for this week.

Remember the following:

Circled numbers, ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥, indicate strings.

Uncircled numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4, indicate left-hand fingers. A zero indicates that no left-hand finger is used.

Roman numerals, I through XIX, indicate frets.

Form the note A by pressing ③ (third string) against II (second fret) with 2 (left-hand finger). Keep your fingertip very close to the fret.



## Visualizing Notes on the Fingerboard

Begin by watching the fingerboard and your finger positions as you play each note. Then close your eyes and continue to play and say the letter names of each note aloud. Visualize your finger movements as you play—aim to see each movement in your mind's eye. Repeat each of the four exercises in the following example until you can play them accurately and confidently.



### RHYTHM

Rhythm is music's pattern in time; the duration that notes are held for.

### APPLICATION

Begin by tapping your foot roughly once per second. This is called the beat. The beat is the basis for all other rhythms. Now clap your hands in time with your foot. You are now clapping quarter notes. Quarter notes (see below) have a stem and black head. Quarter notes represent one full beat. This is the most basic rhythm.



Eight notes subdivide the beat in two. Clap twice for each beat of your foot. You are now clapping eighth note rhythms. The foot taps the beat (quarter notes) while your hands clapping eighth notes. Eight notes are usually grouped together in two's or four's.



Clap the following rhythm. Before beginning establish a steady beat with your foot. Then begin to clap the rhythms.



## **MUSICAL EXPRESSION - DYNAMICS**

Like the volume of a voice in a conversation (or a good argument...), volume in music convey emotional import. A soft sound may convey a sense of intimacy or introversion while a loud boisterous sound can convey joy or exuberance.

We' ll learn to play with three volume levels this week—soft (piano in Italian, or simply “P”), medium (mezzo forte in Italian, or “MF”), and loud (Forte in Italian, or simply “F”). Think of dynamics like the volume control on your stereo; piano is around 3, mezzo forte is around 5, and forte is around 8.

## **APPLICATION**

Begin by placing your thumb on string 4. Pluck the string until you producing a medium sounding volume. This is your standard “baseline” volume (mezzo forte, or MF). This baseline volume is important because it provides you room to get either louder or softer. To play quietly, loosen the tip joints of finger that is plucking (the thumb in this case). Imagine that the joints are soft and flexible, like “jello”. Now play string 4 softly (piano, or “P”) and see how quite you can get. Once you're happy with your soft sound go back to your medium level and play a few notes. Now, to play loudly (forte, or “F”) make the tip joints more rigid and firm—do not let the joints collapse backwards when striking the string. Play string four loudly (Forte). Now play the same exercise on string 3 with Index finger. Finally play string 2 with m finger in a similar manner.