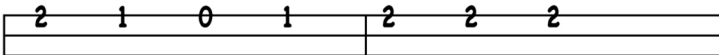


How to Play Simple Songs

Playing songs involves both your brain and your hands. *It is important to already be comfortable using your hands to do Strumstick things before you do songs, so you are free to pay attention to the brain part and are not distracted just making your hands work.*

A song is only one note after another. To show you a song, we have to indicate *which fret on which string* for each note of the song. We will use **numbers** for the fret number, and horizontal lines for the strings. The very top fret, the one the strings are resting on, is called **0 (zero)**. If you are not fretting a string with your finger, it is said to be played at the **zero fret**, or **open**. The next fret from the **zero fret** is **1st fret**, the next after that **2nd fret**, etc.

Illustration: The top line is the first string (that's the skinniest one, the highest pitched one, the one closest to the floor as you hold the Strumstick in playing position). The middle line is the middle string (string 2) and the bottom line is string 3, the lowest pitched and thickest string.



Ma - ry had a lit - tle lamb

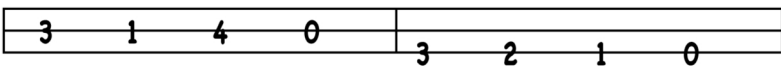
In this example, the first note is [**2nd fret on first string**]. The next note is [**1st fret on first string**]. The third note is [**0 fret on first string**]. You won't need any finger for that 0, and it's called "first string open."

Use the finger that feels most comfortable at first. As you play faster, you may decide to use several fingers in succession, but for now, just use whichever one feels most comfortable.

Whichever note you are fingering, you will still be strumming all three strings! This will make a melody note plus two background notes.

Notes on the other strings:

For notes on strings two or three, the fret number will be written on the line that represents the string the note is on. In the example below, you see [**second string 3rd fret**], [**second string 1st fret**], [**second string 4th fret**], and [**second string open (0 fret)**], etc on third string.



Sometimes people are confused by second string 0 fret; it is not a trick, it's a free note, no finger is needed when a note is open. Since you are strumming all three strings all the time, you are already getting that note, but if that is the melody note at some point in the song, we still need to indicate it.

Reminder about fretting: Squeeze with the tip of your finger, just to the left of the metal fret, not right on it, and definitely not halfway between two frets. The object is to hold the string securely against the fret without muffling the string, and without having to squeeze harder than necessary.

Play slowly: The melody of the song appears when you smoothly play one note after the other. Any one strum may sound odd to you, especially on the second and third strings. When you can play each note slowly but steadily in succession, then you will hear the melody. Speed will come naturally as you become more familiar with a song. When you are learning, **speed is not a virtue, it is an obstacle.** ALLOW yourself to go slowly...Enjoy the Noise!