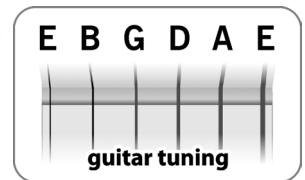


## MEET YOUR INSTRUMENT

As we said earlier, we assume you already have a booklet on your instrument covering some basics, like tuning, replacing strings, and general maintenance (or perhaps you have a teacher?). Use this along with the information below to Get Started With the ToneWay Method, page 93.

**Your Voice:** Sing! This is the instrument you were born with. Thus you have a great advantage by using it, not only for the sheer joy of singing, but as a stepping stone to playing intuitively. We personally hold singing to be the quickest and simplest path to playing by ear. Sure, you can learn to play an instrument without ever singing, but by ear? And as quickly? Unlikely, unless you're unusually talented musically or a child. So, make singing a first priority. For that, the guitar is ideal. You can easily learn a few chords and strum the basic rhythm to accompany your song. Strumming as you sing helps you lock down the beat, which is so essential to music. Also, listening to the harmony of the chord played on the guitar will help you pitch your voice where it needs to be to sing the melody.

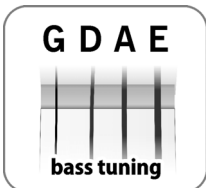
**Guitar:** Most people we know who play this music can play 'basic' guitar, even though many of them usually play another instrument. That tells you something right there. The same cannot be said about any other instrument. Thus, we deem the guitar as the foundation for this 'people music'. If you are an adult beginner of average musical talent and wish to sing, make the guitar the first instrument you learn. At least learn the 'basic' half-dozen chords, the 'basic' strum, and 'basic' picking. This will prepare you for any instrument you may be drawn to play in the long term. Guitar is the meat and potatoes of this music.



If you are going to play guitar, it is absolutely essential that you acquire a **capo**. As you will see, the capo makes playing in any key a no-brainer, which is crucial for matching a song to your vocal range (which, in turn, is crucial for singing). Shubb, Kyser, and Paige all make good capos. You'll also want a **flatpick** – anything that isn't too thin will do.

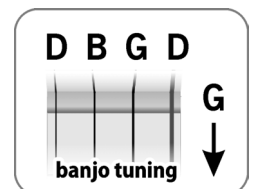
Also, note that almost everyone who plays this music uses a steel-string guitar, as opposed to a 'classical', nylon-stringed one. While they sound pretty, nylon strings lack the power and volume needed to play (unamplified) in a group. If the guitar you have was built for nylon strings, re-stringing it with *light* steel strings should be fine, at least in the short-term.

Reaching over to the big bass strings can make chords on the guitar difficult, initially. Thus, while not usually played in this kind of music, the **baritone ukelele** is a great instrument to start out on. The strings are tuned like the last four strings of the guitar: EBGD. Anything you learn on it applies to the regular guitar as well. See page 132 for Ukulele Picking Patterns. (Another alternative: take off the bottom two strings of your guitar!)



**Bass:** The bass plays a very subtle yet profound role in the ensemble playing of this music, although playing it alone would not be satisfying. It gives a bottom beat which supports all the other players. That you really notice it when it's missing from a jam is a testament to its importance. Bases come in several sizes: full-size (which few play), three-quarter-size (typical), half-size, and quarter-size.

**Banjo:** The open tuning gives the banjo an advantage in that you can pick any string and sound good as long as you're in the right chord. Nevertheless, the three finger banjo picking style may require more talent than the other string instruments. Getting the thumb and the two fingers to switch back and forth between rolling in rhythm and picking the melody without missing a beat takes extra coordination. The 'frailing' (clawhammer) style of playing has a rhythm similar to the other instruments, especially the fiddle 'shuffle', and so may be easier to pull off than the three finger banjo style.

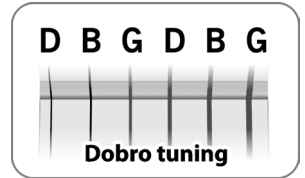


Like the guitar, owning a **capo** is mandatory for banjo players. Banjo capos are usually a bit smaller, since the neck is thinner. You'll also need either a "fifth-string capo," or as we prefer, a few 'railroad spikes' (on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and possibly 10<sup>th</sup> frets). Slipping the 'fifth string' (the high, drone one) under the tiny model railroad spike raises the pitch of the string without re-tuning it, matching what the capo does for the other four strings.

If you've decided to tackle 'Scruggs-style' three-finger picking, you'll also need some **picks**. The fingerpicks are metal and should fit comfortably (try a 'split-wrap' fingerpick for a better fit). The thumbpick is plastic.

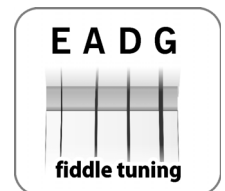
Finally, if you or your neighbors find the banjo to be too loud, you can always get a mute and attach it to the bridge to quiet things down. In a pinch, you can use a clothespin or two.

**Dobro:** Physically speaking, the Dobro is easier to play than the other five instruments in certain ways. It is open tuned, so as long as you're in the correct chord, any string you strike sounds good. The chords are made by simply placing a steel bar over the appropriate fret (making this easy work for arthritic fingers). The Dobro is played with finger picks like a banjo. However, picking is done in a straight-forward way – following the melody closely – and so avoids some of the difficulties inherent to the banjo. On the other hand, it doesn't lend itself to strumming backup for singing as well as the guitar.

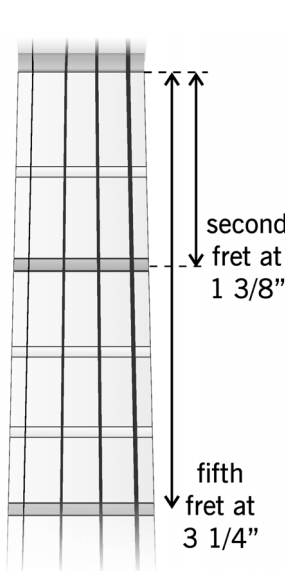


You'll need a **bar**, and some **picks**. The bar (a.k.a. 'slide') is made of solid steel so it has some weight to it (no need to press down hard on the strings). The rules for picks are the same as for the banjo – any set of banjo picks should work fine for Dobro. As for a **capo**: it's not essential, but it sure is nice.

**Fiddle:** Both fiddle and mandolin are extremely well suited for playing melody; their smaller size permits them to be tuned much 'simpler', making them the easiest instrument to play intuitively – in any key! The guitar and banjo require the use of a



capo to keep things simple and 'organized'; on the fiddle or mandolin you just shift your finger pattern around. The challenge with the fiddle (or violin... no difference) lies not in its lack of frets but in the use of a bow. The most distinctive aspect of the fiddle is its soulful voice. It, more than any other string instrument, sings.

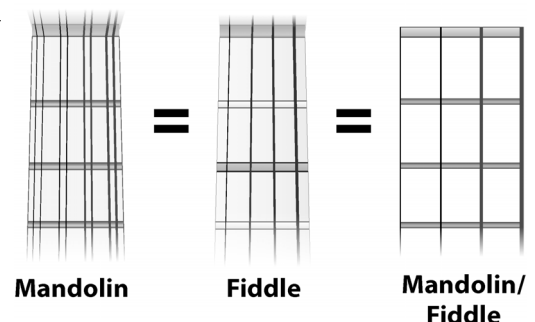


	second	fifth fret
Full-size	1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
"3/4-size"	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	3"
"1/2-size"	1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>16</sub>	2 <sup>13</sup> / <sub>16</sub>
"1/4-size"	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	2 <sup>11</sup> / <sub>16</sub>

There is no shame in using tape to mark the locations of a few frets! In fact, we highly recommend it. Use a few thin strips of electrician's tape to mark the locations of the second and fifth frets, and a few others if you like.

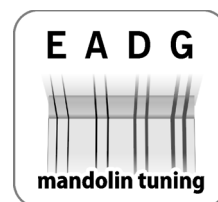
Measurements are provided to help you find where to put the tape (you can also use a tuner or ask someone at a music store). Eventually your fingers will get used to the spacing and you won't need the tape.

Because the fiddle and mandolin are tuned the same, the mandolin ToneWay Picking Pattern also applies to the fiddle. Therefore, we use a combined Mandolin/Fiddle graphic (right) throughout the book. Taping the second and fifth frets allows you to place your fingers accurately there, and your ear should guide you to frets 1, 3 and 4 soon (or you can use your electronic tuner to help you place tape on those frets as well).



Besides the fiddle and the bow, you'll need some **fiddler's rosin**. As the rosin on the bow hairs wears off, you'll need to apply some more so the bow will 'grip' the strings. This should only be required occasionally. Next, a **shoulder rest** makes playing the fiddle more comfortable for some people... though not everyone. Squeaking and scratching noises are part of the charm of learning the fiddle... but if it gets to be too much, you can try a fiddle mute to cut down on the harsh sounds. Finally, if you feel that you just can't control the bow well, just hold it a few inches closer to the middle, or try a 'half-size' bow (which is about four inches shorter).

**Mandolin:** The eight strings of the mandolin are tuned in pairs to match the four strings of the fiddle. Having the same tuning makes the two instruments natural compliments of each other. Playing one helps with the other, we've found. You might say that the mandolin incorporates some of the best features of the guitar and fiddle. The fretted strings and use of a pick give it a distinctive rhythm backup role in this music. Because of the simple, 'rational' tuning, the instrumental 'breaks' can really fly around the fretboard.



It's important to have a good flatpick when playing the mandolin. You'll want a somewhat thick mandolin pick with three rounded (not sharp) 'corners.' The most expensive picks have a special beveling that makes a big difference when playing many notes in succession. The pleasure of having a pick that effortlessly glides across the strings is well worth the five dollars you spend. Finally, you can use light strings and lower the 'action' to make the strings easier to fret.

**And for the kids:** Young kids don't have the same difficulties with music as adults have, so any instrument they're drawn to may be the best place to start. 'Half-size' (or smaller) fiddles suit the very young since their hands can navigate the fingerboard with ease, and their youthful flexibility and adaptability are a big plus in bringing the bowing hand to life. Another alternative is the baritone ukulele (see the sidebar next to the guitar). Anything learned on a baritone ukelele transfers over to the regular guitar when their growing hands are ready. For the mandolin, just remove one string of the pair.



## Some 'Must-Have' Accessories

**Electronic tuner:** a.k.a. the greatest invention in the twentieth century. Having your instrument in tune is crucial. If it's not in tune, anything you play on it will sound "off" – and if it doesn't sound good, you won't do it for long! Electronic tuners make accurate tuning a breeze, and thus, music a joy. Buy one. They're not expensive, and yet priceless. We recommend getting a "clip-on" tuner which feels the vibrations coming from your instrument, and so is not 'distracted' by other noises in the room.

**Strings:** Steel strings wear out eventually. Some people change their strings every few weeks! Most however change them when they begin to sound 'dead', or when they feel rusty and become harder to tune. Fiddle strings usually last for many, many months. Bass strings last for *years*.

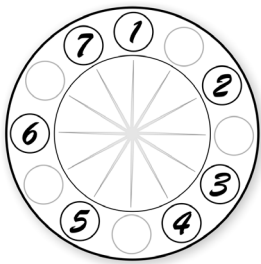
**Strap:** With a strap, you can stand up. This can have a rather large, positive effect on your singing. People often like to jam standing up for that reason as well. Not applicable for the fiddle, obviously, not to mention the bass. Boy, wouldn't that be a funny sight!

**'Gorilla Snot':** "Eww! What?" It's the brand name of a sticky compound that you can put on your guitar or mandolin pick to make it 'sticky.' If you find yourself dropping your pick often, this may be just the ticket. Papa swears by it.

# GET STARTED WITH THE TONEWAY<sup>®</sup> METHOD

## – THE FIVE COMMANDMENTS OF PLAYING BY EAR –

**I. Feel the Melody:** Through one simple song, “Shady Grove”, we will plant the roots of playing music. Upon this foundation, the life-long joy of playing music by ear will grow. Begin *now* by listening to track #4 of the CD (“Shady Grove”) over and over. Stomp your foot and clap as you *drum the rhythm and melody into your mind* – and sing along, of course (see page 72). Note: You can listen to versions of “Shady Grove” and “Tom Dooley” played in varying tempos and keys at [www.playingbyear.com](http://www.playingbyear.com). Also, consider photocopying pages 93–96 to avoid flipping back and forth.

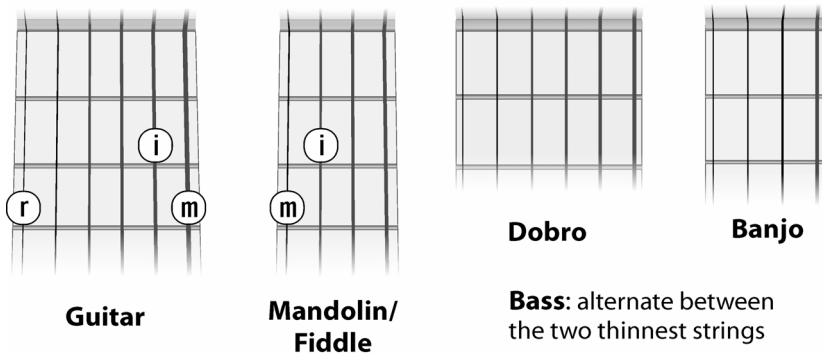


**The Tones:** Think of music as a **circle of seven tones**. You know them as *Do, Re, Mi...*, etc. We use numbers instead, where ‘do’ is 1, ‘re’ is 2, ‘mi’ is 3, . . . ‘ti’ is 7, and back to ‘do’ again an octave higher than the first ‘do’. Numbers simplify understanding and make picking, playing chords and singing harmony much easier, as you’ll soon see.

**II. Keep the Beat:** This music is ‘primitive and organic’. Like its cousins, Native American and African music, it is rooted in a driving primal rhythm in which you *become* the beat. Now, make a ‘G’ chord and strum along with “Shady Grove” as best you can with the CD or the online versions on our website.

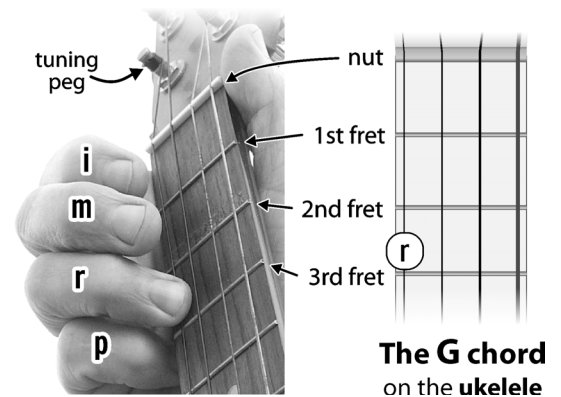
**FACT #1:** Rhythm is the bedrock of music upon which all else rests. You can ‘goof up’ on everything – melody, words, picking – as long as you keep the beat.

**The G chord** (i, m, & r indicate the finger to use: index, middle, or ring.)

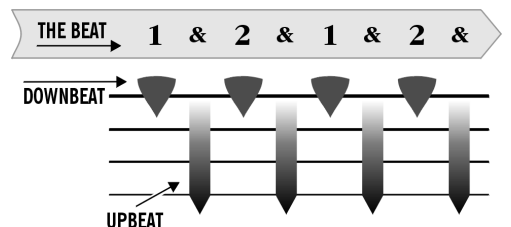


As you can see, banjo and Dobro players can simply strum their instruments “open” (without pressing down any fingers). Bass players should alternate between the G and D strings: G, D, G, D... etc. Fiddle players can strum the strings with their thumb or fingernail (without using the bow) for now.

See the example below, using the ukelele. Guitar players: if you can’t reach your middle and index fingers to those two heavy strings, try the ukelele version by not playing, or pressing down, those two strings.



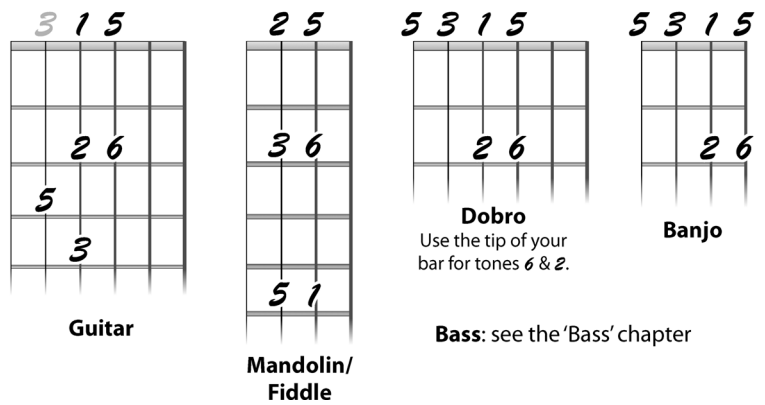
Refer to the rhythm chart (right). At first you can just strum the downbeats, i.e., ‘1’, ‘2’. These are the ‘thump thumps’ you hear the bass playing. Next, strum both beats (‘1 & 2 &’). Play the downbeats (‘1’, ‘2’) mostly on the thicker strings and the upbeat (‘&’) on the thinner strings. Now, before you go on, be sure to strum and sing “Shady Grove” until you can really *feel the melody* and *keep the beat!* Later on, after you’ve got the hang of this, read about strumming for your particular instrument.



### III. Use the Pattern:

A 'ToneWay Picking Pattern' is simply a 'map' of the fingerboard. The numbers show the locations of some of the tones in the circle – the ones we're most likely to need – on the instrument. Now, of the seven tones, the most important is the 1 tone. Why?

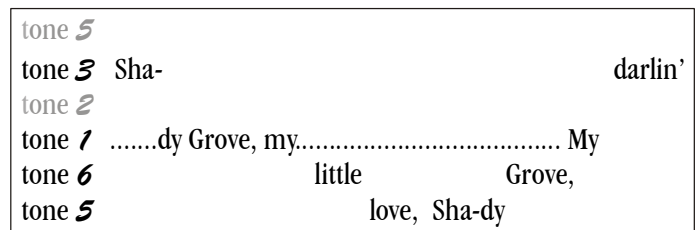
#### Picking Patterns for the key of G



**FACT #2:** Tone 1 is whatever key you are playing in at the moment.

We are playing our first song, "Shady Grove", in the key of G, so tone 1 is also G. Note how tone 1 is the 'G' string on the guitar, banjo, dobro. For the mandolin, tone 1 is at the fifth fret. If you put tape on the fiddle as explained on page 91, tone 1 is down on the second strip, 'the fifth fret'.

Examine your 'G' Pattern above. Notice how tone 1 lies 'midway' in the layout; although, this may be easier to see in the pitch graph chart to the right. Below tone 1, heading down in pitch are tones 6, then 5, and above it, heading up in pitch, are tones 2, 3, then 5. This layout corresponds to the fact that about 90% of all songs 'center' on tone 1, 'flowing' between a low tone 5 and a high tone 3 or 5.



Before we start picking "Shady Grove", listen to and sing the song again. Notice how it flows! Its pitch starts high, drops low, and rises again, and then repeats. Look at the pitch graph chart (above). The dotted line is the 'center', i.e., the all important tone 1. You can see "Shady Grove" doesn't begin on this 'center', it begins higher on tone 3. It is an interesting and useful fact that *all* songs begin on either tones 1, 3 or 5. *Knowing a song's beginning tone makes it much easier to pick.*

<b>SHADY GROVE</b>
3 1 1 1 6 5 5 5 6 1 3 3
Shady Grove, my little love, Shady Grove, my darlin',
3 1 1 1 6 5 5 5 5 6 1 1
Shady Grove, my little love, Goin' back to Harlen.

Okay, let's pick it! Refer to the 'G' Picking Pattern chart above, and locate tones 3 and 1 on your instrument. These are open strings on the banjo and Dobro. Guitars, pick tone 3 on the fourth fret. Mandolin and fiddle players have to press the second and fifth frets to sound these

tones. Now, pick these tones as you sing "Sha - dy - Grove", i.e., '3 - 1 - 1'. Next, sing "my little love" as you pick tones '1 - 6 - 5'. Did you refer to the numbers ("3 1 1 1 6 5") over these words in the 'SHADY GROVE box' above? We call this 'ToneWay Notation' (see page 123 for more). Also, notice how "Shady Grove" uses only four tones: 3, 1, 6, 5. Better still, most songs use only five tones!

Initially, it helps greatly to sing *while* you pick! Refer to the tone numbers above the words for "Shady Grove", and continue to *sing-and-pick* the rest of the song. Sing-and-pick "Shady Grove" over and over until you can do it with your eyes closed – seriously! The object here is to train your fingers to know where the tones are on the fingerboard. When your fingers know, you'll be able to pick most any song you know well enough to sing. By the way, did you notice how the song ends? All songs end on tone 1, so if you know the key it is being played in, you know what note a song ends on – and vice versa.

"Hey! You said there were seven tones. Where the heck are tones 4 and 7?" Oh, I'm glad you asked!

**FACT #3:** Most songs use only 5 of these 7 tones. 'Ignoring' tones 7 and 4 allows you to pick using the worry free pentatonic Picking Patterns above. When your picking sounds 'off', toss in a 4 or 7 and see if that helps.

**Let's Play Another Song:** Listen to and sing "Tom Dooley" (track #13, page 78) repeatedly. Then compare it with "Shady Grove" to find the similarities and differences between them. First, notice that "Tom Dooley" begins on tone 5, instead of 3, but the high tone is still 3. Also, do you see the numbers 1,5 after the title? These denote the chords to play for this song – the 1 and 5 chord. In the key of G, these will be the G and D chord respectively. First, let's learn a little about chords.

**FACT #4:** Beside beginning on either tone 1, 3, or 5, all songs end on the 1 tone.

<b>TOM DOOLEY</b>	1, 5
5 5 5 6 1 3 3	
(G) Hang down your head Tom Dooley,	
5 5 5 6 1 2	
Hang down your head and (D) cry,	
6 5 5 6 1 2 2	
You killed poor Laura Foster,	
2 2 3 1 6 1	
Poor boy you're bound to (G) die.	

**FACT #5:** A 1 chord is simply tone 1 played together with the two other *most important tones* in music, 3 and 5.

To illustrate this, first examine the 'G' chord for the banjo. Notice how no strings are pressed – 'G' is all open strings. When you strum across its four strings, you are playing tones 5-1-3-5, as you can see on the banjo ToneWay Picking Pattern. The 1 chord is built on 'top' of the 1 tone. As you might suspect, just like the 1 tone, the 1 chord is crucial. The

1 chord is the 'root' chord, and is always played; in "Shady Grove" it was the only chord we *had* to play. It is interesting and useful to note that harmony is based on playing/singing three tones (like tones 1, 3 and 5) together. Simply put: harmony is just a chord; a chord is just harmony.

**FACT #6:** The 1 chord is whatever key you're playing in at the moment, i.e., the 1 chord in the key of 'G' is 'G'. The 1 chord in the key of 'D' is 'D', and so on. See Fact #2.

**Learn the '5' Chord:** For "Tom Dooley" we need to play a 5 chord – the next most important chord. Most every song needs one. The 5 chord, like the 1 chord, is also harmony, but it is built on 'top' of the 5 tone, i.e., 5-7-2 (just as the 1 chord is built on 'top' of the 1 tone, i.e., 1-3-5). But, I digress. More to the point, if we're in the key of 'G', we know the 1 chord is 'G'. What is the 5 chord?

**FACT #7:** To 'turn numbers into letters,' simply count up using your fingers, starting with the key you are in as '1'.

We want to know what the 5 chord is in the key of 'G'. We know that by definition the 1 chord is 'G', so let's count up using our fingers, making the thumb equal to the 1 chord (G). So, if our thumb is 1 (G), then the index finger is 2 (A), middle is 3 (B), ring is 4 (C), and the pinky is 5 (D). Thus, in the key of 'G', the 5 chord is 'D'. The chart below shows how to make the 'D' chord. Note: The key of 'A' is the next key after 'G' (see Keys, Tones, Chords and Notes at the top of page 8).

**Changing Chords:** Now, plant your fingers down and make this D chord. Then make the G chord again; then repeat, switching back and forth. Hear that buzzing of strings and/or dull sound? No

sweat... just relax and aim your fingers and let *them* 'learn' how to change chords smoothly. As with "Shady Grove", listen to "Tom Dooley" on the CD. Sing, tap your foot, and strum along. Now turn off your player and sing and strum "Tom Dooley" solo. Keep at this until you hear the song inside your mind; then you will be ready to pick it – maybe even by ear!

**The D chord**

**Guitar**

**Mandolin/  
Fiddle**

**Dobro**

**Banjo**

**Bass:** alternate between the middle two strings

Keep the beat, even if that means messy chord changes or other 'mistakes'.



## Feel the Flow, Sing and Pick:

Compare the flow of “Tom Dooley” (right) with the flow of “Shady Grove” (page 94). Again, the dotted line is the ‘center’, i.e., tone 1. Here, the song starts low, at tone 5, and rises up to tone 3, drops down to tone 5 again, and then rises to tone 2 on “cry”. With tone 2, you now know the five most played tones in music. You can pick almost any song with these. But, let’s not get ahead of ourselves. For now, using your Picking Pattern, just play tone 5 (open string) and *sing-and-pick* “Hang down your”, then play tone 6 as you *sing-and-pick* “head”, then up to tone 1 as you *sing-and-pick* “Tom”, and finally up to tone 3 as you *sing-and-pick* “Doo- ley”. Repeat that, only this time you’ll end “cry” on tone 2. Now, continue on with the rest of the song, *singing-and-picking* by ear when you can, referring to the ToneWay Notation for “Tom Dooley” (previous page) when you need to. *Sing-and-pick* “Tom Dooley” repeatedly until you can do it with your eyes shut.

tone 5			
tone 3		Doo- ley,	
tone 2			cry,
tone 1	.....Tom	.....and	
tone 6	head	head	
tone 5	Hang down your	Hang down your	

**Changing Keys:** Why on earth would we want to change keys when we have the key of ‘G’ worked out so well? If everyone had the same vocal range we wouldn’t have a reason, but that isn’t the case! A key around ‘G’ suits *most* men for *most* songs (90%, or those which flow somewhere between a low & high 5 tone). For *most* women and children, the optimum key for such songs is often around ‘D’. Now, if we change to the key of D, we’ve set tone 1 (and the 1 chord) to be ‘D’ (see Fact #2 and Fact #6). However, this means all the other tones are in new places. That’s no problem; we’ll just need to know where the five tones lay on the fingerboard *now*.

**FACT #8:** Singing within your vocal range is the key to feeling the joy of singing.

First though, sing and strum “Shady Grove” in the key of D. You already know the 1 chord, D. Of course, D was the 5 chord when we played “Tom Dooley” in the key of G. But now we are going to play in the key of D, so the D chord is now the 1 chord (see Fact #6).

**Compare Keys ‘G’ and ‘D’:** After you’ve sung and strummed “Shady Grove” a number of times in the key of ‘D’, sing and strum it in the key of ‘G’ once again. How does it feel? Well?... It should feel better to sing “Shady Grove” in one key or the other, although maybe not right at first – especially if you are: a) very new to singing, b) singing in falsetto, c) singing very softly, d) singing out of tune, or e) too tense. So just sing out! Sing out! Sing out! All these ‘mistakes’ will resolve themselves naturally. Of course, it wouldn’t hurt to read some about singing on page 99.

### Picking Patterns for the key of D

The diagrams show four fretboards with the following patterns:

- Guitar:** Tones 1, 5, 5, 2, 6, 3. A dashed vertical line is on the right side.
- Mandolin/Fiddle:** Tones 2, 5, 3, 6, 5, 1.
- Dobro:** Tones 5, 3, 1, 5, 2, 6. A grey bar highlights the top two frets.
- Banjo:** Tones 5, 3, 1, 5, 2, 6.

**Dobro:** Your ‘home base’ is the D chord on the 7th fret. Slide your bar up to ‘catch’ tones 6 and 2.

**Banjo:** Clamp your capo on the 7th fret and use the ‘G’ pattern for now. The *real* ‘D’ pattern is in the Banjo chapter.

Next, pick “Shady Grove” in the key of ‘D’, using the ‘D’ Picking Pattern (left). Follow the same procedure as you did before in the key of ‘G’. Do you notice the similarities between the ‘G’ and ‘D’ Picking Patterns – especially for the fiddle and mandolin? They are tuned in such a way as to allow you to use *the same* spatial pattern in ‘D’ as in ‘G’. (This holds true for other keys as well.)

The guitar is a little different in that ‘high 5’ tone (which we aren’t using at this point anyway) is one fret lower on the D Pattern.

The banjo and Dobro, being open tuned, can’t slide sideways to change keys. Instead, we slide up the neck to change keys as the Picking Pattern for D shows. Note: ‘Up’ is the direction that raises the pitch.



Now try singing “Tom Dooley” in the key of ‘D’. If ‘D’ is the 1 chord, what is the 5 chord? As you recall (see Fact #7, page 95) the thumb is the 1 chord (D), index is 2 (E), middle is 3 (F), ring is 4 (G), and the pinky is 5 (A). Thus, in the key of ‘D’, the 5 chord is ‘A’. Refer to the information on your particular instrument to learn this chord. However, that won’t be necessary to pick “Tom Dooley”. Just refer to the tone locations on the ‘Picking Patterns for the key of D’ chart, on the previous page.

**Banjo:** Place a capo at the seventh fret and continue playing “Shady Grove” and “Tom Dooley” as you just did in the key of G. At the seventh fret, a ‘G’ chord shape produces a ‘D’ chord sound and a ‘D’ chord shape produces an ‘A’ chord sound – see about the capo on page 98. In the long run, a better choice for the banjo is to either capo the second fret and play ‘C’ or use no capo and just play ‘D’ – see pages 109 and 110.

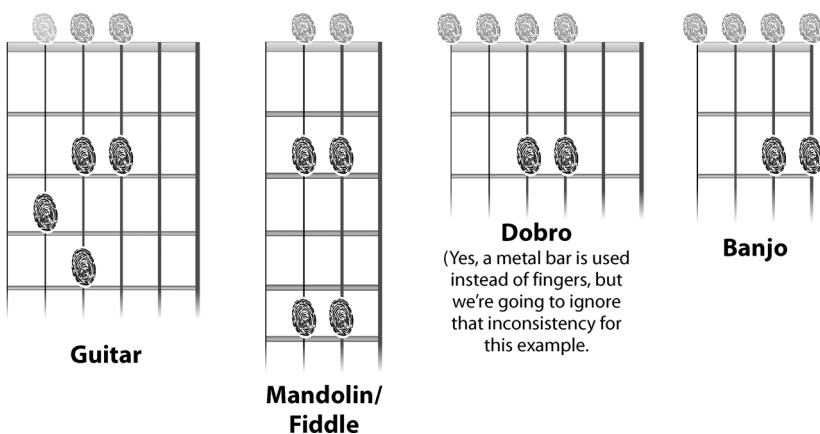
**Dobro:** Place the bar at the seventh fret to make the D chord as shown previously on page 95. Then place it down to the second fret to make an A chord.

**The 4, 2, and 6 Chord:** Learning the 4 chord in addition to the two chords (1 and 5) you learned above is all you need to play countless songs! The only other chords used frequently are the 2 chord and the 6 minor chord. Refer to the chord charts when you need to learn them. Please keep in mind that any **awkwardness in changing chords and strumming** is utterly inconsequential. The days will roll into weeks and months and you’ll see how naturally it all came. If you just listen and play, everything works itself out in due course – so relax and enjoy.

**Just Sing and Pick:** If you feel you don’t understand what we’ve covered in the previous few pages, repeat, repeat, repeat... until you do! Then sing-and-pick the songs given on page 123. Of course, listen to them thoroughly on the CD first. Also, browse the information given throughout this book as interest allows, but remember, the only essential thing to do is sing and play. Note: In the beginning it helps to *sing-as-you-pick*. However, don’t *pick-as-you-sing*! When you sing out, give it your *all*. When you pick, you can sing ‘gently’ as you pick to guide your picking, i.e., picking is only possible if you feel the melody.

As soon as your fingers remember the general tonal relationship, and your mind remembers a song’s words, you won’t need to refer to anything to sing or pick in any key.

**Numberless Picking Patterns for the key of G**



**Again,... “III. Use the Pattern!”**

Some folks get ‘hung up’ a little on all the numbers, so this chart (left) shows what your fingers actually need to know. We just place numbers on the Picking Patterns in this book to show your mind what to do.

Now refer to this chart and pick “Shady Grove” and “Tom Dooley” once again – especially if you are confused about the numbers. The take home lesson here: It is the Pattern that is important, not the numbers we placed on it! Really!

**“Hey, What About the Other Two Commandments?”**

We saved these most important ones for last.

**IV. Make Mistakes:** This is the *only* way to learn COMMANDMENTS I–III above. ‘Mistakes’ are precious jewels on the pathway to learning. Alas, adults fear them. We say, embrace ‘em!

**V. Play with Others:** It’s crucial! This is probably the most important thing you can do to learn to play this music. It is the social experience and mix of ‘talents’ that bring it to life.