

# Stick Dulcimer guide



# Background

Developed from the North American Appalachian Dulcimer, this instrument combines simplicity and playability with the portability of the guitar. These instruments also resemble the older long necked lutes from Egypt, the Turkish Saz, the medieval Italian Coloscione and the Balalaika and Banjo family and provide a similar sound and musical position.

The Stick Dulcimer is my generic name for these instruments that have become increasingly popular over the last 20 years and are found under an assortment of different brand names.

## Tuning

This instrument is tuned to the open tuning of D (D, a, d), which basically means that if you just strum without fretting the instrument plays the chord of D. To tune the Stick you can utilize an electric tuner, piano, guitar or even a tin whistle in D, My Youtube Stick Dulcimer playlist includes a video with tuning tones as well as a description

**\*Stick Dulcimer is a copyright free name that can be used by anyone describing any long necked diatonic fretted instrument of any make freely.**

**String gauges for the instruments I make are**

**0.010" for the high d string**

**0.014" for the 2nd string (a)**

**0.23" wound low D**

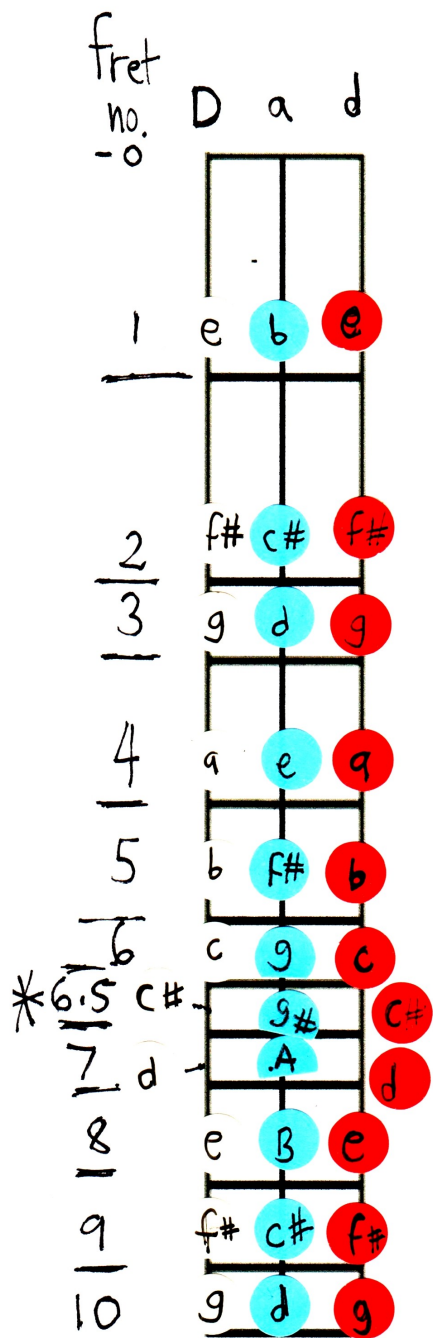
**The Stick Dulcimers I make have the same scale length as the guitar and a tailpiece designed for ball end string you can use regular acoustic guitar strings. (My instruments use the regular ball end strings, some others need loop end strings, If its not obvious just check with your maker.)**

## **Learning to play**

**Beginners to the Stick Dulcimer usually start off playing on the 1<sup>st</sup> strings only using the other two strings as drones, this is very easy and effective and there are no wrong notes to play.**

**Online you can find plenty of free music for the Appalachian Dulcimer that often shares the same “Dad” tuning, you need to remember that the Tabs and Chords for these are reversed and will need rewriting out again, this is a useful exercise when learning new pieces on any instrument anyway!**

**On the next page are the notes of the fret board and alongside them the numbers that correspond to the fret, this information once learned will enable you to play tunes very simply and quickly.**



\* note use of half fret!!

# Playing Chords

*You can strum chords on the Stick Dulcimer just like a Ukulele or guitar, this gives a modal Irish-Bouzouki type of accompaniment. There are many more plus inversions that can be played, see my links for further study.*

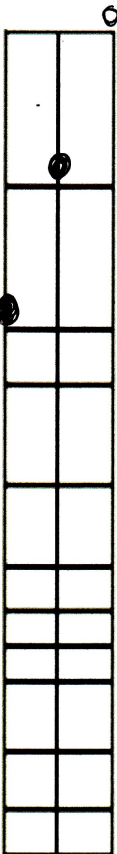
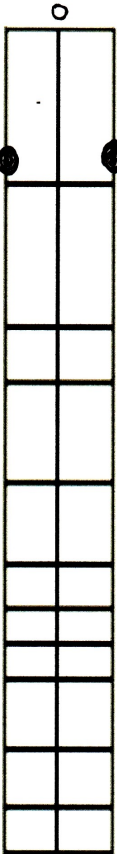
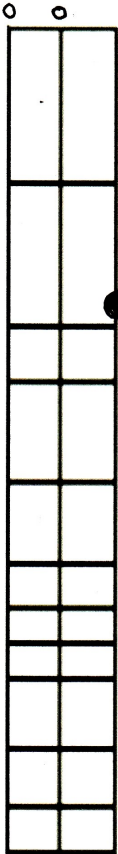
*Here are some of the basic chords to start you off:*

# Basic chords

**D**

**A**

**BM**

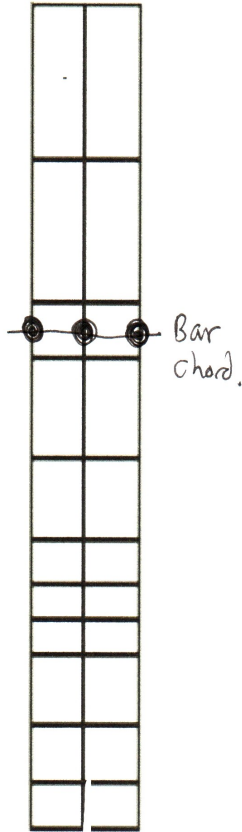


↳

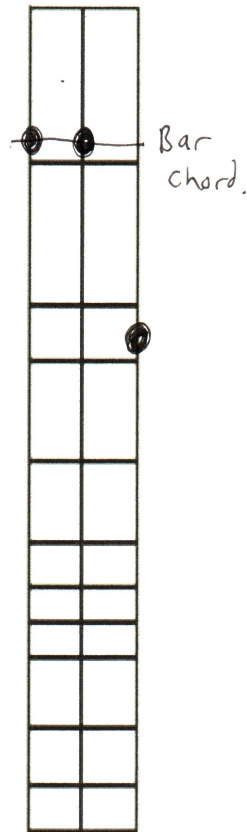
F#M



G

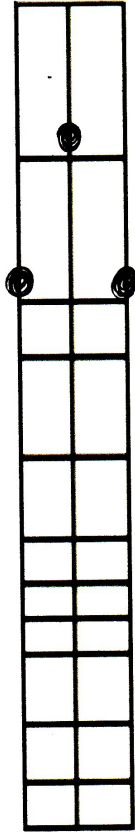


E M

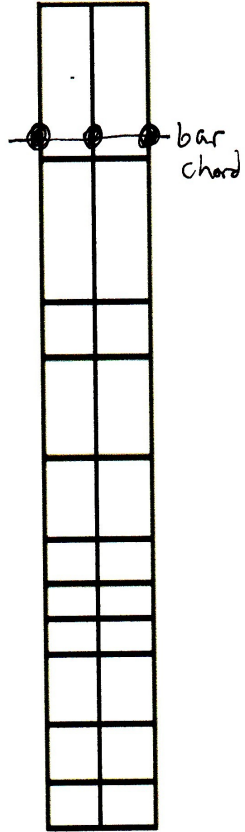




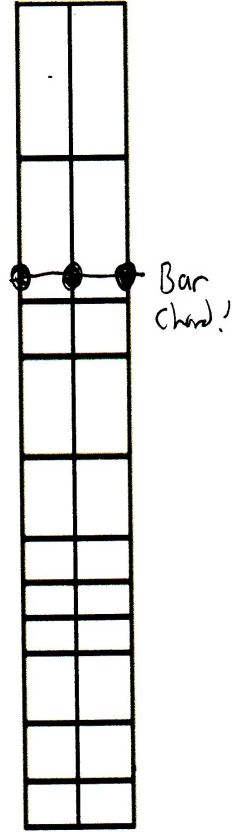
B



E



F#



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## Links for further study:

<http://www.everythingdulcimer.com/tab> (fantastic collection of tabs!!!)

<http://www.strumstick.com> Lots of beginners tunes to learn

<http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/strumsticks/>

Youtube has a growing collection of videos (I have 27 for the Stick Dulcimer myself)

Try keywords like strumstick stick dulcimer dulcitar pickin stick walkabout dulcimer Appalachian sweetstick., happy hunting!!

If you find or create tabs or tutorials online that would be of use please let me know!!



[www.michaeljking.com](http://www.michaeljking.com)