

Instrument Skill Levels

From Beginner to Advanced

Introduction:

As you begin work on your instruments, you need to have a plan. Where do I begin? What do I work on first? What skill comes next? What you do with the skills you are learning once you leave this classroom is entirely your own business. However, the training you will receive in this class follows a specific progression of skills. You will need to start with the basics and work your way up to more advanced skills. If you wish to progress to a higher skill level, you will need to get approval to do so from the teacher. You will need to demonstrate mastery of each skill level before proceeding on to the next.

Guitar teaching sequence:

- Learn G, C, D7, and Em chords. Practice changing from one chord to the next until you can change accurately at one second intervals. Practice playing songs using Simple Strum (strum strings on down beats or every other beat).
- Add D, A7, Am chords. Begin using Bass Strum technique (pluck a single bass note on strong beats, strum on weak beats).
- Add new chords as needed. Begin using two alternating bass strings with your Bass Strum.
- Begin to add bass walks and improvised strumming patterns.
- Begin finger picking patterns OR proceed to Tablature.
- Tablature: simple songs
- Tablature: fiddle tunes

Three-Finger Banjo teaching sequence:

- Learn G, C, D7, and Em chords. Practice changing from one chord to the next until you can change accurately at one second intervals. Practice playing songs using Simple Strum (strum strings on down beats or every other beat).
- Begin learning and practicing Forward Roll pattern.
- Begin learning and practicing Walk-Up pattern.
- Add new chords and begin learning more advanced banjo techniques. This includes reading Banjo tablature.

Clawhammer Banjo teaching sequence:

- Learn G, C, D7, and Em chords. Practice changing from one chord to the next until you can change accurately at one second intervals. Practice playing songs using Simple Strum (strum strings on down beats or every other beat). Use back of middle fingernail.
- Begin learning and practicing Basic Stroke. Add new chords as needed.
- Begin double thumbing and alternating the melody string.
- Tablature: simple melodies

- Tablature: add basic stroke to simple melodies
- Tablature: fiddle tune melodies
- Tablature: add basic stroke to fiddle tunes.
- Advanced banjo techniques and music

Mandolin teaching sequence:

- Learn G, C, D7, and Em chords. Practice changing from one chord to the next until you can change accurately at one second intervals. Practice playing songs using Simple Strum (strum strings on down beats or every other beat).
- Add D, A7, Am chords. Begin using Bass Strum technique (pluck a single bass note on strong beats, strum on weak beats).
- Add new chords and begin using improvised strumming patterns.
- Tablature: simple melodies
- Tablature: flutter picking
- Tablature: fiddle tunes (cross picking)
- Advanced songs and skills.

Piano/Keyboard teaching sequence:

- Learn G, C, D7, and Em chords using LEFT HAND. Practice changing from one chord to the next until you can change accurately at one second intervals. Practice playing songs using Simple Chords (play chords on down beats or every other beat).
- Learn the same chords using the RIGHT HAND. Practice the same way.
- Begin Bass/Chord technique. Add new chords as needed.
- Begin alternating Bass/Chord technique.
- Add bass walks and improvised chording patterns.
- Begin playing Melodies in right hand only.
- Add Chords in left hand to Melodies in right hand.
- Begin using arpeggiated chords or Bass/Chord technique with left hand while right hand plays melody.
- Advanced piano music.

Recorder/Pennywhistle teaching sequence:

- Learn fingerings for first octave using fingering chart. Begin practicing simple songs in key of G.
- Add tunes that use upper octave.
- Begin fiddle tunes. Learn to play in key of D.
- Duets, variations, and other advanced music.