

# How To Use This Book

This method is designed to get you playing quickly and learning as you go. You can work through the book in sequence or hop and skip through to the parts that interest you. Along the way, look for these colorful boxes with detailed information:



## Important!

Watch for the bullhorn to give you an alert regarding crucial aspects of music theory.



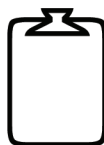
## Note

This box will contain extra bits of information on the current subject.



## Listen

The ear is key to knowing what's going on in music. Here you'll find listening tips and resources to help you hear it all.



## Definition

This box contains definitions of words that are used in the text.

## A Closer Look



Takes a visual approach in order to understand the bigger picture.

## **PRACTICE ZONE**

Tracks available for download from Folkcraft website.

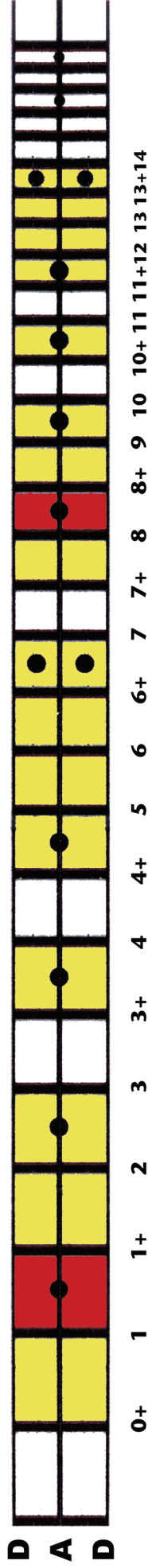
# Preparing Your Ears For A World Of Color

The word *chromatic* comes from *chroma*, the Greek word for “color.” Usually, it refers to the 12-note chromatic scale but can mean different things in different situations. For example, “chromatic” can refer to notes that are not in a 7-note diatonic scale. For comparison, the word *diatonic* (also of Greek origin) translates into “passing through tones” and usually refers to an eight-note musical scale consisting of seven notes and the *octave* of the starting note. *Octave* is Latin for “eight.”

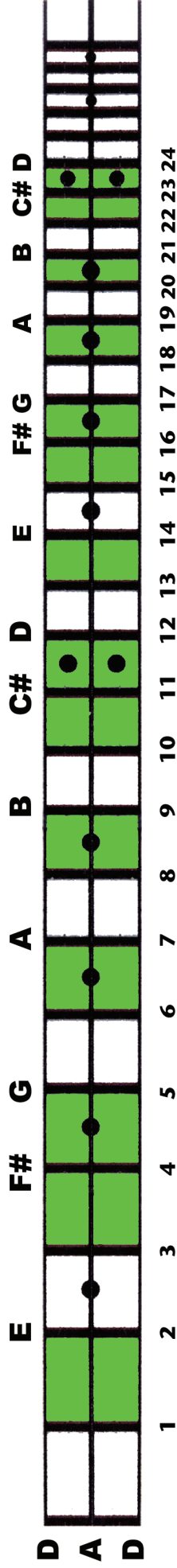
One of the most helpful things you can do to better understand the relationships between pitches is to begin ear-training. Since music is indeed a language, you can learn how to speak it both by reading and hearing. Ear-training programs help you to recognize elements of music like *pitches*, *intervals*, *scales*, *chords*, *rhythms* and more. In the 21st century, there is no shortage of resources designed to help you train your ear and you don't need perfect pitch to do it. Search on the Internet for “free ear-training” and also check the app store on your mobile phone for music theory and ear-training software. You may totally stink at it when you first start, but persistence and patience will pay off in the long run and you'll better be able to identify precise elements of music as you begin your journey with the chromatic mountain dulcimer.

# Fret Numbers & Notes In DAD Tuning

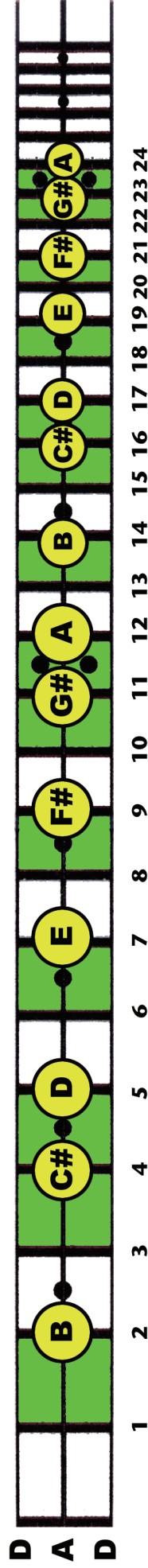
For comparison, let's take a look at both the diatonic and chromatic fret numbering systems. By looking at the diatonic layout you can identify the frets that are on a standard dulcimer. I've highlighted standard fret spaces in yellow and the 1+ and 8+ frets in red. As you can see, we're only adding four notes from a standard diatonic dulcimer (with 6+ and 13+ frets) or three notes from a standard diatonic dulcimer with the 1+ and 8+ frets installed.



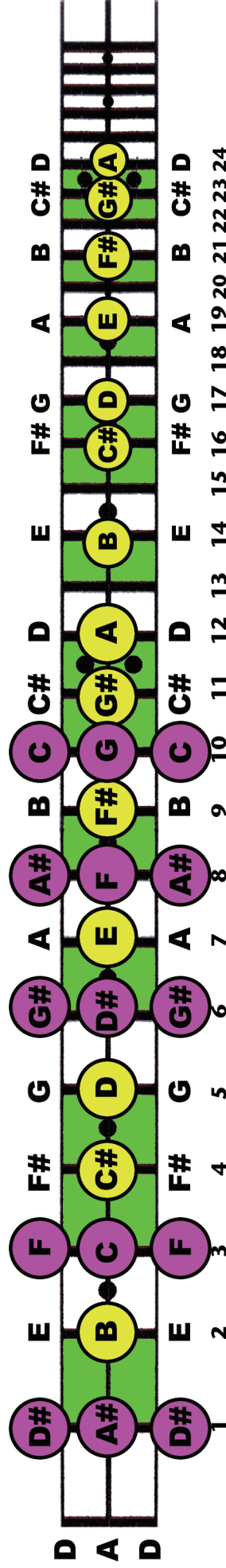
With a chromatic mountain dulcimer, there are no "half-frets". The first octave is represented by numbers 1 through 12 while the second octave is 13 through 24. To play a D Major scale on the melody or bass string on a diatonic dulcimer, we'd play 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6+ and 7. One of the best ways of getting used to this new fretboard layout is to use the positioning dots to guide you. Just remember this: play open as usual, skip the first fret and then play either side of the first dot. Then, play the next three dots, skip a fret and then finally, play the 12th fret. Ideally, you'll have double dots at the octave frets. I've shaded the scale in green.



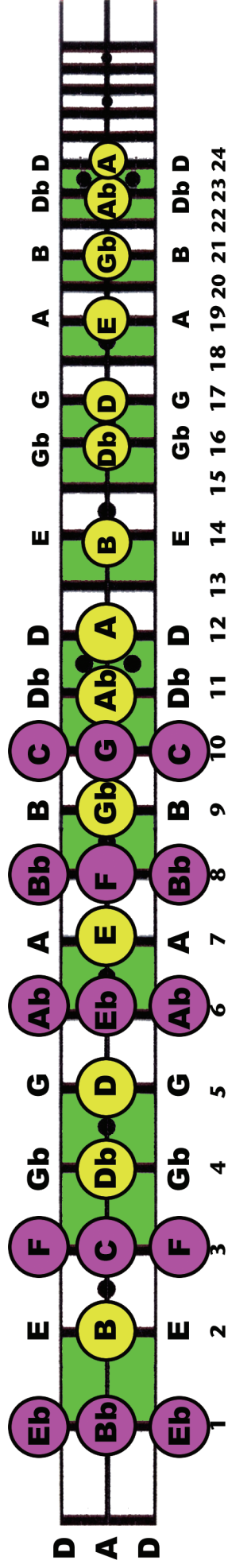
Using these same frets on the middle string, we can play an A Major scale and continue to familiarize ourselves with the fretboard.



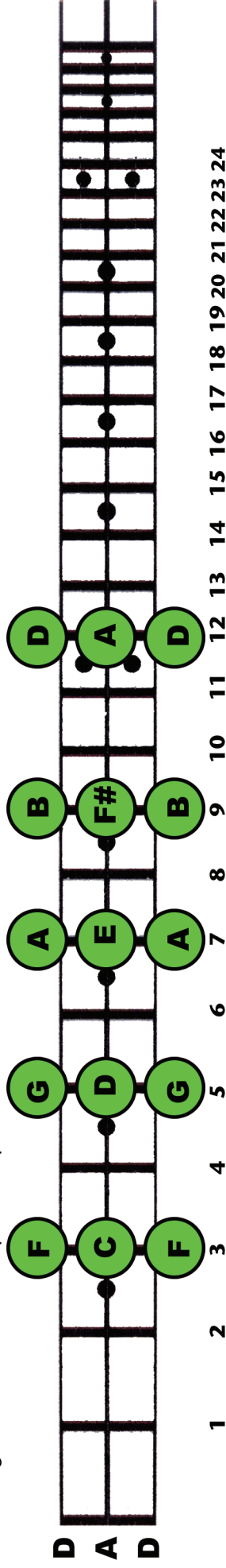
Now I'll add in the notes C and G that are normally at the 6th fret on a diatonic dulcimer as well as F and C that would be at the 1+ fret. Plus, all of the notes that are not available on the diatonic fretboard. All of these additions will be shaded in violet. The D Major scale will remain black and the A Major scale will remain yellow. To keep things uncluttered, I'll focus on the first octave only. These notes would, of course, repeat in the second octave.



You may have noticed that all the non-natural notes were sharps in the previous chart. Those notes can also be read as flats. They're still the same pitches, just spelled differently. Notes, intervals or key signatures that are the same but spelled differently are called *enharmonic*. C# is the same as Db, G# is the same as Ab, etc. Here is the same layout of notes spelled with flats.



While learning the locations of all your notes on the fretboard, it's easier to focus on the reference frets. As mentioned already these are 3, 5, 7, 9 and 12 in the first octave. F G A B for single dots on the bass and melody strings and C D E F# for single dots on the middle string. The double dots mark your octave which is the same as your open tuning, D A D. By memorizing these note positions first, you can figure out what the surrounding notes are by going up or down from the reference markers. For example, one fret down from the fifth fret on the bass string would be Gb/F#. One fret up from the seventh fret on the melody string would be A#/Bb. This pattern repeats in the second octave.



## Definition

The terms *pitch*, *tone* and *note* are kind of interchangeable depending on the context in which they're used. A *tone* is a musical sound. The *pitch* is the highness or lowness of a tone. A *note* is the symbol that indicates the pitch and duration (or length) of a sound. Again, these terms are often used to mean the same basic thing.

Tones are measured in *half-steps* (also called *semitones*) and *whole-steps* (another word for "tone.") Two half-steps equal one semitone. The chromatic scale is made up exclusively of half-steps. A diatonic scale is made up of five whole-steps and two half-steps.

*Accidentals* are notes that have been altered from their normal pitch. *Flat* notes are lowered a half-step and are indicated with a "b" symbol. *Sharp* notes are raised a half-step and are indicated with a "#" symbol. Non-altered notes are considered *natural*.