



Nonsuch Dulcimer Club

The friendly UK club for Dulcimer enthusiasts

Registered Charity Number: 1184249

Playing Level Guidelines – Annual Weekend

Will that workshop be OK for me, and will I be able to keep up?

The club exists to help players improve and enjoy themselves on the dulcimer. So whatever your experience level, we aim to provide dulcimer workshops to stimulate and even challenge you. But it's no fun if you find you really can't keep up, or are going over ground you covered long ago. It can also make the workshop harder for our tutors to teach.

So we produced these **Playing Level Guidelines** to help you understand what a tutor might expect you to know as you take part in a workshop. Some of these techniques might also be taught in the workshop .

Absolute Beginner HD or MD	Some familiarity with tuning your dulcimer. Some awareness of basic musical terms and rhythms can be helpful. Desire to learn!
1. Beginner / Advanced Beginner HD	Familiarity with tuning a dulcimer, basic care & maintenance, using hammers comfortably (alternating). Some awareness of basic musical terms and rhythms is helpful. Reasonable knowledge of HD note positions, esp. in popular keys (G & D). Ability to play simple scales and one or two simple tunes at a steady, even rhythm. Advanced Beginner is starting to learn some of #2.
2. Intermediate HD	Good knowledge of all note positions, esp. duplicated notes. Familiarity with popular rhythms. Ability/confidence to play in the 'common' keys (G, D, C, F & relative minors), play a tune in another octave or key and work out efficient hammering patterns. Understand simple chord structure, ornamentation, arpeggios, harmonies, and dynamics. Able to follow a workshop at a reasonable pace. Keenness to perfect techniques and become more adventurous!
3. Advanced HD	Able to play with a good degree of fluency, understand the HD layout comfortably, find notes as required, keep a fair rhythm and pace during the workshop. Ability to play tunes by ear and join in with sessions confidently. Good knowledge of appropriate musical theory as it applies to the HD. Play varied repertoire and enjoy exploring music aspects such as style, phrasing, dynamics, accents, rhythms, harmony, ornamentation & technique. Able to make a substantial contribution to sessions etc. with other musicians.
1. Beginner / Advanced Beginner MD	Familiarity with tuning a dulcimer to at least one tuning, basic care and maintenance, making clear and distinct notes and chord shapes, strumming in rhythm. Ability to play some simple tunes at a steady, even rhythm – at least one or two from memory. Advanced Beginner is starting to learn some of #2.
2. Intermediate MD	Ability to play in more than one tuning or mode. Familiarity with basic playing styles, chording, harmony, strumming and rhythm variations, plus capo use. Able to follow a workshop at a reasonable pace and play with reasonable speed and dexterity, including dynamics. Keenness to refine playing techniques and become more adventurous!
3. Advanced MD	Ability to use more challenging chords, different tunings & modes. Familiarity with various embellishment and ornamentation techniques, e.g. hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides & harmonics. Knowledge of alternative finger-picking and/or picking styles. Good knowledge of appropriate musical theory as it applies to the MD. Able to make a substantial contribution to sessions etc. with other musicians.