

NOTE: This small addition is especially effective when used in conjunction with dulcimer tunings, when the two fingers are on two strings of the same pitch.

Or the basic stroke may be made emptier by hitting only the 1st string on the 3rd beat, on the brush-down motion of the fingers. This is difficult to do on any string but the 1st, but the right-hand technique may be slightly altered so as to reach the inner strings:

- (2.)
1. Index finger plucks the 3rd string.
 2. Nothing happens.
 3. The 2nd or 3rd finger plucks 1st string (or 2nd).
 4. Thumb plucks the 5th string.

This style may be played "backward", by allowing the thumb stroke to precede that of the 2nd finger:

- (3.)
1. Index finger plucks the 3rd string.
 2. Nothing happens.
 3. Thumb plucks the 5th string.
 4. The 2nd or 3rd finger plucks 1st string (or 2nd).

Both these latter styles, especially when coupled with some of the variations immediately following, give a very precise, rapid succession of single notes into which, often, a melody may be fitted more easily than the regular basic stroke.

Some of the most important variations on the basic stroke may be provided by the left hand, by a filling in of step 2.

1. Hammering on. The left hand can "play" strings as well as fret them. Pluck an unfretted string with the right hand. Then "hammer" down with a left-hand finger on the 2nd or 3rd fret of that string. Do a series of these, alternating the pluck of the right hand with the hammering motion of the left. The hammered note should be clear and hard, not hesitant or muffled, and the beats should be equal, right, left, pluck, hammer, etc. Often the left hand may hammer onto a string other than that plucked by the right (in which case it must have more force behind it than otherwise), or onto a whole chord (which must then be formed in midair and clamped on as well as hammered on - this is not easy). Or you can take a chord position in the left hand, leaving one of the normally fretted strings untouched; then pluck that string with the right hand and hammer on so that the chord is filled out as it should be.

The hammered note, when incorporated into the basic stroke, usually fits into the second beat neatly, giving the resulting rhythm of *bump-a-did-dy*

(). Count four equal beats out loud, take a C chord in the left hand, and follow these steps:

1. Index finger plucks the 3rd string.
2. Hammer onto the 2nd fret of the 3rd string with the left hand 2nd finger.
3. Brush down with the fingers as usual.
4. Thumb plucks the 5th string as usual.

NOTE: In general, a hammered-on note is held onto throughout the brush and thumb strokes following it. If you have difficulty in making the hammered note heard, check your wrist position and make sure that the first joint of the left-hand finger is not giving way as it comes onto the string. Only practice can cure these troubles.