Welcome

This PDF file serves as a very general guide to the Guitar and the Appalachian (Mountain) Dulcimer, it by no means is to be thought of as a tutorial. I have posted at Fretbow's website instructional material for both instruments, you can access these easily from the FREE DOWNLOADS section.

The following pages explain some of the differences between the guitar and dulcimer concluding with some sample music and tablature notation for *Lightly Row* as demonstrated on the introductory audio from my Busking Sessions web page.

If you have any further questions you can contact me at:

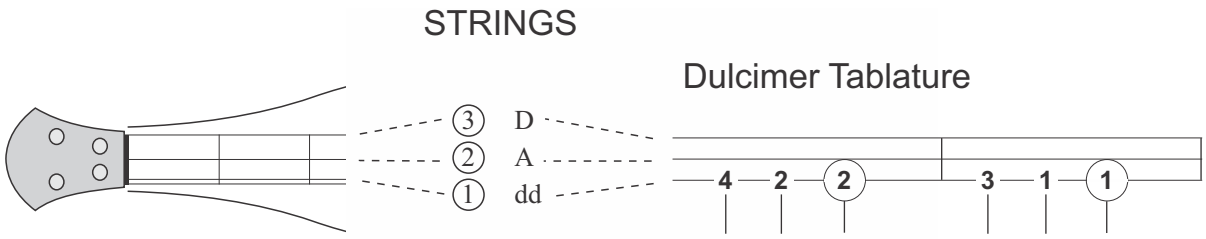
info@fretbow.co.uk

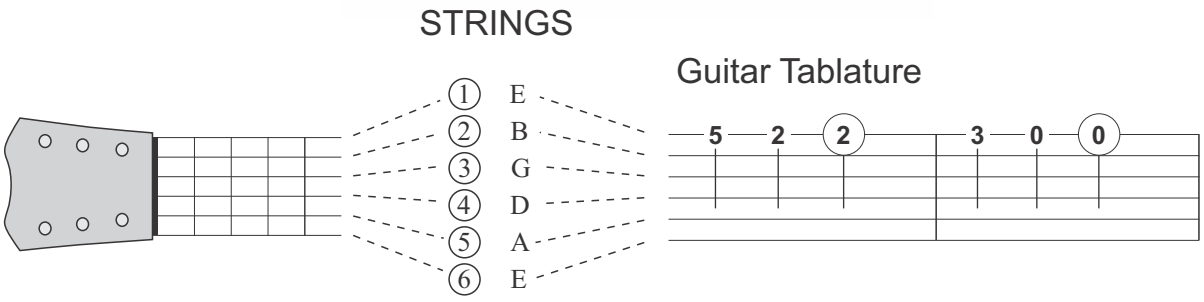
Thank you

Theo Elsey October 2026

An Introduction to Reading Tablature.

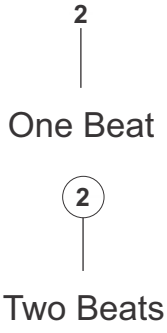
Tablature is the easiest form of written music for most fretted stringed instruments. The horizontal lines represent the strings and the numbers written on the lines are the fret numbers to be played. You can learn more about frets and fretting on the next page. Strings are identified by both number and music note letter names as shown below.





Rhythm

Lightly Row mainly has notes that are played on the beat, there are occasional notes that last for two beats. To play these longer notes play the first beat and say the second beat in your head before moving on - count 1 (2).



Dulcimer and Guitar - *A Brief Comparison*

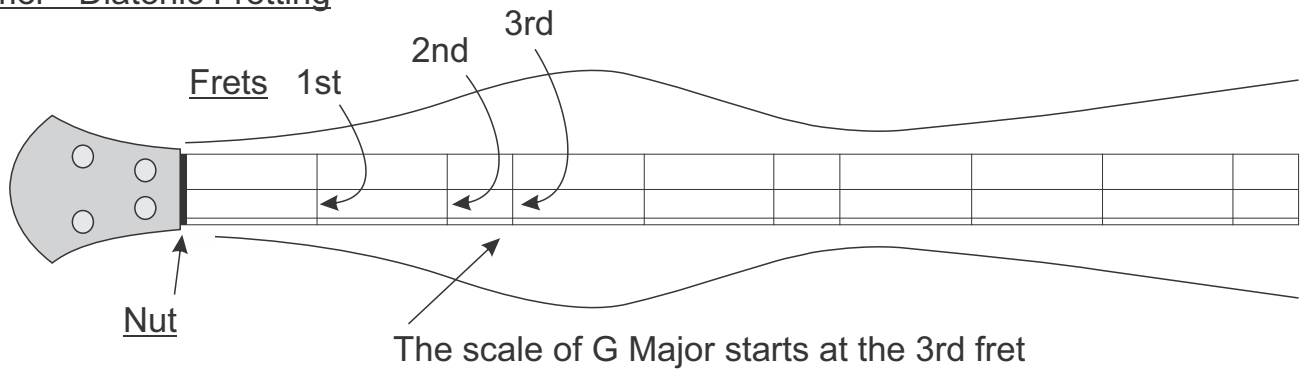
Both the Dulcimer and Guitar are fretted stringed instruments but with some interesting differences. The guitar as you know only too well, is held against the guitarists upper body whereas the dulcimer is held flat on the lap when the player is in a seated position.

The biggest difference in the instruments themselves is in the fretting pattern. Frets are the names given to the strips of wire set into the fingerboard, when a finger presses down on a string at any fret position then the vibrating part of the string is shortened, higher fret positions give higher sounding notes to the lower fret numbers.

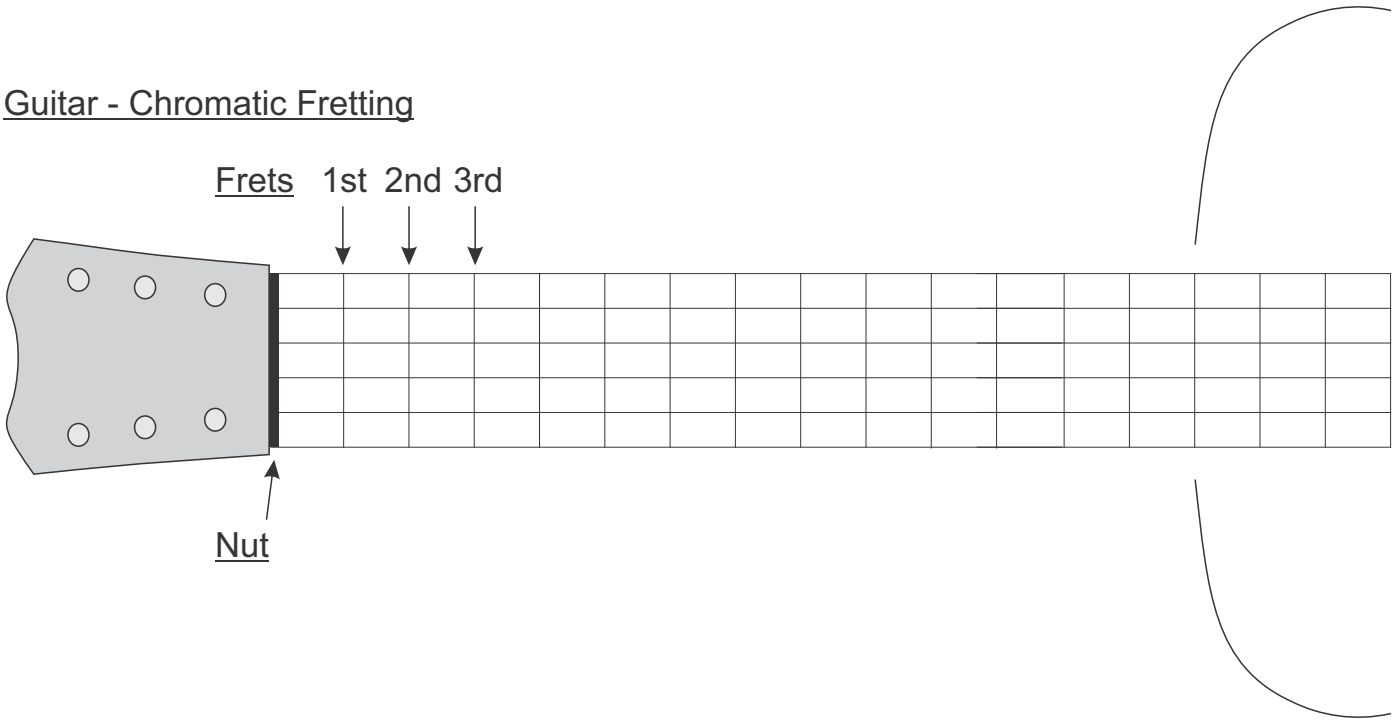
Fretting Patterns for the Dulcimer and Guitar

Compared to the guitar, the dulcimer has fewer frets. The simplicity of this instrument is found in being able to play many basic melodies more easily. A fretting pattern is given that has just the essential notes required for the Major Scale, it is the equivalent of playing the white notes only on a piano/keyboard. The guitar fretboard layout has every fret position with frets that give notes for all intervals found in Western music, the equivalent of all White and Black notes on a piano/keyboard.

Dulcimer - Diatonic Fretting

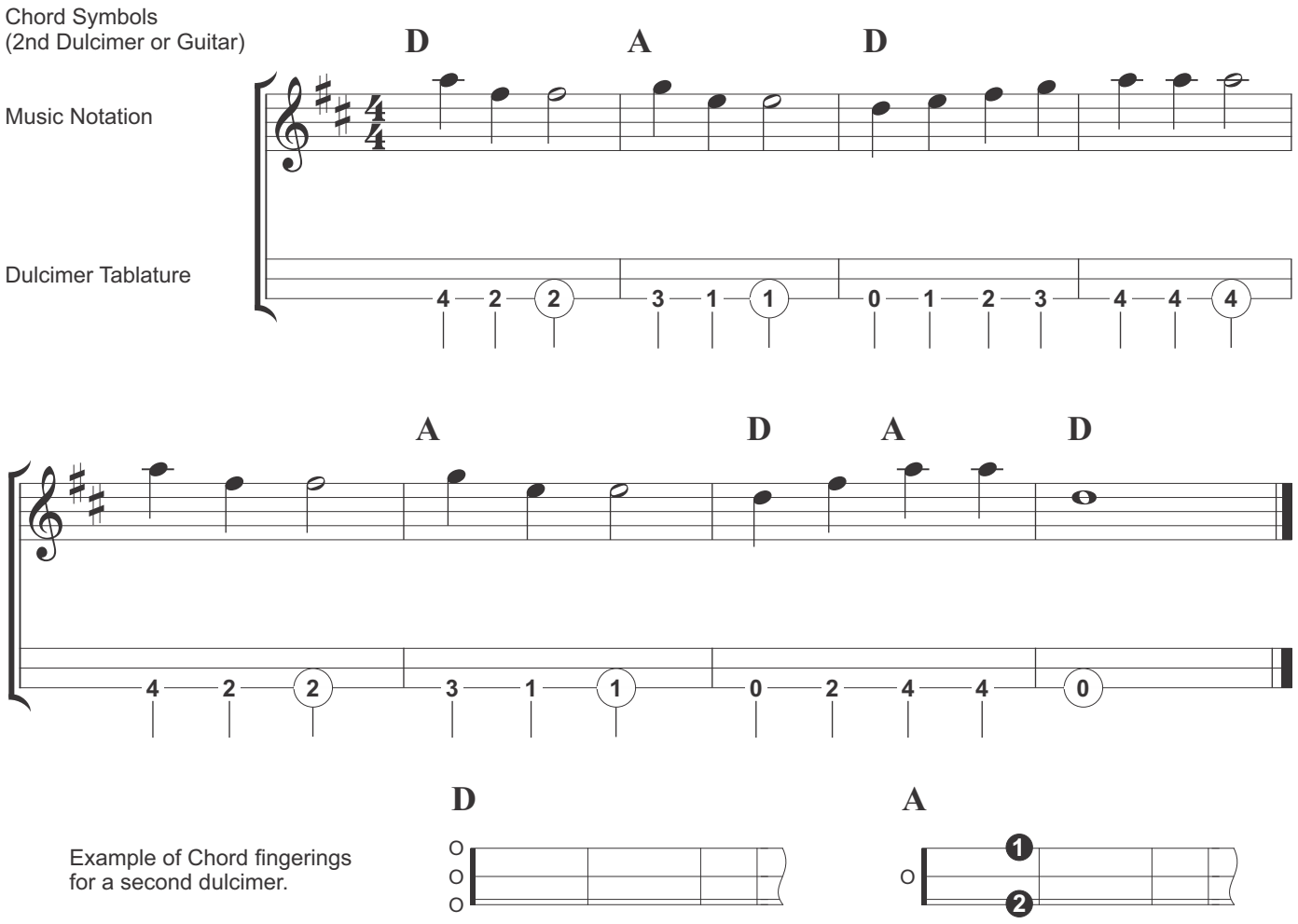


Guitar - Chromatic Fretting

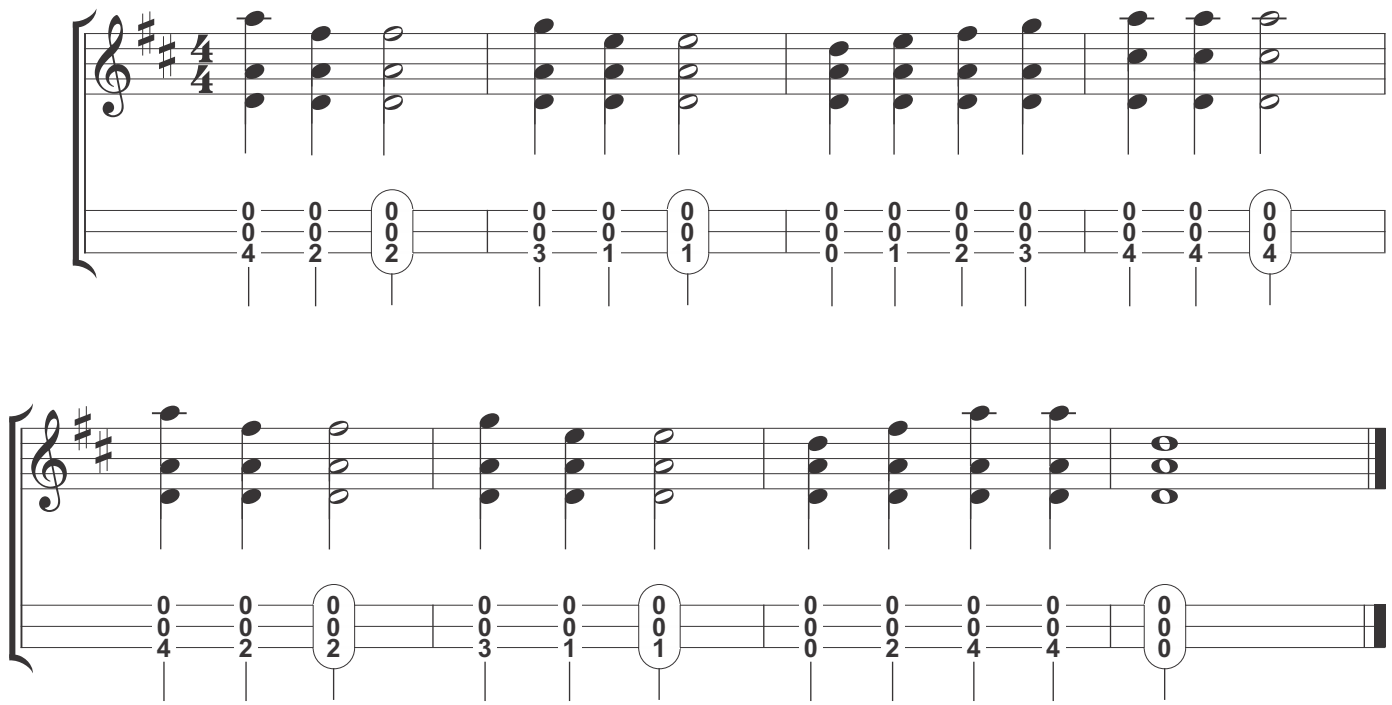


Sample Dulcimer Music

Lightly Row - *Basic Melody with chords for a second instrument*

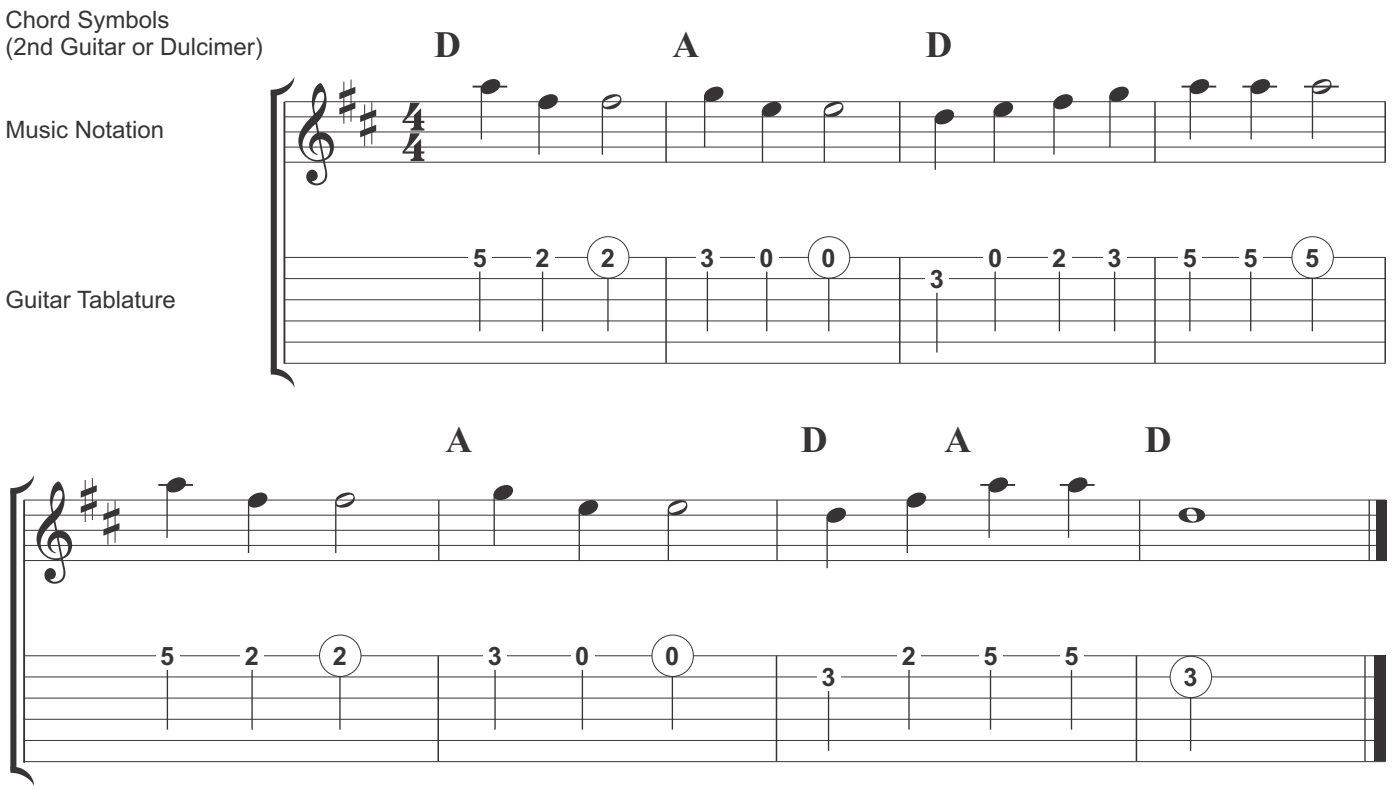


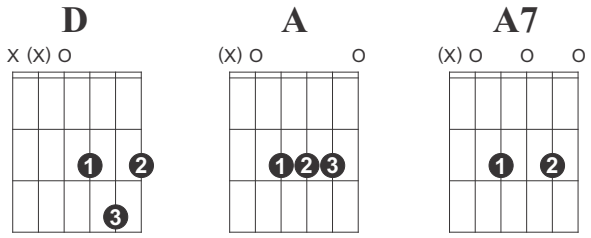
Lightly Row - *Basic Melody with added open drone strings*



Sample Guitar Music

Lightly Row - *Basic Melody with chords for a second instrument*





A7 can be used as an easy alternative to A

Lightly Row - *Solo*

