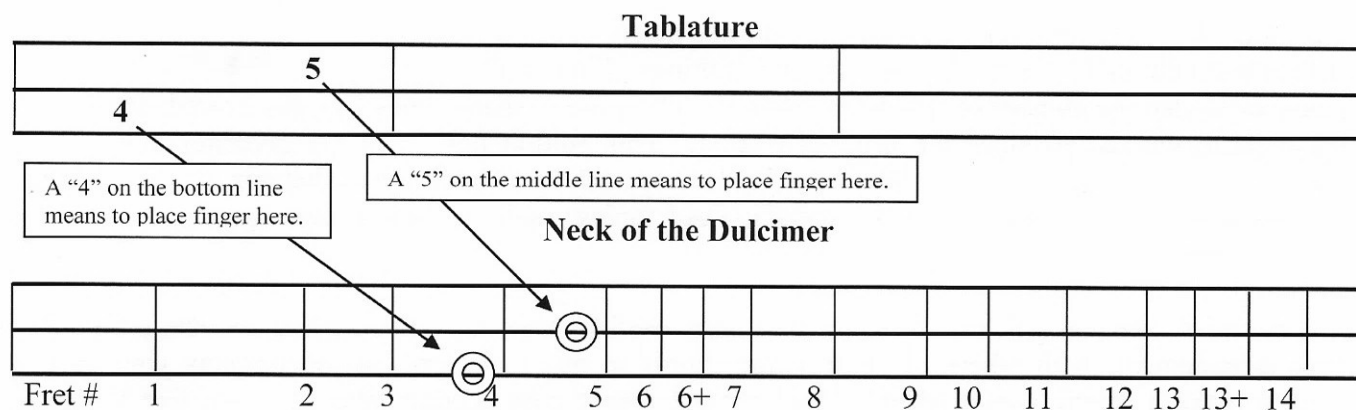


How to Read Dulcimer Tablature

Tablature has been written for many centuries for a wide variety of instruments. It uses numbers or symbols to guide the musician instead of standard musical notation. Dulcimer tablature is relatively simple because only three strings are involved. Each line represents a string or double set of strings. The top line represents the bass string. The middle line represents the middle string, and the bottom line represents the melody string or the double set of melody strings.

Bass String
Middle String
Melody String(s) - usually a double set

The numbers on the tablature represent fret numbers. Therefore, if the number 4 is on the bottom line, the musician would press the melody strings (those closest to him) down just to the left of the 4th fret. (If one is playing a left-handed dulcimer, then it would be just to the right of the 4th fret.)



Special Notes:

- The number "0" means that you are to play that string "open," not pressing it down at all.
- The letter "X" appears occasionally on some pieces. This means that you are to avoid hitting that string at all as you play that set of notes. Unless an "X" appears, assume that you can strum all of the strings as you play.
- Parentheses () around a numeral means that the fret number within it is an alternative note if the other proves too difficult for smooth playing.
- In the interest of avoiding unnecessary clutter, I choose to not place full chords under every note. **If only one number appears under a note, it does not mean that you only play one string.** Assume that you continue to hold the previous chord on the other two strings until the next chord is played.

The following tablature includes the melody line written in standard notation on top of the lyrics and dulcimer tablature underneath. The vertical lines in modern dulcimer tablature indicate the beginning and ending of measures as they do in standard notation. All songs have suggested chords written above the upper staff. If a friend plays guitar, banjo, mandolin, or other instrument, he/she can use these chords to accompany you as you astound hundreds with the beautiful melody. This is standard format for most modern dulcimer tablature.