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A compact disc is available for this book. This disc can make learning the examples in this book easier and more enjoyable. There are also play-along tunes for you to jam with. This symbol will appear at the beginning of every example or song:

Use the CD to make sure that you are capturing the feel of the examples, interpreting the rhythms correctly, and so on.

The track number below the symbol corresponds directly to the example or song you want to hear. Track 1 will help you tune to the CD.

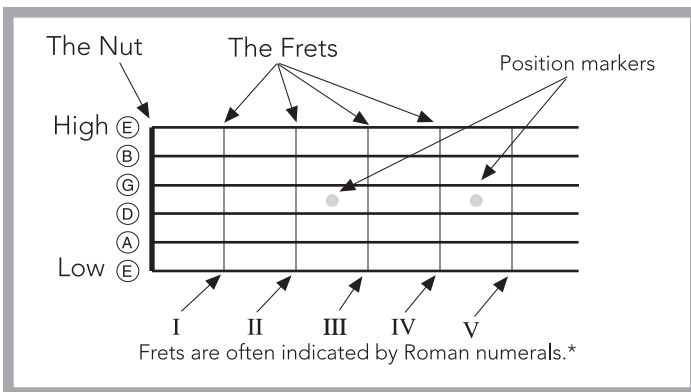
Have fun!

Demystifying the Neck

The most mysterious item on your guitar is the neck, but there are ways of coming to grips with it.

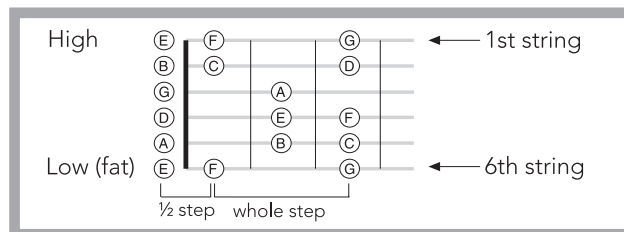
The first thing to be aware of is that musical notes all have letter names. There are only seven letters used for the entire musical alphabet: A, B, C, D, E, F and G. After G, the cycle of letters repeats again, from A to G, over and over.

The distance between two notes with the same name is called an octave. Octave refers to eight notes; from A to A is a distance of eight notes (A B C D E F G A). The second A, the one after the G, is one octave higher than the first A, the one that precedes the G.



The note names of the open strings, from lowest sounding (thickest string) to the highest sounding (thinnest string) are: E, A, D, G, B and E (remember: Even Average Dogs Get the Blues Evenings).

The guitar is played by placing fingers of your left hand on the different frets of the strings and picking them (striking them with the right hand) to sound the notes. Each fret gets a note name, too. The guitar neck chart below shows the open strings and some of the note names on the frets. As you progress up the neck the of the guitar (away from the nut), fret by fret, the letters progress through the alphabet. Some of the notes are a **whole step** (two frets) apart and some are only a **half step** (one fret) apart. For now, you should notice and remember that half steps occur only between B and C and E and F. This chart only shows the first five frets above the nut.



*Roman Numerals

As shown above, frets are indicated by Roman numerals. In case it has been awhile since your last encounter with Roman numerals, you can refer to the chart below to refresh your memory. Both upper and lower case forms are shown.

Here is a review of Roman numerals and their Arabic equivalents.

I i..... 1	IV... iv.... 4	VII .. vii.... 7	X x 10	XIII..... xiii.... 13	XVIxvi 16
II... ii.... 2	V..... v 5	VIII ..viii .. 8	XI xi 11	XIV..... xiv 14	XVII ...xvii 17
III.. iii... 3	VI...vi.... 6	IX.... ix 9	XII xii... 12	XV xv 15	XVIII..xviii ... 18

Chapter 2

Your First Warm-up Exercises

It is important for you to consistently practice a set of exercises that will warm up the muscles in your hands and serve to develop a reliable technique. This chapter will provide a starting point which we will add to later.

Using the Pick

Picks are small pieces of plastic (though you can find some that are made from materials such as steel and tortoise shell) that are used to strum chords and pick strings.

Most players hold the pick between the thumb and index finger, as shown. Some players hold it between their thumb and middle finger. See what is more comfortable for you. Your other fingers should curl in and form a cup of support for your index finger.



Hold the pick like this.



Here's how it looks on the guitar.

You can pick in two directions: down and up. A downstroke is when you strum or pick in the direction of the floor. In this book, it is indicated by this sign:



An upstroke is when you strum towards the sky.

In this book, it is indicated by this sign:



Experiment with different pressures. You'll notice that dynamics (loudness and softness) are related to how hard you hold the pick: lighter is softer while tighter is louder.

Now that you know how to hold the pick, it is time to put it to work.