

Picking and Strumming



Imagine a day in the woods. You and your friends are hiking back to the cabin where your family is gathering. You cross a covered _____ 1 _____ over a bubbling brook and notice the smoke curling from the _____ 2 _____ of the cabin. As you go nearer, you hear the strumming of a _____ 3 _____. "What beautiful music!" you exclaim. That's when the idea hits—you want to learn to play the guitar.

Playing the guitar is a great hobby. _____ 4 _____ a guitar is easy to take with you wherever you go. You don't need a lot of _____ 5 _____ to play one. You need only a guitar and a pick. Learning to play the guitar takes time and patience, though. You cannot _____ 6 _____ to play well at first. The good news is that you can play a lot of songs after learning only a few chords.

First, choose your guitar. There are many types, including folk, classical, and electric. Look for a guitar that is _____ 7 _____ for a person your size. Then have someone show you how to tune it.

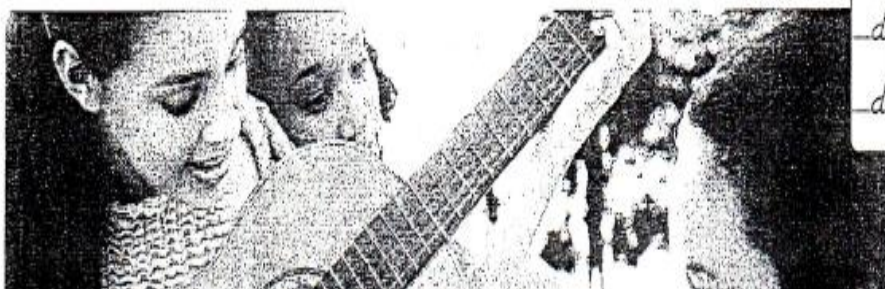
Second, plan a way to _____ 8 _____ your time between school, family, and the guitar. Then _____ 9 _____ with your family the best times to practice. You don't want to bother anyone with your picking and strumming, _____ 10 _____, of course, for those times when you'd like someone to listen.

Third, find a teacher. Remember that _____ 11 _____ people teach in different ways. Talk to other guitar players to help you choose the right instructor.

Fourth, go to your guitar lessons. You might learn the history of the guitar or how plucking a string makes sounds. You will definitely learn chords and scales.

You need nimble fingers to change chords or play scales _____¹². Some chords and scales may strain your fingers or even your _____¹³. A _____¹⁴ or injury that interferes with the movement of your fingers may slow you down. Talk to your doctor if you notice such a problem.

Do not let playing a few scales each day discourage you. Think of each one as a kind of musical puzzle or _____¹⁵ to solve. Play the notes, _____¹⁶ your lessons, and then practice, practice, practice. Remember that you can never practice _____¹⁷. With time, you will play better and better. The most important thing is to never _____¹⁸ trying. If you give up too soon you may feel _____¹⁹ later. Instead, _____²⁰, play your guitar, and enjoy making beautiful music for your family and friends!



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