

Finished Chord Harp

4-Chord Zither



MUSICMAKERS

651-439-9120
www.harpkit.com
#1

REPLACING STRINGS

NOTE: Stringing is a bit of an art. It is important to do a nice job here so you don't end up with sharp ends of wire that can poke a finger or catch on clothing as people handle the instrument. Another important thing is to try to wind the string evenly on the tuning pin. This requires figuring out a way to hold the excess slack wire in your left hand as you turn the tuning pin with your right hand. You might like to put a rubber mat or a thick towel on your work table to keep the box from sliding and getting scratched.

If you break a string, you can order replacements from Musismakers. Contact us by phone or order on our web site. We show individual replacements under the menu heading "Strings" and then "Loop End Strings", or you can order the entire set by searching for "Chord Harp" in the search window.

HINT: When replacing a string, it is always best to turn the tuning pin backwards to raise it up higher than its neighbors before winding the new string on. The pins are threaded so they drive deeper into the wood as you turn them clockwise.

IMPORTANT: Because the strings all cross at four different levels above the wood, it is important to wind the strings neatly on the tuning pins to prevent strings of one level from buzzing against those of another level.

Some people have little or no experience stringing instruments, and the idea of controlling how the wire winds onto the pin as while turning with the tuning key is a daunting challenge. Some wires are thin and slippery -- very difficult to hold in your fingers.

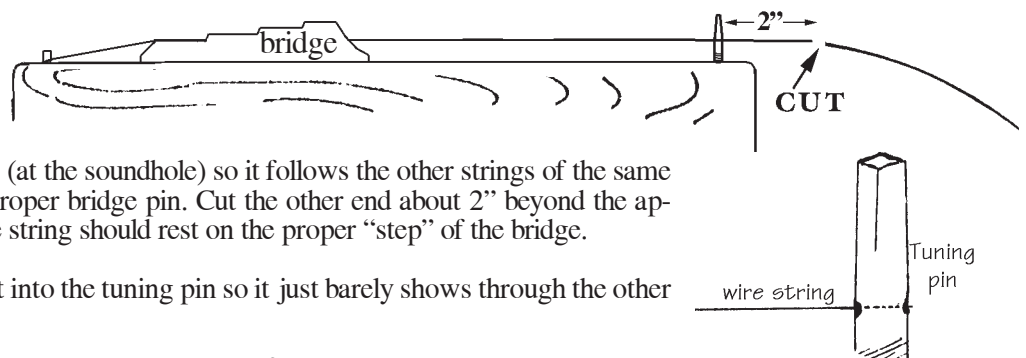
The trick is to hook the loop end of the wire to the hitch pin and get the free end started around the tuning pin so you can simply pull the excess wire sideways with your left hand until it is taut in both directions, forming a kind of "V" shape. Then you can lift or lower the string with the left hand as you turn the key with your right. This will guide the windings neatly onto the pin. The "V" in the wire will gradually pull straight and taut between the two pins.



A. Consult the String Chart to make sure you have the correct size string for the position.

B. Push the string through the crossings (at the soundhole) so it follows the other strings of the same layer, and hook the loop end over the proper bridge pin. Cut the other end about 2" beyond the appropriate tuning pin as shown here. The string should rest on the proper "step" of the bridge.

C. Pull the end of wire back and insert it into the tuning pin so it just barely shows through the other side of the pin, as shown at right.



STRING CHART

D-CHORD:

D3	.042"	Loop-End Wound String
F#3	.032"	Loop-End Wound String
A3	.024"	Loop-End Wound String
Middle C4	.018"	Loop-End Plain String
F#4	.014"	Loop-End Plain String

G CHORD:

G3	.032"	Loop-End Wound String
B3	.024"	Loop-End Wound String
D4	.020"	Loop-End Plain String
G4	.016"	Loop-End Plain String
B4	.012"	Loop-End Plain String

C CHORD:

Middle C4	.024"	Loop-End Wound String
E4	.020"	Loop-End Plain String
G4	.018"	Loop-End Plain String
C5	.014"	Loop-End Plain String
E5	.012"	Loop-End Plain String

F CHORD:

F4	.024"	Loop-End Wound String
A4	.024"	Loop-End Wound String
C5	.018"	Loop-End Plain String
C5	.018"	Loop-End Plain String
F5	.014"	Loop-End Plain String

D. Use the tuning key to turn the pin clockwise about 1/2 turn, leaving the string loose enough so it does not pull out of the little hole.

E. Then pull the string with your left hand to kink the end where it enters the hole, much like “setting the hook” when fishing.

F. Turn the tuning key to finish winding up the slack as you hold the excess wire with your left hand. Don’t over-tighten the string - you may break it. Just take up the slack so the string is taut.

Use your left thumb to pull the slack wire sideways, keeping it taut as you turn the tuning pin clockwise until the slack is pulled taut.

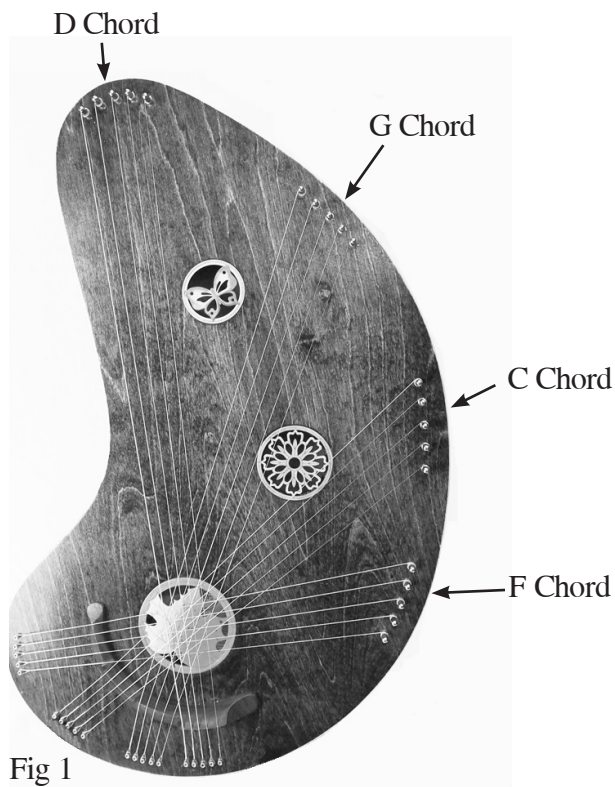
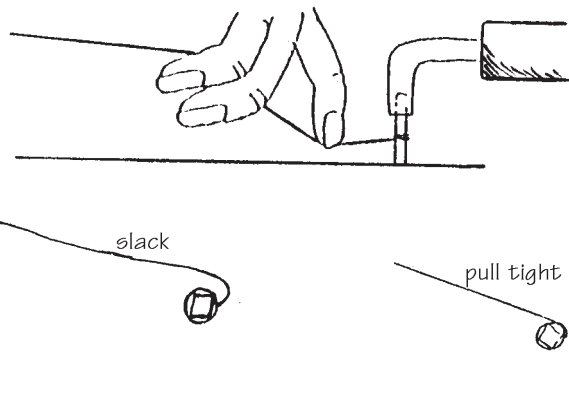


Fig 1

Tune the strings to the chords shown at left (Fig 1), using the Tuning Chart on the opposite page for the specific notes.

Notice that each note has a number next to it (D3, C4, etc.) -- this designates the specific octave of the note. These numbers change at every C note, and Middle C is number C4. That means any note marked with number 3 will be tuned below Middle C, and all the notes marked 4 or 5 will be tuned above Middle C.

If you intend to play the instrument while standing or walking around, you’ll definitely want to install the strap to hold it over one shoulder. It is surprisingly comfortable to play that way, using just one hand for strumming. That frees up your left hand for directing the singers, playing a flute, or slapping mosquitoes....

Use an awl to punch-mark for one strap button on the edge of the box near the bridge, as shown in fig 2a. Notice that this location is about an inch to the left of one of the glue seams in the frame.

Mark the position for the other mounting button between the D and G chords near the narrow end of the instrument, as shown in Fig 2b.

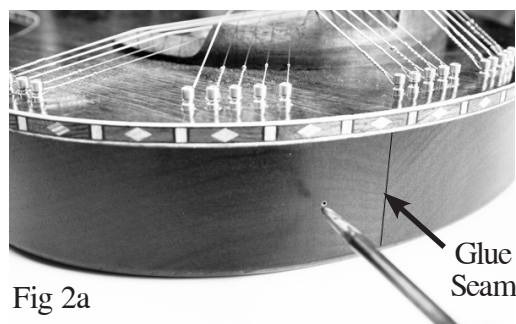


Fig 2a

Then drill a pilot hole that is just slightly smaller than the screw threads. You may want to test your bit in a piece of scrap wood before drilling the instrument. The screws that come with mounting buttons may vary in size, so we cannot specify the proper bit for the pilot holes. Just make sure the screws can be driven in to full depth. If you don’t like the screws provided, you may switch to something you have on hand.



Fig 2b

Screw the mounting buttons in place firmly, as shown at right. Then install the strap to the buttons -- which is often easier said than done. Sometimes we use an awl to help pry the leather button hole over the button.

The strap should go behind your back and over your left shoulder with the instrument in front, as shown in the photo on the back of this booklet.



This instrument has four chords arranged in a way that allows you to play in two different keys. That means that if the song is too high to sing in the key of C (using C-F-G chords), you can play it in the lower key of G (using G-C-D) chords instead, or vice versa.

NOTE: If you are musically trained, you'll notice that the D chord is actually tuned to D7 -- adding the 7th note makes the chord want to resolve back to the G chord (the root chord for key of G), and that is a nicer sound than just a straight D major chord.

You can play a G7 chord too, by plucking the first string in the F chord while strumming the G chord.

We have some good resources for 3-chord songs that you can play very easily on this instrument. You can accompany literally hundreds of common songs that would be familiar to most people. Three chords basically form the foundation for any song. Of course, many songs get more complicated than that, but a good majority of sing-along songs require only three chords.



We have also designed a nice wooden stand that works well for displaying the Chord Harp (plus our Reverie Harp, Hognose Psaltery, Kantele, Mandolin, Banjo, or Strumbly). Look for it in our catalog and on our web site. You can even add rosettes to the stand (shown) as a decorative option if you like.

Musicmakers
PO Box 2117
Stillwater, MN 55082
651-439-9120
www.harpkit.com