MusicMakers

FINISHED MOUNTAIN BANJO

INSTALLING NEW STRINGS

> NOTE: If you purchased NylGut strings for your banjo, you'll need to form a loop at the end of each string and tie that loop into an overhand knot, as shown here.
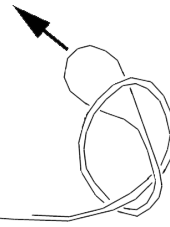
___1. We include a leather scrap to protect the body of the banjo from being scratched by the strings as they pass over the bottom edge. Use masking tape to hold the leather in place as you install the strings.

Then hook the looped end of the fattest string #4 (D3 note, .024" wound, or 4th string NylGut) onto the 2nd tailpin from the left and hold it up to the lower left peg on the peghead (not the short 5th peg that is part-way down the neck).
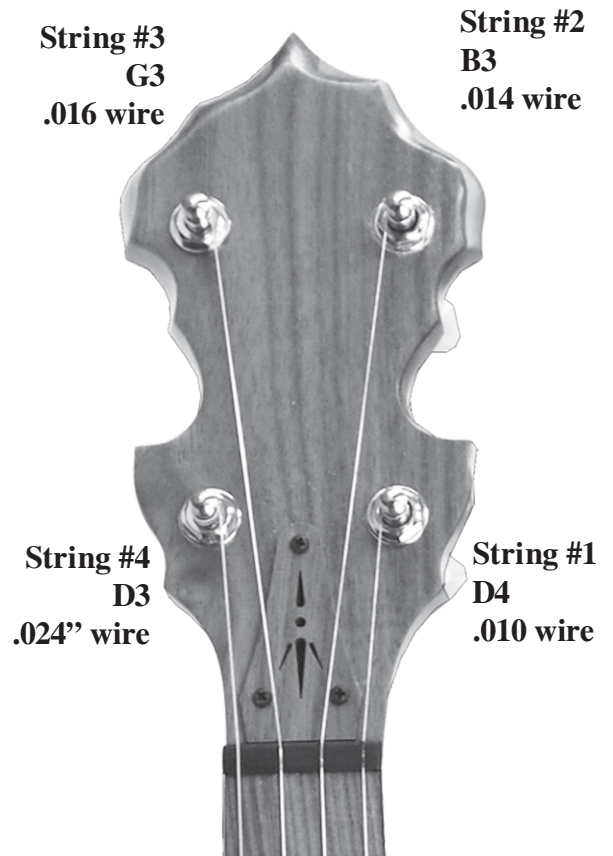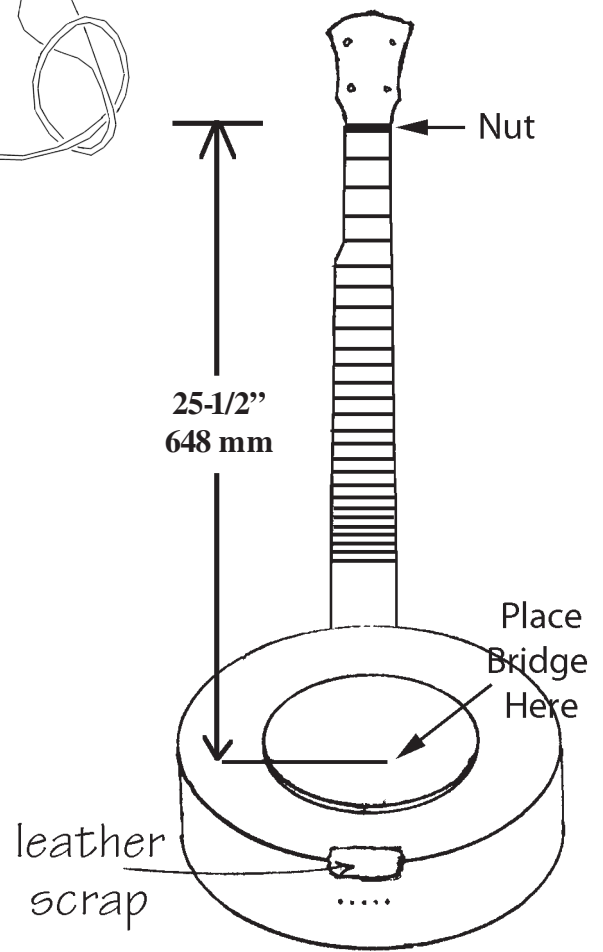
Before you start winding the string on the peg, pull the string past the peg and clip it off about 3" beyond peg. That is the amount of excess that needs to get wrapped around the post of the tuning peg.

Pull the string back until the clipped end just pokes through the hole in the peg. Start turning the peg as you hold the string so it winds around the peg until it becomes taut -- but not too tight! Be cautious about over-tightening the strings. You don't want to break one this quickly....

> NOTE: Strings should wind toward the center of the peghead as shown (below right).

___2. Find the bridge and slide it under the string, positioning the bridge on the skin head 25-1/2" from the nut, as shown (right). This string should rest in the second groove from the left end of the bridge.

___3. You will probably need to make some adjustments at the back of the banjo to get this first string to hang properly above the fretboard:

Use the 5/32" Allen wrench to loosen the long screw at the top of the body (in back) by just one turn or so. Then switch the wrench to the screw below it and tighten that screw as you watch how the neck moves. The goal is to push the peghead downward until this first string hangs about 1/4" over the frets nearest the body. When you get to that point, switch back to the upper screw and tighten it back up again. You can do more fine adjusting after the rest of the strings are installed.

Nut

25-1/2"
648 mm

Place Bridge Here

leather scrap

String #3
G3
.016 wire

String #2
B3
.014 wire

String #4
D3
.024" wire

String #1
D4
.010 wire

___4. Install three more strings in the order shown at right, hooking their loops over the proper tailpins as you install them in order. Leave the left-hand tail pin open for the 5th string.

HINT: If you find the lighter strings slipping on the tuning pegs, take care to cross at least one of the wraps over another as you turn the peg. This helps cinch the string to the outside of the post.

Crossed string
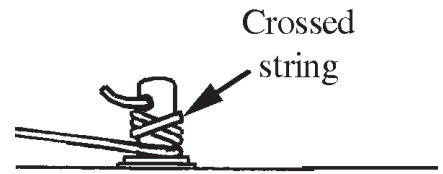
___5. Install the 5th string, having it wrap around the tuning peg as shown at right. Tune the strings as indicated by the photos.

☞ NOTE: Some people ask about the numbers next to the notes. Middle C on the piano is C4, so D4 and G4 are higher than Middle C, and the other notes marked with the number 3 are below Middle C.

String #5
G4
.010 wire

Tiny Screw
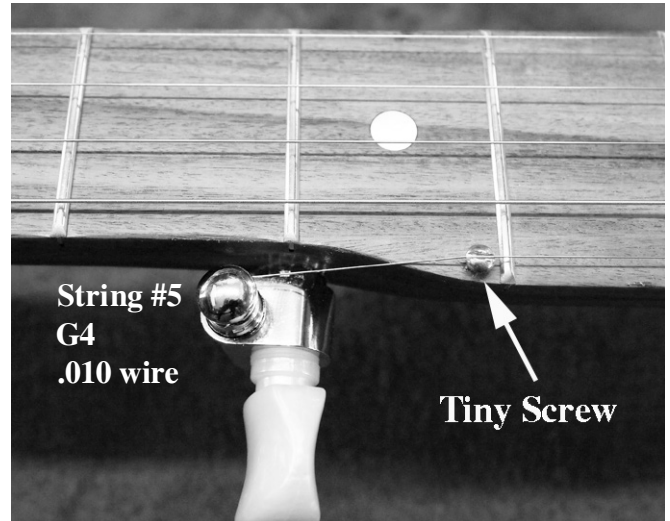
ADJUSTING YOUR BANJO

___6. Now we recommend doing some fine adjustments on your banjo. This instrument allows complete adjustment of the neck, the skin head, and the string action. Here are some suggestions:

TRUSS ROD: The truss rod is used for achieving a relatively flat playing surface on the fretboard. We don't want it perfectly flat, however, because that can cause some string buzzing. Remember that the truss rod works in two different directions, you can use it to put a slight hump in the middle of the neck or to put a slight dish in the middle. You'll want the latter, and here's how to test it:

The most playable fretboards have a very slight dip in the middle. If you press a string down against the first fret with one hand, and the same string against the last fret with the other (at the same time), you should see a slight gap between the string and the fret located about at the mid-point. This gap (known as "relief") can be adjusted by turning the truss rod with the allen wrench provided. Just be careful not to force the truss rod too hard -- you don't want to break the rod! Your goal is to have about 1/32" to 1/16" space under the string in the middle when the string is held down against the lst and last frets at the same time.
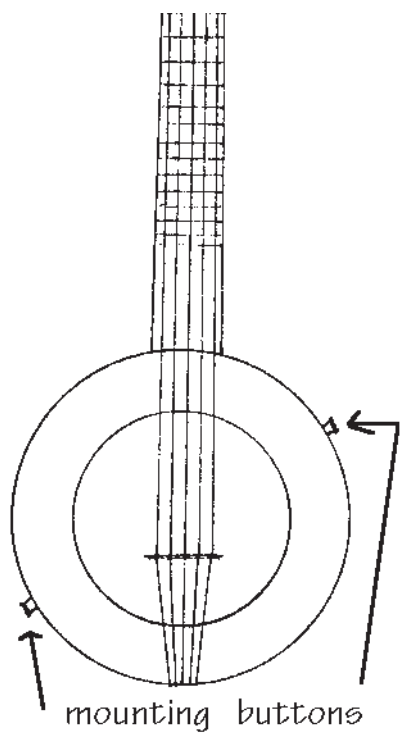
ADDING A STRAP: You may add a shoulder strap to this instrument to make it easier to play while standing or walking. We like a standard guitar strap with two mounting buttons that are placed at approximately the "2 o'clock" and "8 o'clock" positions on the body as illustrated at right.

Loosen/Tighten or Remove neck

Tilt neck

Loosen/Tighten skin head

mounting buttons