

Teach Your Kids Guitar Teacher's Handbook



TEACH YOUR Kids GUITAR



Copyright © 2018 by Teach Your Kids Guitar

Teach Your Kids Guitar expressly reserves all rights. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other digital, electronic or mechanical means, without the prior express written permission of Teach Your Kids guitar, except in the case of brief quotations, embodied reviews, and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. Furthermore, Fretty Frog™ and other character images contained in this work are the trademarked property of Teach Your Kids Guitar and all rights to use Fretty Frog™ and other images contained in this work are expressly reserved. For permission requests please contact Teach Your Kids Guitar at:
info@teachyourkidsguitar.com

Printed in the United States of America, First Printing: 2018.

Visit us online at:
TeachYourKidsGuitar.com

TeachYourKidsGuitar.com Website Registration

Thank you for purchasing the Teach Your Kids Guitar Method (TYKG)!

Lifetime access to the TeachYourKidsGuitar.com website and online instructional resources is provided with your purchase.

If you received this Teacher's Handbook in the form of a spiral bound hard copy, there will be a label attached to this page with a coupon code.

Visit TeachYourKidsGuitar.com/activate and use the coupon code to activate your user registration and gain full access to our online instructional resources.

Table of Contents

Before You Begin	6
About This Handbook	8
Part I – The TYKG Approach.....	10
Section 1: Student Skill Levels.....	10
Section 2: TYKG Song Packs.....	12
Section 3: Teaching Tips.....	21
Section 4: Student Practice.....	25
Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals	28
Scale Activity 1 - Play the Practice Patterns on the Scale Sheet.....	28
About Scale Activity 1	30
Song Pack Item: Scale Sheet.....	32
Student Goals.....	37
Teacher Strategies.....	40
Melody Activity 1: Play the Melody Using the Melody Sheet	45
About Melody Activity 1.....	47
Song Pack Item: Melody Sheet.....	49
Student Goals.....	50
Teacher Strategies.....	52
Chords Activity 1: Play the Chords Using the Chords Sheet	56
About Chords Activity 1	58
Song Pack Items: Chord Sheets	62
Chord Fingerings Booklet	64
Student Goals.....	65
Teacher Strategies.....	80

Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks	86
Melody Activity 2: Play the Melody with Melody and Chords Track	86
About Melody Activity 2.....	88
Song Pack Item: Melody and Chords Track.....	90
Student Goals.....	93
Teacher Strategies.....	98
Chords Activity 2: Play the Chords with the Melody and Chords Track....	105
About Chords Activity 2.....	107
Student Goals.....	109
Teacher Strategies.....	118
Part IV – Advanced Level: Taking off the Training Wheels	123
Melody Activity 3: Play the Melody with the Chords Track	123
About Melody Activity 3.....	125
Song Pack Item: Chords Track.....	127
Student Goals.....	128
Teacher Strategies.....	131
Chords Activity 3: Play the Chords with the Melody Track	133
About Chords Activity 3	135
Song Pack Item: Melody Track	137
Student Goals.....	138
Teacher Strategies.....	140
Appendix: Making Music with Your Student	142

Before You Begin

Starter Guides

At this point, you should have already read and used these three starter guides: **Orientation Guide**, **Tuning Guide**, and **First Lesson Guide**.

These have helped you and your student get off on the right foot, paving the way for success with guitar.



Orientation Guide

The **Orientation Guide** has basically been a “get acquainted” guide. You’ve used it to preview the teaching and learning concepts that are applied throughout the TYKG method.

Tuning Guide

The **Tuning Guide** has shown you how to tune your student’s guitar. It’s important that you regularly tune your student’s guitar because tuning a guitar can be confusing, and in some cases, physically difficult for a child.

First Lesson Guide

The **First Lesson Guide** has provided step-by-step guidance for delivering the first lesson and playing the very first song. With it, you and your student established the fundamentals that are used throughout the TYKG method.

TYKG Handbook Supplements

Teach Your Kids Guitar



Lesson Planning

Lesson Planning Booklet

While using this Teacher's Handbook, we also recommend following our **Lesson Planning Booklet** as you give lessons to your student – especially during the first few weeks of teaching. It will show you exactly how to deliver effective guitar lessons that are fun for both you and your student. When you use our Lesson Planning Booklet along with this Teacher's Handbook, you'll establish a consistent approach for teaching your student – not just for the first few lessons – but throughout your entire journey with TYKG.

Singing Activities Manual

For many musicians, guitar and singing go hand in hand. In fact, the guitar itself can be one of the best tools for learning *how* to sing in key and with proper timing. That's why we've included Singing Activities to complement learning guitar.

Singing Activities are an optional part of our method; therefore, you can choose to teach them at any time, or they can also be left out altogether. If you choose to teach them, you'll want to learn more in our **Singing Activities Manual**.

Teach Your Kids Guitar Singing Activities



About This Handbook

The **TYKG Teacher's Handbook** is a comprehensive instructional resource for your TYKG journey. This handbook is not intended to be read or absorbed all at once. Rather, it's been designed to be understood and used on a gradual basis and in a way that parallels your child's own musical development.

The Teacher's Handbook is divided into the following parts:



Part I – The TYKG Approach: Provides an overview of how our method works. Important topics include student skill levels, Song Packs, teaching tools and student practice.

Part II – Beginner Level Activities: Beginners will learn guitar fundamentals by learning scales, melodies, and chords.

Part III – Intermediate Level Activities: Students will “put on the training wheels” and begin playing with Guide Tracks.

Part IV – Advanced Level Activities: Students will “take off the training wheels” and begin performing independently, along with background accompaniment only.

Appendix – Making Music with Your Student (optional): Discusses how you can make music with your student in a variety of ways.

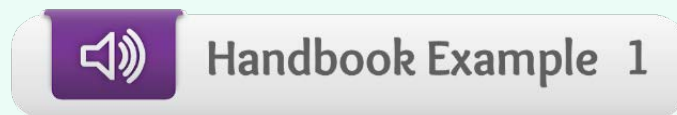
Teacher's Handbook Audio Examples

Throughout this Teacher's Handbook, we provide **MP3 Audio Examples** to clarify certain teaching concepts and strategies. Each handbook audio example corresponds to a specific guitar concept that you'll need to know for teaching, so we highly recommend that you listen to each one carefully.



- If you're using the hard copy version of TYKG, you'll find these on your **TYKG USB Thumb Drive** in the *Audio Examples > Handbook Examples* folder.
- If you're using the digital download version of TYKG, you'll find the audio examples directly embedded in your **Teacher's Handbook PDF** file.

We indicate Audio Handbook Examples at various points using images such as this:



So, when you see the above image later in this document, you'll listen to Handbook Example 1 to clarify a musical concept.

You'll find dozens of additional sound examples throughout the Teacher's Handbook. As you listen, be aware that recorded guitar examples will sound faster and more accurate than your beginner student is able to play.

Part I – The TYKG Approach

Section 1: Student Skill Levels

The TYKG method has been designed to provide a gradual skill development progression for both student and teacher. Each TYKG song includes ten distinct learning activities that can be applied across three skill levels: **Beginner**, **Intermediate**, and **Advanced**.

Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

At the **Beginner Level**, your student will learn guitar fundamentals that will last a lifetime. It's important to realize that these fundamentals will be gradually developed as your student learns songs. The amount of time spent at the Beginner Level is usually determined by a student's age.

For example:

- 4 to 7-year-olds often stay at the Beginner Level for a few years.
- 8 to 11-year-olds often stay at the Beginner Level for several months to a year.
- 12 - up students often stay at the Beginner Level for several weeks to several months.

Our flexible design allows every child to move at his or her own pace so that every child can experience success.

Beginner Level Activities are found in Part II of this handbook (Pg. 25)



Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

Once fully comfortable with Beginner Level fundamentals, your student will move on to the **Intermediate Level** where he or she will begin practicing with Guide Tracks – professionally recorded “play-a-long” tracks that are included in each Song Pack. They expand the learning environment by providing the opportunity to practice right along with the music.



At the Intermediate Level, Guide Tracks act almost like a set of “training wheels” on a bicycle, providing support as your child practices songs and tries to match specific guitar parts. Here’s where your child will learn to feel rhythm and develop good timing.

Intermediate Level Activities are found in Part III of this handbook (Pg. 83)



Advanced Level: Taking off the Training Wheels

After feeling comfortable and confident with Intermediate Level activities, your student will take off the “training wheels” and use the next level of Guide Tracks at the **Advanced Level**. Now your student will begin playing chords and melodies independently, along with background accompaniment. This

simulates what it would feel like to play with other musicians, ultimately taking your student to the performance level.

Advanced Level Activities are found in Part IV of this handbook (Pg. 120)

Section 2: TYKG Song Packs

The key to success with our method is our **TYKG Song Packs**. Each Song Pack PDF includes learning activities that correspond to your student's current skill level, whether Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced. With Song Packs, students have a large “pool” of songs to learn from, no matter what their current skill level. They'll have a repertoire of songs to return to again and again, while building new skills and setting new goals.

Here are the contents of each TYKG Song Pack PDF:

- **Progress Sheet**
- **Scale Sheet**
- **Melody Sheet**
- **Mini Chords Sheet**
- **Regular Chords Sheet**
- **Music and Guide Tracks**



Each of these items is discussed later in this Teacher's Handbook. But first, let's look at where you can find your TYKG Song Packs. TYKG users who have purchased the hard copy format will find all of their Song Packs on their TYKG USB Thumb Drive. TYKG users who have purchased the digital download version will find all of their Song Packs at our website. We'll discuss both options over the next few pages.

NOTE

You'll need the latest version of Adobe Reader to open Song Pack PDFs. It's free and available at [Adobe.com](https://www.adobe.com)

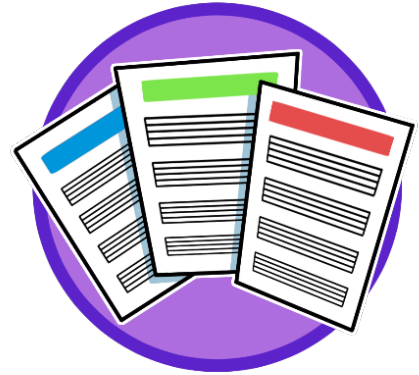
TYKG Hard Copy Version

10 Pre-Printed Song Packs

Your TYKG package comes with these 10 pre-printed Song Packs that are perfectly sorted and ready to use:

Alphabet Song
Bingo
Eensy Weensy Spider
Hush Little Baby
London Bridge

Mary Had a Little Lamb
Oh! Susanna
Ring Around the Rosie
This Old Man
Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star



When you place them into your student's binder in alphabetical order, you'll be taking the first step towards our effective system of organization. In the future, you'll continue to print new Song Pack materials, always organizing them alphabetically for easy access.



TYKG USB Thumb Drive

After working with the first 10 pre-printed Song Packs, your student will be ready to learn more songs. You'll find dozens of Song Packs in PDF form on your **TYKG USB Thumb Drive** that's included with your TYKG Hard Copy version.

Whenever your student is ready for a new song, you can print its PDF Song Pack Sheets, inserting it alphabetically in the three-ring binder following our system of binder organization described on Pg 12.

NOTE

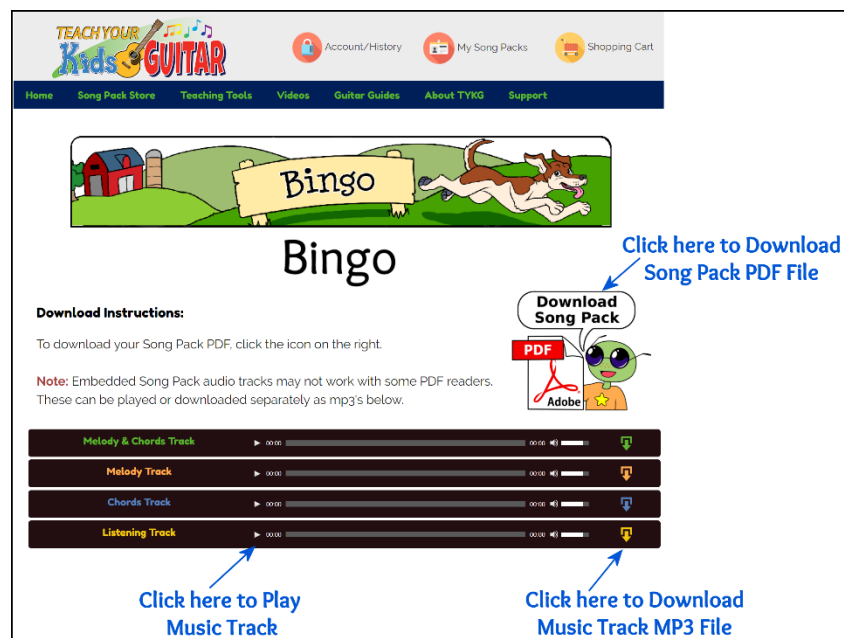
Users who have purchased the hard copy version of TYKG will also be able to download Song Packs from our website, explained on the next page.

TYKG Digital Download Version

If you've purchased the Digital Download Version, your Song Packs will be available at **TeachYourKidsGuitar.com**. After logging into your account, click the **My Song Packs** icon.



Next, click **View Pack** and you'll be taken to a page where you can download your Song Pack. You can also download (or play) embedded Song Pack music tracks separately as individual MP3's if you so choose.



Organizing Song Packs

Organization is the key to success with TYKG! Our **System of Organization** is easy and requires only a three-ring binder. This will enable you to organize the materials for a large number of songs, so that both you and your student can quickly and easily find what you're looking for.

Each Song Pack's learning materials can be placed in the binder in this way:

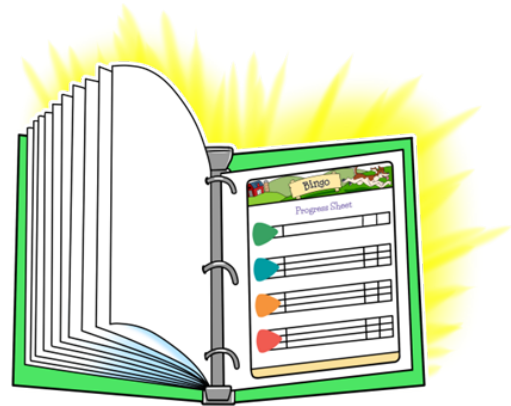
1st - Progress Sheet

2nd - Scale Sheet

3rd - Melody Sheet

4th - Mini Chords Sheet

5th - Regular Chords Sheet



Whenever a sheet is more than one page, insert the two pages facing each other, so that both can be viewed at the same time. Also, be sure to insert songs (with their learning materials included) by alphabetical order to make them easy to locate.

Section 2: Progress Sheet and Practice Schedule

The Progress Sheet

The **Progress Sheet**, included in each Song Pack, acts as a roadmap for all the activities associated with a particular TYKG song. It helps you make assignments for practice and keep track of your student's accomplishments.

Each Progress Sheet highlights ten distinct learning activities in four separate categories: **Scale**, **Melody**, **Chords**, and **Singing** (*optional*). All ten can be performed with every single TYKG song. Because each Song Pack provides both short-term and long-term learning activities, you'll return to re-use each song's Progress Sheet again and again.

The Progress Sheet uses icons to classify learning activities according to student skill levels. These icons make it easy to target the specific activities that are developmentally appropriate for your student:



Beginner



Intermediate



Advanced




Bingo		Practicing	Achieved
SCALE	1 Play the Practice Patterns using the Scale Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>
MELODY	1 Play the melody using the Melody Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>
	2 Play the melody with the Melody and Chords Track		<input type="checkbox"/>
	3 Play the melody with the Chords Track		<input type="checkbox"/>
CHORDS	1 Play the chords using the Chords (or Mini Chords) Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>
	2 Play the chords with the Melody and Chords Track		<input type="checkbox"/>
	3 Play the chords with the Melody Track		<input type="checkbox"/>
SINGING	1 Sing and play the Practice Patterns using the Scale Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>
	2 Sing and play the melody using the Melody Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>
	3 Sing the melody and play chords using the Chords Sheet		<input type="checkbox"/>

Beginner
 Intermediate
 Advanced

© 2017 Teach Your Kids Guitar All Rights Reserved




Part I – The TYKG Approach

For example, if you look at the Melody category, you'll see three learning activities – one that's for beginners (**one black guitar**), one that's for intermediate students (**two black guitars**); and one that's for advanced students (**three black guitars**):

MELODY			Practicing	Achieved
	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>		
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		

The Progress Sheet helps you and your student keep track of overall progress for each song, with columns titled **Practicing** and **Achieved** for each activity. You'll be able to see exactly what has been accomplished, as well as what still needs to be accomplished, just by glancing at a Progress Sheet.

The **Practicing** column helps you monitor the activities currently being practiced. You'll check off this column for an activity when you assign it for practice.

MELODY			Practicing	Achieved
	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		

The **Achieved** column helps you monitor the activities your student has successfully accomplished. Check off this column when you feel that your student has met an activity's Achievement Criteria.

MELODY			Practicing	Achieved
	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		




Achievement Criteria

Each of our learning activities has an Achievement Criteria that your student must complete. You'll learn about each activity's specific Achievement Criteria in **Parts II-Parts IV** of this handbook.

For example, the Achievement Criteria for Melody Activity 1 (*found on page 45*) involves playing the song from start to finish while demonstrating three basic skills: (1) reading guitar tablature; (2) using the correct fingering; and (3) using a guitar pick.

So, if your student can play the song while demonstrating all three skills, Melody Activity 1 can be marked Achieved.



				Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>		✓	✓
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>			
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>			

Please be aware that “Achieved” does not have to mean “perfect.” It simply means that your student has completed an activity’s Achievement Criteria to the best of his or her current ability. On the other hand, if your student is unable to meet the Achievement Criteria for a song, it’s not a problem. Just hold off on marking the Achieved column and continue to practice the same activity with other songs.

Very Important: Your Beginner Level student who has “Achieved” Melody Activity 1, **SHOULD NOT** automatically move onto Melody Activities #2 and #3. These will be for much later on, when your student has gained more guitar experience. *The focus for a Beginner Level Student will only be on Beginner Level activities.*

The Practice Schedule

Now that we've looked at the Progress Sheet, let's take a look at its companion – the **Practice Schedule**. The Practice Schedule is a useful tool that you'll use again and again throughout your TYKG journey. If you've purchased the hard copy version of TYKG, you'll find the Practice Schedule PDF on your **TYKG USB Thumb Drive**. If you've purchased the digital download version, you'll find the Practice Schedule PDF under **Teaching Tools** at TeachYourKidsGuitar.com

Practice Schedule												
Fill in song titles and circle the number(s) for the goals you are practicing												
DATE	SCALE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING								
	1	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3								
	1	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3								

You (the teacher) will use the Practice Schedule during each lesson to assign activities for practice in preparation for the next lesson. There are several reasons why you'll want to use the Practice Schedule. While giving lessons, it will remind you of what your student has been practicing, so that you'll know exactly what to review – and that's always the first step in a TYKG lesson.

In addition, your student will also use the Practice Schedule during each practice session – to see what specific practice activities have been assigned. This will help keep your student on track and practicing independently throughout the week.

Part I – The TYKG Approach

The Practice Schedule has four columns which correspond to the same four learning categories found on the Progress Sheet: **Scale**, **Melody**, **Chords**, and **Singing**. There's a column on the left where you can record the date that assignments are made.


Practice Schedule

Fill in song titles and circle the number(s) for the goals you are practicing

	SCALE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING
DATE				
May 21 2016	ABC Song	ABC Song		
	①	① 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3

The Practice Schedule is designed to work hand in hand with each song's Progress Sheet. Each category column has a blank "song title" box with a set of numbers at the bottom that relate directly to the numbered activities on the Progress Sheet. You should use these two sheets during every lesson in this way: After you assign an activity for a song on its Progress Sheet, you'll then fill in its song title in the box that matches the Practice Schedule category, circling the corresponding activity number and entering the date.

Alphabet Song



Progress Sheet

		Practicing	Achieved
SCALE	1	Play the Practice Patterns using the Scale Sheet	✓
	2		
	3		
MELODY	1	Play the melody using the Melody Sheet	✓
	2	Play the melody with the Melody and Chords Track	
	3	Play the melody with the Chords Track	

Practice Schedule

Fill in song titles and circle the number(s) for the goals you are practicing

DATE	SCALE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING
May 21 2016	ABC Song	ABC Song		
	①	①	1 2 3	1 2 3

NOTE

Copies of the Practice Schedule can be placed in the front of the three-ring binder. Unlimited copies can be downloaded at our website. When used weekly, the Practice Schedule fills up quickly, so we suggest printing off several copies at a time.

Section 3: Teaching Tips



Take Your Time

As a teacher, you may be eager to move through material much faster than your student is ready. This is a common mistake that even professional guitar teachers sometimes make. But it doesn't benefit a student to rush through learning materials to get to the next skill level. More likely, it will result in frustration for both the student

and teacher and can result in underdeveloped skills.

It takes time to acquire skills on guitar, and you need to allow your child this time. Just because you may want to teach more advanced Learning Activities, doesn't necessarily mean your student is ready.

For example, if you've been teaching melodies for a few months, you may be eager to let your child play along with Guide Tracks. It's possible your student will be ready, but it's also very likely that he or she may need a few more months of practice. You can try occasional experimentation to see what your student is capable of, but don't force it. If you try something new – and it seems obvious your child isn't ready – save it for later.

The trick is to keep your student challenged, but not to worry about moving through skill levels as fast as possible. Relax and enjoy the time spent together. If your child continues to enjoy and play the guitar, he or she will eventually reach every goal.

Get Feedback from Your Student

You'll want to receive constant feedback to make sure the information you are teaching is being understood. Without feedback, it can be hard to tell when your student is ready to move forward. Good communication makes a big difference. *Here are two good ways to draw feedback:*



1. Frequently ask your student questions.

When you're teaching new concepts, you can ask, "Do you understand?" or "Does this make sense to you?" If the response is "no," use follow-up questions to figure out how your student perceives (or misperceives) the information.

Even better, have your student explain the concept back to you. You can also say things like: "What does this mean?" or "Why should you always do it this way?" This helps a student think more independently and will help concepts sink in, long term.

2. Encourage questions from your student.

Create an environment where your student feels comfortable asking questions. There are no stupid questions in music! Encourage your student to ask questions whenever something doesn't make sense. This leads to a greater understanding of the material and helps keep your learner engaged in the learning process.

Use Positive Reinforcement

We can't overemphasize the importance of creating a positive learning environment when giving lessons. Your student should feel comfortable and unafraid to make mistakes or ask questions. This will create a positive association with learning guitar and with learning from you.

Encourage your child every step of the way and use positive reinforcement to ensure that your learner feels good about his or her accomplishments. Offer congratulations for achievements when they're warranted. This kind of a feedback can mean everything to a child who's looking for approval from a person he or she looks up to!



Be Patient



Patience is an important part of being a teacher. Don't get upset when your student makes mistakes or has trouble understanding. Tell your student that mistakes are a not a bad thing. In fact, they are a necessary part of the learning process. Sometimes it can take several tries for a new concept to sink in.

You already know that children learn behavior from adults. The more patient you are, the more patient your student will be. The more relaxed you are, the more relaxed your student will be. The more willing you are to work through challenges, the more willing your student will be.

Avoid Frustration

Everyone knows that frustration can be a normal part of learning and teaching. But there are specific ways to help avoid undue frustration. If your student is having problems, you can:

1. **Take a short break and try again.** Your student may be very close to "getting" a concept or skill but just really needs a short break to relax. Let your student stand up and stretch. Or take a few minutes to ask about your child's day or chat about an upcoming event. If this still doesn't work, leave it behind and try again another time.
2. **Return to something familiar.** Go back to a previous song or activity that your student is comfortable with and can play. This will boost confidence and is a productive way to keep practicing.
3. **Move onto something new.** Don't allow your student to get stuck on a specific song or learning activity. Instead, leave it and try a new song or activity at the appropriate skill level.

The good news is that when teaching with TYKG, you can always stop, try other things, and then return later while bringing more experience to the table. When your student is struggling with something, you may start to think that she or he is never going to get it, but that's really not the case. Something that seems impossible at one point in time may be very possible upon returning to it in the future.



Section 4: Student Practice

The TYKG Method has been designed to encourage your student to practice independently between lessons. With our three-ring binder System of Organization, he or she will be able to easily locate learning materials and lesson assignments during practice. *Be sure that your student's binder is organized correctly (discussed on Pg. 12).*



The main focus during a practice session should usually be practicing **New Assignments**. These will be learning activities assigned during the previous lesson and identified on your student's Practice Schedule. Each activity can be practiced multiple times, even within the same practice session.

In addition to practicing new assignments, your student can also review **Previous Assignments**. When making assignments during a lesson, you might choose to assign previously learned activities that you would like your student to review. Or you can encourage “self-choosing” – allowing your learner to pick out old songs and activities for review.

NOTE

This combination of practicing both new and old activities each week is a key to success. This will ensure that your student will never run out of things to practice.



Assisted Practicing

One of the best ways to encourage consistent practice early on and to ensure that your student is practicing correctly is to provide Assisted Practicing. A big advantage of the TYKG method is that you always know exactly what your child should be practicing between lessons. You understand the learning material because you've taught it, and you know what

your student should be working on because you've assigned it. This certainly puts you in a great position to help your child with "homework."

That's where "homework help" comes in – in the form of Assisted Practicing. If you decide to use Assisted Practicing, then you, as the teacher, will actually sit in during the practice time, treating it a little bit like a lesson. You'll listen and you'll watch. You'll gently guide or correct your child when needed, and you'll answer any questions. Your job will be to monitor the session, making sure that your child is practicing correctly.

As your child gains experience, you'll find that the need and frequency for Assisted Practicing will diminish. In fact, TYKG has been specifically tailored to promote independent practice. However, in the early stages, a student may not fully understand what to do during a practice session. Everything is so new that it's easy for a student to forget many of the details learned in lessons, and this is where Assisted Practice matters most.

Children and Practice Habits

Many children love guitar and enjoy lessons, but are unenthusiastic about or uninterested in practicing at first. This is actually quite normal and no reason to quit. *They are kids*, after all!

Keeping this in mind, consider adjusting the length and frequency of practice sessions, depending upon age and experience. For example, an older student will often practice longer and more frequently than a younger one. Also, an experienced student will have more skills and materials to work with than a brand new student will have.



You might start out with a couple of 15-minute practice sessions per week. For a young child who is new to guitar, this may be plenty. However, there really is no limit to how much your student can practice. Every child is different and some may voluntarily practice often, whereas others may practice only a little.

Just because your student doesn't practice a lot right now, don't assume that this will always be the case. If your student sticks with guitar, the amount of voluntary practice time is sure to increase with age and experience because there will be more to work on and more skills to use.

NOTE

If your child doesn't practice *at all* between lessons, simply use Assisted Practice as a substitute for a formal lesson. If you continue to give lessons (and/or Assisted Practice sessions), your child will stay immersed in guitar even if he or she is not practicing regularly.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Scale Activity 1 - Play the Practice Patterns on the Scale Sheet

Getting Started



Prerequisite

The prerequisite for Scale Activity 1 is the **First Lesson Guide**.



Best Songs to Start With

Alphabet Song
Bingo
Eensy Weensy Spider
Hush Little Baby
London Bridge

Mary Had a Little Lamb
Ring Around the Rosie
This Old Man
Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
When the Saints Go Marching In



Lesson Planning

To incorporate Scale Activity 1 into your lessons, use our **Lesson Planning Booklet** as your guide.



Video Tutorial

For visual demonstrations of Scale Activity 1, watch our tutorial on **Practicing Scales** available at TeachYourKidsGuitar.com

Section Preview



About Scale Activity 1

Scale Activity 1 provides a “kid-sized” approach for developing guitar skills by practicing with scales. It also serves as an effective warm-up for each lesson and practice session.



Song Pack Item

- Scale Sheet



Student Goals

- Reading Guitar Tablature
- Using Correct Fingering
- Using a Pick



Teaching Strategies

- Lesson Warm-Up
- Note Guiding with Scales
- Finger Guiding with Scales
- Correcting Mistakes



About Scale Activity 1

With **Scale Activity 1**, your student will improve guitar fundamentals by practicing with musical scales. We've discovered that kids really don't mind practicing scales – as long as they're bite-sized. Scale Activity 1 provides an approach that makes scales enjoyable, and most importantly keeps them in your student's practice routine.

With Scale Activity 1, your student will “Play the Practice Patterns using the Scale Sheet.” Each TYKG song has its own corresponding **Scale Sheet**, a sheet that contains what we call **Practice Patterns** – our own bite-size scale “chunks.”

The goal of Scale Activity 1 is to continue to develop the guitar fundamentals that were introduced in the First Lesson Guide. These incorporate three skills: (1) reading tablature, (2) using correct fingering, and (3) using a pick. Your task as the teacher is to guide your student through Scale Activity 1 with new songs and assign it for practice between lessons.

NOTE

Scale Activity 1 will serve as a good warm-up (both physically and mentally) before each lesson and practice session.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Assigning Scale Activity 1

When you assign Scale Activity 1 for practice, check off its “Practicing” column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, on the Practice Schedule fill in the song title in the Scale column and circle the number.

As shown on Progress Sheet

		Practicing	Achieved
SCALE	1 Play the Practice Patterns using the Scale Sheet		

As Shown on Practice Schedule

DATE	SCALE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING
7 / 11	Mary Had a Little Lamb			
	①	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3

Diagram illustrating the assignment of Scale Activity 1. A green guitar pick labeled "SCALE" points to the "SCALE" column in the Practice Schedule. A red circle around the number "1" in the Practice Schedule points to the "Practicing" column in the Progress Sheet. A red circle around the checkmark in the "Practicing" column points to the "Achieved" column in the Progress Sheet.

Achievement Criteria for Scale Activity 1

Scale Activity 1 can be marked **Achieved** for a particular song when your student can play through the Practice Patterns while demonstrating these skills: (1) Reading Guitar Tablature, (2) Using Correct Fingering, and (3) Using a Pick.

SCALE

		Practicing	Achieved
1	Play the Practice Patterns using the Scale Sheet		

Remember that Achieved does not mean "perfect." Be generous with Achievements – especially at first. Your student will improve with Scale Activity 1 over time while learning new songs.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals



Song Pack Item: Scale Sheet

Each TYKG song has its own corresponding **Scale Sheet**, a sheet that displays the musical scale upon which the song is based. It also provides **Practice Patterns**. These are simple, yet productive, ways to practice with the scale.

The image below shows the Scale Sheet for “Eensy Weensy Spider,” and how to place it in the TYKG binder.

~ Scale Sheet ~
Eensy Weensy Spider
Key of G

G Major Scale

Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti Do

Root Root

Scale Activity I

Play the Practice Patterns located on the next page while demonstrating these three skills:

- (1) Reading Guitar Tablature
- (2) Using Correct Fingering (labeled below)
- (3) Using a Pick

Correct Fingering

1st Fret - Index Finger
2nd Fret - Middle Finger
3rd Fret - Ring Finger
4th Fret - Pinky Finger

Singing Activity I (Optional)

Play the Practice Patterns as you sing all using **Pitch Matching** technique.

*You can sing the notes as labeled in **Sol**

Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti

*You can also sing notes as any of the 5 Primary Vowel Sounds used in music

Ah as in "saw"
Eh as in "wet"
Ee as in "bee"
Oh as in "row"
Oo as in "who"

Eensy Weensy Spider

Practice Pattern 1a - Contour

Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti Do

Practice Pattern 1b - Contour

Do Ti La Sol Fa Mi Re Do

Practice Pattern 2a - Intervals

Do Re Do Mi Do Fa Do Sol Do La Do Ti Do Do

Practice Pattern 2b - Intervals

Do Ti Do La Do Sol Do Fa Do Mi Do Re Do Do

Practice Pattern 3a - Arpeggio

Do Mi Sol Do Sol Mi Do

Practice Pattern 3b - Arpeggio

Do Sol Mi Do Mi Sol Do

Scale Sheet Page 1

Scale Sheet Page 2

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

You'll notice that page 1 of the Scale Sheet has two separate columns containing instructions:

Scale Activity 1	Singing Activity 1 (Optional)
Play the Practice Patterns located on the next page while demonstrating these three skills:	Play the Practice Patterns as you sing along using Pitch Matching technique.
(1) Reading Guitar Tablature	*You can sing the notes as labeled in Solfège :
(2) Using Correct Fingering (labeled below)	Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti
(3) Using a Pick	*You can also sing notes as any of the 5 Primary Vowel Sounds used in music:
Correct Fingering	Ah as in "saw"
1st Fret - Index Finger	Eh as in "wet"
2nd Fret - Middle Finger	Ee as in "bee"
3rd Fret - Ring Finger	Oh as in "row"
4th Fret - Pinky Finger	Oo as in "who"

The column on the left is labeled **Scale Activity 1** and is simply there as a reminder of the goals of this activity. It also provides a reminder of the correct fingering technique that should be used when playing notes.

NOTE

The column on the right is labeled **Singing Activity 1**. Singing activities are optional, so this applies only to those students who wish to sing. Learn more in our **Singing Activities Manual**.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Scale Fragments

To make our Scale Sheets more effective, we've introduced the scale in a unique way. Instead of printing every possible note of a scale, each Scale Sheet prints only the portion of the scale actually used in that particular song – starting with the lowest note and ending on the highest note. We refer to these notes as the Scale Fragment. You'll find this **Scale Fragment** at the top of each scale sheet. Pictured below is an example of the Scale Fragment for “Eensy Weensy Spider.”

~ Scale Sheet ~

Eensy Weensy Spider

Key of G

G Major Scale:

Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti Do

Root Root



Handbook Example 1

The scale fragment will always *begin with the lowest note and end with the highest note* used in the song. The above example, therefore, presents the entire range of notes – but *only* those notes – used in “Eensy Weensy Spider.” Since these are the same notes found in the song, it makes sense that practicing with them will be helpful.

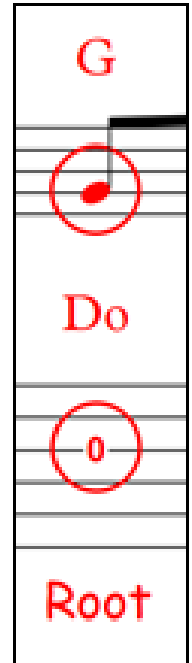
Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Throughout the Scale Sheet, the scale's **root notes** have been highlighted in red to make them stand out. A root note determines a song's key and is the note that the entire scale is based upon. So in this example of the G major scale, the root notes are the G notes, and so the song is in the key of G.

Root notes that are highlighted in red will provide a helpful visualization, but understanding the music theory behind root notes is not the goal here. So if your student asks, "Why are some notes in red?" simply say, "These are the most important notes in this scale."

Another thing your student may notice is that some songs have identical Scale Fragments. This is because a few of the songs we provide happen to share the same key and the same exact range of notes. The example below shows the scale fragment used in "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."

Notice that it's identical to our previous example showing "Eensy Weensy Spider."

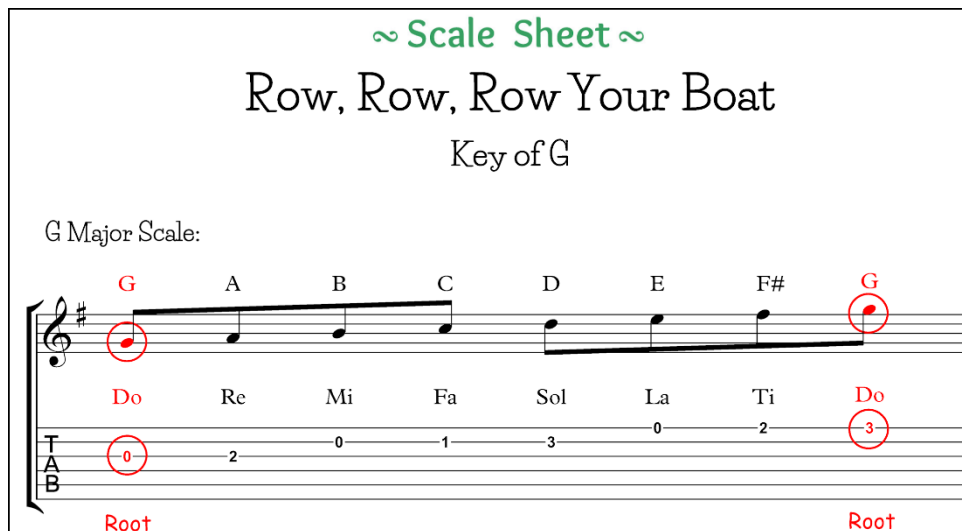


~ Scale Sheet ~

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Key of G

G Major Scale:



Root

Root

If two songs share the same Scale Fragment, the Practice Patterns will naturally be identical as well. So when you get what looks like a duplicate Scale Sheet for a song, simply assign it for practice as if it were brand new. Practicing with the same scale patterns on multiple occasions is actually a good thing, and it's common in music to drill the same scale over and over. As every musician knows, you can never have too much practice with scales.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Practice Patterns

Each Scale Sheet uses the scale fragment with six **Practice Patterns** – simple, yet productive ways to practice with a scale – in bite-sized portions. There are three distinct categories: **Contour**, **Intervals**, and **Arpeggios**.

Contour applies to the physical shape of a musical idea. Contour patterns have a nice, smooth flowing motion that's often used to create melodies.



Handbook Example 2

Practice Pattern 1a - Contour

An **interval** refers to the distance between any two notes. Interval patterns provide a way to practice playing notes with increasing distances between them.



Handbook Example 3

Practice Pattern 2a - Intervals

An **arpeggio** consists of the notes that are found in chords. But instead of strumming the notes together to emit the "chord sound," the musician plays them as individual notes – only one note at a time. Arpeggios are often found in song melodies, so practicing them is a good idea.



Handbook Example 4

Practice Pattern 3a - Arpeggio



Student Goals

In Scale Activity 1, your student will continue to develop the guitar fundamentals that have been introduced in our First Lesson Guide:

- 1) Reading Guitar Tablature
- 2) Using Correct Fingering
- 3) Using A Pick

1) Reading Guitar Tablature

Guitar Tablature (TAB) is the world's most popular guitar notation system and it's used throughout TYKG. But understanding the basics of tablature is just the start. The goal is to become comfortable with reading tablature so that it becomes second nature.

With Scale Activity 1, your student will read tablature on the Scale Sheet in order to play the Practice Patterns. Therefore, your student will not only be improving playing technique but also will be sharpening tablature reading skills as well.

Standard Notation is provided for reference only

Students will use Guitar Tablature when playing

NOTE

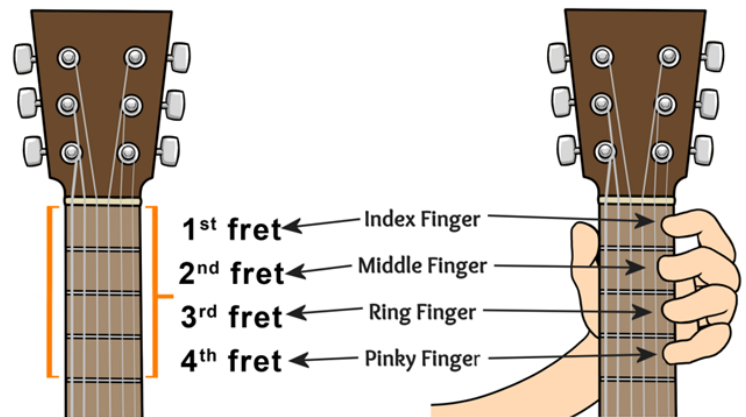
Guitar TAB concepts can be initially taught using our **First Lesson Guide**.

2) Using Correct Fingering

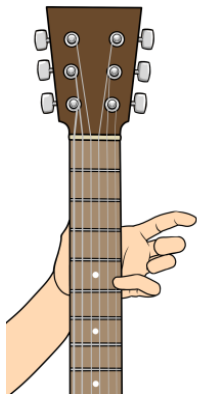
In addition to reading guitar tablature, Scale Activity 1 involves *using correct fingering*. When we say “correct fingering,” we mean using the following technique to play scales:

- 1st finger (Index) for notes on the 1st fret.
- 2nd finger (Middle) for notes on the 2nd fret.
- 3rd finger (Ring) for notes on the 3rd fret.
- 4th finger (Pinky) for notes on the 4th fret.

This is easy to visualize if you picture a “four fret box” around the first four frets of the guitar. As you already know, the “four fret box” is just a helpful **visualization** to assign fingers. Your student does NOT have to physically make this box with his or her hand.



“Four fret box” visualization



In some instances, a scale will contain a note on the 5th fret of the thinnest string. When this occurs, the pinky finger can be used for a note that occurs on the 5th fret. 5th fret notes are uncommon in our songs, but they will pop up occasionally.

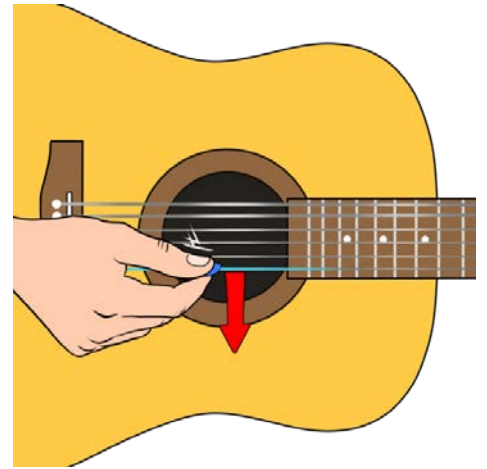
NOTE

When practicing Scale Activity 1, your student can look down at hands or the guitar as often as necessary in order to insure accuracy. Using correct and consistent fingering is the most important thing right now.

3) Using a Guitar Pick

Scale Activity 1 provides a great way for your student to get extra practice with the guitar pick. With this activity, your student will use the pick to play each note in each Practice Pattern. This is great practice, especially for moving from string to string with the pick.

Have your student hold the pick between the thumb and index finger of the dominant hand and use a downward stroke to play a note. Early on, your student may accidentally pluck wrong (or multiple) strings – and this may happen often. This is normal, but with continuous practice, accuracy will improve. It's also normal for a beginner to drop the pick frequently, but with experience this too will also occur less often.





Teacher Strategies

The following strategies will help ensure that you teach Scale Activity 1 successfully with every song. We encourage you to use the following teaching strategies as you provide lessons:

- 1) Lesson Warm-Up**
- 2) Note Guiding with Scales**
- 3) Finger Guiding with Scales**
- 4) Correcting Mistakes**

1) Lesson Warm-Up

In addition to strengthening guitar skills, Scale Activity 1 has another added benefit – warming up. Warming up is valuable for any musician in terms of physically preparing the hands for playing. However, for kids, warming up is just as important *mentally*.

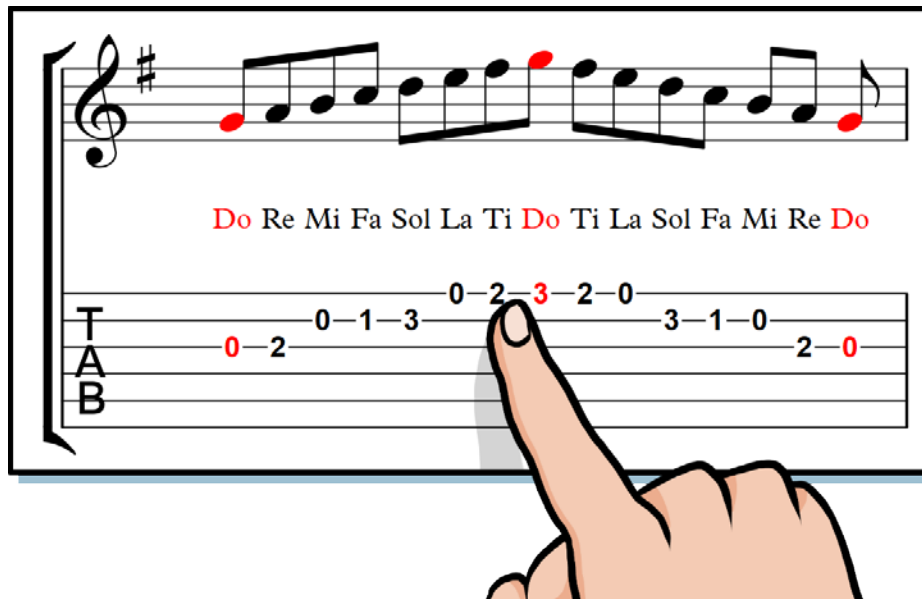
Scale Activity 1 will help your student become focused and ready to make some music. Begin each lesson with Scale Activity 1. If it was assigned with a song in the previous lesson, begin the lesson by reviewing the assignment. If it was not assigned, randomly choose a Scale Sheet and have your student play through the Practice Patterns.

NOTE

In addition to using Scale Activity 1 as a warm up to begin a lesson, we recommend getting your student in the habit of warming up at the start of each practice session.

2) Note Guiding with Scales

Note Guiding refers to physically pointing to notes on the music sheet, using your finger (or pencil or pen), right along as your student is practicing. This will help your student keep track and avoid getting lost. This is especially important early on when your student will often be looking back and forth between the sheet music and the guitar and possibly “getting lost” on the Scale Sheet.



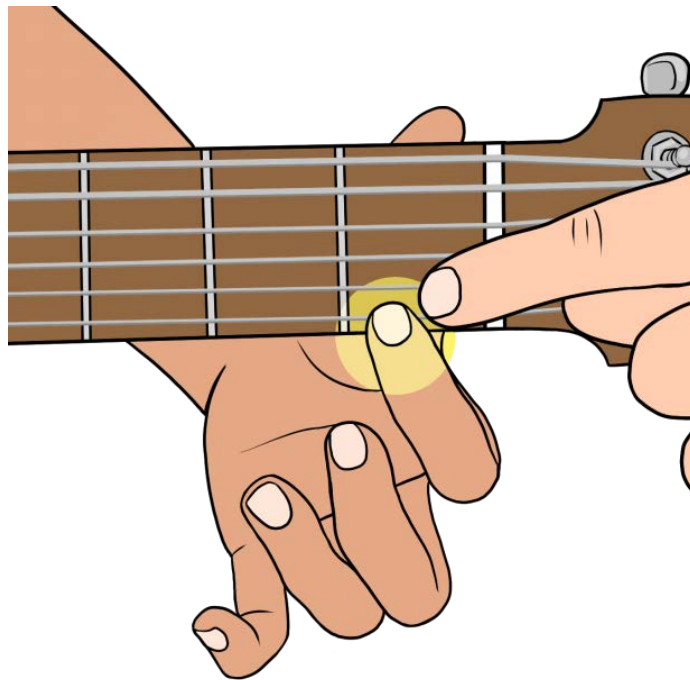
As you can see from the picture above, Note Guiding also has the added benefit of helping focus your student’s attention to where it belongs – on the music!

Early on, Note Guiding will be used to follow the music on the page without getting lost. This is especially important for a beginner whose focus is on following guitar tablature and using the correct fingering. Use this strategy as often as necessary, but only for as long as necessary. Over time, you'll use it less and less, until your student begins to “play by feel” and is able to follow the music sheets without the need to look at the guitar.

3) Finger Guiding with Scales

It can often be confusing for a beginner to know exactly where on the guitar to place fingers when playing notes. When this confusion occurs, it may be necessary to guide your student's finger to the correct location on the guitar. We call this **Finger Guiding**, and it simply involves pointing to the correct string and fret location to show where to place the finger. It may also be necessary to use your own hands to physically guide your student's fingers into place.

Just as with Note Guiding, Fingering Guiding is not meant to be used long-term. We encourage you to use it as much as necessary early on, but as your student becomes comfortable playing notes and chords, you will use it less and less.



4) Correcting Mistakes

Correcting a student's mistakes is one of the most important parts of being the teacher. It's really the only way for a beginner to know that he or she has done something wrong and to learn from it. When you "correct" a mistake, you'll point out what was wrong and have your student do it again the correct way.

With Scale Activity 1, the most common mistakes involve playing the wrong notes and using the wrong fingers. This is going to happen *a lot!* Watch your student's fingers closely while playing and then take the following actions:



- Gently correct your student whenever he or she plays a wrong note. *Make sure your student understands what went wrong, correcting the error before moving on.*
- Gently correct your student whenever he or she uses the wrong finger to play a note, even if the note itself is correct. *The correct fingering is always: Index Finger – 1st fret; Middle Finger – 2nd fret; Ring Finger – 3rd fret ; Pinky Finger – 4th fret; Pinky Finger – 5th fret.*

NOTE

Help your student realize that mistakes are not something to feel bad about!

Scale Activity Conclusion

Scale Activity 1 is a Beginner Level activity that is designed to help your student learn the fundamentals. Initially, your student's goal will be to complete **Scale Activity 1's Achievement Criteria** (Pg. 28) with each song learned. However, this activity will be useful well beyond the Beginner Level.

When your student reaches Intermediate Level activities, he or she will still continue to use Scale Activity 1 to help develop a new skill – Playing by Feel – which involves playing while keeping eyes on the music sheet, not having to look at the guitar. This skill will be necessary for when your student is ready to play along with our Guide Tracks.

At every stage, Scale Activity 1 will serve as a perfect “warm-up” (mentally and physically) for each lesson and practice session. Your student will benefit from continuous practice with scales to improve speed and fluidity. Help your student treat Scale Activity 1 as a regular “workout routine” that will complement each new TYKG song.



Melody Activity 1: Play the Melody Using the Melody Sheet

Getting Started



Prerequisite

The prerequisite for Melody Activity 1 is the **First Lesson Guide**.



Best Songs to Start With

Alphabet Song

Bingo

Eensy Weensy Spider

Hush Little Baby

London Bridge

Mary Had a Little Lamb

Ring Around the Rosie

This Old Man

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

When the Saints Go Marching In



Lesson Planning

To incorporate Melody Activity 1 into your lessons, use our **Lesson Planning Booklet** as your guide.



Video Tutorial

For visual demonstrations of Melody Activity 1, watch our video tutorial **Learning to Play Melodies** available at TeachYourKidsGuitar.com

Section Preview



About Melody Activity 1

With **Melody Activity 1**, your student will learn the most important part of a song: the melody. Melody Activity 1 can be thought of as a “partner” activity to Scale Activity 1 as most of the student goals and teaching strategies are the same.



Song Pack Item

- Melody Sheet



Student Goals

- Reading Guitar Tablature
- Using Correct Fingering
- Using a Pick



Teacher Strategies

- Introducing New Songs
- Note Guiding with Melodies
- Finger Guiding with Melodies
- Correcting Mistakes



About Melody Activity 1

Melody Activity 1 is a Beginner Level activity where your student will learn the most important part of a song: the melody. This may become your beginner student's favorite activity, as it's at this point that he or she will learn many traditional, well-known songs.

With Melody Activity 1, your student will "Play the Melody using the Melody Sheet." Each TYKG song has its own corresponding **Melody Sheet**, which displays the song's melody in Guitar Tablature. One of the goals of Melody Activity 1 is to become better at *reading tablature*. The other goals involve developing playing technique with *correct fingering* and *using a pick*.

You may notice that the goals for Melody Activity 1 are exactly the same goals as in Scale Activity 1. In fact, Melody Activity 1 can be thought of as a "partner" to Scale Activity 1—two complementary activities for developing the same skills. Your task as the teacher is to guide your student through Melody Activity 1 with new songs and assign them for practice between lessons.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Assigning Melody Activity 1

When you assign Melody Activity 1 for practice, remember to check off its **Practicing** column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, on the Practice Schedule, fill in the song title in the Melody column and circle the number 1.

As shown on Progress Sheet

		Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1 Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	✓	
	2 Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3 Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		

As Shown on Practice Schedule

DATE	SCALE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING
7 / 11		Song Title		
	1	① 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3

Diagram illustrating the assignment of Melody Activity 1. The Progress Sheet shows the 'Practicing' column checked for the first activity. The Practice Schedule shows the 'Song Title' entered in the Melody column and the number 1 circled in the first row of the practice schedule.

Achievement Criteria for Melody Activity 1

Melody Activity 1 can be marked **Achieved** for a particular song when your student can play through the entire Melody Sheet while demonstrating these skills: (1) Reading Tablature, (2) Using Correct Fingering, and (3) Using a Pick.

		Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1 Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2 Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3 Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		

Remember that Achieved does not mean "perfect." Be generous with Achievements – especially at first. Your student will improve with Melody Activity 1 over time while learning new songs.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

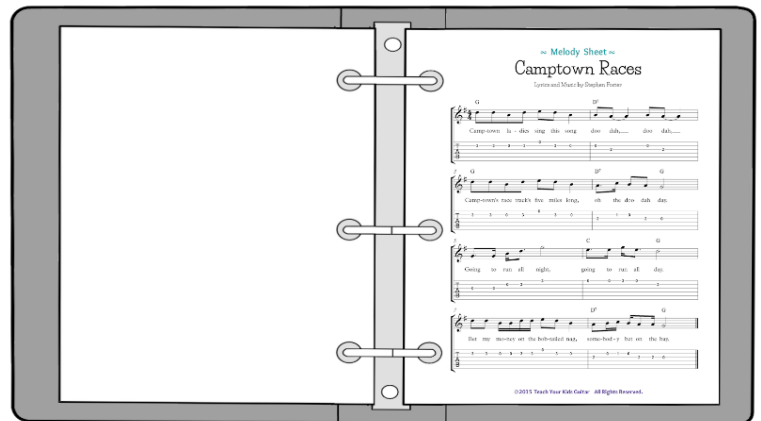


Song Pack Item: Melody Sheet

The Song Pack item used for Melody Activity 1 is the **Melody Sheet**. This sheet introduces the song's melody in both guitar tablature and standard music notation. However, standard music notation is provided for comparison purposes only and can be ignored altogether. Your student's focus will be on Guitar Tablature while using the Melody Sheet.

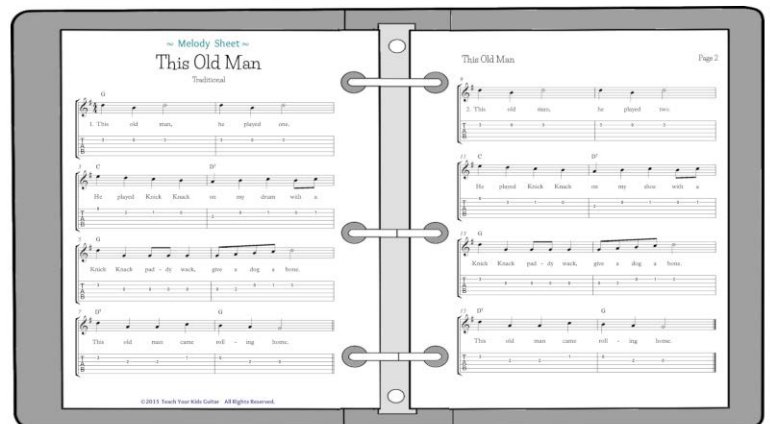
The Melody Sheet makes it easy for your student to follow a song's melody when practicing. The melody notes are lined up directly with the Song Lyrics, making them easy to follow and understand. In addition, each song is presented in a fully symmetrical and easy to follow format.

When a song's Melody Sheet is one page long, it can be placed on the right-hand side of the binder.



One Page Song

When a song's Melody Sheet is two pages long, place the first page on the left and the second page on the right so they can be viewed together.



Two Page Song



Student Goals

Student goals for Melody Activity 1 are essentially the same as its “partner” – Scale Activity 1:

- 1) Reading Guitar Tablature
- 2) Using Correct Fingering
- 3) Using a Pick

1) Reading Guitar Tablature

Melody Activity 1 provides a great way for your student to get extra practice reading Guitar Tablature. With this activity, your student will read tablature on the Melody Sheet in order to play the melody. In this way, your student will not only be improving playing technique but will also be sharpening tablature reading skills as well.

The image shows two staves of music for the song "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star". The top staff is in standard musical notation, featuring a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff is the lyrics "Twink - le, twink - le lit - tle star,". The bottom staff is guitar tablature, with the letters "T", "A", and "B" on the left side. The numbers 0, 3, and 3 are placed on the lines to indicate fret positions. To the right of the standard notation staff, a blue bracket points to it with the text "Standard Notation is provided for reference only". To the right of the guitar tablature staff, a blue bracket points to it with the text "Students will use Guitar Tablature when playing".

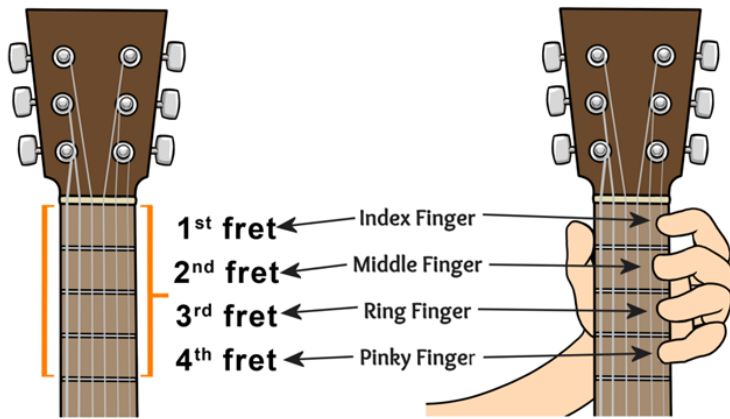
NOTE

Guitar TAB concepts are initially learned in our **First Lesson Guide**.

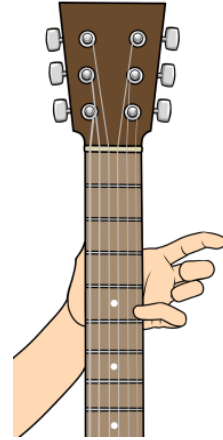
Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

2) Using Correct Fingering

In addition to reading guitar tablature, Melody Activity 1 involves using correct fingering. This means Index Finger for the 1st fret, Middle Finger for the 2nd fret, Ring finger for the 3rd fret, and Pinky Finger for the 4th fret. In rare instances, a song may contain a note on the 5th fret, and your student can use the Pinky Finger.



“Four Fret Box” Visualization

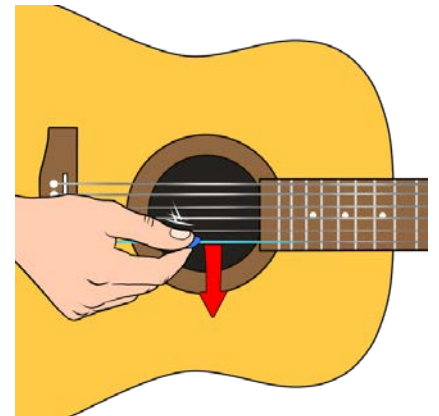


Pinky Finger used for 5th fret notes

When playing notes with Melody Activity 1, your student can look down at hands or the guitar as often as necessary in order to insure accuracy. Using correct and consistent fingering is the most important thing right now.

3) Using a Pick

Melody Activity 1 provides a great way for your student to get extra practice with the guitar pick. Have your student hold the pick between the thumb and index finger of the dominant hand and use a downward stroke to play a note. Early on, your student may accidentally pluck wrong (or multiple) strings – and this may happen often. This is normal, but with continuous practice, accuracy will improve. It's also normal for a beginner to drop the pick frequently, but with experience, this too will also occur less often.





Teacher Strategies

Most of the Melody Activity 1 Teacher Strategies are also the same as those in Scale Activity 1. However, Melody Activity 1 will also involve introducing new songs:

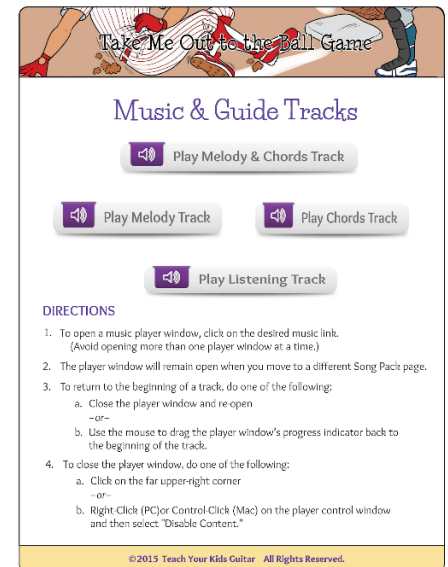
- 1) Introducing New Songs
- 2) Note Guiding with Melodies
- 3) Finger Guiding with Melodies
- 4) Correcting Mistakes

1) Introducing New Songs

When teaching Melody Activity 1, it will be helpful if your student is familiar with each song being learned. In many cases, your student may already be familiar with a new song because many of our TYKG songs are so well-known to kids. However, as your student continues to learn songs, he or she may run into unfamiliar ones.

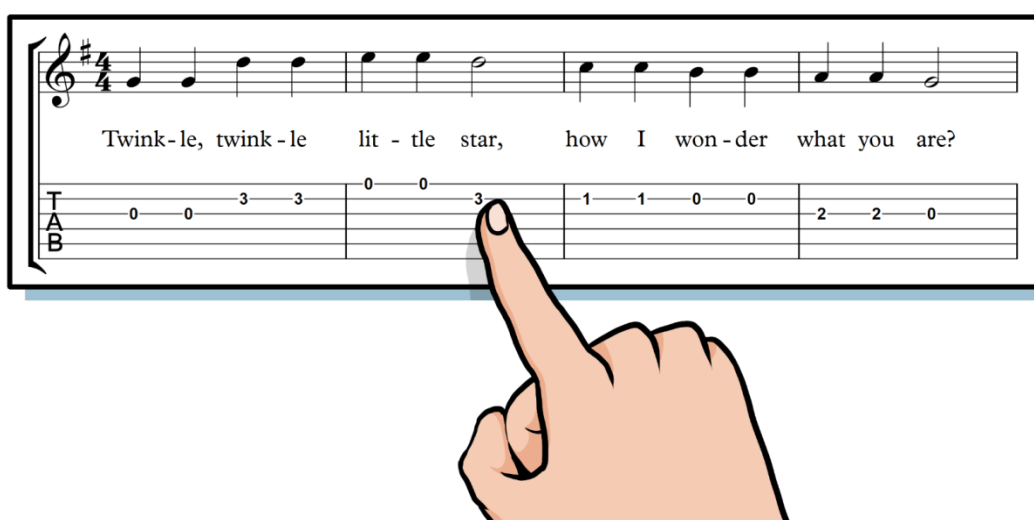
Each Song Pack has a **Music and Guide Tracks Sheet** which includes two tracks that can be used to introduce your student to a brand new song:

- The **Listening Track** provides a complete performance of a song, featuring a vocalist. This is an especially useful track if your student has never heard the song before. If this is the case, you may want to play the song over several times, both for enjoyment and familiarity.
- The **Melody and Chords Track** provides the guitar parts that your student will someday be practicing. This track can also be used to hear what the guitar sounds like.



2) Note Guiding with Melodies

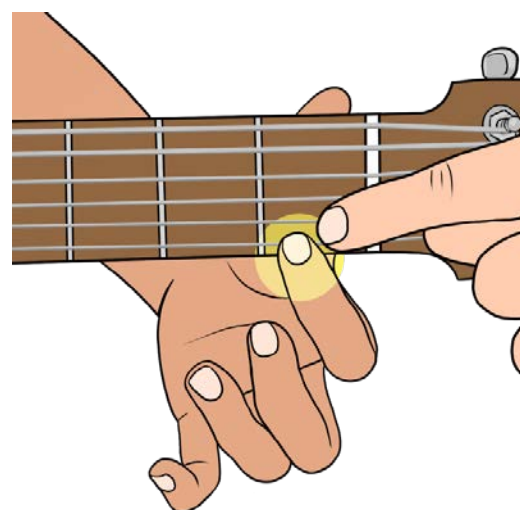
You'll recall that **Note Guiding** refers to pointing to notes on the music sheet, using your finger (or pencil or pen), right along as your student is practicing. This strategy is especially important with Melody Activity 1 where your student will often be looking back and forth between the sheet music and the guitar. The Note Guiding strategy will help your student “keep track” and avoid “getting lost.” *Note Guiding is also very helpful for focusing a young student's attention!*



3) Finger Guiding with Melodies

Finger Guiding can also be helpful for Melody Activity 1, especially early on. Finger Guiding simply involves pointing to the correct string and fret location to show your student where to place the finger. It may also be necessary to use your own hands to physically guide your student's fingers into place.

You can use Finger Guiding whenever your student is confused about which finger to use and where to place it in order to play a note. Use this strategy as often as necessary, but only for as long as necessary.



4) Correcting Mistakes

With Melody Activity 1, the most common mistakes involve playing the wrong notes and using the wrong fingers. No surprise: This is going to happen a lot! Watch your student's fingers closely while playing and take the following actions:



- Gently correct your student whenever he or she plays a wrong note. *Make sure your student understands what went wrong, correcting the error before moving on.*
- Gently correct your student whenever he or she uses the wrong finger to play a note, even if the note itself is correct. *The correct fingering is always: Index Finger – 1st fret; Middle Finger – 2nd fret; Ring Finger – 3rd fret; Pinky Finger – 4th fret; Pinky Finger – 5th fret.*

NOTE

Help your student understand that mistakes are not a bad thing. Rather, they provide opportunities to learn from what he or she did wrong.

Looking Ahead: Melody Activity 2

To develop the skills necessary for Melody Activity 2, your student should already be very comfortable with the fundamentals learned in Melody Activity 1. This means fulfilling the **Melody Activity 1 Achievement Criteria** (Pg. 45) with multiple songs. Just a reminder: For some children it may take a couple of years before feeling fully comfortable with Melody Activity 1. If you sense that your student isn't ready for Melody Activity 2, continue to practice Melody Activity 1 with more songs. Don't feel rushed to move on.



Melody Activity 2 (Pg. 84) is an Intermediate Level activity where your student will begin a new challenge – playing melodies along with Guide Tracks. Specifically, your student will play along with a song's Melody and Chords Track. The guitar melody on the recording acts as “training wheels” for learning how to play with proper timing.

Down the road, your student will also need to develop another skill – “Playing by Feel.” This means your student will play the melody while looking only at the Melody Sheet and not at hands or the guitar. This is important because there won't be time to look when playing with the track.

Chords Activity 1: Play the Chords Using the Chords Sheet

Getting Started



Prerequisites

The prerequisites for this activity are **Scale Activity 1** and **Melody Activity 1**.



Best Songs to Start With

Alouette
Eensy Weensy Spider
Hush Little Baby
London Bridge
Mary Had a Little Lamb
Oh My Darling Clementine

Oh Where Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone
Ring Around the Rosie
Skip to My Lou
The Farmer in the Dell
This Old Man
When the Saints Go Marching In



Lesson Planning

To incorporate Chords Activity 1 into your lessons, use our **Lesson Planning Booklet** as your foundation.



Video Tutorials

For visual demonstrations of Chords Activity 1, watch our video tutorial **Learning to Play Chords** available at TeachYourKidsGuitar.com

Section Preview



About Chords Activity 1

With **Chords Activity 1**, your student will begin learning chords. We've included “kid-sized” chords that we call Mini Chords, which will allow younger students to practice Chords Activity 1.



Song Pack Items

- Mini Chords Sheet (ages 4-9)
- Regular Chords Sheet (ages 10-up)



Chord Fingerings Booklet

- Mini Chord Fingerings (ages 4-9)
- Regular Chord Fingerings (ages 10-up)



Student Goals

- Learning Chords
- Strumming and Counting



Teacher Strategies

- “New Chord” Exercise
- Chord Switching Exercise
- Note Guiding with Chords
- Finger Guiding with Chords
- Correcting Mistakes



About Chords Activity 1

Chords Activity 1 is a Beginner Level Activity where your student will learn to play chords. A chord consists of multiple notes, all played at the same time. It's important to know that when learning chords, time and patience are required. Chords present a big challenge for kids, so be sure that your student is already comfortable with Scale Activity 1 and Melody Activity 1 before attempting chords.

Chords Activity 1 has two possible Song Pack items that can be used, and which one you decide to use should be based primarily upon your student's age and/or hand size. You'll consider either the **Mini Chords Sheet** or the **Regular Chords Sheet**. When it comes to children, there is a big difference between "Mini Chords" and "Regular Chords."

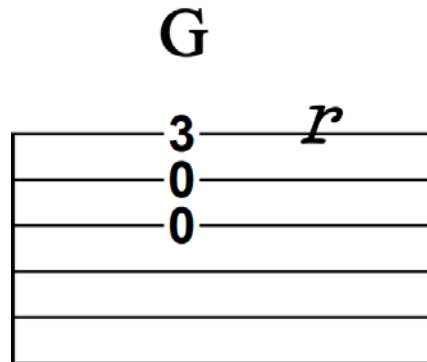
Guitar chords have always been a problem for children due to one obvious reason – *small hand size*. For most kids, certain chord shapes aren't just extremely difficult – they are impossible! Of course, this is a problem that will eventually take care of itself once your child grows in size, but this can take years.

However, we don't believe a child should have to wait years to learn chords. That's why we include a special approach which uses "kid-sized" chords that we call **Mini Chords**. Mini Chords are really just a smaller portion of Regular Chords, and they work just as well. Of course, they have a "smaller" sound, but musically they function just like full size chords and serve as a perfect stepping stone for learning regular chords later on.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Mini Chords

Mini Chords are recommended for children ages 4-9. Your student can use these “kid-sized” chord shapes for all TYKG chord activities for as long as necessary. Here is a photo example of a Mini Chord (also shown in TAB).



As you can see, a Mini Chord is really just a smaller version of a Full Size Chord. This has several advantages. For kids, Mini Chords are not only easier to play, but also easier for to visualize and understand. Thinking about three strings at a time is a lot easier than thinking about four, five, or six strings used in Full Size Chords.

Mini chords are a great substitute for a young student who is not really ready to learn full size chords. That being said, Mini Chords are ultimately meant to be only a stepping stone to playing full size chords at some point in the future. Eventually, your student will move on to full size chords as he or she grows in age and experience.

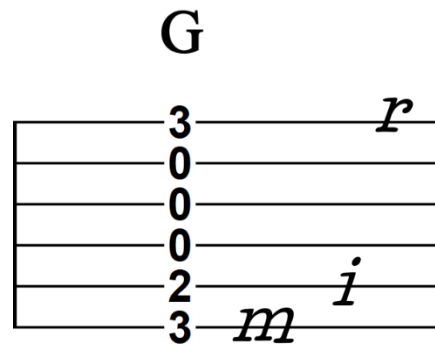
NOTE

Mini Chords also work well for our Singing Activities, allowing a small child to play chords while singing songs. Learn more in our **Singing Activities Manual**.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Regular Chords

Regular Chords are recommended for children ages 10 and up. By this time, most kids' hands are big enough to form full sized chord shapes. Here's a photo example of a Full Size Chord (also shown in TAB).



As you can see, a Regular Chord can use up to six strings at a time, which means a bigger hand stretch. This is the main reason why we recommend Regular Chords for older children whose hands are larger.

But keep in mind that these are just general guidelines. For example, some kids are big for their age, so a student who falls somewhere in the 4-9 range may be able to do Regular Chords. And for students over 10 who struggle with Regular Chords, Mini Chords will be a better place to start.

The important thing to remember is that Mini Chords can be used by your student for as long as needed. Many kids complete TYKG songs with Mini Chords at first, and go back again later on to try them again with regular size chords.

NOTE

It takes time before chords begin to sound good. In fact, it's common for chords to sound quite bad for a while, but that's okay! The most important thing to know is that chords do *not* have to sound perfect before using them. *The best approach is to keep practicing chords with multiple songs; over time, they'll sound better.*

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Assigning Chords Activity 1

When you assign Chords Activity 1 for practice, check off its Practicing column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, on the Practice Schedule, fill in the song title in the Chords column and circle the number 1.

As shown on Progress Sheet

		Practicing	Achieved
CHORDS	1 Play the chords using the <i>Chords (or Mini Chords) Sheet</i>	✓	
	2 Play the chords with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3 Play the chords with the <i>Melody Track</i>		

As Shown on Practice Schedule

DATE	SCALE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING
7 / 11			Song Title	
	1	1 2 3	① 2 3	1 2 3

Achievement Criteria for Chords Activity 1

Chords Activity 1 can be marked **Achieved** for a particular song when your student can play through the Chords Sheet by strumming chords while counting. *If between the ages of 4-9, your student can use the Mini Chords Sheet to achieve this activity.*

		Practicing	Achieved
CHORDS	1 Play the chords using the <i>Chords (or Mini Chords) Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2 Play the chords with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>		
	3 Play the chords with the <i>Melody Track</i>		

Remember that Achieved does not mean "perfect." Be generous with Achievements – especially at first. Your student will improve with Chords Activity 1 over time while learning new songs.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

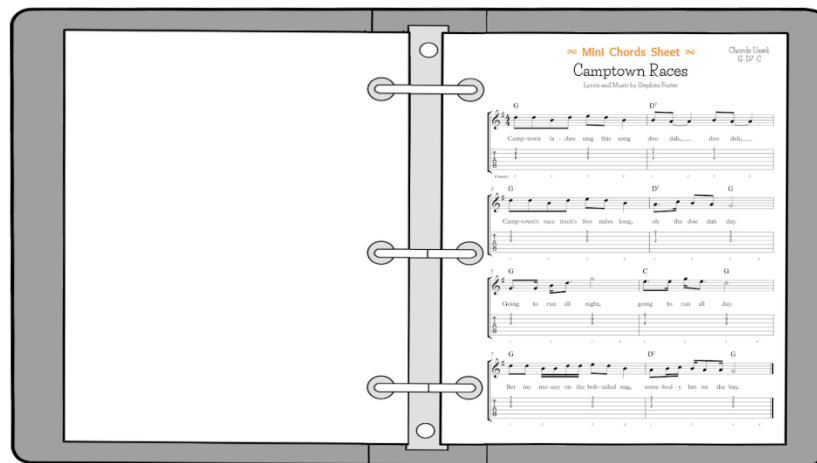


Song Pack Items: Chord Sheets

Mini Chords Sheet: Ages 4 – 9

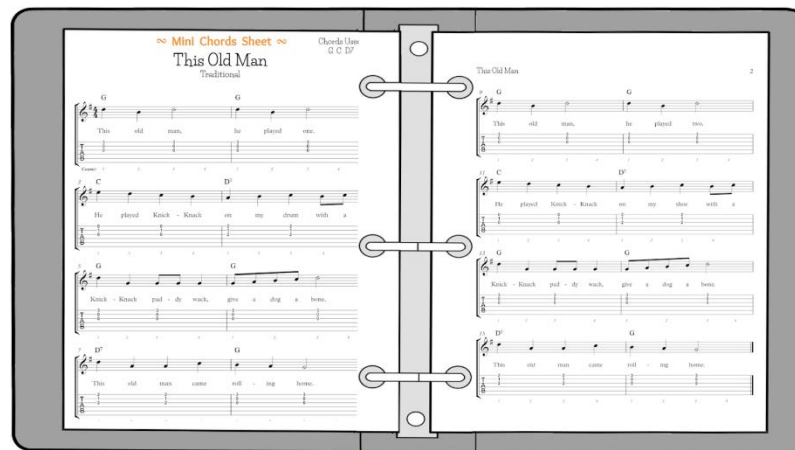
For kids ages 4-9, the Song Pack item used for Chords Activity 1 is the **Mini Chords Sheet**. When you're ready to teach Chords Activity 1 with a song, print out its Mini Chords Sheet, and organize it into your student's binder:

- If a song's Mini Chords Sheet is one page long, it can be placed on the right-hand side of the binder.



One Page Song

- If a song's Mini Chords Sheet is two pages long, place the first page on the left and the second page on the right so they can be viewed together.



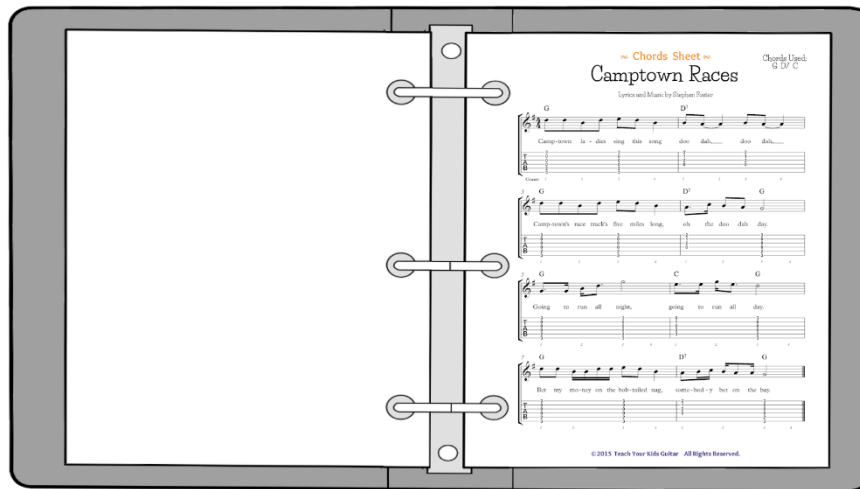
Two Page Song

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Regular Chords Sheet: Ages 10 and up

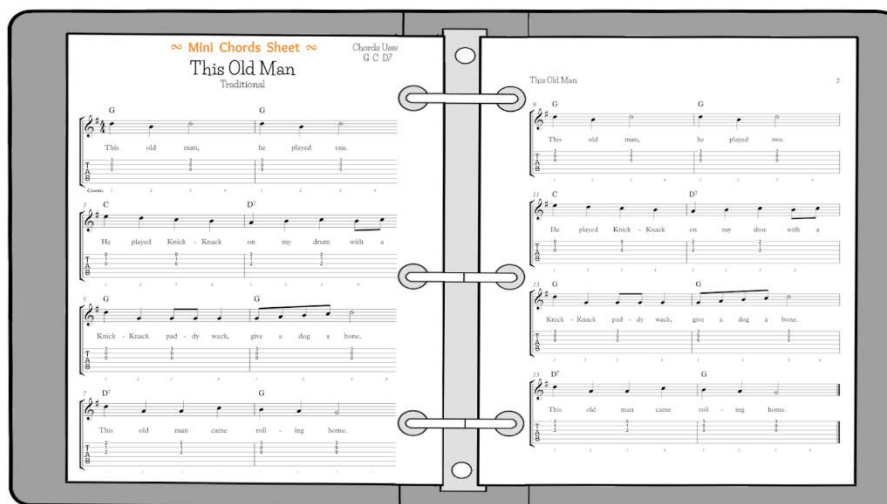
For kids ages 10 and up, the Song Pack item used for Chords Activity 1 is the **Regular Chords Sheet**. When you're ready to teach Chords Activity 1 with a song, print out its Chords Sheet and organize it into your student's binder this way:

- If a song's Chords Sheet is one page long, it can be placed on the right-hand side of the binder.



One Page Song

- If a song's Chords Sheet is two pages long, place the first page on the left and the second page on the right so they can be viewed together.



Two Page Song

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals



Chord Fingerings Booklet

The **Chord Fingerings Booklet** displays the fingerings for every guitar chord used in our method. This booklet will be useful every time you teach a new chord. It will also serve as a reference tool if your student forgets a chord fingering.

Both categories of chords are found in the Chord Fingerings Booklet: **Mini Chord Fingerings** (Ages 4-9) and **Regular Chord Fingerings** (Ages 10 and up).

i = index
m = middle
r = ring
p = pinky

Mini Chord Fingerings

A

0
2
2

i m

Am

0
1
2

m i

A7

0
2
0

i

© 2018 Teach Your Kids Guitar All Rights Reserved

Mini Chord Fingering Sheet

i = index
m = middle
r = ring
p = pinky

Regular Chord Fingerings

Option 1

Option 2

A

0
2
2
2
0

i m r

Am

0
1
2
2
0

m r i

© 2018 Teach Your Kids Guitar All Rights Reserved

Regular Chord Fingering Sheet

Be sure to have the booklet handy while you are teaching Chords Activity 1. You can also allow your student to use it whenever necessary during practice sessions. Show your student how to use it to find and remember the fingering for any chord.

NOTE

If you've purchased the hard copy version of TYKG, you'll find the Chords Fingering Booklet included in your package. If you've purchased the digital download version, you'll find the Chords Fingering Booklet in PDF form at TeachYourKidsGuitar.com

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals



Student Goals

With Chords Activity 1, your student will begin a new set of goals for learning how to play chords. These skills take time to develop, so be patient.

- 1) Learning Chords
- 2) Strumming and Counting

1) Learning Chords

With Chords Activity 1, your student will learn new chords and become familiar with them by playing songs. Initially, we recommend choosing from our list of **Best Songs to Start With** found at the beginning of this section. “Hush Little Baby,” included in this list, is a good choice when just starting with chords. We’ll use it in the following examples to show you how to teach chords.

Mini Chords (Ages 4 – 9)

Look at the Mini Chords Sheet for “Hush Little Baby.” Turn your attention to the label, circled in red, located at the top right-hand corner of the sheet. We call this label the **Chords Used** label, where we’ve identified all the chords used in this song – C, G, and G⁷.

≈ Mini Chords Sheet ≈

Hush Little Baby

Traditional

Chords used:
C G G⁷

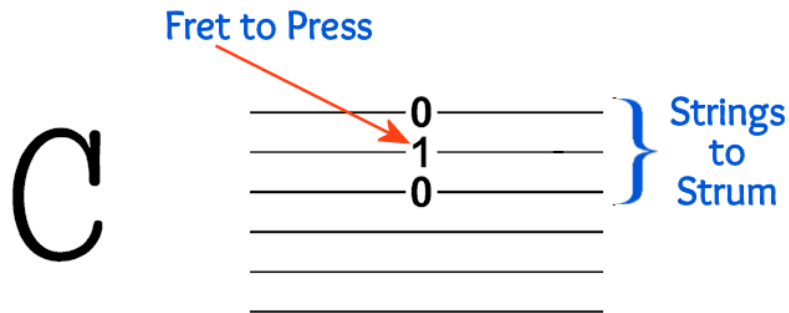
C G G⁷ C

Hush, lit-tle ba-by, don't say a word, Pa-pa's gon-na buy you a mock-ing bird, and

Count: 1 2 3 41 2 3 41 2 3 41 2 3 4

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

The next step then is for you to teach these three chords to your student. Let's see how this is done, using the Mini C Chord as an example.



Like all our Mini Chords, the Mini C Chord has only three notes. These notes are represented by numbers on the TAB staff. By now, your student should have a good grasp of the fundamentals of guitar tablature, thanks to Scale Activity 1 and Melody Activity 1. This will be important for Chords Activity 1, since reading chords in TAB can be more challenging.

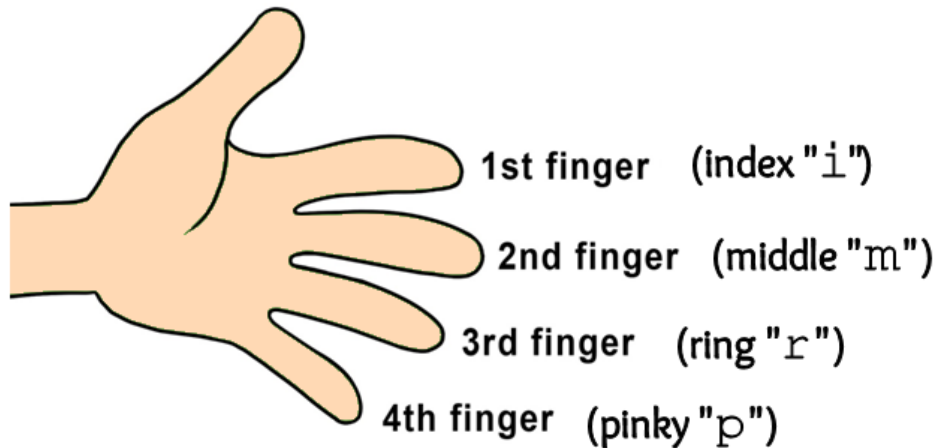
When chords are shown in tablature, the numbers representing the notes will always be lined up in a vertical row, symbolizing that all the notes within the chords are strummed simultaneously. These numbers will show the frets that are pressed down and the strings that are strummed.

The first thing to realize when teaching a new chord is that although you *will* find the Tablature for chords on the Mini Chords Sheet, you *will not* find the exact fingering. In other words, you and your student will also need to refer to the **Chords Fingering Booklet** to view the proper placement of each finger on each string. For example, to form the Mini C chord pictured here, you need to know that the only correct finger to use is the index finger (**i**).

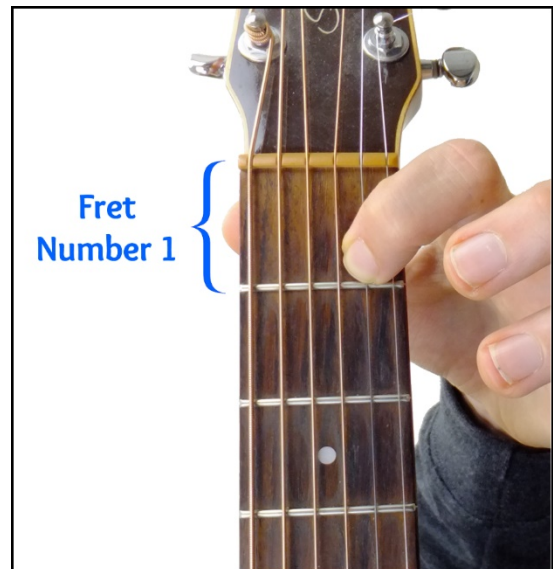
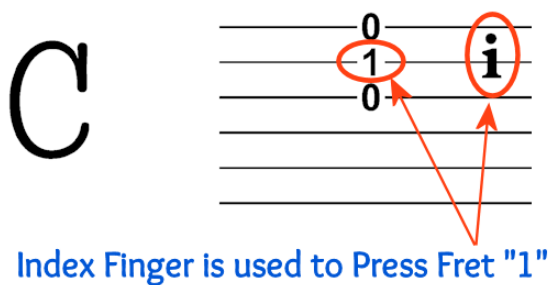


Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

As you already know, letters will represent the finger(s) used to play notes (**i** for index, **m** for middle, **r** for ring, and **p** for pinky). Make sure your student understands which letter represents which finger.

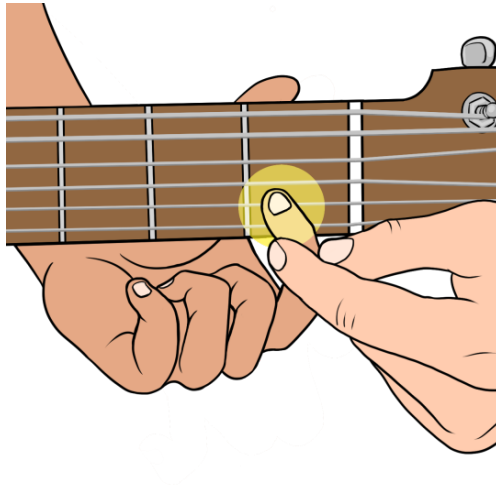


As you can see in the images below, the Mini **C** Chord requires only the index (**i**) finger to play. In order to play this chord, your student will have to press down on the 1st fret of the second string with the index (**i**) finger, similar to the image below.



Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Obviously, Mini Chords are meant to be easy. Still, young kids may have some difficulty interpreting the chord fingering in tablature. That's why we recommend using Finger Guiding to place or direct your child's finger to the correct position.



It's critical that your student uses the correct fingering for each chord, so please use Finger Guiding as often as necessary. Once you've positioned your student's finger(s), you can have him or her look at the chord in the **Chord Fingerings Booklet** one more time to reinforce this connection.

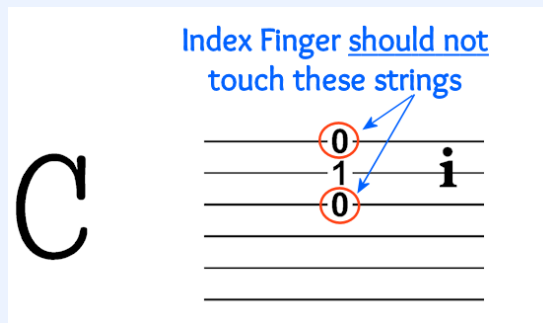
NOTE

When teaching new chords, we strongly suggest using our **“New Chord” Exercise** and our **Chord Switching Exercise**. You'll learn all about these exercises in the following section on Teacher Strategies.

Chord Concepts: Arch Fingers and Press Firmly

Using the correct fingerings is the first step, but there are two other key considerations when building a chord: **Arching Fingers** and **Pressing Firmly**.

- **Arching Fingers** – When teaching chords, you should constantly reinforce the importance of arching fingers. The goal is to keep the fingers arched so that each *finger tip* touches only its respective string. If a finger also touches an unintended string, that other string won't ring out.



Fingers should be arched to avoid touching extra strings



- **Pressing Firmly** – Each fretted note of a chord has to be pressed down *firmly* to ring out clearly. A common occurrence is that children don't press down hard enough. If a particular note does not ring out, remind your student to press down harder.

Realize that pressing firmly may cause some discomfort for some kids. With time, this discomfort should lessen as the finger tips toughen up.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Regular Chords (Ages 10 and up)

Now let's look at the **Regular Chords Sheet** for "Hush Little Baby." Once again, the first place to look is the Chords Used label which shows that **C**, **G**, and **G⁷** are the only chords used in this song.

~ Chords Sheet ~

Hush Little Baby

Traditional

Chords used:
C G G⁷

C



Hush, lit-tle ba - by,

T	0
A	1
B	2
	3

Count: 1 2 3 4

G



don't say a word,

T	3
A	0
B	0
	0

Count: 1 2 3 4

G⁷



Pa-pa's gon-na buy you a mock-ing bird, and

T	1
A	0
B	0
	0

Count: 1 2 3 4

C



T	0
A	1
B	2
	3

Count: 1 2 3 4

This time, let's see how to build a regular **C** chord. Notice in the image below how a regular **C** chord consists of multiple fingers pressed down at the same time.

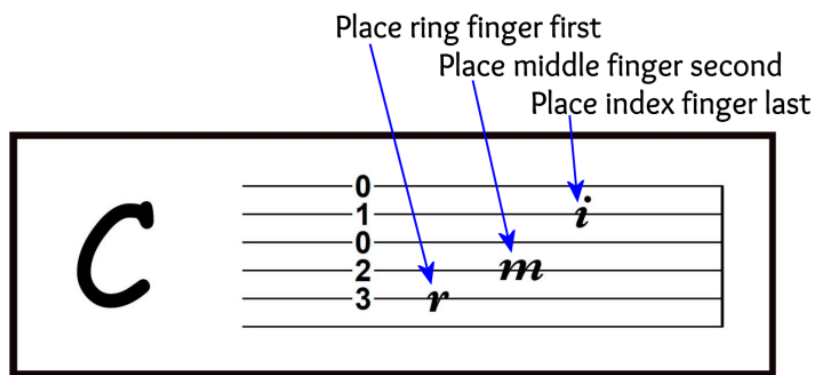


C chord

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

It's this "multiple fingers" configuration that can confuse a student, who may not know where or how to begin building a chord. Therefore, have your student build chords *one note at a time, one finger at a time*, always starting from the thickest string and moving toward the thinnest string.

So for example, when making a **C** chord, the order of finger placement would be ring finger on the 3rd fret, middle finger on the 2nd fret, and then finger index on the 1st fret. This is the same order indicated by the staggered fingering labels on the Chord Fingering Sheet.



First Note
of C Chord



Second note
added to C chord



Full C chord

NOTE



In the future, and with practice, fingers will begin to fall into place all at the same time. However, when first learning chords, your student should use the above approach.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Chords with Two Possible Fingerings

Certain guitar chords have two possible fingerings that your student can choose from. Either fingering can be used, and it's really just two different approaches for playing the same chord. In our Chord Fingerings Booklet, we identify these fingerings as **Option 1** and **Option 2**.

	Option 1	Option 2
G	3	3
	2	2
	3	3



The diagram shows two fingering options for the G major chord on a guitar. Option 1 shows the index finger on the 2nd string (G), the middle finger on the 3rd string (B), and the ring finger on the 4th string (D). Option 2 shows the index finger on the 3rd string (B), the middle finger on the 2nd string (G), and the ring finger on the 4th string (D). Both options result in the same G major chord sound.

There are only a few chords in our program that have two fingerings (**G**, **A**, **A⁷**, and **Em**) and for these chords, we recommend using just one of the fingerings to start. Learning both fingerings at the same time can be confusing, especially for a child. Of course, you can always let your student try both fingerings and then choose which works best.

NOTE

For chords with two possible fingerings, **Option 1** is generally the easiest for kids with small hands.

2) Strumming and Counting

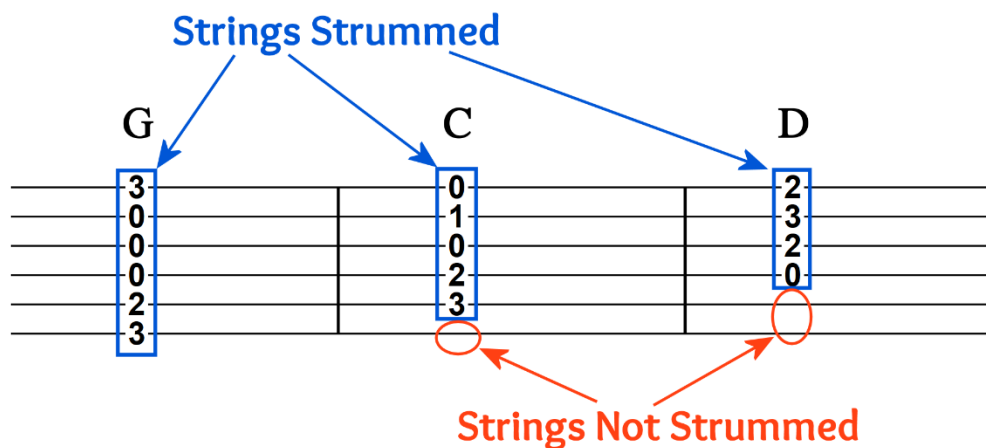
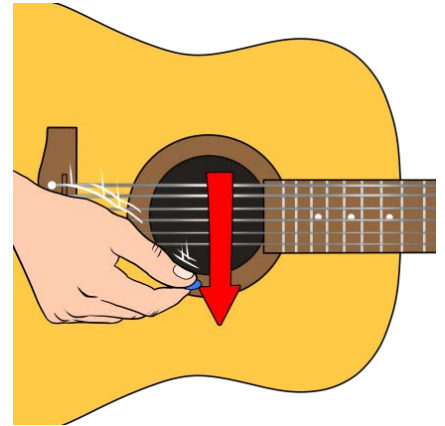
In addition to learning new chords, your student will begin strumming them to play songs and will develop counting skills while strumming. Initially, counting will help your student follow the chords while playing. Later on, counting will help your student follow the beat when playing chords along with guide tracks.

And at first, strumming and counting chords will sound very “clunky.” This is because it may take your student some time to switch to the next chord. This is a normal part of the process, and this will also fall into place gradually and over time.

Strumming Chords

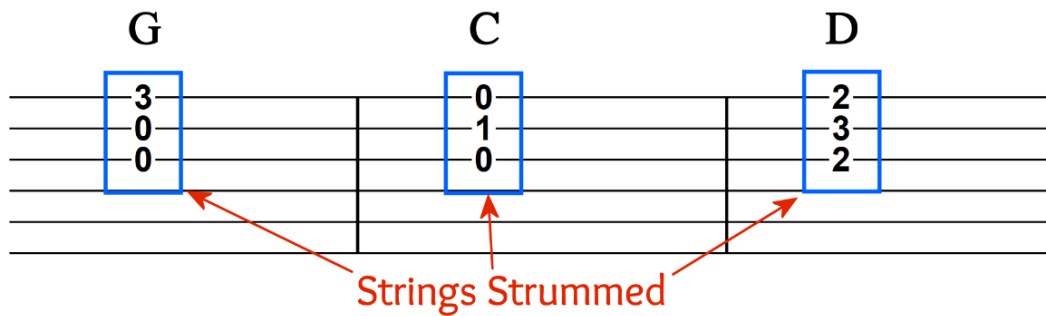
Strumming a chord involves striking multiple strings with the guitar pick. Just as with playing melody notes, holding the pick between the thumb and index finger is recommended. And when strumming a chord, always use a *downward* picking motion.

The goal is to *strum only the strings that are used for each chord*. These strings are indicated in guitar tablature wherever you see a number on a line. In other words, wherever a number appears on a line, then that string should be strummed.

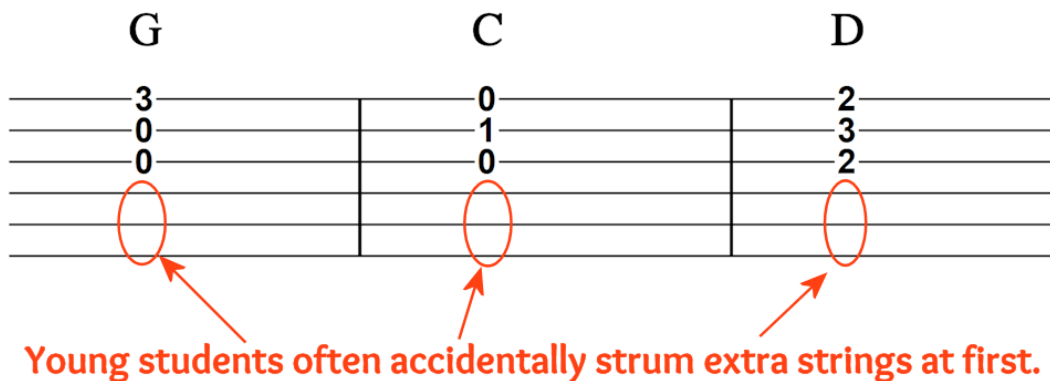


Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

With Mini Chords, strumming is actually much easier, since almost every Mini Chord uses only the top three strings.



That being said, you shouldn't be too surprised if your new guitar student accidentally strums extra strings at first. This is common early on, so be patient and continue to offer guidance to strum the correct the strings when playing songs.



NOTE

Some beginners have a tendency to strum the strings very hard with the pick. Help your student understand that this is not necessary and instead to strum the strings more softly. It will produce better sounding chords and help your student feel more relaxed.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Counting

Counting is a useful musical skill while strumming chords with Chords Activity 1. For now, counting will help your student follow the Chords Sheet while playing each song. In future learning activities, counting will also help with following the beat while playing chords along with Guide Tracks.

The Chords Sheet provides information that makes it easy to know how to count while strumming chords. **Chord Symbols** are used to identify chord changes and have been placed above every bar. A **bar** is a segment of music that contains a certain number of **beats** which we have indicated for you by the numbers in the **count**.

These concepts are illustrated in the example below, showing the first four bars of "The Muffin Man."

Bar

Chord Symbols

D D G E⁷ A⁷

Do you know the muf - fin man, the muf - fin man, the muf - fin man?

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

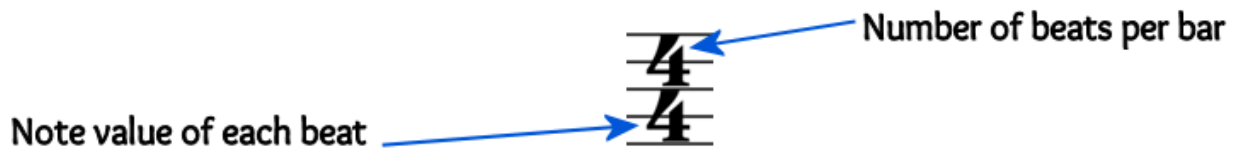
Count Beats Bar Lines

String	Bar 1	Bar 2	Bar 3	Bar 4
T	2	2	2	2
A	3	3	3	3
B	2	2	2	2
B	0	0	0	0

You may notice that there are four beats (1, 2, 3, 4) per bar. This is determined by the **time signature** which we've circled in red in the image above.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

The **count** is always reflected by a song's time signature. Time signatures are represented by a standard "fraction-type" symbol with a number on the bottom and a number on top.



The **bottom number** gives the note value of each beat (e.g., quarter note, eighth note, etc.). If you're unfamiliar with this concept, don't let that concern you. Understanding note values is not necessary when using our Chords Sheets.

The **top number** of a time signature is what's important for you. It tells you how many beats to count out for each bar of music. And it's the top number which corresponds to the count that we've placed beneath each bar on the Chords Sheet.

Here are the time signatures found in TYKG songs and how to count them:



Count "1 2"



Handbook Example 5



Count "1 2 3"



Handbook Example 6



Count "1 2 3 4"



Handbook Example 7



Count "1 2 3 4 5 6"



Handbook Example 8

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Time signatures might seem confusing at first. We've tried to simplify this concept by placing the **count** (corresponding with the top number of the time signature) *underneath* every bar on each of our Chords Sheets.

G G C

O - ver the riv - er and through the woods, to grand

Count: 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 1

When counting with Chords Activity 1, the goal is to strum the chords to the **count** that is labeled beneath each bar. Have your student *count out loud* so you'll be certain that he or she is counting accurately. Let's see and hear how this is done using "Hush, Little Baby."

"Hush, Little Baby" has a time signature of 4/4 which means there are four beats to count out for each bar. Each bar is labeled with the count "1 2 3 4," making it easy to follow while counting.

C G G⁷

Hush, lit - tle ba - by, don't say a word, Pa-pa's :

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Your student should count the beat out loud while strumming the chord on the corresponding beat number. In “Hush, Little Baby,” the chords to be strummed fall on beats **1** and **3**. Therefore, while counting “**1 2 3 4**” your student will strum the chord at the exact moment he or she says “**1**” and “**3**.”



Handbook Example 9

The previous sound sample was played “in time,” meaning the count is steady and even. You should expect, though, that your beginner won’t be able to count and strum “in time” for quite a while. When a student is new to playing chords, it takes an extra moment to form a new chord before strumming it. This naturally results in both a delay in timing and in uneven counting.

Here's a more realistic example of how a new student might sound when first practicing counting and strumming.



Handbook Example 10

If your student sounds this way, just know that this is normal. With more practice, this will get smoother. Eventually, your student will be able to count *and* strum with an even rhythm. This skill will be developed over time by regularly practicing Chords Activity 1 with new songs.

NOTE

If your student is having a hard time with counting, or simply refuses to count, just have him or her perform Chords Activity 1 *without* counting. After your student becomes more comfortable with chords, you can add counting back in.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

Counting the “+”

Chords Sheets for certain songs have “+” signs in between the numbers of the **count**. This is shown in the following example from “Bingo.”

There was a farm-er had a dog and

T	A	B
0	1	1
1	1	1
0	2	2
2	2	3
3	3	3

Count: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

If you have a musical background, you may recognize that “+” signs are used for counting 1/8th notes. Even if you're unfamiliar with the concept of 1/8th notes, all you really need to understand is that the “+” sign represents the word “and” when counting.

Therefore, a count labeled “1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +” will simply be counted out by your student loud as:

“1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and”



Teacher Strategies

There are several key teaching strategies for Chords Activity 1 for you to learn about. Some of these are variations on familiar strategies such as Note Guiding and Fingering Guiding. We'll also introduce our Chord Exercises that are valuable for learning, memorizing, and practicing new chords.

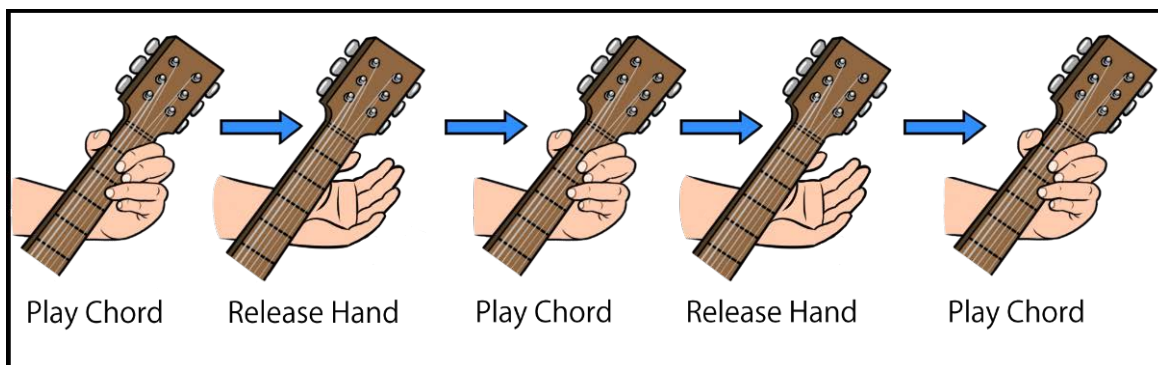
- 1) “New Chord” Exercise
- 2) Chord Switching Exercise
- 3) Note Guiding with Chords
- 4) Finger Guiding with Chords
- 5) Correcting Mistakes

1) “New Chord” Exercise

Sometimes in music the simplest exercises are also the most effective. Here's a great exercise you should use every time you teach a new chord. It will help your student become familiar with a brand new chord almost immediately.

With this exercise, you'll simply have your student play the chord once and then lift the hand off the fretboard returning to a neutral position. Then repeat this process. Play the chord, then lift the hand up, play the chord, lift the hand up. Repeat this for a few minutes and chord fingering will quickly become familiar.

The example below shows how this might look with a **D** chord:



2) Chord Switching Exercise

We would now like to introduce you to another valuable tool for learning, memorizing, and practicing chords. We call it the **Chord Switching Exercise**.

Here's how it works: Before playing a song, you'll have your student choose *any two* of the Chords Used on the Chords Sheet (or Mini Chords Sheet) and practice by playing them once each, switching back and forth for several minutes. Your student should also say the chord name out loud each time it's played as a way to memorize the chords by name.

Let's illustrate this using the song "This Old Man."

~ Chords Sheet ~

This Old Man

Traditional

Chords Used: G C D7

G G

This old man, he played one.

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

This song's Chords Used label lists three chords, **G**, **C**, and **D⁷**. Let's say you chose **C** and **G** for your student to start with. Your student will say "**G**" out loud and play the **G** chord once. Then say "**C**" and play the **C** chord once. Then go back and say "**G**" again and play the **G** chord. Then say "**C**" and play the **C** chord once more.

The goal is to switch back and forth between these two chords for a couple of minutes to become more comfortable with the chords.



Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

The Chord Switching Exercise can be used to practice switching between any two chords. Since the Chords Used label for “This Old Man” lists **G**, **C**, and **D⁷**, you could choose **G** and **D⁷** or **C** and **D⁷** to switch between.

If you chose **G** and **D⁷**, here is what it might sound like.



Handbook Example 12

The Chord Switching Exercise also works well when learning Mini Chords. The exercise will be performed in exactly the same way but with the smaller chord shapes. Again, you’ll look at the Chords Used to determine which chords to choose for the exercise.

≈ Mini Chords Sheet ≈

This Old Man
Traditional

Chords Used:
G C D⁷

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Here is what this might sound like with the mini **G** and mini **D⁷** chords.



Handbook Example 13

NOTE

Your student can use the Chord Switching Exercise as a warm-up prior to beginning a song. This is a great way to review the chords used in the song.

Part II – Beginner Level: Learning the Fundamentals

3) Note Guiding with Chords

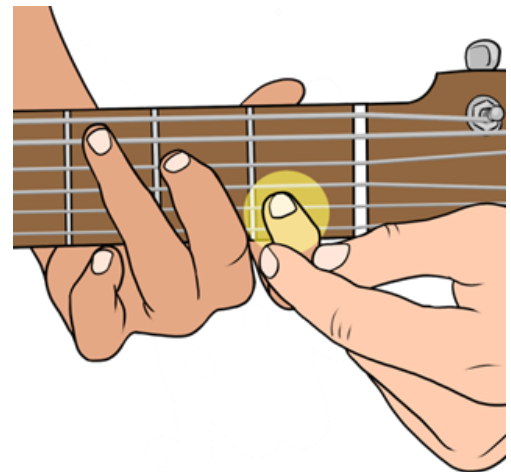
Note Guiding will also come in handy when your student is learning chords. At the Beginner Level, your student will likely have to look at the guitar every time a new chord is formed. This makes it easy to lose one's place. By using Note Guiding, you can help your student “keep track” on the Chords Sheet.

	Measure 1	Measure 2	Measure 3	Measure 4
T	0	0	0	0
A	1	1	1	1
B	2	2	2	2
Count	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

4) Finger Guiding with Chords

Finger Guiding is especially helpful when teaching chords, which often requires more than one finger to play. When learning new chords, it's likely your student will need some assistance with the fingering. You can use your hands to physically place your student's fingers into the correct positions, or you can point to the correct locations.

You can use Finger Guiding whenever there's confusion about which finger to use or where a finger should be placed. You can also use it to help your student properly arch the fingers to avoid touching adjacent strings.



5) Correcting Mistakes

Once again, a big part of teaching Chords Activity 1 will be correcting your student's mistakes. Watch your student's hands while playing and take the following actions:

- Gently correct your student whenever he or she plays a chord using the wrong notes. *You'll find each chord written in tablature right on the Chord Sheet which shows the precise notes in the chord.*
- Gently correct your student whenever he or she plays a chord using the wrong fingering. *The fingerings vary from chord to chord, so be sure to use our **Chords Fingering Booklet** to verify the correct fingerings.*
- Gently correct your student if the chord doesn't ring out. *Be sure your student arches fingers and presses down firmly.*
- Gently correct your student if he or she is not counting accurately while strumming. *The count is labeled directly beneath each bar of music and lines up directly with the chords to be strummed.*



NOTE

Despite correcting your student's mistakes, many chords will probably not sound too great for a while. It takes time to become comfortable with chords. Be patient while teaching and don't worry about perfection – perfection with chords is not realistic for most kids, at least not early in the learning process.

Looking Ahead: Chords Activity 2

To develop the skills necessary for Chords Activity 2, your student should be *very comfortable* with the fundamentals learned in Chords Activity 1. This means fulfilling the **Chords Activity 1's Achievement Criteria** (Pg. 58) with multiple songs. Just a reminder: For some children it may take a couple of years before becoming fully comfortable with Chords Activity 1. If you sense that your student isn't ready for Chords Activity 2, continue to practice playing melodies with more songs. Don't feel rushed to move on.



Chords Activity 2 (Pg. 102) is an Intermediate Level activity where your student will begin a new challenge – playing chords along with Guide Tracks. Specifically, your student will play along with a song's Melody and Chords Track. The guitar chords on this audio recording act as the “training wheels” for learning how to play with proper timing, and the recorded melody will help your student follow the song.

To keep up with the track, your student will also need to develop another chords skill – “Playing by Feel.” This means your student will play the chords while looking only at the Chords Sheet and not at hands or the guitar. This is important because there won't be time to look when playing with the track.

Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

Melody Activity 2: Play the Melody with Melody and Chords Track

Getting Started



Prerequisite

The Prerequisite for this activity is **Melody Activity 1**.



Best Songs to Start With

Alphabet Song
Bingo
Eensy Weensy Spider
Hush Little Baby
London Bridge

Mary Had a Little Lamb
Ring Around the Rosie
This Old Man
Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
When the Saints Go Marching In



Lesson Planning

To incorporate Melody Activity 2 into your lessons, use our **Lesson Planning Booklet** as your foundation.



Video Tutorial

For visual demonstrations of Melody Activity 2, watch our video tutorial **Learning to Play Melodies** at TeachYouKidsGuitar.com

Section Preview



About Melody Activity 2

With **Melody Activity 2**, your student will begin a new challenge – playing with Guide Tracks. These play-along tracks will act as “training wheels” to support your student while learning proper rhythm and timing.



Song Pack Item

- Melody and Chords Track



Student Goals

- Playing by Feel
- Playing with the Melody and Chords Track
- Practicing “Saves”



Teacher Strategies

- Controlling the Track
- Listening to the Track Before Playing Along
- Note Guiding with Tracks
- Dealing with Student Frustration



About Melody Activity 2

Melody Activity 2 is an Intermediate Level activity where your student will begin the next challenge: playing along with Guide Tracks. **Guide Tracks** are professionally recorded “play-along” tracks which are included in each Song Pack. They allow your student to get the best possible guitar practice – playing along with real music.

With Melody Activity 2, your student will use a song’s Melody Sheet and play along with its **Melody and Chords Track** while trying to match the sound and pace of the music. The Melody and Chords Track is a full instrumental recording, containing both the melody and the chords of the song. With Melody Activity 2, the guitar melody on the recording acts as “training wheels” for learning how to play with proper rhythm and timing.

However, Melody Activity 2 also involves another important skill that your student must first develop in order to play along with the tracks: **Playing by Feel**. This means keeping his or her eyes only on the Melody Sheet and not looking at hands or the guitar while playing. Playing by feel allows your student to keep the song flowing without any breaks in the music – an important skill for keeping up with the tracks.

NOTE

Playing by Feel will be the first focus for Melody Activity 2. Have your student return to previously learned melodies and scales to develop this skill. It may take several months to develop this skill – be patient!

Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

Assigning Melody Activity 2

When you assign Melody Activity 2 for practice, check off its **Practicing** column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, go to the Practice Schedule and fill in the song title in the Melody column and circle the number 2.

As shown on Progress Sheet

		Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1 Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2 Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	✓	
	3 Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		

As Shown on Practice Schedule

DATE	SCALE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING
7 / 11		Song Title		
	1	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3

Diagram illustrating the assignment of Melody Activity 2. A red circle highlights the number 2 in the Progress Sheet under the 'Practicing' column. Red arrows point from this circle to the 'MELODY' column header and the circled number 2 in the Practice Schedule.

Achievement Criteria for Melody Activity 2

Melody Activity 2 can be marked **Achieved** when your student can play along with the Melody and Chords Track from start to finish.

		Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1 Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2 Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	✓	✓
	3 Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>		

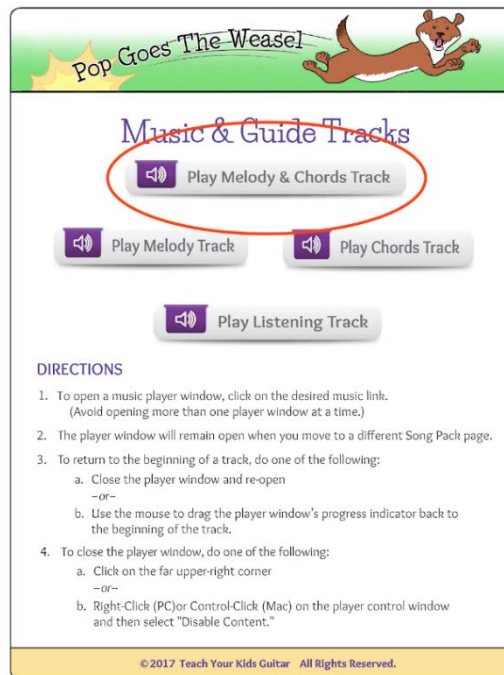
Diagram illustrating the achievement criteria for Melody Activity 2. A red circle highlights the checkmark in the 'Achieved' column for Melody Activity 2.

Remember that Achieved does not mean "perfect." Be generous with Achievements – especially at first. Your student will improve with Melody Activity 2 over time while learning new songs.



Song Pack Item: Melody and Chords Track

Melody Activity 2 introduces a new Song Pack item – the **Melody and Chords Track**. The Melody and Chords Track is a full instrumental recording, containing both the melody and the chords of the song. With Melody Activity 2, the guitar melody on the recording acts as “training wheels” for learning how to play with proper rhythm and timing. When playing along with the Melody and Chords Track, your student will follow the notes using the song’s Melody Sheet while playing by feel in order to keep up with the track. The Melody and Chords Track on the Music and Guide Tracks Sheet has been included in each Song Pack.



NOTE

Each TYKG song is unique, so the challenge of playing along with the Melody and Chord Track can vary widely from song to song. If you try a song that's just too difficult, save it for later.

Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

Two-Bar Count In

Every TYKG Guide Track begins with a two-bar **Count In**. This means that when you play a song in our Song Pack, you'll hear a spoken count along with the beat. Very often it will be two bars in length (for example 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4). Essentially, this tells your student to get ready to play along with the track, and it gives your student time to do that.

Just as important, it also provides the timing for the music that will correspond to the song's Time Signature (Pg. 73). So, if a song is labeled with a 4/4 time signature, each bar of the two-bar Count In will be counted as "1 2 3 4" and with both bars together that would be:

"1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4"
1st Bar 2nd Bar

For example, "Alphabet Song" has a Time Signature of 4/4. Listen to the two-bar Count In and you'll hear "1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4" before the song begins.

Time Signature

A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P,

TAB 0 0 2 2 0 3 3 2 2 0 0 0 0 2



Handbook Example 14

NOTE

It can sometimes be helpful for your student to listen to a track's Count In once or twice, before attempting to play along.

Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

Pick-up Notes

Sometimes a song has notes that are played during the two-bar Count In. These are called **Pick-up Notes**. You must realize that the first bar of a Count In is never displayed on our Melody Sheets. Only the second bar is visible to you. It's in this second bar that you may sometimes hear Pick-up Notes, depending upon the song. Below, hear how Pick-up Notes, when they happen, always begin in the second bar of the two-bar Count In. Once again, remember that you won't actually see the first bar of the Count In on the Melody Sheet; you'll only see the second bar.

C

She'll be com-in'round the moun-tain when she comes.

Count in: 1 2 (3 4)

2nd Bar of Spoken Count In

Pick-up Notes



Handbook Example 15

The spoken Count In will always stop right before the first Pick-up Note to help your student properly time the first notes. On some songs you'll hear the word “**and**” in between each number of the **Count In** (shown on the Melody Sheet as a “+” sign).

A

Oh, I went down South for to see my Sal, sing-ing

Count in: 1 + 2 + 3 + (4 +)

Pick-up Notes



Handbook Example 16



Student Goals

The primary goal of Melody Activity 2 is to play a song's melody along with the Melody and Chords Track. However, before starting to play along with the track, your student will first need to develop another skill: Playing by Feel.

- 1) **Playing by Feel**
- 2) **Playing with the Melody and Chords Track**
- 3) **Practicing Saves**

1) Playing by Feel

Your student's first focus for Melody Activity 2 will be **Playing by Feel**. This means your student will keep his or her eyes only on the Melody Sheet and will not look at hands or the guitar while playing melodies. Playing by feel allows your student to keep the song flowing without any breaks in the music – a critical skill for keeping up with the tracks.

Fortunately, your student has been practicing for this goal all along by using correct and consistent fingering when playing melodies and scales. In fact, after a while, many students begin to play by feel instinctively and without any prompting. If your student is playing by feel at this point (or just starting to) – then great!

However, the period of learning to play by feel could last for a while. Usually, it takes a few months before starting to become comfortable with it. In fact, many students will go through a lengthy phase of **Attempting to Play by Feel**, which means playing some notes without looking at the guitar, but still looking quite often to play others.

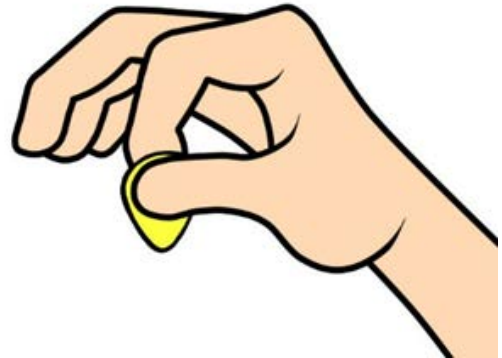


Steps for Playing by Feel

In order to play by feel, your student will have to eliminate the need to look at his or her hands while playing. With the following approach, we suggest that your student refrain from looking at the picking hand first and, later on, the fretting hand. However, some students find it easier to do this in the opposite order – eliminate looking at fretting hand first and the picking hand second. In other cases, a student may be able to avoid looking at both hands simultaneously. Every child is different, so be open minded and flexible in finding ways to reach this goal.

➤ ***Step 1: Eliminate looking at the picking hand***

Early on, your student may be in the habit of looking at both hands before playing a note, often looking at the fretting hand first in order to press down the correct note and then looking at the picking hand in order to pluck the correct string. Generally, the first step to playing by feel is to eliminate looking at the picking hand, but allowing your student to look at the fretting hand.

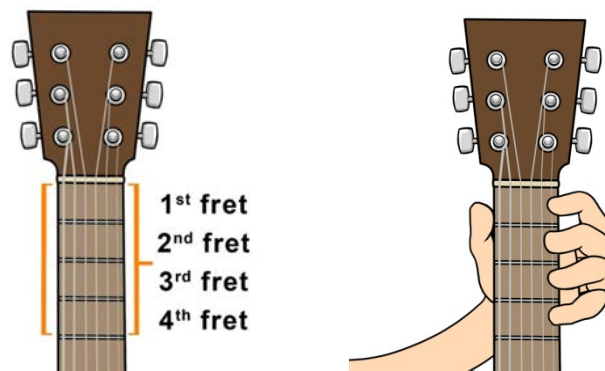


This first step can last for several weeks and can be a new goal. There will be many mistakes along the way, but your student will learn from these, eventually gaining the ability to better "feel" where the correct strings are located for plucking.

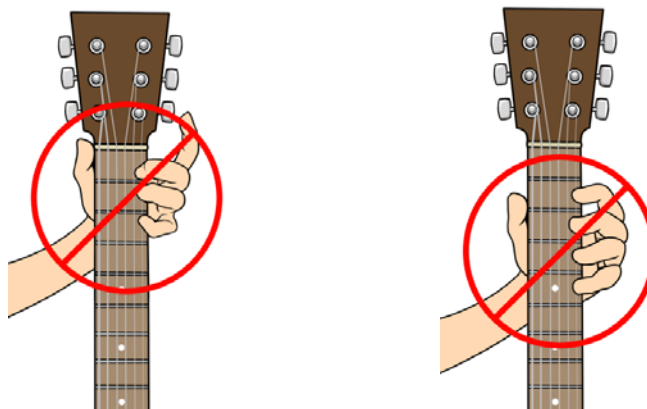
Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

➤ *Step 2: Eliminate looking at the fretting hand*

The second step to playing by feel is to eliminate looking at the fretting hand. This will be easier to do if your student has been following our “four fret box” fingering approach. Remember, your student does not have to physically make this box with the hand; it’s purely a visualization to show the correct fingering. However, it is important that the hand stays near this area.

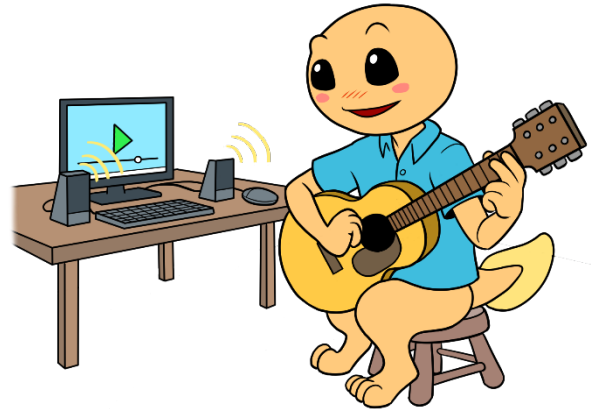


The most common mistake occurs when the hand shifts away from the “four fret box” and ends up in the wrong position. Make your student aware of this potential problem. If your student continues to use consistent and accurate fingering and can manage to keep the hand in the correct position, playing by feel will come naturally.



2) Playing the Melody with Melody and Chords Track

When comfortable with playing by feel, your student will be ready to try playing along with Melody and Chords Track. As you can imagine, learning to play with Guide Tracks takes time and patience. Be sure to start with shorter, simpler songs – we’ve listed some recommendations at the beginning of this section.



And don't think of Guide Tracks as “all or nothing,” where success is only determined by completing a song from start to finish. Every note that’s matched with the recording is a success, even if your student can't complete the full song. Every second your student spends playing along with real music will provide high quality practice.

This concept is important for both of you – especially in your first attempts with Guide Tracks. In fact, when encouraging your student to practice with Guide Tracks, you may choose to relate it in terms of something like a video game. For example, all gamers know that you never start a brand new level of a game and go through it perfectly on the very first try. Rather, you lose, try again, get a bit farther, etc. It may take lots of attempts, but over time you improve and eventually become a winner.

NOTE

At first, it will be up to you to cue up Guide Tracks for your student (starting, stopping, etc.). Set the appropriate volume so that your child can easily hear the track and also the guitar. In other words, try to get a good sound “mix” of both your student and the track.

3) Practicing “Saves”

It's very common to make mistakes when playing with Guide Tracks. As we've said repeatedly, mistakes are a not a bad thing; in fact, they are a necessary part of the learning process. More importantly, mistakes provide constant opportunities to practice **Saves**.

After making a mistake, your student can stop for a brief moment and then jump right back into the music to perform a *save*. Help your student realize that he or she can't fix the exact spot where the mistake was made – it's already too late for that! Your student needs to stop – for just a brief moment – and then jump back into the next bar or musical phrase.

Here's an example of what a *save* might sound like, using “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

The image shows a musical score for the song "Mary Had a Little Lamb" in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb." Below the melody, a guitar TAB line shows the fret numbers: 0, 3, 1, 3, 0, 0, 0, 3, 3, 3, 0, 3, 3. A red circle highlights the first '0' fret, with a red arrow pointing to it and the word "Mistake" in red text below. A blue circle highlights the '3' fret, with a blue arrow pointing to it and the word "Save" in blue text below. Chord symbols C, G7, and C are placed above the first, second, and third measures respectively.



Handbook Example 17

NOTE

The ability to perform *saves* is a skill in itself. The more your student practices them, the easier they will become. Before long, *saves* will become a natural reaction when mistakes occur. Even professional musicians make mistakes, but they know how to “save the situation” and keep right on going.



Teacher Strategies

Your student will need a lot of guidance when first learning to play with tracks. At first, it will be up to you to control the tracks and clarify your student's goals. Eventually, your student will be able to do all of this independently, but initially, your help and guidance will be necessary.

- 1) Controlling the Track
- 2) Listening to the Track Before Playing
- 3) Note Guiding with Tracks
- 4) Dealing with Frustration

1) Controlling the Track

Controlling the Melody and Chords Track involves starting the track as your student attempts to play along. It also involves stopping the track when your student “goes off the rails,” then re-starting in order to make another attempt.

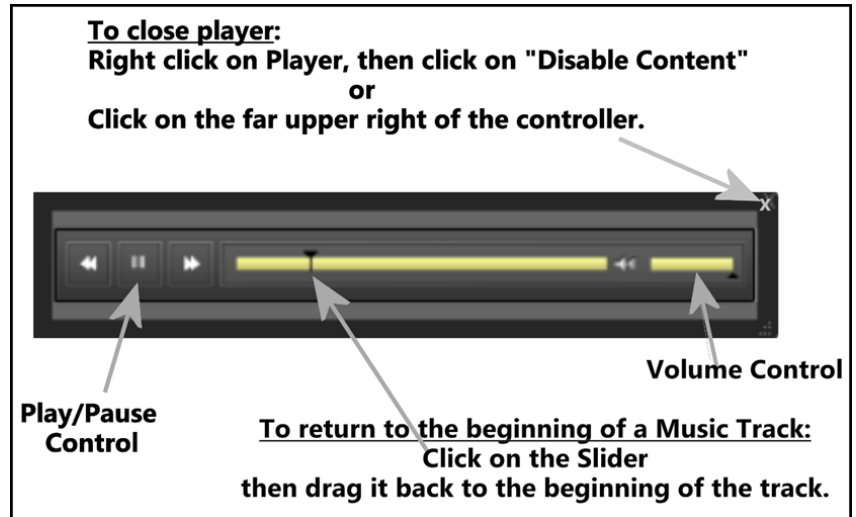
Song Pack Embedded MP3 Tracks

Guide Tracks are embedded in each Song Pack PDF on the Music and Guide Tracks Sheet:



Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

When you click the Guide Track Link, a small player window will appear. This will allow you to control the track. There is a Play command which starts the track and then allows you to Pause. Please note that there is no “Stop” command which re-starts the track. However, restarting a track is still fairly simple. You can just drag the slider back to the beginning, or you can close and then re-open the track. The diagram below illustrates slider commands.



Individual MP3 Tracks

When practicing at a computer, our embedded tracks may be ideal, but this is not your only option. If your student enjoys practicing with another type of music player, you can also use our tracks individually. If you’ve purchased the hard copy version of TYKG, you’ll also find the Guide Tracks as individual MP3 files on your TYKG USB Thumb Drive. If you’ve purchased the digital download version you can download individual MP3’s at our website.

You’ll find download links for your Guide Tracks on your **My Song Packs** page (see page 11) at TeachYourKidsGuitar.com



2) Listening to the Track Before Playing Along

Listening to the Melody and Chords Track *before* playing along can be beneficial. Have your student look at the Melody Sheet while you do this. This helps to make a visual connection with the music on the page to see how the melody is supposed to sound. You (and / or your student) can also use your finger to follow along with the notes on the printed music sheet as you hear them. This makes it easy to both hear and see the timing of the notes.

With Guide Tracks, the biggest challenge occurs when there's either a cluster of short notes, or conversely, a lot of space between notes.

Here's an example with “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes.”

G

Head, shoul - ders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

3 0 3 2 3 0 3 3 3

Longer note Shorter notes



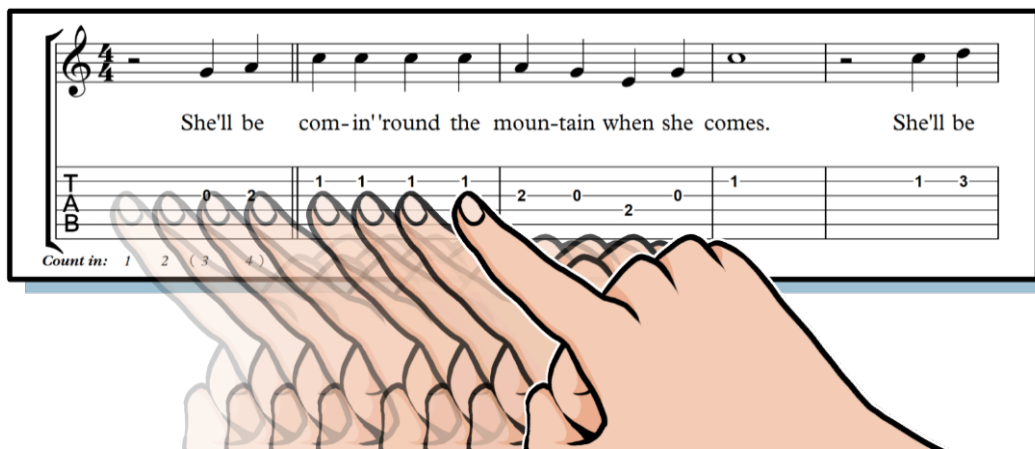
Handbook Example 18

NOTE

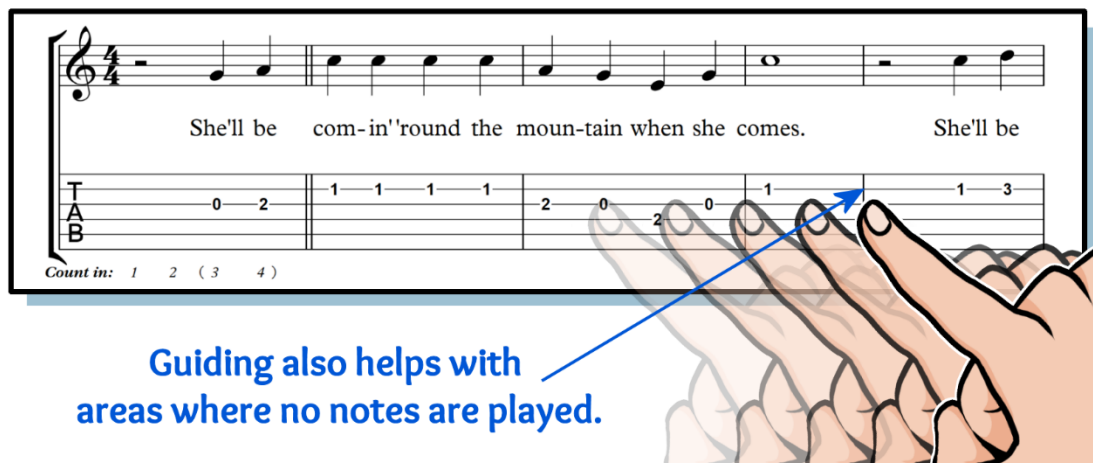
Before playing, listen carefully to the track's two bar **Count In**. Be sure your student understands exactly when and where to play the first note, especially if the song contains **Pick-up Notes**. Remember, only the second bar of the Count In is shown on the Melody Sheet, and it's only shown when Pick-up Notes occur (*see pages 88-89*).

3) Note Guiding with Tracks

When your student begins Melody Activity 2, Note Guiding will once more become useful – but in a new way. This time, you'll use your finger to follow notes right along with the recording to help your student match them while playing. Be sure to stay "in time" with the music and point to notes exactly when you hear them on the track. Rather than “jumping” from one note to the next with your finger, we suggest moving it in a smooth motion – moving across the page and “keeping time” with the music.



Try to time your finger with the tempo so that it always points to the right spot on the Melody Sheet, whether or not there is a note. Note Guiding across an area of music where there are no notes played can be just as helpful since students often make mistakes in these areas.



Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

Note Guiding will also help your student perform *saves*. When your student makes a mistake or stops, it will be easier to find a spot to jump back into if you're pointing to the correct notes. The purpose of Guide Tracks is to help your student “feel” the rhythm and develop timing, so Note Guiding will not be necessary for long. Nonetheless, when first starting to play melodies along with Tracks, this strategy can make all the difference.

Listen to Handbook Example 17 once again to see and hear how Note Guiding can help your student make a *save*.

The image shows a musical score for 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. Below the staff is a guitar TAB line with fret numbers. A red arrow points to a red circle around the '0' fret on the TAB, labeled 'Mistake made here'. A blue arrow points to a blue circle around the '3' fret on the TAB, labeled 'Save made here'. A hand is shown pointing to the '3' fret on the TAB.

Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb.

TAB: 0 3 1 3 0 0 0 3 3 3 0 3 3



4) Dealing with Student Frustration

Practicing with Guide Tracks can be a challenge for students, and so it's common to feel some frustration. This is a very important topic because frustration is the single biggest reason kids get turned off to a musical instrument. Therefore, it's important that you know how to deal with student frustration, should it occur.



- If your student is exhibiting signs of intense frustration, our advice is "don't push." Instead, pull back. Return to learning activities that your student enjoys. You can always re-visit the Guide Track when your student has developed more confidence.
- Try to help your student understand that mistakes are actually a good thing and are oftentimes the best way to learn. In fact, practicing with Guide Tracks is all about making mistakes, learning from them, and trying again.
- Help your student understand that success with Guide Tracks is not "all or nothing." Even if your student can only play four bars of a song, that's still an accomplishment in itself and constitutes valuable practice.
- Every TYKG song is unique, so the challenge of playing along with the tracks can vary widely from song to song. If you try a song that's just too difficult, save it for later.

NOTE

Some children are very prone to frustration. Fortunately, learning an instrument is one of the best ways to teach a child patience. As your student's skills, age, and experience increase, so will the motivation to work through challenges.

Looking Ahead: Melody Activity 3

To develop the skills necessary for Melody Activity 3, your student should be very comfortable with the fundamentals learned in Melody Activity 2. This means fulfilling **Melody Activity 2's Achievement Criteria** (Pg. 86) with multiple songs. If you feel that your student isn't ready, continue to practice Melody Activity 2 with other songs. If your student continues to practice matching the melodies on the Melody and Chords Track, he or she will eventually develop the sense of timing necessary for Melody Activity 3.



Melody Activity 3 (Pg. 120) is an Advanced Level activity where your student will “take off the training wheels” and begin playing melodies with Chords Tracks. The Chords Track provides background accompaniment only, and your student will no longer have the recorded melody to match. This is the final phase of our melody activities, and it simulates what a real-life playing situation might feel like.

Chords Activity 2: Play the Chords with the Melody and Chords Track

Getting Started



Prerequisite

The prerequisite for this activity is **Chords Activity 1**.



Best Songs to Start With

Alouette
Eensy Weensy Spider
Hush Little Baby
London Bridge
Mary Had a Little Lamb
Oh My Darling Clementine

Oh Where Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone
Ring Around the Rosie
Skip to My Lou
The Farmer in the Dell
This Old Man
When the Saints Go Marching In



Lesson Planning

To incorporate Chords Activity 2 into your lessons, use our **Lesson Planning Booklet** as your foundation.



Video Tutorial

For visual demonstrations of Chords Activity 2, watch our video tutorial **Learning to Play Chords** at TeachYourKidsGuitar.com

Section Preview



About Chords Activity 2

With **Chords Activity 2**, your student will begin playing chords along with Guide Tracks. This time it will be the chords that will act as the “training wheels” to help your student learn proper rhythm and timing.



Student Goals

- Playing Chords by Feel
- Playing with the Melody and Chords Track
- Practicing “Saves”



Teacher Strategies

- Chord Switching Exercise
- Controlling the Track
- Listening to the Track Before Playing Along
- Note Guiding with Tracks
- Dealing with Frustration



About Chords Activity 2

Chords Activity 2 is an Intermediate Level activity where your student will begin a new challenge: using the Chords Sheet to play along with the Melody and Chords Track. With this activity, it's the *chords* on the track that act as the “training wheels.” But the melody heard on the recording also matters because it will help in following the song’s structure while playing the chords.

On the Progress sheet, you’ll see that the goal of Chords Activity 2 is to “Play the Chords with the Melody and Chords Track.” In addition, Chords Activity 2 involves another important skill for playing along with the tracks: **Playing by Feel**. In this case, your student will keep his or her eyes only on the Chords Sheet (or Mini Chords Sheet) and not look at hands or guitar while playing.

With Chords Activity 2, playing by feel can be developed with our Chord Switching Exercise. This is the best approach for learning to play chords (or Mini Chords) without having to look. It will also be the best exercise for practicing switching between different chords, which is the biggest challenge with Chords Activity 2.

Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

Assigning Chords Activity 2

When you assign Melody Activity 2 for practice, check off its **Practicing** column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, go to the Practice Schedule and fill in the song title in the Chords column and circle the number 2.

As shown on Progress Sheet

			Practicing	Achieved
CHORDS	1	Play the chords using the <i>Chords (or Mini Chords) Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2	Play the chords with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	✓	
	3	Play the chords with the <i>Melody Track</i>		

As Shown on Practice Schedule

DATE	SCALE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING
7 / 11			Song Title	
	1	1 2 3	1 ② 3	1 2 3

Diagram illustrating the assignment of Chords Activity 2. The Progress Sheet shows the 'Practicing' column for Chords Activity 2 checked. The Practice Schedule shows the 'CHORDS' column with the 'Song Title' entered and the number 2 circled, indicating the activity to be practiced.

Achievement Criteria for Chords Activity 2

Chords Activity 2 can be marked **Achieved** when your student can play along with the Melody and Chords Track from start to finish.

			Practicing	Achieved
CHORDS	1	Play the chords using the <i>Chords (or Mini Chords) Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2	Play the chords with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	✓	✓
	3	Play the chords with the <i>Melody Track</i>		

Remember that Achieved does not mean "perfect." Be generous with Achievements – especially at first. Your student will improve with Chords Activity 2 over time while learning new songs.



Student Goals

The goals for Chords Activity 2 are similar to those in Melody Activity 2, except with chords instead of melodies. Your student can use either Full Size or Mini Chords to practice towards these goals. Choose the chord sheet that is age or hand-size appropriate.

- 1) Playing Chords by Feel
- 2) Playing along with the Melody and Chords Track
- 3) Practicing “Saves”

1) Playing Chords by Feel

Your student’s first focus for Chords Activity 2 will be on **Playing by Feel**. This means your student will keep his or her eyes only on the **Chords Sheet** and will not look at hands or the guitar while playing melodies. Playing by feel allows your student to keep the song flowing without any breaks in the music – an important skill for keeping up with the tracks.

If your student is not yet playing by feel but is comfortable with the fundamentals learned in Chords Activity 1, then it’s time to start making this a goal. Just so you know: The period of learning to play by feel could last for quite awhile for some students. Usually it takes a few months of practicing playing by feel before starting to get comfortable with it.

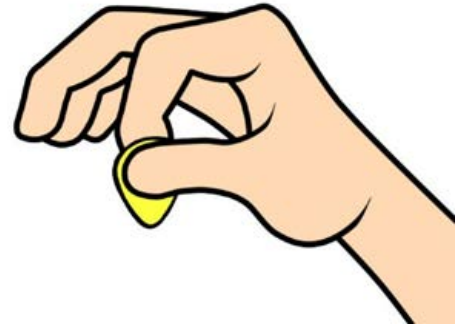


Steps for Playing by Feel

In order to Play Chords by Feel, your student will have to eliminate the need to look at hands when playing. This will be a gradual process for most students, and we recommend eliminating the need to look at each hand, one at a time.

➤ ***Step 1: Eliminate looking at the picking hand***

Early on, your student may be in the habit of looking at both hands before playing a note, often looking at the fretting hand first in order to press down the correct note and then looking at the picking hand in order to pluck the correct string. With chords, the first step to playing by feel is to refrain from looking at the picking hand, but allowing your student to look at the fretting hand.



You can expect a period of time where your student will accidentally strum strings that he or she wasn't supposed to. Just as often, your student may miss strings that were supposed to be strummed. It's normal; don't worry about it too much but do encourage corrections.

It's possible that your student may be in the habit of looking at the strumming hand before playing a chord. Help your student break this habit. There will be many mistakes along the way, but your student will learn from these, eventually gaining the ability to better "feel" where the correct strings are located for plucking.

Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

➤ Step 2: Eliminate looking at the fretting hand

The second step to playing by feel is to refrain from looking at the fretting hand. Your student will follow and form the chord shapes while keeping eyes only on the Chords Sheet and not on hands or the guitar. Eventually, once chord shapes and names have been memorized, your student can also follow the **Chord Symbols** located above the staff.

Chord Symbols

Hot cross buns! Hot cross buns!

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Chord Symbols are a helpful way to read chord progressions and keep the song flowing “in time.” On the Chords Sheet, a chord symbol will appear every time there's a chord change or a new bar of music. Your student can also use the guitar tablature to follow the chords; of course, once the chords are memorized by name, they'll be easier to follow using the Chord Symbols.

NOTE

The best way to practice playing chords by feel is to practice the **Chord Switching Exercise** (pages 78-79).

2) Playing the Chords with the Melody and Chords Track

When your student is comfortable with playing by feel, it will be time to move on to the main goal of Chords Activity 2: Playing the Chords with the Melody and Chords Track.

We realize that your student may actually be able to play chords along with Guide Tracks even *before* becoming comfortable with playing by feel. This can be accomplished by



occasionally glancing down at the guitar for each chord change. This is OK at first, and you can allow this if it motivates your student to practice with the track. Over time, though, the ultimate goal should be only playing by feel, which will become important later for more challenging songs.

NOTE

If between ages 4-9, your student can try **Mini Chords** for Chords Activity 2. Students ages 10 and up can try **Regular Chords**.

Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

Counting

Counting can be very helpful with Melody Activity 2. To begin correctly with the Melody and Chords Track, you can have your student *count along* with the two-bar Count In. Here's an example with the beginning of “This Little Light of Mine.” Your student can count along with the spoken count: “1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4” and then immediately begin playing the chords.

The image shows a musical score for the song "This Little Light of Mine" in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "This lit-tle light of mine,—" and "I'm gon-na let it shine.—". Above the staff, the chord G is indicated for each of the four measures. Below the staff, a guide track is provided with fret numbers for the Treble (T), Alto (A), and Bass (B) staves. The counts are: 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4.

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
T	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Count: 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4



Handbook Example 19

In addition, your student can continue to count throughout the entire song if he or she chooses. This approach will help your student target the beats to strum on.

The image shows a musical score for the song "This Little Light of Mine" in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "This lit-tle light of mine,—" and "I'm gon-na let it shine.—". Above the staff, the chord G is indicated for each of the four measures. Below the staff, a guide track is provided with fret numbers for the Treble (T), Alto (A), and Bass (B) staves. The counts are: 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4.

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
T	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Count: 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4



Handbook Example 20

Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

If a song contains Pick-up Notes, the spoken count on the Melody and Chords Track will cease once the first Pick-up Note is played. Naturally, your student can still continue to count out the entire two-bar intro, right up until the first chord is played. Listen to a student count along with the two-bar intro for “Simple Gifts.”

Spoken Count ends when Melody begins



Handbook Example 21

NOTE

Your student can try different counting approaches to see which works best. It's also possible that your student may not need to count at all. If your student can play along to match the track, that is what's important – counting is just a very helpful tool.

Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

Switching Between Chords

When strumming the chords along with the track, the biggest challenge will be *switching* between different chord shapes in “real time.” When switching to a new chord, the goal is to play it precisely on the correct beat.

Here’s an example of what this would sound like with “America, the Beautiful.”

Chord Change

Chord Change

C G G C

O beau - ti - ful for spa - cious skies, for am - ber waves of grain, for

T 0 0 3 3 3 3 0 0
A 1 1 0 0 0 0 1 1
B 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

When switching to a new chord,
the new chord must be played on the beat.



Handbook Example 22

As you can see, if your student has a hard time switching between the chords, it will be almost impossible to keep up with the track. If experiencing this, your student can practice with the “problem” chords using the **Chord Switching Exercise** (pages 78-79).

Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

Another reason a guitarist fails to switch in time to a new chord is that he or she *has waited* too long to begin switching the chord. For example, when switching to a new chord which lands on Beat 1 of the next bar, you can't actually wait until Beat 1 to start forming that new chord – it will already be too late!

The key is to begin switching to the new chord on the last beat – *before* it even appears on the Chords Sheet – as shown below.

Chords: C, G, G, C

Lyrics: O beau - ti - ful for spa - cious skies, for am - ber waves of grain, for

Fingerings (T, A, B):

Beat	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
T	0	0	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
B	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2
B	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Lift up C chord on last beat and start making G chord here

Lift up G chord on last beat and start making C chord here

This concept is critical to switching chords and playing “in time.” Here's another example, using an excerpt from “Polly Wolly Doodle.”

Chords: A, D, E

Lyrics: Pol - ly Wol - ly Doo - dle all the day. My____

Fingerings (T, A, B):

Beat	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
T	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
A	2	3	3	0	1	1	1	1
B	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	2
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Lift up A chord on last beat and start making D chord here

Lift up D chord on last beat and start making E chord here

3) Practicing “Saves”

It's very common to make mistakes when playing with Guide Tracks. We can't say it too often – mistakes are a not a bad thing; in fact, they are a necessary part of the learning process and, more importantly, they provide constant opportunities to practice “**Saves.**”

When making a mistake or getting lost in a song, your student can stop for a brief moment and then jump right back into the music to perform a *save*. Help your student realize that he or she can't fix the exact spot where the mistake was made – it's already too late for that. Your student needs to stop – for just a brief moment – and then jump back into the *next* bar or musical phrase.

Here's an example of what a *save* might sound like, using “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

The image shows a musical score for 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: 'Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb.' The score is divided into four measures, each with a chord symbol above it: C, C, G7, and C. Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with strings T, A, B and frets 0, 1, 2, 3. The first measure (C) has frets 0, 1, 0, 2, 3. The second measure (C) has frets 0, 1, 0, 2, 3. The third measure (G7) has frets 1, 0, 0, 2, 3. The fourth measure (C) has frets 0, 1, 0, 2, 3. A red circle highlights the fret 1 on the B string in the third measure, with a red arrow pointing to it and the word 'Mistake' written below. A blue circle highlights the fret 1 on the B string in the fourth measure, with a blue arrow pointing to it and the word 'Save' written below.



Handbook Example 23

NOTE

The ability to perform *saves* is a skill in itself. The more your student practices them, the easier they will become. Before long, *saves* will become a natural reaction when mistakes occur. Even professional musicians make mistakes, but they know how to save the situation and keep right on going.



Teacher Strategies

The teacher strategies for Chords Activity 2 are similar to those in Melody Activity 2, except with chords instead of melodies.

- 1) Chord Switching Exercise
- 2) Controlling the Track
- 3) Listening Before Playing
- 4) Note Guiding with the Track
- 5) Dealing with Frustration

1) Chord Switching Exercise

The **Chord Switching Exercise** can once again be helpful. It can enhance two of the most challenging skills used in Chords Activity 2: building chords and switching between them. It's also the best way to become comfortable with playing by feel.

Remember that with the Chord Switching Exercise, your student will pick any two chords and practice by playing them once each, switching back and forth for a couple of minutes. Be sure to choose from the Chords Used section at the top right of the Chords Sheet (shown below).

~ Chords Sheet ~

On Top of Old Smokey
Traditional

Chords Used
G C D7

Count: 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

NOTE

The Chords Switching Exercise can also be a good warm-up before playing a song. It's also a quick way to review unfamiliar chords.

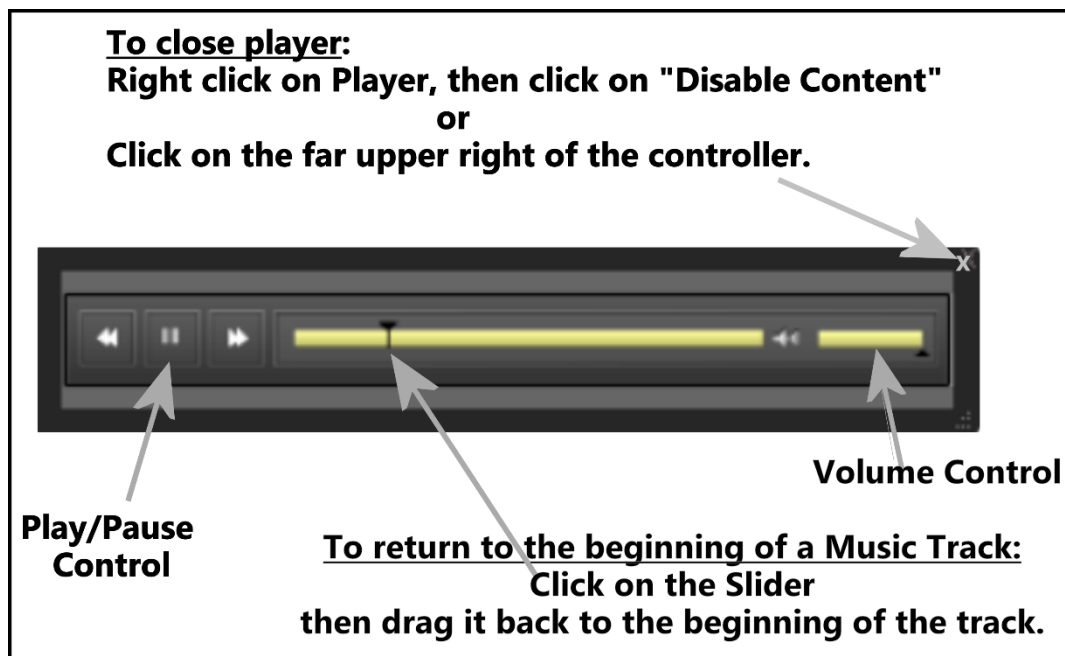
2) Controlling the Track

During lessons, it will be up to you to control the Melody and Chords Track as your student attempts to play along. This involves starting the tracks as your student begins to play along. It also involves stopping the track when your student “goes off the rails,” then re-starting in order to make another attempt.



By now you probably have experience controlling the Melody and Chords Track with songs from Melody Activity 2. You’ll find this track embedded on the final page of each Song Pack.

The following diagram provides a quick review of the player controls for Guide Tracks opened in Song Pack PDFs.



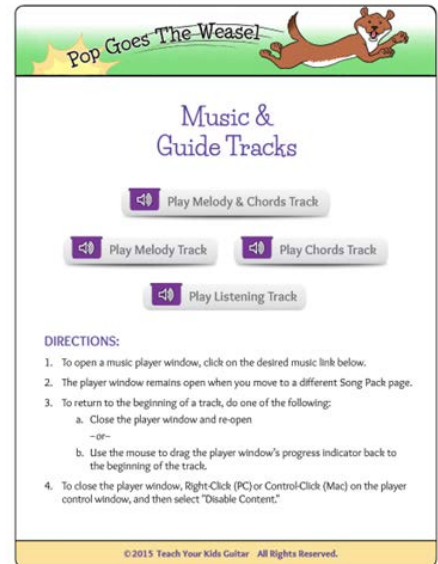
NOTE

In addition to being embedded in Song Pack PDF's, Guide Tracks are available as individual MP3's files that can be played through other devices. For more on this see Individual MP3 Tracks, Page 96.

3) Listening to the Track Before Playing Along

Listening to the Melody and Chords Track before beginning to play along can really be beneficial. Have your student listen to the track while looking at the Chords Sheet. This will help your student make a visual connection with the music on the page. In this way, it becomes easier to hear and see the timing of the notes.

While listening to the Melody and Chords Track, your student's ear will naturally be drawn to the melody. Rather, have him or her listen specifically to the chords. Listen to the track yourself and focus on hearing the chords in the background.



Handbook Example 24

If your student is still having a hard time discerning the chords, you may also consider letting him or her hear the song's Chords Track. This track doesn't contain the melody, allowing the chords to be heard very clearly. So while this track is not specifically used for this Chords Activity 2, it may still be useful for listening purposes.



Handbook Example 25

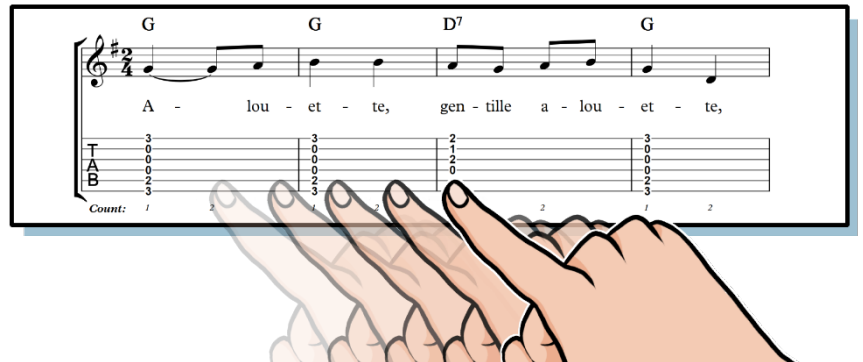
NOTE

Before playing, listen to the track's two-bar **Count In**. Be sure your student understands exactly when and where to play the first note, especially if the song contains **Pick-up Notes**. Remember, only the second bar of the Count In is shown on the Chords Sheet, and it's only shown for songs where Pick-up Notes occur.

Part III – Intermediate Level: Working with Guide Tracks

4) Note Guiding with the Track

Note Guiding has been a valuable TYKG strategy every step of the way, and right here is no exception. For Note Guiding, use your finger and follow the chords along with the recording. Be sure to stay in time with the music and point to the chords at the exact time you hear them on the Track.



Note Guiding will also help your student performs *saves*. If your student makes a mistake, it will be easier to find a spot to jump back into, especially if you (the teacher) point to the notes. The purpose of Guide Tracks is to “feel” the rhythm and develop timing, so Note Guiding will not be necessary for long. But when first starting to play chords with tracks, this bit of assistance can make a big difference.

5) Dealing with Frustration

Playing chords with Guide Tracks is a new challenge. For this reason, some students will experience difficulty keeping up and some may feel a bit of frustration. This is something you should expect. But if your student is exhibiting signs of intense frustration, our advice is "don't push." Instead, pull back. Just continue to practice with Chords Activity 1 with more songs. Re-visit Guide Tracks when your student has developed more confidence.



Looking Ahead: Chords Activity 3

To develop the skills necessary for Chords Activity 3, your student must be very comfortable with the fundamentals learned in Chords Activity 2. This means fulfilling **Chords Activity 2's Achievement Criteria** (Pg. 105) with multiple songs. If you feel that your student isn't ready, continue to practice Chords Activity 2 with other songs. If your student continues to practice matching the chords on the Melody and Chords Track, he or she will eventually develop the sense of timing necessary for Chords Activity 3.



Chords Activity 3 (Pg. 130) is an Advanced Level activity where your student will “take off the training wheels” and begin playing chords with Melody Tracks. The Melody Track provides the melody only, and your student will no longer have the recorded chords to match. This is the final phase of our chords activities, and it simulates what a real-life playing situation might feel like.

Part IV – Advanced Level: Taking off the Training Wheels

Melody Activity 3: Play the Melody with the Chords Track

Getting Started



Prerequisite

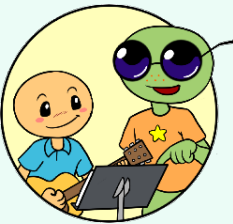
The prerequisite for this activity is **Melody Activity 2**.



Best Songs to Start With

Alphabet Song
Bingo
Eensy Weensy Spider
Hush Little Baby
London Bridge

Mary Had a Little Lamb
Ring Around the Rosie
This Old Man
Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
When the Saints Go Marching In



Lesson Planning

To incorporate Melody Activity 3 into your lessons, use our **Lesson Planning Booklet** as your foundation.



Video Tutorial

For visual demonstrations of Melody Activity 3, watch our video tutorial **Learning to Play Melodies** at TeachYourKidsGuitar.com

Section Preview



About Melody Activity 3

With **Melody Activity 3** your student will “take off the training wheels” and begin playing with melodies on his or her own. Guide Tracks will provide background accompaniment only, mimicking a real performance situation.



Song Pack Item

- Chords Track



Student Goals

- Playing the Melody with the Chords Track
- Practicing Saves



Teacher Strategies

- Controlling the Track
- Note Guiding with Tracks
- Dealing with Frustration



About Melody Activity 3

Melody Activity 3 is an Advanced Level activity where your student will play each song's melody along with its Chords Track. The Chords Track itself does not include the song's melody; it will only provide background accompaniment. In other words, our Chords Track "takes off the training wheels," so to speak, leaving it up to your student to play the melody on his or her own.

"Taking off the training wheels" is the new challenge in Melody Activity 3, but several goals from Melody Activity 2 will still apply. Your student will continue to play by feel while following the Melody Sheet. Also, your student will continue to practice *saves* after making mistakes.

For some songs, Melody Activity 3 can be much more difficult than Melody Activity 2. Whenever your student tries Melody Activity 3 for a song and can't do it, the solution is simple: Leave it for now and come back later. In the meantime, continue to practice Melody Activity 2 with that song. Melody Activity 2 will help your student developing the rhythm and timing required for each song.

Part IV – Advanced Level: Taking off the Training Wheels

Assigning Melody Activity 3

When you assign Melody Activity 3 for practice, check off its **Practicing** column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, go to the Practice Schedule and fill in the song title in the Melody column and circle the number 3.

As shown on Progress Sheet

			Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	✓	✓
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>	✓	

As Shown on Practice Schedule

DATE	SCALE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING
7 / 11		Song Title		
	1	1 2 ③	1 2 3	1 2 3

Achievement Criteria for Melody Activity 3

Melody Activity 3 can be marked **Achieved** when your student can play along with the Melody and Chords Track from start to finish.

			Practicing	Achieved
MELODY	1	Play the melody using the <i>Melody Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2	Play the melody with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	✓	✓
	3	Play the melody with the <i>Chords Track</i>	✓	✓

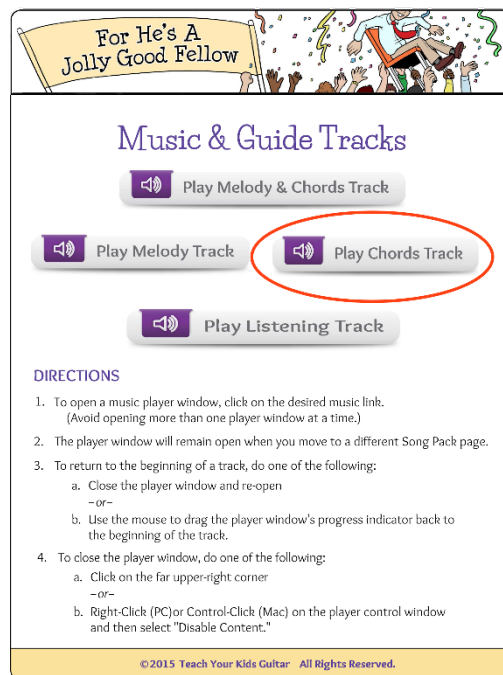
Remember that Achieved does not mean "perfect." Be generous with Achievements – especially at first. Your student will improve with Melody Activity 3 over time while learning new songs.



Song Pack Item: Chords Track

Melody Activity 3 introduces a new Song Pack item – the **Chords Track**. The Chords Track includes a song's chords but not the melody. In other words, this track functions as background accompaniment only. It “takes off the training wheels,” leaving it up to your student to play the melody all on his or own.

You'll find the **Chords Track** on the **Music and Guide Tracks** sheet included in each Song Pack.



NOTE

Each TYKG song is unique, so the challenge of playing along with the Chords Track can vary widely from song to song. If you try a song that's just too difficult, save it for later.



Student Goals

Student goals for Melody Activity 3 are similar to those in Melody Activity 2. However, the challenge is greater now, especially when practicing *saves*. Throughout this activity, be sure your student continues to play by feel.

- 1) Playing with the Chords Track
- 2) Practicing “Saves”

1) Playing with the Chords Track

Listen to this excerpt of the Chords Track for the song “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow.” Notice how it provides only background accompaniment, and there’s no recorded melody.



Handbook Example 26

So the goal of Melody Activity 3 is to play the song’s melody along with the Chords Track, using the Melody Sheet. Here’s what the melody sounds like when accompanying the Chords Track.

Count in: 1 2 (3)



Handbook Example 27

Part IV – Advanced Level: Taking off the Training Wheels

Pick-up Notes

Beginning a song that contains **Pick-up Notes** will be a bit more challenging since there is no recorded melody to match. The vocal Count In for the two-bar intro will leave off just before the very first Pick-up Note is played, but the beat will remain to help with timing. When playing along, your student will try to time the first Pick-up Note just as the vocal count leaves off.

Let's look at the beginning of "Amazing Grace," a song with a time signature of $\frac{3}{4}$ (meaning 3 beats per bar). Looking at the Melody Sheet, you'll see that the first note is a Pick-up Note and that it occurs on Beat 3. Notice that the beat where the Pick-up Note begins has been placed in parenthesis, below the TAB staff.

The image displays musical notation for the beginning of "Amazing Grace" in 3/4 time. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The melody starts with a pick-up note on the third beat of the first bar. The lyrics "A - maz - ing Grace, how sweet the sound that" are written below the staff. The bottom staff is a guitar TAB. The first bar has a pick-up note on the third beat, indicated by a red circle and a blue arrow labeled "Pickup Note". The time signature is also indicated by a blue arrow labeled "Time Signature". The TAB staff shows the fret numbers for the notes: 0, 1, 0, 0, 3, 1, 2, 0, 0. The first bar is circled in red, and the first note (0) is circled in red. The lyrics "A - maz - ing Grace, how sweet the sound that" are written below the staff.

Listen to the Chords Track for "Amazing Grace" and notice that the two-bar vocal Count In leaves off exactly where the first note should be played.



Handbook Example 28

Now listen to the Track with the melody added in; notice that the first guitar note starts exactly where the vocal Count In leaves off.



Handbook Example 29

Part IV – Advanced Level: Taking off the Training Wheels

Pick-up Notes can be the biggest challenge with Chords Tracks, so if struggling, have your student go back and practice the same song with the Melody and Chords Track to practice the timing.

2) Practicing Saves

By now your student should be comfortable practicing *saves* when playing along with tracks with Melody Activity 2. With Melody Activity 3, the challenge becomes much greater since there is no recorded melody to help your student get back on track. However, this is how it would be in a real-life playing situation, so it's the ultimate goal for *saves*.

Let's hear how this might sound with the song "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

The image shows a musical score for the song "Mary Had a Little Lamb" in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are "Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb." Below the melody is a guitar tablature. The first measure of the melody is marked with a 'C' (C major) and the second with a 'G7' (G dominant 7th). The tablature shows the following fret numbers: 0, 3, 1, 3, 0, 0, 0, 3, 3, 3, 0, 3, 3. A red circle highlights the first '0' fret, with a red arrow pointing to it and the word "Mistake" written below. A blue circle highlights the '3' fret, with a blue arrow pointing to it and the word "Save" written below.



Handbook Example 30

Remember, the ability to perform *saves* is one of the most important skills that a musician can have. Encourage your student to attempt *saves* after making a mistake, but remember that this skill takes time to develop. If your student is having difficulty performing *saves* with a song in Melody Activity 3, then return to Melody Activity 2 for more practice with the "training wheels" on.

As always, your student can leave it for now and come back later to master the skill.



Teacher Strategies

With Melody Activity 3, you'll use many of the same teaching strategies as Melody Activity 2:

- 1) Controlling Tracks
- 2) Note Guiding with Tracks
- 3) Dealing with Frustration

By now these teaching strategies should be well established, and hopefully you're comfortable with incorporating them into your lessons. These strategies are just as important for Melody Activity 3, so we recommend reviewing them before teaching this activity. To review these strategies, re-read our **Melody Activity 2 Teacher Strategies**, beginning on Pg. 95 of this handbook.

NOTE

If your student is unable to play along with the Chords Track in Melody Activity 3, try this: Have him or her return to **Melody Activity 2**. Your student can take extra time practicing along with the song's melody as heard on the Melody and Chords Track. This will help prepare your student for another attempt at achieving Melody Activity 3.

Melody Activities Conclusion

Congrats to both you and your student for making it this far with our program. Playing melodies along with Chords Tracks is the final objective of our Melody Activities. This simulates what it would be like to play the song along with a real-live rhythm section. You and your student should feel proud that you've made it this far – and that you did it together!

You'll know your student has reached this point when he or she can complete **Melody Activity 3's Achievement Criteria** (Pg. 123) with multiple songs. But in music, there's always more to learn. At this point, your student will benefit from continued practice with Melody Activity 3 with more songs.

We provide a wide variety of songs, and they all contain unique elements. There's a big difference in the skills needed to play our easiest songs and the skills needed to play our hardest songs along with Guide Tracks. The challenges will continue as your student attempts to master Melody Activity 3 with even our most challenging tunes.



Chords Activity 3: Play the Chords with the Melody Track

Getting Started



Prerequisite

The prerequisite for this activity is **Chords Activity 2**.



Best Songs To Start With

Alouette
Eensy Weensy Spider
Hush Little Baby
London Bridge
Mary Had a Little Lamb
Oh My Darling Clementine

Oh Where Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone
Ring Around the Rosie
Skip to My Lou
The Farmer in the Dell
This Old Man
When the Saints Go Marching In



Lesson Planning

To incorporate Chords Activity 3 into your lessons, use our **Lesson Planning Booklet** as your foundation.



Video Tutorial

For visual demonstrations of Chords Activity 3, watch our video tutorial **Learning to Play Chords** at TeachYourKidsGuitar.com

Section Preview



About Chords Activity 3

With **Chords Activity 3** your student will once again “take off the training wheels” and begin playing chords on his or her own, with tracks. Guide Tracks will not include chords, leaving it up to your student to provide accompaniment to the soloist, just as in a real playing situation.



Song Pack Item

- Melody Track



Student Goals

- Playing the Chords with the Melody Track
- Practicing Saves



Teacher Strategies

- Controlling the Track
- Note Guiding with Tracks
- Dealing with Frustration



About Chords Activity 3

Chords Activity 3 is an Advanced Level activity where your student will play each song's chords along with its Melody Track. The Melody Track does not include the song's chords; it will only provide the recorded melody. In other words, the **Melody Track** "takes off the training wheels," leaving it completely up to your student to "fill in" the chords to support the melody.

"Taking off the training wheels" is the new challenge in Chords Activity 3, but several goals from Chords Activity 2 will still apply. Your student will continue to play by feel while following the Chords Sheet. Also, your student will continue to practice *saves* after making mistakes.

NOTE

As always, your student can use either **Mini Chords** or **Regular Chords** for this activity, choosing whichever one is age or hand-size appropriate.

Part IV – Advanced Level: Taking off the Training Wheels

Assigning Chords Activity 3

When you assign Chords Activity 3 for practice, check off its **Practicing** column on the Progress Sheet. At the same time, go to the Practice Schedule and fill in the song title in the Chords column and circle the number 3.

As shown on Progress Sheet

			Practicing	Achieved
CHORDS	1	Play the chords using the <i>Chords (or Mini Chords) Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2	Play the chords with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	✓	✓
	3	Play the chords with the <i>Melody Track</i>	✓	

As Shown on Practice Schedule

DATE	SCALE	MELODY	CHORDS	SINGING
7 / 11			Song Title	
	1	1 2 3	1 2 ③	1 2 3

Note: Red arrows indicate the flow from the Progress Sheet to the Practice Schedule. One arrow points from the circled '3' in the Chords column of the Progress Sheet to the 'Song Title' field in the Chords column of the Practice Schedule. Another arrow points from the circled '3' in the Chords column of the Progress Sheet to the circled '3' in the Chords column of the Practice Schedule.

Achievement Criteria for Chords Activity 3

Chords Activity 3 can be marked **Achieved** when your student can play along with the Melody Track from start to finish.

			Practicing	Achieved
CHORDS	1	Play the chords using the <i>Chords (or Mini Chords) Sheet</i>	✓	✓
	2	Play the chords with the <i>Melody and Chords Track</i>	✓	✓
	3	Play the chords with the <i>Melody Track</i>	✓	✓

Remember that Achieved does not mean "perfect." Be generous with Achievements – especially at first. Your student will improve with Chords Activity 3 over time while learning new songs.

Part IV – Advanced Level: Taking off the Training Wheels



Song Pack Item: Melody Track

Chords Activity 3 introduces a new Song Pack item – the **Melody Track**. The Melody Track does not include the song's chords; it provides only the recorded melody. The Melody Track takes off the training wheels, so to speak, leaving it completely up to your student to "fill in" the chords to create the musical composition. With this track, it's entirely up to your student to support the song's melody by playing the chords independently. This simulates a common performance situation where your student would be playing rhythm guitar while another musician is playing or singing the melody.

You'll find the Melody Track on the **Music and Guide Tracks Sheet** included in each Song Pack.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Music & Guide Tracks

Play Melody & Chords Track

Play Melody Track

Play Chords Track

Play Listening Track

DIRECTIONS

1. To open a music player window, click on the desired music link.
(Avoid opening more than one player window at a time.)
2. The player window will remain open when you move to a different Song Pack page.
3. To return to the beginning of a track, do one of the following:
 - a. Close the player window and re-open
 - or–
 - b. Use the mouse to drag the player window's progress indicator back to the beginning of the track.
4. To close the player window, do one of the following:
 - a. Click on the far upper-right corner
 - or–
 - b. Right-Click (PC) or Control-Click (Mac) on the player control window and then select "Disable Content."

©2017 Teach Your Kids Guitar All Rights Reserved.

NOTE

Every TYKG song is unique, so the challenge of playing along with the Melody Track can vary widely from song to song. If you try a song that's just too difficult, just save it for later.



Student Goals

Student goals for Melody Activity 3 are similar to those in Melody Activity 2:

- 1) Playing the chords with the Melody Track
- 2) Practicing “Saves”

1) Playing the Chords with the Melody Track

The main goal is to play the chords with the Melody Track. First, let’s listen to what the Melody Track sounds like, using “The Star Spangled Banner” as an example.



Notice how you can clearly hear the melody, but the Track sounds very “empty” since no chords are being played. It will be up to your student to fill in this “empty space” by playing the chords. Now, here’s what this Track would sound like with the chords added by your student. The illustration below shows the chords your student will play, as depicted on the Chords Sheet.

Oh say can you see by the dawn's early light, what so

T	A	B
0	0	0
1	1	1
0	2	2
2	2	0
3	0	3

Count: 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3



Part IV – Advanced Level: Taking off the Training Wheels

2) Practicing Saves

By now your student should be very comfortable practicing *saves* when playing along with tracks with Chords Activity 2. With Chords Activity 3, the challenge is slightly greater since there are no recorded chords on the Melody Track to help your student get back on track. Since this is how it would be in a real-life playing situation, it's the ultimate goal for *saves*.

Let's hear how this might sound.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Mary Had a Little Lamb" in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. Below the staff, the lyrics are: "Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb." Above the staff, the chords are indicated: C, C, G⁷, and C. Below the staff, the fret numbers for the strings (T, A, B) are listed for each measure. The first measure (C) has fret numbers: T=0, A=1, B=2. The second measure (C) has fret numbers: T=0, A=1, B=2. The third measure (G⁷) has fret numbers: T=1, A=0, B=0. The fourth measure (C) has fret numbers: T=0, A=1, B=2. An orange circle highlights the fret numbers for the third measure (1, 0, 0) with an arrow pointing to the word "Mistake". A blue circle highlights the fret numbers for the fourth measure (0, 1, 2) with an arrow pointing to the word "Save".



Handbook Example 33

Remember, performing *saves* is one of the most important skills that a musician can have. Encourage your student to attempt them after making mistakes but realize that this skill takes time to develop. If your student is having difficulty performing *saves* with a song for Chords Activity 3, then return to Chords Activity 2 for more practice with the “training wheels” on.

As always, your student can leave it for now and come back later to conquer the challenge.

NOTE

When practicing these goals, your student should continue playing by feel with chords. In addition, your student can use counting to help follow the track while playing along.



Teacher Strategies

With Chords Activity 3, you'll use many of the same teaching strategies as Chords Activity 2:

- 1) Chord Switching Exercise
- 2) Controlling Tracks
- 3) Note Guiding with Tracks
- 4) Dealing with Frustration

By now, these teaching strategies are becoming second-nature, and hopefully you're comfortable with incorporating them into your lessons. These strategies are just as important for Chords Activity 3, so we recommend reviewing them before teaching this activity. To review these strategies, re-read our Chords Activity 2 Teacher Strategies beginning on Page 115 of this handbook.

NOTE

If your student is unable to play along with the Melody Track in Chords Activity 3, try this: Have him or her return to **Chords Activity 2**. Your student can take extra time practicing along with the song's chords as heard on the Melody and Chords Track. This will help prepare your student for another attempt at achieving Chords Activity 3.

Chords Activities Conclusion

Congrats to both you and your student for making it this far with our program. Playing chords along with Melody Tracks is the final objective of our Chords Activities. This simulates a common performance situation where your student would be playing rhythm guitar while another musician is playing or singing the melody. You and your student should feel proud that you've made it this far – and that you did it together!

You'll know you've reached this point when your student can complete **Chords Activity 3's Achievement Criteria** (Pg. 133) with multiple songs. However, in music there's always more to learn. At this point, your student will benefit from continued practice with Chords Activity 3.

We provide a wide variety of songs, and they are all unique. There's a big difference in the skills needed to play our easiest songs and the skills needed to play our hardest songs along with Guide Tracks. The challenges will continue as your student attempts to master Chords Activity 3 with our most challenging songs.



Appendix: Making Music with Your Student

With TYKG, you and your child can play music together! Making music with your child is entirely *optional*, but for many parents, it can be a treasured experience.

However, this will usually not happen right away. Consequently, making music with your child is a goal that's usually reserved for Intermediate and Advanced Level students.



When ready, you can make music together with any TYKG song in the following ways:

- You can play the chords while your student plays the melody.
- You can play the melody while your student plays the chords.
- You can play another instrument (piano, harmonica, etc.) while your child plays guitar.
- You and your student can play the chords and sing together.
- You can sing while your student plays the chords – ideal if you don't play guitar yourself, but enjoy singing.

Appendix: Making Music with Your Student

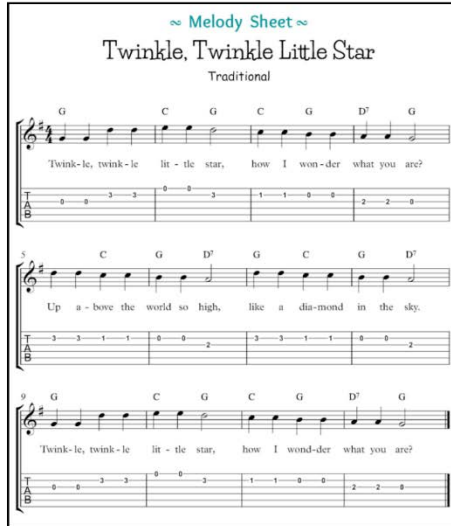
Playing Guitar Together

Let's explore the two most popular options for playing guitar together:

1. You play the chords while your student plays the melody.

~ Melody Sheet ~

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
Traditional

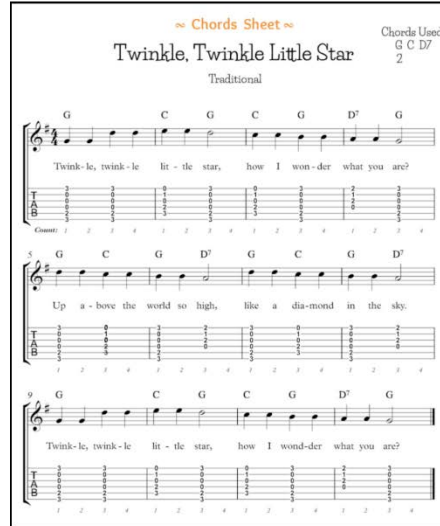


Melody Sheet
Student plays melody

~ Chords Sheet ~

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
Traditional

Chords Used:
G C D7
2

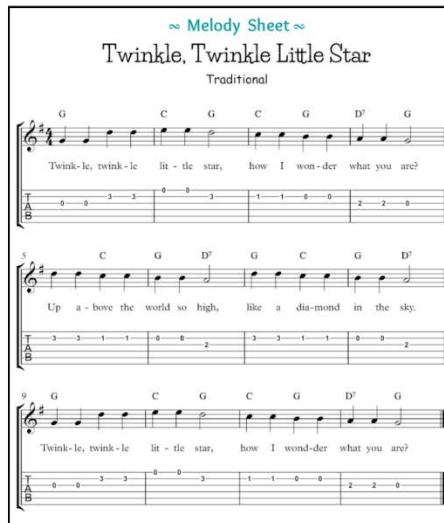


Chord Sheet
Teacher plays chords

2. You play the melody while your student plays the chords.

~ Melody Sheet ~

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
Traditional



Melody Sheet
Teacher plays melody

~ Chords Sheet ~

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
Traditional

Chords Used:
G C D7
2



Chord Sheet
Student plays chords

Appendix: Making Music with Your Student

Both of these options can work with every TYKG song; however, playing *well together* will not happen right away. If you already play guitar, you might be ready, but your student may need time to become comfortable playing either melodies or chords for this to work. If you're learning guitar along with your child, you will also need the time to become comfortable with this.

You'll know your student is ready to play with you when he or she can play along with Guide Tracks. Our Guide Tracks develop the rhythm skill required to keep a song flowing "in time." Of course, playing together can still be "clunky" if either your timing or your student's timing is off. So the ultimate goal is to play along together with good timing. Thanks to Guide Tracks, your student will eventually be able to play songs with you in perfect time without slowing down or speeding up.

Practicing Together with Guide Tracks

When practicing a song together, use the **Melody and Chords Track**. This Track contains both the melody and chords of the song, so that each guitarist has a part to play. For example, you can play chords to match the chords on the recording while your student plays the melody to match the melody on the recording. Or you can play the melody while your student plays the chords. Essentially, this will be handled in the same way as when your student practices with tracks without you. The only difference is that now you are also playing along.



There's no doubt that the best way to accomplish good timing is through our Guide Tracks. You and your student can use Guide Tracks as training wheels while you each play your guitar part to match the recording. Once you both have the timing down, you can ditch the training wheels altogether and do it on your own without the help of the tracks – making music and memories together!

THE END!

...Or is it Just the Beginning?

