

## **Tips for new Baritone dulcimer players ...**

### **Heavier stings require more pressure to fret**

Assuming you are used to playing a standard dulcimer, a baritone dulcimer has much heavier strings. Those thicker, heavier strings require much more pressure from your fingers to fret. That additional pressure requires more strength than you may realize at first. Playing the baritone as frequently as possible will strengthen the needed muscles.

### **Tuning the strings and playing with others**

Using a baritone tuned AEA you can play standard "DAD" dulcimer tab by yourself or with other baritones. When you do this you are "transposing" the music from the key of D to the key of A. This lower key is often easier for people to sign along with which is one of the many reasons that baritone dulcimers are popular. However, specifically because of this difference in key, a baritone dulcimer tuned to AEA and a standard dulcimer tuned to DAD won't sound so great if you play them together.

### **Playing in the Key of D**

To play with others that are playing standard dulcimers tuned DAD you can retune your baritone dulcimer one step lower to D on the middle string making your tuning ADA. This will put your baritone dulcimer in the Key of D. At this point, you won't be able to play the standard DAD tab directly but only slight modifications are needed. For a start, play just the melody string and play 3 frets up. Meaning that if there is a 2 on the standard tab you should play fret 5; for fret 4 on standard tab you play 7 on your Baritone, and so on. While you can strum across all the strings, you should fret only the melody sting in this example.

### **Playing Chords in Key of D - tuned ADA**

As mentioned above, if you are playing your baritone by yourself you can tune it to AEA and play standard dulcimer "DAD" tab without modification. Also, if you are playing your baritone with others who are playing standard dulcimers, you can tune down to "ADA" and play only the melody by playing up 3 fret but what if you want to play chords in ADA tuning? See our next page with sample chords for the Key of D for the Baritone dulcimer tuned ADA ...