

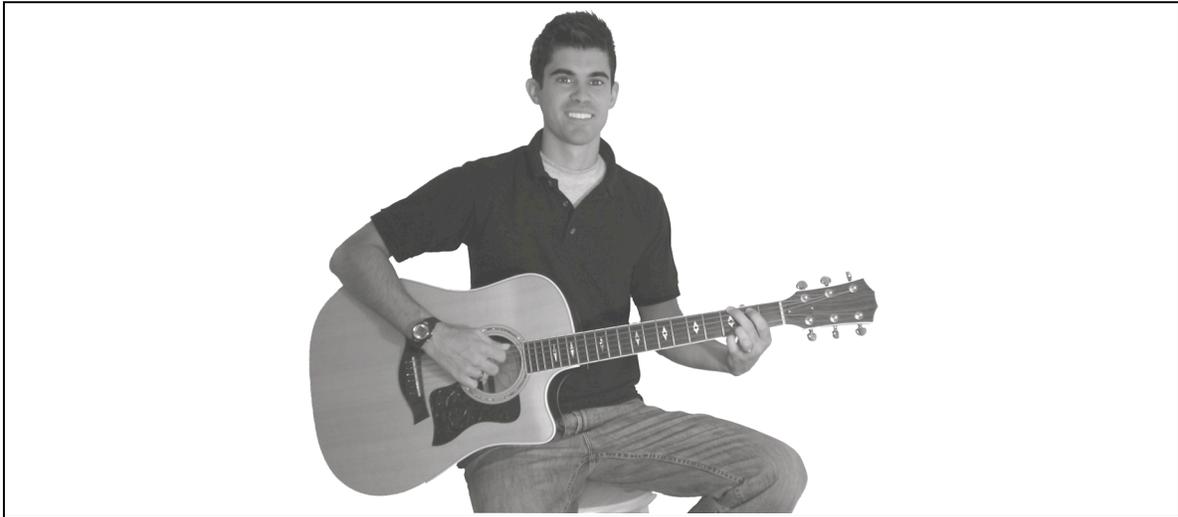


# Excerpt

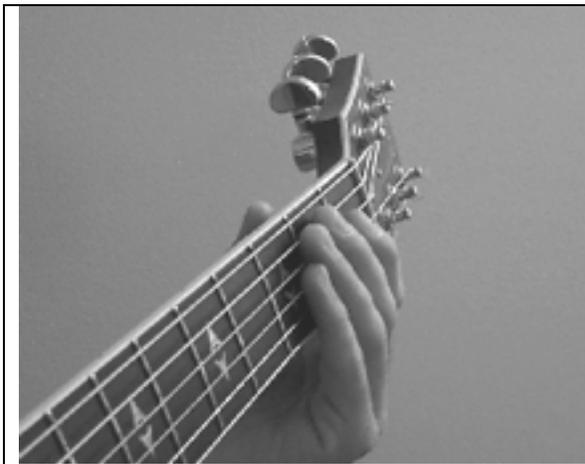
stephen mann

# Before You Play

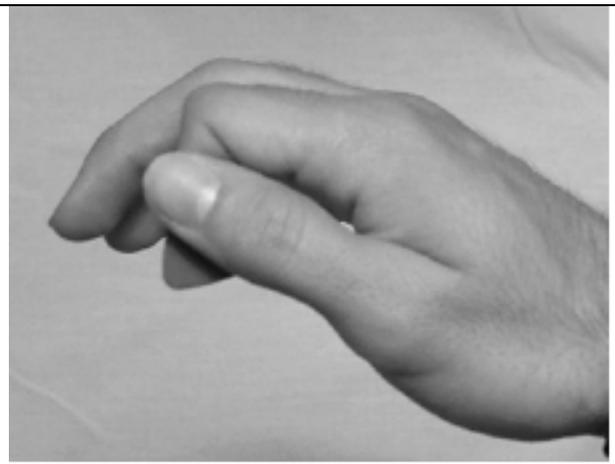
- ❖ First, tune each string to standard tuning (e, B, G, D, A, E) using a tuner.
- ❖ Place the curved side of the body of the guitar on your right thigh. Your right arm should come over the guitar so it can reach the strings.
- ❖ As your right arm comes over the top of the body of the guitar, it should hold and support it. The left hand should be free to move about and should not carry the weight of the guitar.
- ❖ The neck of the guitar should either be tilted slightly towards the ceiling or parallel with the ground. It should never be pointed towards the ground.
- ❖ Your **left hand** is all about fingers. *No palms*. The pad of your thumb should rest on the back of the neck and should be pointing towards the ceiling. Beware that your thumb will probably move without your realizing it. Position your fingers like you are about to run your fingers down a chalkboard or scratch somebody's back. Now, scoop them underneath the neck so that they stand tall on the strings. Your fingertips should be pressing the strings, not your finger pads. Position your finger(s) right in the middle of the fret for the best sound, and be careful that your finger is not accidentally touching another string below it. When you start learning chords, your left hand will have to squeeze as hard as it can.
- ❖ Your **right hand** should be fairly relaxed. The pick should rest on the side of your index (pointer) finger, with your thumb securing it. Just the tip of the pick should be sticking out. To hold the pick, make a fist with your thumb resting on top. Now, slide the large edge of the pick underneath the thumb with the small end pointing out the side of the thumb. The pick should have a little leeway or "give" when strumming, so don't hold on too tight. This may feel awkward, but how you hold the pick will make all the difference when you branch out from common strum patterns or start soloing. Also, you will get the warmest, fullest sound when you hold the pick the correct way.
- ❖ When you strum, hinge at the wrist, not the elbow.
- ❖ It may help to put your right foot on an object on the floor that is about 6 inches off of the ground. This will help bring the guitar closer to you. If you want to use a strap, just adjust it where you feel comfortable. In fact, if you're having trouble holding the guitar, a strap will probably help.
- ❖ Pick selection is mostly about preference, but steer away from the heavy ones when playing acoustic guitar. Try medium or light gauge picks.



How to Hold Your Guitar



Left Hand Position



Right Hand Position