

Will the workshop be OK for me? Will I be able to keep up?

A dulcimer workshop should challenge and stretch the student! However life can be very difficult for tutors and fellow class members if some students - over-estimating their own current playing abilities - do not possess the skill-sets necessary for getting the most from the workshop.

These ***Playing Level Guides*** might help by providing some ideas of what a tutor might expect you to know before you embark on a workshop.

1. Beginner HD	Familiarity with tuning a dulcimer, basic care & maintenance, using hammers comfortably (alternating). Some awareness of basic musical terms and rhythms can be helpful. Reasonable knowledge of HD note positions, esp. in popular keys (G & D). Ability to play simple scales and one or two simple tunes at a steady, even rhythm.
2. Beginner/Improver HD	ALL of #1, plus some of #3
3. Intermediate HD	Good knowledge of all note positions, esp. duplicated notes. Familiarity with popular rhythms. Ability/confidence to play in the 'common' keys (G, D, C, F & relative minors), play a tune in another octave or key and work out efficient hammering patterns. Understand simple chord structure, ornamentation, arpeggios, harmonies, and dynamics. Able to follow a workshop at a reasonable pace. Keeness to perfect techniques and become more adventurous!
4. Intermediate/Advanced HD	ALL of #1 and #3, plus some of #5
5. Advanced HD	Able to play with a good degree of fluency, understand the HD layout comfortably, find notes as required, keep a fair rhythm and pace during the workshop. Ability to play tunes by ear and join in with sessions confidently. Good knowledge of appropriate musical theory as it applies to the HD. Play varied repertoire and enjoy exploring music aspects such as style, phrasing, dynamics, accents, rhythms, harmony, ornamentation & technique. Able to make a substantial contribution to sessions etc. with other musicians.
1. Beginner MD	Familiarity with tuning a dulcimer to at least one tuning, basic care and maintenance, making clear and distinct notes and chord shapes, strumming in rhythm. Some awareness of basic musical terms and music tablature can be helpful. Ability to play one or two simple tunes at a steady, even rhythm.
2. Beginner/Improver MD	ALL of #1, plus some of #3
3. Intermediate MD	Ability to play in more than one tuning or mode. Familiarity with basic playing styles, chording, harmony, strumming and rhythm variations, plus capo use. Able to follow a workshop at a reasonable pace and play with reasonable speed and dexterity, including dynamics. Keeness to refine playing techniques and become more adventurous!
4. Intermediate/Advanced MD	ALL of #1 and #3, plus some of #5
5. Advanced MD	Ability to use more challenging chords, different tunings & modes. Familiarity with various embellishment and ornamentation techniques, e.g. hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides & harmonics. Knowledge of alternative finger-picking and/or picking styles. Good knowledge of appropriate musical theory as it applies to the MD. Able to make a substantial contribution to sessions etc. with other musicians.