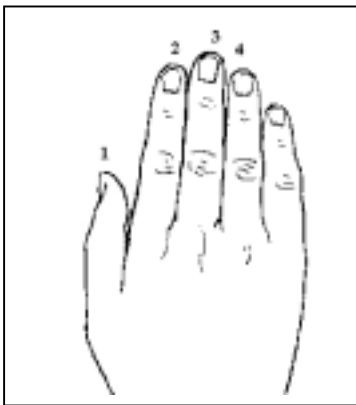


Lesson 1: Strumming Your Way to "Boom-Chukka"

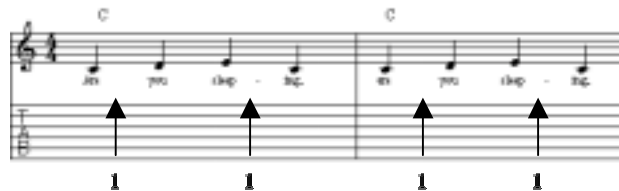
Start to play the autoharp by developing a nice, even strum. Using your thumb pick, start at the lowest strings, and have your hand go from the low to the high strings like the hand of a clock, in nice, long, even strums. In order to get "in the groove" with your strum, try reciting something you've memorized, such as the Preamble to the Constitution, the Twenty-third Psalm, or a Shakespeare passage, keeping up your nice, even strum as you go along. Then see if you can carry on a conversation while continuing to strum. Keep it even and slow and smooth.

Now, for the purposes of showing you which finger to use, I'll number them in illustrations as shown:

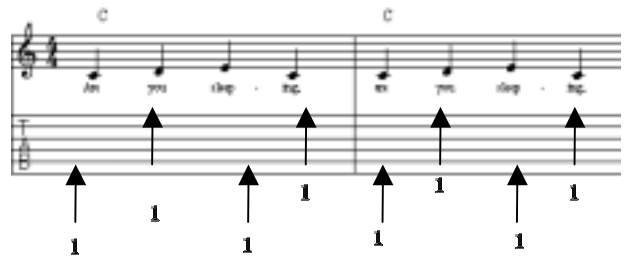


An upward arrow with a #1 below it indicates that you strum upward with the thumb. A downward arrow with a #2 above it tells you to brush downward with the index finger.

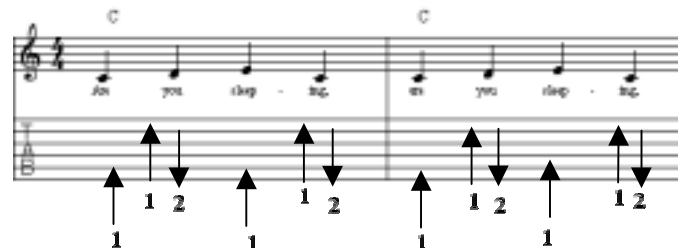
Now, sing "Are You Sleeping" with a nice big strum on the first and third beats of each measure:



Once you've mastered that, try strumming with your thumb on the low part of the 'harp on the first and third beats of each measure, and on the high part of the 'harp on the second and fourth beats, as shown:



And once you have that down, try adding a back brush with your index finger after beats 2 and 4:



This strum will form the basis of much of your rhythm strumming on the autoharp. Many people call it the "boom-chukka" rhythm. See if you can sing "Are You Sleeping?" as a round with somebody else while keeping up your "boom-chukka". In how many languages can you sing this round? Try them all. Keep your rhythm going while you do.