

First time movements

Now you're ready to start making sounds, lovely sounds. Whatever you do, the strings will give you a tone that will reward you for all your efforts if you listen to it instead of worrying about what you're doing,

Important

- When you put a finger on a string, make sure you have enough contact to feel secure. About a quarter inch of finger tip across the string is a good rule of thumb.
- Don't just let it lie there; put a little bit of pressure on the string. This helps the finger "stick to" the string.
- Raise your thumb and point your fingers down slightly. This allows the fingers to move back to the palm without obstruction. It also gives a feeling of authority, of control, rather than tentative timidity.

Remember to do all exercises with both hands, (separately, of course.)

Brushing with fingers

Goal:

To get used to closing the hand completely when plucking the strings

Sit down at your harp,
lean it back against your chest
and relax.

Rest a moment,
then hold your hands out.

Open and close your hands
as you did in "Hands Alone" but
while you are doing this familiar movement
brush your fingers
across the strings,
moving your hands upward,
then beginning again
at the bottom.

Repeat.

Now listen as you do this.
Forget everything but the beautiful sound of strings.

Brushing with thumbs

Goal:

To get used to moving the thumb up and down completely while plucking the strings

Sit down at your harp,
lean it back against your chest
and **relax**.

Rest a moment,
then hold your hands out.

Close your fingers,
and leave your **thumbs**
standing up.

Brush downwards with
your thumbs,
from top to bottom

Repeat.

Now **listen** as you do this.
Forget everything but the beautiful sound of strings.

Thumbs alone

Goal:

To practice plucking one string at a time with the thumbs.

With your hand closed,
use the
“up and down thumb movement”
to **pluck**
one string,
then another,
then another.

Repeat.

Now **listen** as you do this.
Forget everything but the beautiful sound of strings.

Important:

Make sure your thumbs go **all** the way up and **all** the way down. Why? Because a large movement is more relaxing than a small one. Try it. Small movements make the hand tense; large ones release it.

Slide position; pluck position

When you brushed the strings with your thumbs, they slid easily from one to another. When you plucked, they didn't slide, or at least, hopefully, they didn't.

What's the difference?

A thumb that's flattened against the strings will slide easily, but not pluck well.

A thumb that is pointed slightly forwards will pluck well, but not slide easily.

Goal:

To practice changing the angle of the thumb from slide to pluck position and back.

With your hand closed,
and thumb **pointed** slightly forwards,

pluck

then change so the thumb is **flat**
against the strings,

slide it onto the next string.

It's like plucking
but your thumb ends up on the next string.

Pluck again,

place your thumb on another string
and then **slide**,

adjusting the angle of your thumb.

Repeat

Now **listen** as you do this.

Forget everything but the beautiful sound of strings.

Sliding fingers, plucking fingers

The same change of angle applies to the other fingers, too. The change of angle, however, is more noticeable.

When your finger tip is **ahead** of your palm, it will slide easily, but not pluck well.

When your finger tip is **close** to your palm, perhaps an inch away, it will pluck easily,
but not slide well.

Goal:

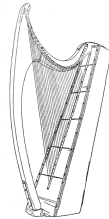
*To practice changing the angle of the fingers
from slide position to pluck position and back*

Place your thumb and another finger on the string,
(the thumb is just an anchor point)
pull your hand back
so the tip of the finger
is **ahead** of the palm.
Now slide the finger
from that string to the one above it.

Move your hand forward
until the tip is **close** to your palm.
Now pluck,
making sure that the finger
goes under the thumb
closing **completely**.

Repeat

Now **listen** as you do this.
Forget everything but the beautiful sound of strings



Summary

**Practice each exercise until you're comfortable with it,
until it feels easy, natural.**

Practice each exercise with both hands.

**Put a little pressure on the strings
to keep your fingers securely placed there**