

Sizing Pinches to Fit

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Pinching all the time with the middle finger and thumb (*mt*), the usual pinch taught to new melody players, can at times be less than optimum, let alone tiring. With the autoharp's bass pitches balancing the tone of high-pitched melody notes, pinches sometimes need to be larger

or smaller than *mt* to help the thumb strike the bass strings comfortably.

Pinching with the index and ring fingers (*it, rt*) enlarges and reduces the playing hand's size while magnifying a melody's orchestration!

Don a thumb pick and *three* fingerpicks on the index, middle and ring fingers (*i, m, r*), then give the following tutorial a try.

Tutorial: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

I notated "Twinkle" three ways, in G and D major, to play in the high, middle and low ranges of the autoharp's string bed. If F and C major play more resonantly on your autoharp, use these keys instead. The Roman-numeral chords in the *Chords Key* at the bottom of this page make transposing to any key easy.

Version 1: High range in D major

First, be sure your playing arm is off the autoharp so the hand can center itself over the high strings.

Version 1 is easy: pinch with the thumb and *all three* fingers throughout, as indicated by "3" over each *T* (a low bass string) or *t* (a higher bass string), for *rmi-T* and *rmi-t*. The *ring* finger sounds every melody note, the

middle and index fingers pluck harmony just below the melody, and the thumb strikes the lowest strings. To catch *T* or *t*, all you have to do is open the playing hand wide and the thumb will go down low and define a bass line automatically. You can't miss!

Pinch away:

3 *rmi*
T thumb
(& t)

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 ↑ 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 ↑
T T t t t t t t t t t t T

5 I V7 I V I V7 I V D.C.
3 3 3 3 3 3 3 ↑ 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 ↑
t t t t t t t t t t t t t

Play Version 1 once more and check that the pinky remains free while pinching! If it sticks straight out, it's stuck. (Save that pose for 4pm high tea. ☺)

Even though the pinky doesn't have a fingerpick on it, it still needs to flex to help *rmi* move freely and easily.

	Chords Key			
	I	IV	V7	V
G major	G	C	D7	D
D major	D	G	A7	A
F major	F	Bb	C7	C
C major	C	F	G7	G

