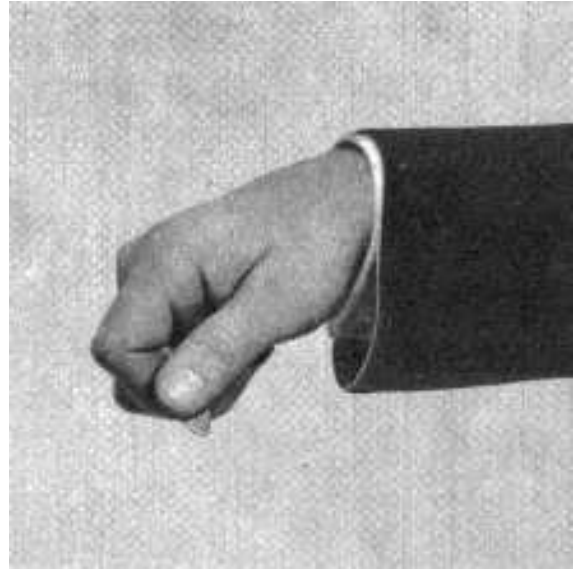




How to Hold the Banjo



How to Hold the Pick

Holding Banjo and Pick

The banjo rim rests on the right thigh with the left hand grasping the neck at the first fret. The right arm rests on the arm rest with the right wrist curved slightly over the bridge so the pick comes in contact with the strings about two inches in front of the bridge. The pick is held between the thumb and first finger of the right hand with the other three fingers supporting the first. (See illustrations and consult teacher.)

Hints for the Beginner

- 1.... Select a certain time to practice and don't allow anything to interfere with it.
- 2.... Don't argue with your teacher, you're not paying him to debate with you, neither does he wish to take your money for it. Ask questions, yes. If you don't agree with the answer you get, reserve decision until you know more and have had further experience.
- 3.... Hear all the good tenor-banjo music you can, listen to it carefully, see what the player does to get certain effects you like. Notice how he sits, holds his banjo, his attitude toward his audience.
- 4.... Remember that your playing is to please others if you're to be successful - it's not to please yourself only. You'll never be able to earn a salary for yourself by playing to yourself. So make everything about your playing as pleasing as possible. Not only your playing and your selections, but your appearance, your manner of playing, your attitude toward your listeners and your fellow artists.
- 5.... Whenever you play with other players, strive to fit your playing in with theirs, so the general effect is as good as possible. Don't try to outshine them. Your success depends on the excellence of the general effect, not on your ability to dazzle anybody individually.
- 6.... If your practicing annoys your family or friends and there's no place to go where they can't hear you, put a banjo mute or a violin mute over the bridge-unless you have a banjo equipped with a mute.
- 7.... Always be sure your banjo is in tune before you practice. if you can't get it in tune, see if the bridge is in the right place, or if some of the strings are false. Old strings lose their elasticity and may become false. If so, put on new ones.
- 8.... To see if the bridge is in the right place, touch the string lightly over the 12th fret and pick it as you take your finger away. The resulting tone is a harmonic and is exactly one octave higher than the open string. Now press the string down at the 12th fret; if the two notes (harmonic and stopped note) are in unison, the bridge is in the right place. if the stopped note is sharp, the bridge is too near the fingerboard, if flat it's too far away. Move it up or back accordingly until the stopped note is in tune.
- 9.... Tuning the banjo gradually pulls the bridge forward. It should lean slightly back toward the tail piece, keep it adjusted so.
- 10...Wire strings gradually cut into the bridge. To give the best tone, they should be just far enough into the bridge so the string notches keep them from slipping If they've cut into the bridge slightly file off the top of the bridge until the top of the string is above the bridge. If they've cut in so deeply they don't clear the frets, get a new bridge.

Having progressed this far, you are now ready for the intensified study of syncopation, jazz, ragtime, chord analyzing and more advanced professional playing found in Volume II. of this series.

"You are musical if you anticipate pretty well what is coming" - **Schumann**