

**Melodies and Chords Together.** This takes two forms, which we can state as questions.

1. What chord should I play if the song does not list chords?
2. Can I put melody notes in between chords, or add them to chords? Lets look at them in order.

### **1. What Chord Happens When?**

Knowing what chord to play at a certain point in a song is a complex matter, and we cannot give you definite rules here. We can make a few suggestions, though. Look at the various chord fingerings in the diagrams. You can see that there are a few chords that include the note, "1st string open" ( a G, a C, and an Em). If you are playing a song, and the note you are playing is 1st string open, chances are good that the chord that should happen at that time is either a G, a C, or an Em. Consider 1st string 1st fret. There are only three chords listed that include that note; D, D7, and A. One of those chords has a good chance of being the one that will sound "right" in that spot.

*[What does sound "right" mean? You are playing a song you are familiar with. You may not know anything about music or chords, but you have heard that song many times with the original, as composed, "right" chords. G or C or Em will all be harmonious with 1st string open, but only one of them will really sound right at the beginning of "This Land is Your Land." If you are writing a song, use whatever chord sounds good to you whenever... you are the artist.]*

If you are figuring out the chords to a song you know the melody to, you have a good chance of figuring out enough chords to dress up your melody a little bit. For any melody note, there will be a chord somewhere on the neck that will work with that note (you may have to use Sliding Chords to get there, by the way).

Note: You do not usually change chords at every note, so sometimes a note will be happening that does NOT go with the chord playing then. This is usually a "just passing through" note on the way to another note that will fit in the chord, or in the next chord.

This is about as much advice as we can give on this topic. You can usually get help from guitar playing friends about chords, you can look at our material about chords in the section "Quick and Dirty Music Theory," and you can also find sheet music for many songs in music stores or online, which will include chords. The sheet music may not be in the key of G (or D for the grand), so you will have to transpose from the song's key to G, but that is another topic.

### **2. Adding a Melody to a Chord**

You can always play a song with just the melody, and let the Strumstick make the chords, or you can always just strum the chords and not play any melody at all. But it is a lot more fun, once you have some skill under your belt, to work with both melody and chords together. This could be as simple as using a chord fingering that contains

the note you need instead of just fingering the one note... if you need 1st string 3rd fret for a couple of beats, finger the basic C fingering to add that chord to the progression of the song:

Example:

0     1     2   3(C)   3(C)  
This   land   is   your   land

3(C)   0     1   2     2  
this   land   is   my   land   etc.

The 3(C) indicates finger the C chord to get the 3rd fret note, for this example.

Throwing an appropriate chord into an otherwise melody-only song adds a lot of dimension, texture, and interest to the song. There are many occasions where you can do this, especially if you include the idea of using Sliding Chords to help out a melody note.

### **Adding a Few Melody Notes**

The next level is playing the chords, but then playing a section of just melody notes for a while. They could be single notes, plucking one string at a time. They also could be "Strumstick automatic" - finger the notes and the Strumstick does the background. Either way is OK, the choice will affect the mood of the song at that point.

**END OF SAMPLE**