

Fiddle I - Beginner

This class is for students who have no experience on the fiddle. We will start from scratch learning how to tune your instrument, how to hold the fiddle and bow, basic bowing techniques, and a simple tune. Bring a working fiddle and bow and a recording device. A shoulder rest and rosin are optional but recommended.

Fiddle II - Advanced Beginner

This class is for students who have previous experience playing the fiddle, but are still beginners. We will learn a few tunes and practice using bow direction and drones to make simple tunes start to sound like classic old-time tunes!

Fiddle III - Intermediate

This class is for intermediate players who know quite a few tunes “up to speed” and are ready to take their playing and repertoire to the next level. Students will learn tunes by ear, piece by piece, and will discuss techniques to give the tunes an old-time sound. We recommended that students have some experience with drones, playing in different keys (primarily G, D, and A), and learning pieces of tunes by ear.

Fiddle IV - Advanced

This class is for advanced players who want to focus on improving their dance fiddling. We will experiment with different ways in which the bow can create rhythms to support the beat of dance tunes, cross-tuning, and learning some new dance tunes. Students should be able to drone with no trouble, play quite a few tunes up to speed, and have some experience controlling their bow direction.

About Emily Elam: Former Arkansas State Banjo and Fiddle Champion and current Assistant Music Director at the Ozark Folk Center State Park, Emily has years of teaching experience on both banjo and fiddle. She recently completed a book entitled *500 Fiddle Tunes: Transcriptions of Billy Mathews' Old-Time Archive* chronicling the tunes of Ozark fiddle master, Billy Mathews.

About Everett Elam-Along with his wife Emily, Everett is one half of the fiddle duo, The Bow Tanglers. Everett is a past Arkansas State Fiddle Champion also has a background in traditional violin.

About Shay Pool-Longtime Music Roots teacher, owner of Mountain View Music and lover of all things Old Time, Shay has been a stalwart of the music community in Mountain View for many years.

About Eden Pool-Eden studied music at Berklee in Boston, MA. Along with her husband Lukas, they run the Ozark Banjo Co., producing unique handmade banjos here in Stone County, Arkansas.

Fiddle I, Shay Pool

How to Hold the Fiddle

If you're brand new to the fiddle, it can be tough to juggle the fiddle, bow, and try to play notes at the same time! Pick up the basics of holding your instrument and producing notes with good tone. If you don't own a fiddle, a limited number will be available to borrow.

Caring for Your Fiddle

No matter how well you play, nothing sounds good if the fiddle is out of tune or the bow needs more rosin. Learn to tune and care for your fiddle and bow to sound great and keep your instrument in excellent condition.

Learning Tunes by Ear I

Tackling a tune armed with only a fiddle and your ears can be intimidating - it's a lot to learn. We will break down how to learn a tune by ear, one note at a time. Learn how to match pitches your hear and discuss strategies for remembering all the notes you find.

Learning Tunes by Ear II

Did you know that in many tunes, almost half of the phrases are repeated? Once you've learned the first half, you're nearly done! Dissect a few tunes and learn how to use the tune structure to quickly learn each phrase by ear.

Building Technique I

Learn some tunes and exercises that will help you to build technique, so you can play more challenging tunes! You can use these tools to play more in tune, play faster, and produce a cleaner tone.

Making the Most of your Practice

Practicing is more than playing the same thing over and over. Pick up tips for efficient practice methods that will help you learn more quickly.

Fiddle II, Everett Elam

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Adding Drones

What are drones? When should you drone, and how long? Although droning, or playing on two strings, is one of the most iconic "fiddle" sounds, it can be difficult to master knowing when to drone on tunes you already know. Learn how to use drones to make your playing sound full and rhythmic.

Following Along in a Jam

Jamming can be one of the most rewarding ways to participate in the old-time community but can be intimidating. Gain confidence in your ability to join in on tunes you don't know and get some tips for learning tunes from jams. Test your abilities in a jam following this session!

Keeping the Beat: Metronomes, Tapping Your Foot, and More

Building good timing is essential to play with other musicians. Even if you don't have the greatest sense of rhythm, there are exercises and technology that can help you get a handle on your timing. Join us to learn how to use a metronome, tapping your feet, and backup instruments to improve your timing playing solo or with a group.

Building Technique II

Learn some tunes and exercises that will help you to build technique, so you can play more challenging tunes! You can use these tools to help you play tunes in difficult keys, with double stops, and with challenging bow patterns.

Learning Tunes from Field Recordings

Poor audio quality can make learning from field recordings tough, but with a little imagination, you can learn some great tunes from scratchy audio files. Learn how to get the most from old field recordings by building your listening skills and discovering easy-to-use technology to facilitate your learning.

Fiddle III, Eden Pool/Emily Elam

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Ozark Fiddle Tunes

Expand your repertoire with some fiddle tunes from Arkansas and Missouri. In addition to learning the tunes, listen to field recordings of Ozark fiddlers playing these tunes and discuss stylistic differences within Ozark regions.

Intro to Cross-Tuning

Taking your fiddle out of the standard GDae tuning can open up a whole new world of tunes and techniques to enjoy in a resonant cross-tuning. If you've never cross-tuned, join us to discover how to change to a common alternate tuning and learn a new tune! If you have multiple fiddles, please bring an extra to cross-tune.

Adding Style to "Easy" Tunes

Do you avoid the tunes you learned as a beginner because of the "easy version" that you play? Take your tunes to the next level by listening to other versions of these simple tunes and learning how to implement new ideas that you hear.

Playing for Dances

Aside from a steady beat, what makes a tune enjoyable for dancers? Come learn how to make your playing more compelling for dancers.

Fiddle IV, Eden Pool/Emily Elam

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Leading the Beat

Anticipating the beat gives fiddle tunes a unique drive by starting notes before the beat on which they would normally fall. The anticipation adds interest to the rhythm and makes tunes more fun to play and hear. Listen to examples of fiddlers who lead the beat, practice leading the beat, and discuss how to know when you can anticipate the beat in other tunes you play.

Using the Bow to Create Rhythm Patterns

Not all fiddlers consciously control what direction their bow is going while they play, but many still use their bow to create some wonderful rhythmic patterns that add a strong beat to dance tunes. We will discuss how to use the bow as a tool to create some of these rhythms and practice some simple exercises to help develop bow control.

Tunes in GDad Cross-Tuning

It's common to cross-tune to the keys of A or D, but what about the key of G? Learn some tunes in GDad cross-tuning like Indian Nation and Saddle Up the Grey.

Notating Tunes

This session is for players who can read sheet music but struggle to write it down themselves. Learn how to take the music you already know and put it down on the page.

Tunes from Faye Green

Faye Green first picked up a fiddle in 1925 at the age of 5 and began her journey to becoming an Ozark fiddler. Surviving recordings of Faye, her husband Leonard, and daughter Brenda provide not only a wonderful opportunity to practice learning from field recordings, but also to preserve Faye's unique style and rare tunes.

All Levels

Original Tunes by Billy Mathews

Attend Billy Mathews' matinee performance, then discuss his playing style. What elements would you like to include in your own playing? Learn an original tune by Billy and try to mimic his playing style.

Contest Rules & Overview

Judy Kent will present the contest rules and explain judging criteria for prospective contestants. This is a great time to ask questions and evaluate your tune choices.