

Acoustic Guitar Lessons



Don Bunch

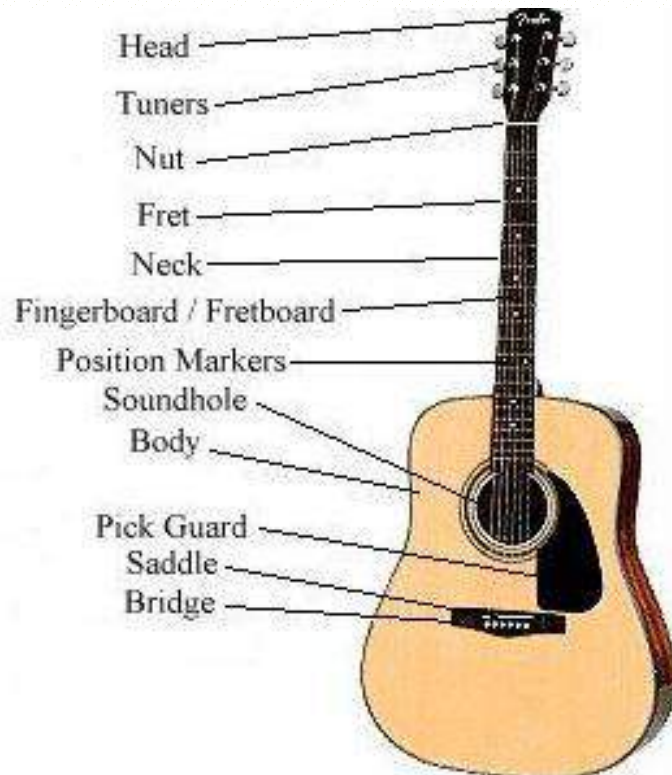
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Lesson 1: Introduction to the Guitar

Guitar Terms

Congratulations on buying a new guitar! In order to become a guitarist, you should learn the parts of the guitar. The major parts of the guitar are discussed in terms of its body: the top of the guitar is the “**head**”, the fingerboard/fretboard is on the “**neck**” and the soundhole is usually centered in the “**body**”.



The **tuners** are usually made of metal or tortoise shell. The **tuners** are wound counter-clockwise from their positions on the head when strung. The **nut** is white plastic piece at the bottom of the head. The **nut** is the starting point of the string that produces a note when plucked. The ending point is the **saddle**, which is the white plastic piece in the center of the **bridge**. For instance, the first string in a standard tuning is an “**E**” note (it is also referred to as the “**E**” string). The face of the neck is called the **fretboard**. The **frets** are the spaces between the **fret wires** on the **fretboard**. The space between the **nut** and the first fret wire is the 1st fret. When you press the **E** string on the 1st fret, you shorten the length of the string that vibrates, creating a higher pitch (the “**F**” note).

The **position markers** are usually found on the fretboard and on the side of the neck. These are dots which indicate the 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 12th, 15th and 17th frets on an acoustic guitar. The **soundhole** allows the sound to project from the body. The **pickguard** is designed to protect the body from being scratched. Not all guitars have **pickguards**, but when you look at the holes in the body of Willie Nelson’s guitar you can see why they are important. The **bridge** is the

wooden piece attached to the center of the body. The **bridge** anchors the strings to the body of the guitar either with pegs or through holes in the bridge.

Holding the guitar

I usually play my guitar while standing up, but you'll probably want to sit down while you are learning to play. Get an armless chair or sit on a sofa. You should sit upright. Now, pick up your guitar, and hold it so the back of the body of the instrument comes in contact with your stomach/chest, and the bottom of the neck runs parallel to the floor. The thickest string on the guitar should be the closest to your face, while the thinnest should be closest to the floor. Typically, a right-handed person will hold the guitar so the headstock points to the **left**, whereas a left-handed person will hold the guitar so the headstock points to the right. Left-handed people need a left-handed guitar.

A right-handed guitarist should hold the guitar on his right leg and the left-handed guitarist should hold the guitar on his left leg. Your **dominant** hand is used for picking and strumming the strings while the **non-dominant** hand becomes your "fretting hand". The thumb of your fretting hand should rest behind the neck of the guitar, with your fingers in a slightly curled position.

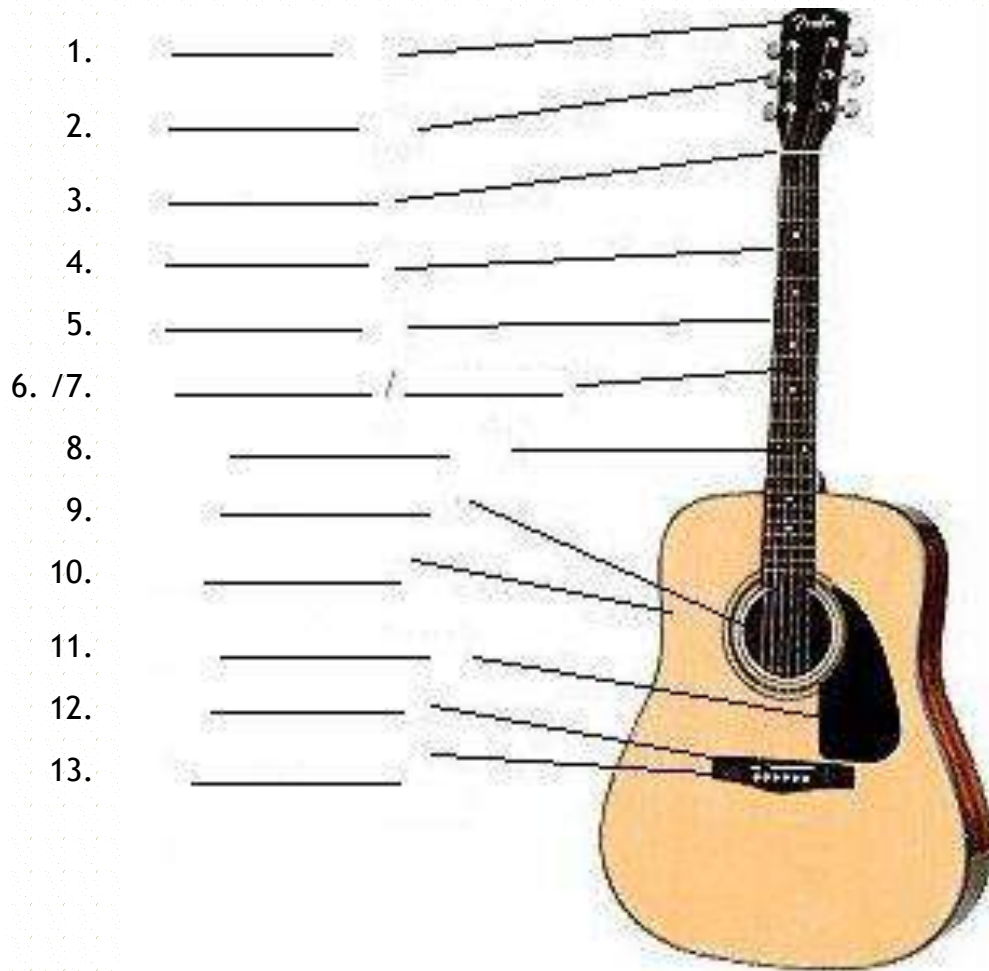
Holding the Pick

Find, buy or borrow some guitar picks. You can experiment with different shapes and brands, but most people use medium gauge picks to start. Hold a pick in your **dominant** hand as shown in this photo. Be sure the pointed end of the pick is pointing directly away from your fist, and is out about a half an inch. I usually hold the pick closer to the end of my thumb. Hold the pick firmly.



Lesson 1: Worksheet

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate guitar terms without looking at the previous pages.



14. A right-handed guitarist holds the pick in his _____ hand and fingers the fretboard with his _____ hand.

15. The head of the guitar is held to your _____ if you are a right-handed guitarist.

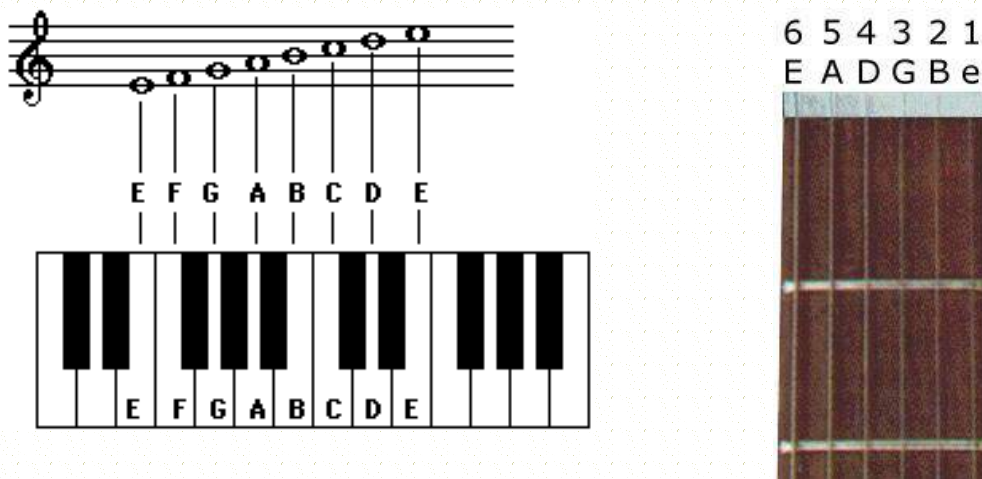
Lesson 2: Tuning the Guitar

Standard Tuning

Before you begin playing, you must also know how the frets and strings are numbered (See Figure Below). The strings are numbered from the lightest (thinnest) to the heaviest (thickest). So the thinnest string is the 1st string and the thickest is the 6th string. A guitar in standard tuning is tuned to E-A-D-G-B-E. In other words, 6th string - Low E, 5th string -A , 4th -D, 3rd -G, 2nd -B, 1st - High E. Look at the diagram to find out how the frets are numbered. The 0 fret is also the open note on each string.

To tune your guitar, you only need to have one string tuned to any note, as long as you know which one it is. This is known as the reference point. Once you have this, tuning the rest of the strings is easy. There are various ways to find the reference point. You can use any of the following methods to tune one string or all your strings.

Piano/Keyboard: A keyboard is an excellent way to tune your guitar. Just tune the strings by matching them with their respective keys. The piano diagram covers one octave while the guitar diagram covers two octaves.



Electronic Tuner: Allows you to tune the guitar string by measuring the frequency of the string. Some tuners have a switch for each string while others are chromatic. The chromatic tuner will identify the note you are playing and will indicate whether you are below the pitch (**flat**) or above the pitch (**sharp**).

Follow these instructions for tuning your guitar, with the top string being already tuned to an E.

E | |-----0--|| 1st
 B | |-----0-----5-----|| 2nd
 G | |-----0---4-----|| 3rd
 D | |-----0-----5-----|| 4th
 A | |-----0---5-----|| 5th
 E | |--5-----|| 6th

Step 1	Place your finger on the 5th fret of the 6 th string and tune the 5th string until both match.
Step 2	Place your finger on the 5th fret of the 5th string and tune the 4th string until both match.
Step 3	Place your finger on the 5th fret of the 4th string and tune the 3rd string until both match.
Step 4	Place your finger on the 4th fret of the 3rd string and tune the 2nd string until both match.
Step 5	Place your finger on the 5th fret off the 2nd string and tune the 1 st until both match.

Chromatic Scale

A chromatic scale includes all 12 notes in a standard octave. This may seem confusing at first because the definition of an octave is an 8-note scale where the 1st note and the 8th note are the same pitch. For example, in a standard “C” scale, the 1st note and the 8th note of that scale would both be “C”. However, a chromatic scale includes every half-note step in between the two “C’s”. A “#” symbol means sharp and a “b” symbol means flat or 1/2 step above or below the whole tone respectively, so the chromatic scale from “C” to “C” is:

C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C
---	-------	---	-------	---	---	-------	---	-------	---	-------	---	---

A half-step above E is F and a half-step above B is C, so there is no E#/Fb or B#/Cb. Below the notes of the fretboard are diagramed. Notice that by the time you get to the 5th fret of each string, you are overlapping the notes of the next string.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
E		F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E
B		C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B
G		G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G
D		D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D
A		A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A
E		F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E

Major Scale

I mentioned the **octave** in the explanation of the chromatic scale. Now I will explain how the eight notes of the major scale are chosen. The major scale can start with any note on the chromatic scale. This note is known as the **root** note. In order to determine which notes are included in the scale we follow this pattern: W-W-H-W-W-W-H (W - Whole Step, H - Half Step). This gives you an eight-note scale of **Root -2-3-4-5-6-7-Octave**, where the octave is a higher pitch of the same note.

For example, in the “C” scale, we would choose the following notes from the chromatic scale:

Root		2		3	4		5		6		7	Octave
Root		W		W	H		W		W		W	H
C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C

So, the “C” scale is C,D,E,F,G,A,B and C. This is the easiest key to remember because it has no sharps or flats.

In order to practice this concept, let’s construct a major scale in the key of “G”. We’ll start from the “G” note in the center of the chromatic scale and follow the W-W-H-W-W-W-H pattern to find our notes.

C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C
---	-------	---	-------	---	---	-------	----------	-------	---	-------	---	---

First we express the chromatic scale with G at the start and get:

G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G
----------	-------	---	-------	---	---	-------	---	-------	---	---	-------	----------

Then we use our pattern to choose the notes of the G major scale:

Root		2		3	4		5		6		7	Octave
Root		W		W	H		W		W		W	H
G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G

The key of G has one sharp expressed as F#, because we already have a G note represented in the scale.

Lesson 2: Worksheet

1. Practice tuning your guitar in a standard E-A-D-G-B-E tuning using a piano/keyboard, an electronic tuner, or with manual tuning.

2. Fill in the notes of the chromatic scale starting with the C note:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

3. Using the chromatic scale and the W-W-H-W-W-W-H pattern, find the notes of the following major scales:

Root		2		3	4		5		6		7	Octave
Root		W		W	H		W		W		W	H
A												A
B												B
C												C
D												D
E												E
F												F
G												G

Answers

1. Follow lesson steps.
2. Fill in the notes of the chromatic scale starting with the C note:

C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C
---	-------	---	-------	---	---	-------	---	-------	---	-------	---	---

3. Using the chromatic scale and the W-W-H-W-W-W-H pattern, find the notes of the following major scales:

Root		2		3	4		5		6		7	Octave
Root		W		W	H		W		W		W	H
A		B		C#	D		E		F#		G#	A
B		C#		D#	E		F#		G#		A#	B
C		D		E	F		G		A		B	C
D		E		F#	G		A		B		C#	D
E		F#		G#	A		B		C#		D#	E
F		G		A	Bb		C		D		E	F
G		A		B	C		D		E		F#	G

Lesson 3: Major Chords

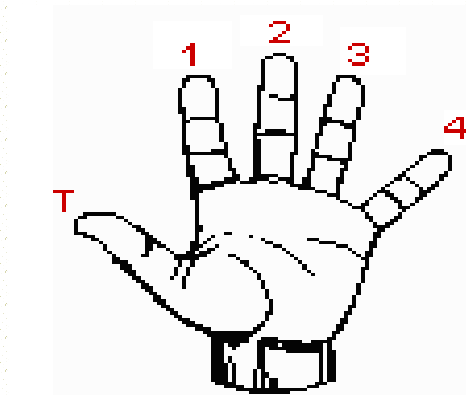
Basics

Now that you've learned guitar terms and the basics of music, you are ready to start learning chords. When you use your fretting hand to press the strings down on the frets of your guitar, you will start creating chords. It's just as important to learn what notes you are playing as it is to learn the chord formation in order to become proficient at the guitar.

First, remember that the standard tuning of a guitar is:
E, A, D, G, B, E (you can remember it as **Eat All Day Get Big Easy**)

6	5	4	3	2	1
E	A	D	G	B	E

You also need to know how your fingers are numbered for fretting the notes:



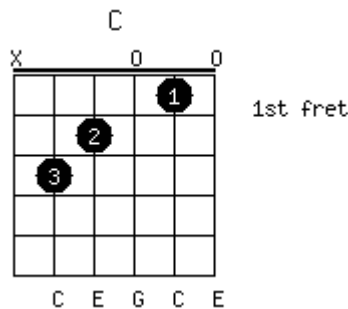
Chord Triads

In Lesson 2, you became familiar with the notes of several major scales (C, D, E, F, G, A & B). Now you will learn how to use the Root note, the 3rd note and the 5th note of each scale to form major chords. Remember that in the key of C there are no sharps or flats, so the C major scale is:

Root		2		3	4		5		6		7	Octave
Root		W		W	H		W		W		W	H
C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C

Now you will use the root (C), the 3rd note (E) and the 5th note (G) to form a C-major chord.

The lowest note of chords is usually the root note, so for the C-major chord; you will not play the 6th string (X denotes not playing the string). Starting on 5th string, you will make a **C-note** by pressing the 3rd fret with your 3rd finger. On the 4th string, you will make an **E-note** by pressing the 2nd fret with your 2nd finger. The 3rd string is left open because it is a **G-note** when open (0 denotes an open string). On the 2nd string, you will make a **C-note** by pressing the 1st fret with your 1st finger. The 1st string is left open because it is an **E-note** when left open.



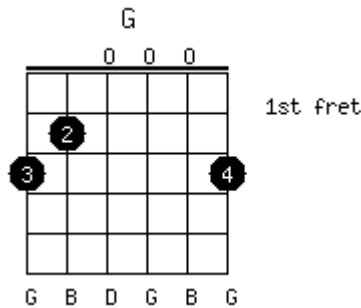
After you've formed this chord, practice picking the strings from the 5th string down to the 1st string. Each note of the chord should ring. If the note sounds dull, you may be unintentionally pressing one of the strings with the wrong finger. Next, we'll start to learn about chord families and get one step closer to playing some songs!

Chord Families

Let's move to another easy key to play: **G-Major**

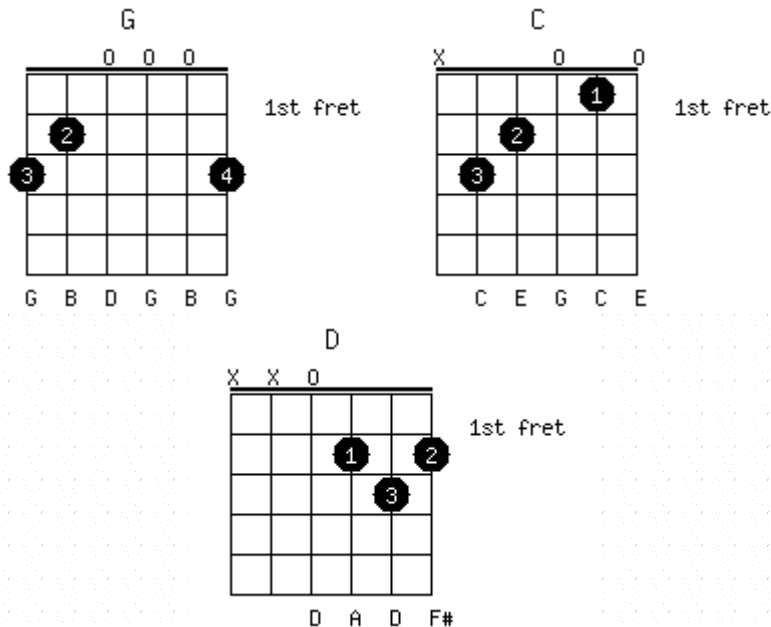
Root		2		3	4		5		6		7	Octave
Root		W		W	H		W		W		W	H
G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G

Using the root (G), the 3rd note (B) and the 5th note (D), you will make the G-major chord this way:



This chord may also be played with your 1st, 2nd and 3rd fingers, but learning to play the G-major chord with the above fingering will help you move from the G chord to the C chord more easily.

Chord families are chords made from the major scale. Most rock and folk tunes are based on chords formed from the root note, the 4th note and the 5th note. In the key of G major these chords would be: G major, C major and D major



Practice playing these chords by picking each of the strings without an X listed above them. Below are examples of a couple of songs you can play with just these three chords:

Sweet Home Alabama (Lynyrd Skynyrd)

D C G (repeat)

D C G D C G
Big wheels keep on turning; carry me home to see my kin.

D C G
Singing songs about the Southland,

D C G
I miss old 'Bamy once again and I think it's a sin

D C G D C G
Well I heard Mr. Young sing about her, I heard ole Neil put her down

D C G
I hope Neil Young will remember

D C G
A southern man don't need him around anyhow

D C G D C G
Sweet home Alabama, where skies are so blue

D C G D C G
Sweet home Alabama, Lord I'm coming home to you

In Birmingham they love the governor
Now we all did what we could do
Now Watergate does not bother me
Does your conscience bother you?
Tell the truth

Now Muscle Shoals has got the Swampers
And they've been known to pick a song or two
Lord they get me off so much
They pick me up when I'm feeling blue
Now how about you

There is one point in this song where an F major chord is used, but you can always learn that later! For the most part **Sweet Home Alabama** is just D major, C major, G major played over and over again. On the next page you'll find the words and chords to **The Joker** by Steve Miller, another three chord song.

The Joker (Steve Miller)

Intro: G C D C (2X)

G C D C
Some people call me the space cowboy, yeah

G C D C
Some call me the gangster of love

G C D C
Some people call me Maurice
G C D C G

Cause I speak of the pompitous of love

C D C G
People talk about me, baby

C D C G
Say I'm doin' you wrong, doin' you wrong

C D C
Well, don't you worry baby, don't worry

G C D C
'Cause I'm right here, right here, right here, right here at home

G C G C
'Cause I'm a picker, I'm a grinner, I'm a lover and I'm a sinner

G C D C
I play my music in the sun

G C G C
I'm a joker, I'm a smoker, I'm a midnight toker

G C D C
I sure don't want to hurt no one
(Repeat)(2X) - (I get my lovin' on the run)

You're the cutest thing that I ever did see
I really love your peaches
Want to shake your tree
Lovey-dovey, lovey-dovey, lovey-dovey all the time
Ooo-eee baby, I'll sure show you a good time (chorus)

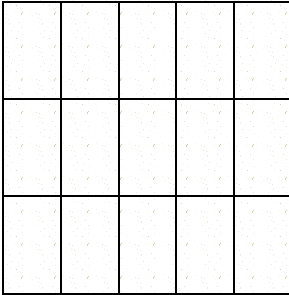
People keep talking about me baby
They say I'm doin' you wrong
Well don't you worry, don't worry, no don't worry mama
'Cause I'm right here at home

You're the cutest thing I ever did see
Really love your peaches want to shake your tree
Lovey-dovey, lovey-dovey, lovey-dovey all the time
Come on baby and I'll show you a good time

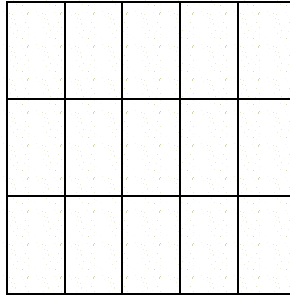
Lesson 3: Worksheet

1. Using the 1, 3, and 5 pattern to form major chords: diagram the following major chords:

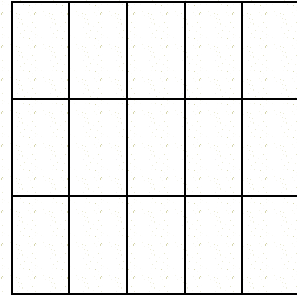
A Major



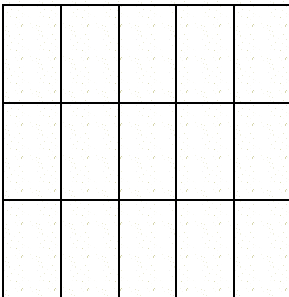
B Major



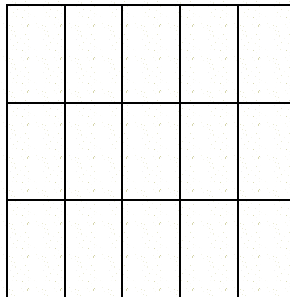
C Major



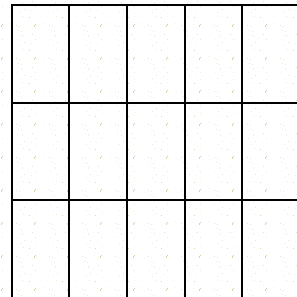
D Major



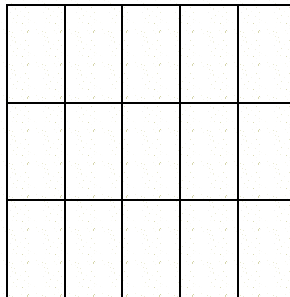
E Major



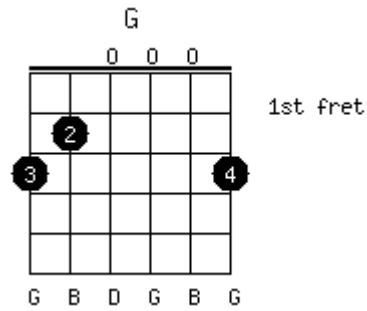
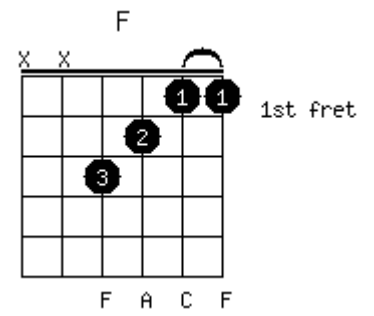
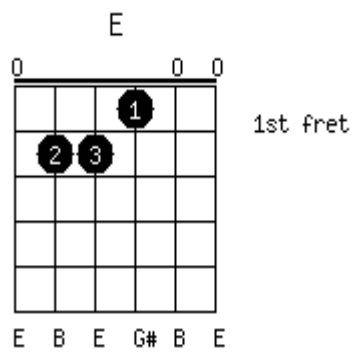
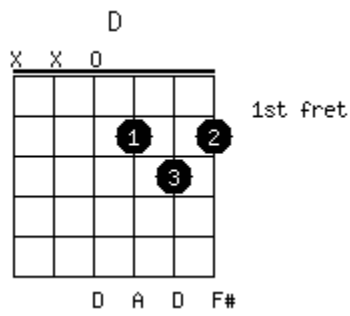
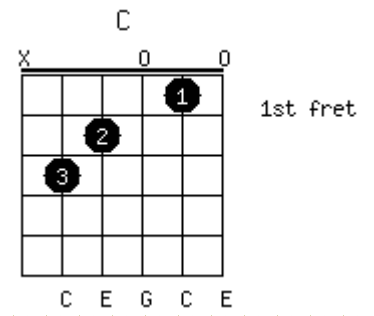
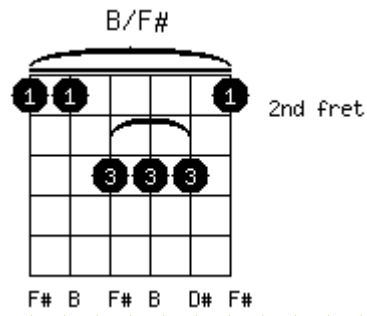
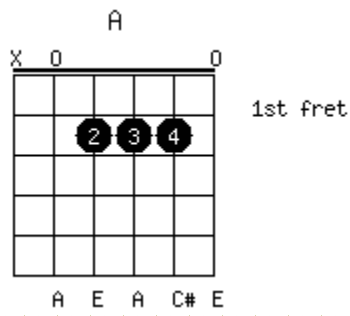
F Major



G Major



Answers



Lesson 4: Minor Chords

Relative Minors

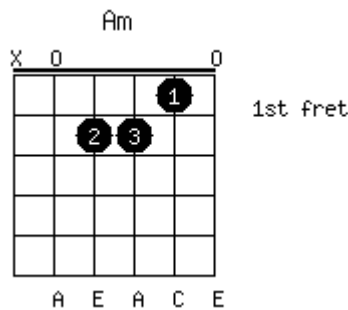
The relative minor chord of any key can be found by using the 6th note of that key as the root of a chord. For example, the relative minor of C major is A-minor, because A is the 6th note of the C major scale and the A-minor scale has the same notes as the C-major scale. Below is the C-major scale:

Root		2		3	4		5		6		7	Octave
C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C

The minor scale starts with the root and follows this pattern: W-H-W-W-H-W-W. Below is the A-minor scale:

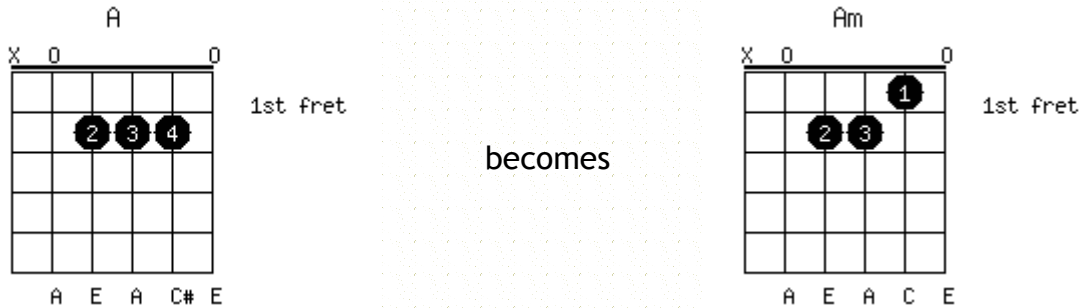
Root		2	3		4		5	6		7		Octave
Root		W	H		W		W	H		W		W
A		B	C		D		E	F		G		A

Therefore, the relative minor chord of C-major is A-minor, formed from the Root, 3rd and 5th notes of the A-minor scale: A-C-E

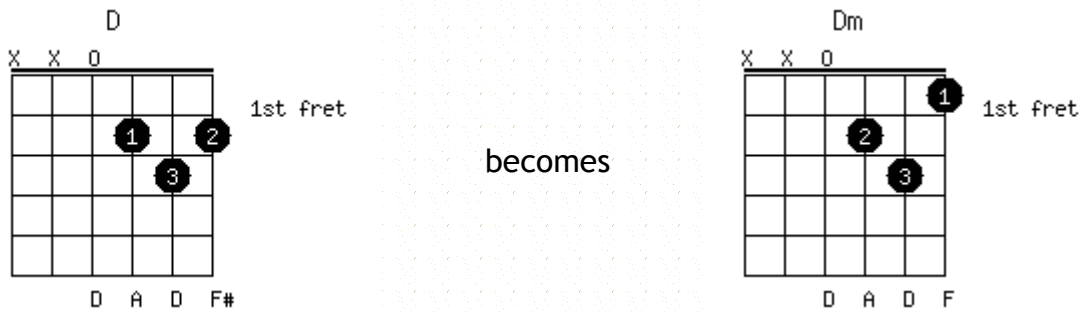


Flattened 3rd Note

The music theory above may be too involved at this point for making minor chords, so here's a shortcut. Take any major chord and flatten at least one of the 3rd notes in that chord. For example:

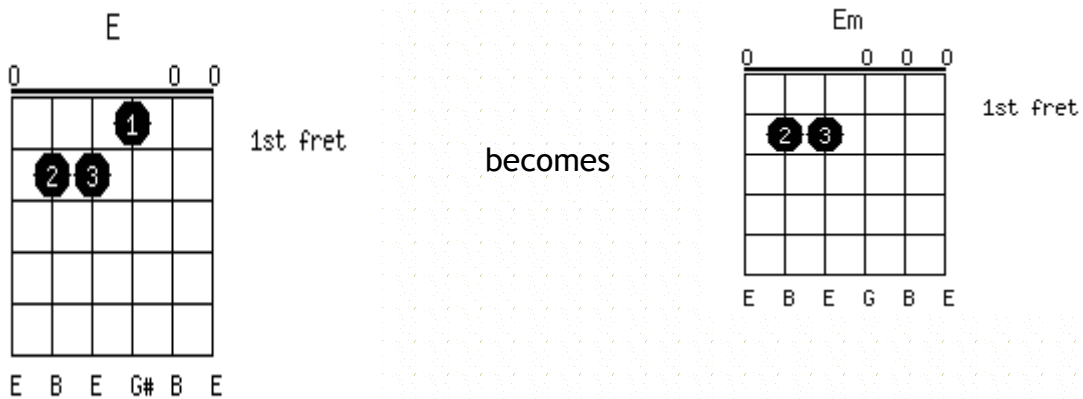


The 3rd note of the A major scale is C#, so the flattened 3rd note would be C. Here's another example:



The 3rd note of the D major scale is F#, so the flattened 3rd note would be F.

Ok, one more:



The 3rd note of the E major scale is G#, so the flattened 3rd note would be G.

Here are some songs you can play now that you've mastered a few minor chords. They have the chords (G-C-D) in them with the relative minor chord of G major: E minor!

Wonderful Tonight Eric Clapton

G D C D
It's late in the evening; she's wondering what clothes to wear
G D C D
She puts on her make up and brushes her long blonde hair
C D G G/F# Em
And then she asks me, Do I look al-right?
C D G G D C D
And I say yes, you look wonderful tonight

G D C D
We go a party and everyone turns to see
G D/F# C D
This beautiful lady that's walking around with me
C D G G/F# Em
And then she asks me, do you feel alright?
C D G
And I say yes, I feel wonderful tonight

C D G G/F# Em
I feel wonderful because I see the love light in your eyes
C D C D
And the wonder of it all is that you just don't realize
G G D C D G D C D
How much I love you

G D C D
It's time to go home now and I've got an aching head
G D C D
So I give her the car keys she helps me to bed
C D G G/F# Em
And then I tell her as I turn out the light
C D G G/F# Em
I say my darling, you were wonderful tonight
C D G D C D G D C D G
Oh my darling, you were wonderful tonight

http://www.thetabworld.com/Clapton_Eric_Wonderful_Tonight_guitar_chord.html

Stay
Jackson Browne

(D) G Em C D G Em C D
(... People,) stay just a little bit longer.

D G Em C D G Em C D
We wanna play just a little bit longer.

 G Em C D
The promoter don't mind.

 G Em C D
And the union don't mind

 G Em C D
if we take a little time and we leave it all behind

 Em
sing one more song.

 G Em C D G Em C D
Oh, won't you stay just a little bit longer.

G Em C D Em
Please, please, please say, you will. Say you will.

 G Em C D G Em C D
Oh, won't you stay just a little bit longer.

 G Em C D G Em C D
Oh, please, please stay just a little bit more.

 G Em C D
now the promoter don't mind.

 G Em C D
And the roadies don't mind,

 G Em C D Em
if we take a little time and we leave it all behind sing one more song.

http://www.thetabworld.com/Jackson_Browne__Stay_guitar_chord.html

Brown Eyed Girl

Van Morrison

G C G D
Hey where did we go, days when the rains came?

G C G D
Down in the hollow, playin' a new game,

G C
Laughing and a running hey, hey

G D
Skipping and a jumping

G C
In the misty morning fog with

G D C
Our hearts a thumpin' and you

D G Em C D G
My brown eyed girl, you my brown eyed girl.

Whatever happened to Tuesday and so slow?
Going down the old mine with a transistor radio
Standing in the sunlight laughing,
Hiding behind a rainbow's wall,
Slipping and sliding
All along the water fall, with you
My brown eyed girl, you my brown eyed girl.

D G
Do you remember when we used to sing?

G C G D
Sha la la la la la la la la te da

So hard to find my way, now that I'm all on my own.
I saw you just the other day, my how you have grown,
Cast my memory back there, Lord
Sometime I'm overcome thinking 'bout
Making love in the green grass
Behind the stadium with you
My brown eyed girl, you my brown eyed girl

Do you remember when we used to sing?
Sha la la la la la la la la te da.

Country Roads
John Denver

G Em
Almost heaven West Virginia
D C G
Blue Ridge Mountains Shenandoah River
G Em
Life is old there older than the trees
D C G
Younger than the mountains blowin' like a breeze

G D
Country roads take me home
 Em C
To the place I belong
 G D
West Virginia mountain momma
 C G
Take me home country roads

All my memories gather round her
Miner's lady stranger to blue water
Dark and dusty painted on the sky
Misty taste of moonshine teardrop in my eyes

Country roads take me home
To the place I belong
West Virginia mountain momma
Take me home country roads

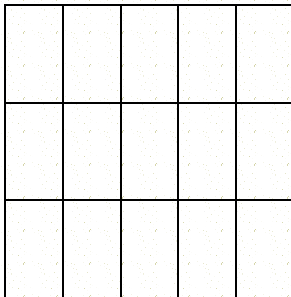
Em D C G
I hear a voice in the morning how she calls me
 C D G
The radio reminds me of my home far away
Em F C
Drivin' down the road I get a feelin'
 G G7
That I should been home yesterday yesterday

Country roads take me home
To the place I belong
West Virginia mountain momma
Take me home country roads
Take me home down country roads.

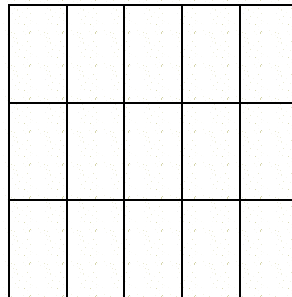
Lesson 4: Worksheet

1. What is the relative minor chord of G major? _____
2. What are the notes of that chord? _____
3. Using the 1, 3b, 5 pattern to form minor chords: diagram the following major chords.

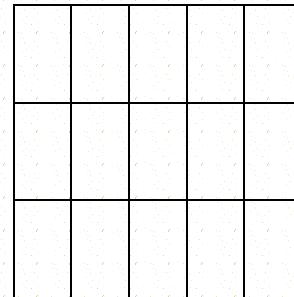
A Minor



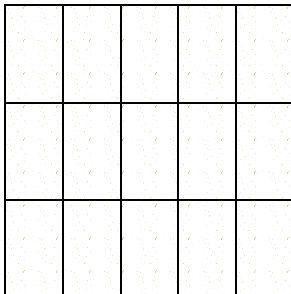
B Minor



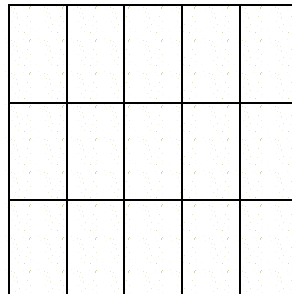
D Minor



E Minor

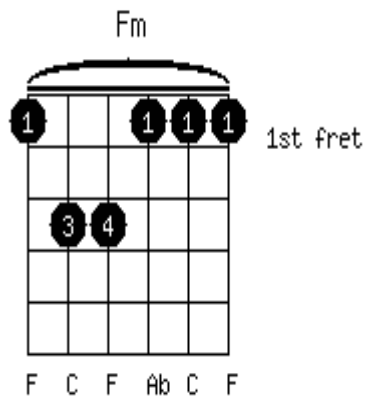
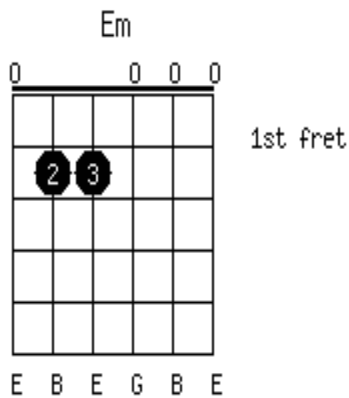
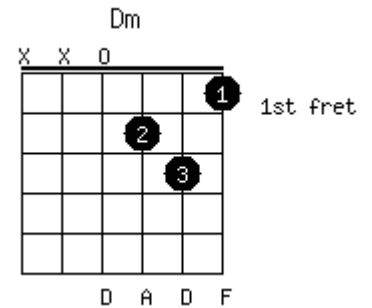
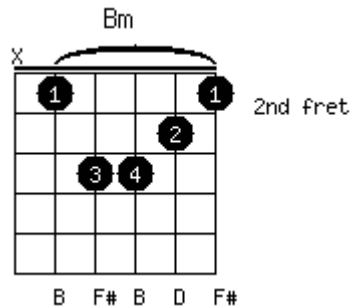
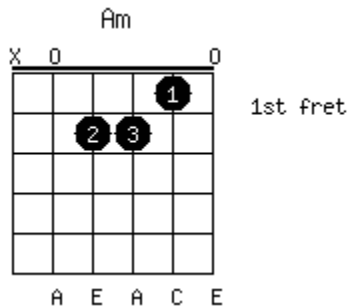


F Minor



Answers

1. What is the relative minor chord of G major? E minor
2. What are the notes of that chord? E-G-B
3. Using the 1, 3b, 5 pattern to form minor chords: diagram the following major chords.

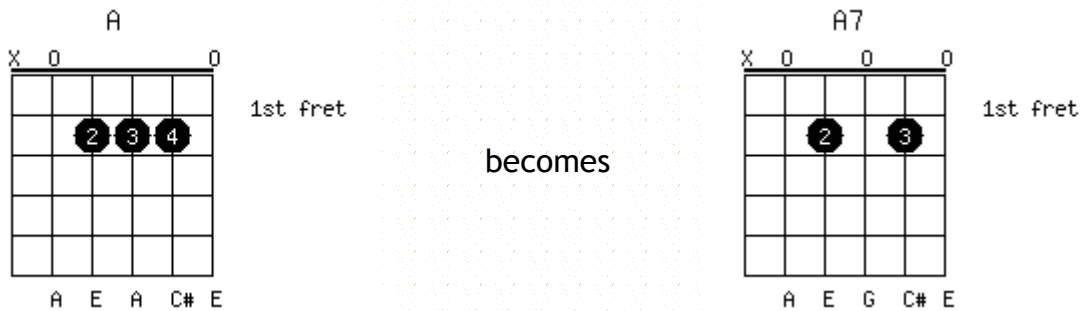


Lesson 5: Seventh Chords

7th Inning Stretch

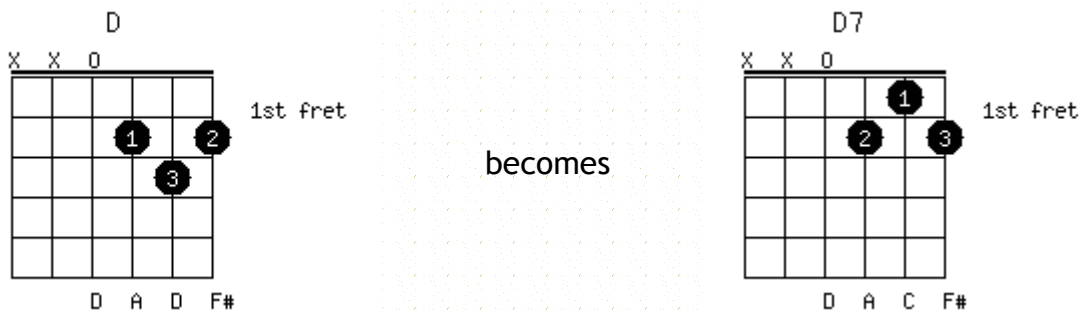
Whether you intend to play rock, country or folk tunes, you will definitely want to learn how to play major and minor 7th chords because they add flavor to a song like cilantro adds flavor to eggs.

7th chords are very easy to make: take any major chord and introduce at least one note that is the **flattened 7th** note of that chord's major scale. For example:



The 7th note of an A major scale is a **G#**, so a flattened 7th note would be G.

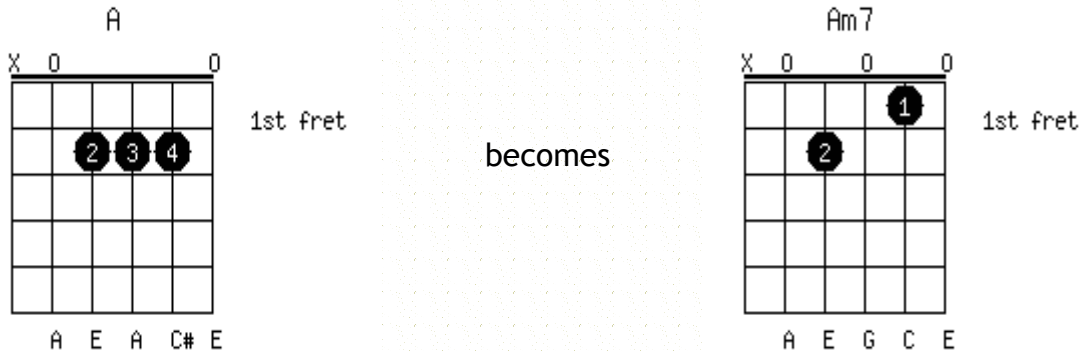
Here's another example:



The 7th note of a D major scale is a **C#**, so a flattened 7th note would be C.

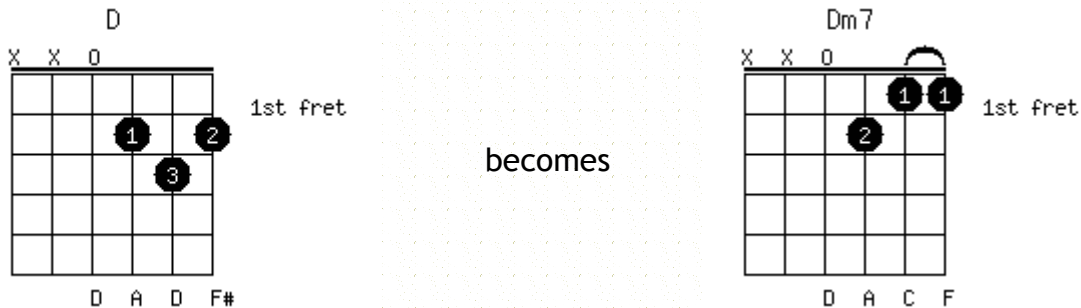
Minor Sevenths

There are two rules to making minor chords: first you make the major chord into a minor chord by flattening the 3rd note and then you add a flattened 7th note. For example:



The 3rd note of the A major scale is C#, so the flattened 3rd note would be C. The 7th note of the A major scale is a G#, so a flattened 7th note would be G.

Here's another example:

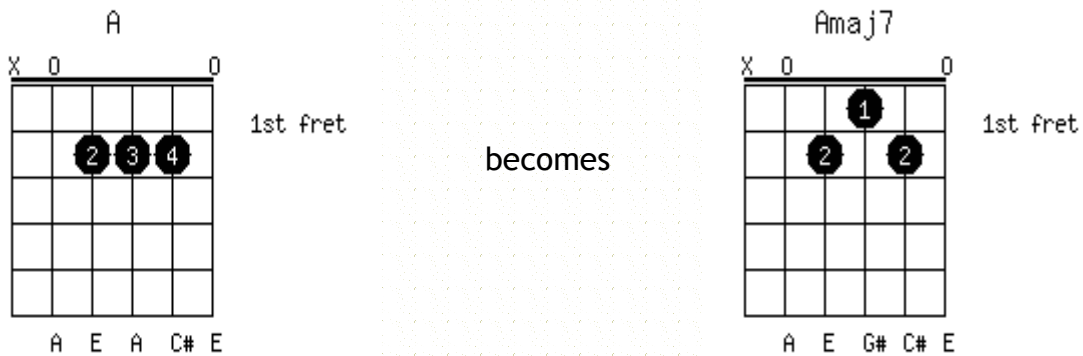


The 3rd note of the D major scale is F#, so the flattened 3rd note would be F. The 7th note of the D major scale is a C#, so a flattened 7th note would be C.

Major Sevenths

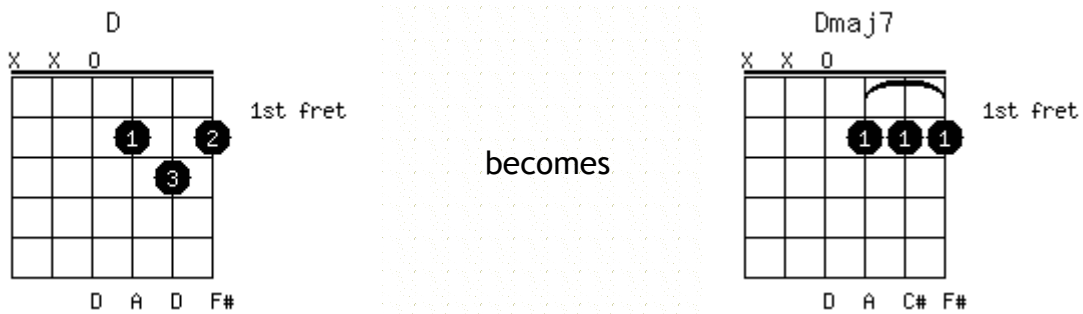
The major seventh chord should not be confused with the seventh chord. The difference between an A7 and an Amaj7 is that the 7th note of the major scale is not flattened in a major seventh chord. This makes a major seventh chord fairly easy to make since you just drop one of the eighth notes down a half step to add a seventh note.

Here are two examples using the A and D chords:



The 7th note of the A major scale is a **G#**, so the A on the 3rd string is dropped ½ step to a **G#**.

Here's another example:

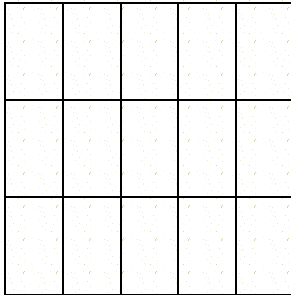


The 7th note of the D major scale is a **C#**, so the D on the 2nd string is dropped ½ step to a **C#**.

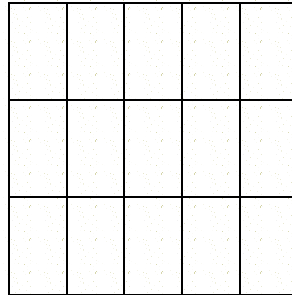
Lesson 5: Worksheet

Diagram the following chords:

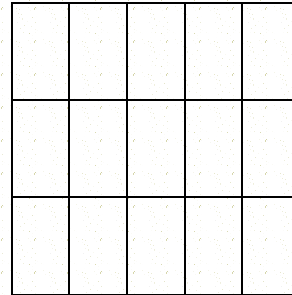
E7



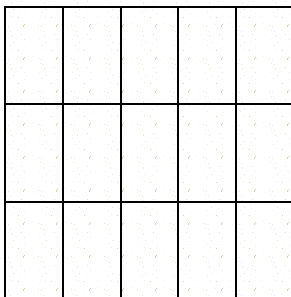
Emaj7



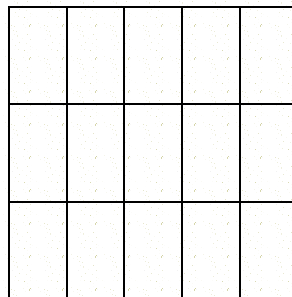
Em7



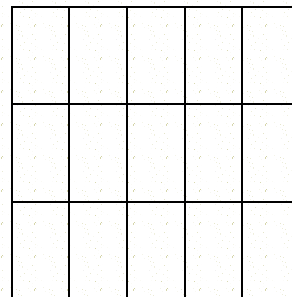
A7



Amaj7

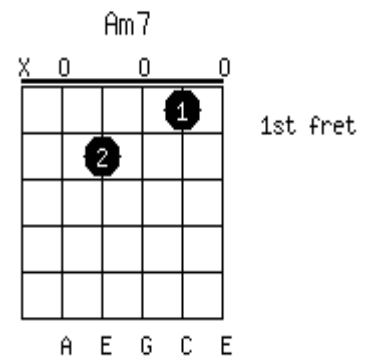
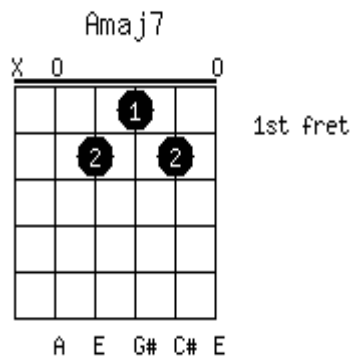
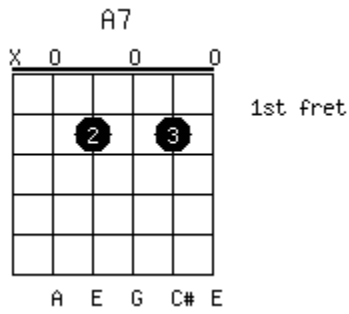
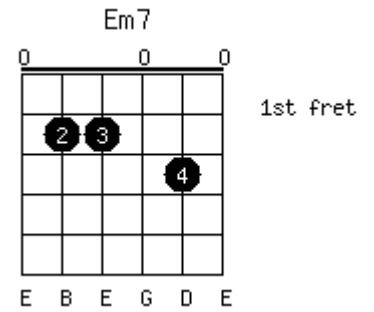
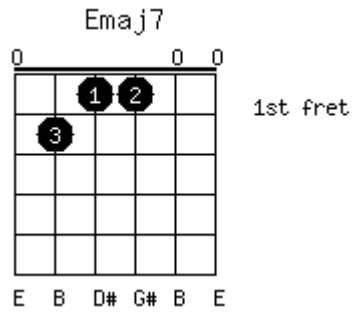
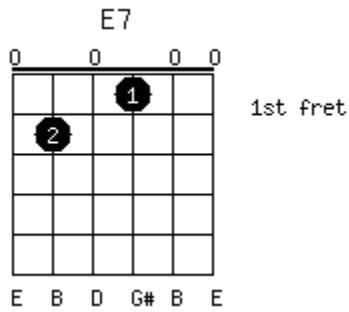


Am7



Chapter 5: Answers

Diagram the following chords:



Lesson 6: Barre Chords

E formation: Major, Minor, Sevenths

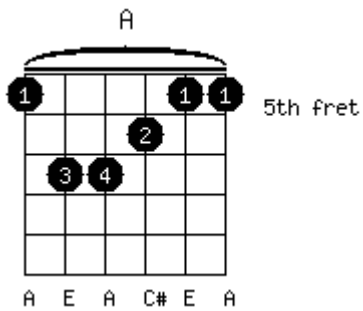
Although most folk songs can be played without the use of **barre chords**, they are essential to playing most rock songs! **Barre Chords** are chords that have your index finger holding down more than one string and not playing with any open strings. Below is a picture of an F major chord, using the barring method:



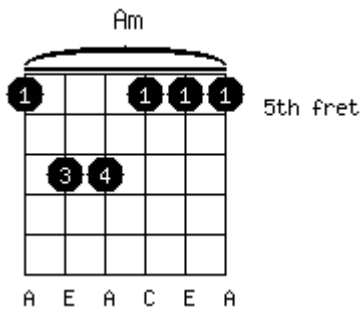
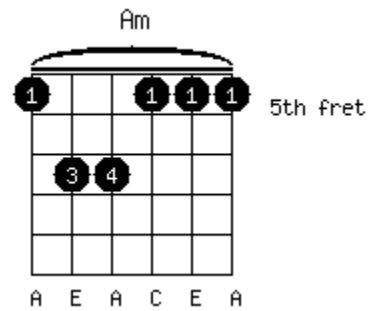
Note that the 2nd, 3rd and 4th fingers are playing the formation of an E major chord while the 1st finger is barring all of the strings of the first fret. You may find this hard to do at first because the 1st finger must be held flat and you are putting your 4th finger to work for the first time, but barre chords have a great advantage over open chords: they can be moved up and down the neck to make any chord you want. For example:



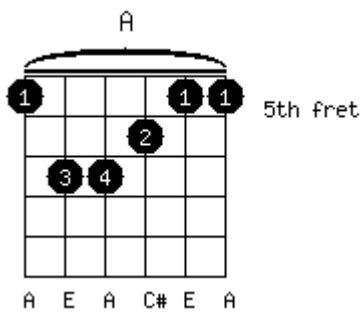
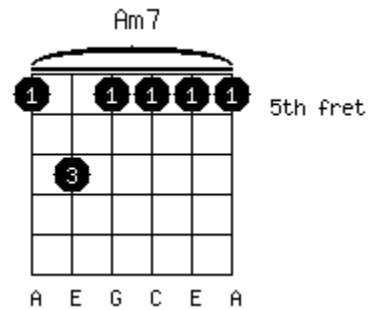
All major, minor and seventh chords can be made using E formation barre chords. Let's look at A major, Am, Am7 and Amaj7 using E formation barre chords. The 1st finger is barred across the 5th fret, making the 6th string an A note. The 2nd, 3rd and 4th fingers make an E formation to create the rest of the chord:



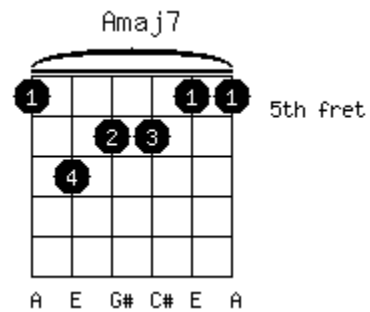
Then the minor chord follows the same pattern as the open Em chord by flattening the 3rd note: C#



By flattened the 7th note of the A major scale, the 2nd A note drops a whole step (G) to become an Am7 barre chord:



By dropping the 2nd A note down a half step, we get an Amaj7 barre chord:

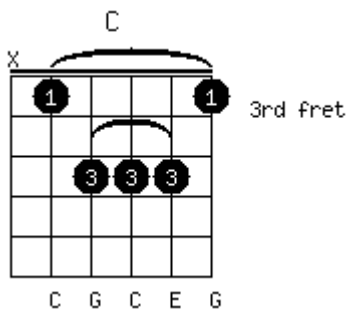


These variations of the E formation barre chord may be played anywhere on the neck. The note on the 6th string fret you barre determines the base of the chord you are playing.

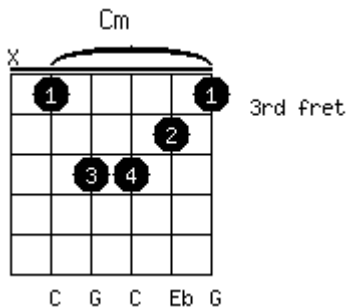
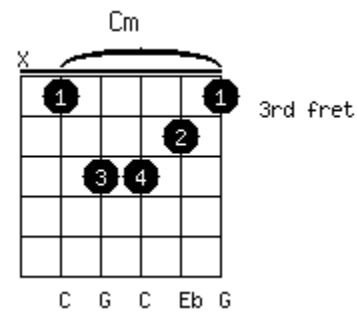
Similarly, you can use an A major chord formation to create barre chords.

A formation: Major, Minor, Sevenths

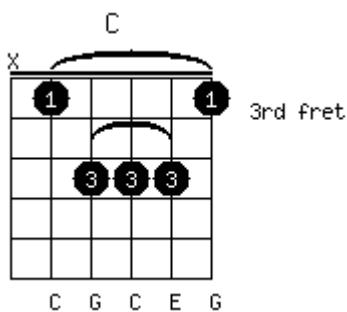
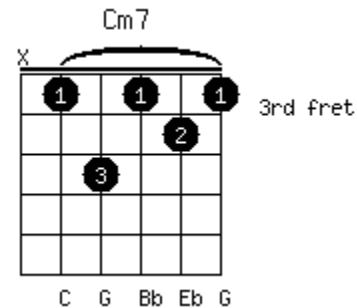
As you've probably already guessed, in the A formation barre chord starts with barring the first five strings with your 1st finger. The A formation is then barred on 2nd, 3rd and 4th strings with your 3rd finger. This formation may be difficult to master, but the versatility of the A formation barre chords is worth the effort. Let's look at C major, Cm, Cm7 and Cmaj7 using this barre chord formation. The first finger is barred across the first 5 strings on the 3rd fret. Note that the 6th string is not played (unless you want to add a G bass note: this would be a C/G chord). The bass note on the 5th string is a C, which determines which chord you are playing. The 3rd finger barres the 2nd, 3rd and 4th strings 2 frets above the 1st finger:



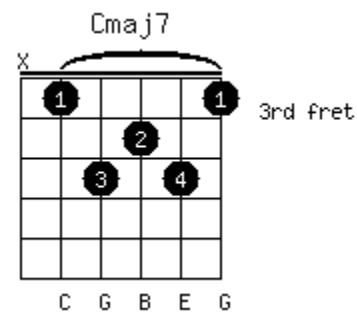
Then the minor chord follows the same pattern as the open Am chord by flattening the 3rd note: Eb



By flattened the 7th note of the C major scale, the 2nd C note drops a whole step (Bb) to become an Cm7 barre chord:



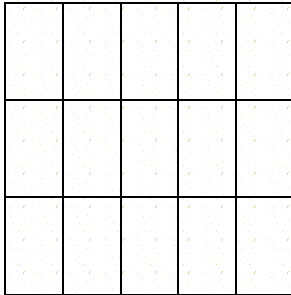
By dropping the 2nd C note down a half step, we get an Cmaj7 barre chord:



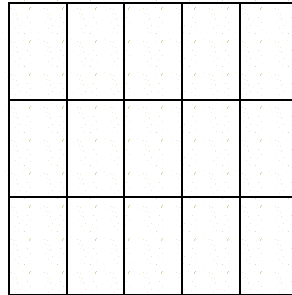
Lesson 6: Worksheet

Using the E formation barre chord, diagram the following chords:

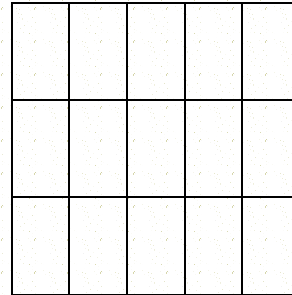
F# major



Bbmaj7

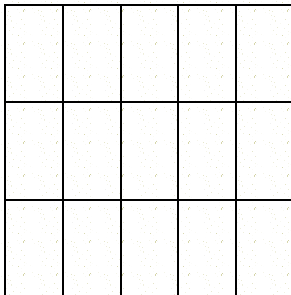


Cm7

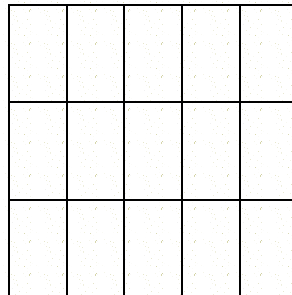


Using the A formation barre chord, diagram the following chords:

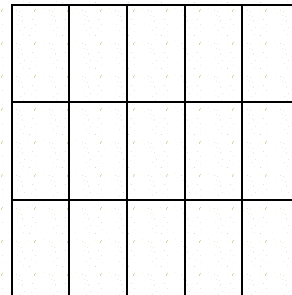
D major



Bbmaj7



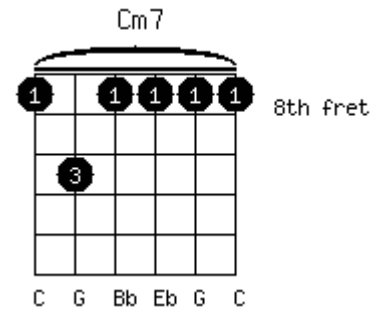
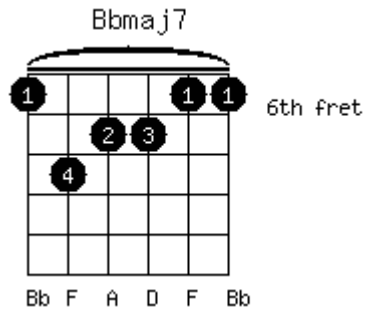
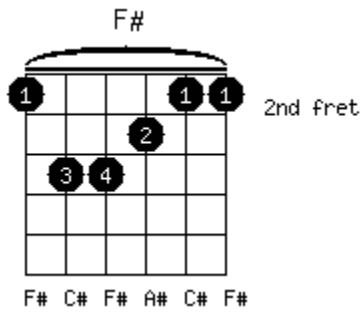
Cm7



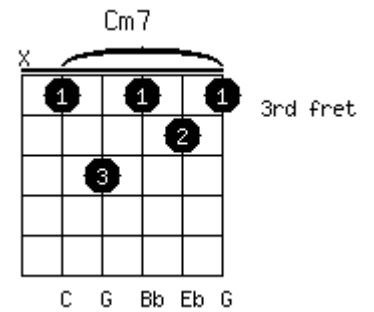
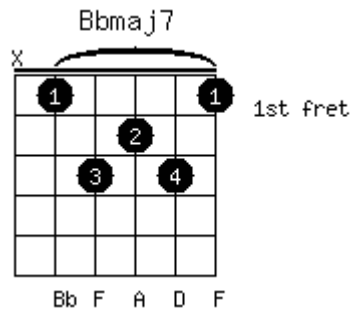
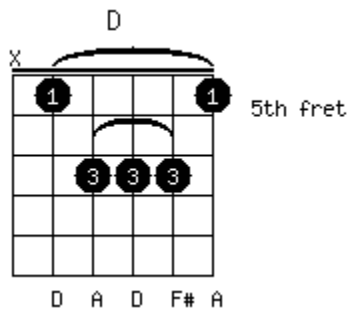
Note that both of the Bbmaj7 and Cm7 chords contain the same notes.

Lesson 6: Worksheet Answers

Using the E formation barre chord, diagram the following chords:



Using the A formation barre chord, diagram the following chords:



Lesson 7: Basic Rhythms

Down & Up Strokes

Up to this point, we've concentrated on your fretting hand. Now, you will learn basic rhythms used in folk and rock music. When you play acoustic guitar alone, you must establish the melody and the rhythm as you play. The guitar must become a percussive stringed instrument. This can be achieved through the strumming method you chose. Follow the tab below for a couple of basic rhythms:

("v" denotes a down stroke, "^" denotes an upstroke)

You will not find rhythm marks in guitar tablature, but this is for demonstration purposes only. First, we'll look at some guitar chords in tab.

	G	Em	C	D
E	+---3---	0---	0---	2---
B	---0---	0---	1---	3---
G	---0---	0---	0---	2---
D	---0---	2---	2---	0---
A	---2---	2---	3---	x---
E	+---3---	0---	x---	x---

	v	v	^	^	v	^	v	v	^	^	v	^	v	v	^	^	v	^	v	v	^	^	v	^
E	+---3---	0---	0---	0---	2---	0---	0---	1---	3---	0---	2---	0---	2---	0---	0---	0---	3---	x---	x---	x---				
B	---0---	0---	0---	0---	1---	3---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---				
G	---0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---				
D	---0---	2---	2---	2---	0---	2---	2---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---				
A	---2---	2---	2---	3---	x---	3---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---				
E	+---3---	0---	0---	0---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---				

This is a basic rhythm for strumming, but each song has its own pattern. For instance, the song *Stay* uses the chords listed above with alternating down and upstrokes like this:

	v	^	v	^	v	^	v	^	v	^	v	^	v	^	v	^	v	^	v	^
E	+---3---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	2---	3---	0---	2---	3---	0---	2---	3---	0---	2---	3---	0---	
B	---0---	0---	0---	0---	1---	3---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	
G	---0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	2---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	
D	---0---	2---	2---	2---	0---	2---	2---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	0---	
A	---2---	2---	2---	3---	x---	3---	x---	x---	2---	2---	2---	2---	2---	2---	2---	2---	2---	2---	2---	
E	+---3---	0---	0---	x---	x---	x---	x---	x---	3---	3---	3---	3---	3---	3---	3---	3---	3---	3---	3---	

Stay - ay - ay just a little bit longer

Riding the Bass

Folk music often requires a strumming techniques I call “riding the bass.” In this technique, you pick the bass note of a chord, and then strum the chord. For example:

```

      v v ^ v ^ v ^ v v ^ v ^ v ^ v v ^ v ^ v ^
E +-----3-----0-----0-----2-----+
B |-----0-----0-----1-----3-----|
G |-----0-----0-----0-----2-----|
D |-----0-----2-----2-----0-0-----|
A |-----2-----2-----3-3-----x-----|
E +--3-3-----0-0-----x-----x-----+

```

Another variation of this technique is used in folk music to establish a bass line and a rhythm pattern. The “bass” note may vary to create a more interesting bass line.

```

      v v ^ v v ^ v v ^ v ^ v v ^ v v ^ v v ^ v ^
E +-----3-----3-----0-----0-----3-----3-----0-----0-----+
B |-----0-----0-----1-----0-----0-----0-----1-----0-----|
G |-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----0-----|
D |-----0-----0-----2-2-2-----0-----0-----2-2-2-----|
A |-----2-2-2-3-3-3-----2-2-2-3-3-3-----3-3-3-----|
E +--3-3-3-----x-x-x-----3-3-3-----3-3-3-----x-x-x-----+

```

Jig beat

The jig beat uses eighth notes and can be used to strum entire chords or can be combined with the bass ride technique as shown below:

```

      v v ^ v ^ v v ^ v ^ v v ^ v ^ v v ^ v ^
E +-----3-----0-----3-----0-----+
B |-----0-----1-----0-----0-----|
G |-----0-----0-----0-----0-----|
D |-----0-----2-----0-----2-----|
A |-----2-----3-3-3-----2-----3-3-3-----|
E +--3-3-3-----x-----3-3-3-----x-----+

```

Lesson 8: Major Scales

First Position Major

Whether you intend to play lead guitar or would just like to develop your guitar skills, I recommend practicing the following scales. You will use all four of your fingers when you practice. Let's start with the first position major scale in the key of G. Note that you start on the 6th string at the 3rd fret, which is the G note:

2 4 1 2 4 1 3 4 1 3 4 2 4 1 2

```

E +-----2-----3-----+
B |-----3-----5-----|
G |-----2-----4-----5-----|
D |-----2-----4-----5-----|
A |-----2-----3-----5-----|
E +---3---5-----+
  
```

The notes in bold are the tonic note **G**, so this fingering gives you a two-octave scale within four frets. If you play this fingering with the fingers listed above, there will be little movement in your hand position and you will strengthen your seldom used 4th finger! Practice playing this scale forwards and backwards to gain strength and muscle memory. Below is another graphic to emphasize the fingering of the scale:

1	F	A#	D#	G#	C	F
	F#	B	E	A	C#	F#
3	G	C	F	A#	D	G
	G#	C#	F#	B	D#	G#
5	A	D	G	C	E	A
	A#	D#	G#	C#	F	A#
7	B	E	A	D	F#	B

Second Position Major

Still in the key of **G**, the second position major scale starts with the second note of the **G** major scale, **A**. Notice that the second position scale overlaps some of the notes from the first position scale. Again, the notes in bold are the tonic note **G**.

1 3 4 1 3 1 2 4 1 2 4 1 3 4 1 3 4

E	+	-----5--7--8--+													
B		-----5--7--8-----													
G		-----4--5--7-----													
D		-----4--5--7-----													
A		-----5--7-----													
E	+	---5--7--8-----+													

Below is another graphic to emphasize the fingering of the second position scale:

3	G	C	F	A#	D	G
	G#	C#	F#	B	D#	G#
5	A	D	G	C	E	A
	A#	D#	G#	C#	F	A#
7	B	E	A	D	F#	B
	C	F	A#	D#	G	C
9	C#	F#	B	E	G#	C#

Third Position Major

The third position major scale starts with the third note of the **G** major scale, **B**. Notice that the third position scale overlaps some of the notes from the second position scale. Again, the notes in bold are the tonic note **G**.

1 2 4 1 3 4 1 2 4 1 3 1 2 4 1 2 4

E	+	-----7--8--10+														
B		-----7--8--10-----														
G		-----7--9-----														
D		-----7--9--10-----														
A		-----7--9--10-----														
E	+	-7--8--10-----+														

Below is another graphic to emphasize the fingering of the second position scale:

	A#	D#	G#	C#	F	A#
7	B	E	A	D	F#	B
	C	F	A#	D#	G	C
9	C#	F#	B	E	G#	C#
	D	G	C	F	A	D
11	D#	G#	C#	F#	A#	D#

The scales above are for the key of **G**; however you can use these fingerings for any key by changing the tonic note and following the same patterns. For example, the first position major scale in the key of **A** will start on the 5th fret and follow the same *pattern* as the first position major scale previously shown.

Key of G: First Position							Key of A: First Position							
1	F	A#	D#	G#	C	F		3	G	C	F	A#	D	G
	F#	B	E	A	C#	F#			G#	C#	F#	B	D#	G#
3	G	C	F	A#	D	G		5	A	D	G	C	E	A
	G#	C#	F#	B	D#	G#			A#	D#	G#	C#	F	A#
5	A	D	G	C	E	A		7	B	E	A	D	F#	B
	A#	D#	G#	C#	F	A#			C	F	A#	D#	G	C
7	B	E	A	D	F#	B		9	C#	F#	B	E	G#	C#

When the 1st, 2nd and 3rd position scales are shown above each other, you can easily see how the scales overlap each other.

Key of G: First Position	1	F	A#	D#	G#	C	F
		F#	B	E	A	C#	F#
	3	G	C	F	A#	D	G
		G#	C#	F#	B	D#	G#
	5	A	D	G	C	E	A
		A#	D#	G#	C#	F	A#
	7	B	E	A	D	F#	B
Key of G: Second Position	3	G	C	F	A#	D	G
		G#	C#	F#	B	D#	G#
	5	A	D	G	C	E	A
		A#	D#	G#	C#	F	A#
	7	B	E	A	D	F#	B
		C	F	A#	D#	G	C
	9	C#	F#	B	E	G#	C#
Key of G: Third Position		A#	D#	G#	C#	F	A#
	7	B	E	A	D	F#	B
		C	F	A#	D#	G	C
	9	C#	F#	B	E	G#	C#
	11	D#	G#	C#	F#	A#	D#
	1	F	A#	D#	G#	C	F
		F#	B	E	A	C#	F#
	3	G	C	F	A#	D	G
		G#	C#	F#	B	D#	G#
	5	A	D	G	C	E	A
		A#	D#	G#	C#	F	A#
	7	B	E	A	D	F#	B
		C	F	A#	D#	G	C
	9	C#	F#	B	E	G#	C#
		D	G	C	F	A	D
	11	D#	G#	C#	F#	A#	D#

Lesson 9: Transposing

Transposing the key of a song can be accomplished through two methods. The easiest way to transpose the chords of a song is to use a capo. For example, a song that you have learned to play in the key of C may have the following chord progression: **C, F, C, G, C, Bm, C**, which can easily be changed to the key of D by placing the capo across the 2nd fret and playing the same chord formations. However, since you have raised the pitch one whole note with the capo, the chords are actually **D, G, D, A, D, C#m, D**. Below is a picture of a Kyser Quick Change capo (like the one I use) placed on the 3rd fret to raise the pitch 1 ½ notes.



The second method of transposing the key of a song requires more work. As you can see from the example above, if you wanted to transpose a chord progression from the key of C to the key of D, you would simply raise all chords one whole note or two frets. Notice in the example above that all major chords remain major and all minor chords remain minor. Another way to think of transposing the key is to look at the relative scales of the keys you are using. As an example, let's change the chord progression above from the key of C to the key of G. First, write out the notes of the keys of C and G like this:

Root	2	3	4	5	6	7	Octave
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G

Then, simply match the chords with the corresponding position of the new key. The progression **C, F, C, G, C, Bm, C**, in the key of C becomes **G, C, G, D, G, F#m, G** in the key of G.

Lesson 10: Chord Progressions

I consider chord progressions to be the unifying theory of learning to play rhythm guitar. First, let's take an easy key like C major. The notes in the C Major Scale are C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C. Now take the degrees of these notes and write them out.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C	D	E	F	G	A	B
Major	Minor	Minor	Major	Major	Minor	Minor

It is important to remember that the 1st, 4th and 5th degrees or notes of the C major scale will produce major chords: C major, F major and G major respectively. It is also important to remember that the 2nd, 3rd, 6th and 7th degrees or notes will produce minor chords: D minor, E minor, A minor and B minor respectively.

Of course, we are not limited to playing only major and minor chords and we have already learned how to produce seventh chords, minor sevenths and major seventh chords. The guiding principle to remember is that certain chords in the key of C should always be major or minor depending on the degree from which they are taken. For example, if you hear a G chord in the key of C major, it will likely be a G, a G7 or a Gmaj7, but not a G minor. Likewise, a D chord in the key of C major will likely be a D minor or a Dm7, but not a D major.

Now you are ready to discover the basic chord progressions in all the major keys. Start with the most often used keys of C, D, E, G & A and write out the chords found in each of these keys:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C	Dm, Dm7	Em, Em7	F, F7, Fmaj7	G, G7, Gmaj7	Am, Am7	Bm, Bm7
D						
E						
F						
G						
Major	Minor	Minor	Major	Major	Minor	Minor

Websites

For more info, visit:

<http://www.guitarlessonworld.com/>

<http://www.supersonic.net/guitar/lessons.htm>

<http://guitar.about.com/library/weekly/aa071200a.htm>

Guitar Chord Graphics

<http://hatbox.lib.virginia.edu/text/gtrchord/>