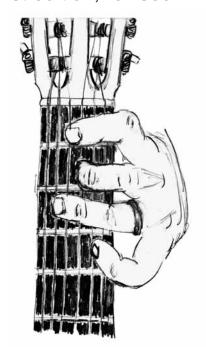
Guitar Basics

first edition, revised



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Preface

The Basics

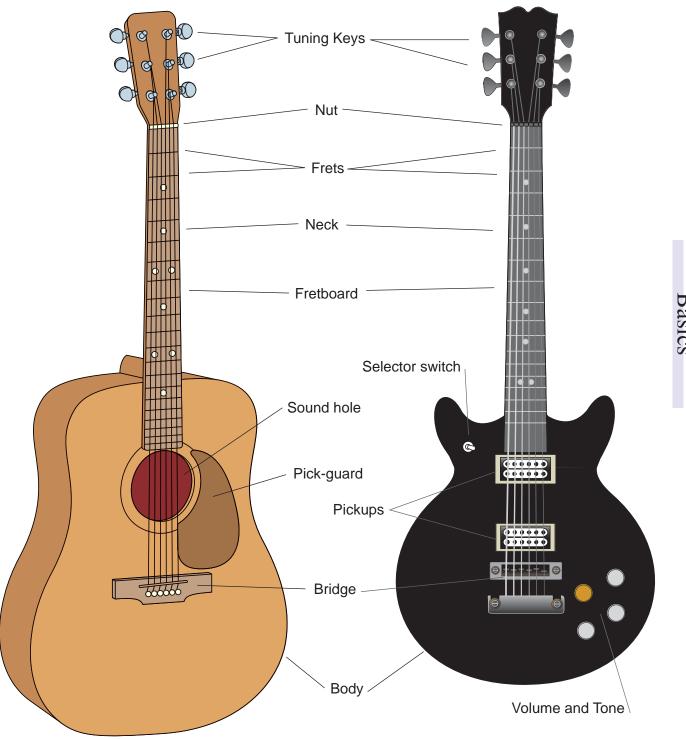
People learn to play guitar for different reasons, from self-amusement, the amusement of friends, to making a career of it. To a large degree, the goal determines the course of study. Someone who wants to strum in front of a campfire will want to learn some basic chords and rhythms; someone who wants to play in a band will need to learn bar chords and scales.

I've gathered these concepts and present them in this book to serve as a launch pad for further study, for whatever goal you may have. This book is meant as a text for private and group lessons. The main concepts covered are note reading, chording, fingerpicking and major scales. These basic skills are rudimentary for any style of playing.

After completing this book, you should have solid basic skills and a clearer idea as to what style or styles to pursue.

The best way to go about learning any instrument is to find a good teacher and develop a consistent practice routine. While this book is not meant to be a substitute for a good instructor, it is meant to get your feet wet in the realm of musicianship. It is my goal to present these basic concepts in a way that encourages the student to learn more.

Parts of the Guitar



Tuning

Relative Tuning

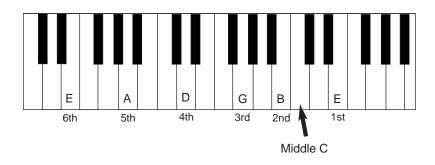
Assuming that the 6th string is in tune, pressing the 6th string on the 5th fret produces the pitch A, which is the same pitch as the next open string, string 5.

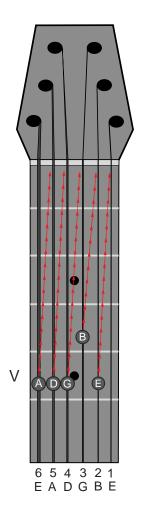
Pressing the 5th string at the 5th fret produces the pitch D, the same pitch as the next open string, string 4.

The 4th string at the 5th fret produces G,the 3rd string at the 4th fret produces B and the 2nd string at the 5th fret produces E.

Tuning to a Piano

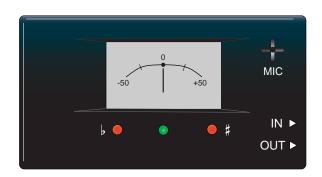
The notes of the piano corresponding to the guitar:



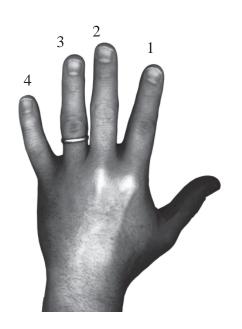


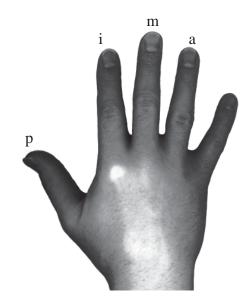
Using an Electronic Tuner

Electronic tuners have a small mic for pick up, or may be plugged into.



Hands



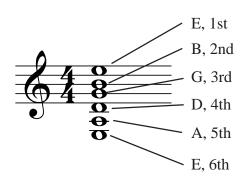


Open Strings

Neck Diagram:

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

Notation:



Positioning

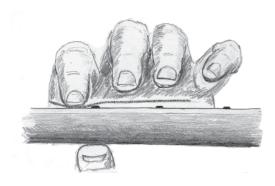
Sitting

Sit comfortably in a chair that allows both feet to rest flat on the floor. (Depending on your size and the size of the chair, you may want to elevate your right leg, by using a footstool or stack of books). The guitar should sit on your right leg with your right arm resting on top of the body of the guitar keeping the neck tilted slightly upwards. Do not support the neck with your left hand, rather keep the guitar in position with your right arm. Your left hand needs to be free to move about the fretboard. The bottom side of the guitar should rest flat on your leg; not at an angle. Your right forearm should be loose and free, ready to strum.



Fretting

To effectively play a note on a string, press your fingertip directly behind the fret, perpendicular to the fretboard. Placing your finger on top of the fret will result in a "muted" sound, placing it too far behind will cause "buzzing". Touching adjacent strings can result in either. It is essential, especially when chording, to keep your fingers from touching adjacent strings. Practice playing individual notes before trying whole chords.



Positioning

Flatpicking

Hold the pick between your thumb and index finger, with your index finger slightly bent. When strumming, hold the pick lightly, allowing it to glide across the strings. Hold it tighter for plucking single notes.



Strumming

Strumming should be a fluid motion involving your right forearm, wrist, and pick. Let the pick glide across the strings at an angle; note that the tighter you hold the pick, the more it has to flex of its own, resulting in a "bright" tone. Tone can be varied by your grip on the pick, how you attack the strings and by different shapes and thicknesses of the pick. Buy an assortment and experiment.



How to practice

"Remember the direct correlation between time spent in practice and ability to play."

Practice is essential to any creative discipline. To make steady progress with your instrument, consistent, deliberate, regular practice is necessary. The following are some suggestions for maintaining a healthy practice routine:

1) Designate a regular time and place to practice –

preferably away from other distractions such as the television or stereo or any other background noise.

2) Have a goal -

It may be a new scale, exercise, or the first few bars of a new song. Start with a warm-up exercise, then play something familiar. After you've loosened up to play, begin working toward your goal.

3) Reward yourself -

Don't practice for too long without a break. If you begin having trouble concentrating, take a few minutes to stretch and get a drink.

4) Don't give up -

Skills take time and effort to develop. Practice may seem tedious at times, but diligent, steady progress is the only way to develop solid musicianship.

Sample practice

| Warm-up | 5 min. |
|---------------|---------|
| Familiar song | 5 min. |
| Lesson | 20 min. |

Basics

Practice Record

| What to Practice: | Date: | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|--|--|--|
| | When You practiced: | | | |
| | start End | | | |
| | Sun | | | |
| | Mon | | | |
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Practice Record

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Basics

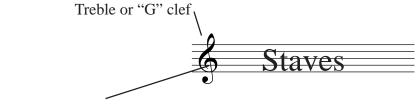
Practice Record

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Notation

Notes convey *pitch* and *rhythm*. Notes are held on a staff. A note towards the top of the staff is higher in pitch than one towards the bottom of the staff. *Bar lines* separate *measures*, measuring time or rhythm. The time signature tells how much time, or how many beats are contained in a measure. Most music has 4 beats per measure, with the quarter note equal to 1 beat.

Pitch



The treble clef circles the note G

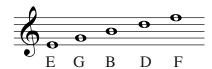
The notes on the spaces can be remembered by what they spell: F,A,C,E



The notes on the lines can be remembered by acronyms:

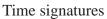
Every Good Boy Does Fine or

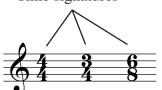
Empty Garbage Before Dad Flips



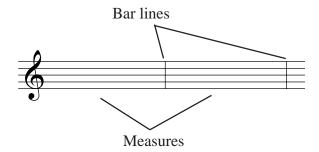
Notation

Rhythm





The top number gives beats per measure, the bottom number gives the note value of the beat. Four-four time is *four* quarter notes. Three -four time is *three* quarter notes. Six-eight time is *six* eighth notes, and so on.



o Whole note = 4 beats

Whole rest

 \bigcirc Half note = 2 beats

- Half rest

• Quarter note = 1 beat

Quarter rest

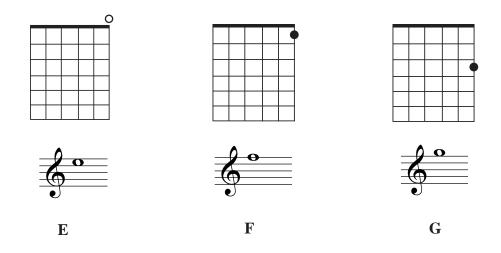
Rhythms #1

For this rhythm exercise, pluck an open string and let it sustain for the duration of the note value while you count "one, two, three, four" out loud.



Notes of the First String

The open first string sounds the note E, shown here in a fretboard diagram and as notation. The first finger on the first fret is F, the third finger on the third fret is G.

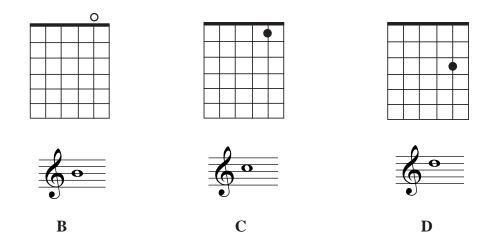


1st string exercise:



Notes of the Second String

The open second string sounds the note B, the first finger on the first fret is C, the third finger on the third fret is D.



2nd string exercise:



Having learned some first position notes, the following are some melodies on which to try them. Keep your eyes on the music, use proper finger positioning, and say the note names out loud; this will help you learn them.

Melodies

1



2



Ode To Joy

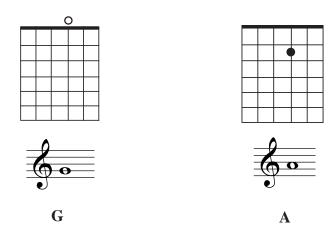
Beethoven





Notes of the Third String

The open third string sounds the note G, the second finger on the second fret is A.



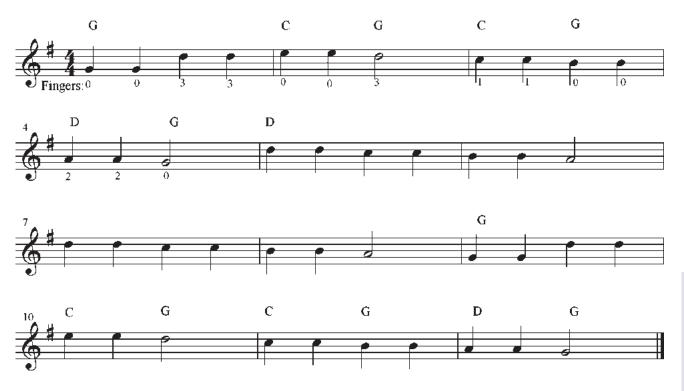
3rd string exercise:



Exercise on first three strings

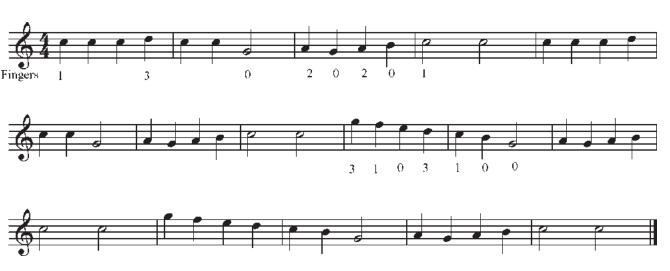


Twinkle Twinkle



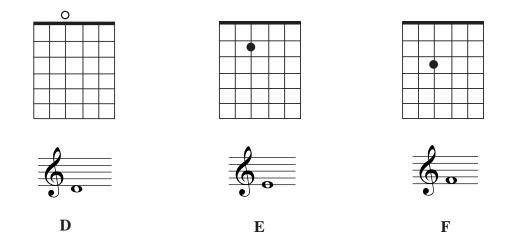
King Wenceslas

English Traditional



Notes of the Fourth String

The open fourth string sounds the note D, the second finger on the second fret is E, the third finger on the third fret is F.



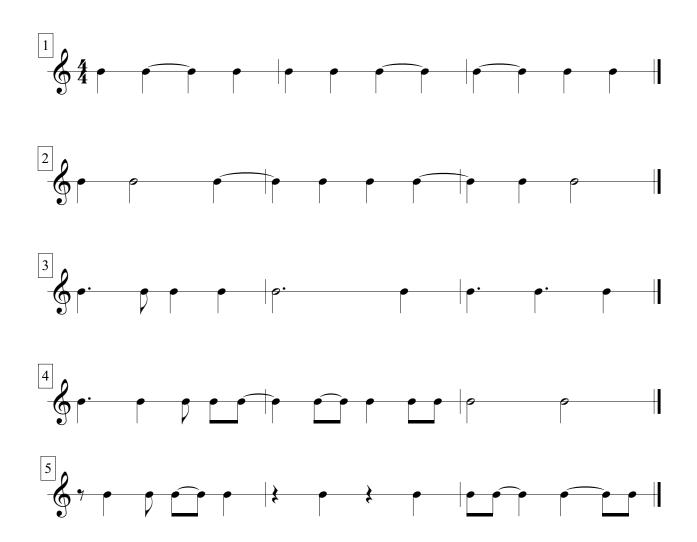
Notes on the 4th string:



Rhythms 2

Introducing the tie and the dotted note J value, along with the eighth rest (γ). The tie connects two notes within a measure or across a barline. The dot adds half of the notes' value to the note, for instance, a dotted quarter note equals one and a half beats, or three eighth notes (J = J J) A dotted half note equals three quarter notes, etc.

Play through each line using an open string.



Amazing Grace

John Newton



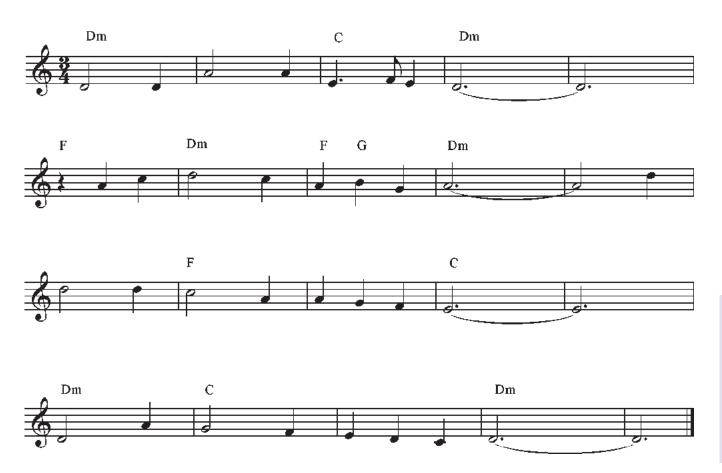
Yankee Doodle



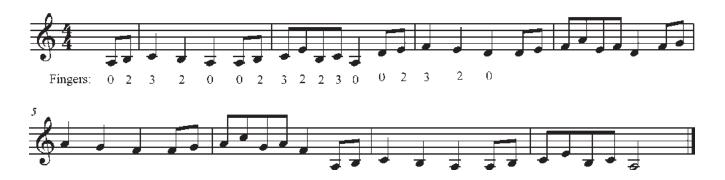




Scarborough Fair

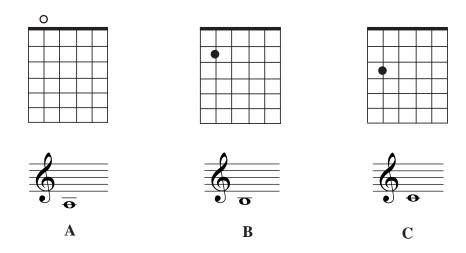


Pharoah Music



The Fifth String

The open fifth string sounds the note A, the second finger on the second fret is B, the third finger on the third fret is C.



Notes on the 5th string:

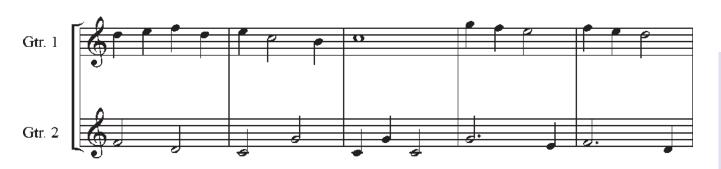


Duet

B.N.









12 Bar Blues



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Note and Chord Exercises







Simple Gifts



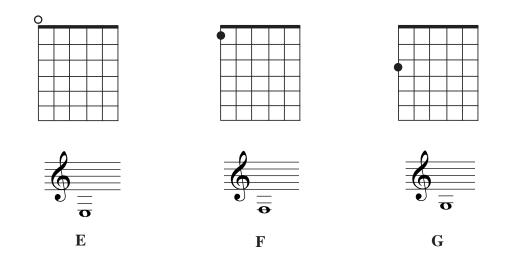


Roller Waltz



The Sixth String

The open sixth string sounds the note E, the first finger on the first fret is F, the third finger on the third fret is G.



Notes on the 6th string:

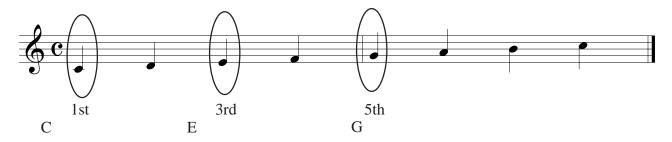


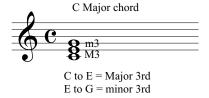


What's a Chord?

A chord is a group of notes played (strummed or plucked) together. The basic kind of chord is the major triad. As the name implies, triads are made up of three notes – the root, third and fifth notes of the scale. The root is the note on which the chord is based. For example, the C chord is based on the note C. The other notes, (3rd and 5th) are derived by counting up from C (C counts as one, D two, E three, etc.).

C major scale:

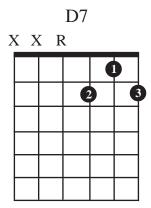




Another way to think of it is: Root, 3rd, 5th. The root note of the major scale followed by the 3rd and 5th notes of the scale.

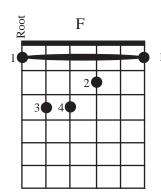
Chord Diagrams

Diagrams show fingering positions for chords and are a great visual way to develop a chord vocabulary. In the chord diagram,"R" means the root note of the chord, or the note the chord is named from, and "X" means don't strum that particular string.

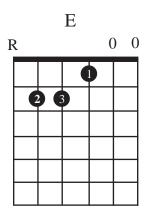


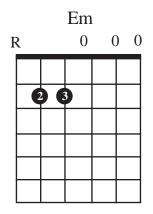
An open chord diagram showing fingering, the root on string 4 and X's over strings 5 and 6.

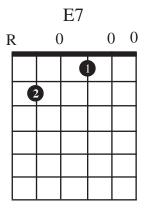
Bar chords are moveable chord forms that don't use open strings; instead, the 1st finger acts as a "bar", played across the fretboard while the other three fingers fret different notes. The fingering in the diagram below on the first fret is F, when moved to the second fret, F#, on the third fret G and so on. These are extremely handy once mastered. Bar chords in this book are grouped into types one and two, based on the root of strings five and six.

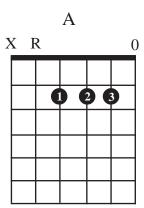


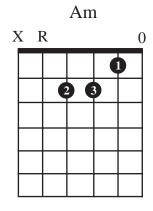
A bar chord diagram showing fingering and the root. Notice the 1st finger layed across the fretboard covering strings 1,2 and 6. When moved up the fretboard, this same shape becomes different chords.

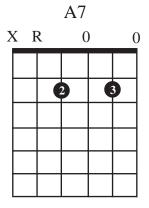


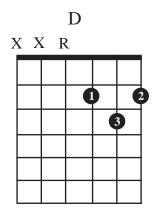


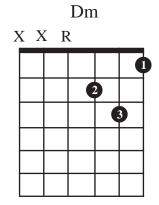


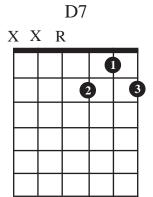


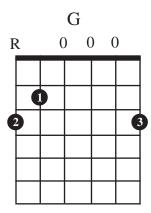


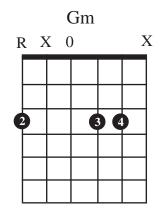


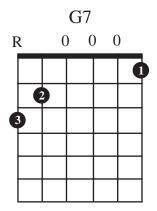


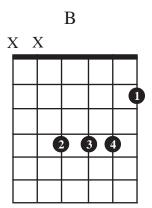


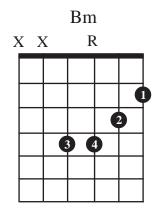


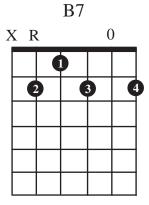


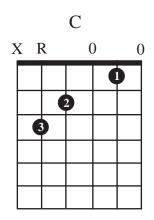


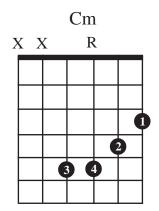


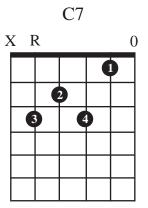


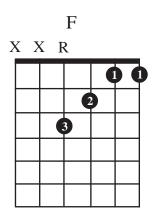


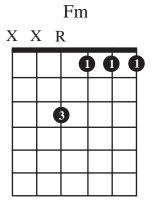


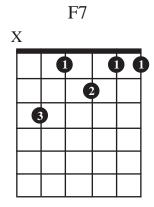


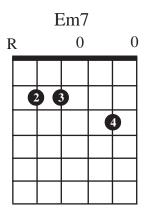


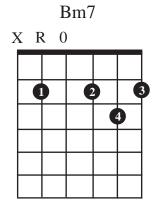


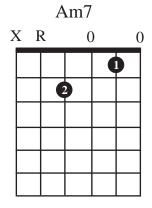


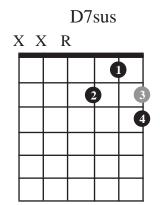


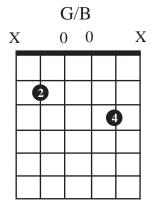


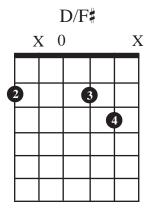












Strumming Chords

To begin using chords, you must first learn the fingerings, then practice switching between them. Start with some easier chords (such as the ones in the following exercise) and strum slowly, keeping an even tempo. It is important not to strum at a tempo faster than what allows you to switch to the next chord. Learn to switch between two chords at a time, say Em and Am, then switch between others until you can play through the whole exercise. After you are comfortable with the first exercise, move to the next one.

Exercise 1





Exercise 2





Exercise 1

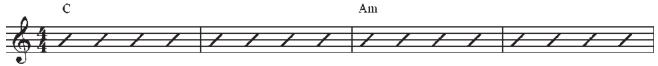
Strum downward on each beat:





Exercise 2

Pluck only the bass note on the first beat, strum on the second beat; bass note on the third beat and strum on the fourth beat:





Exercise 3

Play alternating bass notes on beats one and three; strum beats two and four:

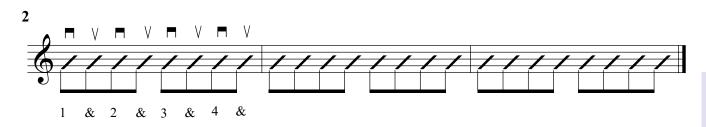


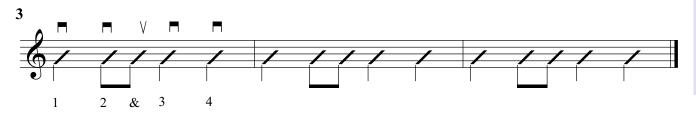


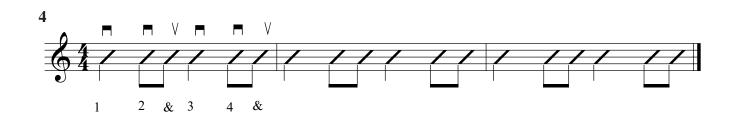
Strum Patterns

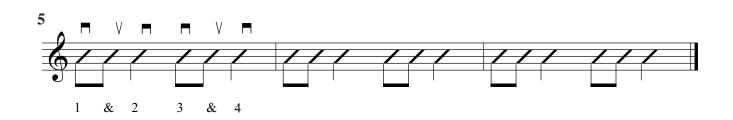
Use these strum patterns to practice new chords; feel free to combine patterns and create your own. The important thing is to count as you play these and play them in time. Note also the down and up strum markings.





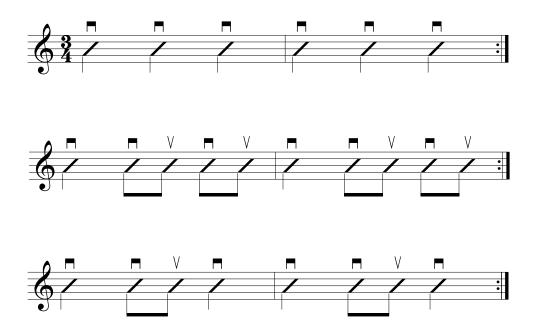




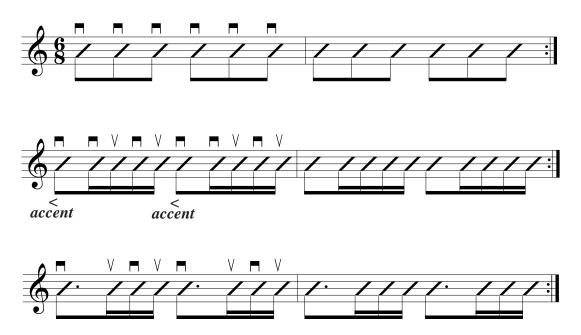


More Strum Patterns

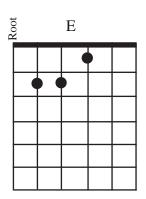
Three-four time often feels like a waltz; to accentuate that feel play only the root of the chord on beat one followed by strums on beats two and three. Variations are also shown.

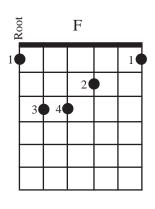


Six-eight time is peculiar in that it can feel like two groups of three, or a slow two. Playing just eighth notes makes it feel like threes; accenting beats one and four makes it feel more like a slow two.



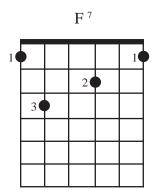
Bar Chords

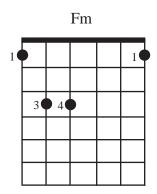


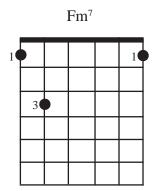


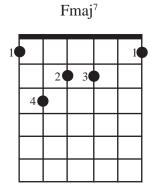
Form I

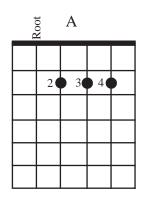
The Form I Bar chord has the same form as the open E chord with the root on the 6th string

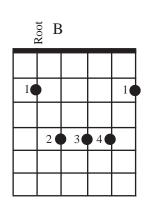






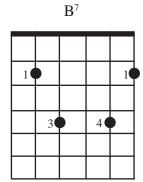


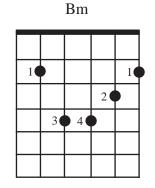


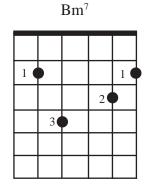


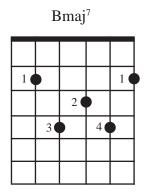
Form II

The Form II Bar chord has the same form as the open A chord with the root on the 5th string





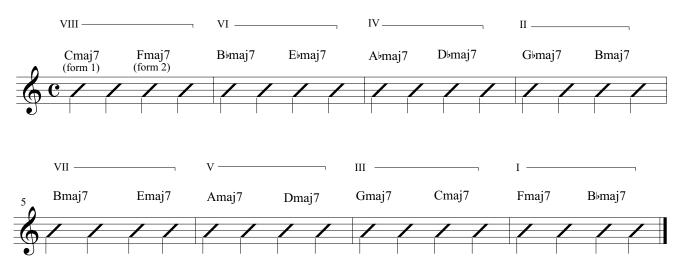




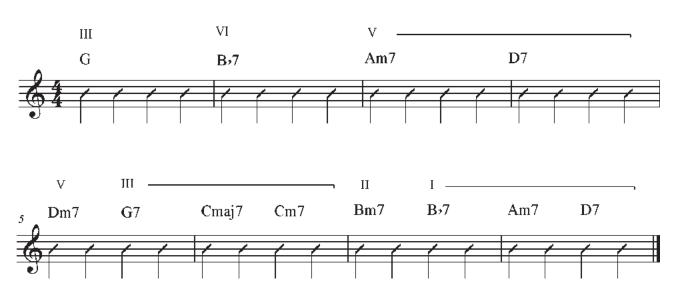
Chord Form Study

These exercises are to get you familiar with the neck. **Exercise 1**: Beginning with Cmaj7 on the VIII fret, it is a cycle of fourths all the way down to fret II. Starting again with Bmaj7 on the VII fret takes you back to fret I. Two chords are played in each position, covering all twelve possible chords. After playing through this using major 7 chords, play through it using minor, minor 7, dominant 7, and major chord forms. **Exercise 2**: This progression is more like you will find in songs. The fret positions will dictate which chord form to use. Notice that the last two chords are in open position.

Exercise 1

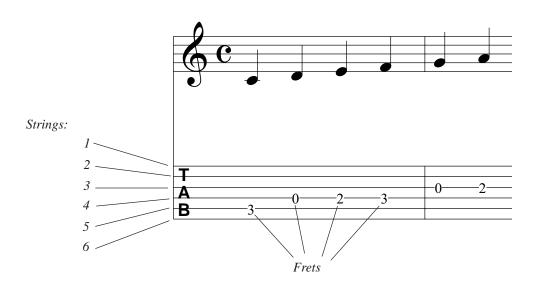


Exercise 2



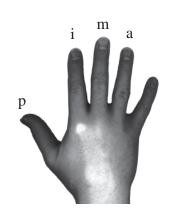
Tabulature

Tabulature (or TAB) is a visual way of writing music for guitar and other stringed instruments. The hoizontal lines represent the strings of the instrument, and the numbers indicate the fret on which it is played. You will most likely see tabulature added underneath standard notation.

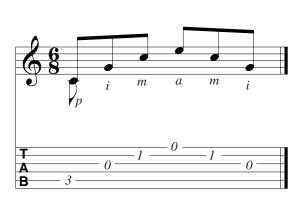


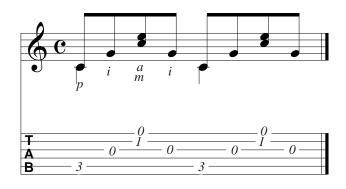
Finger Picking

Finger picking is using your right hand fingers to pluck the strings. Your right hand should be relaxed, resting over the strings near the back edge of the sound hole, fingers just above the strings ready to strike. To correctly pluck a string in free-stroke fashion, engage the string with the tip of your finger and let it slide off the end of your nail as you pull your finger toward the center of your hand. Generally, the thumb plays bass notes and the fingers play some sort of arpeggio. However, the number of picking patterns is virtually limitless. Shown here and on the next pages are a few simpler patterns.



*Notice the Right Hand finger designations below the notes.

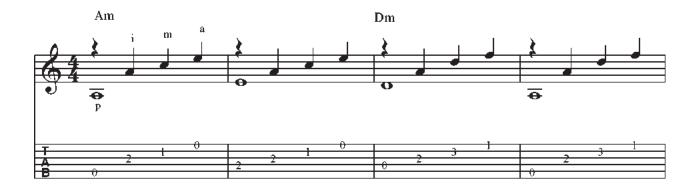


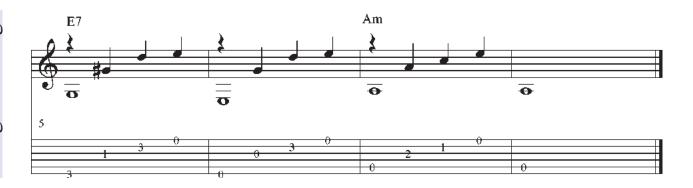


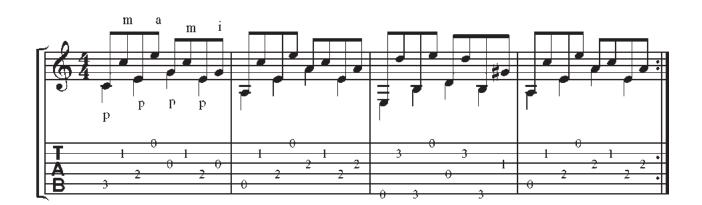


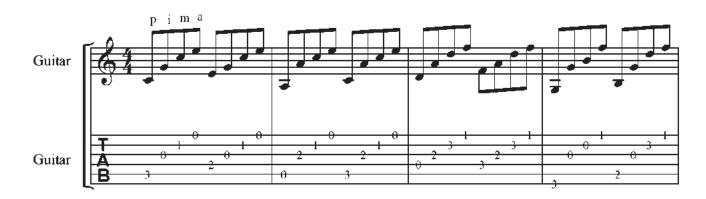
Fingerpicking Exercises

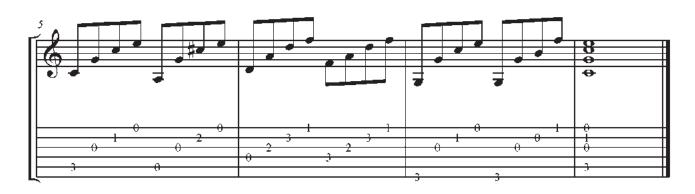
It is helpful to think in terms of chords for your left hand, while the right hand plucks the individual strings.

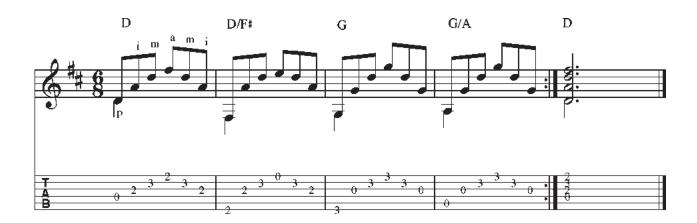




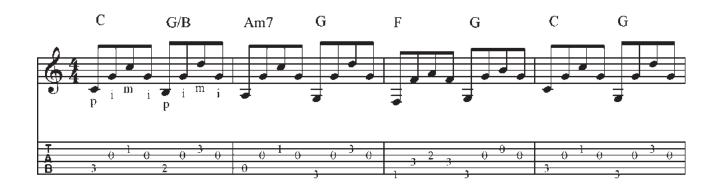


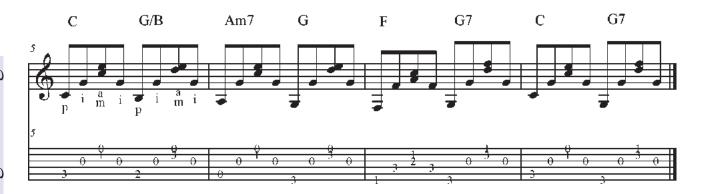


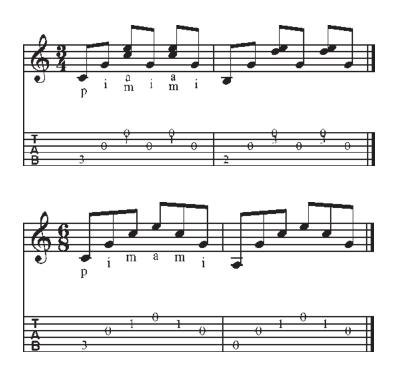




This exercise shows how the bass note can "walk" down the scale as the chords change. Once you are comfortable with this one, try using the patterns on the bottom of the page. Notice the different rhythmic feel of the different time signatures.





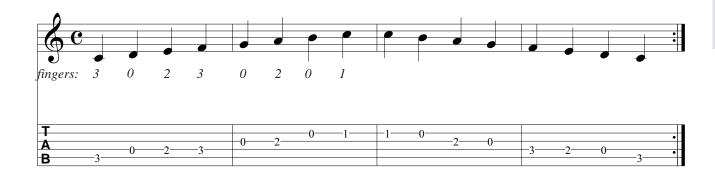


C major scale

A scale is a pattern of intervals played in succession. An interval is the distance between two note pitches, for instance, from C to D is an interval of a whole step; from E to F is a half step (there are no half steps between B and C, and E and F). Two half steps equal one whole step. The major scale has an interval pattern of "whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, whole step, half step". Or more simply put: wwhwwwh.



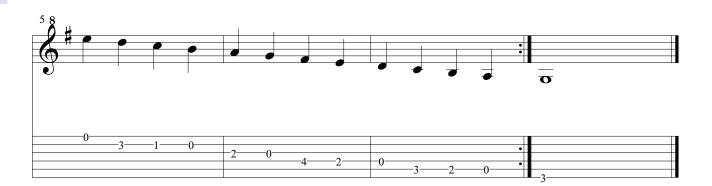
The C major scale is illustrated below using notation and tabulature.



G major scale

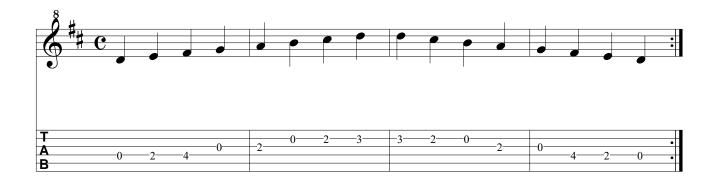
The G major scale needs the note F raised by a half step in order to conform to the wwhwwwh major scale pattern. This is shown by a sharp (#) in the key signature, meaning *every time you see the note F, play an F sharp*.





D major scale

The D major scale needs the notes F and C raised by a half step in order to conform to the wwhwwwh major scale pattern. This is shown by two sharps (#) in the key signature, meaning *every time you see the notes F or C, play them sharp*.



D major scale

2 octaves

To play the second octave of the D scale, shift to second position as noted (II) and then to the seventh position.

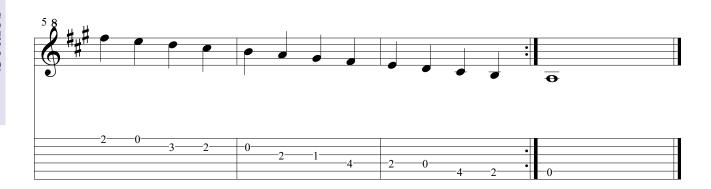




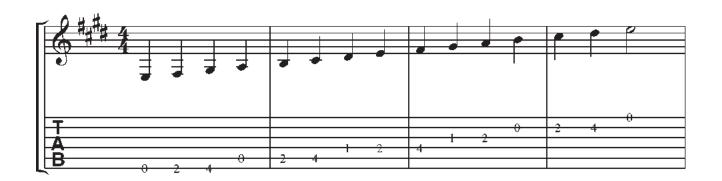
A major scale

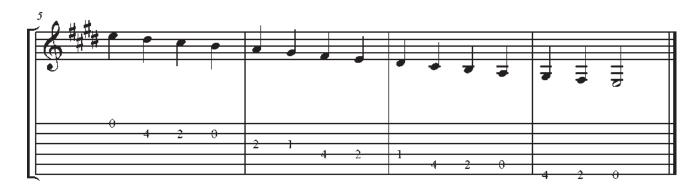
In A major, F,C and G are sharped.



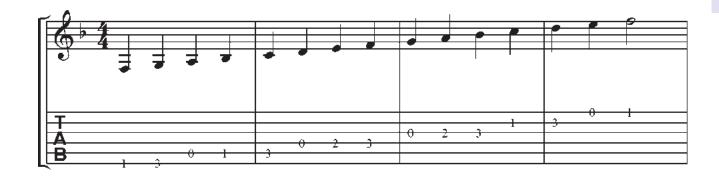


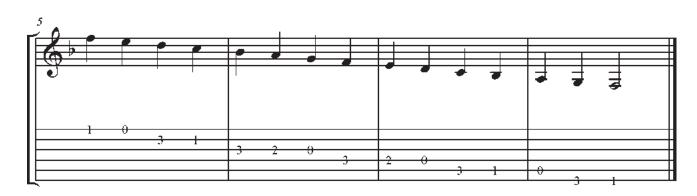
E major scale





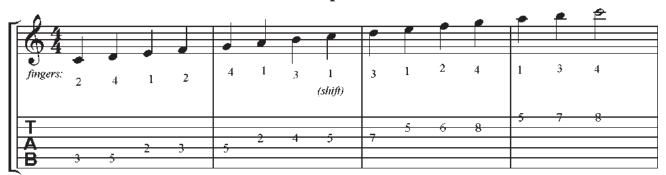
F major scale





C major scale

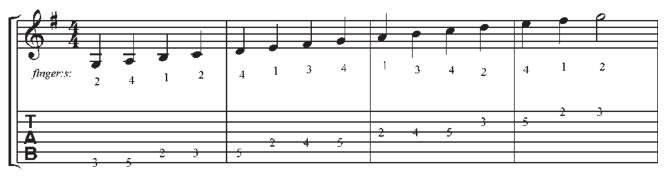
in 2nd position





G major scale

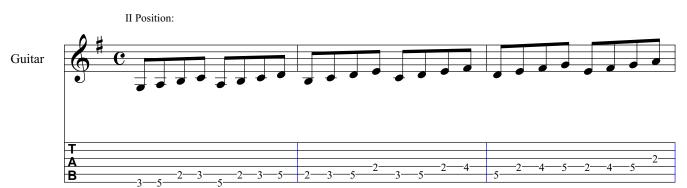
in 2nd position

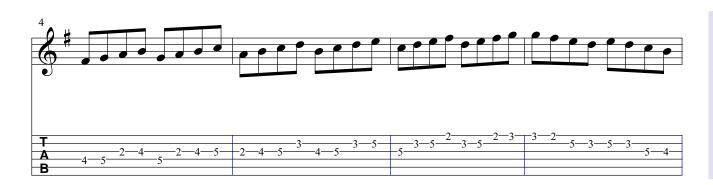


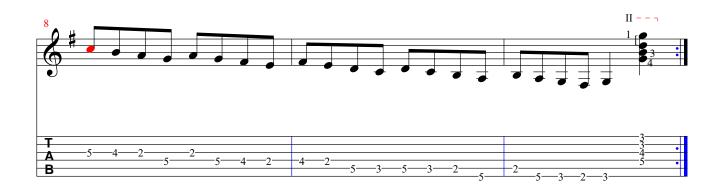


Major Scale Warm-Up

This moveable exercise utilizes all six strings. Note the pattern change on the way down the scale.







Appendix

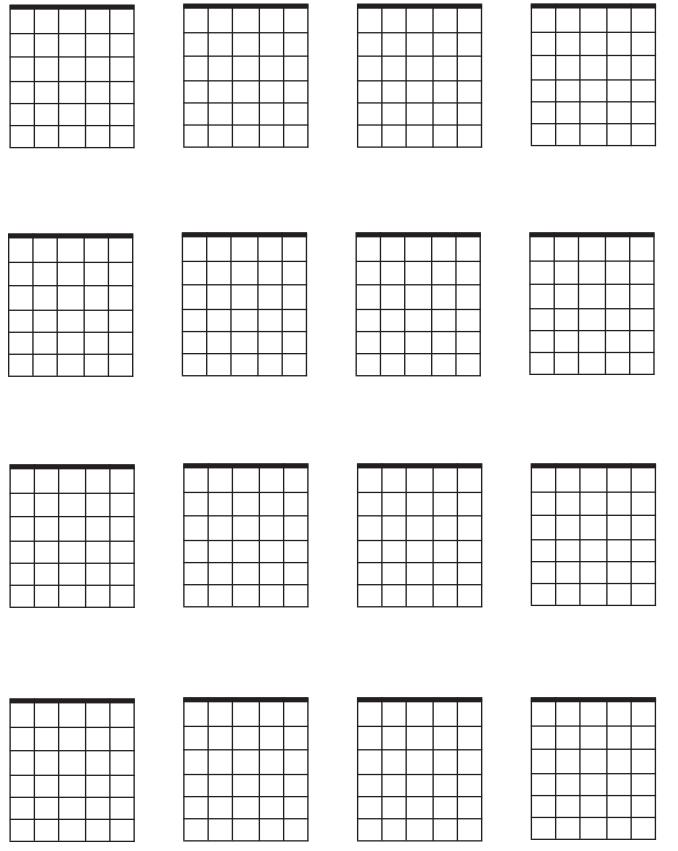
Feel free to copy the following pages.

Practice Record

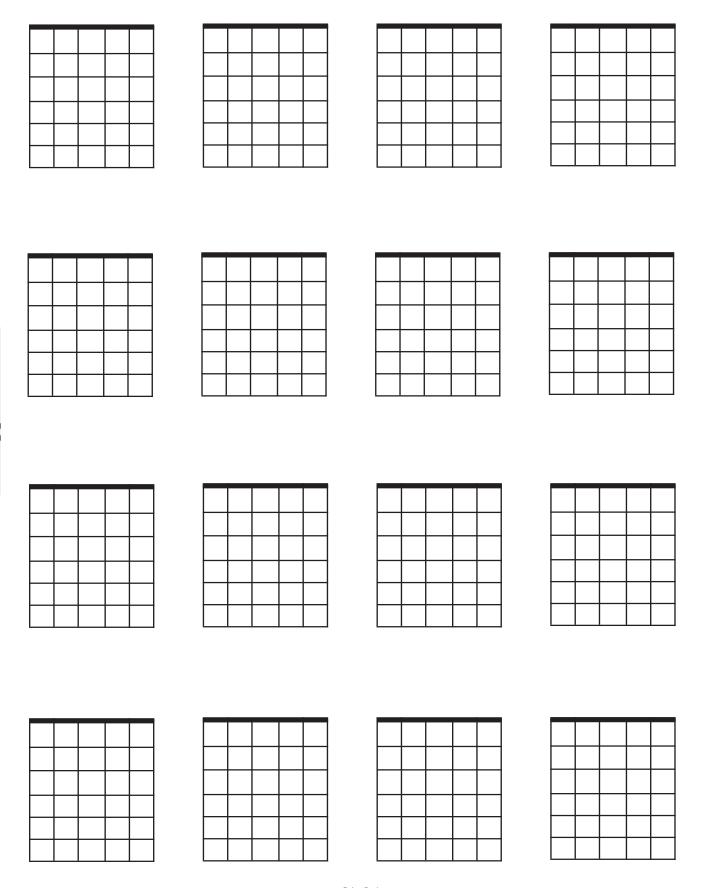
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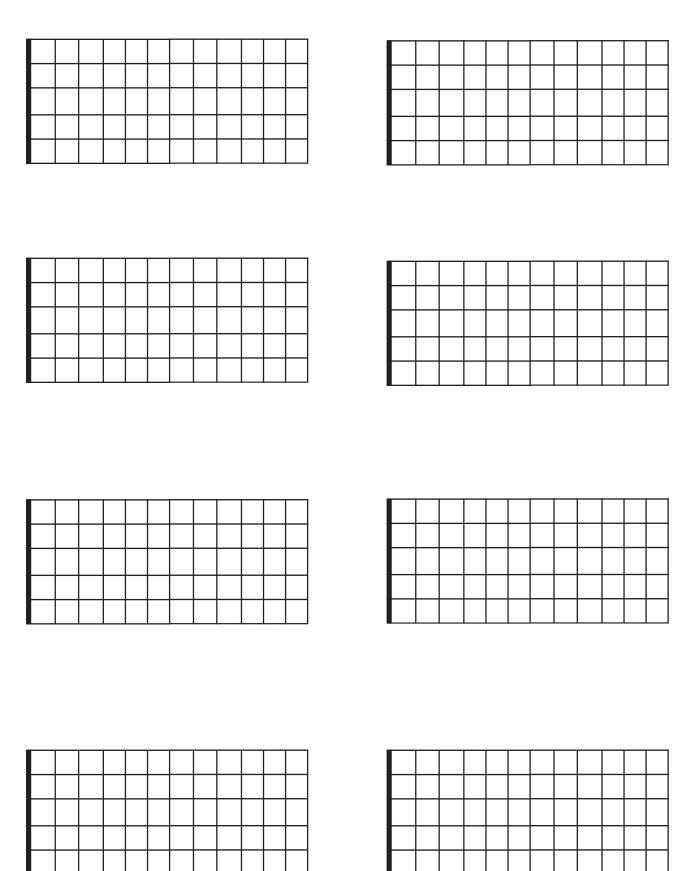
Practice Record

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