



Andy
Guitar

Beginners Guitar Course eBook

An absolute beginners guitar method

for absolutely anyone

Andy Crowley



Beginners Guitar Course eBook

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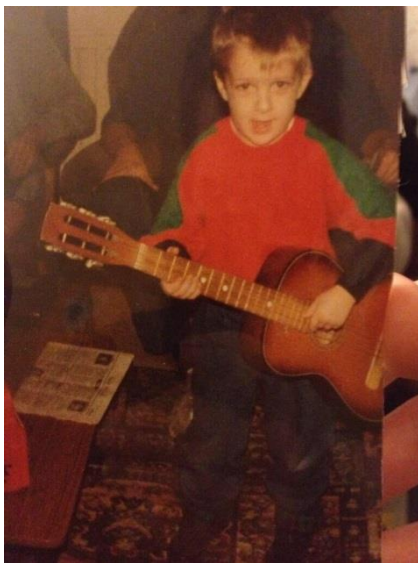
website <http://www.andyguitar.co.uk>

email andyguitarlessons@gmail.com

*"If you put your mind to it,
you can accomplish anything."*

Marty Mcfly

My biggest inspiration for picking up a guitar is the **scene from the movie *Back To The Future* where Marty plays the song Johnny B. Goode** on a red Gibson ES345 guitar. When I think back, that is my earliest memory of wanting to play, even if, at the time as a 6 year old- doing anything of the sort was a distant fantasy.



I tried many instruments throughout my school years, but none of them compared to the electric guitar specifically, or how people were transformed when they played it. However, I was put off learning guitar many times as a kid because I thought it was too cool for me, because my fingers hurt, I thought my hands were too small and I couldn't see how practicing *Polly Wally Doodle* in school lessons would allow me to reach my goal of playing like Marty.

However, with a love for the music itself and support from my family, it was never too long before I had another go.

From reading your comments and emails, it seems that my videos have acted as inspiration for some people, for they have taught them to play something where other lessons or teachers have failed. Whatever your inspiration is, make it as big and bold in your mind as you can, and simply remind yourself of it as often as possible.

It works for me.

All the best in your guitar playing journey!

How to use this eBook

In this eBook I have included everything I think a well-rounded beginner guitarist should have covered from my 7 years of teaching privately and 20 odd years of learning myself, playing in bands and just rocking out. The end goal of this course is to give you the ability to play rhythm guitar along to loads of real songs right away (including Johnny B. Goode, of course)

Because you're human, you'll probably skip sections, not follow all of my advice and play things differently to how I would have you play it. All of this is fine, and not as important as keeping the desire alive to play the thing in the first place!

Unfortunately, I could not include full chord sheets to any songs in this eBook for copyright reasons. However, throughout this course I will be referencing real songs, for which video lessons are available for [free on the website](#). I plan to make a songbook in the future.

Every page of this eBook has or will shortly have an accompanying video where I demonstrate exactly what I'm asking you to do, how to do it, and what to avoid.

The following links recall a list of videos for EITHER guitar lessons OR songs from the website. These will illuminate everything in this eBook and should be referenced repeatedly where needed.

[Click here to see the list of free video guitar lessons \(not songs\) that correspond to each lesson in this course](#)

(not all have been filmed at the time of writing, but will be completed shortly)

[Click here to see all the Song lessons that are available for each level of this beginner's course \(10 per level!\)](#)

To make everything as easy to read and use as possible...

Things I would like you to DO or PLAY, such as exercises or chords are in a BLUE BOX

Key points I would like you to REMEMBER are in an ORANGE BOX

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Why Donate?

Donations allow me to spend more time per week creating videos and course for you guys. Without them, I'd have to spend all my working hours teaching privately, which is fun but means little online content. So please donate if you can afford to receive more content!



Beginners Course

Level 1- Introduction and Goals

At this level we'll learn how to

- **Read chord boxes**

We learn how chords are written down so you can learn to play any chord you like!

- **Play and change between the chords E and A**

These are the two easiest chords on guitar. We learn just these two so we can get you play better strumming patterns and REAL SONGS faster!

- **Tips on chord changes and make your chords sound great!**

Changing between chords is the hard bit to begin with. I've got plenty of tips threaded throughout this level to help make this as EASY as possible!

- **Understand bar and beats and play chord sequences**

We look at how to play the simplest strumming pattern and how to keep in time.

Real songs are just chord sequences!

- **Play real songs along to the record straight away!**

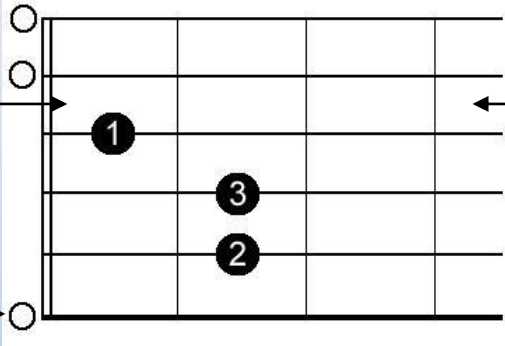
We'll learn how to read song sheets, use a capo AND how to hear the beat in real songs so you can play along to your favourite songs at this level!

Level 1 01 – E chord and A chord

Chord Boxes

Chord boxes show us where to put our fingers for each chord. Here is the chord box for the E Chord (E major). [See a video on How To Read Chord Boxes HERE](#)

The E Chord




This double line is the **nut** of the guitar. This is where the strings meet the **head**


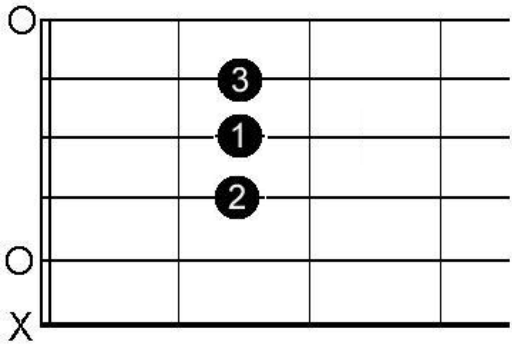
O means the open string should be heard.
X tells us this string should not be played

The vertical lines are the guitars **frets**

The horizontal lines are the **strings**. This one is your thickest 'E' string



The A Chord

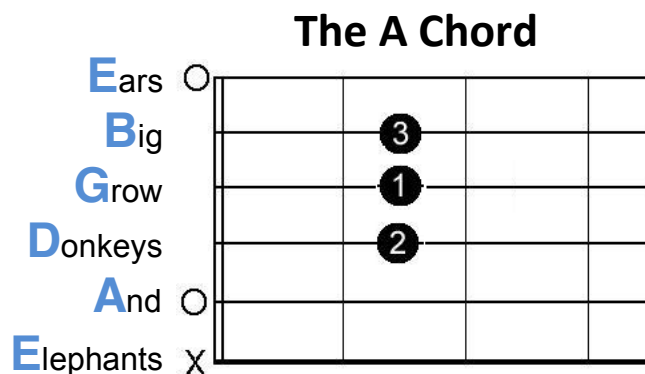


Top tips to make your chords sound great!

- Press down strings with the tips of your fingers only
- Place your fingers at the 'good' side of the fret
- **Use a pick!** Picks give a clearer sound. Use a thin one (.38mm) to begin with!
- Don't play any strings with an **X**
- Don't touch the underside of your guitar with the palm your chord hand- this will mute the thinnest E string!

Open string names

You'll need to know the names of the open strings. Using a mnemonic can help you remember them. For example; Elephants And Donkeys Grow Big Ears to remember **E A D G B E** (thickest to thinnest!)



Changing Between Chords

This is the hard bit! To help, I suggest keeping your first finger down and shuffling it between the first and second frets. This is called an **anchor finger** as it stays in contact with the guitar and should make your changes smoother.

E Chord

1

A chord

1

Anchor Finger

1. Play the E chord
2. Keep your index finger down, and lift off the other 2
3. Slide your index finger to the second fret
4. Play the A chord by placing your 2nd finger above and the 3rd finger below
5. at the same fret

This 'anchor finger' idea will also help you to play the next chord (which is a D) as the first finger will not have to move at all to play that one!

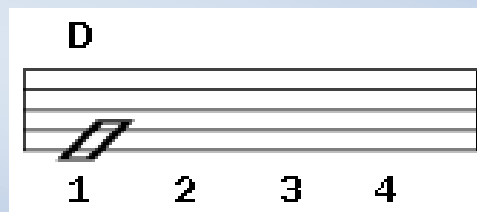
Level 1 02 – The Beat and 4th strumming

What are bars and beats?

The beat is what you nod your head or tap your foot to when you hear a song you like. It is a pulse in music that everything lines up to. 99% of the time, a song will use a count of 4 beats, which we call a **bar**. Whatever strumming we do for 1 bar, we tend to repeat this throughout an entire song. So when you look at a song, only 1 bar of strumming may be shown, which you learn to repeat while playing whatever chord is written. How fast you count this 1, 2, 3, 4 is called the tempo, aka speed or bpm (beats per minute)

Beat- what you tap your foot to
Bar- 4 beats, to a count of 1, 2, 3, 4
Tempo (aka bpm)- the speed of this count

Strumming Pattern 1- Spreads



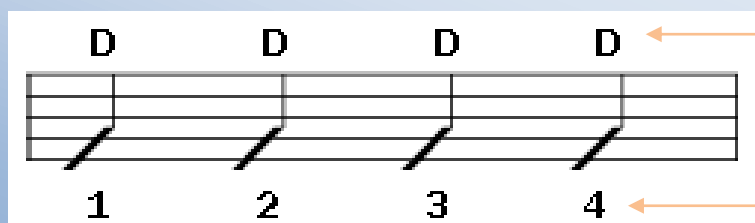
This is where we strum once per bar on beat 1. The chord should ring out for the rest of the bar.

This is a great place to start when learning any new song as it gives you chance to learn the chord changes. Plus- many real songs actually start like this! Count 1, 2, 3, 4 at a slow, even pace (out loud if needs be) and strum an E chord every time you say beat 1.

Strumming Pattern 2- 4th Strumming (On the Beat)

After 'Spreads', 4 down strums on each beat should be seen as the default strumming pattern when first learning any new song. Keep the pace and volume even

4 down strums on the beat can be written like this.



The 'D' and the arrows represent down strums

The '1 2 3 4' is the beat, and the symbols mean a 1 beat strum.

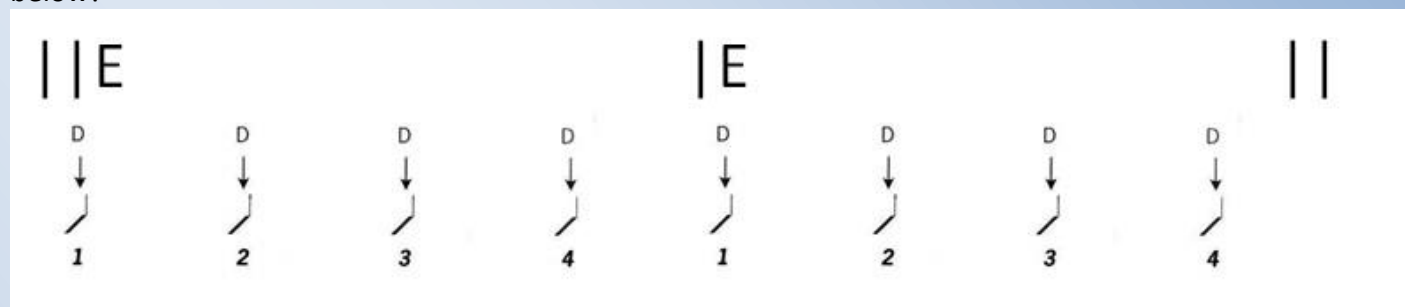
The strumming for any song is only shown as a 1 bar pattern. This is generally repeated for an entire song.

Chord Sequences

You should now try and play a chord sequence and strumming pattern alone, then try it over the drum beat in the drum video at <http://youtu.be/OY3QLBengyc>

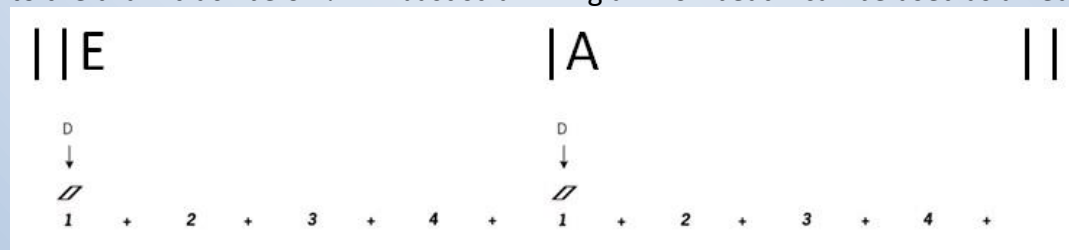
Chord sequence 1 (Easy)

Strum an E chord on every beat to a slow count. This should also be done along with Andy in the video above. Repeat this a few times, then try along to the drum track below!



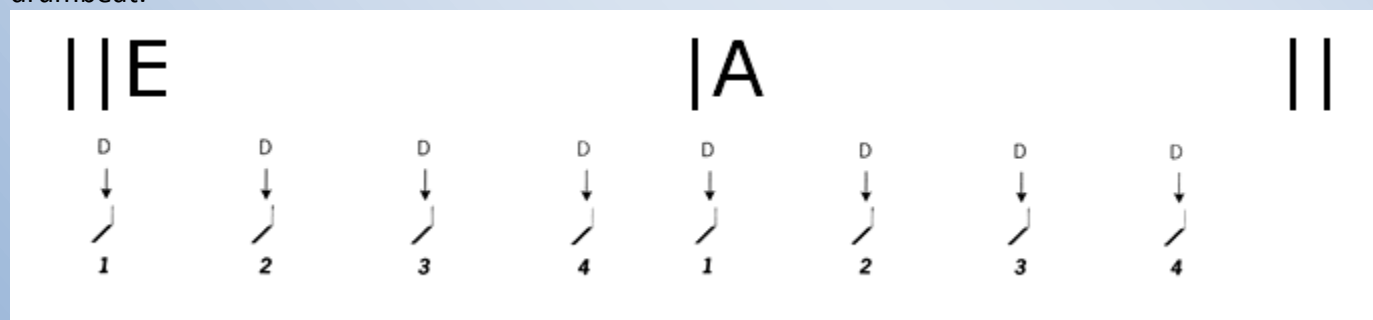
Chord sequence 2 (Medium)

Strum E on beat 1, then A on beat 1 of the next bar. Repeat this a few times to a slow even count, then try along to the drum track below! N.B. Just strumming an E on beat 1 can be used as an easier alternative to get started.



Chord sequence 3 (Hard for a total beginner)

Play a bar of E then a bar of A on the beat to an even count for around 2 minutes, then do this along to the drumbeat.



Being able to do this is the overall goal of this entire level. There are some great songs to try out, but if you can do this along to the drumbeat then feel free to move ahead to level 2!

TOP TIP- Begin on a cymbal to know that you have started on beat 1!

There are more complex strumming patterns shown in some of the songs at Level 1 of my beginner's course. Feel free to have a go at them, but please see this 'on the beat' strumming as your default for every time you learn a new song or chord sequence

Level 1 03 – What a ‘Capo’ is and how to use it

A ‘capo’ holds down the strings at any fret on your guitar. This allows you to still play the chords you know, but they will now sound higher. This is great as it allows us to play many more songs than we could without the capo!! I really recommend the ‘Trigger type’ capo, as it is easy to put on and adjust to get rid of any buzzing. It should be placed up against the fret (just like your fingers!)

‘Trigger’ type capo



E chord with capo



Pro guitarists use a capo creatively to get a certain sound, such as James Blunt on ‘You’re Beautiful’, where his guitar sounds a little like a Mandarin because of a high capo. In my beginner’s course, I have used the capo as a way for you to play songs that would otherwise use chords that are very tricky like barre chords.

The chord sheet of a song will always tell you which fret to put your capo. As a handy tool, singers can move the capo higher or lower to suit their voice.

‘Action’ and using a capo to improve your guitar

The ‘**Action**’ of a guitar is the height of the strings from the fret board. A high action means the strings are far away from the fret board, and vice versa.

Unfortunately, many cheap beginner guitars have a high action, and a high action makes a guitar much harder to play. Even expensive guitars can have high action too. If you’ve spent a good amount on your guitar, but have found it to have a high action, you’ll want to get it ‘setup’. Good guitar shops offer this service for around the cost of a guitar lesson.

However, as a **capo** holds down the strings at any fret on your guitar, this will always improve your guitar’s action. This is the other reason I use a capo so often for beginners lessons- it makes it easier to play. If it’s easier to play, it sounds better!

Level 1 04- Playing along to real songs

In my opinion, the most fun you can have practicing guitar is playing along to real songs that you love!

If you're a total beginner, you'll want to have played along to the video and drum loop in **Lesson 2 strumming on the beat** before you try this lesson. If you've done that, this is very similar! But there are a couple of things you should know.

Firstly, you cannot start playing along from the first second of the track. The count in of '1 2 3 4' is rarely still there on real songs. We need to listen first, and then join in to what we hear.

How to play along to Song 1 'For What It's Worth' by Buffalo Springfield

You can listen to this song for free on YouTube or Spotify!

This is song 1 from the beginner's course. The chord sequence (covered in detail at lesson 8 of this level) is a bar of E and a bar of A for 2 bars. To join in, you hear the first sound of the record and know this is the E chord. You then WAIT for these 2 bars, and then join in on the next E! You can even wait longer to get your bearings, but always start on the E chord. Focus on the drums and count the beat to be sure you know when to come in.

If all goes wrong and you lose where you are, just start again from the beginning of the songs. This is far better than trying to 'catch up' with the song as this likely won't work. It's therefore best to choose songs that don't change much. The songs in Level 1 of my beginner's course are perfect examples

If the song has a riff you'd like to join into, wait to hear the riff say twice, and then join in at the third time so you play at the right speed and can predict when to come in at the right time.

What's the goal when playing along to real songs?

If you can keep up for even just a minute- great job! That's the goal of this whole level! Don't move on too quick though, it's important to practice this skill, even when you can do it or it will disappear. Like a muscle, all these basic skills need working out. SO keep at it, but feel free to vary the songs in your repertoire to keep yourself interested, and then stick to your favourites.

Level 1 05- My fingers hurt!

How hard and where to press down a fret

So many learning guitarists press down far too hard to make their chord shapes or when playing anything. Some students call it '**Gorilla Grip**'. This exercise demonstrates how little you can press down with the right finger positioning, which should make everything so much easier!

The 'My fingers hurt!' exercise

1. With your first finger, play the note at 3rd fret on your thickest string (Or any dotted fret)
2. Play the note as you usually would, and give a number between 1 and 10 to indicate how much you are pressing down, 10 being like making a fist, 1 being not pressing at all
3. Now place your finger to your side of the fret, between the dot and the fret nearest to you
4. Play this note once every second, and gradually lesson the amount of pressure on this note by a fraction at a time until it buzzes and eventually the note doesn't ring out at all
5. Play the note again, but only press on just enough so that the string doesn't buzz. Ensure your finger is at the 'good' side of the fret
6. Give a number between 1 and 10 again to indicate this pressure. It should be much lower than before. **THIS is the amount your should be pressing down every time you play anything on your guitar**

You should repeat this exercise with each finger and around the fret board if you feel it will benefit you

Level 1 06- How to read song sheets and chord sequences for Beginner guitar

This beginner's course will enable you to be able to search for the chords to any song and be able to play the rhythm guitar part. To do this we need to learn how to read song sheets and chord sequences. There are two main styles; **Songbook Style** and **Bars and Beats style**

***N.B Songs can also be written in TAB aka Tablature.
We'll cover that later in this course***

Songbook style

This is where lyrics are written with chords above. There are no bar lines here, and strumming

patterns are rarely given. This presumes a lot of knowledge of the song and requires the guitarist to sing along, feel the pulse (the beat) and work out where to change chord on certain lyrics. The words are written out like a poem and chords can seem sporadically spaced, making it hard to spot patterns.

Bars and beats style

Similar to above, but with bar lines added, chords evenly spaced, and lyrics more spaced out/ crowded together (depending on how the song goes). This shows patterns in the song clearer, making it easier to learn.

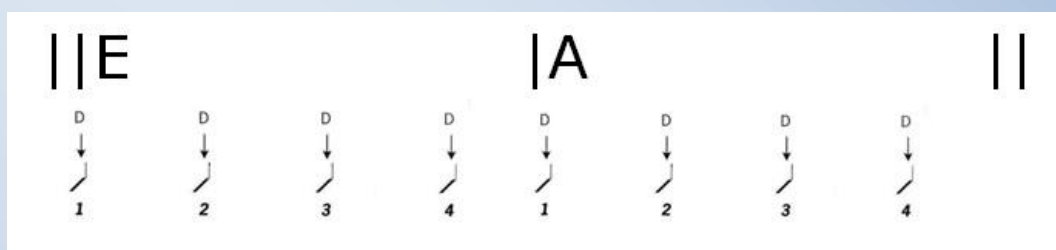
Level 1 07- Chord sequence's for Level 1

Here I will list the chord sequences you should practice for this level. These are the essential sequences you should be able to play before moving on to the next level. Some of these are the same or similar to certain songs at each level of the course, and I'll name the songs as we go.

As this is Level 1, we'll just be going between E and A, but for a different amount of time so you can do any of the songs at this level.

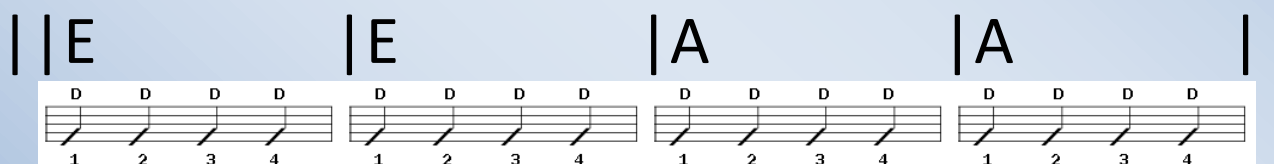
Chord sequence 1 (Similar to 'For What It's Worth')

Strum an E chord on every beat to a slow count. This should also be done along with Andy in the video above. As with all these chord sequences, repeat this a few times to an even count



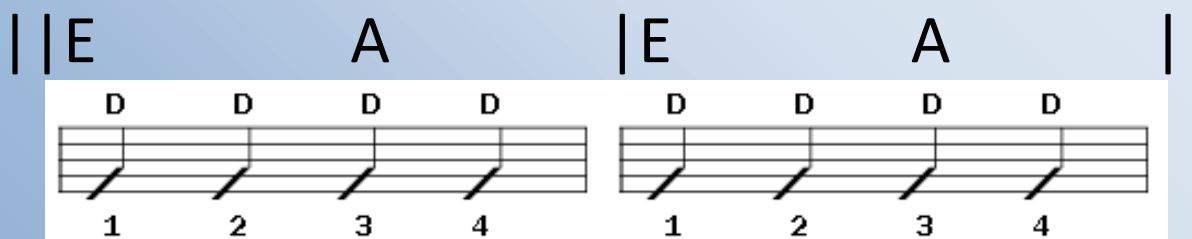
Chord sequence 2 (Similar to 'Silence is Easy')

Play 2 bars of E and 2 bars of A, strumming on the beat for around 2 minutes



Chord sequence 3 (Similar to 'Love Me Do' and 'Three is a Magic Number')

Play 2 beats of E then 2 beats of A on the beat to an even count for around 2 minutes, then do this along to the drumbeat.



Level 1 08- Recommended songs for Level 1

Here I list the essential songs from each level so you can fast track the beginner's course.

The 10 songs at each level are chosen not only because of the chords, but also because of the other skills they allow you to acquire. Most people who learn online just chose the songs from the list they know or like. In private lessons, I suggest songs that the student wouldn't naturally pick, but after trying them, they like it and they feel the benefit. Here I offer you the same advice so you can fast track through each level easily.

Recommended songs for Level 1

'For What Its Worth' by Buffalo Springfield

My absolute beginner's lesson, so make sure you can do this! Ideally practice this on the beat to the drum loop in lesson 2, or even better the original song itself!

Science is easy by Starsailor

Similar chord sequence to the song above, but here it's 2 bars of E. This checks that you understand bar and beats, and gives you the option of a higher level strumming pattern!

'Love Me Do' by The Beatles

The Beatles have so many songs that are great for beginners, I've chosen this one as it's the same chords as before but to a different timing. This one has quicker changes and an introduction to song structure and the guitar capo- **don't skip this!**

If you have an electric guitar and Amp, try either of the U2 ones –**Elevation** or **When Love Comes To Town** so you can crank the overdrive!

Now lets make sure your practicing the right things in the next lesson - practice routine for level 1!

Level 1 09- Practice Routine for Level 1

At the end of each Level, I'll give you my recommended practice routine. The following routine should last about 20 minutes.

If this is your first week playing guitar I really don't recommend much more than this or your fingers will HURT. Better to stop after 20 minutes and come back to it the next day than not be able to play for a week! 20 minutes a day is MUCH better than a mammoth 2 hour session once a week!

Practice Routine for Level 1 (20 minutes)

- **Chord practice (Strum pick Strum)** Build your calluses, get your fingers use to making chord shapes automatically
- **Rhythm practice**, stay on 1 chord and practice the 4 down strums, ideally with the drum loop provided in lesson 2
- **Chord sequence's-**
 - || E | A | E | A || This chord sequence played on the beat is totally essential!
 - Also see my recommended chord sequences for Level 1
- **Song practice**; To fast track while covering the essentials, I recommend;
 - For What Its Worth
 - Silence Is Easy
 - Love Me Do*(Song lessons available on the website only)*

Some of this course will appeal more to you than other bits as it covers a broad spectrum. Accept that for now, please cover each section and follow the advice to make the transition between levels as smooth as possible!

So here are your goals for Level 1. Once you can do these- move onto level 2!

Level 1 Goals

- Be able to play the E and A chords from memory
- Be able to play E and A in any of the recommended sequences
- Be able to play 3 songs from the list, and have a go at playing these along to the record

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Why Donate?

I hope you can tell that many hours of work have gone into create this unique course. This is on top of the hours creating the accompanying free videos, and creating website content.

While it is true I make some income from advertisements on the videos, donations allow me to spend less time teaching privately and more time creating new content, while keeping all video content free



Beginners Course

Level 2

Level 2- Introduction and Goals

At this level we'll learn how to

➤ **Play a D major chord**

E, A and D go well together in songs and chord sequences. We'll cover plenty of examples of this

➤ **2 strumming patterns that work for almost ANY SONG!**

Both are '8th strumming patterns' that will get the songs at this level sounding great!

➤ **Play EASY Rock Power Chords**

Rock out the easy way. It works for AC/DC and countless other rock bands!

➤ **Play chord sequences so you can play the Songs at this level**

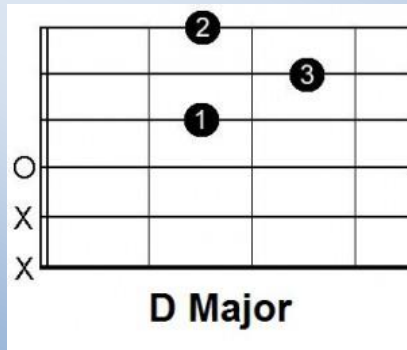
Remember the songs are only available on the website and on YouTube.

These 'Chord Sequences' will make the progression to the songs from chords EASY!

Level 2 01 – E, A and D chords and changes

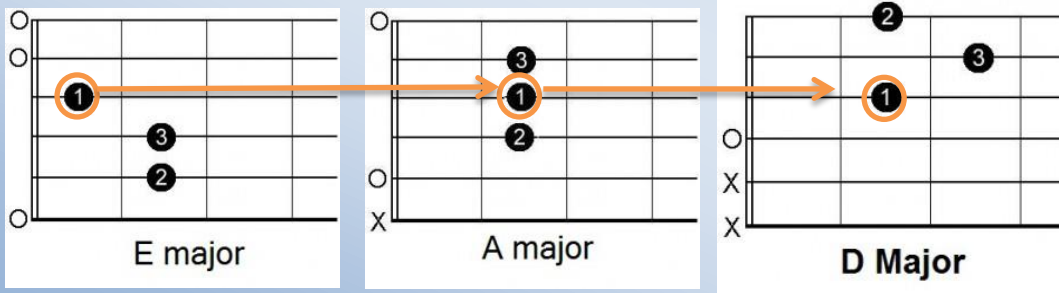
The D chord

This is the new chord for this level. The first finger is in the same position as in the A chord which is a nice way to first learn the chord. **Do not to play the thickest 2 strings** as shown by the 'X's in the chord box below- or it will sound bad!



Anchor finger for E, A and D

Keep your first finger down when changing between all 3 chords you now know. During playing- your first finger should never lift off!



The anchor finger is crucial here. Any chord change you struggle with should be practiced for a minute each practice session. With 3 chord, we also have 3 possible chord changes. They are;

- **E to A** (as in Level 1)
- **A to D** (new for this level)
- **E to D** (the hardest change, but also the least used)

Level 2 02- 8th notes- splitting a bar into 8

This is how a single 8th note looks alone. This is not seen often in the early stages but stay with me...

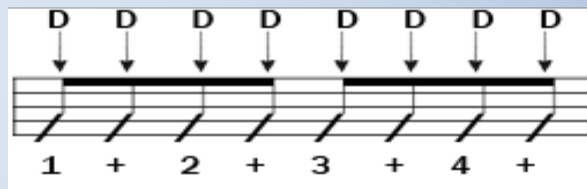


This is a pair of 8th strums. These add up to 1 beat and are joined at the top- the idea is it makes it easier to read when there are a lot of them!

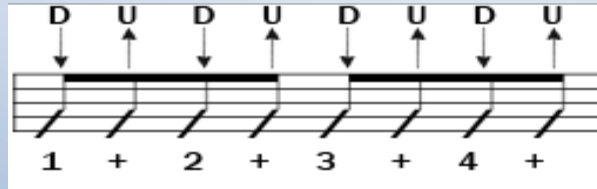


Strumming Patterns for Level 2

8th strumming 'all downs' (70bpm to 100bpm)



8th strumming 'downs and ups' (100bpm to 150bpm +)



Why 'all downs' or 'downs and ups'?

- **8ths all downs** is appropriate for slower songs (60 to 100 bpm).
- **8ths downs and ups** is appropriate for medium to faster tempo songs (100 to 150bpm +).

Each of these strumming patterns is a gateway from the simple 4:4 strumming at Level 1 to any higher level strumming pattern. The 'Strumming Pattern Family Tree' should be seen and understood to grasp this concept. The **End Goal** is to be able to listen to any strumming pattern and be able to play it. Therefore, an understanding of tempo, patterns AND hand movements is crucial.

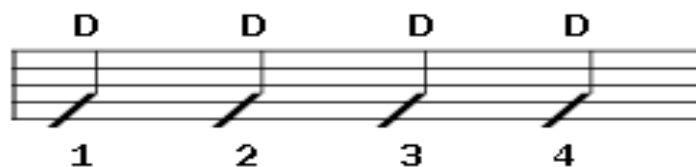
Strumming Pattern

'Family Tree'

The top box is the strumming pattern we covered at Level 1. It's always best to play every chord sequence you try with this first, so you know where the beat falls.

For many songs you can then choose an 8th strumming pattern depending on its tempo.

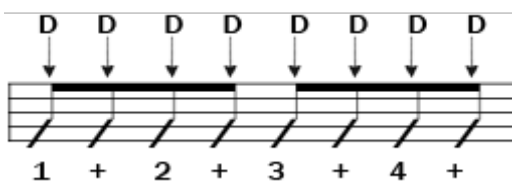
4th Strumming 'On the Beat'



Slower

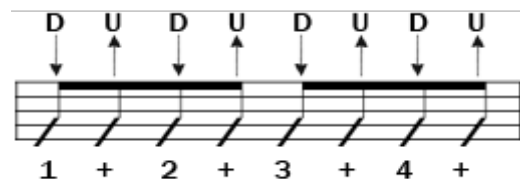
Faster

8th strumming 'all downs' (70bpm to 100bpm)



- ✓ Silence Is Easy (Song from Level 1)
- ✓ Chasing Cars (Song from Level 2)
- ✓ Common People (Song from Level 2)

8th strumming 'downs and ups' (100bpm to 150bpm +)



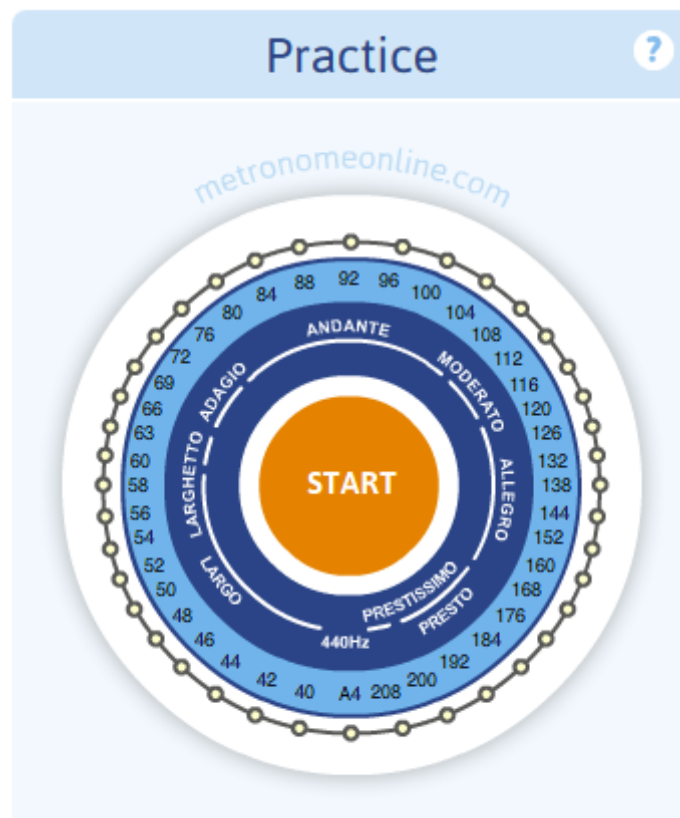
- ✓ You Never Can Tell (Song from Level 1)
- ✓ Have A Nice Day (Song from Level 2)
- ✓ Johnny Be Good (Song from Level 2)

Level 2 03- The Metronome

A metronome is a regular ticking sound that we can set to a certain bpm (beats per minute) which is how we measure the tempo or speed of a song. At 60 bpm, you'll hear a click every second.

Knowledge of how to use a metronome is essential in developing your internal timing (so you play in time automatically without thinking). You can buy them, but I recommend using the free one at metronomeonline.com. This one even has a built in 'accent' (a louder beep once every 4 beeps) to indicate a bar. Remember;

Tempo (aka bpm)- the speed of the beat



Use this at metronomeonline.com

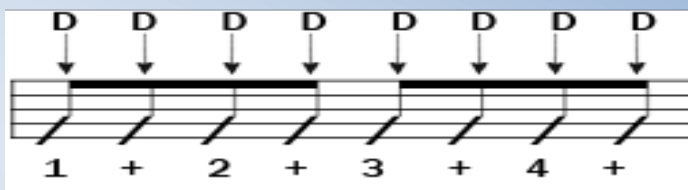
Paying attention to the Latin names here really helps, especially when knowing which strumming pattern to use in line with this beginners guitar course.

- The **Andante** range of bpm (76 to 104) is slow tempos. As we looked at in strumming lesson 2, 8ths all down strumming works best for these tempos. Songs are very rarely slower than 76bpm, but it does happen.
- The **Moderato** range (104 to 120) is medium tempo. This is the crossover where 8ths all downs or 8ths down and ups can work
- The **Allegro** range (120 to 160+) is fast tempo. Sometime there can be a lot of fast rhythms in a song, but the actual beat is quite slow.

In this lesson, we'll be looking at using this from a rhythm guitar point of view. We'll come back later to get your speed up with single note playing. Even so, a metronome should only ever beep on the beat, not on every strum. Sometime there can be a lot of fast rhythms in a song, but the actual beat is quite slow, which can confuse.

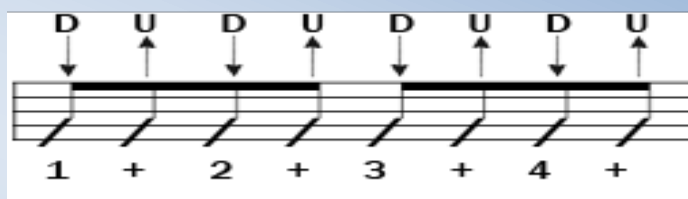
The following exercises are the same as in the previous strumming lesson. However, I'd like you to now do them along to the metronome (rather than the drums) and change the tempos within the specified range.

Exercise 1; Play 1 bar on the beat then 1 bar of 8th All Down Strumming (74 to 104 bpm)



Play any chord using the 2 bar strumming pattern above, then change chord to any other you know. If you can alternate between 2 or more chords, even better! The goal is to strum without any pauses and with the correct count. It's essential to keep the count consistent and not your count or strumming.

Exercise 2; Play 1 bar on the beat then 1 bar of 8th Down and Up strumming (104 to 160bpm +)



Play any chord using the 2 bar strumming pattern above, then change chord to any other you know. If you can alternate between 2 or more chords, even better!

Notice- if you do this correctly your arm is always moving in the same way, this is crucial!

Trying to guess the bpm of songs you hear or know is a great little exercise you can do without even needing your guitar- just listen to songs you like and guess the tempo!

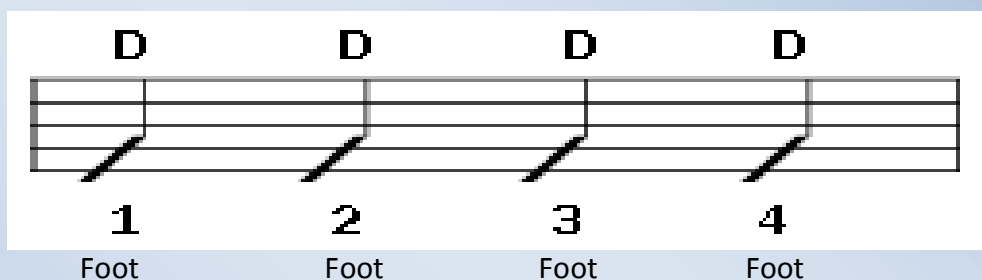
Level 2 04- Tapping your foot to the beat

It really helps if you develop the habit of tapping your foot whenever you listen to any music. This will help you feel a beat naturally, rather than having to count it.

At this level, we're going for strumming patterns more complex than just playing on the beat. You should therefore tap your foot on the beat to really internalise the rhythm and make it automatic that you play in time.

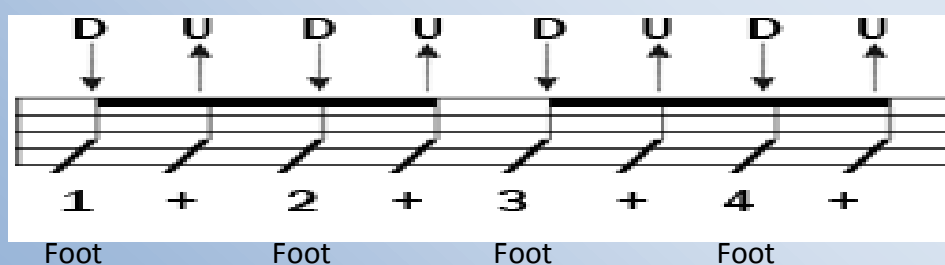
Step 1

Tap while playing on the beat down strums



Step 2

Tap your foot on the beat while playing either of the strumming patterns at this level, or any that you know. This is particularly beneficial along to a metronome or the drumbeats provided in lesson 2.



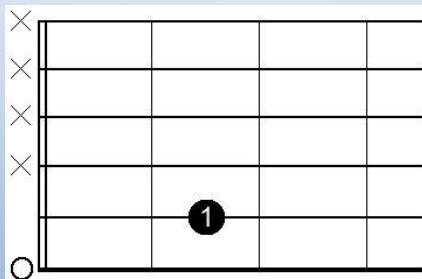
Level 2 05- Open 'Power chords' E5, A5 and D5

Level 2 05- Easy Rock Power Chords

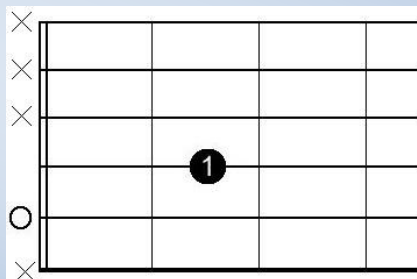
So far we have learned the E, A and D major chords. A lot of Rock and Blues music tends to play the Power chord version of these chords to sound heavier and darker.

The upshot of this is the open power chords can be played with 1 finger, so they are really easy to play!! So lets take a look.

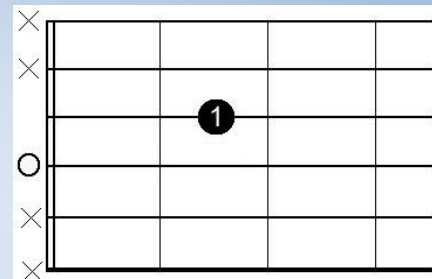
Easy Rock Power Chords



E5 (aka E Power Chord)



A5 (aka A Power Chord)



D5 (aka D Power Chord)

Notice that the root note (The lowest note of the chord) is the same compared to the standard major chord. But when played, these chords sound darker. When played with the strumming patterns at this level, this can give the driving rhythm sound of many rock and blues songs.

Check out Common people by pulp and Jonny Be Goode at this level for examples of this!

Level 2 06- Easy Finger Stretching

Some of the chords to come will require a bit more of a stretch in your fingers. Many people find that their fingers are not flexible enough at first. This exercise opens up your fingers and will help when it comes to playing the trickier stuff.

Easy beginners stretching exercise;

***Warning* Please do this exercise slowly.** The benefits of this exercise are felt doing it really slowly, and making sure you feel a nice stretch in your hand.

1. Put your first finger at 5th fret of the thickest string
2. Place the 2, 3rd and 4th on each fret also on the thickest string, so they are all in a line
3. To make this a deeper stretch, place your first finger at 4th fret, keeping the others where they are
4. You can also move your little finger up a fret, which makes this exercise very hard for most beginners
5. Play each note one at a time, starting with the 1st finger
6. Repeat this for every string 6 to 1 then 1 to 6, repeat at least twice **slowly**
7. Do this **slowly** every time you pick up your guitar until your hand is very used to this exercise and the stretches feel effortless

Level 2 07- Chord sequence's for Level 2

Here I will list the chord sequences you should practice for this level. These are the essential sequences you should be able to play before moving on to the next level. Some of these are the same or similar to certain songs at each level of the course, and I'll name the songs as we go.

As this is Level 1, we'll just be going between E and A, but for a different amount of time so you can do any of the songs at this level.

Chord sequence 1 (Similar to 'Have a nice day' by the Stereophonics)

Always begin learning any new song or chord sequence by playing on the beat. With this chord sequence, you should try the **8th down and up strumming** from lesson 2!

| | A | A | D | D | |

Chord Sequence 2 (Similar to Wherever You Will Go by The Calling)

Try this one nice and slow on the beat first, keeping the timing even and changing to the D chord on beat 3. Then try **the 8ths all down strumming** from lesson 2.

| | A | E | A | D | |

Chord sequence 3 (12 bar blues in A- Similar to Johnny Be Goode)

This is a very common chord sequence and uses all the chords we know so far in a longer sequence, known as a 12 bar blues (Its 12 bars long and used a lot in blues music as well as other genres such as rock and pop) Literally hundreds of songs use this, and it also introduced the concept of a song being in a 'Key'.

N.B. This sounds best with power chords from Level 2 05- this is indicated by the '5's.

| | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|--|
| A5 | A5 | A5 | A5 | |
| D5 | D5 | A5 | A5 | |
| E5 | E5 | A5 | A5 | |

Level 2 08- Recommended songs for Level 2

Here I list the essential songs from each level so you can fast track the beginner's course.

The 10 songs at each level are chosen not only because of the chords, but also because of the other skills they allow you to acquire. Most people who learn online just chose the songs from the list they know or like. In private lessons, I suggest songs that the student wouldn't naturally pick, but after trying them, they like it and they feel the benefit. Here I offer you the same advice so you can fast track through each level easily.

Recommended songs for Level 2

Lean On Me by Bill Withers

Introduction of how a song would be written in a songbook style, i.e. without bar lines. The easiest song here, and a great one to try singing along to without having to count!

Chasing Cars by Snow Patrol

A great song to showcase your 8ths all down strumming, quite slow and without any quick changes

I Can't Explain by The Who OR Wild Thing by The Troggs

Either of these songs is ideal as your first easy guitar 'Riff'. A riff is anything short and recognisable- so this is a great thing to show off to your friends and play in front of people as it sounds great on its own! Nothing wrong with learning both, but you don't have to

Johnny Be Goode by Chuck Berry OR Hound Dog by Elvis

Both are examples of a 12 bar blues with the chords you know. Plus- Chuck Berry and the King? Who wouldn't want to learn these!

Level 2 09- Practice Routine for Level 2

At the end of each Level, I'll give you my recommended practice routine.

*The following routine should last about 25 minutes. If you want to go on longer or can't do the full 25 then **PLEASE STILL PICK THE GUITAR UP**. Even just 5 minutes a day is MUCH better than a mammoth 2 hour session once a week.*

Practice Routine for Level 1 (25 minutes)

- **Chord practice (Strum pick Strum)** Continue to build your calluses, get your fingers changing between E, A and D chord shapes easily
- **Rhythm practice**
 - 8ths all down strumming (for Slower tempos)
 - 8ths down and up strumming (for medium/ faster tempos)
 - stay on 1 chord and practice the 8th strumming patterns, ideally with the drum loop provided in lesson 2!
- **Chord sequence's-** See my recommended chord sequences for Level 2
 - |A |A |D |D ||
 - |A |E |A |D ||
 - 12 Bar Blues in A
- **Song practice;** Keep 1 or 2 songs for the previous level add...
 - A song with 8th all down strumming (e.g. Chasing cars, Johnny Goode)
 - A song with 8th down and up strumming (e.g. Have a nice day)
 - A riff (I Can't Explain or Wild thing)*(songs available on the website only)*

Remember- *it's essential you can do a riff, a strumming song with E, A and D and a 12 bar blues in A at this level!*

So here are your goals for Level 1. But you will know which songs and genres appeal more to you, don't fight that, just make sure you can do the following at each level

Level 2 goals

- Be able to play the chords from memory and have all possible changes solid (E, A and D)
- Be able to play any of the recommended chord sequences, and as a bonus- be able to make up your own
- Be able to play at least 5 songs, and have a go at playing these along to the record. Be sure to keep a couple from previous levels!

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I hope you can tell that many hours of work have gone into create this unique course. This is on top of the hours creating the accompanying free videos, and creating website content.

While it is true I make some income from advertisements on the videos, donations allow me to spend less time teaching privately and more time creating new content, while keeping all video content free



Beginners Course

Level 3

Level 3- Introduction and Goals

At this level we'll learn how to

➤ Play a G major chord

The G to D change is fundamental at this level. Also; G, D and A go well together in songs and chord sequences. We'll cover plenty of examples of this

➤ Strumming variations

In reality, songs rarely stick to one strumming pattern for an entire song. We're going to learn some variations of the patterns you know to keep it interesting and make your strumming sound more professional!

➤ Easy blues guitar Riff

Learn the most common blues guitar riff, used in countless songs but popular with Chuck Berry and Led Zeppelin!

➤ Performing and recording tips

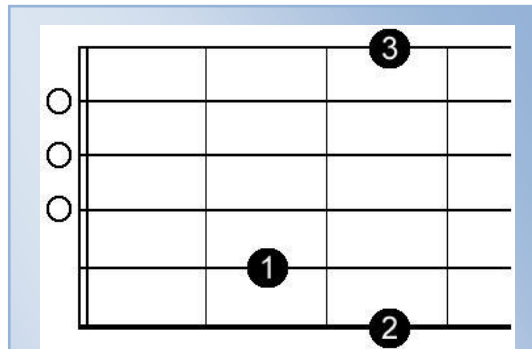
I'll take you through the basics of;

- ✓ playing guitar stood up
- ✓ singing and playing guitar at the same time
- ✓ recording yourself

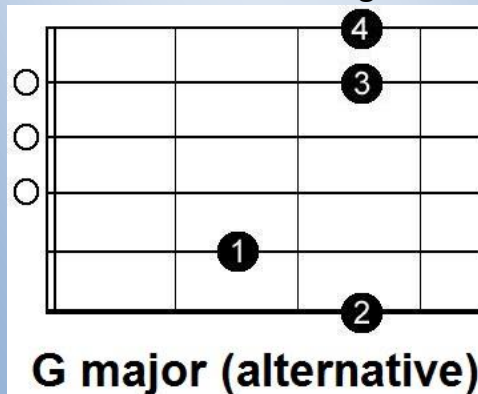
Stage 3- G A and D

G major Chord

This is the standard way of playing a G chord using just fingers 1, 2 and 3.

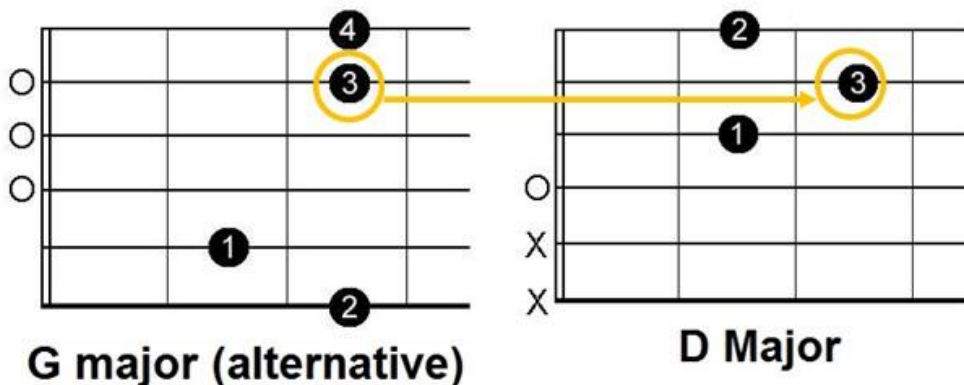


There are a few other ways to play a G chord. The one pictured below is the most common and most useful, it doesn't have another name as it has all the same notes as a normal G- but it is usually nicknamed a 'Big G'. As it is also used in Wonderwall by Oasis, I usually call it an Oasis or 'Noel Gallagher G'.



G to D change

You can just lift your fingers off and go for a standard G to a D chord. However, many players and songs use the 'Big G' here because it sounds nicer and the change is easier. THIS is the reason the only new chord at this stage is a G- so you can master this change! If you do, everything afterwards will be easier. If you don't you'll likely have to keep revisiting this over and over. Preserver now- you'll need it to do some of the best songs at this stage including [Free Fallin by Tom Petty/ John Mayer](#) and [Highway To Hell by AC/DC!](#)

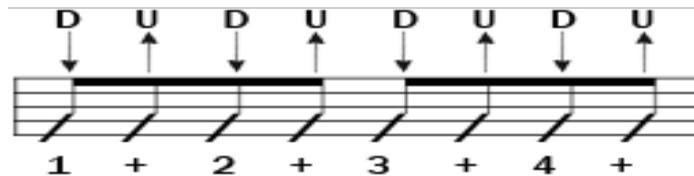


Finger 3 should not lift when changing between D and G!

Level 3 02- 8ths D and U strumming variations

Here is the strumming pattern for level 3 of my beginners guitar course. These strumming pattern variations can be used in the songs Mr Tambourine Man, Girlfriend in a coma, If you Wanna and Songbird from the beginners course!

8th strumming with downs and ups



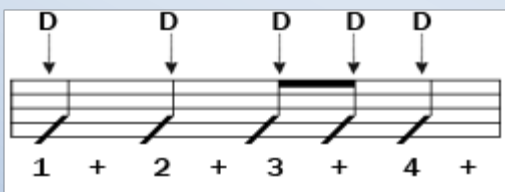
As a rule, the down strums always have to be on the beat. With this strumming, the up strums have to be on the off beat. This is suitable for MEDIUM TO FAST bpm songs because of the economy of movement. We NEED to keep this hand movement for ALL the variations below.

8th strumming downs and ups- Variations!

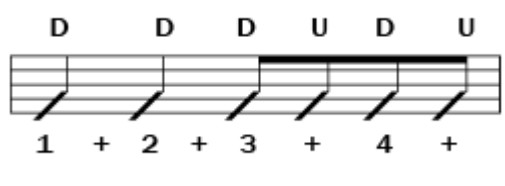
In reality, songs rarely stick to one strumming pattern for an entire song. Instead, slight variations are used to hold the listeners attention. My suggested variations at this level involve missing some up strums. Importantly- your hand should still always keep moving as if your playing then ups!

Exercise – Keep the strumming hand moving D U D U to a count of 1 + 2 + etc with the following variations to the drum track at the bottom of this page!

Variation 1



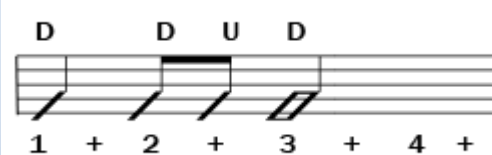
Variation 2



Variation 3 (Most used)



Variation 4



Level 3 03- Strumming on the neck trick

How to learn any strumming pattern easily

Struggling to nail the new strumming variations? Can't tell your downs from your ups? Here's a quick strumming tip.

Whenever you can't get a new strumming pattern, move your strumming hand over to the neck of the guitar. Moving the two hands closer together really helps people with the sync between their two hands, which should help you nail any strumming pattern faster!

Try this with the new strumming patterns covered in Lesson 2

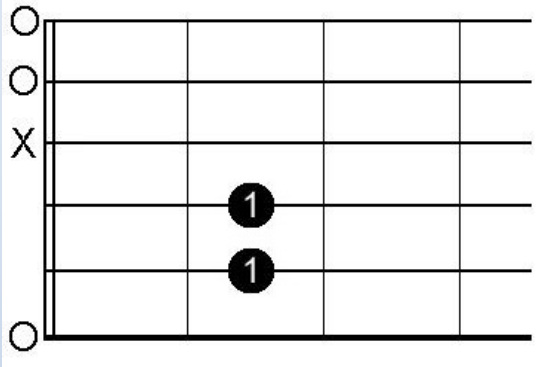
Exercise – Keep the strumming hand moving D U D U to a count of 1 + 2 + etc with the following variations to the drum track at the bottom of this page!

Level 3 04 The 1 finger E and A chords

Here we learn to play an A chord with just 1 finger, very useful for anyone with larger fingers!

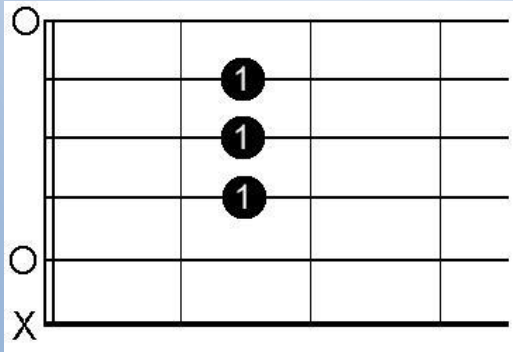
These are also great for playing classic rock 'AC/DC' style chords. They are also used for playing riffs in any genre as the other fingers are free to play other notes!

E chord with 1 finger



N.B. Make sure you're muting the string with an 'X' with your first finger by lifting it slightly!

A chord with 1 finger



With the A chord- you definitely don't want to put your finger over the 1st string too or you'll be playing an A6 which sounds different. You can mute the thinnest E string by lifting your first finger slightly. This is an extension of the A5 power chord we covered at Level 2, but can be used as an alternative to the 3 finger A chord as it sounds the same!

Level 3 05- Add the Easy Blues Riff to a 12 Bar Blues

*"Alright guys, this is a Blues riff in B,
What me for the changes, and try and keep up, OK?"*

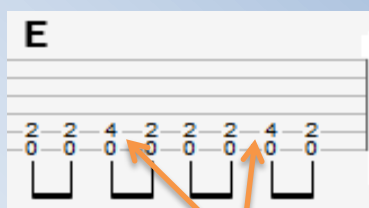
Marty Mcfly

Here we're learning the same blues riff as Marty and Chuck played in Johnny B. Goode, but we're learning it for the 3 open power chords we covered in Level 2 05. It's the same riff for each chord, and feels the same when you play it, we just move down the strings as to change chord. Here is the riff for each chord

The most common Blues shuffle riff ([See a video on How to Read TAB](#))

Here is the riff using an E power chord

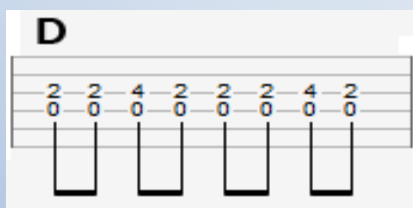
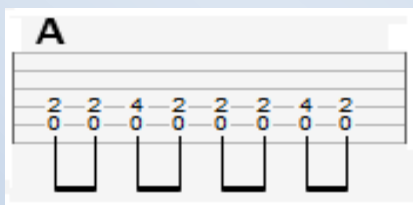
Strum the thickest 2 strings on your guitar



The numbers represent fret numbers. However, this note should be played with your first finger

Play the 4th fret note with your 3rd finger. Refer to the video for this lesson on the website if you need more help

These are played in exactly the same fashion, but moved a string down, therefore They start on an A power chord and D power chord



12 bar blues in A

(Similar to *Johnny Be Goode* by Chuck Berry and *Keep Your Hands To Yourself* by Georgia Satellites)

So not a blues riff 'in B' as Marty said, here we're in A. This means we use the 3 riffs we've just covered in the order written below.

A '12 bar' what now?

This is the most common chord sequence in Blues and Rock n Roll songs. It uses all the chords we know so far in a longer sequence, known as a 12 bar blues (It's 12 bars long and used a lot in blues music as well as other genres such as rock and

12 bar blues in A with Easy Blues Riff

To make this as easy as possible, play the riff in E, A and D SEPERATELY FIRST. Then follow this as a guide so you know how many of each section to do

The image shows a 12-bar blues guitar tab in A major, divided into three systems of four bars each. The first system (bars 1-4) is for the A chord, the second (bars 5-8) for the D chord, and the third (bars 9-12) for the E chord. Each bar contains a sequence of fret numbers (2, 0, 2, 4, 2, 0, 2, 0, 2, 4, 2, 0) for the strings, with some numbers highlighted in blue or orange. The tab is written in 4/4 time and includes a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Level 3 06- Playing guitar stood up

If you're an electric guitarist and see yourself on the stage one day, you have to practice playing guitar stood up. Not all the time, but most of the time. Otherwise it will feel very different and alien to you to stand up, and you won't nail things you can do in practice. Ideally, your strap should be set so the guitar is at the same height stood up as when sat down, which you can do by putting it on sat down and adjusting the strap. If you like the guitar dangling by your knees (like I use to), be prepared to not play or progress as well, and for a bad back...

Here's another thing

Playing guitar stood up **IMPROVES picking hand technique effortlessly** in so many cases. When people practice guitar sat down, they tend to hunch over to see their fingers, their shoulders tighten up and their picking hand naturally tends to have bad technique. This can happen on acoustic guitar too, so watch these tips and check your technique!

Ever stood in front of the mirror with a tennis racquet and imagined you're a rock star?

Playing guitar in front of a mirror is a FANTASTIC way to self assess your own technique.

A few points to look for when watching yourself rock out are;

- ✓ Stand tall and drop your shoulders
- ✓ Try not to lean forward
- ✓ Watch your fingers in the mirror to try and improve

Level 3 07- Chord sequence's for Level 3

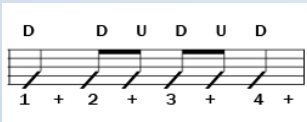
Here I will list the chord sequences you should practice for level 3. These are the essential sequences you should be able to play before moving on to the next level. Some of these are the same or similar to certain songs at each level of the course, and I'll name the songs as we go.

As this is Level 3, we'll just be going between G, A and D so you can easily progress to any of the songs at this level.

Chord sequence 1

This entire level is really dedicated to mastering the change between the D chord and G chord, so here's a chord sequence to work on this change. As always, begin learning this new chord sequence by playing on the beat of even just strumming spreads (just strumming beat 1 of each bar). With this chord sequence, you should THEN try the **8th down and up strumming!**

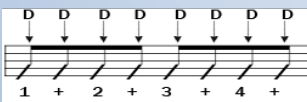
| | D | D | G | G | |



Chord Sequence 2

Try this one nice and slow on the beat first, keeping the timing even. Then try **the 8ths all down strumming** when possible.

| | D | A | G | A | |



Chord sequence 3

There are a few songs at this level with 2 chords per bar. This means the first chord happens on beat 1 and the second chord on beat 3. Again, try it on the beat to a slow count, and then try **8ths all down strumming** for this one!

| | D A | G A | |



Level 3 08- Recommended songs for Level 3

Here I list the essential songs from each level so you can fast track the beginner's course. The 10 songs at each level are chosen not only because of the chords, but also because of the other skills they allow you to acquire. Most people who learn online just chose the songs from the list they know or like. In private lessons, I suggest songs that the student wouldn't naturally pick, but after trying them, they like it and they feel the benefit. Here I offer you the same advice so you can fast track through each level easily.

Recommended songs for Level 3

Sit Down by James

| | D | D | G | A | |

This is the chord sequence for the whole song with a capo at 2nd fret. This song works on most of the changes we need to master in one simple sequence- it's not easy at first but you'll get it!

Free Fallin' by Tom Petty (famous cover by John Mayer)

This again works on the D to G change, but a little faster (ok, a lot faster!). This can be considered a riff as it is short and recognisable too.

Highway to Hell by AC/DC

One of the greatest Classic Rock riffs of all time- with the 3 easy chords you already know! Again, it requires a solid D to G chord change.

Level 3 09- Practice Routine for Level 3

*The following routine should last about 30 minutes. If you want to go on longer or can't do the full 30 then **PLEASE STILL PICK THE GUITAR UP**. Even just 5 minutes a day is MUCH better than a mammoth 2 hour session once a week.*

Practice Routine for Level 3 (30 minutes)

- **Chord practice (Strum pick Strum)**
 - G to D change (most common- make this a priority)
 - G to A change (other changes are far less common, focus on these)
- **Rhythm practice**
 - 8ths all down strumming (for Slower tempos)
 - 8ths down and up strumming (for medium/ faster tempos)
 - Try all the 8th strumming variations from [Level 3 02](#). Then try going between each of these without stopping- tough but awesome for your rhythm!
- **Chord sequence's-** If you can do these- then use this time on songs instead!
 - | D | D | G | G | |
 - | D | A | G | A | |
 - | D A | G A | D A | G A |
- **Song practice;** Keep 3 or 4 songs for the previous level and add...
 - *Sit Down* by James, *Free Fallin'* by Tom Petty or another acoustic song
 - *Get Back* or *Highway to Hell* as another riff based song
 - Keep both [All Down](#) and [Down and Up](#) motion strumming songs!

Remember- All Down 8th strumming I used for **slower songs**;
Down and Up 8th strumming is used in **faster songs**!

So here are your goals for Level 3. I'm sure you get the idea; you can do whatever songs you like- just make sure you can do the following before level 4!

Level 3 goals

- Be able to play the chords from memory (E,A,D and G) and be confident with the changes
- Be able to play any of the recommended chord sequences and as a bonus- be able to make up your own. Try these with the new strumming patterns at this level while keeping timing consistent!
- Be able to play AT LEAST 5 songs from the list, and have a go at playing these along to the record.
- Most of these may just be most of the song, but 2 or 3 NEED to be all the way through. Good examples of songs to play all the way through are *James sit down*, *Free Falling*, *Twist and Shout* and *Highway To Hell*.

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You can contact me via the website or Facebook message to arrange a bank transfer or credit card payment if you prefer.

How much should I donate?

I'll be making this eBook available soon for around £8 (\$12). You can donate however much or little you feel it was of benefit to you

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Donations allow me to spend more time per week creating videos and course for you guys. Without them, I'd have to spend all my working hours teaching privately, which is fun but means little online content. So please donate if you can afford to receive more content!



Beginners Course

Level 4

Level 4- Introduction and Goals

At this level we'll learn how to

➤ Play 3 Minor Chords

These are Em, Am and D minor.

➤ Strumming variations

In reality, songs rarely stick to one strumming pattern for an entire song. We're going to learn some variations of the patterns you know to keep it interesting and make your strumming sound more professional!

➤ Easy blues guitar Riff

Learn the most common blues guitar riff, used in countless songs but popular with Chuck Berry and Led Zeppelin!

➤ Performing and recording tips

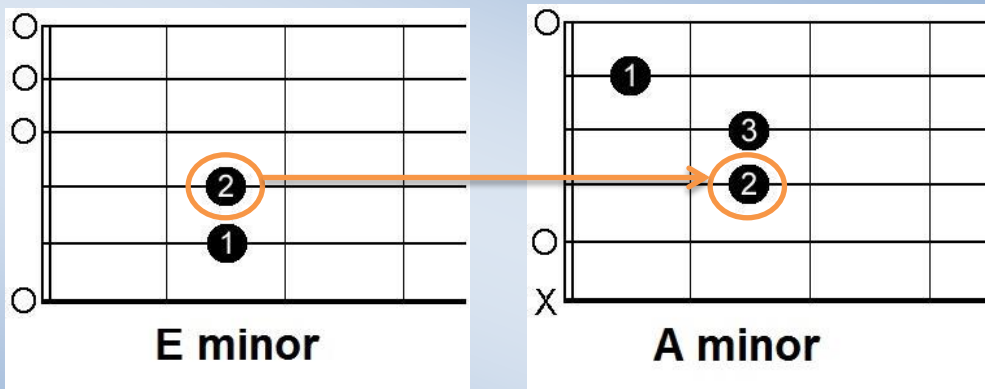
I'll take you through the basics of;

- ✓ playing guitar stood up
- ✓ singing and playing guitar at the same time
- ✓ recording yourself

Level 4 01 – Open Minor Chords

What is a 'minor' chord?

Minor chords can be easier than the major chords we've learned. However, they sound very much 'sad' and are therefore less common than 'happy' major chords.

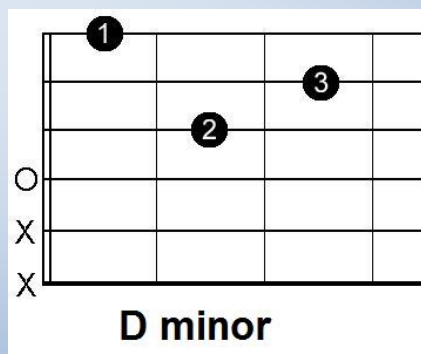


*Again we have an **Anchor Finger** which is circled*

Notice that this is almost the same as E major, except that one finger is missing. It is that string that makes the whole chord sound happy or sad- **so make sure it rings out!**

The D minor Chord

Don't play the strings with an X- just like with A and D major!

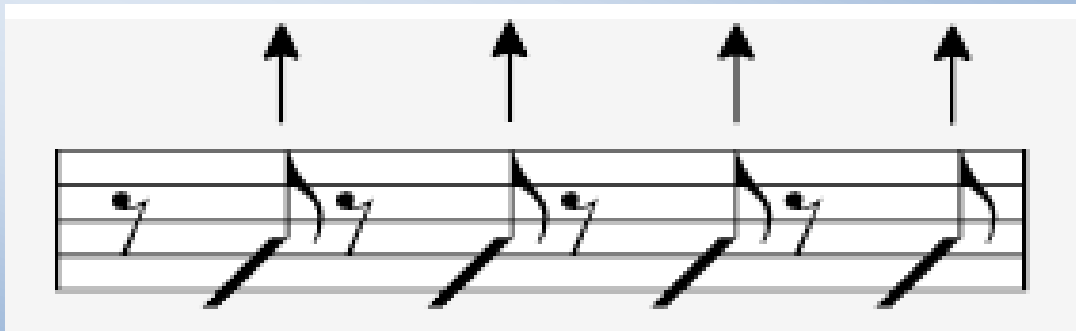


Most people find D minor MUCH tougher, especially for changing. This is fine, s not used often at all. We'll have to get it but its fine if it takes a little longer than the other two.

Level 4 02- 'Off beat' strumming

Many people find this a lot of fun, and other really struggle with it. The idea is we 'mute' the count and just strum the off beat, as shown.

Reggae 'off beat' strumming



Muting is used in all genres and is worth getting used to, This pattern is used in most reggae songs, including Natural Mystic from this level of the beginners course. Make the strums as short as you can to make it sound really authentic!

Exercise

- Play down strums on every off beat, and mute either straight away (Reggae style) or on the beat.
- Strum any chords you like for the whole drum track.
- I recommend playing 2 bars of Am then 2 bars of Dm!

Level 4 03- Hearing the difference between major and minor

At this level we're covering the 3 open minor chords Em, Am and Dm. You also know the major chords E, A and D. Here we're gonna train your ears to hear the difference between these different types of chords, major and minor.

Major chords generally sound **happy** or normal.

Major = cheery!

Minor chords ALWAYS sound **sad**.

Minor = dreary!

If you don't take the time to study the way chords sound, you'll likely fail to notice subtleties in your playing that could be improved if you could hear them yourself. You'll also likely fail to hear the detail in any song or part you are learning, and therefore not be able to replicate it to a high standard.

In the audio below, I have recorded different major and minor chords. First, try and work out which is major or minor. Then, go one step further- and try and guess which chord I am playing! It may be a total guess at first, but you'd be surprised how quickly you can train your ears to hear these chords with practice.

Level 4 04- Playing guitar and singing at the same time

Many people want the ability to play guitar and sing at the same time, but this can be tricky for many people. This isn't going to be a singing lesson. This is a lesson about how to do two things at once.

The trick to doing two things at once is to make sure one of the things EASY. Automatic. Effortless. Then you think about the other thing you're trying to do while the other is happening automatically.

For most people, the thing to make automatic is rhythm guitar playing, aka strumming chords in an easy pattern. Then you think about your singing; when to breathe, pitch, lyrics, etc. The song '**Aint no sunshine**' is a great song to start on this journey as the guitar playing and singing are largely separate.

If you ever struggle, consider your choice of song. You need to know both singing and playing REALLY well if you have any hope of doing both together.

Finally, make sure your rhythm guitar is simple enough to sing over rhythmically. As you tackle harder songs with syncopated rhythms (very off beat) you'll notice things fall apart more. This isn't because 'its harder'. It's likely the contrasting rhythms that are hard to match up. The arctic monkeys are master of this syncopation of rhythm and singing. A song like '**Dancing Shoes**' or '**Why'd you only call me**' have contrasting rhythms from the vocal and guitar riffs, making them very difficult to do at the same time! '**Like I love You**' and **Bad Moon Rising**' from the beginners course is another example of a very difficult song to play and sing.

Easy songs to have a go with include;

- **Aint no sunshine**
- **Songbird**
- **Mr Tambourine Man**
- **Twist and shout**
- **Chasing Cars**
- **Knocking on Heavens Door**

If any song is really trick to simply sing, try using a capo at different frets to change they key and find where it sounds best for you voice!

Level 4 05- Play better guitar by recording yourself

For many people, recording yourself is very scary. This could be because they are not good with technology, or because of the actual performance element.

My message at this level is simple. Make a start at recording yourself.

Why? Obviously music is sound, so it needs to be heard. But you hear ASTOUNDINGLY LITTLE of what you play **while playing**. Think of hearing yourself on an answerphone message. "I don't sound like that!" Well you do, but it sounds different to you while you're talking.

OK, BUT HOW?

EASY - Smartphone voice memo/ video camera

Believe it or not- this is how most professional bands and songwriters record their ideas- simply because we always have our phone on us and it sounds pretty good these days!

This is where I recommend everyone to start. I use this myself to quickly asses a song I'm going to be performing at some point with the minimum of fuss.

BEST FOR LEAST EFFORT - GarageBand or other Tablet apps

Garageband for mac is the easiest way into the professional world of recording. Its very scary at first but very 'plug and play. A couple of YouTube tutorials and you'll be away.

BEST VALUE - Cubase/ Nuendo for PC

As many people don't have Apple Macs, Cubase is a great option. I made my album 'First Words using Cubase LE 4. This software was FREE with the audio interface (This plugs your guitar into your PC). The audio interface I recommend is a Lexican Alpha, which is £50 on Amazon at the time of writing

FOR THE PROS - Protools or Logic for Mac

Pros use these to record their albums to a fully professional standard.

There are few things more essential to your progress at any level than listening to yourself back. All I ask is that you make a start to do so, however basic that may be.

Level 4 06- Improve picking hand technique by playing guitar stood up

Info on playing position is found at the beginning of this book. However, just like with our posture in real life, bad habits can creep in without us realising.

Many people practice guitar while hunched up on their sofa, learning forward trying to read their notes or perched on the side of their bed. When we pause to reflect- of course a hunched position is going to be bad for our technique.

The amazing thing is that I've found standing up while practicing to be so GOOD for mine and my student's technique! This is especially true for electric guitarists. However, I encourage acoustic guitarists to become more aware of their posture and sitting position while playing.

Personally, I wanted to play in a band from the first time I picked up a guitar. So, especially when I got my first electric guitar at aged 12, it made sense to me to practice stood up to emulate my heroes on the stage. If you practice something sat down for weeks, then stand up on the night- it's going to feel different. An extreme example is- if a guitarist wants to play guitar behind his head- he needs to practice that off the stage first!

Strap length

It is best to set the height of your strap while sat down, ensuring there is no slack. Then there is little difference in where the guitar is when you stand, it just stops you hunching up as much. You can set it a little lower for comfort, but if you can see your belt buckle above the guitar when you stand, it's REALLY bad and you'll give yourself a bad neck and back.

Strap type

Any type is fine, but the wider the strap the more comfortable it will be- definitely handy to have a wide strap for heavy guitars such as *Les Pauls* like mine!

Key Points

- ✓ Standing up is generally GOOD for picking hand technique
- ✓ Set your strap while sat down for optimum strap length
- ✓ Don't lean or hunch forward ever, even if you can't see your fingers as well
- ✓ Relax your shoulders and don't press down too hard!

Level 4 07- Chord sequence's for Level 4

Here I will list the chord sequences you should practice for level 3. These are the essential sequences you should be able to play before moving on to the next level. Some of these are the same or similar to certain songs at each level of the course, and I'll name the songs as we go.

As this is Level 4, we'll be going between G, A and D PLUS the minor chords you now know. There are a lot of possible combinations now, but not all chords go together well and there are common sequences, listed below.

Chord sequence 1

This chord change is used in 'Songbird' and 'That's Entertainment', but here I've done 2 bars of each chord to make it easier to play. This is the easiest change we have- so an opportunity to get some higher level strumming in!! (e.g. off beat strumming and 8th strumming variations)

| | G | G | Em | Em | |

Chord Sequence 2

Try this one nice and slow on the beat first, keeping the timing even. Then try **the 8ths all down strumming** when possible.

| | G | D | Em | Am | |

Chord sequence 3

We generally don't go from a major chord to a minor chord of the same letter (e.g. A to A minor) However here I used a chord sequence where this does work

| | D | A | Am | E | |

Level 4 08- Recommended songs for Level 4

Here I list the essential songs from each level so you can fast track the beginner's course.

Recommended songs for Level 4

Ain't No Sunshine

Great one to play and sing at the same time. This is also the ONLY essential minor chords song (They do sounds quite dreary after all...)

Natural Mystic

Get you off beat strumming working- it's an essential rhythm guitar skill!

Songbird

Another easy one but great for strumming, this should be tried along to the record- just join in! Also a good choice if you want to sing over your own playing!

Level 4 09- Practice Routine for Level 4

At the end of each Level, I'll give you my recommended practice routine.

The most benefit will be found if you can do this nearly every day. If you do this, you'll start to get accelerated returns (google the cycle of accelerated returns to learn more about this!)

Practice Routine for Level 3 (30 minutes)

- **Chord practice (Strum pick Strum)**
 - Changes between each minor chord plus the G chord will need work
 - Particular changes should be Em to Am, Am to Dm and G to Am
- **Rhythm practice**
 - Off-beat strumming ([Level 4 02](#))
 - 8ths all down strumming (for Slower tempos)
 - 8th strumming variations from [Level 3 02](#) (for medium/ faster tempos)
- **Chord sequence's-** If you can do these- then use this time on songs instead!
 - | G | G | Em | Em | | (*similar to Songbird by Oasis*)
 - | G | D | Em | Am | |
 - | D | A | Am | E | | (*Not as common, more sophisticated!*)
- **Song practice;** Keep 4 or 5 songs for the previous level and add...
 - Ain't No Sunshine is essential in my opinion
 - Songbird by Oasis will be useful for many people

Keep both [All Down](#) and [Down and Up](#) motion strumming songs and
Keep a couple of riffs from the previous levels!!

Here are your goals for Level 4 - just make sure you can do the following before level 5!

Level 4 goals

- Be able to play the chords from memory (E,A,D, Em, Am, Dm and G)
- Know the difference between major and minor, and be able to say which a chord is by just listening (see lesson 4 at this level)
- Be able to play any of the recommended chord sequences and as a bonus- be able to make up your own. Try these with the new strumming patterns at this level while keeping timing consistent!
- Be able to play at least 5 songs, and have a go at playing these along to the record. These can be 5 totally new songs, but it's better to keep your favourites from previous levels too.

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Beginners Course

Level 5

Level 5- Introduction and Goals

At this level we'll learn

➤ The C major chord

We'll also master changes between G, C and D, which are commonly found together in real songs. In these songs, we'll see that the Cadd9 chord is also used, and we'll learn this easy chord too!

➤ Add accents to strumming

Transform your strumming patterns by adding accents and added up strums. These will stop your strumming sounding flat and give it better feel and groove.

➤ G major pentatonic scale

Yes, we will learn our first scale- nothing to be scared of! I'll show you how to practically integrate this into your everyday guitar playing AND get you playing melodies!

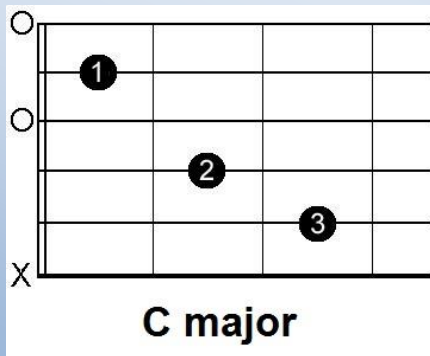
➤ Repertoire and practice routine

As always, I'll provide you with a list of my recommended songs to smoothly fast track this course, as well as the practice routine I recommend you use.

Level 5 01- G C and D chords, variations AND changes

The C chord

This chord is the biggest stretch we've done so far and is a totally new shape. It is however so common that you need to take the time to learn and be able to play it.



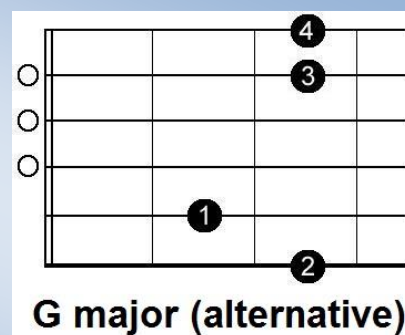
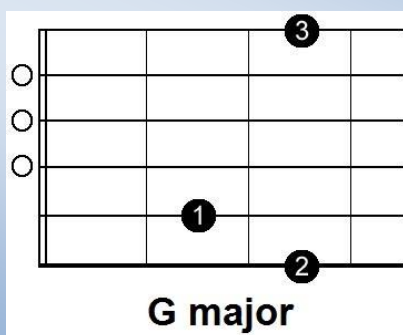
Common chord changes

G, C and D go together really well and are used in any order in a LOT of songs (as you'll soon find from this level in the song lessons). We'll look at why later. For now, we need to get the changes between them solid enough to play real songs. Practice changing for around a minute for each of the following;

- G to C
- C to D
- G to D (a recap on the standard G to D change from level 3)

G chord recap

Here are the 2 most common ways to play a G chord that we learned at [level 3](#). If you struggle with this Level a lot, I strongly suggest going to level 3 and learning at least 3 songs!

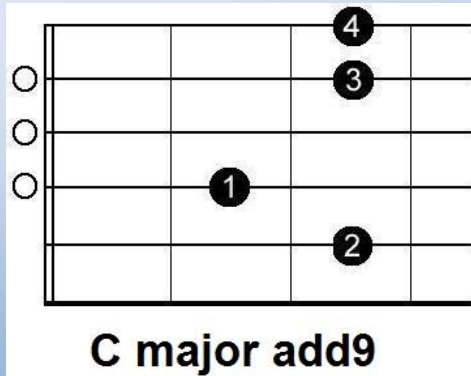


The first G is the easiest way to play a G. The alternative is common as it sounds good when changing to a D as the 3rd finger stays down.

Oasis style chords

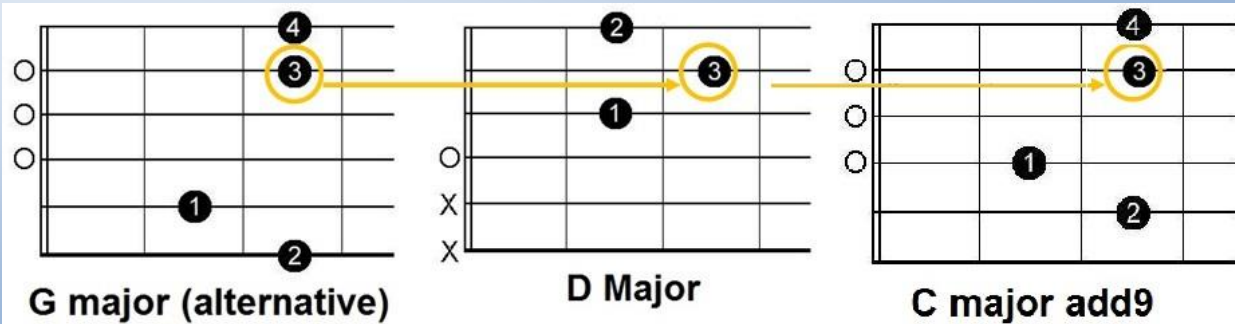
The Cadd9 chord

This is where the Cadd9 comes in. G, C and D go together really well but can be difficult to change between as your fingers are changing to very different chord shapes all the time.



Playing the big Oasis style G, a Cadd9 and a D means you can keep your 3rd finger down and the others don't move as far.

This also means they can sound better and a lot of songs are played in this way.



You can even choose to play a Cadd9 in most cases even if the chord sheet says to play a normal C! However, this won't always work, so a normal G and C and changes should be learned too.

For great examples of this technique in REAL SONGS, listen to;

- ✓ 'Wonderwall' by Oasis
- ✓ 'Drunk' by Ed Sheeran (watch the live version on YouTube)
- ✓ 'You're Beautiful' by James Blunt

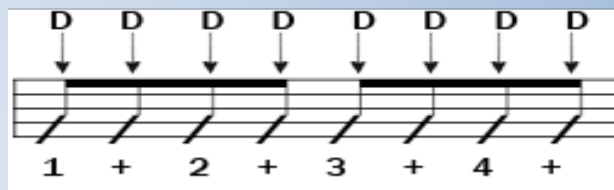
Level 5 02- 8th all down strumming embellishment's

Here is the 8th strumming we covered at Level 1. Songs around this level that you can try out these 8th strumming variations include;

Knockin' On Heavens Door, Sweet Home Alabama, Can't Always Get What You Want, Wanted Dead Or Alive from Level 5;

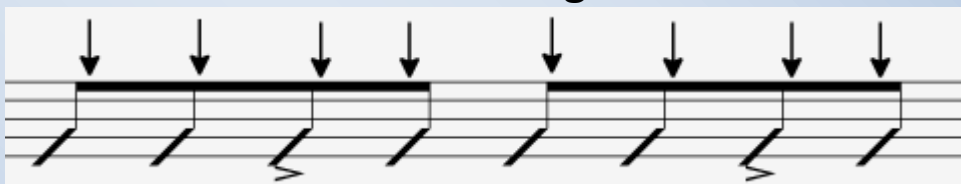
Love The Way You Lie, Yellow and Get Lucky from Level 6; plus Stand By Me, Hey Jude and Hotel California from Level 7, so LOTS! 😊

8th all down strumming (from Level 2)



At this level, it can sound a little relentless and flat. To spice it up, the first thing we can do is play beats 2 and 4 louder, known as adding an 'accent'. We do this on beats 2 and 4 as this is where the snare drum will play, which is the loudest part of a regular drumbeat. The accent is shown by the > symbol.

8th all down strumming – with accent



If you're up for a challenge, you can then play the thicker strings only on counts '1 +' and '3 +'. This will further accent 2 and 4 as the others are now quieter.

You can also try adding a little up strum as shown. This technically makes it a 16th strumming pattern which is hard! But I've found some people can do it at this level, so give it a go!

8th all down strumming- with added 'up'



Level 5 03- The G Major Pentatonic Scale

The G what-now? Lets take a second to look at what the words mean....

Pent = 5

Tonic = First note of a scale; in this case **G is the first note**

Scale = A sequence of notes ordered Low to high then vice versa

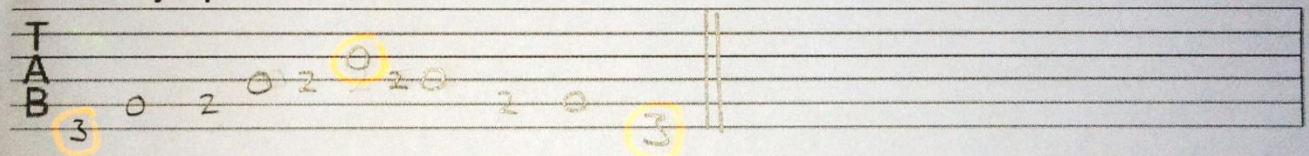
A **scale** can be seen as a musical alphabet that we can create melodies with. Confusion can be happen because different scales give us the notes for different styles, genres or chord sequences.

So, the G major Pentatonic Scale is a set of 5 notes played up or down. It works best over any chord sequence in the **key of G** (Covered in Level 6 01!) and it sounds great over all common pop styles such as acoustic or rock music. Songs it is used in include the intro riffs of 'Wish You Were Here' by Pink Floyd and 'My Girl' by The Temptations.

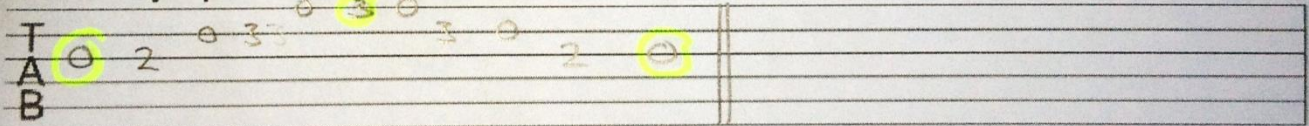
Guitar melodies are written in TAB (short for Tablature). This is where every line represents a string on your guitar, and the numbers are the fret numbers

G Major Pentatonic scale in TAB

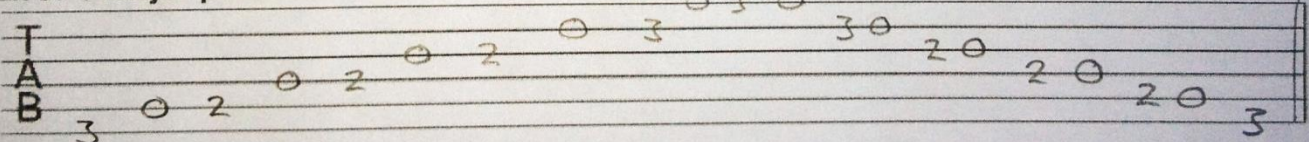
Ex 1. G major pentatonic first octave



Ex 2. G major pentatonic second octave

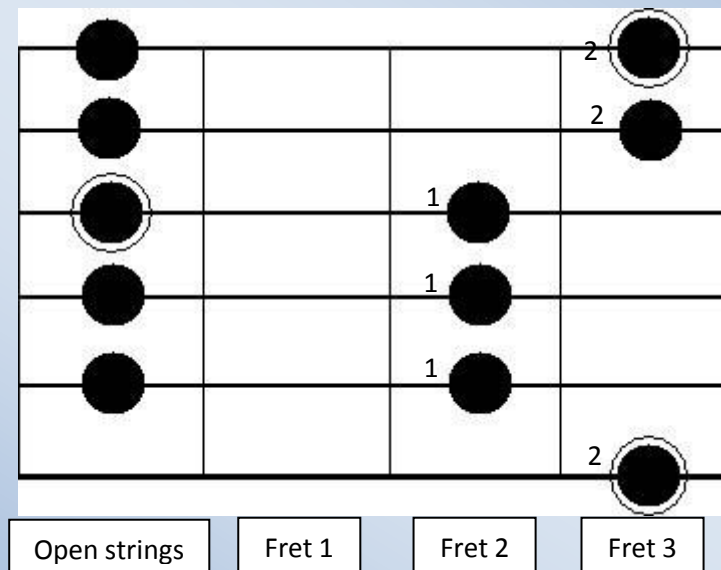


Ex 3. G major pentatonic full scale ascending



G Major Pentatonic Diagram

Scale diagrams help visualise the scale on your fret board. Each black dot shows where to place your fingers. The **circled dots are the G notes**, these show you where you should start and end the scale.



Level 5 04- Air changes

At the moment, you're likely making at least 1 chord by putting one finger down at a time (likely the G). What I want to introduce is making the shape of each chord before putting your fingers down. This will lead to MUCH quicker changes, and is how the pros do it!

Air changes Exercise

1. Make the shape of e.g. the G chord a cm above the fret board and keep your fingers still in this position for a few seconds
2. Press your finger down and strum the chord as usual
3. Lift your fingers and repeat this between all the chords you know.
4. It helps to always go from the one your struggling with (likely the G) between every chord. E.G. Go G to D, G to Em, etc.

The idea is to implant the chord shape into the muscle memory of your hand. This is much better than just remember which fret and strings the fingers go into and will make your changes easier and faster!

Level 5 04 –Hammer Ons and Flick Offs

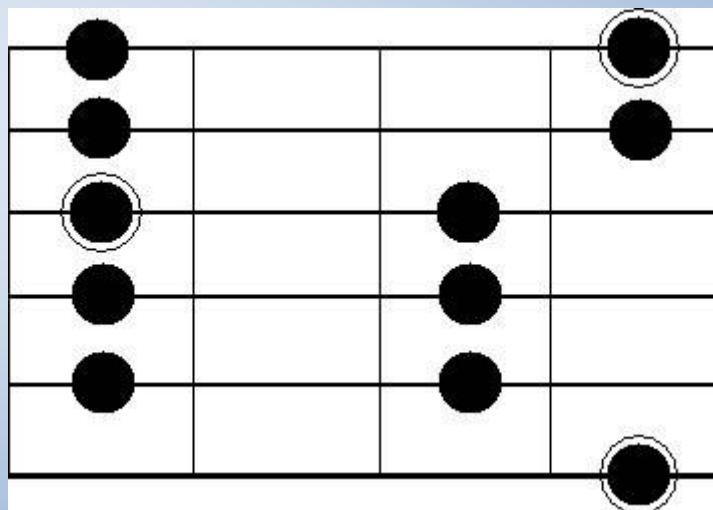
‘Hammer ons’ and ‘flicks off’ with G major Pentatonic Scale and chords

Now you know the notes of the G major pentatonic scale, you can try doing the same notes by picking the open strings and hammering on (or flicking off) your fingers to make the 2nd and 3rd fret notes sound.

This is a great way to play much faster sequence's! However, it needs to be practiced slowly at first to try and get the hammer ons to sound the same as the picked notes.

Play the G major Pentatonic with hammer ons and flick offs

Pick open strings
as normal

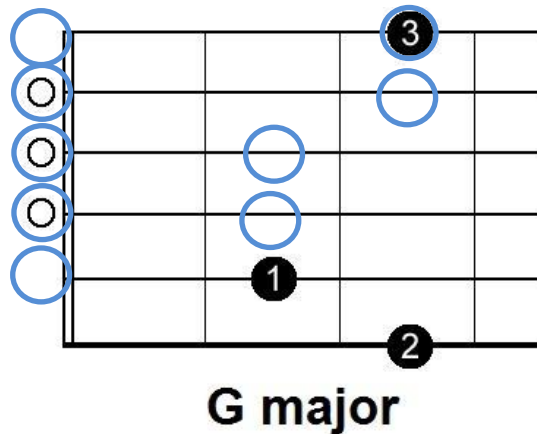


‘Hammer on’ 2nd and 3rd
fret notes when going
up.

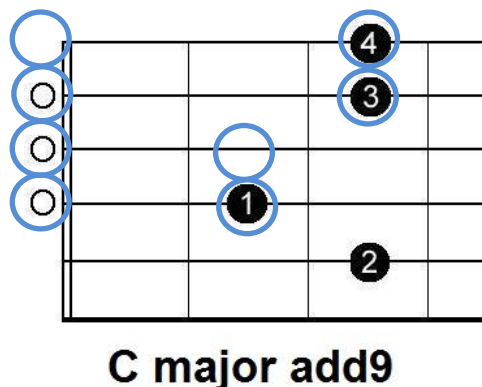
Flick off to the open
strings when going
down!

Level 5 05 – Adding G major pentatonic notes to chords

Now you know the notes of the G major pentatonic scale, we can add some of these melodic notes while playing chords. When playing a G chord, we are already playing many notes from the scale, as shown below.



The easiest way to add the other notes is to play any of the circled notes below with your first finger. Great results will also come if you only play certain strings, which can highlight the melodic notes that you're playing with your first finger.



For great examples of this technique in REAL SONGS, listen to;

- ✓ 'You Can't Always Get What You Want' by The Rolling Stones
- ✓ 'Wish You Were Here' by Pink Floyd

Level 5 07- Chord sequence's for Level 5

You know many chords now, but not all of them go together as well as others. At Level 5 it's all about fluid changes between G, C and D. These are probably the most common 3 chords used in guitar based songs, so well worth taking the time to master changing between just these 3! We also add in the odd Em and Am.

Try out any strumming pattern you're comfortable with. Then try the 8th all down strumming with embellishments for Level 5 02!

Chord sequence 1

This chord progression uses all 3 of the main chords G, C and D, and is similar to the progression used in Brown Eyed Girl, a classic guitar song!

| | G | C | G | D | |

Chord Sequence 2

This is a great feel good rock song chord progression. Try this one nice and slow on the beat first, keeping the timing even. Then try **the 8ths down and up strumming** when possible.

| | D | D | C | G | |

Chord sequence 3

Put simply, this is **THE MOST USED CHORD SEQUENCE EVER** for hit pop songs over the past 50 years. It is known as a 4 chord song, but more about that at the next level. For now- see if you can play it with any of the strumming patterns you know!

| | G | D | Em | C | |

Level 5 08- Recommended songs for Level 5

Here I list the essential songs from each level so you can fast track the beginner's course.

Recommended songs for Level 5

Knocking on Heavens Door

You have a choice of the acoustic (Bob Dylan) Version here, or the Rock version (the great cover by Guns and Roses). Both repeat the same chord sequence for the vast majority of the song, and it's a really common progression- so make sure you can do it!

Yellow by Coldplay

This is a great song to get everyone singing along at a party. It isn't fast and it sounds great when you get the strumming too it. It has some structure to keep it interesting, and its fairly easy to play along to the record- give it a go!

Sweet Child O Mine

Obviously a classic guitar song! In my video lesson online, I show you how to play the rhythm guitar of this song, which is quite easy!! It does have more structure, and more chords than you may be used to. Challenge yourself and learn a classic!!

Level 5 09- Practice Routine for Level 5

I recommend you increase your practice time to 40 minutes. If this is too much, then try 20 minute slots a day this can really work for many people!

Truth be known, I like to spend the first 5 or 10 minutes playing whatever comes to mind. It clears my head and warms my fingers up for the more focused practice to come

Practice Routine for Level 5 (40 minutes most days)

- **Chord practice (Strum pick Strum)**
 - All about the chord G, C and D at this level
 - minor chords will start to get used a lot now too!
- **Rhythm practice** (Use these in your songs asap)
 - 8ths all down strumming with embellishment's [Level 5 02](#) (for Slower tempos)
 - 8th strumming variations from [Level 3 02](#) (for medium/ faster tempos)
- **Chord sequence's-** If you can do these- then use this time on songs instead
 - | G | C | D | C ||
 - | D | D | C | G ||
 - | G | D | Em | C || (The most common chord sequence!)
- **Song practice;** Keep 4 or 5 songs for the previous level and add...
 - Knocking On Heavens Door is the simplest song with all the chords
 - Any song that uses G, C and D is a good one, really hammer those changes

Now is a good time to ensure you have variety in your songs. Have you learned a riff or two yet? Can you demonstrate different strumming patterns? Can you play some songs along to the record?

Here are your goals for Level 4 - make sure you can do the following before level 5!

Level 5 goals

- Be able to play the chords from memory (E,A,D, Em, Am, Dm, G and C)
- Be able to play any of the recommended chord sequences and as a bonus- be able to make up your own. Try these with the new strumming patterns at this level while keeping timing consistent!
- Be able to play at least 5 songs from the list, and have a go at playing these along to the record. These can be 5 totally new songs, but it's better to keep your favourites from previous levels too.

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I hope you can tell that many hours of work have gone into create this unique course. This is on top of the hours creating the accompanying free videos, and creating website content.

While it is true I make some income from advertisements on the videos, donations allow me to spend less time teaching privately and more time creating new content, while keeping all video content free



Beginners Course

Level 6

Level 6- Introduction and Goals

At this level we'll learn

➤ **The G major scale**

The major scale is the foundation of all western music. For us- it simply adds 2 notes to the pentatonic scale you already know!

➤ **The most common strumming pattern- ever!**

Simple as that. This strumming pattern- based on one that you know already- fits in more songs than any other- and I'll tell you what those songs are!

➤ **The notes on the guitar**

We'll also look at how the notes lead us to know which chords go together!

➤ **The Key of G and Chord/ scale relations**

I'll show you how the notes in the G major scale tell us all the common chords in the Key of G

➤ **Repertoire and practice routine**

As always, I'll provide you with a list of my recommended songs to smoothly fast track this course, as well as the practice routine I recommend you use.

Level 6 01 – The G Major Scale

At Level 3 03 we learned the G major **pentatonic** scale. This is a **5 note** scale which is the easiest and most common scale for chilled happy guitar songs (Think 'My Girl' by the Temptations or happy and chilled acoustic music).

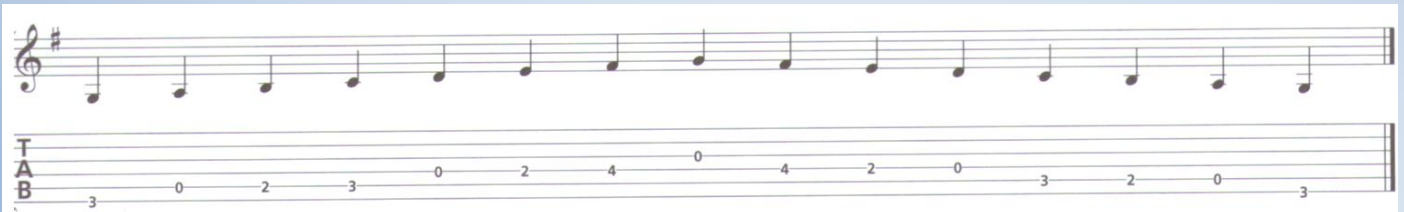
Here we're looking at the full MAJOR SCALE. The major scale is the foundation of all western music. It has **7 notes**, so we're simply adding 2 notes to the 'Pent- a tonic' scale you know already! We generally practice scales G to G, this makes it 8 notes in total.

To start with we'll just cover 1 **octave**

N.B. 'Oct' means 8, so an octave is 8 notes of a major scale.

***Octave** is also always used to describe the same note a different pitches!*

G Major Scale (1 octave)

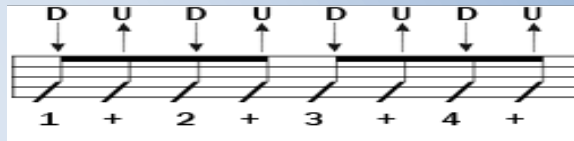


A great example of this scale in a song is Redemption Song by Bob Marley!

Level 6 02- The most common strumming pattern-ever!

A tie goes great with a smart suit. It is also used in music when we do not play on a main beat. This strumming is another variation on 8th down and up strumming, here's a reminder of that...

8th down and up strumming



If you haven't covered how to miss out strums yet, see [Level 3 strumming](#) as you'll need that before attempting this. This is harder as we are missing out beat 3. It is also the MOST COMMON STRUMMING PATTERNS. It is used in Sweet Child O Mine, She Sells Sanctuary, I'm A Believer and Good Golly Miss Molly from Level 5; Hey Brother from Level 6; And Dock Of The Bay and Saw Her Standing There from Level 7. Told you it was common!

8th strumming with a tie

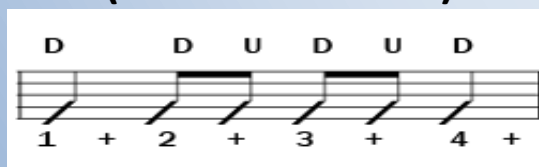


The important thing is to keep your hand moving the same as your normal 8th strumming. If there's a pause at any point, it will go wrong. This can be tough but you will get it! If you really struggle, you'll want to master your [Level 3 strumming](#) before attempting this.

TOP TIP!

If you struggle with this strumming pattern, make sure you can do this one first as the hand motion is the same!

8ths Down and Up variation 3 (from Level 3 02!)



Level 6 03- The Key of G

There are 3 steps to knowing all the chords in a key. As this level is all about the key of G, we'll be using this as our example.

Step 1- Write the notes to a major scale, in this case, the G major scale. These give us the root note, i.e. letter names to each chord in the key

G major scale notes- G A B C D E F#

Step 2 – Now we know the letter names, we need to know which chords, therefore, are major or minor?

To find this, we number each letter 1 to 8. Music theory dictates that the 1st, 4th and 5th chords should be **major**, and the others are minor

**G major scale notes numbered-
Why? 1, 4 and 5 become major, the rest become minor**

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|----------|----------|---|----|
| G | A | B | C | D | E | F# |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Step 3 – This gives us all the chords in the key... almost. In real songs, the 7th chord is usually a G/F#, rather than f# minor.

THIS now gives us all the chords in the Key of G major!

G – Am – Bm – C – D – Em – G/F#

(Sticking strict to the theory it should be F# diminished- as you can guess, diminished chords are very jazz and not used in many Pop songs at all!)

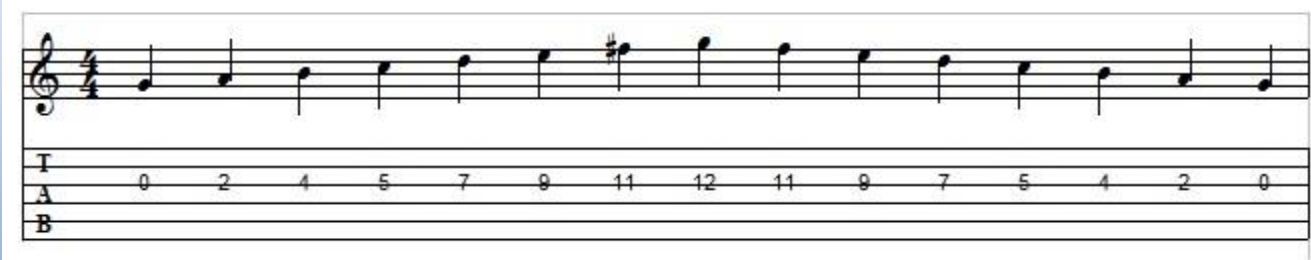
The other amazing thing that a key does is give us all the melodic notes that over the top of these chords! These notes are the major scale that we started off with.

Level 6 04- The G Major Scale on 1 string!

It can be difficult to visualise a scale that snakes down your fret board. I therefore always think it's really handy to be able to play the scale on 1 string to visualise the notes better AND to keep in mind what it sounds like! As the major scale is so important, we're covering this now.

NOTE: many great solos and riffs such as Thunderstruck by AC/DC are played just on 1 string!!

G Major Scale on 1 string (the G string)



The Key of G Scale/ chord relations

G major scale-

G A B **C** **D** E F#
1 2 3 **4** **5** 6 7

G Major Scale



Common chords in the Key of G

G – Am – Bm – C – D – Em – G/F#

Level 6 04- Introduction to the notes on guitar

Now we've memorised a couple of scales, we need to cover the notes we have available to us, and then where they are on a guitar neck. But first, the basics.

There are 7 notes that have a letter name, the same as the major open chords you know

A B C D E F G

This sequence is repeated to give us all the notes you can sing or play on a guitar. Each time the sequence is repeated, the notes are of a higher pitch.

A B C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C D E F G

Between most of these there is another note that can be called a sharp(#) or a flat(b)

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

A common question here is, why a sharp OR a flat? Why not just a sharp?

A sharp(#) raises the pitch by 1 fret

(sit on something sharp, you'd go **up** too!)

A flat(b) lowers the pitch by 1 fret

(like a flat tyre would go **down**)

It always confused me why this was the case. Why have sharps and flats at all? Why not just have more letters? This we just have to accept. Music is a language and all languages have their rules and quirks.

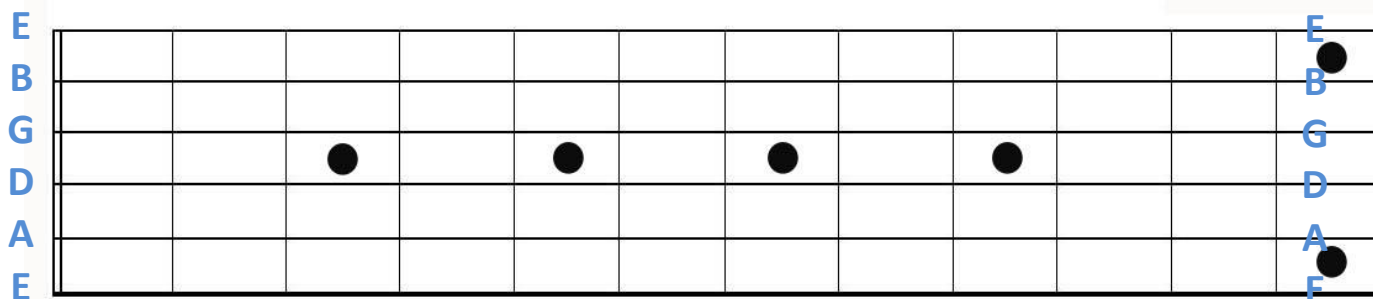
Later, you will come to understand that having sharps and flats leads to a pattern which makes it EASY to visualise where ALL the notes are! But the pattern is not clear in the early stages. To explain the pattern now would be like memorising SOH CAHTOA (a way to help you with a trigonometry problem) to help you with your times tables.

So where are these notes on a guitar?

Know Your Open Strings

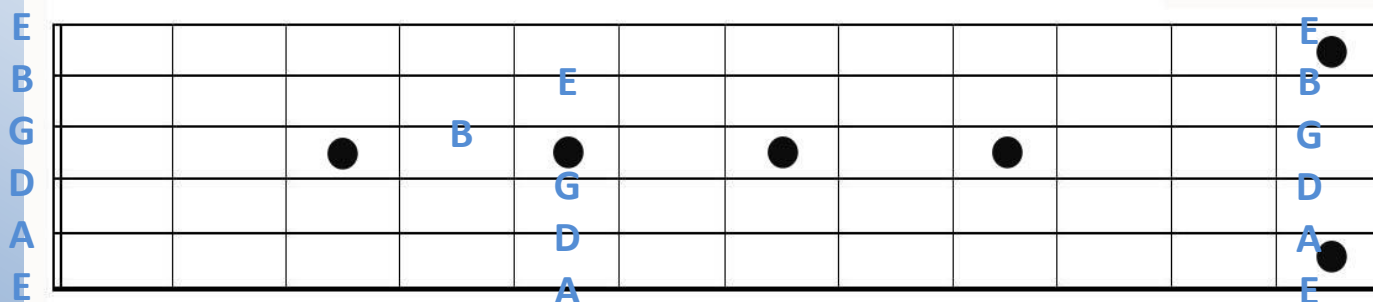
You'll need to know the names of the open strings. Using a mnemonic can help you remember them. For example; **E**lephants **A**nd **D**onkeys **G**row **B**ig **E**ars to remember **E A D G B E** (thickest to thinnest!)

These notes are then repeated at the 12th fret, which usually has 2 dots.



5th fret tuning trick

The notes at 5th fret can be used to check the tuning of your instrument, providing you know the first note is an E. Very handy trick if you suspect that your guitar might have gone out of tune and want to check quickly! N.B. The only note that isn't at 5th fret is the B, which is at 4th simply because of how a guitar is tuned.



After this lesson, I'd like you to use the previous page to name all the notes on your thickest E string. Because the E string starts on an E note, we start from E, then F, then F# (default to the sharps to make it more logical, i.e. F F# G G# etc)

Many of the naturals (non-sharps) fall on the dots; including G, A, B, and E on the double dot at 12th fret. This is a great way to check that you're right! In fact, its awesome to memorize these so you don't have to count up all the time!

Level 6 07- Chord + Lead guitar for Level 6

Level 6 is all about the Key of G, and how to play notes from the G major scale (or G pentatonic) over chords in this key. So here's we're essentially adding some lead guitar workouts! These work best played over

Chord sequence 1

This chord progression uses all 3 of the main chords G, C and D, and is similar to the progression used in Brown Eyed Girl, a classic guitar song!

| | G | C | G | D | |

Chord Sequence 2

This is a great feel good rock song chord progression. Try this one nice and slow on the beat first, keeping the timing even. Then try **the 8ths down and up strumming** when possible.

| | D | D | C | G | |

Chord sequence 3

Put simply, this is **THE MOST USED CHORD SEQUENCE EVER** for hit pop songs over the past 50 years. It is known as a 4 chord song, but more about that at the next level. For now- see if you can play it with any of the strumming patterns you know!

| | G | D | Em | C | |

Level 5 08- Recommended songs for Level 6

Here I list the essential songs from each level so you can fast track the beginner's course.

Recommended songs for Level 6

Brown Eyed Girl by Van Morrison

A classic song that happens to be in the Key of G. This uses the most common strumming pattern ever (from Lesson 2 of this level). It also introduces a 'Bridge' (known as a pre chorus in America). This is a song section that can occur between a verse and a chorus to build the song up and make the chorus sound better!

Hey Brother by Avicci

A massive hit in 2013, this song is popular with my private students of all ages. It again uses the most common strumming pattern ever from lesson 2, and is again in the Key of G when a capo is used.

Love the way you lie / California King Bed by Rihanna

Both of these are great examples of '4 chord songs' in the Key of G.

Level 6 09- Practice Routine for Level 6

Here still I recommend a practice time of 40 minutes, especially considering the theory content and to give you time to try out your own chord sequences. Remember, if this is too much; break it up into 2 x 20 minute sessions

The most benefit will be found if you can pick up your guitar nearly every day! Don't worry if you have a day off, but if you're spending more days not playing than you are playing- be aware you will not make the progress you could be making!

Practice Routine (30/ 40 minutes most days)

- **Chord practice (Strum pick Strum)** All about the chord G, C and D at this level, but the minor chords will start to get used a lot now too!
- **Rhythm practice**
 - 8th strumming with a tie (Level 6 02)
 - 8ths all down strumming with an accent and an up (Level 5 02)
- **Chord sequences-** Be able to play any of the recommended chord sequences and as a bonus- be able to make up your own. Try these with the new strumming patterns at this level while keeping timing consistent!
- **G major scale-** this should be played 4 times through, ideally to a metronome as in Level 6 03! Have a few attempts to get the sound as smooth and the timing as even as you can
- **Song practice.** Practice songs that use the two strumming patterns listed in the rhythm practice section- it is the be all and end all of this level. I'd like you to also be aware what key you think the songs you know are in. Finally, make sure you can still play at least 2 guitar riffs by now! (Can't Explain, Free Falling and Highway to Hell or similar should still be in your repertoire!)

Level 6 goals

- Be able to play the chords from memory (E,A,D, Em, Am, Dm, G, C and Cadd9)
- Have a basic understanding of what a key is and name all the chords in the Key of G
- By now you should know around 10 songs, some old, some new, some easy, some hard. Of these songs;
 - You should be able to play at least 5 songs all the way through ALONG TO THE RECORD
 - These songs should have structure to them/ are in the songbook style i.e. they have a verse, bridge, chorus, middle 8
 - Be able to play at least 2 recognisable guitar riffs, these should be from memory and ALONG TO THE RECORD

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1

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Beginners Course

Level 7

THIS IS THE FINAL LEVEL IN THE BEGINNERS COURSE!



Level 7- Introduction and Goals

At this level we'll learn

➤ **7th chords- B7, A7, D7, E7, G7 and C7**

7th chords always sound '**bluesy**', just like how minor chords sound 'sad'. There's a lot of chords here, but they're similar to the ones you know already. Blues up your open chord and play more songs with these chords!

➤ **Blues and Folk strumming patterns**

We'll cover a blues shuffle and folk triplet strumming, sound complex but their easy to do and sound great!

➤ **The Minor Pentatonic Scale**

This will show you the notes used to make blues and rock riffs and solos! We'll learn to play this with hammer ons and flick offs so you can play it faster!

➤ **Repertoire and practice routine**

As always, I'll provide you with a list of my recommended songs to smoothly fast track this course, as well as the practice routine I recommend you use.

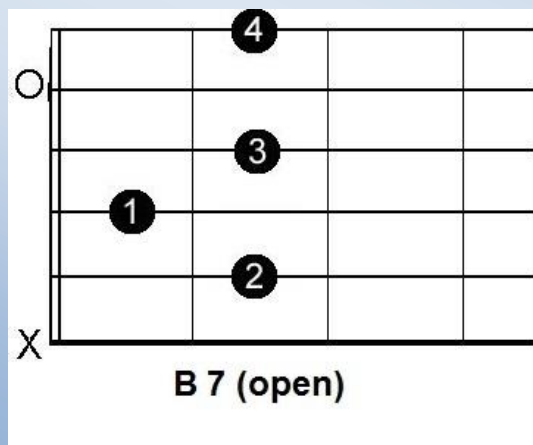
Level 7 01- '7' Chords B7, A7, D7 and E7

What is a '7' chord?

Any number at the end on a chord means there is an extra note added. This doesn't always make it harder to play, in fact it can make it much easier!

7th chords always sound **'bluesy'**, just like how minor chords sound 'sad'. The only way to play a normal B chord on guitar is with a tricky barre chord. The B7 here can be seen as a much easier option anytime you see that a 'B' is written in most songs!

The B7 chord



Recommended changes to practice;

- E to B7 (really common with a 12 bar blues and songs in the key of E)
- A to B7 (the 1st 3 fingers remain in the same shape- they simply move down a string)
- G to B7 (The 'buskers' chord change, used in Stand By Me, Dock Of The Bay in the songs below)

B7 crops up in every song at this level, it is that common especially as an alternative to a standard B chord which we won't be doing for some time (it's tough!)

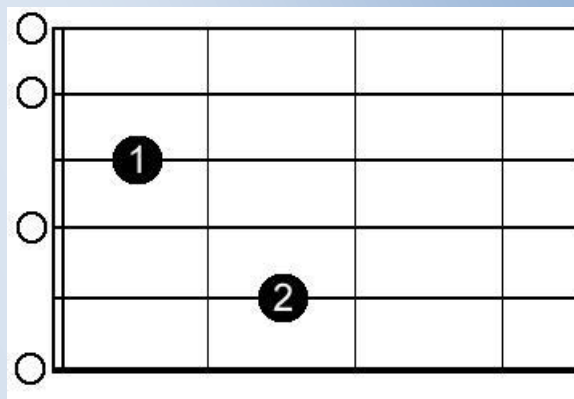
As well as being an essential basic chord, this can be used as an alternative to the very tricky B major barre chord. It is also in my opinion crucial preparation for the F barre chord that is coming up at the next level! For now, the text below will give you an easy alternative to the F chord, so check that out too!

Blues up your open chords - A7, D7 and E7

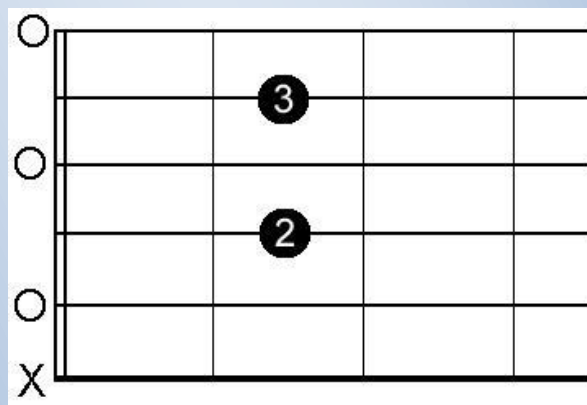
This page covers how to play 7th (aka bluesy) versions of the open chords you already know!

These chords are used in most songs at this level, and in many songs you'll look up in the future. Though memorizing the B7 chord should be the priority at this level, these chords are easier, so please take the time to commit them to memory!

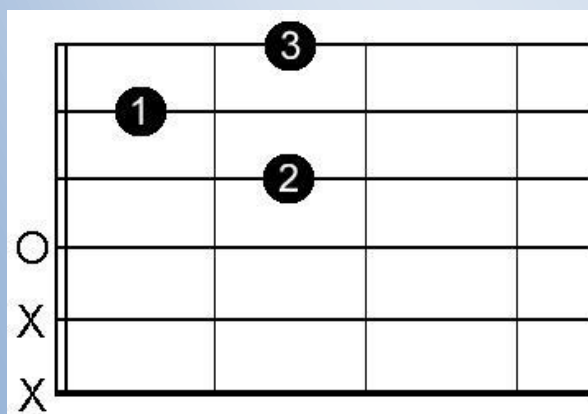
E7 chord



A7 chord



D7 Chord

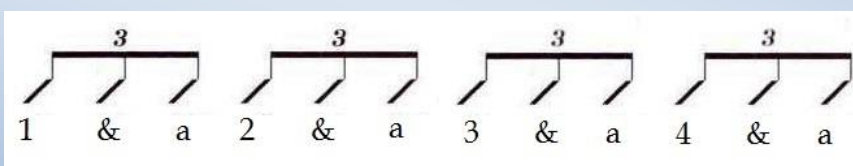


Level 7 02 – Triplets and Swing Strumming

In this rhythm guitar lesson, we look at how to play **triplets** and **swing, aka shuffle** rhythms. These are useful for blues, folk and also some pop songs. They are both totally different to the '**straight**' strumming we have looked at so far and **should never be mixed**.

Triplet Strumming

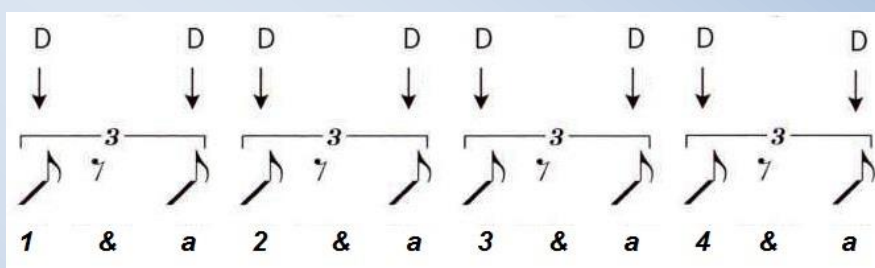
A song either uses a straight rhythm or a triplet rhythm. Straight rhythms, such as 8th strumming split a beat into 2. A triplet is a beat which is split into 3, shown by the small 3 above the notes linked together. The best way to count it is '1 & a 2 & a' etc as shown.



Song examples; Mull Of Kintyre, Stormy Monday and other **blues and folk standards**

Blues Shuffle

A blues shuffle palm mutes the & to create a pause. This creates the familiar 'bounce' rhythm used in blues songs such as Before You Accuse Me and Chicago. **Pop** songs such as Sit Down by James use this too but tend to just mussy the & strum rather than muting to stop it sounding bluesy!



TOP TIP!

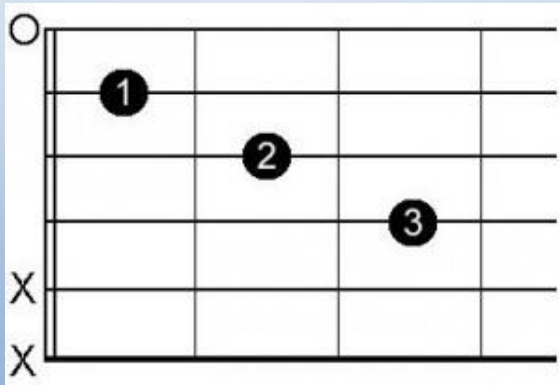
For and Rock/ Blues sound- pick only the thicker 2 strings out of the chord and use Palm Muting with your strumming hand! Without this, the overall sound is still similar to what you have played before. Adding the palm muting makes it sound a bit darker and less jangly. Both with and without this sound be mastered!

Level 7 03- The F major 7 chord (aka Fmaj7)

The major7 (maj7) chord is not bluesy. It sounds pleasant and peaceful (honest!). We're learning the Fmaj7 now as an easier alternative to the big bad F barre chord, or other harder ways to play an F. Sometimes the Fmaj7 will be specifically written and should be played. For now, any song where you see the F chord, you can use this until you learn the F barre chord!

This is easy as it's really similar to a C chord which you should be good with by now, and is why I call it an 'F like a C' chord!)

The Fmaj7 chord

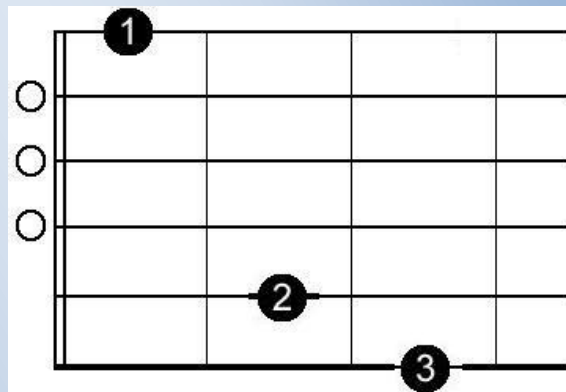


This Fmaj7 doesn't work all the time, which is why we'll have to learn the real F chord after this beginner's course. It can take a few weeks for some people and that's totally fine- its tough!

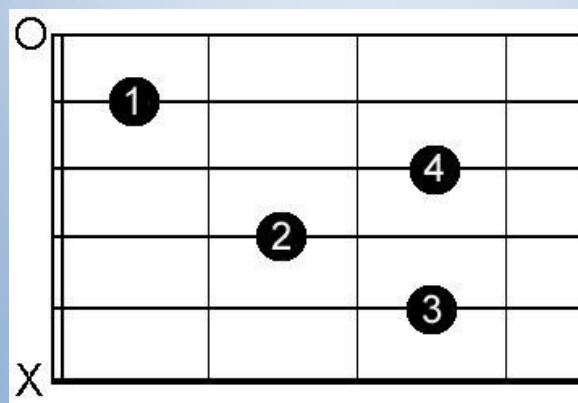
Many people avoid songs with an F chord in it because it's so hard- now you know that this Fmaj7 chord is an option- you'll be able to take on so many more songs!

Level 7 04- G7 and C7 chords

The G7 chord



The C7 chord



These chords are both bluesy 7th chords. However, 7th also have another function. They can also indicate that there is about to be a chord change. This is because of the way they sound when used after the standard version of the same chord. See the example below.

| G | G7 | C | C7 |

| G (one strum to end)

The goal of playing AND listening to this chord sequence is to hear the tension (In the 7th chord) and the release (in the chord after it).

Imagine how much easier playing songs would be **if you could learn to hear AND predict when a chord in a song will change.** EVERYTHING would become easier, right? This is how 7th chords are commonly used- so get familiar with what they sound like!

Level 7 05 – The Minor Pentatonic Scale

This scale allows you to learn the most common set of notes used in the riffs, melodies and guitar solos in Rock, Blues and Indie music. Everyone from Led Zeppelin to The Arctic Monkeys uses this scale. There are 2 ways we can notate this scale (great news- neither involves having to read music!)

One method is called a **Shape Box** and the other is with **guitar TAB**. Each has pros and cons, so we should learn to use both. **Shape boxes** are a great way to visualise where to place your fingers, and therefore memorize it easier. It is less useful for showing the order of the notes, for that, we need to use **TAB (aka guitar Tablature)**.

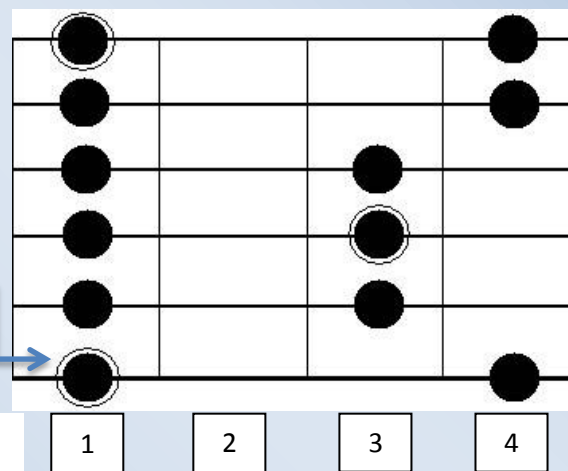
Minor Pentatonic 'shape box'

This is similar to a chord box, but you would only place one finger down at a time. Imagine dipping your fingers in paint then playing this scale- this is what your fret board would look like! Scales have a root note that gives its name, just like chords. Therefore the first note you start on gives the scale its letter name. This 'shape box' shows you this shape, then you can move it up and down the fret board to play it in any Key!

This is the first note of the scale, aka the root note

When this note is the 12th fret, this is the E minor Pentatonic

Finger number



The circled notes are the root notes at different octaves.

I get private students to pause at each octave (as shown in the exercises) **so you should too!**

Here is the full scale in TAB in E. This should be practiced until it can be played 4 times in a cycle without making any mistakes. Playing the whole scale is rarely done in songs, but remember- this is like learning your Blues Rock alphabet!

Full scale - E minor fret pentatonic 12th



How to practice The Minor Pentatonic Scale

The next page shows you exactly how I'd like you to practice this scale, as there are right and wrong ways to do it, along with my personal recommendations.

Scale playing TOP TIPS!

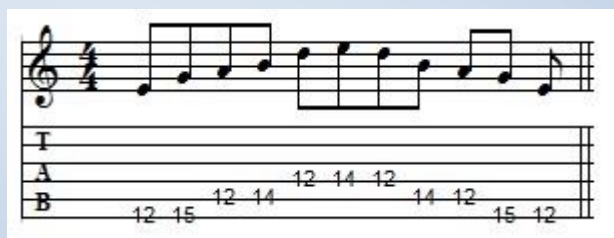
- Use the correct fingers, assigning a finger to a fret (shown in shape box diagram)
- The notes should be committed to memory as soon as possible

When the notes are memorised... (these are the trickier points that take longer)

- Keep ALL fingers no more than a cm from the fret board at ALL times
- Minimise the silence between each note

The goal is to play each of the following exercises 4 times through by *cycling* the riff. This is where we repeat the notes evenly without playing the first or last note twice, so we play them in a cycle, hence *cycling* the riff! All the following examples are in the key of E

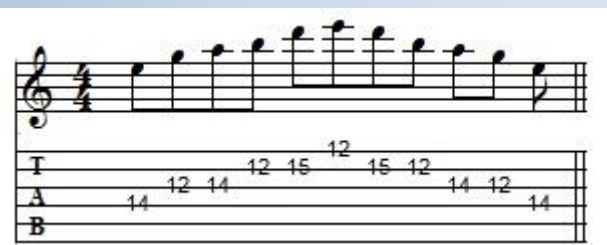
Lower Octave - E minor pentatonic



The notes in this lower octave are generally used to create riffs!

e.g. *Sunshine of your Love* by Cream (Eric Clapton)

Higher Octave - E minor pentatonic



The notes in this higher octave are generally used to create solos for lead guitar playing

e.g. The solo in *Hey Joe* by Jimi Hendrix and *I Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor* by The Arctic

Level 7 06- Hammer ons and Flick offs with The Minor Pentatonic

Hammer ons and *Flick offs* (aka *pull offs*) are a way of playing single notes without picking them. These are great for playing FAST and also create a smoother sound- very useful!

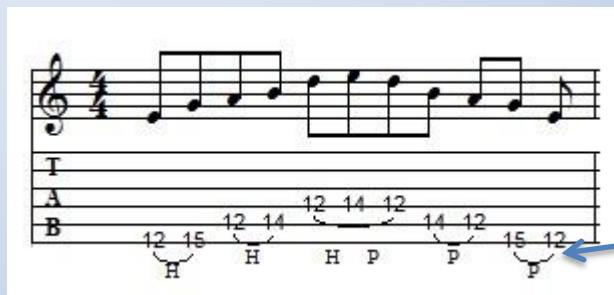
A hammer on is when a finger from the chord hand hits the string to sound a note

***A flick off is when a finger is already on a note,
and it flicks off to a lower note on the same string***

The absolute goal with *hammer ons* and *flick offs* is to get them to sound the same as if a note was picked. The temptation will be to play them too fast, a while this should be experimented with- they will likely be unusable in real songs until you can control when you play them.

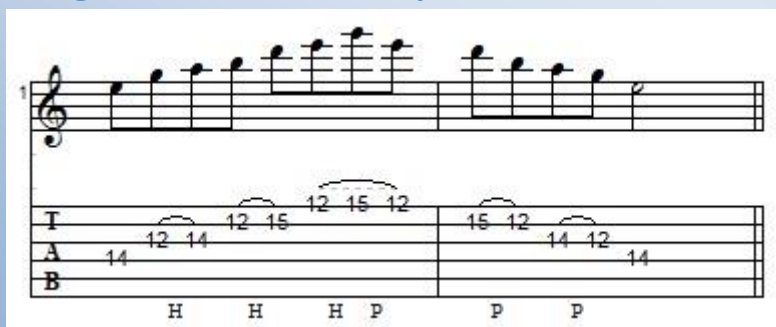
Hammer ons and flick offs can be used in any scale. As the most common and easiest example, we're going to play it over the E minor pentatonic scale we already know.

Lower Octave - E minor pentatonic with hammer ons and pull offs



The line that joins two notes together indicates that the 2nd note is played with either a hammer on or a pull off

Higher Octave - E minor pentatonic with hammer ons and pull offs

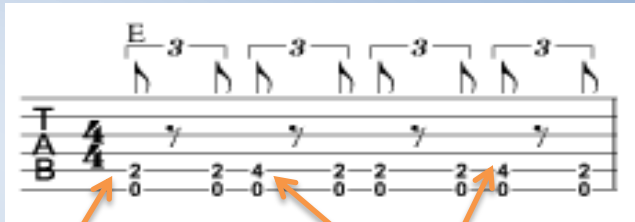


Remember- Any sequence always uses hammer ons when going up and pull offs coming

Level 7 07- Old School 12 Bar Blues in E

The most common Blues shuffle riff ([See a video on How to Read TAB](#))

Strum the thickest 2 strings on your guitar



The numbers represent fret numbers. However, this note should be played with your first finger

Play this note with your 3rd finger. Refer to the video for this lesson on the website if you need more help

12 bar blues in E

At level 2 07 and Level 3 05 we covered how to play a 12 Bar Blues in A. Here we play the same thing in a different Key. We also play it with a blues shuffle strumming pattern we looked at earlier

Old School 12 Bar Blues in E

This is basically the same as 'Before You Accuse Me' by Eric Clapton and 'Sweet Home Chicago' also played by Clapton and covered by the Blues Brothers



To make this as easy as possible, play the riff in E, A and D SEPERATELY FIRST. Then follow this as a guide so you know how many of each section to do

Level 7 08 – Essential songs for Level 7

Learning these songs will enable you to fast track this level! You will learn practical song examples of every guitar skill in the course if you follow the song suggestions listen below.

Remember, every song I suggest here has a video showing you how to play it for free on my website, just follow the links!

Sitting on the dock of the bay

This has more chords than most songs including the crucial G to B7 chord change. It is also very Jazz sounding, largely because there are so many chords in the song, all of which are major! You can choose to learn *Stand by me* by Oasis as an alternative

Hotel California

A student favourite, lots of chord changes and most people feel that what they play sounds very like the record. Hey Jude is also another option if you're a fan of the Beatles and/ or a good sing a long! 😊

Before you accuse me

You need to learn a song that is a 12 bar blues in E. You can do Sweet Home Chicago as it is the same guitar wise, but Before You Accuse Me is a lot slower- so better to learn that one first! You should also consider Heartbreak Hotel if you like these songs and the style of guitar as it has a cool easy guitar solo in it!

Level 7 09- Practice Routine for Level 7

I'm going to split this into 2 25 minute sessions, part 1 for chord strumming and part 2 for single note playing. This can be done on alternate days. For best progress however, 50 minutes of guitar fun a day will maximise your returns!

Truth be known, I like to spend the first 5 or 10 minutes playing whatever comes to mind. It clears my head and warms my fingers up for the more focused practice to come

Practice Routine for Level 7 (50 minutes most days)

Part 1- Chords and strumming (25 minutes)

- **Chord practice (Strum pick Strum)** Lots of new chords at this final level. B7 and Fmaj7 should be prioritised highest, but E7, A7, D7, G7 and C7 need to be covered
- **Rhythm practice**
 - ✓ Triplet strumming and a blues shuffle (Level 7 02)
 - ✓ 8th strumming with a tie (Level 6 02)
 - ✓ 8ths all down strumming with an accent and an up (Level 5 02)
- **Chord sequences**
 - ✓ Chord sequences in Level 7 07
 - ✓ You need to really nail a G to B7 AND E to B7 changes at this level
- **Song practice.** Practice songs that use the two strumming patterns listed in the rhythm practice section- it is the be all and end all of this level. I'd like you to also be aware what key you think the songs you know are in. Finally, make sure you can still play at least 2 guitar riffs by now! (Can't Explain, Free Falling and Highway to Hell or similar should still be in your repertoire!)

Part 2- Single Note playing (25 minutes)

- **E minor pentatonic scale at 12th fret (Cycled 4 times)** For added benefit, this should be done to a metronome set between 60 and 100 bpm and playing on every tick
- **G major scale-** this should be played 4 times through in a cycle. When it's sounding good, try and improve your speed. Track your speed by playing along to a metronome!
- **Riffs-** Learn a mix of single note and chord based riffs. Aim for around 5, and try 2 of these along to the record, aiming eventually to have them all ALONG TO THE RECORD

End goals for this Beginners Course!

These are my end goals for you by the end of this Beginners Course.

This list can be used as a guide, as you may have no interest in for example blues, or this may be your favourite bit and you may spend far more time on that- its cool!.

However, **I encourage you to look at all the areas below to give you all the tools you'll rely on later to play songs in any style!** Basically, if you've never heard or tried something, how will you know if you like it?

Level 7 Goals!

- Play all chords from memory (E,A,D, Em, Am, Dm, G, C, B7, E7, A7, D7, G7, C7 and Fmaj7) and be confident reading chord boxes
- Understand basic TAB and be able to follow chord sheets confidently
- You should be comfortable creating your own simple chord sequences in the key of G
- Be able to demonstrate the 'most common' and '2nd Most Common' Strumming patterns, plus swing strumming
- Be confident playing the easy blues riff in a 12 bar blues

Most if not ALL of these things should be demonstrated in your Song Choices!

- By now you should know at least 10 songs, some old, some new, some easy, some hard. Of these songs;
 - ✓ You should be able to play at least 5 songs all the way through ALONG TO THE RECORD
 - ✓ These songs should have structure to them/ are in the songbook style i.e. they have a verse, bridge, chorus, middle 8
 - ✓ Be able to play at least 2 recognisable guitar riffs, these should be from memory and ALONG TO THE RECORD

Where do I go from here?

A big part now is retaining what you have learned. It's no good covering chords now only to forget them later. **Crucially- you need to create a repertoire of songs that showcases as much of what you have learned as possible.** These songs should show the range of your new guitar skills, so don't just have 10 Oasis songs but no riffs, or know the verse to 10 songs but you can't play the chorus to any of them. Be honest with yourself, understand that of course you should include your favourites or what you find you can do well- but not at the exclusion of everything else.

Many of you, particularly the electric guitarist's should wish to pursue lead guitar and lead guitar solos, more complex riffs, etc. **My new Lead Guitar YouTube Channel** is designed to be a great place to start!

The next thing to pursue for all guitarists would be barre chords. I haven't even included the F barre chord in this course as so many people really struggle with it, and it isn't essential to play great guitar. Others find they can do it straight away. This would be the next thing to add to your game for most people.

Thank you for using this free eBook and the videos!

Without you guys, I'm just a guy in a room talking to a camera. Thanks for those who have donated already.

For anyone who can't afford it, that's fine! I appreciate that not everyone can. For those who can and have benefited from the content, your donation is appreciated.

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