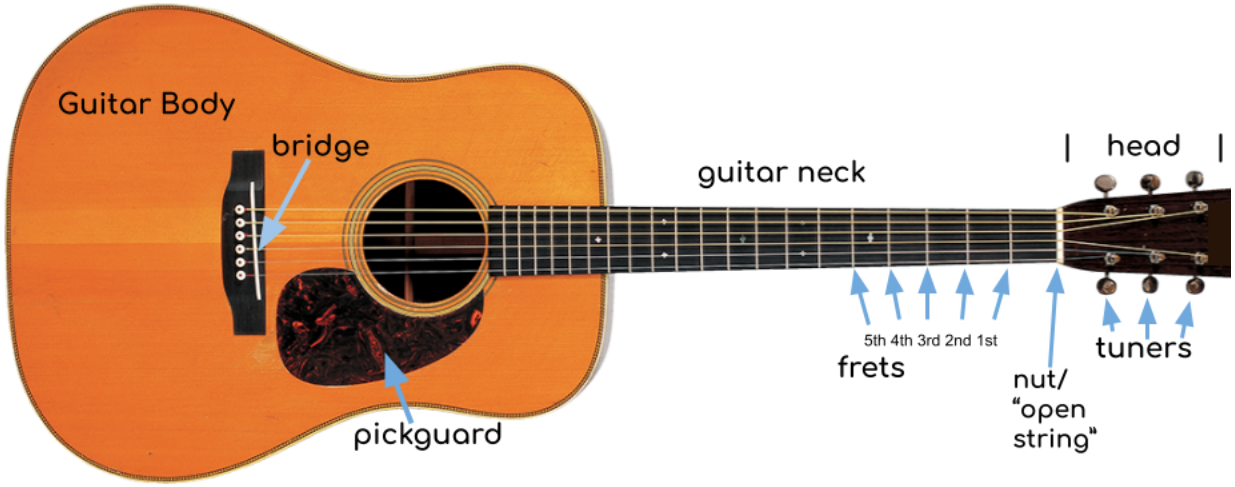
Guitar
Level 1

Each section is meant to be expanded on, added to, studied, and repeated often, and not just read through one time. This is not a weekly curriculum. This is a supplement to go along as you learn. It is meant to be used as a guidebook or checklist as you go along.



Tuning:

You'll need a tuner - a way to keep your guitar in tune. You should tune just about every time you play, or whenever you move your guitar from one place to another. Things like change of temperature and humidity affect the tuning of the guitar. If it doesn't sound good, then what's the point? Keep that thing in tune!

E A D G B E - these are the open string names.

"**E**very **A**fternoon **D**ogs **G**o **B**arking **E**verywhere"

Learning a few of the most common chords:

In order to play songs, you have to learn and be able to transition between chords. ***Most music you hear is built on chords, and powered forward by rhythm.*** Like a train, the chords build the train, and the rhythm powers it. You'll have to put the work in by learning and practicing chords

The first most common chords you should work on are G, D, C, Em, Am, A, E, as well as any others you might need along the way. **Starting out** is the absolute hardest part about playing guitar. Before you get over that first hill, it's going to seem nearly impossible. Remember, if it was easy, everyone would do it. You're developing a LIFE skill. Something you can do at any time of your life. It'll always be there.

Putting chords into chord progressions:

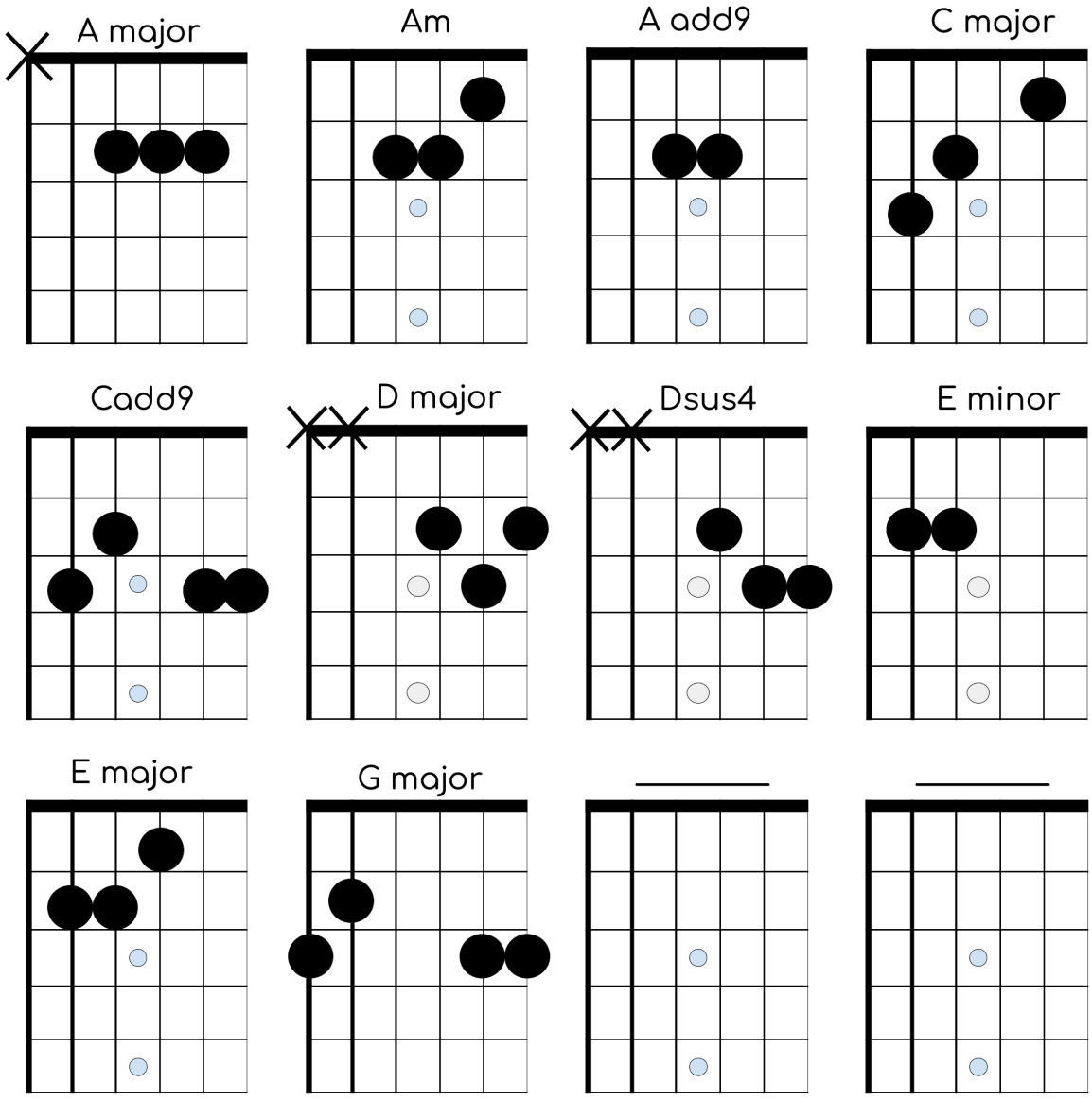
A chord progression is a group of chords that often gets repeated, or represents a section of a song. Putting these chords together, with the right rhythm allows you to play songs. Over time you'll learn to recognize patterns of common chord progressions used along other songs you've learned.

Rhythm:

Having Rhythm is having a deep, understood, consistent idea of "Beat," and bringing that forward motion to the song you're playing. Music moves forward. You, the rhythm guitarist, have to learn a sense of capturing the rhythm, laying a foundation of beat, or forward motion. You'll work on that a lot! Out of all the parts of music, ***rhythm is the most important***.

Open Position Chords / Cowboy Chords:

We start with "open position" chords, or "cowboy chords." These are chords made within the first 3 frets usually. Those "open chords" take advantage of open strings to help build them. Usually, some strings are fretted and some open. In the future, we'll add chords up the neck. Here are some first chords to learn:



Time:

Remember, if it was easy, everyone would do it. It takes a commitment to learn the guitar. You'll work on this skill for the rest of your life, if you want to. You'll also have to put time into it often now if you want to get good. ***Practice today***, and ***commitment long term*** are the keys to getting good.

In the beginning, the best thing to do is learn some chords, and learn some simple songs. The more songs you learn, the better you'll get all around.
There are basically 4 types of chords.

Types of chords you should learn:

1. **Standard or Traditional Chords** - these chords have some tradition behind them. They are usually established, basic, major and minor chords. Styles like bluegrass/folk, traditional country will almost exclusively use these chords. These are the basic building blocks of a chord and are 1 dimensional in sound.
2. **Most Common or Current, Modern Chords** - these are the common types of guitar chords you hear in pop or current music. Sometimes songs use what we'll often call "fancy" shapes, that color or express a certain sound. Other artists use these chords until they become common shapes in one degree or another. These chords have been made popular by artists from the 1960's onward. Particular artists use these chords and then they become popular in the mainstream of primarily acoustic guitar for pop, Worship, rock, etc. These "modern" start showing up from the 1960's and beyond. They've always been there, technically, but they've become popular to use. Chords like Cadd9, Dsus, Em7, Asus, Fmaj7, etc. ← usually open position chords. These are often used not just because they sound good, but because they are simple enough or even "easy" to play.
3. **Complex, Colorful, or Jazz style, Advanced shapes** - These are what we call "colorful" chords. They are multi-dimensional in sound. They don't sound square or plain, but they expand your ear pallet. They connect to the chords before and after them. These chords tie themselves to each other as they go along. Think of type one chords as plain baked chicken, and these type 3 chords as adding flavors and fancy recipes to those type 1 chords. They become way more interesting! Or type 1 chords as a black and white photo or canvas. Type 3 chords add interesting color to that picture. These are chords with fancy numbers next to them.
4. **Individualistic, Artistic and Unique Chords** - These are chords made on the guitar that are creative in nature and aren't commonly heard in modern music. They have a unique expressiveness to them. These can be heard in alternate tunings, and even classical styles. These chords can still often be classified or named, but they aren't chords commonly used in mainstream music. *YOU* can make them by being creative and following your curiosity.

Again, you should learn all 4 types of chords! ***Learn the traditional ways, learn the common ways, learn the fun jazzy/fancy/colorful chords, and also be creative.*** It's smart and healthy to do all 4.

Level one is all about getting started, though getting started takes some time! It's more about getting over that first hump, which is learning a handful of chords, establishing good practice habits, learning some basic strumming patterns, and showing determination.

Chord Progressions:

Here are 5 separate chord progressions you can work on. Practice down strums, and transitioning with good timing. Focus on making clean changes, and minimizing buzzing and messy sounds. YOU are the drummer. YOU have to bring the rhythm to the table. For each group, try rearranging them in your own patterns. You can spend months or more on this.

G / / / G / / / C9 / / / C9 / / / REPEAT

Am / / / Am / / / Em / / / Em / / / REPEAT

C / / / Em / / / C / / / Em / / / REPEAT

G / / / Dsus / / / C9 / / / C9 / / / REPEAT

A / / / D / / / A / / / E / / / REPEAT

E / / / Aadd9 / / / E / / / Aadd9 / / / REPEAT

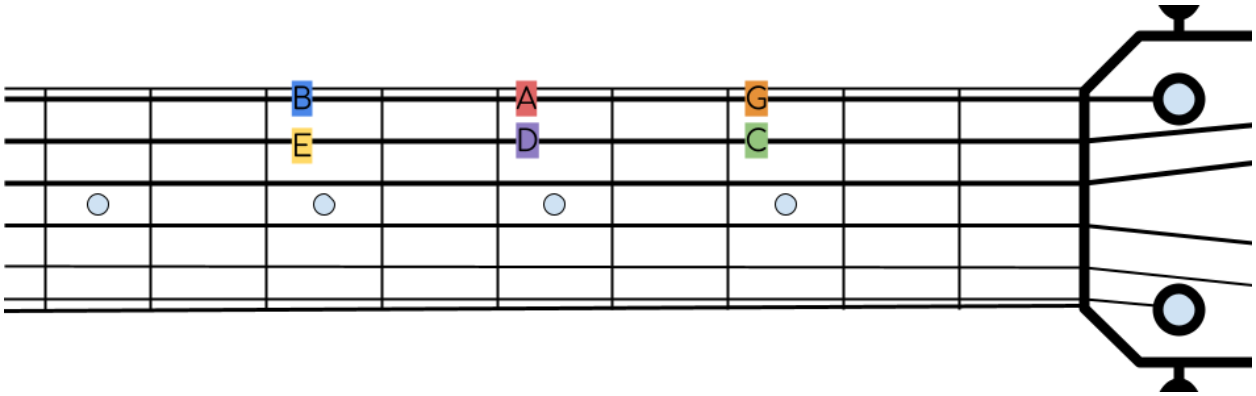
Once you've been playing for 1-2 years, and have gotten to where you can switch chords fairly easy, you're ready to go to **LEVEL 2.**

Before you're completed with LEVEL 1, you should:

1. Have learned and mastered at least 7+ chords
2. Be able to play 4+ songs without guidance - with confidence
3. Have developed good practice habits and show enthusiasm for more knowledge
4. Have learned to tune, and keep guitar in tune, can tune by ear - have had some listening development. Should understand the importance of a tuned instrument.
5. Have focused on and mastered more than one rhythm pattern
6. Have created/written and be able to play 2 original "songs" - your own chord progressions. This is FUN and CREATIVE. Both "songs" need to be uniquely a different style. Make it your own, something from *you*. Each song needs to have 2 different parts - like a verse and a chorus. Be creative, and put some chord progressions together! This can be just music, and doesn't have to have singing or words (though you should try it!) Here are a couple examples

Guitar
Level 2

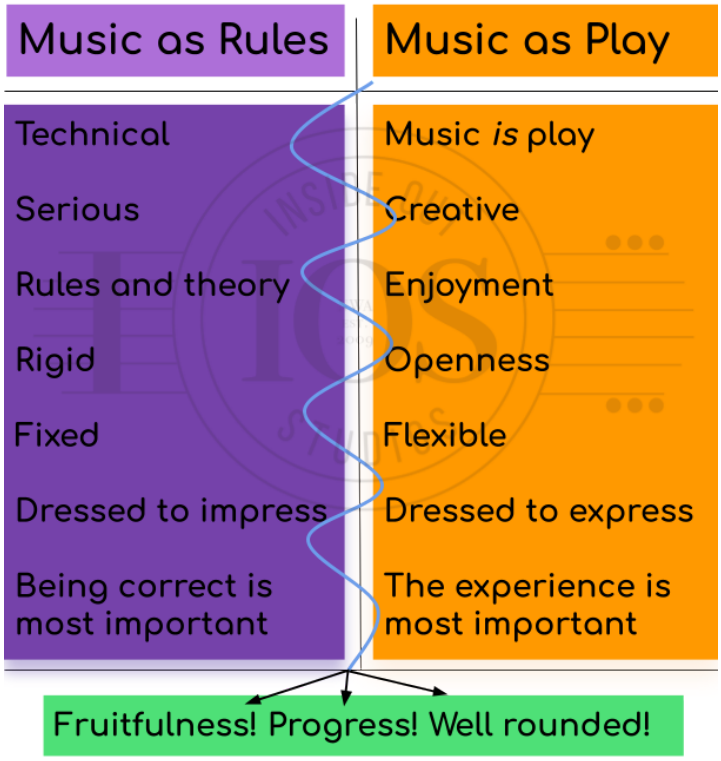
In addition to knowing your open strings, there are 6 more notes you should learn and keep in mind.



These are the 1st most important notes to learn "up the neck." It can't be emphasized strongly enough: for MANY reasons coming soon, take some time to memorize these notes and quiz yourself until you know them. We will build chords from these notes, and learn solo-scales from these notes, and look at you! - ***You're learning up the neck!*** It's not as much a mystery anymore.

"Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and cheer to life and to everything." - Plato

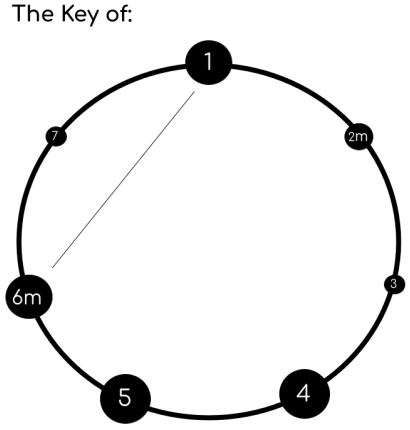
When approaching music in general, there's two mindframes to have. They go together. The first one is "Play," and the other is "Rules." Which is it? Music is both! Sometimes we focus on one more than the other, but they are both equally important. If you're not having fun or enjoying yourself, what's the point? Why do it? Why "play" music if it doesn't have a playful element to it? Also, why play music if it's just play, and isn't ever focused. If it's only play, then you won't get anywhere. It's the constant flow between and with Play/fun/creativity and Focus/rules/theory that yields FRUITFULNESS.



We want to be fruitful and progress. We want to be expressive, to learn, to expand our ability and understanding. When music is only serious, that comes out to the listener too. If you are a performer, the audience needs to not just see your technical ability. They want to see *you*, the performer - feeling, expression. You can impress someone with your technical ability, but if you don't move them, if you don't express something from deep inside, then you've missed the point.
If you find yourself getting too frustrated with a technique, take a break from that and do something you can do that brings the enjoyment back. Show your technical ability that you've learned. Show that you're a person expressing something, and that the listener is invited in to experience that with you. If you are ALL technique, it will appear cold and surface.

What does it mean to be "in the key" of a certain note?

For example, if someone says, "this song is in the 'key of G.'"
It means that *that* note (or chord) is the main note of the song, and the melody and other chords in the song generally revolve around that note. That note is home base. It is your "one" note. It is the common thread that should be able to find it's way throughout the song, holding it all together. It's the root note, the foundation note of the song. Most songs can fit into a major key, and that's how we'll try to most always organize our approach to songs going forward.



THE CIRCLE OF CHORDS
The Circle of Chords revolves around a major scale, one note at a time, around the circle. For each note in the scale, there is a chord that represents that spot. Sing (or play) that major, and for each note, there you'll add a chord. The 1 chord is the main root note, or key of the song. The 2 chord is the next note in the scale and is a minor chord. The 3rd note in the scale can be represented by a minor chord, or what we call a "one over three" chord. DON'T worry about that yet. Focus ALWAYS on the 1, the 4 major, 5 major, and 6 minor. Notice the dots are larger in the example. They are the MOST common.
Each key has its root note ("the 1" note, foundation note), and there are 7 notes total in the scale, with the 8th one starting over again as an octave higher than the first one. **For each note in the major scale, we assign a chord for that note.** This is the circle of chords, and each key has its own group of chords. We put the main root note at the top, and revolving around, we add the next proper chord for that note in the scale. Not all chords are the same type. **Each note in the major scale has a chord that represents that place.**

*If you're really into music theory, read this next paragraph. If you want to get to playing, move on!
There are other systems of looking at the chords within a key, often seen with the Circle of Fifths, or Nashville Number System. The Circle of Chords is similar, however we emphasize a different 3rd chord, and 7th chord along the key. These other systems put a minor chord at the 3, and a diminished chord at the 7 position. The Circle of Chords chooses a different, more common choice and makes the 3 chord a "1 over 3," and the 7 chord a "5 over 7." The reason is, though these other systems have standardized this into common music theory, the most common choices made in popular music are not the minor on the 3rd position and diminished chord at the 7 position, but instead the "over" chords mentioned. Right now, this distinction is NOT really that important, however if you're super into music theory, this may be a point of interest. If it's over your head right now,

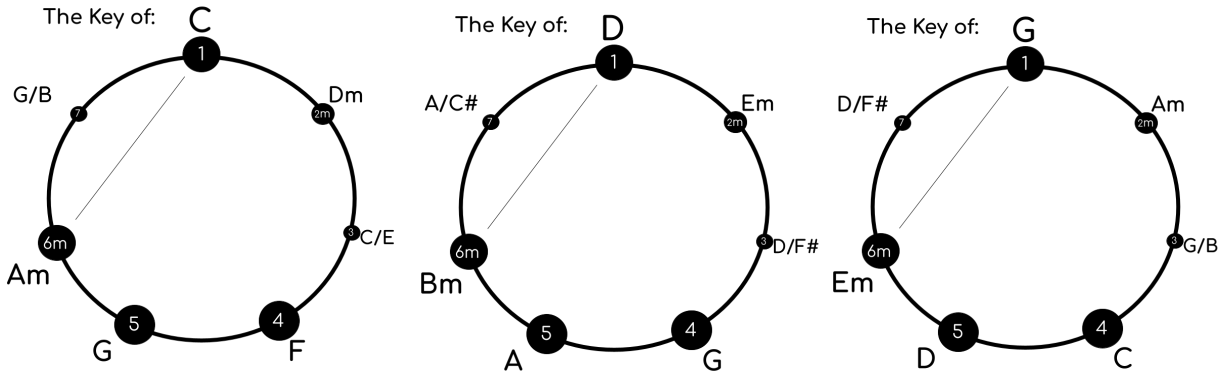
just skip over this distinction for now. Don't overwhelm yourself with this! This idea will take YEARS to comprehend. Music is a language, and it will make more sense the more you hear it and experience it. Let it go over your head, it's ok for right now!

The Five most common keys on the Guitar:

There are 5 main keys that most guitar players focus on, especially acoustic rhythm guitar players. Acoustic rhythm is the best place to start on the guitar. The 5 most common keys are:
key or A - key of C - key of D - key of E - key of G

Each key has its own set of chords. **The most common chords in a key are the 1 (main note), 4 chord, 5 chord, and the 6 minor chord. The 1, 4, and 5 position chords are major, the 6 chord position is a minor.** This is always the case, unless a song is "breaking rules," and that's totally encouraged! You might see on other charts the 3 chord being a "minor chord," rather than the "1 over 5." Here is one difference between the Circle of Chords, and other theories. We are using the most commonly used chords here, not what's become standardized. Both are correct, we are just focusing on, again, what's used most commonly in modern music.

Here are 3 out of the 5 keys. Take a minute to study them. Notice the 1, 4, and 5 major chords of each key. You'll want to memorize the 1, 4, 5, and 6 minor chords *FIRST* for each key. This is designed to organize you as you learn, like creating a portfolio of understanding for each key. Knowledge is Power!



You should recognize some of these chords. Some will be new.
There are plain, and basic ways of playing each chord. First, you should learn a mixture of those "Type 1," standard ways, and also some of the most common (Type 2). Both are important.

Remember, there are **4 types** of chords you'll learn.

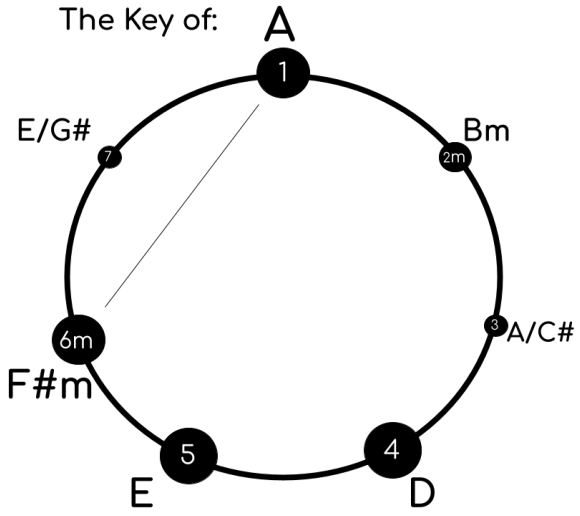
1. **Standard or traditional** - basic, open chord major and minor chords, styles like bluegrass/folk, traditional country
2. **Most common or current, modern** - common pop/current artist chords, genre specific, worship styles and techniques, including 1960's innovations and beyond. These are often easier to play, and sound good for modern styles.
3. **"Fancy", jazz style chords, complex sounding, purposefully colorful** chords - these can be chords up the neck, more "advanced shapes." When you choose colorful chords, outside of the type 1 or 2 boundaries.
4. **Individualistic or unique** - being creative, using alternate tunings - any style - could include classical, acoustic rock, melodic, etc. Creative chords you won't see in a book.

Type 2 rhythm:

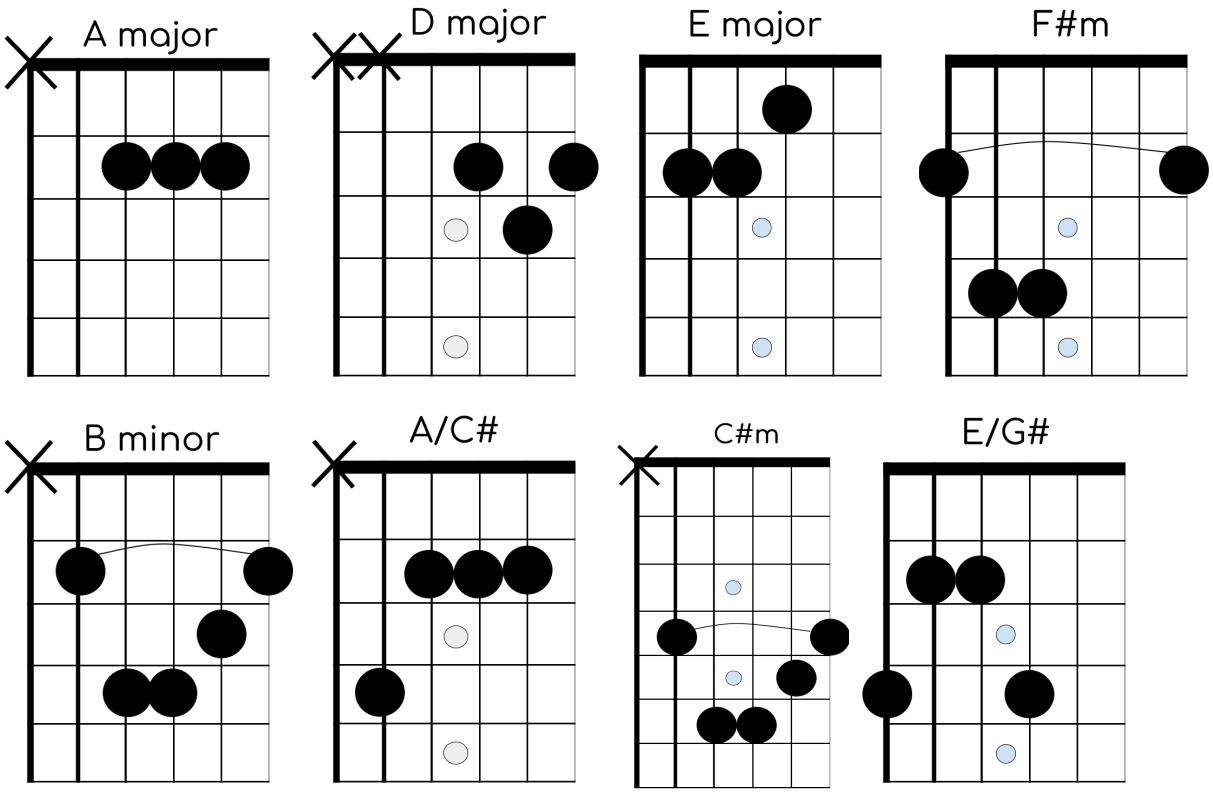
The first distinction between thinking Level 1, and thinking in a Level 2 way will start with your rhythm. Type 1, or "1 dimensional" rhythm can only see or focus in on 1/4 beat down strums. Quarter beat strums are the "basic down beat" of the song. If you counted 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - to a song's beat, you're counting in quarter beats. How do you learn to be more complex? The simplest way to do that is to double it - literally playing twice as fast as the "down beats," or "quarter beats" into eighth beats. Double up! - Twice as fast, and twice as many. The beats not only of the quarters, but what we call "and" beats - the 1/8th beats.
Count 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &, and put a strum on both of those. Add this thinking to your songs and chord progressions.. When you double your rhythm, playing 1/8th beats, the potential for complex thought and application is compounded greatly by simply thinking in doubles.
Part of moving from 1 dimensional thinking, to 2 dimensional thinking making your thoughts on rhythm more complex.
Eighth beats are much more interesting than "down beats." Remember, you are the drum, so the more complex you can think into the beat, the more interesting your sound. Simple chords and progressions can become more much interesting and confident when the rhythm is more complex.

Now, you've doubled your thinking into the ¼ beats, and you're thinking and acting in 1/8th beats. What happens now if you add some up strums? You've just added 1/16ths. Playing music - playing rhythm is not just about duplicating learned rhythm patterns, it's about how you approach it and how complex you're able to think into the groove of the song.

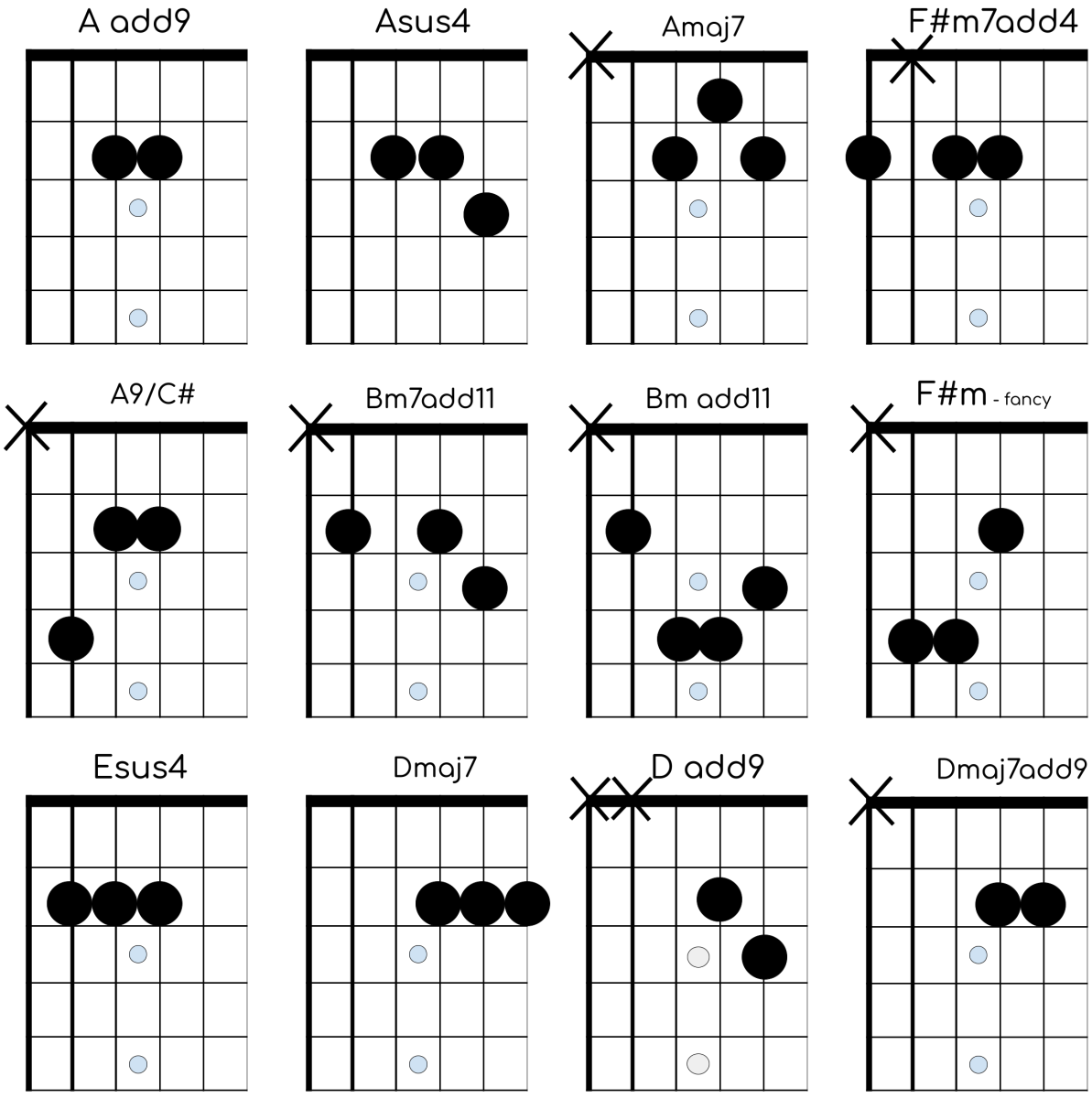
After each key, there's chord progression ideas. Apply these rhythm ideas into the chord progressions. Once you've gotten good at one and have spent TIME with it, rearrange the progression into your own, with your own timing - either 2 beats, 4 beats, or 8 beats on each chord. For learning good structure, consider keeping your chord progressions to a total of 16 beats.



Remember, the A is the root note, and boss chord. It's the most common. The A, and it's 6 minor chord, F#m overlap each other like twins. Experiment with alternate chord shapes in this key. A9, D2, and Esus sound good in this key.
The D does not suspend in the key of A. Why? The note that makes the Dsus4 note is a g note. There is no g note in the key of A. The 3 chord can be a 1/3 or a 3 minor, depending on the song.
Starting with the 1, 4, 5, and 6 minor chords:



These are the Traditional, Type 1 ways of playing the key of A on the guitar in the open position.



Here's a good list of the Type 2 (common or modern) shapes in the open position for the Key ofA. Work on both traditional ways, and common ways. When looking at a chord chart, just because something says a particular plain chord, that doesn't mean you can't put motion/melody or color options in its place - if you think it sounds good and fits the song. Now you have options.

Chord Progressions:

Be a pro at the key of A. Spend lots of time working on these chord progressions, specific songs in the key, or being creative in the key.
Make sure and read the "Rhythm" section just prior.
Here are some chord progressions to try. Spend plenty of time (even months), or come back to it from time to time) on these progressions.

D / / / A / / / E / / / A / / /

A / / / A / / / F#m / / / F#m / / /

F#m / / / D / / / E / / / Esus / / /

Aadd9 / / / Dadd9 / / / F#m7add4 / / / E / / /

A / / / Asus / / / A / / / Esus / E /

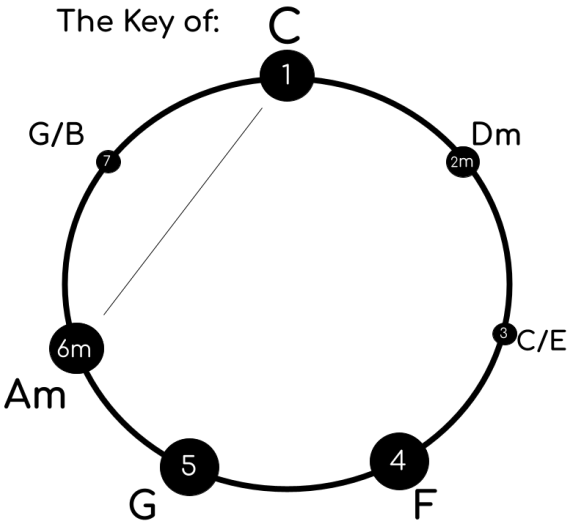
F#m7add4 / / / E / / / A / / / Bm / / /

A / / / E / / / A / / / C#m / / /
A/ / / F#m A / / / E / / /

Bm / / / E/G# / / / A / / / E / / /

*Each progression is set for one measure (4 beats) on each chord. Listen to how the chords relate to each other. Change the chord patterns up, try different timings and rhythm patterns.

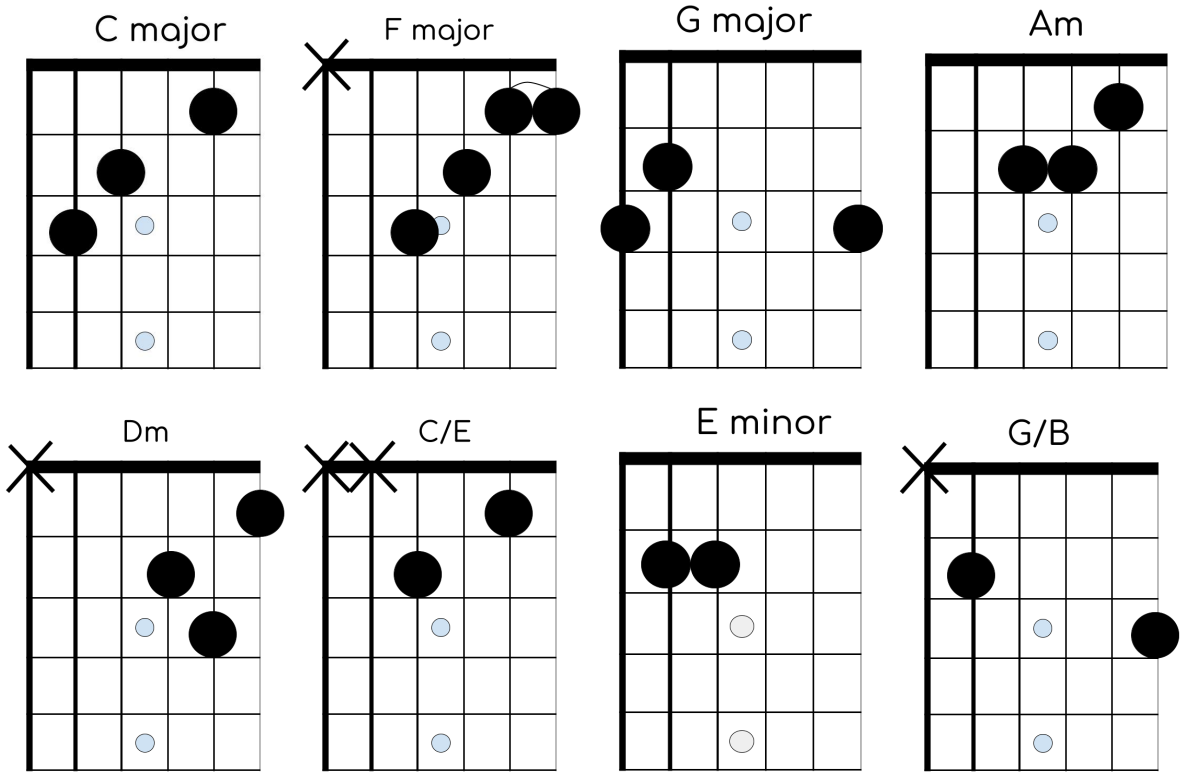
Go to www.insideoutONLINE.com for a jam-along guide and track for each example.



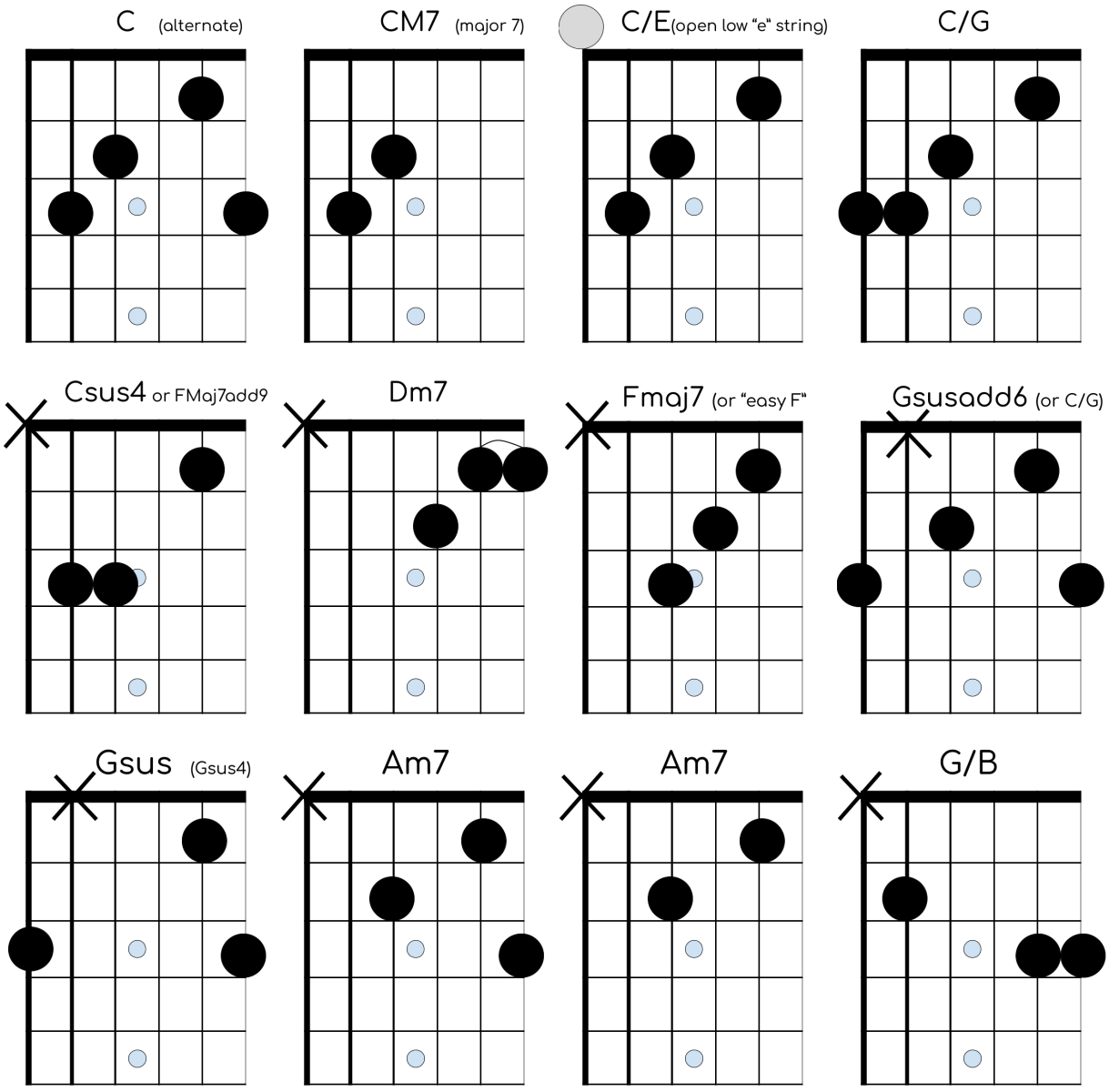
The key of C is often used for folk style, Americana, or acoustic guitar-forward music. Remember, the C is the root note, and boss chord. The C, and its 6-minor chord, A Minor overlap each other like twins - different but nearly the same. Experiment with alternate chord shapes in this key. Csus, Fmaj7, Am7, and Gsus sound good in this key, as alternate options. The key of C also often has stepping down or up chord progressions, like C - G/B - Am

Most people play Fmaj7 instead of regular F. There are lots of ways to play F. The 3 chord can be a 1/3 or a 3 minor, depending on the song.

Starting with the 1, 4, 5, and 6 minor chords:



These are the Traditional, Type 1 ways of playing the key of C on the guitar in the open position.



Here are the additional shapes, and Type 2 (common or modern) shapes, and Type 3 (purposefully fancy/colorful) shapes in the open position. Work on both traditional ways, and common ways. When looking at a chord chart, just because something says a particular plain chord, that doesn't mean you can't put motion/melody or color options in its place - if you think it sounds good and fits the song. Now you have options.

Chord Progressions:

Be a pro at the key of C. Spend lots of time working on these chord progressions, specific songs in the key, or being creative in the key.
Make sure and read the "Rhythm" section just prior.
Here are some chord progressions to try. Spend plenty of time (even months), or come back to it from time to time) on these progressions.

C / / / Csus / / / C / / / G / / /

C / / / Dm / / / C/E / / / Fmaj7 / / /

Am / / / Em / / / G / / / C / / /

Dm / / / Am / / / C / / / G / / /

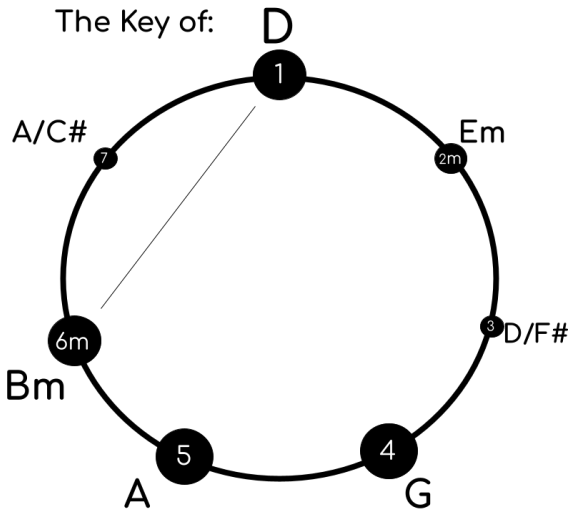
Dm7 / / / Cmaj7 / / / Am7 / / / G / / /

Fmaj7 / / Am7 / / / C / / / Dm / / /

C / / / G/B / / / Am / / / Csus / / /

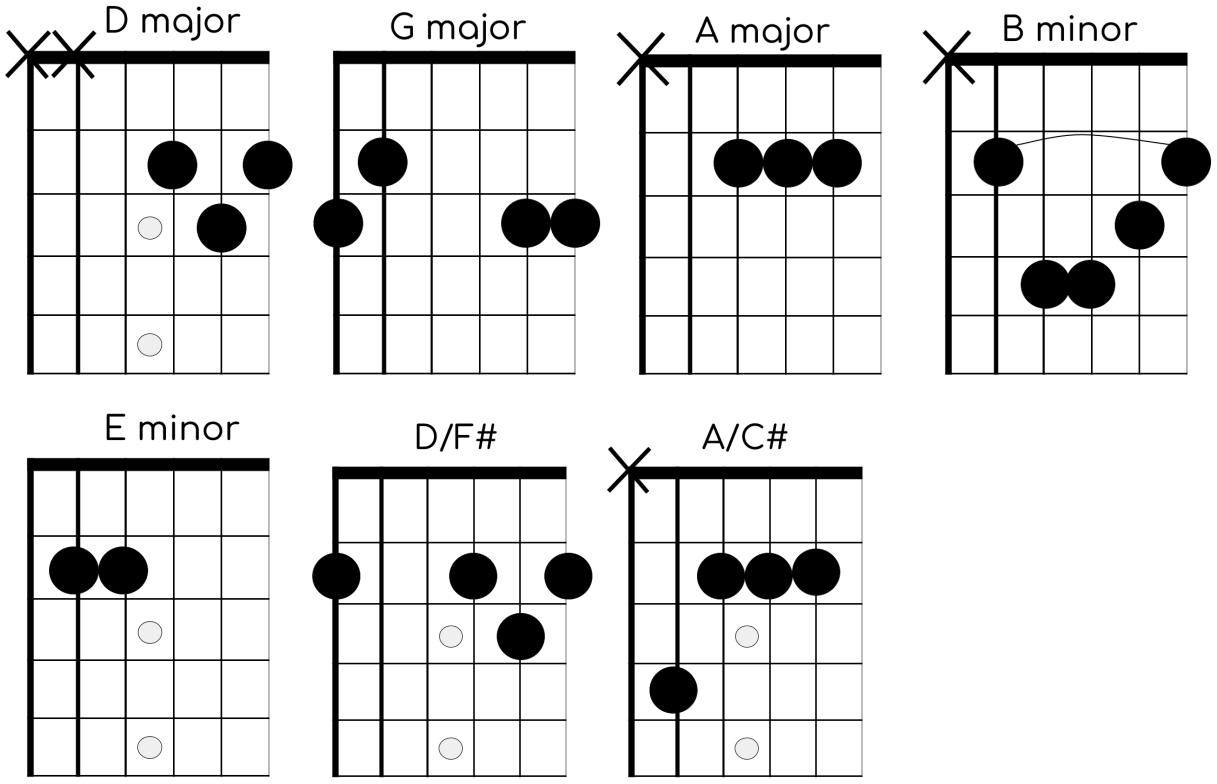
*Each progression is set for one measure (4 beats) on each chord. Listen to how the chords relate to each other. Change the chord patterns up, try different timings and rhythm patterns.

Go to www.insideoutONLINE.com for a jam-along guide and track for each example.

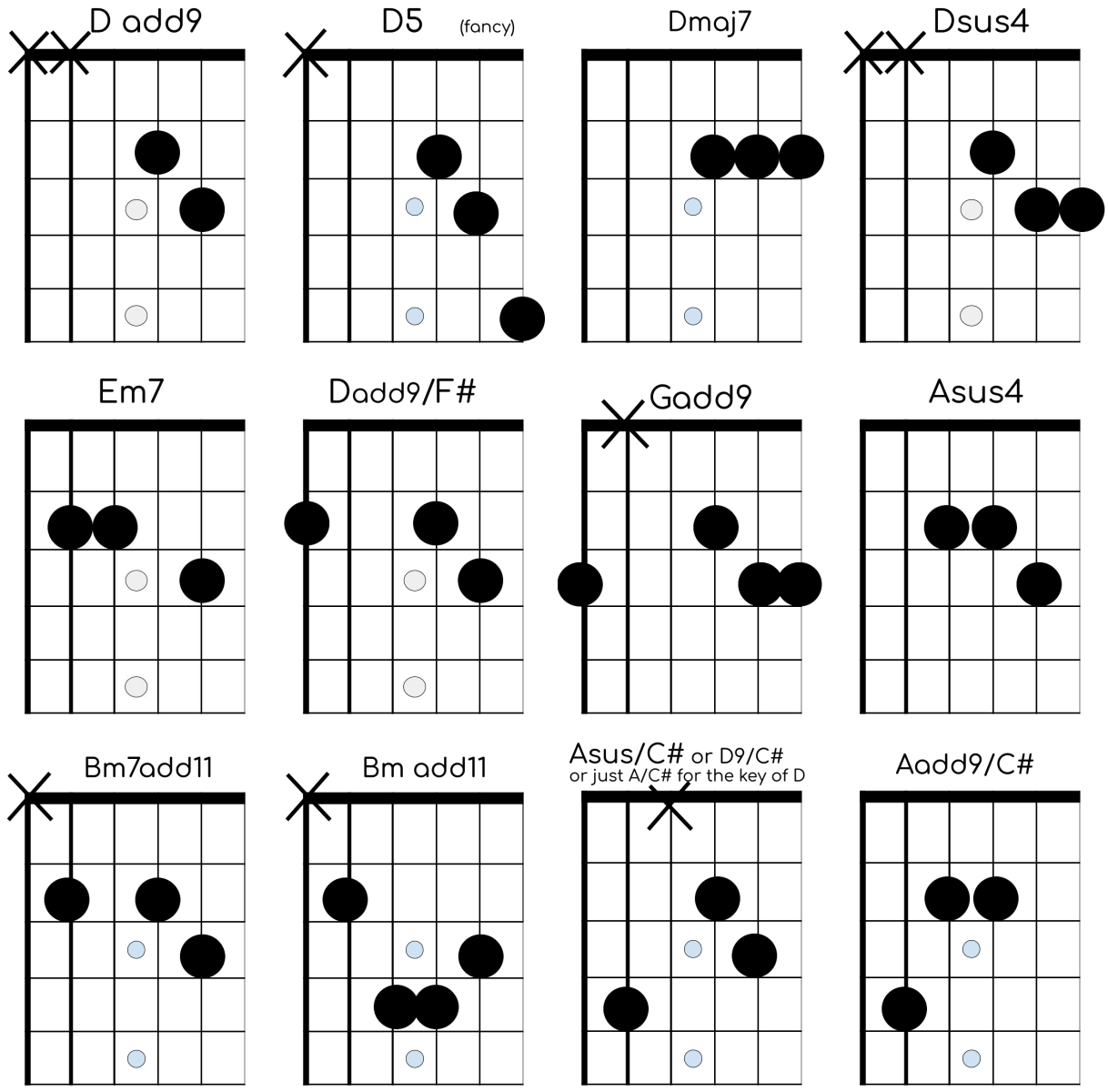


The D is a bright and delicate sounding chord. Common "fancy" or colorful alternate shapes include Asus, Aadd9, D2, G2, Em7, Bm7. Just like in other keys, the D has a relative minor, his favorite minor - his "6-minor" - Bm. Playing traditional Bm can be a bit difficult, especially for beginners. There is an alternative shape, when in the key of D, to play the Bm. It's a fancy "Bm7add11." But you can just call her "fancy Bm."

We'll start with the most common group of chords - the 1 chord, 4 chord , 5 chord, and 6 minor. The 3 chord can be a 1/3 or a 3 minor, depending on the song.



These are the Traditional, Type 1 ways of playing the key of D on the guitar in the open position.



Here are the Type 2 (common or modern) shapes, and Type 3 (purposefully fancy/colorful) shapes in the open position. Work on both traditional ways, and common ways. When looking at a chord chart, just because something says a particular plain chord, that doesn't mean you can't put motion/melody or color options in its place - if you think it sounds good and fits the song. Now you have options.

Chord Progressions:

Be a pro at the key of D. Spend lots of time working on chord these progressions, specific songs in the key, or being creative in the key.
Make sure and read the "Rhythm" section just prior.
Here are some chord progressions to try. Spend plenty of time (even months), or come back to it from time to time) on these progressions.

D / / / Dmaj7 / / / G / / / Asus / / /

Gadd9 / / / D/F# / / / Em7 / / / D / / /

Bm7add11 / / / Asus / / / G / / / G / / /

Dsus / / / D / / / A / / / G / / /

Em7 / / / Gadd9 / / / D / / / Asus / / /

Bmadd11 / / / D / / / A / / / Em / / /

D / / / Asus/C# / / / Bm7add11 / / / Asus

*Each progression example is set for one measure (4 beats) on each chord. Listen to how the chords relate to each other. Change the chord patterns up, try different timings and rhythm patterns.

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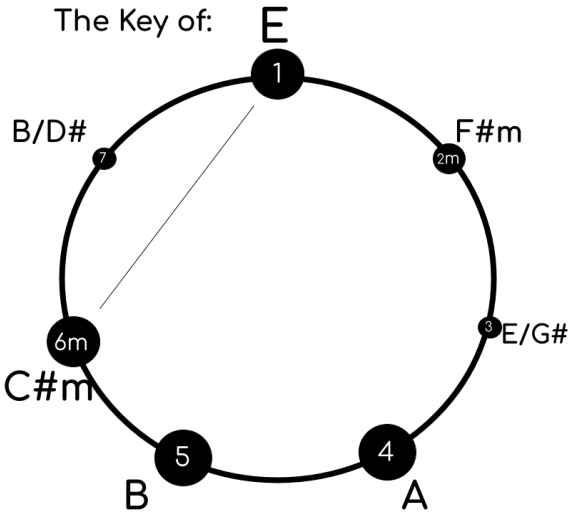
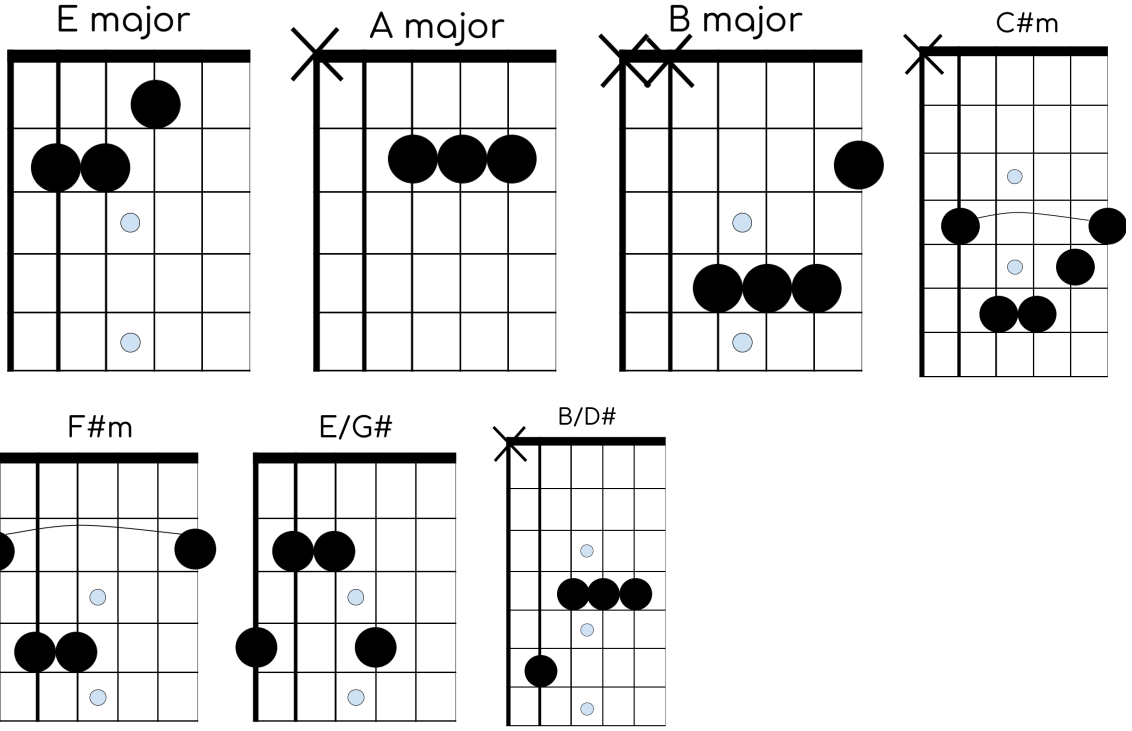
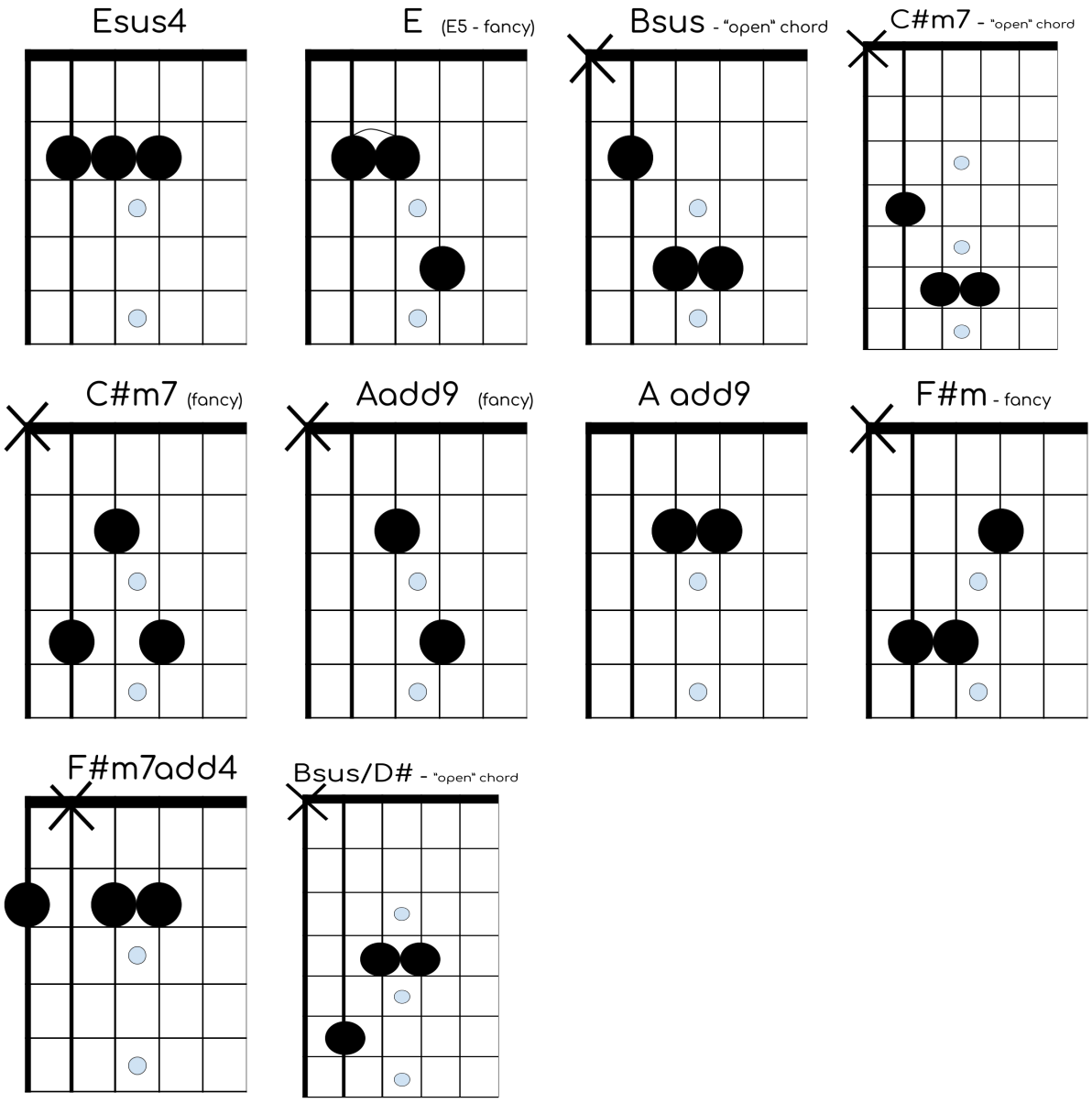


The key of E is a very unique key on the guitar. 4 out of 6 of the open strings are in the key, first of all. Using this key properly will allow you to get a broad, wide, jangling, big sound. To take advantage of this sound, you'll look for opportunities to play open strings, particularly the 2 high, when applicable (the d and g strings are NOT in the key, and will sound bad). Generally, opening up your high strings will sound good on most any chord. A9, Esus, and other fancy F#m, C#m, and B chords will really make this key sound cool. The 3 chord can be a 1/3 or a 3 minor, depending on the song. Learning traditional shapes is important. However, don't underestimate the power of focusing on the alternate shapes in this key!



These are the Traditional, Type 1 ways of playing the key of E on the guitar in the open position.



Here are the Type 2 (common or modern) shapes, and Type 3 (purposefully fancy/colorful) shapes in the open position. Work on both traditional ways, and common ways. When looking at a chord chart, just because something says a particular plain chord, that doesn't mean you can't put motion/melody or color options in its place - if you think it sounds good and fits the song. Now you have options.

Chord Progressions:

Be a pro at the key of E. Spend lots of time working on these chord progressions, specific songs in the key, or being creative in the key.
Make sure and read the "Rhythm" section just prior.
Here are some chord progressions to try. Spend plenty of time (even months), or come back to it from time to time) on these progressions.

A / / / B / / / C#m / / / E / / /

E / / / Bsus / / / Cm#7 / / / Aadd9 / / /

Aadd9 / / / Esus / / / F#m7add4 / / / E / / /

E / / / Aadd9 / / / E / / / Bsus / / /

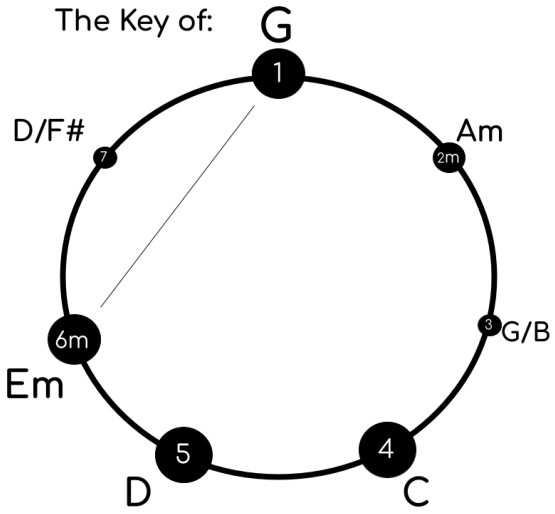
Aadd9 (fancy) / / / E/G# / / / F#m (fancy) / / / E5 / / /

C#m7 / / / Bsus / / / F#m7add4 / / / Aadd9 / / /

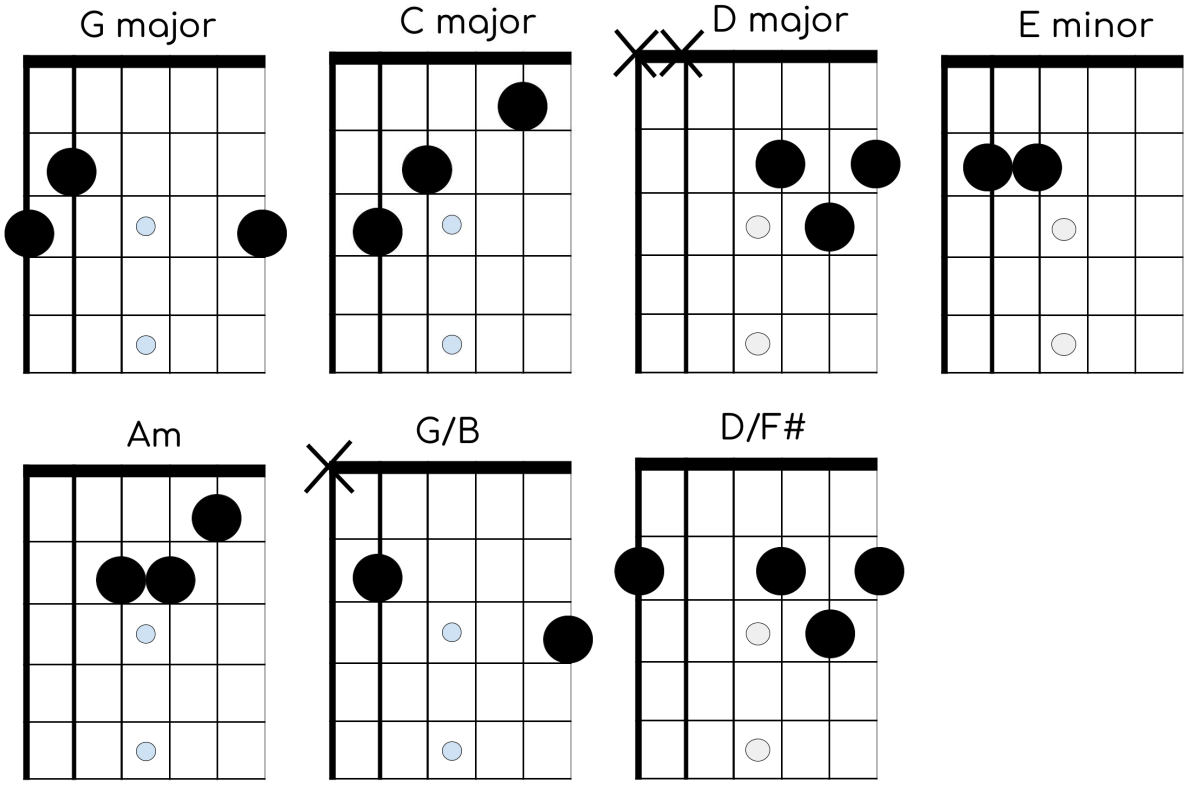
C#m7 (fancy) / / / Aadd9 (fancy) / / / C#m7 (fancy) / / / Bsus / / /

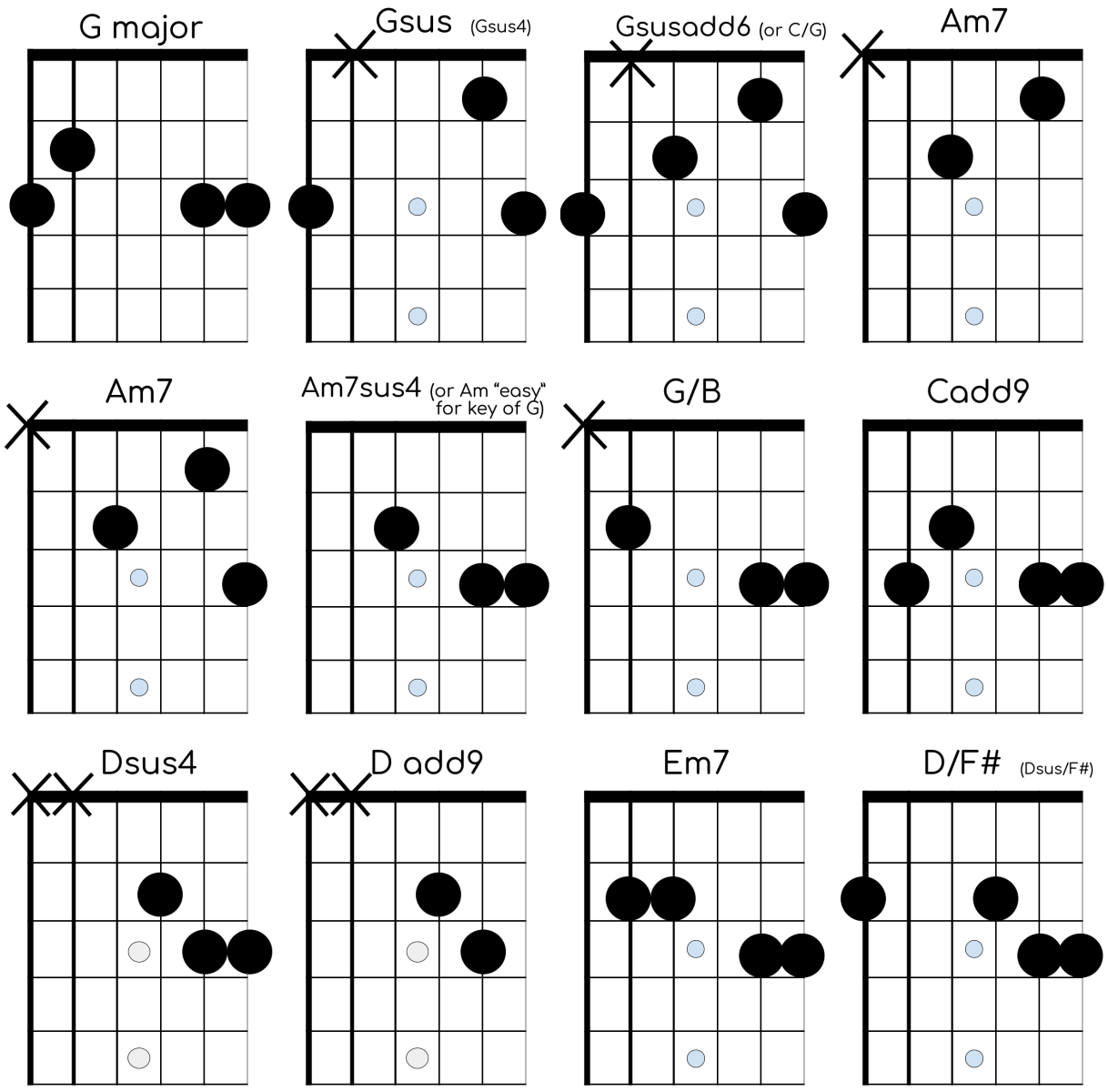
*Each progression example is set for one measure (4 beats) on each chord. Listen to how the chords relate to each other. Change the chord patterns up, try different timings and rhythm patterns.

Go to www.insideoutONLINE.com for a jam-along guide and track for each example.



The Key of G is probably the most commonly played key on the guitar. This key was traditionally, like the other common keys, used for folk/country/bluegrass style, and now it's often used with type 2 chords for 90's and 2000's particularly - the common/modern style. First listed is the "traditional" style, then the more current ways of playing the key below. As always, you can replace a chord like "C" with a "Cadd9," when you think it sounds appropriate. Now you have options, *You* decide. Feel free to focus on the 2nd list of chords. Just know, the traditional shapes are good too, and should be mastered. The 3 chord can be a 1/3 or a 3 minor, depending on the song. First listed is the 1, 4, 5, and 6-minor.





Here are the Type 2 (common or modern) shapes, and Type 3 (purposefully fancy/colorful) shapes in the Level 2, open position. Work on both traditional ways, and common ways. When looking at a chord chart, just because something says a particular plain chord, that doesn't mean you can't put motion/melody or color options in its place - if you think it sounds good and fits the song. Now you have options.

Chord Progressions:

Be a pro at the key of E. Spend lots of time working on these chord progressions, specific songs in the key, or being creative in the key.
Make sure and read the "Rhythm" section just prior.
Here are some chord progressions to try. Spend plenty of time (even months), or come back to it from time to time) on these progressions.

D / / / C / / / G / / / Em / / /

Am / / / Em / / / G / / / D / / /

G / / / Cadd9 / / / G / / / Dsus / / /

Em7 / / / Dsus/F# / / / G / / / Am7 / / /

Cadd9 / / / G/B / / / Dadd9 / / / G / / /

Em7 / / / G / / / Dsus / / / Am7sus4 / / /

G / / / Gsusadd6 / / / Em / / / C / / /

*Each progression example is set for one measure (4 beats) on each chord. Listen to how the chords relate to each other. Change the chord patterns up, try different timings and rhythm patterns.

Go to www.insideoutONLINE.com for a jam-along guide and track for each example.

In order to complete level 2, you should:

1. Know and be able to recognize the 1, 4, 5, 6m in each of the 5 main keys.
2. Have played 10+ songs, specifically using more than 2 or 3 of the keys.
3. Know 12+ chords by heart and be able to transition them easily.
4. Be creative often, writing songs or chord progressions, and understanding what key they're in.
5. Have dabbled with using a CAPO. (without all the knowledge/music theory stuff yet)
6. Know how to read the feel of a song, and even be able to adapt chord shapes to fit the particular song based on genre, style, and what the song calls for.
    a. You can decide which chord type to use in a situation - traditional shapes (TYPE 1), or modern/common shapes (TYPE 2).
7. Have memorized the 6 notes on the 3rd, 5th and 7th frets (G, A, B, & C, D, E notes from the first chart in level 2), and be applying that knowledge in various, entry level ways.

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Guitar Level 3

3.1

Level 3 is about understanding **up the neck**: getting out and away from the "cowboy chord" position. What is up there? It's like a mysterious forest to explore and make sense of. Understanding up the neck is also all about taking the things you've learned in the open positions and understanding how to apply those positions and shapes up the neck.

More thoughts on mindset:

There are 2 basic ways to approach the guitar.

1. One way is to focus on **technique** and **theory**. All thoughts and practice is focused on **concepts**, **knowledge**, **facts**, "**proper technique**" and "**rules**." Reading music, or following **charts**, being able to answer **technical** questions about scales, theory, etc. Priority of playing is "graded" on ***correctness***.

2. Another way to play is when you focus on **play**, enjoyment it gives you, entertainment, social activity. Literally "playing." - having **fun**. Less priority on "rules," and more energy towards being **creative**, being individually **expressive, and playing with feeling.**

Some people put more emphasis on one or the other. Some people are purely one or the other - there are people with "education" in music, have extensive music

theory knowledge, yet they don't know how to enjoy themselves, and can't hardly play a note unless it's written in front of them.
Yet some people seem to be an expert player, but you ask them a technical question, even "what chord is that," and they can hardly tell you.
There are plenty of examples of successful, rich, or famous musicians who have very little music theory knowledge, but somehow just know what to do.
How is this possible? Which approach is better?
It shows that:

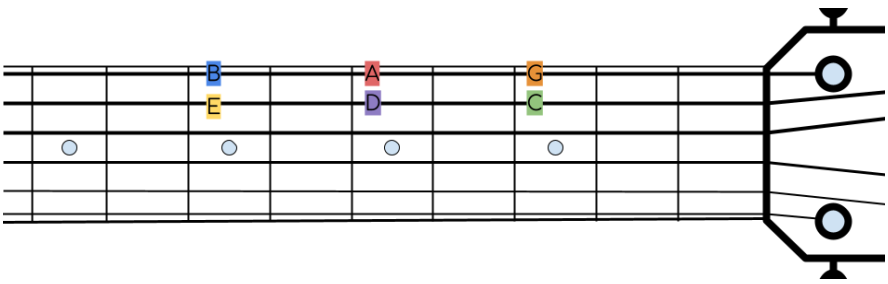
1. People are wired differently - they have different learning styles, and
2. Music can be approached and expressed in a variety of ways - music isn't just one way. It can be approached like a **science** or an **art**.

You have to find ***how you're personally wired***, and press into that, **but also understand that the flip side of the coin is just as EQUALLY important**. When you understand how to lean into your own style of approaching music, you can also learn to be aware of the other side that you may not naturally be inclined to. If you want to be well rounded, learn to enjoy the other approach to music too. Learn the traditional ways of doing things. They're there for a reason. Learning new, colorful ways of expressing your chords and style gives you more options as opportunities or as creativity happens.

Be you, and also build both sides as you go.

Getting into Scales, & Two VERY IMPORTANT ones on Guitar

Remember those 6 notes we learned on the 3rd, 5th, and 7th fret - the G, A, B, C D, and E notes? Here's the chart again:



We are going to use these notes to be the launching point for scales. Scales, though they can seem "boring" at first, are the building blocks for creating melody and playing "lead guitar," or "solo guitar." All those really cool solo's you hear on songs - those are built from these scales below. Again, don't underestimate the power and practical use of scales. You should run scales all the time! Up down, left right, back and forward, etc. Make them sing!
Scales are good for:

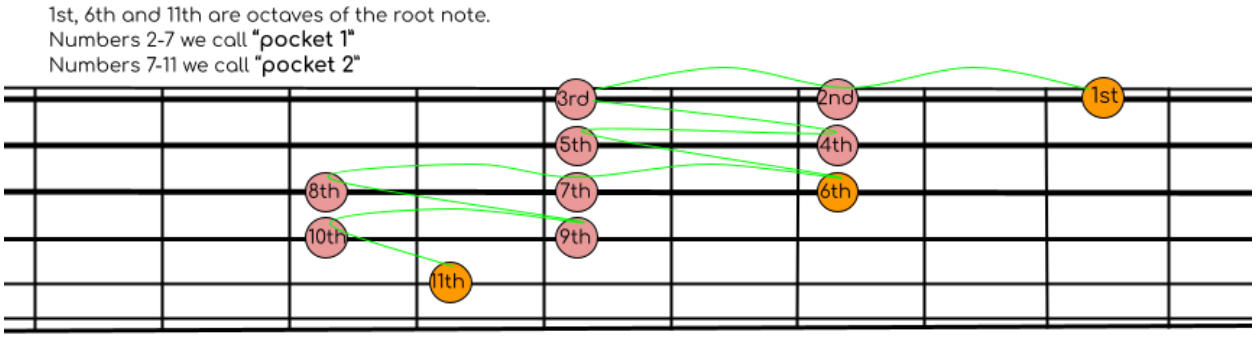
1. Dexterity and motion - using all those fingers, the muscles the motion
2. Creating melody and playing solos - making your guitar sing or be a voice
3. Understanding of being effective and proficient up the neck - what's going on up that neck?

4. Helping with making "guitar hands" which should get those fingers spread wide when you play.

Let's start with the **"Major Pentatonic Scale."**

Don't worry too much about what it means for right now, but learn to listen to it, and how it speaks. This scale is great for solo guitar because it has a fluidity to it, and really allows for multiple techniques, but particularly *slides*. This scale works great with the key of G, key of A, Key of B, and Key of C, because of how those keys land on the guitar with this scale. These 6 notes you've learned earlier (particularly the ones on the top string - G, A and B) will now allow you to play "solos" in those 4 keys.

Whatever key you're in, you will position that 1st note on the key note you're in, and run the scale up from there. If you're in the key of G, start on that 3rd fret top string. The scale for the key of G will run right on top of the A and B notes, and continue on from there. If you're in the key of A, simply start on that 5th fret instead and run the scale up from the 5th fret. Key of B? Start on the 7th fret, etc.

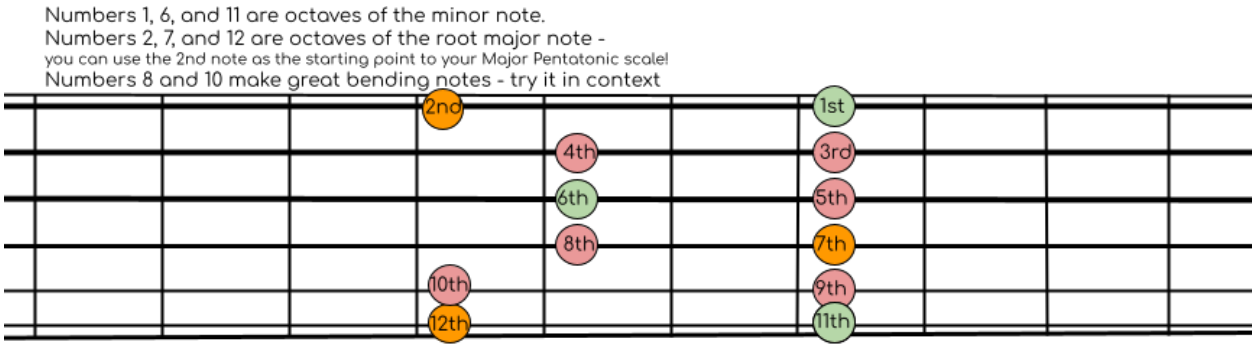


Now you can "solo" and make melody in 3 or 4 different keys! (playing this scale in the key of C will start on the top string C note, which is the 8th fret, directly after the B note on the 7th fret).

Start by playing this scale just forward. You CAN SPEND WEEKS JUST ON THIS, at home on your own time. Work on getting solid, smooth notes. Use multiple fingers, spread those fingers as you play - force the spread while you're getting muscle memory.

Just like everything else, these scales are not meant to learn and play one or two times. This is an ONGOING development you'll ALWAYS work on. Come back to these concepts, and re-read them. We have to Understand them, Practice them, Practice them some more, and push yourself to be faster, more effective, more musical and creative as the months and years go by.

The **“Minor Pentatonic Scale”**



Notice the straight down line of notes, down from the 1 note. Take time to create a mental image of that note from that fret.

Most songs you hear with a guitar solo, from Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix, blues music, on to modern country, worship styles, etc use this scale! When used properly it can really sing. Try different techniques like hammer on, pull offs, bends (particularly the 8th and 10th notes), and vibrato.

Don’t let the major and minor scale scare you. They can work as partners. Where should you put the minor pentatonic scale? Go back to your circle of chords - For most common purposes, you’ll use the minor pentatonic scale on the “6 minor” note of whatever major key you’re in. If you put your first note of the scale on the 6 minor note you can start the scale from there.

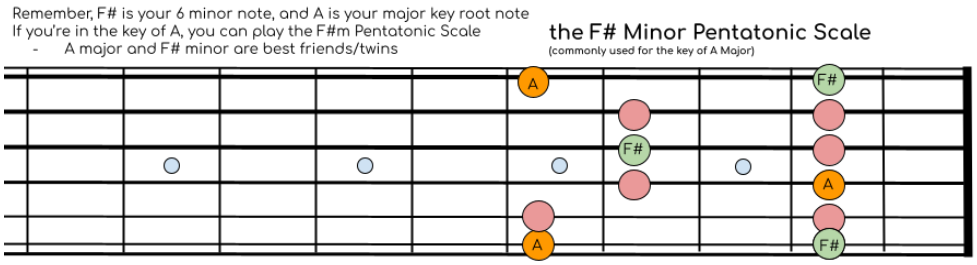
Here is an excellent opportunity to practice **different techniques:**

1. **Hammer On Technique** - When one note is played and a finger on the same string is “hammered on” to continue that note that was played without plucking again.
2. **Pull Off Technique** - When a higher note is played and “pulled off” to a note behind it (either to another finger or open string). This is one pluck of the string, then yielding 2 notes played.
3. **Slide Technique** - this is when you pluck the string on one note and slide a finger either up or down, smoothly continuing the original pluck.

All 3 techniques are about making that guitar sing and express. All 3 also start with one pluck, and allow for another note to be played off that original pluck energy. These techniques help with smoothness minimizing choppy, single dimensional playing. The “Major Pentatonic Scale” is great for these 3 techniques.

How to use the Minor Pentatonic Scale in the key of A:

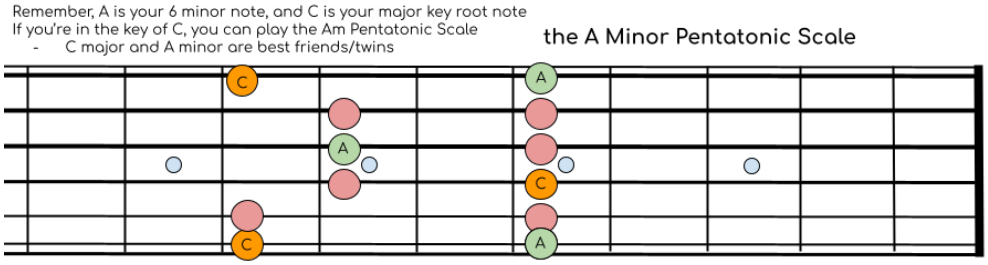
For example, if you're in the key of A, what is the key of A's 6 minor note? F#. You'll find an F# note on the 2nd fret, top string, right behind the G note. Running this scale from that starting point will sing as if it's right in that major key of A. They work together. The 6 minor chord and the 1 major chord in any key work like partners - like twins. Notice your 2nd note is your major key note - A. You could run your major pentatonic scale from the 2nd note in this scale, which is A.



How to use the Minor Pentatonic Scale in the key of C:

If you're in the key of C, what's the key of C's minor chord? Am. Take this scale, starting on the A note, and all of a sudden it sings like a key of C scale.

- Hop up to the C note (8th fret and the 2nd note in our scale), and take off on the major pentatonic scale from there. Now you're all over the neck!
- A minor chord and C major chord are twins. The Am pent. Scale works directly with a C major pent. scale.



Key of G: What's the key of G's minor 6 chord? Em.
If you're in the key of G, the minor pentatonic scale can be played in the open string position, starting with an open E note. Another common move is to go all the way up to the 12th fret, where the guitar starts over again. Where the double

dots are, use that fret as the starting point for your minor pentatonic scale. Now you're playing the Em Pentatonic Scale, which doubles as a key of G major scale.

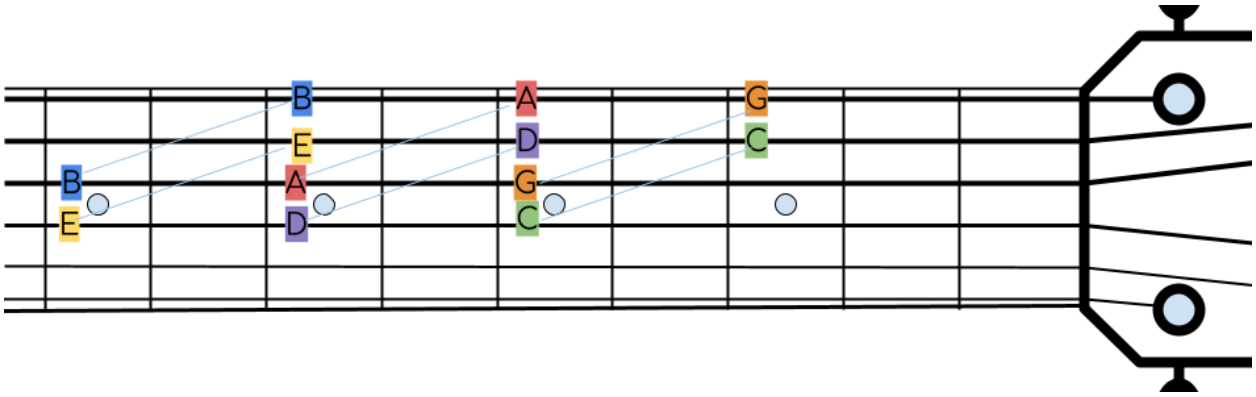
You can also use the Minor Pentatonic Scale as a bluesy minor sounding scale. Let's say you're playing Am and Em back and forth. Use this scale on the A note on the 5th fret and it will sound good. There are numerous uses for this scale, but this is a good starting point.
Remember, in any major key, go to that major keys 6 minor note, and the scale can be played from there for most any pop, worship, rock, country styles.
Want to get bluesy and have some edge to your sound? Play the minor pentatonic scale directly on the major note of the key you're in. This only works in particularly bluesy or aggressive type songs - when you want to bring some real attitude.

Making Mistakes

Learning to play an instrument, and gaining experience is all about making mistakes as you go. It's part of it. You could call it "making mistakes," because that's how most people think of it, and when you can't get to a chord fast enough, or your rhythm is off, or you forget to change, or you don't do very good on a solo, or you hit a bad note, most people think of this as a mistake. We don't like to make mistakes.
Some people focus on those "mistakes" more than others. We want to do good! We want to Rock! Unfortunately, as we learn an instrument, especially in the first year or two, people can really get frustrated with themselves and down about these "mistakes."
What happens when we focus on that note or chord we missed, or that sour note, or not being able to transition to the chord fast enough? What happens when the mistake becomes our focus? We miss out even more! When you stop to take the time to focus on the mistake, it's like jumping off the train, stopping it, and getting it going again. That's no fun!
Simply DO NOT focus on the "mistake" when you make them, but learn the SKILL of getting back on track as soon as possible. The correct thing for you and others is to ignore it, and stay focused.
Every musician makes mistakes, and certainly more often in the earlier phases. But a professional musician, whether they've thought about it or not, has learned the skill of pretending the mistake didn't even happen.

What's better? 1. Stop the song/train, point out the error, get frustrated with yourself, or 2. Stay on the train - mentally and literally, put it behind you as if it didn't even happen and get back on track? Literally every musician makes "mistakes," but the good ones learn to ignore them - you'll get faster and faster at correcting yourself. Mistakes will not only become less and less as that skill develops, but when they do, they'll be less noticeable not only for you, but for others listening or people you're playing with. IGNORE the MISTAKES. Get back on track quickly, and work to do better without the self pity.

A quick trick for finding octaves on guitar - "The 2 Down 2 Over Rule"



Any note you know on the top 2 strings can also be found an octave higher just 2 strings down, 2 frets up. Congratulations, you've just doubled the notes you know! Now you can not only know a bit about what's going on on your E and A strings, but now you know notes from your D and G strings. That's power! Knowledge is power. Test yourself.

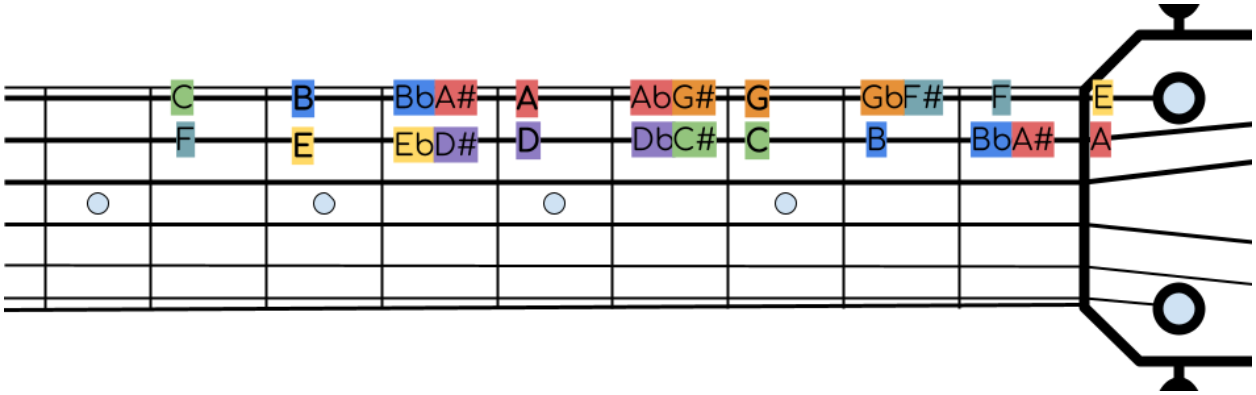
Sharps and Flats:

♭ What in the world is a **"flat"** note? Like Bb, Eb, Ab. If you see a "♭" or simply sometimes just a "b" letter next to a letter note, this literally just means go down (flat) one note, or go to the note lower in pitch, behind that letter note. Think of a tire. If it goes flat, it goes down. Look at the guitar neck octave chart just above. Look at the top string, 6th fret, the one between the A and the B note. That note is a Bb (B flat). Look at the 4th fret between the G and the A note. That note is an Ab (A flat). It has to do with *where* the note (or chord) is being played.

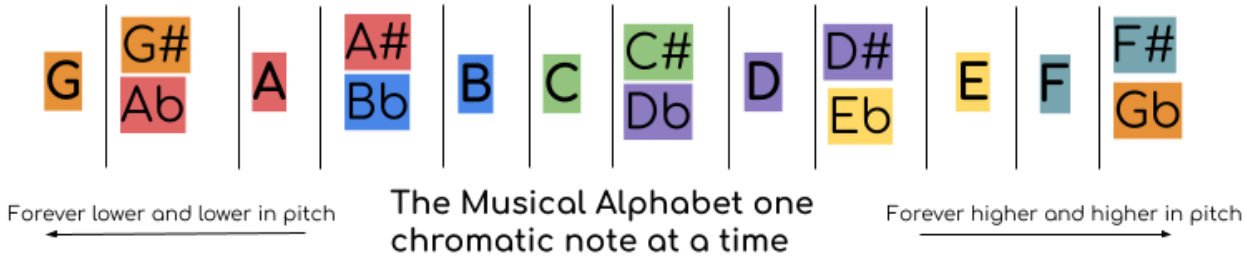
♯ What is a **"sharp"** note? This is the note one higher than the natural note. If you see an A#, it means the note just higher than A. Think of a tire again. Imagine when you put more air in it, it gets "sharp" (yes, really use your imagination...). It goes higher in pitch. Again, sharps and flats have to do with *where* the note is played. It's not a type of chord or something, it's the place, up (sharp/♯) or down (flat/♭) from that natural note (look at the charts below for visual clarity). That will make more sense later, in level 4 and beyond.

Yes, this means, as one note is flat, it is also another note sharp. You could say, it depends on what angle you're looking at it from. Again, just take in what you can about this, and be open to learning it more concretely as you go. It's a process.

There are 2 notes that don't have a sharp. - the E and B note. Directly after an E or a B note is the next natural letter note. After E is the F note. After B is the C note. All other notes have a sharp after them.

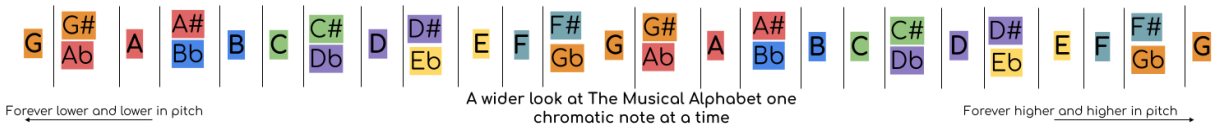


Take lots of time to study the guitar neck above. Don't let it overwhelm or scare you. REMEMBER, you ALREADY KNOW the G, A, B, C, D, E notes on the 3rd, 5th, and 7th frets where the dots are. When you need something, just go up or down from there. Need a Bb? Go to B, and flatten it one note. Need a C#? Go to C and raise it one note. Boom, C#.



These are just the notes, without how they're referenced on the guitar. This is the universal musical alphabet. The graph above this one is how these notes are planted onto the guitar, and where to find them. You should memorize how these notes work up and down. **Chromatic means all the incremental notes,** not just the notes within a certain key and scale.

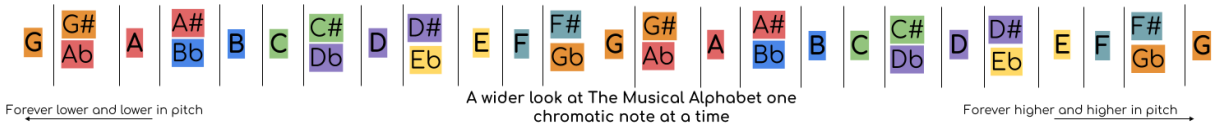
How do these notes work with the scales you learned earlier? Remember from your keys and chords you've learned, not all notes are included in each key. For example, the key of G goes G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, G, A ... and so on. Trace that across the music alphabet above.
The Key of A goes A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G#, A, B .. and so on. Follow that on the chart.



Full Steps and Half Steps: measuring distance between notes

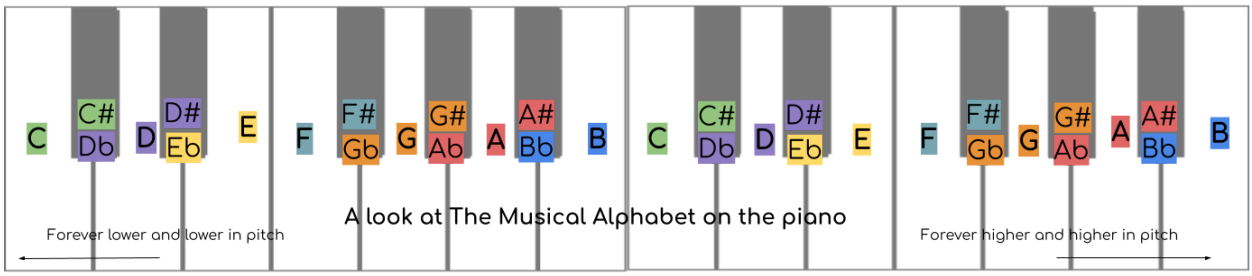
As we move through our scales, and also observe our keys, we need to talk about distance between notes. The most common term we'll use to talk about that is "full steps" and "half steps." If you walk one step forward, there's about one foot between your back leg and your forward foot. Think of this like notes.

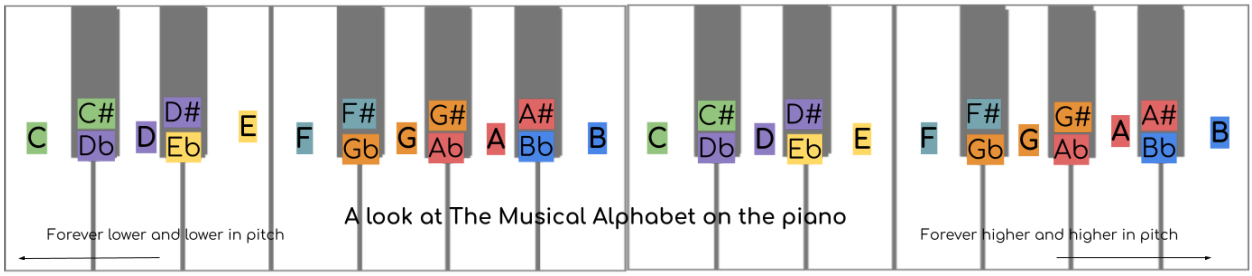
If you go "one step forward" in music, that means to skip one note - go one step forward. One step forward from a C note is a D note. Notice there's a sharp/flat note between them. One step forward from F# is G# - skipping over the G note.



If you move a half step forward, you've just gone to the very next note, like from D# to E, or from B to C. Take a minute to look at these examples and work your way through some of your own.
Looking at a major scale, starting with it's 1 note, it will go: full step forward, full step, half step, full step, full step, full step, half step to land back on the octave home again.
Use the key of C as an example:

Full step from C to D, full step from D to E, half step from E to F, full step from F to G, full step from G to A, etc. Pick the key of A and follow that pattern to see how ALL keys follow that distance. That's why as one thing is in one key, it is also to another key. We perceive all keys the same because they all work within the same rules of distance.





Wait.., I thought we were learning the guitar.. Why is there a piano on here?

We want to understand ***music*** in a deep and wide way. We want to move towards being a multidimensional player - this requires knowledge.

Here you can see what's up with those black and white notes. Find an F# note on the piano. What is its other name? Gb. Depends on which way you're looking at it from.

Understanding how music, notes, scales, and chords work on any instrument helps apply them to other instruments.

You can SEE how after the B note, there is no sharp note - the next note is C natural.

Same with the note after E, there is no E#, the next note is a natural F.

I say C#, you say Db. .. Same note.

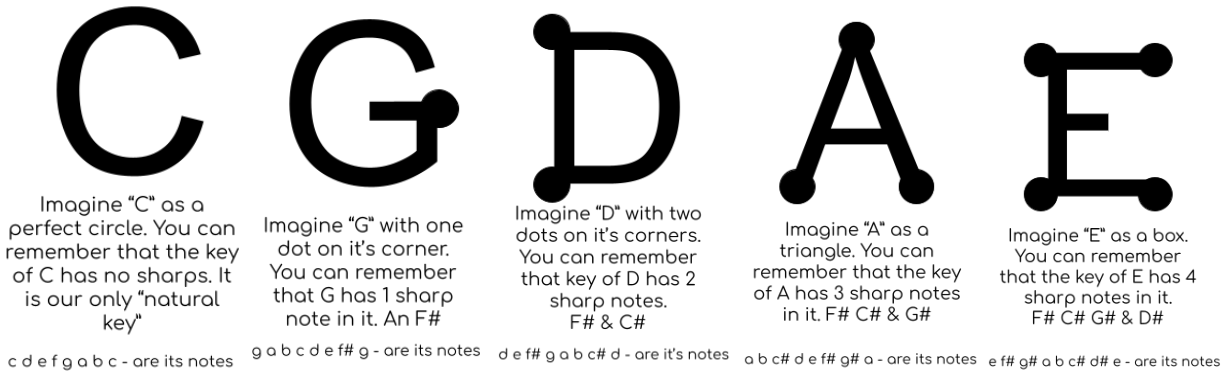
How do you know which to use? Think of it this way: **Every key needs one of each letter**, just one - but all of them. In a major scale/key, you'd need an A note of some sort (whether flat, natural, or sharp), a B note of some sort, a C note, etc etc, all the way to G.

For example, look at the notes to the key of D. You can use your circle of chords to help you remember the major scale of D.

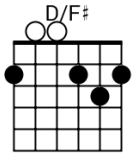
The **notes in the Key of D are D, E, F#, G, A, B, C#, then D again** at the next octave. Notice, for example, we didn't call F# a Gb instead. Why? Well, we have a G natural, and then we wouldn't get an "F" note at all. There's only one of each letter in the major key. It'll be that way in all the keys.
These 5 keys we've learned (besides key of C, since it's all natural notes) are our Sharp (#) keys. We don't include B in our open position keys, simply because the key of B is an awkward key to play on guitar, and hardly ever gets played in the open position.

The main key shapes we play ON RHYTHM GUITAR, as you're probably realizing, are the Key of A, the Key of C, The key of D, the Key of E, and the Key of G.

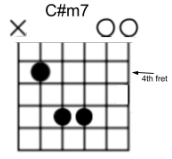
Here are those "sharp keys" according to how many sharp notes they have in them (the key of C is not technically a "sharp key," but "the natural key"). Dropping the dots on the letters like this is just a way we can remember how many sharp notes are in each of the main 5 keys. For reference, you can remember it like this:



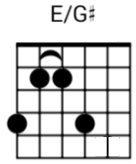
The most common sharp you'll see in open position chords are chords with an F# note in them, specifically the chords F#m, and D/F#. Look at the chart above with the sharps in each key. Notice all the keys with sharp notes include an F# - maybe that's why it's so common to see!



Look at the D/F# chord (from the key of D or key of G). Notice the f# note up on the low E string, second fret, right behind the G chord note.



Look at the C#m chord shape we commonly use for the key of E. Notice that C# note lands on the 4th fret, right after the 3rd fret, 2nd string C note.



Look at the E/G# chord from the key of E. The G# note lands on the 4th fret, right past the 3rd fret G note.

Time and Experience

Always remember, don't let yourself be overwhelmed with concepts and theory, but think about it, immerse yourself in it the best you can. The concepts aren't necessarily something you'll hear once and know it and know what to do with it. We are speaking a language - the foreign language of music that ONLY with **experience and time** does it start to make logical sense. You'll need to hear these concepts many, many, many times, and repeated over years of time. Not just hearing it, but experiencing it and applying it.

These deeper concepts typically sink in after 8+ years of playing, or 17 years of age or older (if you've been playing since you were a kid).. You get *real* "light-bulb moments" only after that amount of time!

If someone started speaking Spanish to you for the first time (or the 10th or 15 time), you probably wouldn't understand it. It's a foreign thing to you, a foreign culture altogether. But imagine hearing it everyday, and forcing yourself to actively play a part in that culture and language. After MUCH TIME and immersion, things would slowly start to make sense, slowly but surely. Then imagine one day, things just REALLY start to click, but only after you've done the work and put in the time.

As you're learning though, just because after hearing it/experiencing it once and it's not making total sense, that doesn't mean we shouldn't speak the language anyway, or that you should give up. You may have felt that giving up urge before. When we immerse ourselves anyway, and push forward, and go with it as much as possible, trust the process, keep having fun. Meander between play and theory, back and forth, and you'll have breakthroughs - both conceptually, and in ability.

How else do you learn a language, but constant time and experience with that language. The same applies to music. You can do it! It's a LIFE SKILL. Stick with it, and you'll keep getting those "aha" moments, AND learn to apply them in the moment.

Before you finish LEVEL 3.1, you should:

(*Keep in mind, most people will never truly "complete" Level 3, but here is an important list to help you cover your bases. Continually immerse yourself in these ideas, and build ongoing experience.)

1. Be able to play both the major and minor scales smoothly up and down
2. Utilize all 3 "smoothness techniques" - hammer on, pull off, and slide (and vibrato) to actively be practicing creating melody expressed from *you.* *(You can decide at some point you're just not a lead player, that's ok, not everyone is. But you might as well know some things around it. Some people are satisfied with being just a rhythm player, and that's fine. Be you!)*
3. Know how to find not only the main 6 notes from level 2 (G, A, B, C, D, E, and F), but also how to find their sharps and flats, AND mastered the "2 down 2 over rule" for finding octaves within your top 4 strings.
4. Utilize the major pentatonic scale and/or minor pentatonic scale to play lead or melody over the main 5 keys. (we'll add more keys later for major scales for key of C, & D, & E, etc).
5. Understand how sharps and flats work (and that E and B don't have sharps!)
6. Have mastered the art of not focusing on mistakes, but acquired the instantaneous thought style of moving on from mistakes - no longer stopping the train to focus on error, but rolling with it and staying on task, in the moment.
7. Understanding "over chords" from level 2. Like G/B, D/F# as the most common.
8. Recognize and know the difference in keys between the various chords from level 2 - knowing what key you're in based on the chords.
9. Understands and can use capo to transpose between shapes and keys with little hassle.