GUITAR FRETBOARD MASTERY

AN IN-DEPTH GUIDE TO PLAYING GUITAR WITH EASE

INCLUDING NOTE MEMORIZATION, MUSIC THEORY FOR BEGINNERS, CHORDS, SCALES AND TECHNICAL EXERCISES

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GUITAR MASTERY VOL. II

Guitar Fretboard Mastery

In-Depth Guide to Playing Guitar Freely, Including Note Memorization, Music Theory for Beginners, Chords, Scales and Technical Exercises

- Guitar Mastery Volume II -

Nicolas Carter

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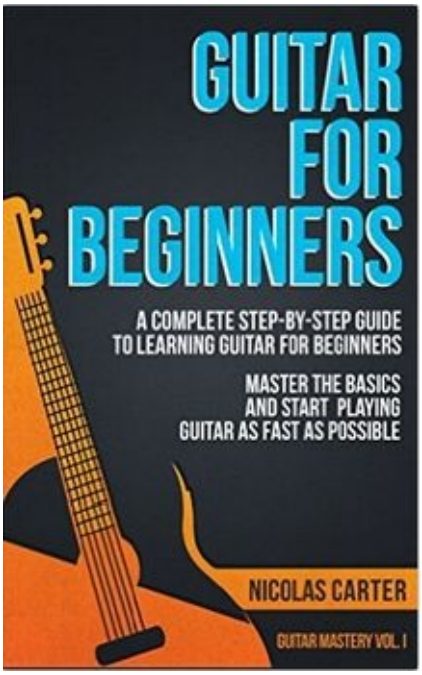
Guitar Mastery Series

This is the first out of many books which will cover different aspects of playing and mastering guitar, such as: learning songs by ear, music theory, rhythm skills, chord construction, CAGED system, *etc.* Each new book will build upon the last one. This book (Volume 2) continues where the 1st one left off, and covers many different a bit more advanced things, as you'll see.

In each of the books you'll find tremendous value - I'm sharing what I've learned along the way that has helped me learn guitar and enjoy the beauty of playing in all its forms.

Check out other books that are available so far in the series:

Guitar for Beginners
- Volume 1 -



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Introduction

First of all, thank you for reading this book. I wrote it with the intention to share some of the most valuable things I've learned while studying and playing guitar over the years.

The knowledge shared in this book will help you to 'unlock' and demystify the guitar fretboard and achieve more freedom in your playing. You will gain a much better understanding of how guitar works, how music theory is related to guitar and why all this is so much useful. You will be amazed how much this understanding, along with the provided exercises, will benefit your playing.

Let me explain first what do I mean by 'Guitar Fretboard Mastery'.

Although the term mastery is hard to define and can mean different things depending on the context, it is usually regarded as the ability to play almost anything that you want anywhere on the fretboard. The ability to play with ease and use guitar without any technical or knowledge limitations.

To tell you the truth right away, I don't know about anyone who has achieved this level of playing ability, whether on guitar or on some other instrument. You can argue that the musical geniuses like Jimmy Hendrix or Mozzart (not comparing them in any way) were able to play anything that comes from their head anytime they wanted, but that's beside my point.

The point is that learning and playing guitar (or any other instrument) is a process of constant new discoveries. There will always be new stuff to learn and something new to explore. That's the beauty of it!

What I'm trying to say is that you can only get better at playing guitar, but you will never be able to learn everything, which is fine. Fretboard mastery, and therefore guitar mastery, as such, is not some level which is achieved, it's the consequence of the hard work and the constant strive to improve, learn more and

become a better player.

In order to get better at playing guitar, there are three aspects to consider:

1. Understanding aspect (knowledge),

2. Technical aspect

3. Musical aspect.

All three are tied together and are more or less equally important.

When you understand the fretboard and how guitar works, how the notes and scales are laid out, how chords come from those scales and how they're constructed - which is what this book is about, you open up more doors for yourself and you achieve more freedom in your playing. You are no longer stuck using only the same old open chords. This is the power of understanding.

Technical aspect follows this closely. What good it is to know all this stuff if you can't use it in real playing because of the lacking technical skills? Having impeccable technique is what allows you to fully express yourself on guitar, and that's why a huge part of this book is dedicated toward developing some crucial aspects of your technique.

Musical aspect is something that is being overlooked by many today, and it's probably the most important. Many people rely too much on their technique while playing and only think in terms of the technique, while instead they should just free up their minds and play from their heart, like a true musician would. This includes the rhythm skills as well.

Being a better musician doesn't require you to have any special talent. Please don't have have this limiting self-belief! This is what hinders the progress of most players.

"Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, the mind can achieve."

This is one of my favorite quotes by Napoleon Hill, and I found it in so many ways to be true. You can become a better musician through developing your ear,

your rhythm skills and listening and figuring stuff out.

Developing your musicianship skills is not the focal point of this book, but it is covered a bit nonetheless. Also, check out the bonus section. ;)

In order to better explain the process of mastering guitar fretboard, this book is divided into 5 parts. Part 1 is all about learning and memorizing every note on a fingerboard in an easy and progressive manner.

You need to get to know your instrument. This is the first step toward fretboard mastery - you have to be able to name any note anywhere on a guitar fingerboard almost instantly (like piano players would). In the next 2 parts you will have a better idea of why is this so much important.

Since this process is going to take some time, I do recommend that you don't wait until you've memorized every note to move on to Part 2, but rather go through the entire book first, and then continue on with learning the note positions at the same time while working on what's being taught in other parts.

Part 2 is all about mastering the Major scale. It's the most important scale you'll have to know. Almost all music that you hear today comes from this scale. In this part you will learn what is a scale, what's a major scale, a root note, how chords and scales get their names, and what is a key. You will also learn how to play in all 5 positions of the Major scale and connect them all across the fingerboard.

Part 3 is mostly devoted to mastering the technical aspects of scale playing. The accent is put on developing your technique, specifically your: picking technique, finger strength, dexterity, left/right hand coordination, playing in time, etc.

As I've said, your technique in large part determines how much you can express yourself through playing guitar. That's why it is so important to develop a proper technique.

Part 4 is all about the chords. You will learn how chords are constructed from a Major scale, you'll learn about the intervallic relationships, what different chord

types there are and how they're divided, how to locate the chords easily and play them all over guitar fretboard. Get ready for many 'a-ha' moments. ;)

Part 5 is about learning all intervals that exist in music. I wanted to include this because it is the essential knowledge for any musician. As you start to develop your musical ear you will need to know the intervals.

By knowing all this you will be able to easily play in any key, and solo/improvise more freely. You will develop a very strong foundation that will last you forever.

Dealing with music theory

So yes, this book will deal with some fundamental music theory for guitar - you can't go without it, but don't let that intimidate you or put you off. If you've gone through my 1st book you know that I strive to keep everything simple and beginner friendly. Especially for this I have an easy way of explaining things so that anyone can understand.

Music theory is not hard to learn like some people may think. It's not a rocket science. There is an interesting logic to it, and it's actually quite cool.

Music theory explains why some notes sound good when played together. That's all it does, the whole purpose of it. It is your map and an aid to creating beautiful music. Even if someone is amazingly gifted with musical skills beyond comprehension, he or she can still find lots of benefits in understanding the music theory.

Understanding music theory means that you know what will sound good together, what won't and why. It's just a tool that helps you achieve more freedom in your playing and master the guitar. It is also needed in order to be able to effectively communicate with other musicians. No need to say that for this reason learning at least the basics of it is vital to your further development as a guitar player.

There's a distinction I'd like to make between music theory and music reading, or sight reading. We don't learn how to read music in this book, we only learn music theory. Sight reading is a totally different subject, not particularly useful for most guitarists who are not playing classical music or going to music schools. Music reading as such is entirely optional for you to learn.

Keep in mind that this book is nothing like the ones you can usually find in music stores or the ones used for music schools. I'm just a guitar player, like you. What I'm sharing with you here is what took me many years to learn from

various different sources. My goal with this book is to give out tons of value and help you learn all this much faster than me.

What you should know first

While the material covered in this book is suitable for a beginner to learn, it's not meant for complete beginners who just bought their first guitar, or in other words, there are some stuff you'll have to be familiar with first in order to fully experience all the benefits from what's being taught in the book. You'll need to:

1. Have a basic understanding of guitar, how to produce sound, how to hold it and play in a correct playing position.

2. Understand the note circle as the most fundamental concept where all music comes from.

3. Understand what is an octave.

(You'll be able to pick up the 2. and 3. easily just by going through the first part of this book)

4. Be able to play the basic open chords and preferably even some barre chords

5. Understand how and why barre chords are moveable

6. Be able to strum guitar and play a simple strumming pattern

It is for this reason that I have a book titled: "Guitar for Beginners", which covers all that and much more. It pretty much covers everything that a new guitar player should know.

You don't need to go through the previous book in order to understand this one, but if while reading you find something that you struggle to understand, I strongly recommend that you check out my first book.

The book you're reading right now is the 2nd book in my Guitar Mastery series.

It is aimed for beginners and intermediates and it covers quite a lot of ground. Every bit of information that you learn here you will rely on a lot in your playing, and that's why it's really powerful to know.

Part 1 - How to easily find and learn all notes on guitar fretboard

This is your first step toward guitar fretboard mastery. For many guitarists the idea of learning the position of every note on a whole guitar fretboard seems crazy. But it is quite doable if you just take it step by step and try to get a little bit better each time you practice. That's the essence of the Kaizen philosophy which you can apply here for best and fastest results. I have a personal development book on that topic, so if you're interested you can check it out.

Anyway, sorry for the book plug, let's get back to our topic. So how do we tackle this seemingly 'impossible' task of learning the note positions, and why should we even bother with it in the first place?

Have you ever seen how piano players learn their instrument? One of the first things they start working on is learning the position of every note from the note circle on each of the piano keys. While this may seem hard, there is a little trick that piano players use to memorize the notes. The trick is in the order of black and white keys.

We know there are 12 notes in Western music and that between B and C, and E and F there are no sharps (#) or flats (b). Since each piano key corresponds to a particular note (going higher in pitch from left to right - clockwise), the white keys that correspond to the mentioned notes won't have black keys between them. Black keys are only for notes with sharps and flats, while white keys are for natural notes (without # or b). Just this little difference is enough to easily learn where each note is (on which piano key).

Why the heck did I just talk about learning notes on piano keyboard?! Well, stringed instruments have quite a few thing in common. For example, one string

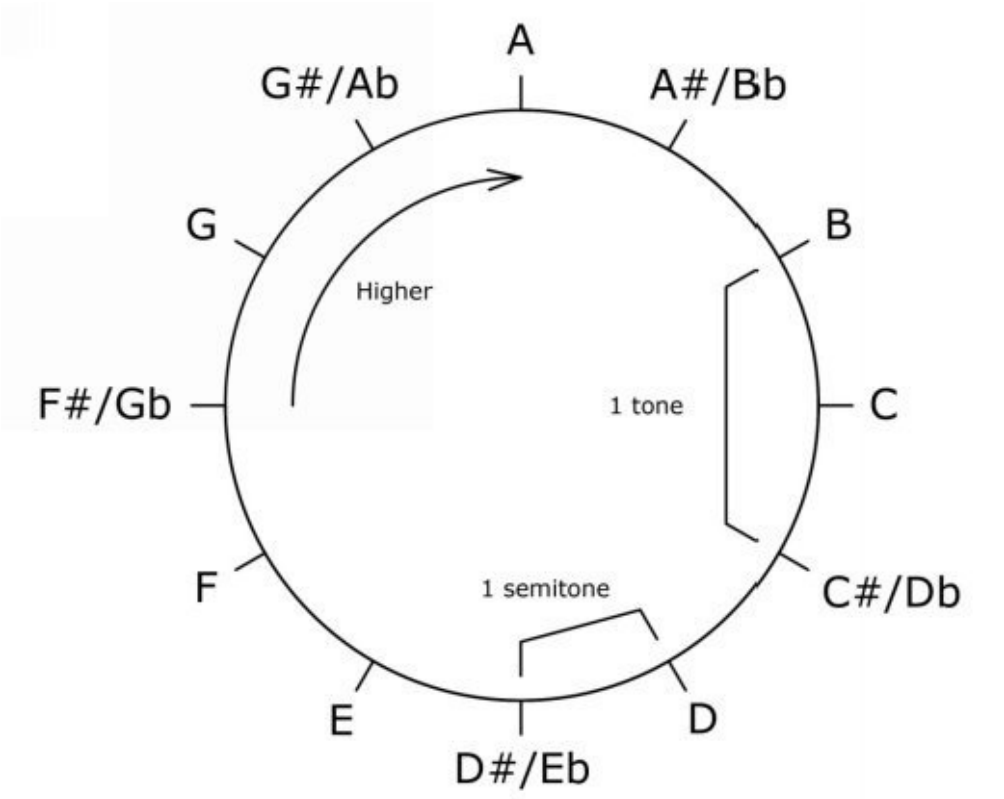
on guitar is like a piano keyboard, expect you don't have black and white keys that help navigate your way around. Instead, you have the dots (fretboard inlays) serving as a reference point, and open strings to use as a starting point.

Simply by knowing the notes on guitar you can 'pick up' how to play a piano much easier, and vice versa. Knowing how to find notes quickly on guitar (which is a bit harder than on piano), will make it possible to find and play any chord or a scale anywhere on the fretboard.

Now not to get ahead of ourselves, let's start from the simplest way to find notes.

Step 1 - Counting the notes

If you understand the note circle and the names of the open strings this is quite easy.



This method is also described in a previous book, but here's a quick recap of it.

Example 1 - Finding the note on 4th fret D string

If you want to figure out the note on the 4th fret D string, you would start from the open D string and move clockwise around the note circle fret by fret.

- 1st fret would be D#,
- 2nd fret E,
- 3rd fret is F,
- 4th fret is **F#.**

Example 2 - 9th fret B string

If you want to figure out the note on, let's say 9th fret B string, you can in the

same way start from the open B string and go fret by fret clockwise on the note circle until you come to the 9th fret - which is G#. Seems easy enough, but it takes some time.

In this example, since we're trying to figure out a note which is higher up the fretboard (after the 6th fret), we can also apply the same process but *in reverse*, to find the note faster.

First we need to understand that **the notes on the 12th fret of any string are the same notes as on the open strings.** This is because they are exactly 1 octave higher (12th fret - there are 12 notes in music). After the 12th fret the notes repeat themselves. You should already know by now than an octave is 12 semitones (or frets on guitar) higher than the starting note - same as one full way around the note circle.

So the note on the 12th fret is B. You can now go counter-clockwise (descending) on the note circle to figure out the note on the 9th fret.

- 11th fret would be Bb (same as A#)
- 10th fret would be A
- 9th fret would be **Ab** (same as G#)

Notice we're using b's instead of #'s. This is because we're going backwards or counter clockwise on the note circle and notes are becoming lower in pitch, so it is more accurate and convenient to use the flats. This is a simple rule we will go by when figuring out scales and intervals later in the book.

Exercise 1

Use the described method to find the notes on the following positions as fast as you can. Make sure that you go in reverse as well if the note is higher than the 6th fret (use both #'s and b's). Measure the time it takes to do all 15 of these.

1) 3rd fret E	6) 4th fret B	11)10th fret e
2) 5th fret e	7) 7th fret A	12) 13th fret G
3) 9th fret G	8) 3rd fret E	13) 15th fret D
4) 9th fret A	9) 6th fret e	14) 11th fret E
5) 6th fret D	10) 7th fret B	15) 17th fret A

This is a great beginnery note finding exercise which helps in remembering the note circle.

There are much faster ways to find the notes and memorize them easily.

Step 2 - Fretboard orientation, 6 key tones and the use of dots/fretboard inlays

Now we will introduce some quicker ways of finding and memorizing the notes. Make sure you can do the Exercise 1 first, since it's important to go step by step through this process.

The next step is to remember the positions of 6 key tones (notes) on guitar and use them as reference point for finding the notes on E and A strings quickly. Those are the notes on the 3rd, 5th and 7th fret of E and A strings. Here are the notes:

Frets	3rd	5th	7th
A string	C	D	E
E string	G	A	B

These notes are often called 6 key tones because they are used quite often as 'root' notes (more on that later) for chords and scales in many, many songs.

You can use mnemonics to memorize them easily. For example:

"3 **G**rumpy **C**ats with 5 **A**ngry **D**onkeys scare 7 **B**ig **E**lephants."

This doesn't make any sense but hopefully you can do a better job than me. :) This way it's really easy to remember these key notes and know where they are at any given moment.

Black/white dots (fretboard inlays)

Have you wondered what are those black or white dots on a guitar fretboard and to its side facing the eyes? They serve two purposes:

1. Reference point for navigating the fretboard and orientation.

2. Decoration - some guitars have wonderfully decorated inlays with different motives (for example, man transforming to wolf on James Hetfield's guitar)

Black dots help us navigate and find our way around the fretboard while playing. They can also be used as a point of reference for finding and memorizing the notes without having to count the steps from the nut or from the 12th fret.

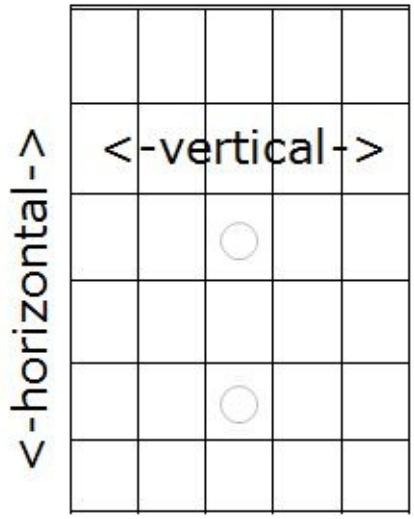
You'll notice that on most guitars the dots are located on the 3rd, 5th, 7th, 12th, 15th, 17th frets. Some guitars may not have them on a fingerboard, but they're almost always located on the side of the neck facing the eyes.

Notice that the 6 key tones coincide with the dots on 3rd, 5th and 7th frets.

Take your guitar and play each of these notes, play around with them a bit. This will help in remembering them. As you play the notes at first visualize their name and say it out loud.

Fretboard orientation and fretting hand motion

Just to clear up one thing regarding the fretting hand motion for the future, take a look at this picture:



Assuming that the guitar is in your lap (or hanging if you're playing standing up)

in standard playing position, understand that:

Horizontal motion can be either left - toward the nut, and right - toward the bridge.

Vertical motion can be either up - toward the ceiling, or down - toward the floor.

For some of the exercises which you'll soon learn about, whenever you see me saying to move your fretting hand, or its specific fingers, in a certain way - horizontally or vertically, remember this and you shouldn't get confused.

Fretting hand movement can also be diagonal in any direction, and each of your fingers can move independently in any direction.

It's amazing when you realize just how technically capable our hands can become for playing just about anything you can imagine on guitar. It looks awesome too.

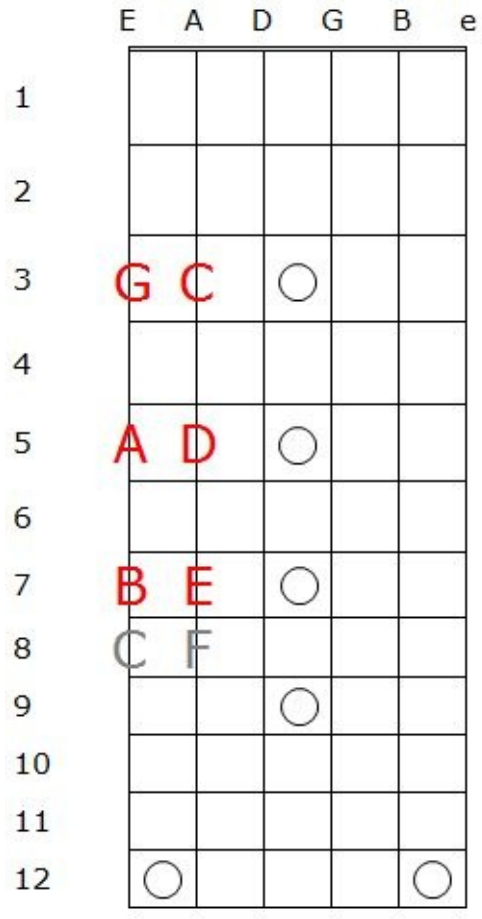
Step 3 - Learning the notes on E and A strings

Now the challenge is to find and remember all notes on E and A strings, up to the 12th fret. After the 12th fret the notes repeat themselves but you can work them out as well if you want.

This is a really important step in the note memorization process and for everything you're going to learn throughout the rest of this book. Knowing the notes on E and A strings is absolutely essential.

Task 1:

Take of sheet of paper and draw a guitar fingerboard like this



Now you can use the open strings, 6 key tones and 12th fret octaves to quickly

find notes on E an A strings. As you find the notes write them down on the corresponding fret on your drawing.

I've put 6 key tones in red here, but you can use any color which is different than the one you're going to to use to fill up the rest of the notes on E and A strings only.

After you write down all the notes on E and A strings save this drawing for later as you'll need it. Remember that being able to instantly remember these notes won't happen overnight, just be patient.

You should have more than enough knowledge now to find the notes on these strings fast, especially with the help of 6 key tones.

After that the next step is to remember the positions of all other natural notes (without # or b) on E and A strings, and then finding the rest of them quickly will be a piece of cake.

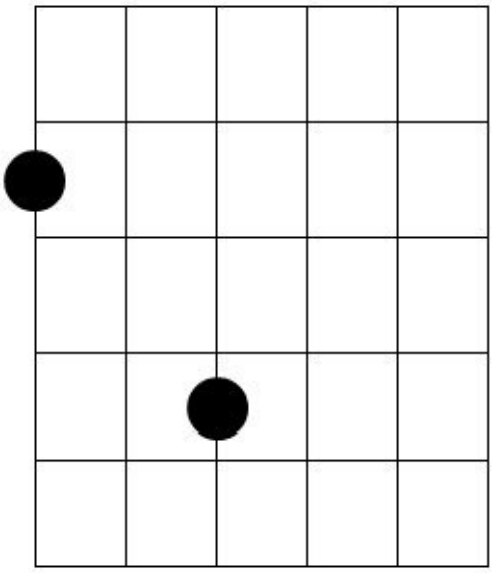
When you become good enough so that you can find any note on E and A strings **in less than 3 seconds**, you can say that you know the notes on E and A strings really well. :)

Step 4 - Using octaves to find the notes on D, G, B and e strings

Now we will learn how to use octave shapes on guitar to easily find the notes on D, G, B and e strings. There are 4 octaves shapes that are most useful ones for this.

An octave shape is just a shape on guitar consisting of two notes that are an octave apart. There are many different octave shapes on guitar that you can play, but the ones I'm showing you here are some of the most useful ones.

Finding notes on the D string (Octave shape #1)



Octave shape #1

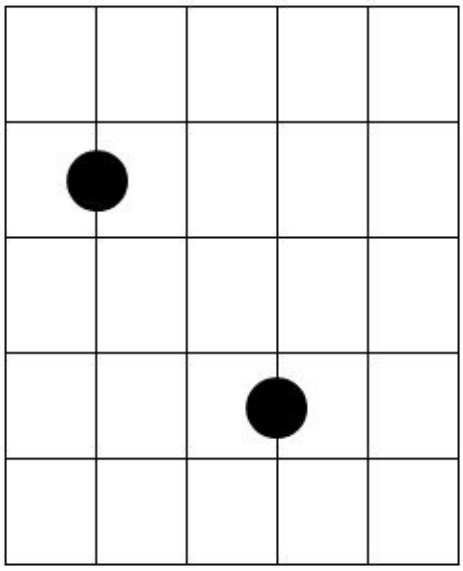
Each of the vertical lines on the image above corresponds to: E, A, D, G, B and e strings.

If you play for example G note on the 3rd fret of the E string, that same note, but an octave higher, can be found on the 5th fret of the D string. This is the exact octave shape shown on image.

The note on the 5th fret E string is A, but when you apply this shape, you can find that that same note is found on the 7th fret D string.

This shape applies for any of the notes on low E string! Just knowing this makes finding notes on the D string so much faster.

Finding notes on the G string (Octave shape #2)



Octave shape #2

For the notes on the G string we use the exact same with the only difference being that we are using the notes on the A string as a starting point.

For example - if you play a C note on the 3rd fret A string, that same C (one octave higher) can be found on the 5th fret of the G string.

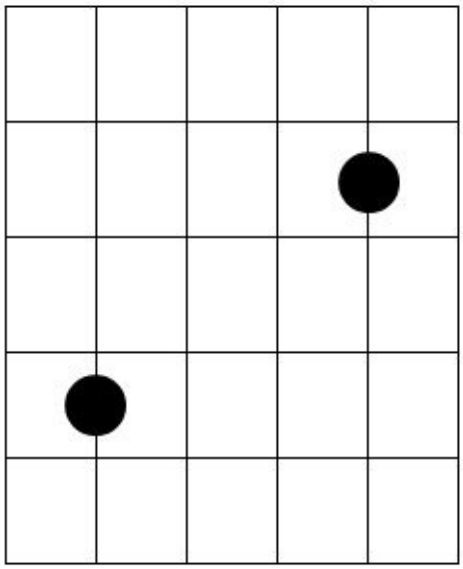
If you play the F on the 8th fret A string, an octave higher F can be found on the 10th fret G string.

In order to better memorize this first two shapes you should play around with them. Use your index finger to play the lower note on E/A string, and you can use either ring or little finger to play the octave on D/G string.

It's important to make sure that while gripping these shapes your index finger is covering or leaning over the rest of the strings, thereby muting them - when you strum a guitar you should only hear the two gripped notes. In the case of the Octave shape 2, your index finger should also just barely touch the low E string so that it is nicely muted as well.

You'll notice that these two shapes are used in songs quite often, in rock music especially. So try to just play with them, move them around from fret to fret, switch between E and A strings, try different strumming patterns or pick the notes individually, try to come up with something cool. This will help in remembering them.

Finding notes on the B string (Octave shape #3):



Octave shape #3

This shape is a bit different than the first two. We're using A string as the starting point again, but this time we're going backwards two frets toward the nut.

If you play the C note again (3rd fret A string), that same C can be found on the 1st fret B string. This higher C on the B string is also one octave higher than the C on A string.

Say you go to the 6th fret A string and apply this shape, you'll quickly find D# note on the 4th fret B string.

This shape is used much less in real playing than the first two because it is a bit harder to play, although it is immensely useful for finding notes on the B string.

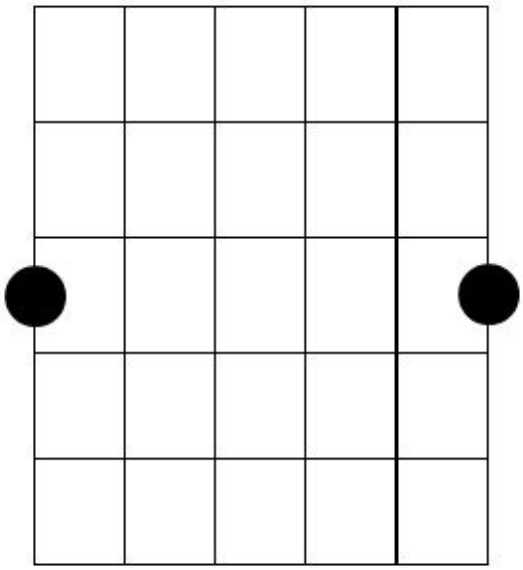
To play it and strum it correctly your muting skills (one of the most useful skills to have on guitar) need to be top-notch.

Use your index finger to play the note on the B string, and your ring finger to

play the lower note on the A string. Your ring finger needs to subtly lean over and mute both low E and D strings while holding the note on A string, and your index finger in the same way needs to mute the G and high e strings.

This requires some practice, but it is quite doable, and useful for your muting skills on guitar. ;)

Finding notes on the high e string (Octave shape #4)



Octave shape #4

This is the easiest shape to use simply because E and e strings are the same notes and they share the same note positions**.** If you already know the notes on the low E string, then you know the notes on the high 'e' as well**.**

It's important to keep in mind that unlike other shapes, here the lower and the higher notes are **two octaves apart.**

G note on the 3rd fret low E string is also found on the 3rd fret high e string**.**

Bb on the 6th fret E, is also found on the 6th fret high e string**.**

You can also use this shape for playing, but you don't have to use the muting technique - in this case it is redundant and you won't gain anything**.** The better idea would be to get used to playing it with ***hybrid picking*****.**

Hybrid picking is a picking technique where you're using a pick to play the lower note, and either your middle or ring finger (or both) to play the higher note(s)**.** This is a technique I use most often in my playing**.**

In order to play this last shape more easily you can use your middle finger to play the note on the low E string, and your ring finger to play the note on the high e string.

This requires some stretch with your fingers, so it is a good stretching exercise as well. Good thing is that you don't have to mute anything, just use the hybrid picking technique - play the note on the low E with a pick, and the note on the high e with your ring finger, at the same time.

You'll be using these octave shapes very often, not just for finding notes but in general playing as well. So make sure that you're comfortable with them, get them under your fingers.

After this, for the next step you can try to memorize more key tones on D, G, B and e strings, and/or you can do some specific exercises for memorizing all the notes. There are really cool exercises I'm going to show you next. But first...

Task 2

Hope you still have your fretboard drawing from Task 1, now you'll need it to write down all the remaining notes on the rest of the strings, which you'll find using the octave shapes. Do this all the way up to the 12th fret, or go beyond if you wish. Double check each note to make sure that you got it right.

After you become comfortable with using the octave shapes to find notes on D, G, B and e strings, in order to take your knowledge of the fretboard notes to a whole new level, I'm going to show you some fun exercises.

These are the best exercises for memorizing any note anywhere on a guitar fretboard. Though you should try these only after you can find the notes easily using all previously described methods.

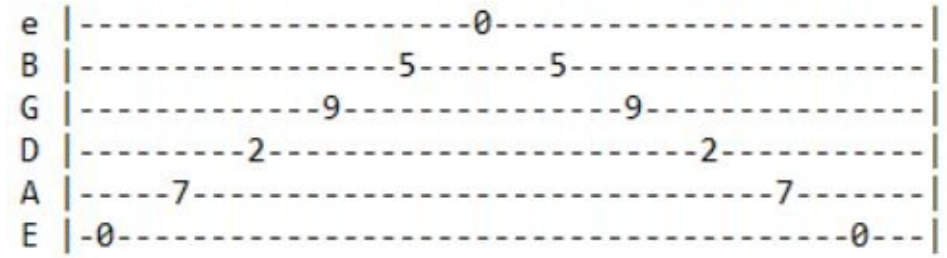
One note in every position (Exercise 2)

This exercise is simple but very effective. You're going to play one note once in all positions on the fingerboard, on every string up to the 12th fret. Suggested note order is: E, D, C, A, G, and then B, F. You don't need to practice the notes with #'s or b's.

First you'll have to know all positions where the note can be found on the fretboard (up to the 12th fret). It is advisable that you write a tab for this after you find all the positions of the note you're practicing. I'm going do it with an E note as an example.

You can perform this exercise in 2 ways: vertical and horizontal.

Ex 1 - Vertical

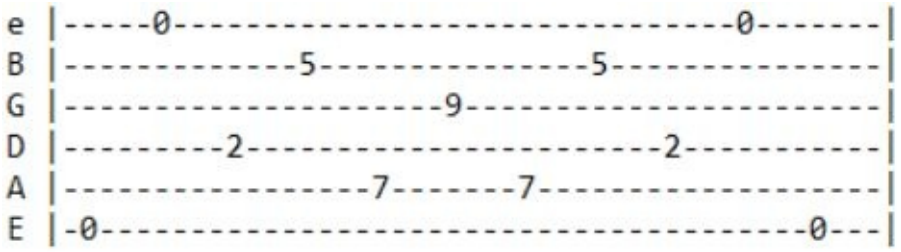


As the Tab shows, you start from the lowest string by finding the lowest position of the note that you're practicing. Then you move on to the A string and do the same for the rest of the strings. In this exercise we're ignoring the 12th fret and using the open strings, so that each note is only found once on each of the strings.

For example, E note is found on the open E string and on the 12th fret as well, but we're ignoring the 12th fret and play it only once.

When you get to the high e string just move back up in the same way.

Ex 2 - Horizontal



This is another way you should do this exercise, and a more useful one in my opinion. In this way you're finding and playing all E notes in order but horizontally from the 1st fret up to the 12th fret.

Just go fret by fret (as opposed to string by string in Ex1) and write down in Tab the note you're going to practice. Check out the tab example.

How to perform the exercise - rules and guidelines to follow

1. Use only your index finger to play all the notes, except for the open strings of course.

2. Don't play the same note twice on one string. In other words, play the open string and don't play the 12th fret. Other times, just to differentiate, you can exclude the open string and play the 12th fret.

3. Use the metronome (there are free ones online) and set the speed as low as you need, and gradually move up the speed. Ideally, you would go from 40-60 bpm to a target speed of 160-200 bpm. Play each note position in sync with metronome click.

4. As you add one note at a time make sure that you're still practicing the old ones as you'll forget them.

Don't overdo this exercise. Spending up to 5 minutes on it is more than enough. Just pick the note (from the suggested note order), find all of its positions on the fretboard (hopefully you can do this fast by now), write the note positions in tab,

set the metronome speed you're comfortable with, and do the exercise a couple of times both vertically and horizontally.

Tip: In order to perform big note to note jumps on guitar (which you'll have to do for this exercise) try to look at the fret where you want your finger to go before moving it there. This will make it easier to make big jumps on guitar and don't make mistakes. This is the tip I was given by several awesome guitar teachers and it helped me out a lot.

Task 3

Write a tab for all the notes that you practice like I did here with note E.

Mind bending note finding game (Exercise 3)

I learned this exercise from Justin Sandercoe (one of the best guitar teachers), and I'm sharing it with you here. Warning, it's really hard! ;) It should only be attempted after you can find the notes using the previously discussed methods and are fairly good at them.

This exercise is done without a guitar, and it's actually a great way to pass the time if you're stuck somewhere. :) The idea is to be able to visualize the fretboard in your head, thus making it easier to work out the chords and scales or anything else visually. This takes years of practice, but it is well worth it.

So here are the instructions on how to do it:

1. Grab a paper sheet and draw a table as shown below.

2. Divide the columns in 1 to 6 and 6 to 1. E is the 6th (thickest) and e is the 1st (thinnest).

3. Write down 12 random fret numbers on the left for each of the columns (1 to 6 and 6 to 1). Try not to put consecutive numbers or otherwise it would be easy to cheat.

Frets	e to E (1 to 6)	Frets	E to e (6 to 1)
5		12	
2		3	
11		8	
1		5	
9		11	
3		2	
7		7	
10		4	
4		10	
8		1	
12		6	
6		9	

4. Column 1 to 6 means that you have to write down the note names, from the 1st string (thinnest high e string) to the 6th string (thickest low E string), on a fret that is shown on the left column. Column 6 to 1 is done in the same way but in reverse - from thickest to thinnest string.

5. For 6 to 1 column (in which you're ascending, moving clockwise) use '#' - sharps, and for 1 to 6 (descending, moving counter-clockwise) use 'b' - flats.

6. Try filling this table and you'll see just how hard it is. If you get stuck you can check on your guitar, or use the answers provided at the end of this book.

If you do this exercise on a regular basis you will learn where all notes are on guitar in no time.

Have fun! :)

Part 2 - Learning the Major Scale

Definition of a scale and what's a Major scale?

This is where it becomes scary for some, but totally unnecessary. Let's dive straight in by demystifying the scales first!

A scale is a sequence of notes from the note circle ordered in a specific way. Each scale has it's own scale formula of intervals or distances between its notes by which those notes are 'taken' from the note circle.

Those intervals are measured in tones (T) and semitones (S). You should remember those from the previous book and from the note circle. Check out the note circle image in the 1st section again if you have trouble remembering.

There are many different scales out there and each one has a unique combination of T's and S's.

I know that this might sound confusing but just bear with me.

Major scale is a just a type of scale - it's the most used scale in the world today and the most important one in Western music. It's safe to say you'll be using it 95% of the time in your playing. Its scale formula looks like this:

Major scale formula:

T S T T T S

This sequence of T's and S's, as I've said, represents the intervals or distances between the notes in a scale. You can start on any note on the note circle and apply this sequence, and you'll get a Major scale.

Major scale has 7 notes. There are also other scales that have more or less notes, like Pentatonic scale (5 notes) which is also a very popular one used for soloing, but we will only be focusing on the Major scale now. Pentatonic scale is much easier to learn and use later on.

So let's pick a note from the note circle, for example C. We will start from that note and apply the major scale formula. Figuring out the notes of the scale is easily done with help of the note circle. It looks like this:

C - **T** - D - **T** - E - **S** - F - **T** - G - **T** - A - **T** - B - **S** - C

We just applied the scale formula to figure out the notes of the C Major scale, which are: C D E F G A B, then octave C again, and then the notes repeat.

This Major scale is called C Major because we started from the note C. Therefore C is called the '**root**' note. If we were to start from an A note, it would be A Major scale. I hope this is clear so far. More on the root notes you'll find in the next section.

C Major scale is a unique major scale in a way that its notes don't have any sharps # or flats b, that's why it the most basic major scale in music theory. If we start from the G note and figure out the notes of the G Major scale, we would get a note with a '#'. If we start from the D note we would get two notes with #'s, etc.

Figuring out the Major scale notes in all keys (Task 4)

The big and challenging task (and a cool learning experience) for you now is to figure out the scale tones for each of the notes like I just did with C**.**

Take a look at the table on the next page, copy it and fill it out with the appropriate notes**.** Use what you learned here and use the note circle only if you have to, and to check if you got it right**.**

Key	T	T	S	T	T	T	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
G							
D							
A							
E							
B							
F							
Bb							
Eb	F	G	Ab	Bb	C	D	Eb
Ab							
Db							
Gb							
C#							
G#							
D#							
A#	B#	C##	D#	E#	F##	G##	A#
F#							

There are 12 notes in music, so there must be 12 Major scales - each starting from a different note, right? Well, yes, but in music theory it's not that simple. We have to deal with both #'s and b's.

In order to fill out the entire table correctly (as you go down the table it gets more difficult) you have to follow a simple rule in music theory which says that

there can't be two side by side notes with the same name. In other words, you need to have each letter of the alphabet in a scale key, and you just add #'s or b's as necessary.

A good practice when figuring out the notes of a scale then is to first just write out the alphabet letters from the starting note.

Let's check out the key of A# as an example, which is a purely theoretical key and very hard to figure out, but it's fun.

A# - **T** - B# - **T** - C## - **S** - D# - **T** - E# - **T** - F## - **T** - G## - **S** - A#

A# is only a theoretical major scale key because:

1. It requires the use of double sharps because of the rule that you can't have more than one alphabet letter.

2. It is too complex and only used in theory.

On the table the first 7-8 keys are very commonly used in music. I've left the theoretical keys like A# for you as a challenge and practice. Try to figure them out and you'll gain a much better understanding of how this stuff works.

Note that for the keys starting on a note with sharp (#) you would use #'s, and if the key starts on a note with flat (b), you need to use b's.

I've provided a complete list of all notes in all keys at the end of this book so that you can double check your work.

What is a Key?

So often we hear how someone says that X song is in the key of ... let's say G major. What does that mean?

It means that this particular song with all its parts, chords and notes, licks, solos, riffs, etc. contains the notes that belong to the corresponding scale, in this case G Major scale. That's why that song is said to be in the key of G.

Some notes or chords in a song can be out if its parent key, and those notes/chords usually surprise the listeners. Just because a song is in a certain key doesn't mean that we can't use some notes outside of the key, but only as long as it sounds good. Remember the rule: "If it sounds good, it is good!" ;)

A key may be explained as a note or a chord that the musical piece revolves around, ends or rests on. This note or chord gives the subjective feeling of 'arrival' and 'rest' to the listener. In the case of G major key, that would be the G note and a G major chord, all belonging to the G major scale.

Besides Major keys can also be minor. Minor keys are the same as major keys except that they are starting on a minor chord. They are a little bit more advanced to explain in detail right now. For now just know that each Major scale key has its relative minor key.

This relative minor key or scale starts from the 6th scale degree (in the key of G the relative minor key would be E minor) and contains the same notes as its relative major scale. Minor keys therefore are kind of sad sounding.

Now, each scale has its own set of chords (we'll get to this in the chords section), and as I've said before, chords are built from scales. Those chords can have different progressions within a scale, for example: G to Em to C to D. All these chords belong to the key of G major, and G chord in this (very common) chord sequence gives the sense of arrival, ending, rest, etc. Try it for yourself on

guitar.

If a musical piece happens to be in E major key, it means that, generally speaking, your first chord would be E and your last chord would be E. This doesn't have to always be the case, but it nicely establishes a comfortable beginning and end for the listener - because the tonal centre is E of course.

To make it simple, a key can be interpreted as a way of saying which scale the song or a music piece belongs to.

Some keys are used more often than others, which depends on the instrument. In that sense, there are more and less guitar-friendly keys.

A key is considered to be more guitar friendly if it contains most of the open chords on guitar, like: Em, Am, E, G, D, Dm, A, etc. For example, key of G is very guitar-friendly, while key of Bb not so much. You can also say that the less #'s or b's key signatures have, the more popular and guitar-friendly they are.

Key signature represents the measure of sharps (#) or flats (b) in a scale (or key). It literary tells you how many sharps or flats there are in each key. It's just a theoretical thing.

It is, of course, possible to play in any key on guitar. The harder keys can be made 'easier to play in' with the help of alternate tunings, clever use of barre chords (if you're good with them) and all the different kinds of capos. It's literary possible to play anything in any way on guitar. ;)

Concept of the Root note

A root note is the starting note, or a note by which scales and chords get their names. It is always the first degree of any scale, or the lowest note in a chord (unless its a chord inversion).

Root note can represent the key, the name of the scale or the name of the chord. Therefore it usually functions as a tonal centre (the note around which the musical piece revolves around).

That's why this is the most important note to be aware of in your playing, and since it is the lowest note in a chord (usually) it is crucial that you know the note names on the low E and A strings on guitar at least in the beginning, and then to learn them on the whole fretboard!

This will make it much easier to find and play the chords all across the fingerboard. That is just one of the reasons why we spent so much time learning the notes on guitar. :)

I hope you're still with me so far. We're now moving on to the technical aspects of learning and playing the Major scale all across the fretboard.

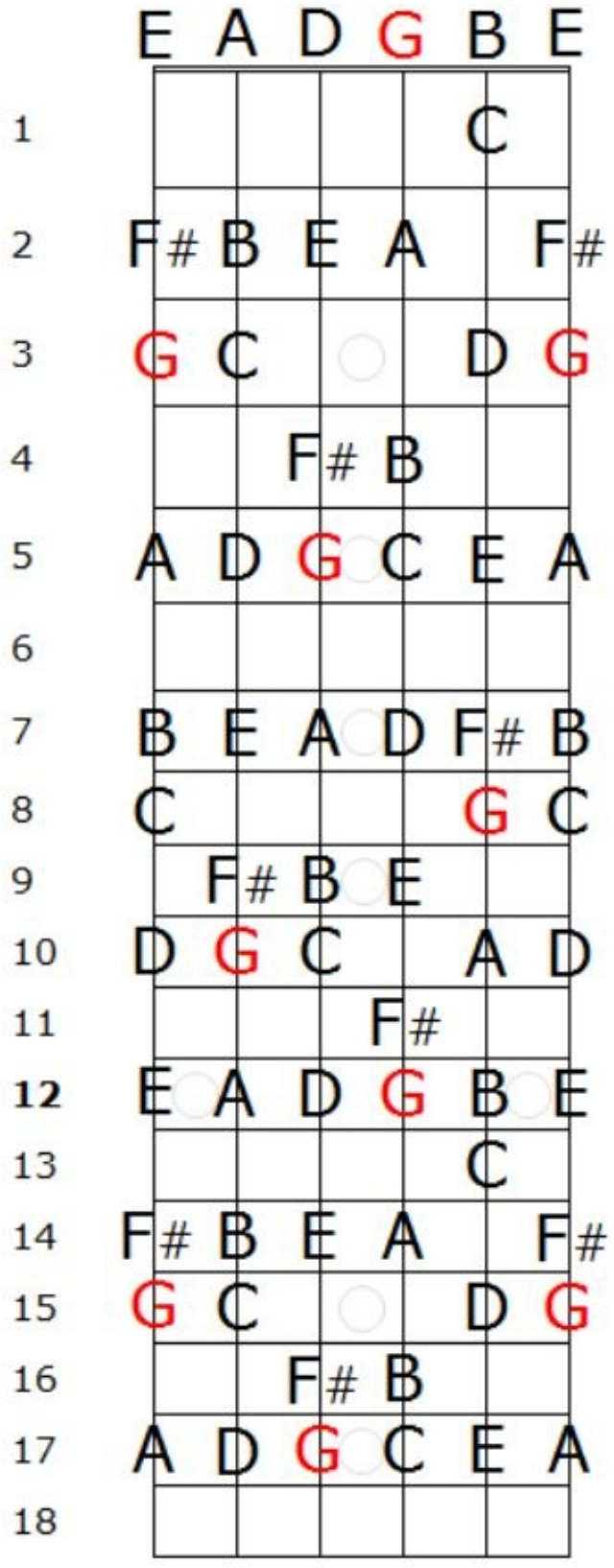
Major scale on guitar

You will now see how a major scale looks like on guitar and how its laid out across the entire fretboard. This is more on the technical side of things and will take some time to learn and master, and I'll show the best way to do this!

It is really important to learn the scales (especially the major scale) on guitar as they allow you to improvise and create melodies much more easily - which is super fun. This helps you be more creative. Learning the major scale is another thing which is essential for *unlocking* the fretboard!

I'll use G as an example major scale because it spreads across the fretboard nicely, and its easy to show all the scale shapes in this key.

G Major scale on guitar:



You can see here the G Major scale with all its notes across the entire guitar

fretboard. There are a couple of things you should be aware of:

a) G is the root note. it is the beginning note (1st degree) of the scale, and it gives the scale its name - G Major scale. For that reason, G note is in red.

b) After the 12th fret the notes repeat (but they are one octave higher), so the 12th fret is the same as the notes on open strings, 13th fret is the same as the 1st fret, 14th fret is the same as the 2nd fret, and so on.

c) Major scale layout on guitar is divided into **5 distinct shapes or 'boxes'**. Dividing this layout into 5 shapes or boxes, makes it much easier to learn the scale across the entire fretboard!

d) These shapes are in different positions on the fingerboard, with different note order. Some notes overlap between shapes. We're going to look at the each one separately.

The process for learning how to use the major scale to improvise/solo on guitar looks like this:

1. You learn the 1st shape, practice it in many different ways until it's in the back of your mind - so that you can play it with your eyes closed.

2. During that process and afterwards as well, you explore the shape and try to improvise/create some melodies with it, as much as you can.

3. Do the same with the 2nd shape. The timeline on how long will it take you to move on to the 2nd shape is entirely up to you.

4. Practice linking 1st and the 2nd shape together. Now you can use both to improvise over a song or a backing track.

5. Learn the 3rd shape in the same way. Practice linking it with the 2nd shape.

6. Repeat this process for the 4th and 5th shape. Practice linking both 5th and 1st shape as it repeats right after the 5th one.

The final stage in this is when you build up so much muscle memory that you

stop thinking about the shapes and your fingers automatically go to the right notes.

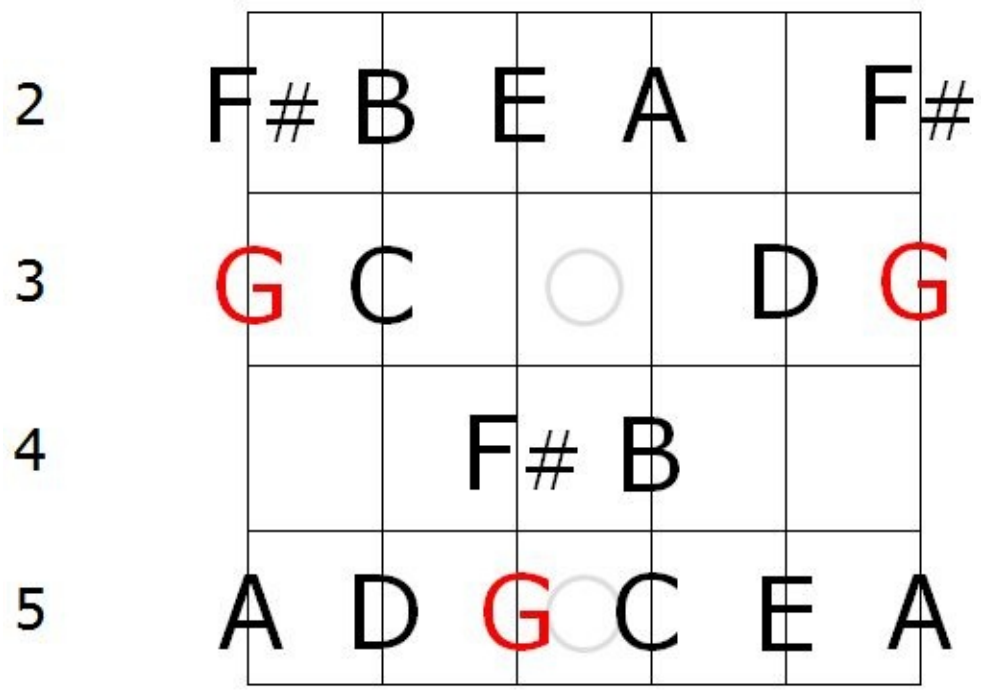
As you attain this level you become quite a lot more expressive while playing guitar because you stop thinking whether you'll hit the right note. When you clear up your mind in this way it is much easier to find and play whatever music comes to you!

This level of guitar playing mastery is quite possible but it requires tremendous time and practice. We're talking many, many years!

In the next few pages I'm going to show you the best ways to learn and use the Major scale across the entire fretboard. This cuts your learning time by a huge margin simply by focusing on the right stuff right from the start.

We will now look at how to learn, practice and play each of the 5 shapes of the G major scale. You will see how each shape looks like and there will be a tab showing you how to play it with the correct fingering.

1st shape (E)



This is the first Major scale shape (in this case - of G Major scale). The numbers on the left represent the frets. Take a look at the root note positions (red G).

The **lowest root note** is found on the **low E string**. This is important to remember for each shape - you'll need to know where are the root notes, and where is the lowest root note especially.

This major scale shape is called **E shape.** This is something that is related to the CAGED system on guitar, and I will explain that some other time. For now just know that this is the 1st shape of a Major scale, and it's called 'E shape', or just the '1st shape'.

In order to learn and practice this shape correctly at first, since it spans 4 frets, use one finger for each fret. So index plays the 2nd fret, middle 3rd, ring finger 4th, and little finger 5th fret. This is en easier shape to play because it doesn't require you to change the position of your fretting hand fingers horizontally,

only vertically, from top to bottom and vice versa.

An important rule - when learning and practicing major scale shapes, always start from the position of the lowest root note of that shape, and finish on the same note!

In this case, you don't start from F# on the low E string, but from the root G next to it. Then you play the whole pattern up to the A note on the high e string, then go back down to F# on the low E string and finish on G.

The following tab shows exactly how this shape should be learned and practiced.

Tip - Try to use the tips of your fingers to play all the scale notes. Also try to keep your fretting hand parallel to the fretboard, and not rounded like when you're bending a note. There will be more tips on playing these shapes in the next section.

1st shape (E) Tab:

```
e |----------------------------2-3-5-3-2-------------------------------|
B |------------------------3-5-----------5-3----------------------------|
G |------------------2-4-5--------------------5-4-2---------------------|
D |------------2-4-5-------------------------------5-4-2----------------|
A |------2-3-5-----------------------------------------5-3-2-----------|
E |--3-5-------------------------------------------------------5-3-2-3--|
    m l i m l i r l i r l m l i m l m i l m l r i l r i l m i l m i m
```

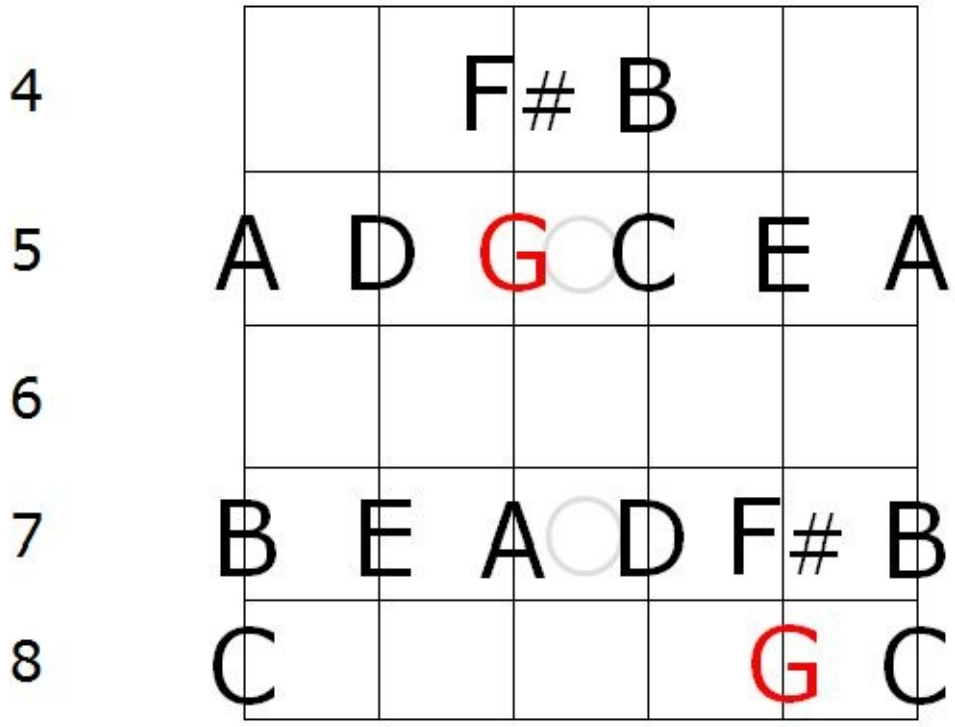
i - index finger

m - middle finger

r - ring finger

l - little finger

2nd shape (D)



This shape continues right after the 1st one. As you can see, the notes on the 4th and 5th frets overlap and belong to both shapes. The lowest root for this shape is found on the 5th fret D string. This is the 2nd major scale shape, also called D shape.

To play it, keep your index finger ready at the 4th fret, middle is for the 5th, ring for the 6th and little finger is for the 7th fret. This one is a little bit trickier to play.

To learn this shape you have to follow rule and start playing from the lowest root note on the 5th fret G string with your middle finger, and then play the next note (A) with your little finger. Then continue playing the B note with your index, C with you middle, and D with your little finger. Then you have to make the switch with your fingers one fret up horizontally.

In order to do so, **with the least amount of movement possible** move your index straight to the 5th fret and play the E note on the B string, continue with your ring finger playing the 7th fret (F#), and little finger plays the G. Do this again for the high e string. Keep the hand parallel to the guitar neck.

Then, from C note come back all the way up to the A note on the low E string. Then go down again to finish on the lowest root note G. Keep in mind that the same switch happens from 2nd to 3rd string (B to G) but **in reverse.** This time, right after you play that E note with your index on the 5th fret B string, move your pinky straight to D note on the 7th fret G string.

There is another switch going from A to E strings where you have to shift your little finger to the 8th fret E string, right after playing the 7th and the 5th fret with your little and middle finger. Then same happens with your index on A to D strings as you go up again to finish on the root note.

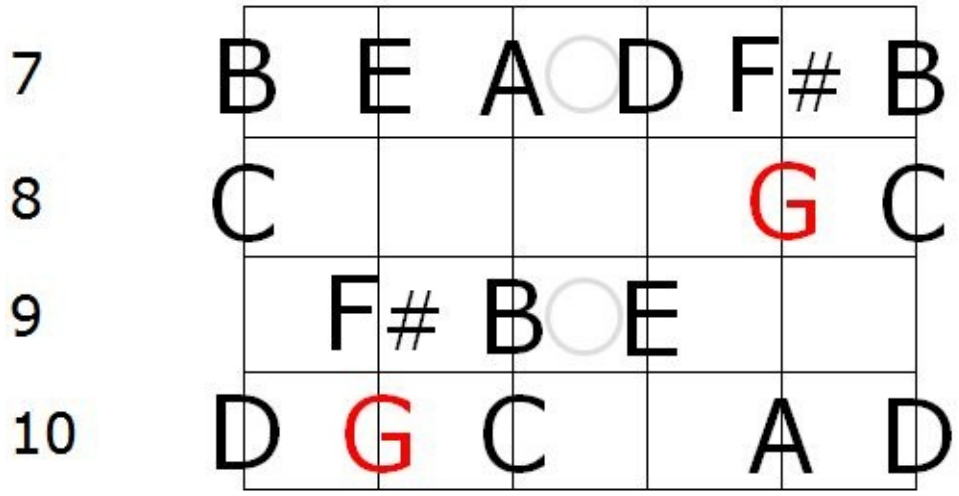
It's a little bit tricky to do this, but only in the beginning. But it is a great technical exercise for your fingers, and you will get accustomed to playing this kind of stuff quite a lot.

2nd shape (D) Tab:

```
e |------------------5-7-8-7-5-----------------------------------------|
B |------------5-7-8-----------8-7-5---------------------------------|
G |------4-5-7-----------------------7-5-4---------------------------|
D |--5-7-------------------------------------7-5-4-------------4-5--|
A |-------------------------------------------------7-5-----5-7------|
E |-----------------------------------------------------8-7-5-7-8----|
    m l i m l i r l i r l r i l r i l m i l m i l m l r i r l i r i m
```

I know this may sound complicated in the beginning, but if you just try for yourself and follow the instructions, you will see that it's actually not that hard get used to playing this.

3rd shape (C)



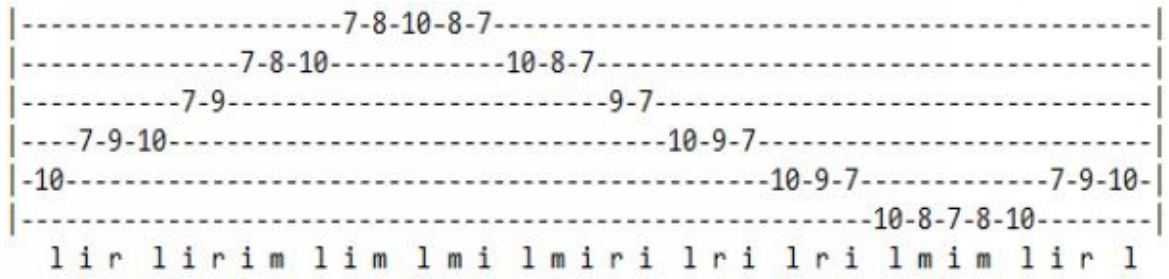
This one is called C shape, or the 3rd shape. The lowest root note is on the 10th fret A string. Interestingly, this shape doesn't have any notes that overlap with the previous shape, but both 9th and 10th fret notes belong to the next one.

Like the 1st shape, this is an easier one to play because it spans only 4 frets. You can play it in the same way as the 1st shape - use one finger for each fret, but remember to start from the lowest root note on the 10th fret A. I will probably repeat this a lot. :)

Then in the same way go all the way down to D on the high e string, then back up to B on the low E, and then down again to the G on the 10th fret.

This 'starting and finishing on the root note' is important for learning and remembering the root note positions in a shape, and for training your ear to get used to the tonal centre of the scale - G in our case.

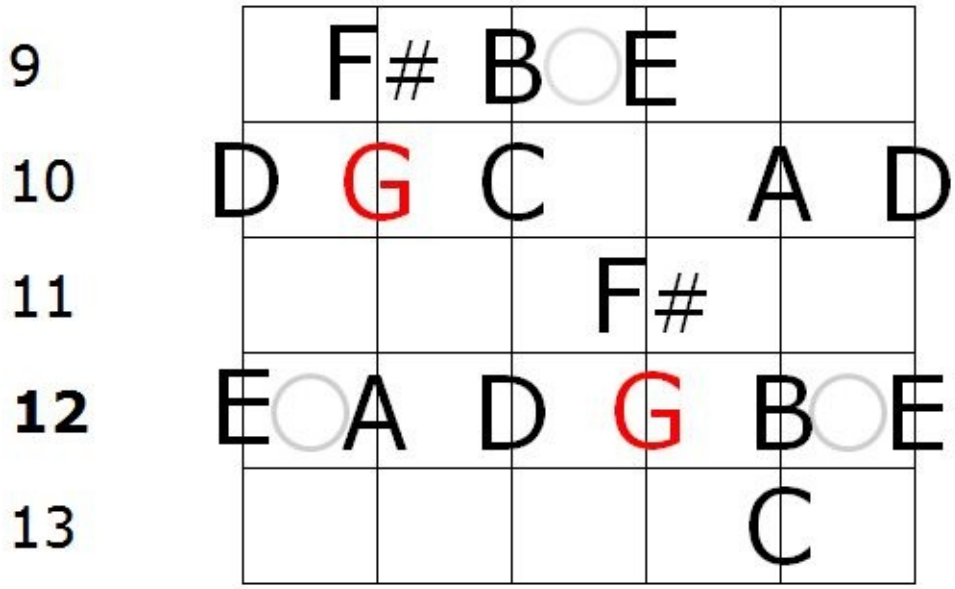
3rd shape (C) Tab:



Frets are now getting more closer and closer together, so this is another thing you'll have to deal with/get used to - because playing higher up the fretboard is just the matter of getting used to it, technique remains the same.

Note that all shapes have the same notes, just in a different order.

4th shape (A)



The A shape or the 4th shape. Lowest root is on the 10th fret A string. This shape is played in the same way as the 2nd shape, notes are just in a different order.

Index is on the 9th fret, middle is ready for the 10th, ring for 11th, pinky for 12th. You start from the lower G note on the 10th fret with your middle finger. Then you go up the scale or physically down on a fretboard all the way to the high E note on the 12th fret. Then go back up to D on the 10th fret E string, and down again to finish on the 10th fret G.

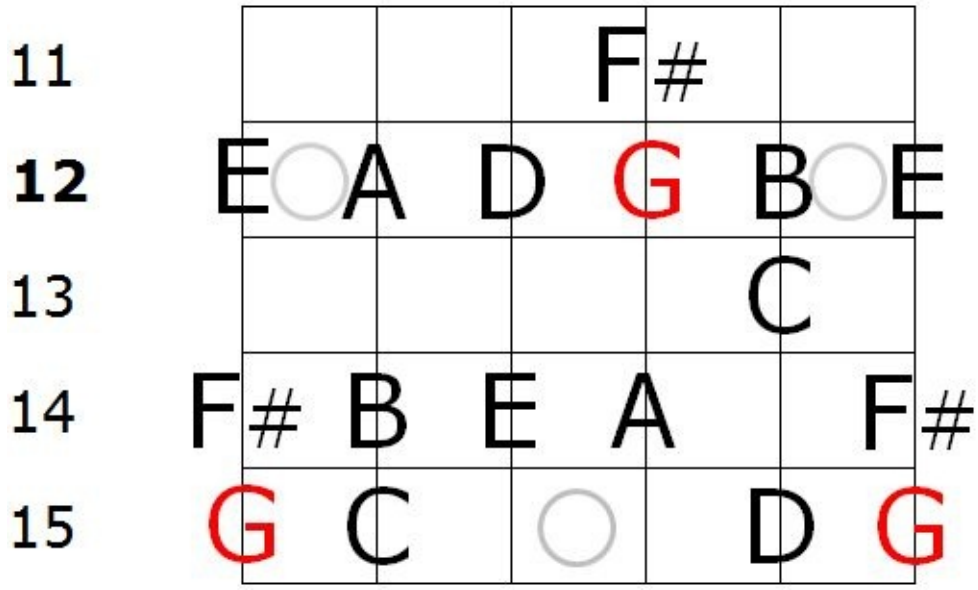
4th shape (A) Tab:

```
|-------------------------------10-12-10-----------------------------------------------|
|----------------------10-12-13----------13-12-10-----------------------------------|
|---------------9-11-12----------------------------12-11-9-----------------------------|
|-------9-10-12-------------------------------------------12-10-9----------------------|
|-10-12-------------------------------------------------------------12-10-9----------9-10-|
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------12-10-12------|
  m  l i  m  l i  r  l  i  r  l  i  r  i  l  r  i  l  r i  l  m i  l  m i  l  m  l i  m
```

As with the 2nd shape, you need to make the switch when moving from G to B,

and B to G strings. After you've played the 12th fret G string (G note) with your little finger, just move your index straight to the A note on the 10th fret B string, and continue in the same way described before. When going back, after playing the A note on the B string 10th fret with your index, move your pinky straight to the G note on the 12th fret. Then go back up all the way to do, and then down again to finish on the root G on the 10th fret.

5th shape (G)

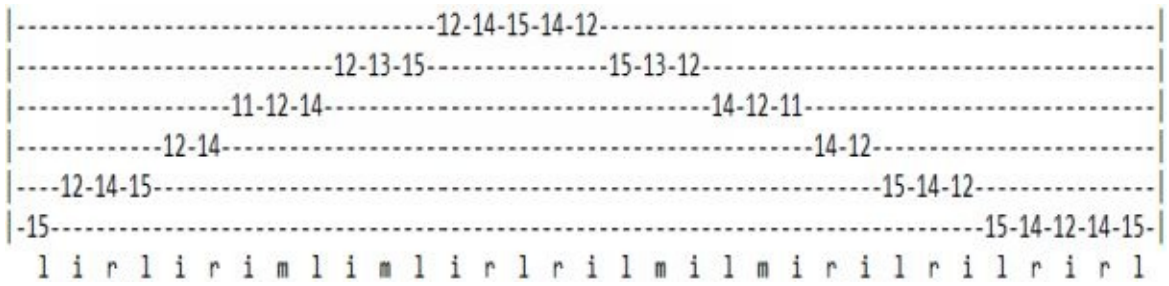


This is the 5th shape, also called G shape. Lowest root note is found on the 15th fret E string. This shape shares the same root note position as the 1st (E) shape which is starting again one octave or 12 frets higher from the 15th fret. The shapes repeat right after this one.

This is also a bit trickier shape to play but not hard to learn. There are two changes you'll have to deal with. For starters, your index will play the 12th fret, middle 13th, ring 14th and your little finger will start on the 15th.

To start, play the lowest root - G on the 15th fret low E string with your little finger, then continue with your index on the 12th fret A, middle on the 14th, and little finger on the 15th. In the same way described before go all the way down to the G note on the 15th, then go back to E on the 12th fret E string, and then up again to the G on the 15th fret low E string.

5th shape (G) Tab:



When it comes to the switches, the 1st one is with your index moving from the 12th fret to the 11th to get that F# note on the G string. Then you play the G and A notes with your middle and little finger, and right after that you move your index to the 12th fret B string and continue as before. When going back you do this in reverse - with your little finger starting the switch.

The 2nd switch is pretty much the same as the one I've described for the 2nd shape. Just follow the tab and you'll get this with no problems.

Note that if you're playing on an acoustic and your guitar doesn't have a cutaway body, your fretting hand motion may be limited by guitar body.

If this is the case, it will be harder (if not impossible) to keep your fretting hand parallel to the fretboard. You can work around this by keeping your hand more rounded (like when bending a note) and stretching your fingers a bit more (ring and pinky mostly) in order to play those hard to reach notes that are more up the neck.

Another thing you'll have to deal with/get used to as you go up the neck, is that the frets are getting closer and closer together. This can make the notes harder to play, especially if you have large hands. But no matter how large or small your hands are, you can get used to playing higher up the neck with practice.

Note that you can play this entire shape (except for that F# on 11th fret) in an open position - using the open strings. You just have to move everything back 12 frets toward the nut. You can easily mess with this and figure it out. ;)

Scale shapes use

We use the scale shapes for two main reasons:

1. For developing your technique - doing the speed runs down and up the scale or playing in scale patterns (more on that later), with a metronome, helps a lot in developing your finger strength, coordination, dexterity and flexibility. This kind of exercises should only be done once you can play the shape easily, without missing any notes. In order to improve your soloing, phrasing, muting, tone control, etc, you really should practice this.

2. For improvisation - If you know at least the 1st position of the Major scale (1st shape) you can use that to improvise (more on improvisation later) over a backing track which is in the same key.

For example, you can play some chords from the G major scale: G, Em, C, D, record that and put it in a loop, or just have your jam buddy play it. Then you can use the G major scale shape that you know, and try to improvise something and come up with nice melodies. Trust me that it is not hard to invent cool melodies this way after you've tried it a couple of times.

You can also use songs that are in key of G to solo over using the G major scale. To name just a few: 'Wonderful Tonight' by Eric Clapton, 'Knocking on a Heavens Door' by GnR/Bob Dylan, 'Sweet Child of Mine' by GnR 'Wish You Were Here'' by Pink Floyd, 'Wake Me Up When September Ends' by Green Day, 'Nothing Else Matters' by Metallica (this one is actually in the key of E minor, but you can solo over it in G because it's the relative major and it will sound good), and there are many, many more!

You can also search for backing tracks in the key of G (or any other key that you wish to practice) on Youtube, and there will be lots of backing track options.

How to practice scale shapes

Here are the rules and guidelines to be aware of when practicing these shapes. Pay close attention to these.

1. The shapes are always learned one by one. Only move to another shape once you can actually use the one(s) you already learned for improvisation and technique development. There is no point in moving to another shape until you can really use the previous one.

2. Try to keep your fretting hand parallel to the fretboard and your fretting hand fingers perpendicular to the fretboard (parallel to the frets or fretwires) but also curled in their knuckles. This will help you to develop proper technique and have more control while playing fast on guitar.

3. Once you get the shape under your fingers and are able to play it very slowly (from root to root), start practicing it with a metronome. For starters, use quarter notes (1 note per click) at 50 or 60 bpm and ONLY speed up once you get comfortable playing at certain speed. You have to get synced in with the metronome, and the only way to that is to concentrate on the groove - tap your foot and move your body as well as your picking hand along with the click. Then make sure that each note you play falls exactly on the click, not before or after it.

4. When learning a shape always start playing from the lowest root note and end on the root note! This applies even if the lowest root is not the lowest note in the scale shape like in the 2nd major scale shape for example. This is important because, like I said, it engraves in your mind where the root is, and you get used to the felling and the sound of the scale's tonal centre - which is its root note.

This rule can be broken if you are improvising or doing specific technique exercises, but in the beginning you should practice this way. Later on when you start to use *modes*, which are the different sound 'flavors' of the Major scale so to

speak, you'll really understand why I'm giving this advice. Major scale modes are a bit more advanced and harder to comprehend right now, and therefore best left for some other time.

5. While playing scales try to make the least amount of movement possible with your fingers. One of the biggest hurdles for new players is that their fingers, while playing a scale shape, tend to move away from the fretboard. This problem is often called **flying fingers.** Almost all beginners 'suffer' from this and even some advanced players as well. This problem hinders their ability to play fast, coordinated and precise by a huge margin.

This is why your fingers should always be as close to the fretboard as possible, especially when playing fast. What you need to do is to, again, practice slowly A LOT and with **minimum movement.** Getting this right will be hard at the beginning, but practicing in this way will pay of tremendously. You will develop an impressive technique and with very strong foundation!

6. Keep everything sounding nice and clear. You don't want muffled notes in your playing. Also avoid making mistakes as much as possible. If you're making mistakes over and over again, then you're actually practicing those mistakes, and if you make too many mistakes each time you practice, that leads to developing bad habits which are very hard to correct.

7. Work on your muting techniques, eliminate any unwanted string noise and focus on the sound you're getting. Only the note you're playing in a shape should be heard, nothing else. That's why you need to have really good **control over the notes.**

This is especially hard if you're playing on an electric guitar plugged into an amp. Any unwanted noise that you make will be amplified and heard very loudly. If you master the muting technique and note control, you will sound like a pro on an electric guitar.

That's why I would suggest that if you have an electric guitar, to go berserk with this - crank up the volume on your amp (if your conditions allow this of course), and practice controlling the sound that is coming out while you play. :)

You will hear all sorts of stuff: a lot of unwanted string noise, harmonics, finger movement, pick scraping, but as you work on correcting this and maintaining control over the sound, over time you will get so much better that you'll be amazed at how good you've become!

8. When playing with the metronome, raise the speed by 10 bpm, or even 5 bpm, gradually, but only after **you can play the scale shape down and up 4 times in a row without making any mistakes at the set speed.** This again builds your technique foundation and ensures that you have really mastered the shape at certain speed before moving on.

9. Practice playing the shapes in other keys as well! I've showed you an example in the key of G, but all shapes are **movable**! If you just move the root to any fret you want (on the same string), and you apply the same shape, you will change keys.

For example, if you move the 1st shape root note from the 3rd fret E string (G) to 8th fret E string (C), then you can play the same shape and you'll get the C major scale (key of C). If you move the root to the 5th fret E string, it would be A major scale (key of A), and so on. You can move the root that is on any string.

If you just know the shape and where is its root note you can use that to play in pretty much any key.

10. Use alternate picking and start with a down-stroke. Second scale note would then come as an up-stroke, and so on. You can also vary this sometimes and try to start with an up-stroke just to break the pattern and make it harder for yourself.

It is also a good idea to use only down-picking or up-picking, especially in the beginning if you have trouble with using alternate picking.

11. Play with the shape! When you know a shape well and you're using it to improvise, make sure that you explore it as much as possible: use different fingerings, slide into notes, use hammer on's and pull offs, half-tone or whole-tone bends, repeat the notes, skip strings, come up with a melody or a lick...

Play whatever comes to your mind, but make sure that while doing that you stay within the shape. Remember, only once you're able to use the shape comfortably should you consider expanding and learning another shape.

Part 3 - Using Scales for Practice and Technique Development

Active and Passive practice and how to improve the quality of your practice

As I've said before, technique is what allows you to fully express yourself on guitar, and practicing scale shapes (especially the 1st one) can be immensely useful for your technique.

Technique elements such as: finger strength, dexterity, flexibility, right/left hand coordination, picking, minimum movement, note control and muting are being worked on the most. It's easy to realize that the benefits of practicing scales are immense and definitely worth your time and effort, no matter how big or small your goals on guitar are.

Tommy Emmanuel, one of the greatest guitar players in the world, has a saying that "Repetition is the mother of all skills". I would also add the word '*quality*' before 'repetition'.

When I say 'quality', I mean you have to pay full attention to what you're doing/practicing and actively participate in noticing and correcting anything that you're doing wrong. This is sometimes called **active practice** or **engaged practice.**

There is also **passive practice**, and it can be useful as well; in fact, there were many times where I would just do scale runs while watching a movie. It isn't nearly as good as active practice, since your mind is not actively engaging, but

you're still on your technique and muscle memory (as long as you refrain from making mistakes all the time).

The problem is that for most people doing these kinds of exercises over and over again gets boring really fast, and the level of quality practice they put in drops as their attention drifts on to something else.

It is really hard to be focused and practice at 100% every time something that you consider to be too repetitive and boring. So what can we do about it?

There are several options...

a) You can limit the amount of time you work on certain aspect of your technique. Sometimes practicing effectively for 10 minutes is a lot better than practicing ineffectively for 100 minutes. It's important that you don't pressure yourself.

You can limit the amount of time you work on certain aspect(s) of your technique to as low as 5 minutes. You will still get better, but as long as you remain **consistent over time**.

Consistency is key. It's much better and more effective to practice something 5 minutes per day for a whole week, than to do it for one hour once a week.

b) Practice as many different things in as many different ways as possible. This will keep things interesting.

c) Challenge your guitar playing friend (jam buddy) to a competition to see who is faster on guitar. This is essentially irrelevant, but it can be a great motivating factor for you to push yourself and prove that you're faster. A little bit of friendly competition can come a long way.

The best example of this are James Hetfield and Kirk Hammet from Metallica. In one of the interviews they compared James to a human with cyborg arm attached because of his unbelievably fast all down-picking style signature riffs. When they asked him how did he developed such an amazing technique, he said

that it was largely thanks to him competing with Kirk back in the day, and proving to one another who is faster over the years.

d) Take regular breaks. I read about this research once (from a reputable source) that it's optimal for your mind to be focused for 25 minutes on something before you should take a break and do something else. Then come back to it fresh after 10 minutes or so.

Taking frequent breaks is important when practicing anything that is too much repetitive. This ensures that the quality of practice you put in is high.

e) Practice technique by learning lots of songs. This is a much more fun way to practice your technique. For example, if there is a cool and 'technical' melody line, riff or lick in a song that you wish to learn to play, then committing to learning and practicing that will be much easier. You will develop your technique even faster because it's more fun what to what you're practicing.

Now let's quickly recap how to learn the scale shapes:

- Memorize the shape first - learn it note by note, and play it very, very slowly. You can use only down-picking if it's easier in the beginning, but eventually you should play it using alternate picking.

- After you've memorized and can play the whole shape good enough, it's time to introduce the metronome. Set it at 60 or even 50 bpm and play it by starting from the lowest root note and finishing on it, as shown on tab in a previous section. Raise the speed by 5 or 10 bpm only after you can play the shape 4 times in a row at the set speed.

- Play quarter notes, which is one note per click, and try hard to get synced in with the metronome. You should be able to play a shape at 60 bpm before you can use it for developing speed and other aspects of your technique.

Speed development

When you can play a scale shape with the metronome set at 60 bpm, you can start using the shape for increasing your playing speed.

In order to develop lightning fast speeds, you first need to build a strong foundation by starting slowly and gradually speeding up. This is not done overnight and it requires tremendous patience.

So how do you do this?

1. First pick a shape, preferably the 1st one. Your goal at the beginning should be **quarter notes** or one note per click at **160 bpm.**

2. You will only get there by starting very slowly which is at 50 or 60 bpm. To repeat again: raise the speed gradually by 5 or 10 bpm, but only after you're able to play the shape 4 times consecutively without making any mistakes at the set speed. This is how a strong foundation is built! It's the proper way.

3. Once you master the quarter notes at 160 bpm, revert the speed back to 60 bpm and work your way up again to the same speed, but this time using **eight notes** - two consecutive notes per click.

Start by playing the first note of a shape (root) along with the metronome click and then play the 2nd note of a shape which should fall exactly in between the clicks (on '+' or 'and' when counted). Then you play the third note on the next click and so on (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +...). It's crucial to keep even notes and time throughout the shape.

It might feel strange at the beginning but you'll get used to it.

4. After you can play eight notes at 160 bpm (remember - 4 times consecutively without mistakes), go back to 60 bpm, again, and do the same thing as before but with **16th notes** - four consecutive scale notes per click.

This again takes some time getting used to, but the premise is that you play the

first note on the click and then you play the next three consecutive notes ('e' 'and' 'a') which are between the first and the second beat/click.

The 5th note of the shape then must fall exactly on the 2nd click, and so on (1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a...). Metronome clicks are on the beats 1 2 3 4, and you're dividing those beats by playing e + a between them. Hope you get the idea.

A good way to get used to this is to just stay on one note and play it using the 16th notes for a couple of bars. Like the strumming exercise we did in the 1st book. You'll want to use the alternate picking for this one.

Just to warn you in time, playing 16th notes at 160 bpm is EXTREMELY fast, and this speed will take years to develop. :) To be honest, I can't play that fast - my upper limit is 120 bpm, which is more than enough for general playing. That should be your target speed as well.

But if you want to get into trash metal, shredding solos, neoclassical music and stuff from guys like Yngwee Malmsteen, Steve Vai, Paul Gilbert, John Petrucci and so on, that will require incredibly good picking technique and you'll have to work much harder at this.

In order to reach 16's at 120 bpm it is advisable that you don't only practice the 1st shape, but to do all kinds of technique exercises for picking speed and finger coordination.

Learning songs like 'Flight of the Bumblebee' by Rimsky Korsakov and 'Turkish March' by Mozart which are heavy on alternate picking is also very beneficial, and unlike generic scale shapes, playing these is fun - and having fun is what will motivate you the most.

In a guitar playing world, 1st shape of the Major scale is usually the one used for determining how fast you are, so that can be your 'benchmark' exercise for keeping track of your progress.

Melodic scale patterns

As soon as you learn the 1st shape of the Major scale and are able to play it evenly without mistakes, you should incorporate some more fun scale exercises that will push your technique much further. These are called **melodic patterns**, **melodic sequences**, or just **scale patterns**.

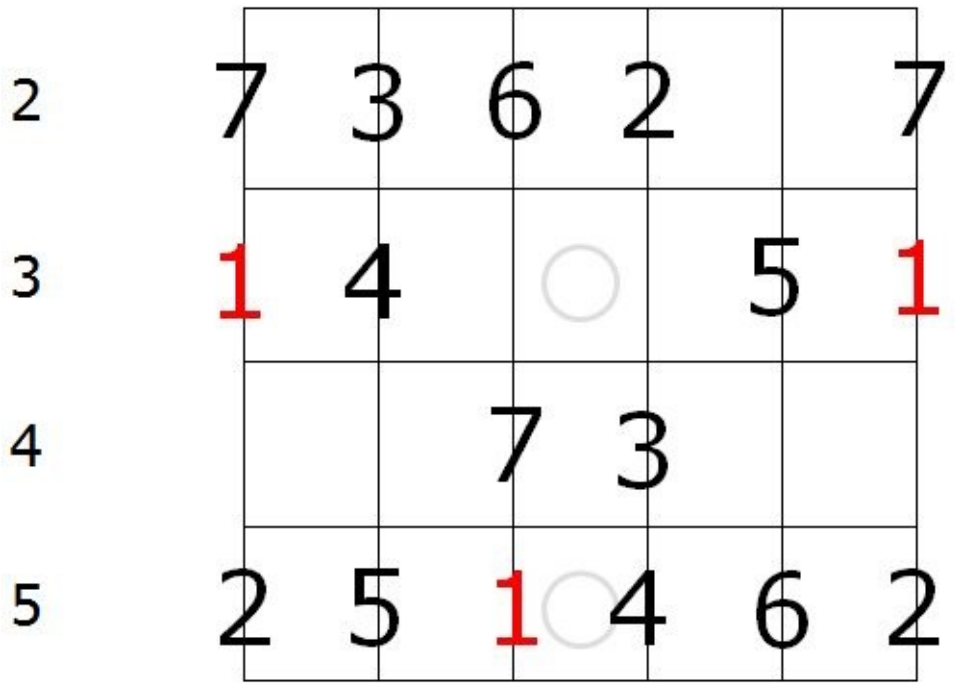
As I've said, practicing a scale shape up and down over and over again can get monotone really fast. You're also bound to reach a plateau at some point where it doesn't seem like your making any progress at all. This happens in all areas of life.

Incorporating some melodic patterns or sequences into your practice is a really great way to break through this and make it more interesting for yourself, not to mention all the technique improvements and benefits you'll get.

Imagine the scale tones numbered in 1 to 8, eight being the same note as one but an octave higher. These are also called scale degrees, as you should know by now.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

These scale degrees don't always have to be played in the presented order. They can be played in different patterns as well. Here is the 1st shape with scale degrees shown:



In the next sections you'll learn about the most the most useful scale patterns. There can be many different permutations you can do, and you can really go crazy with this, but it's not necessary that much. I'm going to list the most useful ones. After these you should be able to make up your owns too if you wish.

Get ready for some numbers! ;)

Intervallic - Playing in thirds

For this pattern you have to play the 1st note, skip the 2nd, then play the 3rd note; then you play the 2nd note, skip the 3rd, then the 4th note; then the 3rd note, skip the 4th, then the 5th note, and so on.

Here is how the pattern is played (just watch the previous image if it seems confusing):

a) 1 - 3, 2 - 4, 3 - 5, 4 - 6, 5 - 7, 6 - 1(8), 7 - 2, 1 - 3, etc. (all the way to 7 - 2, '2' being the 2nd degree on the 5th fret high e string)

Then without stopping you go up:

1 - 6, 7 - 5, 6 - 4, 5 - 3, 4 - 2, 3 - 1, 2 - 7, 1 - 6, etc. (all the way up to 2 - 7 on the low E string)

Then you can either continue playing down pattern again (1 - 3), or you can just play the 1st degree on the 3rd fret (after 2 - 7 on low E string) to finish the pattern.

When you get to the 4 - 6 on the G and B strings 5th fret, you can use a **finger rolling** technique with your pinky to play the the note in a faster and more efficient way. This technique is used quite a lot in general playing and soloing and you really should learn to use it.

b) This pattern can also be played in reverse which is an extra challenge:

3 - 1, 4 - 2, 5 - 3, 6 - 4, 7 - 5, 1(8) - 6, 2 - 7, 3 - 1(8), 4 - 2, 5 - 3, etc.

How to use the finger rolling technique

Take a look at the image on the previous page. As you play the scale pattern in 3rds down the shape, right after playing the 4th degree (2 - 4) on G string 5th fret with the **tip** of your little finger, in order to play the 6th on B string, you can just roll your little finger downward in a way as if you're trying to bar the 5th fret B string with it.

This way you're not playing 6th degree B string with the tip of your little finger, but rather with its fleshy part just beneath the tip.

When you're coming back up (6 - 4), you repeat the same motion but in reverse. Right after playing 7 - 5, play the 6 with the more fleshy part of your little finger beneath its tip (as described in last paragraph), and roll your little finger upward so that its tip presses down the 4 on G string.

No matter whether you're going down, or coming back up, each time your little finger needs to mute the note it is rolling from, just by gently touching it.

These are the basic motions of the finger rolling technique. It is much easier to use it than it might seem when you read about how to do it. Just try it, follow the instructions and you'll figure it out.

You can use this technique with any of your fretting hand fingers, and it will be

a very useful mechanic in your playing for the future.

3 in a row

Another very useful pattern where you're playing 3 notes in a row, then one back, then 3 in a row again. Here is how it looks like (just follow the image with scale degrees shown):

a) 1-2-3, 2-3-4, 3-4-5, 4-5-6, 5-6-7, 6-7-1(8), 7-1(8)-2, 1(8)-2-3, etc.

And up without stopping:

1-7-6, 7-6-5, 6-5-4, 5-4-3, 4-3-2, 3-2-1, 2-1-7, 1-7-6, etc.

b) This pattern as well can be done in reverse down and up the shape.

3-2-1, 4-3-2, 5-4-3, 6-5-4, 7-6-5, 1(8)-7-6, 2-1(8)-7, 3-2-1(8), etc.

You should always try to vary the technical exercises as much you can because this will provide you with the most versatility in your playing.

4 in a row

Instead of 3, you're now playing 4 notes in a row, then you start from the 2nd note and play 4 in a row again. This pattern seems similar to the previous one but it actually uses different mechanics.

a) 1-2-3-4, 2-3-4-5, 3-4-5-6, 4-5-6-7, 5-6-7-1(8), 6-7-1(8)-2, 7-1(8)-2-3, 1(8)-2-3-4, 2-3-4-5, etc.

Go all the way down the the shape and as soon as you reach 2 on high e string, start going back up from 1 on e string:

1-7-6-5, 7-6-5-4, 6-5-4-2, etc.

b) Of course, you can also do this in reverse:

4-3-2-1, 5-4-3-2, 6-5-4-3, 7-6-5-4, 1(8)-7-6-5, etc.

Melodic pattern variations and how to

make your own

I didn't want to get too mathematical in the last section, but I wanted to point out that you can easily create your own melodic/scale patterns and make a practice regime out of them. As I've said you can really go crazy with this.

Why would you want to do this? Well simply because you should practice scales in as many different ways as possible in order to develop your technique.

In order to create any of your own patterns just look at the image of the numbered scale shape and think of some patterns in which you could be playing these notes. There aren't any rules here really.

Here are a couple more variations you can try:

Intervallic variations (3rds, 4ths, 5ths, Arpeggios)

a) Besides playing in 3rds normally and in reverse, you can also combine these two ways and reverse every second.

1-3, 4-2, 3-5, 6-4, 5-7, 1(8)-6, 7-2, 3-1(8), etc.

b) Or you can play in 4ths:

1-4, 2-5, 3-6, 4-7, 5-1(8), etc.

- in reverse:

4-1, 5-2, 6-3, 7-4, etc.

- and with every second reversed:

1-4, 5-2, 3-6, 7-4, etc.

c) In 5ths:

1-5, 2-6, 3-7, 4-1(8), etc.

- these can be also varied in reverse, and reversed every second.

d) You can try to play chord notes (arpeggios) in the scale shape. You could say that these are not for the faint hearted. ;)

1-3-5, 2-4-6, 3-5-7, 4-6-1(8), etc.

- or even harder variation:

1-3-5-7, 2-4-6-1(8), 3-5-7-2, 4-6-1(8)-3, etc.

I think there is no need to explain all the variations you could be making with '3 in a row' and '4 in a row'. I'll leave those ones to you.

If you're not sick of all the numbers by now, you may wonder it is really necessary to practice all these patterns. The answer is definitely no, but you should practice and try most of them.

More ways to practice scales

Practicing scales is a great technical exercise for your fingers, but you need to be able to use those scales in a musical sense and not just in a technical sense. In order to be able to do that you need to practice the scales a lot and in many different ways, to the point where you can stop thinking about them. Then you can start play whatever comes to your mind.

Here are a couple more great ways to practice scales that will help you with this.

Random direction changes

Simply play a scale shape down-up, but at a random point change the direction from ascending (down the shape) to descending (up the shape) and vice-versa. Change direction as often as you can, the more random you make it the greater the benefit. You can practice this for no more than a minute.

Playing random notes

This one is really useful at the beginning while you're still trying to memorize the shape in your mind. Just choose a shape that you wish to practice and instead of playing it only down and up, you play random notes from that shape.

Make sure that you stay within the shape, and play any note that comes to your mind. You can do this for a minute or two. It's a good idea here to start and end on a root note.

String skipping

Skipping strings while playing a solo is a great more advanced technique to use.

You can practice this technique within a scale shape in order to learn it better. It will be of great benefit to your picking hand technique too, especially if it's not used to skipping strings fast.

Starting from the root note here is not important, what matters is that you

become comfortable with skipping the strings while playing .

Here are a couple of examples you can practice:

1) Skipping one string (Ascending notes):

6th-4th, 5th-3rd, 4th-2nd, 3rd-1st

Start on the thickest 6th string and play the shape notes, skip the 5th string (A), play the shape notes on the 4th string (D), then come back to the 5th string and play the shape notes, jump to the 3rd string (G), etc.

You can also start from the thinnest string and go up. This time play the notes in a descending manner:

1st-3rd, 2nd-4th, 3rd-5th, 4th-6th;

2) Skipping two strings:

6th-3rd, 5th-2nd, 4th-1st;

Going up:

1st-4th, 2nd-5th, 3rd-6th;

3) Skipping three strings:

6th-2nd, 5th-1st;

Going up:

1st-5th, 2nd-6th;

4) Pyramid

6th-1st, 5th-2nd, 4th-3rd;

In reverse:

1st-6th, 2nd-5th, 3rd-4th;

You can practice this for a couple of minutes. Practice it with a metronome. It will sound mostly horrible, musically, but don't pay attention to the sound value. :) You're developing your technique and technical exercises usually don't have any musical value.

Linking the scale shapes together

Scale on a single string

As soon as you learn more than one Major scale shape, you need to practice linking the scale shapes together. You don't want to get stuck playing only within one shape, you want to be able to play all over the fretboard effortlessly. That's why you need to practice linking the shapes and ultimately forget about them while soloing.

One of the best ways to do this is to play a scale on a single string! Scales are not only played vertically, through shapes, they can be played in a horizontal manner as well, much like on the piano keyboard. I've already talked about how each of the guitar strings is like a piano keyboard.

Let's say you just learned the 2nd Major scale shape and you already know the 1st one. First thing you should start to practice is linking the two together string by string.

The best way to do this is to pick a string (I would suggest that you start with the thinnest e) and play each of the notes from both shapes on that string. Then play the scale notes from both shapes on the string next to it (in this case B).

Then combine all the notes on both strings from the first two shapes and put on a backing track in a corresponding key. Practice playing over the track using **only these notes.** You don't have to spend too much time on this, just make sure that you practice on each string pair (e-b, B-G, G-D, D-A, A-E).

Later on when you learn the 3rd shape you should practice linking it with the 2nd shape (string by string), 4th with 3rd, 5th with 4th, 1st with 5th.

Remember that you can play an entire Major scale on a single string all the way horizontally. You can figure this out easily when you know the major scale formula (TTSTTTS). Just start from the root note and remember that T is equal

to 2 frets, and S is equal to 1 fret. This is probably the best exercise for learning how to move through the shapes and use the scales in a more creative manner.

As you get familiar with more and more shapes, you may find that it is somewhat easier to come up with cool melodies using only the notes on a single string.

Playing scales harmonically in 3rds and 6ths

Playing harmonically simply means that you're playing more than one note at the same time.

This is an immensely helpful exercise for many different reasons. As such, you should definitely try it, but know that it might be a bit harder to learn, to practice and to actually use this - which is good.

Playing both in 3rds and 6ths harmonically can be done in 2 ways but only after you've memorized at least the first two shapes and you know them really well.

We'll be using the G major scale again as an example.

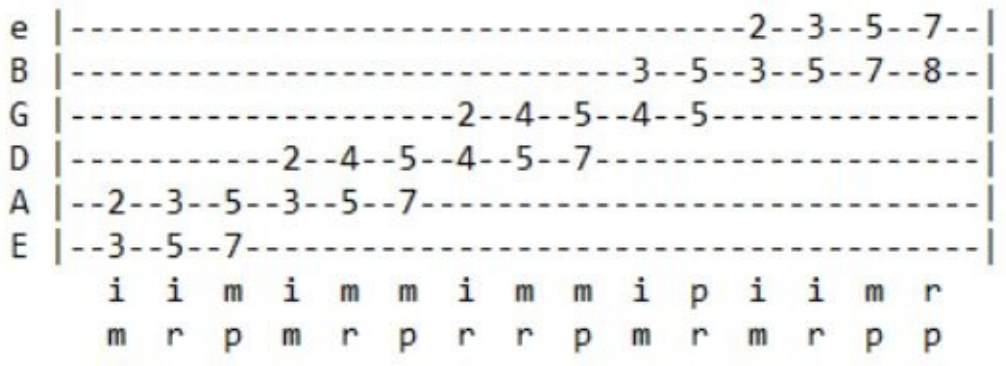
3rds

Remember when we played the scale pattern in 3rds? Well this time, we're playing the same groups of notes. The only difference is that we're playing them at the same time, using a pick.

We will play the scale vertically, spanning two shapes, and horizontally, spanning the entire fretboard through all of the shapes.

Following tabs show exactly how this should be played. For Example 1 we are playing vertically using the first two shapes of the major scale (in this case in the key of G). You can do this for any of the two shapes that are next to each other (after you've learned them).

Example 1 - Harmonizing the scale in 3rds



Beneath the Tab is the suggested fingering option to play this exercise. There are numerous ways to play it but this way is the most beneficial one in the beginning for your finger strength and coordination since you're using your fingers in almost all possible combinations.

Play the exercise once down, and then in the same way go straight back up. You'll be working out the muscles on your fingers and they might start to hurt a bit. :)

You'll notice how playing the scale shape(s) in this way sounds more interesting since you're harmonizing each scale note with its 3rd.

You can work out how to play this exercise for the 2nd and 3rd, 3rd and 4th, 4th and 5th, 5th and 1st shape. This will be very beneficial if you do it on your own, just make sure that you start and end on the root note (like in my example), and use fingering options with the least amount of your fretting hand movement.

Example 2 - Harmonizing in 3rds horizontally

Playing 3rds harmonically in a horizontal fashion (from the nut toward the bridge, and vice versa) should be done on each pair of side by side strings.

This exercise is one of the absolute best for connecting all Major scale shapes together. Plus it sounds cool and impressive.

E and A

```
A |---2---3---5---7----9---10---12---14---|
E |---3---5---7---8---10---12---14---15---|
      i   i   i   i    i    i    i    i
      m   r   r   m    m    r    r    m
```

A and D

```
D |---9--7--5--4--2--0--10--12--14---9--|
A |--10--9--7--5--3--2--12--14--15--10--|
```

D and G

```
G |--4--2--0--5--7---9--11--12--14--16--|
D |--5--4--2--7--9--10--12--14--15--17--|
```

G and B

```
B |--0--1--3--5--7--8--10--12--|
G |--0--2--4--5--7--9--11--12--|
```

B and e

```
e |--7--5--3--2--0---8--10--12--14--15--17--19--|
B |--8--7--5--3--1--10--12--13--15--17--19--20--|
```

Using 3rds in this way is great for soloing and outlining the chords in a song - because chords are built in thirds. More on that in the chords section.

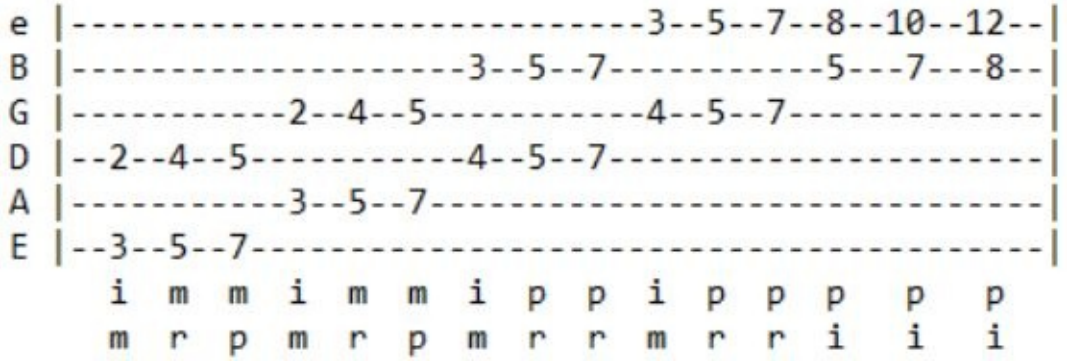
6ths

We're now going to harmonize each note of the Major scale with the 6th scale degree. You'll hear how this sounds new and interesting.

Again, we're in the key of G. Harmonizing each scale degree with its 6th is very similar to what we did with 3rds.

Just play the root note (G) as the first note, than play up the scale (1st shape) to the 6th note. For G note, in the key of G major, the 6th is E. Those 2 notes you're going to play at the same time (harmonically). We are starting from the 1st shape.

Example 3 - Harmonizing the scale in 6ths



In order to play this, we're going to use a technique called hybrid picking. I've explained already what that is, but to recap: while holding the pick normally, you'll play the higher (6th) note by plucking it with your middle finger at the same time as you hit the lower note with a pick. This is an immensely useful technique to have in your arsenal.

There are numerous ways to play this example using 6ths and with different fingering options. I've tried to use a fingering option which forces you to use your ring and little finger and develop their flexibility, independence, strength and dexterity. Try it with this fingering and see how it goes.

You can always switch this up and focus on improving the areas you're weakest at

How to solo using the 6ths

This is where it gets really interesting. This exercise is cool sounding and it's actually used often in blues and rock, and for improvising and soloing. It's often called 'soloing using 6ths'. It can sound really cool when you know what you're doing.

Most often this is done in the key of **D, A or E**, because those keys have the advantage of utilizing the bass root notes found on open strings (D, A and E). This can make for some really interesting "all in one" sounding solos/improvisations on guitar.

I will show you how to play this in the key of D. You can do this in any key that you want, and as always it would be very beneficial to figure this out for yourself. I'll show you how you can do that.

All we need to know is how to quickly find notes on guitar fretboard, and how to play at least the 1st major scale shape on guitar.

Like what we did before, to each degree of the scale we will join it its 6th note. Let's go through this process now in detail.

1st note in our case is D. If we play the 1st shape (starting from D on the 10th fret E string), we can easily find that its 6th degree is B.

D and B are the two notes - a '6th', that we have to play.

2nd note in the key of D is E. When we play the 1st scale shape of D major scale, 6th note after the E is C#. We can also do this by looking for the 6th note of each scale degree on a Major scale chart, but it's more beneficial to do it on guitar.

When we have found our pairs of 6ths in the key of D and written them down, it's time to figure out how to play them.

Remember, we want to utilize D string as a bass note while we play these. It will sound great because it is the root note. Because of this, **it's best to find and play the 6ths anywhere beneath the D string (on G, B and e strings).**

So we start by looking for the D root note on the G string. It's on the 7th fret. We know that its 6th is B, now where can we find the B note?

Note that the 6th note of each scale degree needs to be higher in pitch than the bottom note.

B note can be found on the 7th fret e string. It can also be found on the 12th fret B string, but playing it on e string is way more convenient and easier, and it opens up more possibilities - so we'll use that.

Tab for our first 6th: xxx7x7 or xx07x7

We can use hybrid picking again to play these notes at the same time, but we don't have to. We can just pick these notes individually and accent the bass note. This is up to you.

Next two notes are E and C#.

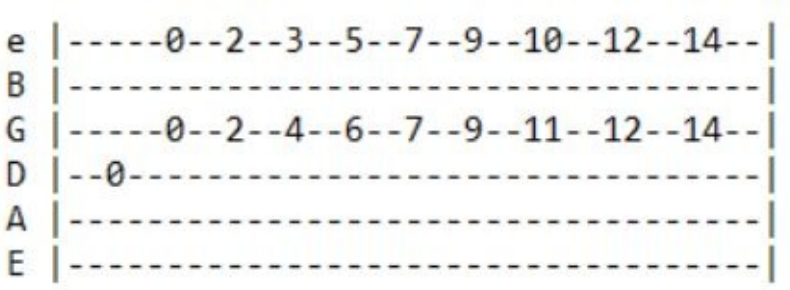
E on G string is found on the 9th fret. C# can be found on the 9th e string.

Next two notes are F# and D.

F# is on the 11th fret G string, D is on the 10th fret e string.

As you can see, in this way we can figure out how to play the entire D major scale in 6ths all across the fretboard while utilizing D string as the bass note. Just playing around in this way sounds cool, maybe a bit unfamiliar because you probably haven't used the 6ths by now.

Here is the tab for this example across the entire fretboard starting from the guitar nut toward the bridge. Our tonal centre is well established by using the root D as the bass note.



Play this normally as the tab shows at first until you learn it. Then you can use different rhythms, accent the bass notes, slide into notes, use hybrid picking or pick the notes individually, etc. It's important that you just play around with this and get used to it. It will be quite useful, especially later on as you progress more and more.

Also, when you try this in a different key remember to write it down like I did using tabs. This will make it easier to remember.

How to solo/improvise

First of all I want to tell you that no one can really teach you how to solo/improvise on guitar, you have to teach yourself that. I can show you some concepts and the best stuff to practice and play, but the only one who can develop your ear and your musicianship is you.

This is done through experimentation, by figuring stuff out by yourself, learning songs by listening, playing around and constantly trying new things on guitar.

If you remember in one of the previous sections I said that soon as you learn a scale shape you should practice using it to solo over a backing track in the same key.

Doing this almost certainly won't sound good to you right away, it will most likely sound very bad, but don't let that discourage you. Over time your improvisational solos are going to improve and sound less and less like you're just playing a scale or some random notes.

In order to get better at this, beside developing your ear and inner musicianship, there are some things you can try that will force you to 'think outside of the box' and help you become better at this faster.

1. Less is more

You don't need to play a bunch of notes in order to have a great solo. Just check out the solo from Love Hurts by Nazareth.

That's why it is a good idea to limit yourself while improvising to playing only the notes on the thinnest 2 strings. Try this over a backing track for a minute and then move on to next two strings (B and G), and try the same. This forces you to be as creative as possible with what little you have available. You should try this for each string pair.

2. Explore the shape

Exploring the shape means that you're trying different things within a shape. For

example, you can slide in to notes, do note bends (this will be much harder on an acoustic because of the thicker strings), use vibrato, stay on a note for longer periods of time (really cool if you have an electric guitar that can sustain the note for longer), play a note several times, incorporate different rhythms, accents, use whatever finger option seems fitting to play the notes.

Exploring is your way to finding new ideas.

3. Some notes are more equal than others

Although this is a bit more advanced, be aware that you're playing over a backing track which is comprised of different notes/chords. Not all of the notes that you play in a scale are going to work well (sound cool) with what's being played in the backing track at the moment. All of them will sound good since you're using the same key tones, but some of the notes will sound better than others depending on what's being heard in the backing track.

That's why it is a good idea to know the backing track very well and which chords it contains (if possible), and know that some notes will work better over those chords than others.

The notes that will work better are always the same notes found in a chord that is being played. Those are the 'safe notes'. Other notes are more riskier in a sense that if you play or land on them they may add tension which can or cannot sound good, depending on a situation.

That's why you need to pay special attention to the sound, and be aware of the effect the note you're emphasizing is having over a backing track. Over time you will develop a strong sense of melody and the effect each of the notes is making.

4. Allowing for space counts

Playing music can be compared to speaking a language. We don't speak all the time, we make pauses (hopefully). This communicates our message better and makes us sound more likeable.

It's the same with playing music. You don't need to always play something, so don't feel the pressure to fill all the spaces with notes. Be comfortable with the pauses.

Allowing for spaces also gives you the time to think about what you're doing - what you want say, and stay in the moment. Take a listen to any of the great blues solos, and you'll see how powerful spaces can be.

5. Start slowly

When you're first starting out with improvisation, the best thing to do is to find and develop slow and simple melodies.

When you find a simple melody that sounds cool to you, stay on it for longer and notice the effect it is having as the backing track goes on. This then ties directly to:

6. Develop the ideas that you find.

When you have that one simple melody that sounds nice, try to develop it further, extend it with new variations, embellish it by using techniques like vibrato, hammer on's or pull off's, slides, etc. Try to add more notes and expand even further this idea.

7. Ask a question and give an answer; add tension and resolve the tension.

Music is simply a way of communicating. When you think about it this way, you can clearly understand the analogy that it's like speaking a language. When we're communicating, we ask question and we give answers, and that's how it is in music as well. Again, check the famous blues solos and you'll see exactly what I mean.

You can also see music as the dynamic between resolve and tension. Resolve is our tonal centre, what gives us the sense of arrival, that nice feeling you get when something is finished or resolved.

You can't have music without something happening in it, and that's where tension comes in. The more you drift away from the original key (the tonal centre), the more tension you'll add. This can be good or not, your ears will tell you.

When you nail the right tension resolve though, it will sound very satisfying. Just to illustrate this point, try playing C7 chord for a bar and finish on F, or try playing C# dim (x x 2 0 2 0 or x x x 12 14 12) to D (x x 0 2 3 2 or x x 0 14 15 14).

Where to find backing tracks

Backing track is simply a musical accompaniment - a series of chords or bass movements played together along with the drums. They are a serious multi-purpose practice tool, especially if you have the ability to create your own, and they're also very fun to play with.

Backing tracks are awesome because they give you a whole band experience. If it's a backing track for a more popular song even better!

They can contain multiple multi-layered instruments, or they can have just a couple of chords played on an acoustic guitar.

Today you can find tons of backing tracks online, especially on Youtube. You can search there when you want to jam out something.

But what's even better is that you can create your own backing tracks. All you need is a recording device (can also be an app on a smartphone). I use Smart Voice Recorder app for this. Then you can take your guitar and record yourself playing series of chords from a key. That's all it takes.

In this book we've learned the Major scale in the key of G. Key of G contains chords like: G, Em, Am, Bm, D, C... (you will learn all about the chords of a key in a 4th part of this book). You can play those chords and have that as a

backing track, or have your jam buddy play them if you have one.

There are no limits to what you can do with this, and it's really great fun.

How to play from heart while soloing and not think about the scales

When you're soloing or improvising, you're going to be using scales a lot. That's a fact. Your solos and improvisations are bound to sound more 'scaley', at least in the beginning.

Getting familiar with them and playing them in **as many different ways as possible** is really going to help in **freeing up your mind** so that you don't think about the scales at all, but you're just playing whatever comes to your mind - which is much easier when your mind is in the present moment, free of the thoughts regarding how to play something.

One of the things that many people get scared of is that practicing scales a lot is going to make them sound like they're just playing technical scales without any real meaning or emotion.

Yes, this can happen, there are many guitarists who are like this. You can find most of them amongst so called 'shredders' - players who like to play fast and flashy solos. Their solos often seem to sound similar and quite technical, with thousands of notes played in a short time. Most of the time during their solo they're just playing typical scale exercises and we get bored fast.

Don't get me wrong, there are many good shredders out there who can play fast and meaningful solos which you can actually enjoy and listen to over and over again. So what differentiates them than the ones who don't?

They have spent enough time developing the understanding part (theory) and the technical part (technical exercises), and they can now use those 'tools' to play whatever comes to their mind 'from heart'. Best music always comes from heart and is picked by the mind.

In order to find that music within you, you also need to develop your ear, learn songs by listening, and develop yourself as a musician.

Let me ask you something - how can you solo or improvise anything when all you know are scales and technical exercises?

Good shredders, who are actually great musicians and guitar players, are **thinking in terms of music** and not in the terms of technique**. They use their ears** to listen to music and figure it out on guitar**.** They study the work of other great musicians they look up to, and they learn from their ideas, songs, solos, licks, etc**.**

Learning lots of songs by ear is the key ingredient which helps in developing a better connection to the instrument**.**

Another thing to point out is that you shouldn't get stuck with repeating the same exercises over and over again**.** If you play the same technical exercises all the time, even when you've become quite good at them, then you can bet it's going to show in your playing, and not necessarily in a good way**.**

You should **always work on your weaknesses.** There is no point in practicing stuff you're good at all the time, when you can be spending that time to improve other critical aspects of your technique**.**

So to summarize, besides working on your knowledge and your technique - with the emphasis on working on your weaknesses, you need to work on developing your ear as well in order to become a better musician, and you need to try and learn stuff by ear as much as you can**.**

There is a really cool exercise for developing your ear and an internal sense of what you want to play and how to get it out on guitar**.** Check the Bonus section at the end of this book where I explain this**.**

Part 4 - Master the Chords

Now that you know how to find the notes quickly, you understand the major scale and you can play it on guitar, it is time to tackle the chords and learn how to play a bunch of them just by understanding a few basic concepts about chord construction.

There are many types of chords out there and like I said in a previous book the list is enormous, but let's recap a bit first.

What are the chords?

Chords represent the sound we get when we play more than one note together at the same time. Every possible combination of notes which can be played is a chord of some sort, but only some of those chords will sound good. Music theory is there to help us know what chords will sound good together in a chord progression, or on their own, and why.

Some of the simplest and the most used chords are made up of 3 different notes and are therefore called **triads** or **triad chords.** Those are usually your basic chords like: C, G, Am, Dm, D, etc.

Although chords generally contain a minimum of three notes, sometimes in certain contexts, and depending on the musical piece, two note chords can also be used. These are called **dyads.** The most popular dyads are the **power chords** - used quite a lot in rock and metal music with distortion, hence the name.

There are also more complex: **quadad** or **tetrad chords**, made up from 4 different notes. As you add more different notes to a chord it becomes more and more complex, but less and less musical. This is important to remember.

Note that it is physically impossible to play more than 5-6 notes together on guitar with your left hand only, and you'll probably never use chords with so many notes. This is not the case for piano players for example as they can play 10 note chords, but remember that the more different notes you add the less musical it becomes.

I say 'different' because that doesn't include octaves or unisons which are often used to enhance the chord sound (check out the Intervals section if you don't know what a unison is).

In music the rule: "Less is more", applies in most cases, so don't bother with learning and understanding something that is physically impossible to play.

Types of chords

In the previous book we've seen that there are many different types of chords. All of the chord types may contain more or less notes. Type a of a chord is often referred to as the **chord quality.** To give some perspective again, here is a list of different types or qualities of the chords:

- Major, minor, sus2, sus4, diminished (or half-diminished), augmented, major 6, minor 6, major 7, minor 7, dominant 7 (or just 7), minor 7b5, diminished 7 (full diminished), add9, major 9, minor 9, 9, 11's and 13's, power chords (or 5ths), slash chords, 1st 2nd and 3rd chord inversions, altered chords and so on.

Don't let this list scare you! You'll understand and learn just how easy it is to know and be able to play all these chords!

If you went through the previous book, you should know that almost all chords can be broken into **3 main types.** Those are:

1. Major

2. Minor

3. Dominant

The reason for this simple breakdown is mostly because of the chord sound and the function it has in a chord progression or a song.

- Major chords are happy sounding
- Minor chords are sad sounding
- Dominant chords create or add tension in a chord sequence. These are used a lot in blues and are therefore sometimes called bluesy chords.

Chords that don't belong to any of the 3 mentioned categories are the suspended 2's, suspended 4's (or simply sus2/sus4), and power chords - aka 5's. There is a reason for that and you'll soon find out why.

One more thing to add is that in the way they are played chords can be: **open**

chords and **barre chords.** If a chord shape contains at least one open string that is being played, then it's an open chord. If a chord shape requires that you play more than one note with one of your fingers (at least), then it's a barre chord.

You can also have a combination of two - a chord shape which uses both open note(s) and a barre grip(s), but that's rarer. There are also chord shapes in which there aren't any open strings or barred notes.

How chords are built

As we know by now, chords are built from scales. They are literary made up of notes from scales, and like scales, each type of chord has its own **chord formula** by which it is built.

We are going to see how all of the triad chords are constructed. These are the most popular and used chords in music. This is the basis for everything that you will learn about the chords later.

Why is this important to know? Well, simply by knowing the basic rules of chord construction you will be able to play much, much more chords more easily and make better use of them.

Triad chords - Major and Minor

Maybe you've noticed this by now - almost all basic chords that you learned in the previous book (except the dominant ones), like: C, G, D, Dm, Em, F, Bm, etc. are actually triads, or 3 note chords. Don't believe me?

Try it for yourself. Take a guitar and play an E chord and figure out the notes that are being played/heard, top to bottom (E -> e string). You should be able to figure this out easily by using the methods from the 1st part of this book.

You will find that the notes played are (in order from the thickest to thinnest string): E, B, E, G#, B, E.

As you can see, some notes repeat themselves several times. This is normal and is the case for most chords. Having those extra notes that repeat (either unisons or octaves) reinforces the chords sound in a way. Remember that you don't need a lot of different notes in order to get a cool sound.

There are 6 basic triad chord types. Here is their list with a chord formula next to each one:

Triad Chord types	Scale degrees		
Major	1	3	5
Minor	1	b3	5
Half-diminished	1	b3	b5
Augmented	1	3	#5
Sus2	1	2	5
Sus4	1	4	5

Each chord type has its own chord formula of scale degrees. In order to figure out the notes of a chord, let's say E major, we have to look at the E major scale.

Now take a look at the Major scale chart (which you have hopefully completed by now) and try to figure out the notes of an E major chord by applying the Major chord formula (1 3 5).

You will see that the notes of E major chord are:

E (1 - the Root, or simply R), G# (3rd), B (5th).

Easy, right? Let's now apply the minor formula (1 b3 5) to that same scale and figure out the notes of an E minor chord. But, wait a second, 3rd note in E Major scale is G#, how do we then apply the b3?

Simple, whenever you see a 'b' symbol in a chord formula it means you have to flatten that note - you have to play the first note before it (counter-clockwise) on the note circle. Likewise, whenever you see a '#' symbol in a chord formula it means you have to sharpen the note which is next to that symbol - just play the first note after it (clockwise) on the note circle.

In the case of E minor chord it would look like this:

E (1), G (b3), B (5)

So we just flattened the G# (3rd degree of E major scale) to G note and got an E minor chord.

Now try to play both E major and E minor one after the other and see how just one little note (or one semitone note difference) makes a huge difference to the

sound!

If you want an extra challenge try to figure out how to play C minor from regular open C major. The shape you'll get will be very awkward to play. That's why C minor is very rarely played as an open chord. It is much easier to play as a barre chord. ;)

Triad chords - sus 2's and sus 4's

These are the special chord types. 3rd is the most important note in any chord (along with the root note), and these chords don't have the 3rd!

Instead, the 3rd is swapped with the 2nd degree of the scale - in the case of sus2, and the 4th scale degree - in the case of sus4.

Because of this they have quite a unique sound and you can't really tell if it's happy or sad.

These chords are used very often and almost always serve as chord embellishments in a song. Figuring them out by ear is not hard and playing them is much easier than augmented or diminished chord shapes.

Let's look at the D chord as probably the most popular and obvious example.

First apply the 1 3 5 formula to D major scale to figure out the notes of the D major chord.

So the notes are: D F# A

Dsus2 (1 2 5) simply requires that we take the 2nd note from the D major scale, and use it instead of the 3rd.

The notes we get are: D E A.

Dsus4 (1 3 5) requires that we take the 4th note and use it instead of the 3rd.

The notes are: D, G, A.

Figuring out how to play these chords is easy and shouldn't give you too much trouble.

Form a D chord and notice where it's 3rd is. It's 3rd (F#) is on the 2nd fret high e string. We need to swap this note with the 2nd from our D major scale, which is E note.

E note is obviously found on the open high e string, so to get Dsus2 all you have to do is form a D chord and lift off your middle finger which is on the 2nd fret e string (F# note), and play high e string open.

Dsus2 Tab - xx0230

For Dsus4 we can see that our G note is found on the 3rd fret high e string. So after forming the D shape, just add the pinky to the 3rd fret high e string.

Dsus4 Tab - xx0233

These chord shapes really do have kind of a 'suspended' sound (neither here nor there) when you think about it, hence their name.

Suspended triad chords exercise

The exercise is to figure out the sus2 and sus4 chord shapes for the following chords:

C, G, D (you already know that one), A, E.

First figure out their notes from their respective major scale, and then by using everything that you learned try to find them on guitar and figure out how to play them.

The only ones that might give you some trouble are Gsus2, Gsus4 (requires a bit of stretch) and Esus2. You can find the tabs for the most commonly used shapes at the end of this book.

This is a great exercise that adds greatly to your ability to research and explore the fretboard on your own. Being able to do this kinds of things leads to true mastery.

Triad chords - diminished and

augmented

For a diminished chord (actually half-diminished since it's a diminished triad, but it doesn't really matter) it's the same, you just have to flatten both the 3rd and the 5th, and you'll get the notes:

E (1), G (b3), Bb (5th) - E diminished chord.

Now playing this diminished chord is a whole different story.

Coming back to our E chord, we can see that the 5th note - B appears twice in E major, and the 3rd - G# appears once. Since we have to flatten both of these notes on whichever string they might repeat, the chord shape we get will look very unfamiliar and possibly very awkward to play. Sometimes even a barre grip is required.

You can try to figure out some ways to play E diminished chord shape if you want. You know enough now to explore this on your own. Though I'll give you two solutions:

1. 0120xx (uses open strings), or

2. x7898x (moveable diminished triad shape - no open strings)

Just to get the fingering right:

1. E string is open, index goes to 1st fret A string, middle to the 2nd fret D, G string is open, B and e strings are not played.

Notes in order: E, Bb, E, G.

2. For the 2nd example, your index goes to 7th fret A, middle to 8th fret D, ring to 8th fret B and pinky to 9th fret G string. Both E and e strings are muted. Note order is the same.

This 2nd E diminished shape is moveable because it doesn't use open strings. When you know that the root is E - found on the 7th fret A, you can move it to any fret on that string, for example 2nd fret (B note), form this shape and you'll

get a B diminished chord.

So this is our diminished chord triad shape (or half-diminished triad to be precise). There are more than one ways to play this chord shape and we won't go into that in this book. You won't be using this chord type a whole lot in the beginning, but it's important that you know about it.

Augmented triad chord type is even rarer and it's hard to find use for it. I can tell you that it sounds exceptionally dark and unstable, and you won't hear it in songs very often.

It's formula is 1 3 #5. If we want to play E augmented we just have to sharpen the 5th of our E major chord, and we get: B -> C. So the notes of E augmented are:

E (1), G# (3), C (#5).

Here is one way to play it:

Tab - 0321xx.

E string is open (can be muted if you prefer), ring finger is on the 3rd fret A, middle on the 2nd fret D and index on the 1st fret G string, B and e are muted.

Here is something interesting:

This E augmented chord triad with the same shape can be also played in this position:

Tab - 0765xx

Which is interesting because the shape remained the same, but the notes are in different order. If you go up two steps (4 frets on guitar), you would again get the same chord, with the same shape but different note order:

Tab - 0 11 10 9 x x or *12 11 10 9 x x*.

You can keep keep moving by 4 frets like this in any direction and only the note order will change while chord shape stays the same.

This tells us that this is one of those **symmetrical chords** - but we'll leave this concept for some other time. ;)

Diminished and augmented triad chord exercise

Try to figure out and play the diminished and augmented triad shapes for chords: C, G, D, A, E.

This will be hard, and the shapes will look very different, and they will often be a bit difficult to play. Just know that you will find great benefits in exploring this kind of stuff on your own.

Diminished chords are more often used as 4 note chords (quadads) than as triads. That's why your goal is to just find the three notes of each diminished and augmented chords that I gave you on guitar and figure out a way to form a chord shape with those notes, and try to play it.

Make sure that once you find something interesting you write it down in Tab. I gave you some suggestions at the end of this book.

This is it for our triad chords. Quadad chords contain one more note (7th degree), and as you add more notes it becomes more complex both in theory and in practice. We will look at those in the next book.

Chords in a scale - Chords of a key

Now that you know how chords are built by utilizing the chord formulas and scales, it is time to explore the relationship between chords and scales a little further. This is one of the most important sections in this book.

In the world of music the necessity to change and play in a bunch of different keys is not uncommon for a guitar player. Being able to change keys on the spot is really useful skill to have for a variety of reasons.

Often times the reason we do this is because we want to play in a key which better suits a singers voice (doesn't matter if we sing or someone else), or it might be just more convenient to play in a certain key depending on a situation.

So let's say that the original song is in the key of C major, and you need to play it in G major. How do you do that?

First you need to know that each Major scale key has its own set of chords, and each of those chords is built from a different scale degree.

In a major scale there are 7 notes - meaning 7 scale degrees, so 7 different chords.

Let's now find out the chords in C major and G major scales (or keys) step by step.

We will do this with the triads only. As I've said, quadads are a bit more complex but the exact same principles apply to them as well.

Here is a numbered C major scale:

C major

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A

Since the Major chord formula is 1 3 5, we will start by adding the 3rd and the 5th note on each scale degree.

This will result in getting 7 different sets of 3 notes, and then we have to analyze

what chord those notes make up.

Scale degree	R	3	5
1	C	E	G
2	D	F	A
3	E	G	B
4	F	A	C
5	G	B	D
6	A	C	E
7	B	D	F

Let's check out now how can we analyze these groups of 3 notes to see what chords they make up.

How to analyze chords

- The first group of notes we have is: C, E, G;

Whenever we have a group of notes like this and we want to figure out what chord it is, **we start by comparing the notes to the major scale of the bottom note.** In this case it's C, and we look at the C major scale.

We apply the major chord formula (1 3 5) to a C major scale and find that the 1st note is C, 3rd is E and 5th is G. All notes are found in a C major scale, so these are obviously the notes of a C major chord.

Next group of notes is: D, F, A;

Again, we start by checking and comparing the notes to the major scale of the bottom note. In this case it's D, so we check the D major scale.

D(1) E(2) F#(3) G(4) A(5) B(6) C#(7) D(8)

Now we can see that D note is the root note (1st) and A is the 5th note, but F (the 3rd note in our chord) is not found in a D major scale. Instead we have F#. This tells us that our note (F) is flattened (b) by a semitone (a half-step on the note

circle).

If we apply the major chord formula 1 3 5 to a D major scale, we get the notes of a D major chord: D F# A, but since our 3rd note is F, it means that our chord formula sequence is actually: 1 b3 5.

And what kind of chord has a formula 1 b3 5?

Minor chord, of course. So this must be D minor then.

- Next group of notes is: E, G, B;

We check the E major scale and repeat exactly the same process. I'll let you figure out the chord for this one, as well as for: F A C; G B D; A C E;

You just have to follow the exact same process I described for the first two note groups. If you have any trouble there will be a complete list with all C major scale chords, so you can check if you got it right.

I just wanted to explain briefly the last group of 3 notes starting on the 7th degree of the C major scale - B D F.

When we check the major scale of the bottom note (B C# D# E F# G# A# B), we can see that both the 3rd (D) and the 5th (F) in our note group are a semitone lower than the 3rd and the 5th in the B major scale. This means that instead of 1 3 5, we have 1 b3 b5.

Do you remember what type of chord has this kind of formula?

You've guessed it - it's a diminished one!

Each major scale has one diminished chord which starts on its 7th degree!

Scale degree	R	3	5		Chord
1	C	E	G	->	C Major
2	D	F	A	->	D minor
3	E	G	B	->	E minor
4	F	A	C	->	F Major
5	G	B	D	->	G Major
6	A	C	E	->	A minor
7	B	D	F	->	B diminished

There is only one difficulty with all this and it's that in the real world notes are not always given in this correct triad order. Sometimes a chord inversion is used where the root note (1) is not the lowest note in a chord.

For example, you can have notes F A D, and it might seem confusing to figure out the chord. It can be different things, but this is most certainly the inversion of D minor (D F A).

Here's another example: B G# E. Can you guess this chord? It's E major, but with the reverse note order. :)

Recognizing these chords by their notes when they're in a different order is something you're going to become better at as you gain more experience playing and figuring stuff out by yourself.

Good start is to get used to the common chord note groups so that when you see one with a different note order you can instantly remember what chord that is. The common ones are: CEG (C chord), GBD (G), FAC (F), ACE (Am), EGB (Em), DF#A (D), AC#E (A), BD#F# (B), EG#B (E), BbDF (Bb), BDF# (Bm), DFA (Dm).

In a more advanced harmony where more complex chords (with more notes) are used, it will be harder to do this because some notes can be left out. This can create a lot of confusion as to what type of chord it is, but there are methods to

figure them out. You shouldn't worry about that for now.

Coming back to our C major scale, you can see clearly now what chords belong to the key of C major and how we got to them. Know that **every major scale key will produce this same sequence of chord types/qualities.** Here is the sequence:

Maj	min	min	Maj	Maj	min	dim
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii

This sequence needs to be memorized. Each major key will produce this same sequence of chord types.

Scale degrees are usually written in roman numerals. This is important because of the chord progressions we're going to talk about later.

Chords in a G major scale

Now we're able to find chords in the key of G much more quickly.

1. Look at the G major scale (G, A, B, C, D, E, F#)

2. Apply the formula:

Maj, min, min, Maj, Maj, min, dim

3. You get this chords:

G Maj, A min, B min, C Maj, D Maj, E minor, F# dim

As I've said, by adding this pattern to any of the keys you will find **diatonic** chords in any key quickly. But wait, what does 'diatonic' now mean?

Diatonic chords

Another term that seems scary but it really isn't. Term 'diatonic' literary means: a scale of 7 notes, but the term 'diatonic chords' in practice means 'the chords of the (major) key', out of which they come from.

The chords in the key of C Major that we've figured out a moment ago are diatonic chords, chords in the key of G Major are diatonic as well, etc.

These diatonic chords (chords of a key) work very well together - if you play and switch between them, since you're playing in a key, they will sound good together.

There are many fantastic songs which are written using only diatonic chords, but there are examples of songs that use non-diatonic chords as well. Non-diatonic (out of key) chords in songs usually have a function of making the song sound more surprising, interesting, unique, unexpected, etc. Whenever you jump out of the key by playing a chord or a note which is not a part of it, you will surprise a listener.

It's important to know that this will not always sound good, so you need to use your ears in order to be able to tell if it's good or not. :)

There is a really fun exercise I've probably mentioned a couple of times, but you should really try it.

1. Pick a key, let's say C major, and record yourself playing some diatonic chords of that key in any order that you wish. You can play any chords from the C major scale and it will sound good, but there are certain chord progressions that are more popular in songs. Make sure that you check out the lesson on chord progressions first, which is coming next.

2. Now playback the recording and try to improvise a melody over your chord progression by using a C Major scale.

You won't believe how easy it will be create cool little melodies! This is the power of understanding and knowing the music theory!

Chord progressions

Diatonic chords when used (which is quite often) usually follow some well established progressions in music.

A chord progression is just a sequence of chords that revolve around a particular tonal centre. They are always written in roman numerals.

Chords that are I, IV and V are usually capitalized - those are the Major chords; while ii, iii, vi, are in lower case - minor chords. Diminished chords (vii) are in a lower case as well.

Maybe you've seen the videos on Youtube where a band or guitarist, plays a bunch of songs (often called 'medley') with the same sequence of 3-4 chords. Here's an example of that.

The secret to this is that all of those songs utilize the same chord progression (more or less) but they are in different keys. All they're doing is playing that same chord progression but only in one key - the key of those 3-4 chords they're using.

This means that just by learning some of the most common chord progressions **you can literary play thousands of songs** which use the same progression.

You see, what makes a song sound structurally different than others amongst many different things that make a song unique (like: melody, chord voicings, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, etc.) is not so much the key it's in but rather the chord progression it uses.

For example, you can have a song which is in the key of B and one in the key of C. That is only one semitone difference in pitch. If they utilize the same chord progression they will sound just barely different - one will be a semitone higher in pitch than the other, and most people won't even notice this.

If on the other hand those songs are in the same key but they utilize a different chord progression, people will recognize the difference immediately.

There are many common chord progressions or patterns that are used in songs. Probably the most famous and the simplest one being: I - IV - V (all 3 Major chords). This chord progression is used a LOT in blues music, and the most well known example of it is a 12 Bar Blues sequence.

Chord progressions exercise

Below you'll find a list of some very common chord progressions. The exercise for you is to play these progressions in at least 5 different keys of your choosing. Choose any strumming pattern that you wish.

Try to remember the 'sound' and the 'feeling' of these progressions as well. If you do these enough you will be able to just hear a song and play it right away without really spending the time to learn it! You will learn to hear and *feel* the progression and play some songs almost instantly.

1. I - VI - IV - V
2. I - V - VI - IV
3. I - V - IV - V
4. I - IV - V
5. III - VI - II - V
6. I - IV - I - V
7. I - V - II - IV
8. I - VI - II - V
9. I - V - VI - III
10. I - III - IV - V

As you can see, the diminished chord (vii) is rarely used in songs, but it has its uses from time to time.

Transposing from the key of C to the key of G

Do you remember our example where the song is in the key of C maj, and we want to play it in the key of G for whatever reason? We have everything we need to know in order to transpose this song to a different key.

Say that the progression of the song goes: I - VI - IV - V in the key of C.

That would give us the chords: C - Am - F - G.

If we want to play this in the key of G, all we have to do is apply the same progression to the key of G (and we already know how to figure out the chords

in any key).

That gives us the chords: G - Em - C - D

Now you can play the same chord progression but in a different key. This means that we've transposed the song to the key of G. :)

This ability to transpose chords is essential for any musician, and sooner or later you will need/want to transpose songs and play them in different keys.

Quick and easy way to find chords on a guitar fretboard and play in any key

Memorizing all the note names, major scale shapes, key signatures and chords that belong to each key… Not an easy task, and it takes time to really understand all that.

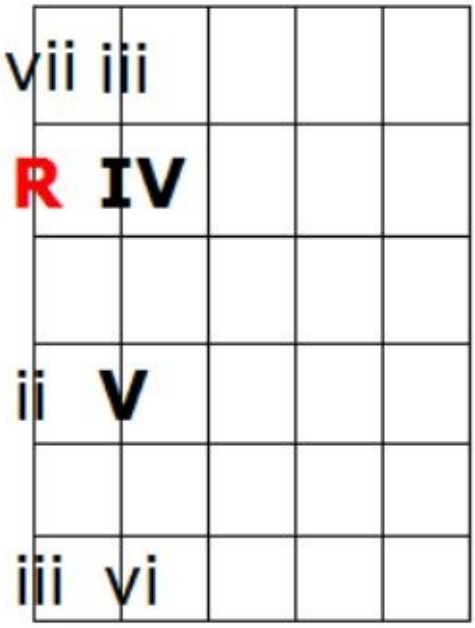
Luckily, what I'm about to show you will enable you to make much better use of all this information right now. You can try this immediately on guitar.

It's just a simple graphical representation of how scale degrees are grouped together on the two lowest guitar strings - E and A. Remember when I said that it's very, very important to know the notes on the thickest two strings? Well, one of the biggest reasons is this.

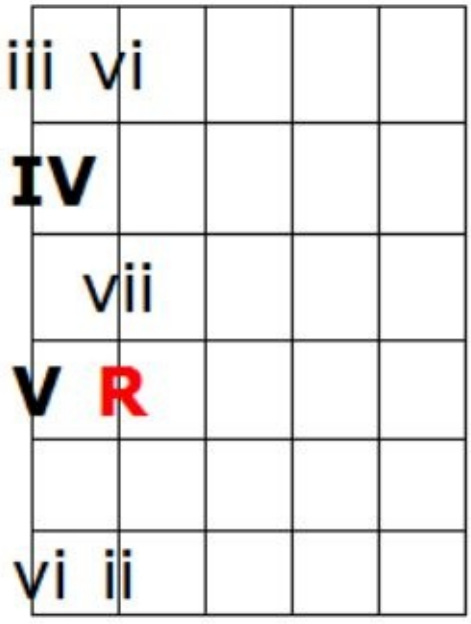
These 2 patterns (one for E and one for A string) can be shown on other strings as well, but E and A are more than enough in the beginning because the root notes for the chord shapes you'll be playing most of the time are found on these strings.

Knowing this will make it very easy to see note and chord relationships directly on the fretboard, and will be particularly useful for instantly knowing what chords are in what key, and how to play in any key!

The only necessity for this is to know all the notes on E and A strings (or you're able to find them very quickly), and to memorize these diagrams.



E string pattern



A string pattern

The most important chords in a key - I (R), IV, V, are highlighted and they should be remembered first**.** Minor chords are in lower case letters; you can find them easily just by knowing where R, IV and V are on E and A strings**.**

Think of the Root you see here as your starting point - no matter what fret you place it on the E string, the pattern shown above (E string pattern) will remain

the same. Likewise, you can also place the Root anywhere on the A string and the shape on Diagram 2 will apply.

This allows you to:

1. Quickly find the chords in any key just by looking at the guitar fretboard and knowing these 2 patterns.

2. Helps you find the chords in a song by ear quicker

3. Play any chord across the whole guitar neck

4. Change keys easily

Example for E string

Let's take the key of A.

We know that the first chord will be A Major (I). **The A note is found on the 5th fret E string.**

We can see on the 1st diagram that the 2nd chord (ii) is B minor since the note on the 7th fret E string is B.

3rd chord (iii) is two tones up from the root. Looking at the pattern, it can be found on the A string beneath the root and one fret back - it's C# minor in the key of A. 3rd chord can also be found on the E string 4 frets up from the root. It's entirely up to you which one you'll use, but you should know both.

4th chord is Major (IV), and it's found two tones and one semitone (or 5 semitones) up from the root. On guitar, it's just beneath the root on an A string. Since we know that note is D, then this chord must be D Major.

5th chord is also Major (V) and it's just one tone higher than the 4th chord (7 semitones up from the root), so E major.

6th chord is minor (vi), and we can see that it's also on the A string, one tone higher than the 5th chord. In the key of A that chord must be F# minor.

7th chord (vii) is the only diminished chord and it's the easiest one to find but hardest one to play. :) It's just one fret lower than the root on the same string. In our case for the key of A, that chord would be G# dim, since we know that the note on the 4th fret E string is G #.

Example for A string

Now let's take the key of E. **The root note E is found on the 7th fret A string.** We can right away apply the A string pattern (2nd diagram) and see what/where all the chords or notes in the key of E are.

1st chord is of course E major.

2nd chord is just one tone (two frets) higher on the same string - F# min.

3rd chord is found one semitone lower than the IV chord on the E string - Ab min.

4th chord is on the E string, two frets lower from the root - A major.

5th is on the same fret just one string above the root - B major.

6th is easily found when we know where the V is. It's just one tone higher than the V on the E string. Additionally, you can find the 6th on the A string just three frets back from the root (3 semitones). In the key of E, that's C# minor chord.

7th chord is just one fret or one semitone behind the root - D# dim

In order to learn these patterns more easily (which is definitely a very useful thing to do) my advice is to remember the easiest: I, IV and V chords, and all the other chords (ii, iii, vi, vii) will be very easy to find from them.

I hope that you can see how this can be used to play chords all over the fretboard or to be able to find the chords in a key much more quickly.

Part 5 - Music Intervals on Guitar

Intervals in a Major scale (Diatonic intervals)

An interval, as mentioned before, is a distance between **any** two notes**.** All intervals have their names and unique sound**.** Intervals are very important because that's how the music 'happens', they are very important in music, and that's why I've included them here**.**

All intervals have their names**.** Musicians can learn to recognize by ear what interval it is when any two notes are played one after the other**.** This ability is called: **relative pitch**, and it's worked on quite heavily in ear training realm**.**

There is also something called **absolute pitch.** It's the ability to instantly recognize by ear what note is being played without any reference except the one in your head**.** This skill is very hard to acquire, and most think it's impossible to learn unless you're a less than 5 year old child**.**

Even though I don't believe this to be impossible to learn, I do think that your time is much better spent mastering the relative pitch! It's much more useful and applicable skill to have, and it's easier to learn**.**

Understanding intervals and being able to recognize them will help you to understand and hear chords and **harmony*** better, and it will help you in many other areas as well (such as: modes, singing, ear training, transcribing, etc**.**)

* *Harmony* is what happens when any two (or more) notes, or chords, are played simultaneously**.**

There are 2 main types of intervals: ***Major*** and ***Perfect*****.**

Major intervals are used a lot in Western music, while Perfect intervals are used more in ethnic music all around the world.

Remember that Major scale follows its scale formula (of T's and S's) by which it uses the notes from the note circle. Intervals are found between any of the notes from the note circle, but the ones that are only between the notes from the Major scale are called **diatonic intervals.**

Now remember this important rule:

Intervals are always determined from the key of the lowest note.

The higher note may belong to the key of the lower one (diatonic interval), or not (non-diatonic interval), but in any case it is an interval of some sort.

Since the lowest note is usually the root note, we will determine the intervals from the key of G, with the lowest note being G.

Here is a numbered G Major scale again:

G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (Octave)

Major intervals are found between:

- the Root and the 2nd scale degree - called 'Major 2nd' interval;
- the Root and the 3rd degree - Major 3rd interval;
- the Root and the 6th degree - Major 6th;
- the Root and the 7th - Major 7th.

Perfect intervals are found between:

- the Root and itself (1st scale degree) - called Perfect Unison;
- the Root and the 4th degree - Perfect 4th interval;
- the Root and the 5th - Perfect 5th;
- the Root and its Octave - Perfect Octave.

Scale Degrees	M. Scale Formula	Notes	Interval names	Disatance
1 to 1(U)	/	G to G	Perfect Unison	0 semitones
1 to 2	T	G to A	Major 2nd	2 semitones
1 to 3	T	G to B	Major 3rd	4 semitones
1 to 4	S	G to C	Perfect 4th	5 semitones
1 to 5	T	G to D	Perfect 5th	7 semitones
1 to 6	T	G to E	Major 6th	9 semitones
1 to 7	T	G to F#	Major 7th	11 semitones
1 to 8(O)	S	G to G	Perfect Octave	12 semitones

You should know the 1st shape of the Major scale by now so take your guitar and play these intervals as you read them**.** Notice how each of the diatonic intervals sound**.**

Chromatic intervals

So far we've looked only at the Major scale intervals (diatonic intervals), but let's now expand upon that and look at the Chromatic intervals. But first I need to explain what 'chromatic' means?

Term 'chromatic' often refers to the chromatic scale, which is a scale that consists of all semitones (S's), and it contains all 12 notes that exist in music. Remember the Major scale and its formula? Well, Chromatic scale formula is just:

S S S S S S S S S S S S

Chromatic scale therefore covers all intervals that exist in music.

This scale has many uses as an exercise for developing your technique as you might have seen in a previous book.

By now you know that there are Perfect and Major intervals. Those are the 2 main types. Read very carefully now.

When the top note (higher one in pitch) does not belong to the key of the lower note, both Major and Perfect intervals get different names.

Major and Perfect intervals become *Augmented* when the top note is **a semitone higher** than the scale tone of the key. For example, A to D is a Perfect 4th interval, but A to D# is Augmented 4th. A to B is Major 2nd, but A to B#(C) is Augmented 2nd.

When the top note is **a semitone lower** than the scale tone of the key, Major intervals become *Minor*, but Perfect intervals become *Diminished*. For example, D to B is Major 6th, but D to Bb is Minor 6th. D to A is Perfect 5th, but D to Ab is Diminished 5th.

Here are all the chromatic intervals listed. Note that some of these intervals are the same in distance but have different names. That's just how it is in theory

sometimes. :)

G to G	**Perfect Unison**	0 semitones
G to G#	Augmented Unison	1 semitone
G to Ab	Minor 2nd	1 semitone
G to A	**Major 2nd**	2 semitones
G to A#	Augmented 2nd	3 semitones
G to Bb	Minor 3rd	3 semitones
G to B	**Major 3rd**	4 semitones
G to B#	Augmented 3rd	5 semitones
G to Cb	Diminished 4th	4 semitones
G to C	**Perfect 4th**	5 semitones
G to C#	Augmented 4th	6 semitones
G to Db	Diminished 5th	6 semitones
G to D	**Perfect 5th**	7 semitones
G to D#	Augmented 5th	8 semitones
G to Eb	Minor 6th	8 semitones
G to E	**Major 6th**	9 semitones
G to E#	Augmented 6th	10 semitones
G to F	Minor 7th	10 semitones
G to F#	**Major 7th**	11 semitones
G to Gb	Diminished Octave	11 semitones
G to G	**Perfect Octave**	12 semitones

Bolded intervals are the Diatonic Intervals. Chromatic intervals contain all Diatonic (Major scale) intervals plus all the ones in between.

Some of these interval names are not used in the real world but they have their place in theory - intervals like: Diminished Octave, Augmented 3rd, Augmented 6th, Augmented Unison, etc.

Let's check out some examples of how you can figure out the intervals between any two notes. This might not be very easy for you if you're new to this, but I'll show you how to figure them out in the easiest way possible.

Example 1: Let's say you want to figure out the interval from F# to D#, here is the process you should follow:

1. Count alphabetically from F# to D#.

Ignore the sharps or flats.

You get: F, G, A, B, C, D.

There are 6 notes so this must some kind of a 6th interval.

2. Check the F major scale. You'll see that D belongs to F major scale and its the 6th degree. This means that F to D is a Major 6th interval.

3. Because F to D is Major 6th interval, F# to D# is the same interval as well.

Let's see a harder example when the top note is not found in the key of the lower note.

Example 2: Bb to Ab.

1. Ignore the b's and count alphabetically from B to A.

B, C, D, E, F, G, A - There are 7 notes so this interval must be some kind of 7th.

2. If we check out the B major scale, we can see that A does not belong to the key of B major, but A# note is its 7th scale degree (Major 7th interval). This means that B to A is Minor 7th interval, so Bb to Ab must be Minor 7th as well.

3. Note that Augmented 6th is the same interval as Minor 7th, but we're using the name Minor 7th name because of the symbol 'b' in our example - which tells us that it's a descending interval.

Example 3: A# to G#

Again, these are the same notes as Bb and Ab and interval remains the same semitone(distance)-wise. The only difference is that interval gets a different name because it's ascending (#).

1. A, B, C, D, E, F, G. Some kind of 7th.

We can straight away ignore #'s and look at the A major scale.

2. F# is the 6th scale degree of A major (Major 6th interval) and since we're using #'s, A to G is Augmented 6th. And this means that A# to G# is Augmented 6th interval as well.

This cool trick can be used whenever a key is too hard - with lots of double #'s, or b's.

To explain one more time, understand that both Augmented 6th and Minor 7th are the same intervals (with the same distance), but they get different names depending on whether we're in an ascending (#) or in descending (b) situation.

Example 4: D to Ab

1. D, E, F, G, A - This is some kind of a 5th interval.

2. D to A is Perfect 5th, so D to Ab must be Diminished 5th interval.

If it were D to G#, the interval would be Augmented 4th.

Hope this makes sense, I know it can be hard to wrap your mind around this stuff, but it's all very logical. :)

Recap

We've covered a lot of ground here and I hope that you can see at least a little bit how this knowledge is immensely useful for a guitarist. The fact is that the more time you spend learning and playing guitar, the more you'll realize this.

I've tried to explain everything in the simplest way possible. Forgive me if I was too repetitive at times - I really wanted to explain this in a way so that everyone who puts an effort can understand. Now let's recap.

With the help of this book (after you've gone through the whole book and spent some time learning and practicing what you learned) you should:

1. Be able to find all notes across the entire fretboard in less than 3 seconds.

2. Memorize and understand the octave shapes and how notes are laid out on the fretboard.

3. Know the Major scale - its formula, how it's constructed and how to use it to solo/improvise over a backing track in any key.

In the beginning, besides key of G, it's a good idea to practice in other 'easier' guitar keys. A key is considered easier if its key signature contains less sharps or flats and it contains some of the notes found on open strings.

4. Know and be able to use all 5 positions of the Major scale and be able to solo/improvise all over the fretboard.

5. Understand what is a Key, and the concept of the Root note.

6. Understand what the chords are and how they are divided, and what is a chord type or quality.

7. Know how the triad chords are built, and how to construct and play any of the

triad chord types.

8. Know the diatonic chords sequence which determines what types of chords come from a Major scale, and understand how that sequence is formed.

9. Understand what is a chord progression, and how you can play thousands of songs that utilize the same chord progression. Also, in any time you should know and be able to play the most commonly used chord progressions.

10. Know all chromatic and diatonic intervals names, and how to figure them out.

11. And finally, know how to easily and quickly switch keys, and play in any key all over the guitar fretboard.

Where to next?

Provided that you've gone through, understood, learned and practiced everything so far, it's easy to say you're at an intermediate level. There are a lot of ways you can go from here and so many aspects of guitar playing you can work on. Know that you should always be the one who decides into what kind of guitar player you want to develop, always go by what you feel you need to do.

Make sure that you practice regularly. Try to pick up guitar each day and do your practice routine. If you don't have a practice routine, you should create one, it's quite easy.

Your practice routine should be focused on an area that you're trying to improve the most. It is directly tied to your long and short-term goals on guitar. In the beginning it should incorporate everything related to developing strong foundational skills. It should consist of:

1) Working on your technique - which includes: picking, chord changing, finger stretching, finger strength, scale playing, etc.

2) Your rhythm skills - you should always work on your rhythm skills and on timing, as I've explained in the previous book.

3) A little bit of theory - knowing the basic theory goes a long way. Do not ever underestimate the power of understanding.

4) Learning songs by listening and ear training - by working on this skill you're at the same time working on all other sets of skills. You can technically only learn songs by ear and you'll get better at everything else. However, this process (which can be very, very hard) is much easier if you work on everything else separately, and you'll also progress much faster overall.

Keep in mind that our work on the basics and building a strong foundation for

guitar mastery is not done. One of the first areas you should look into after this book are the quadad chords (which we haven't touched upon here) and the famous CAGED system. Then there is also the 16th note strumming, more advanced chord construction, other scales, transcribing, song arranging... These are all huge and very important topics, and I have a very nice way of explaining all this. Most will be covered in the 3rd book of this series, so stay tuned.

BONUS - The Number 1 Skill to Truly Mastering Guitar (Besides Rhythm)

Do you remember what was it that inspired you to pick up guitar and learn how to play it? What was the motivating factor behind it?

There are many different reasons why people decide to learn how to play. Whatever that reason is, you can say that what we all have in common is the **need** to play our favorite songs, and the need to express ourselves through playing.

So the question is - how do you learn a song… **Any** song?

Unlike the pre-internet era, today there are a myriad of ways to learn a song. If it's a more popular song there's a good chance someone's done a video lesson on it, covered it, wrote a tab… But what if it's a less popular song and there aren't any videos/covers/tabs for it?

You have probably heard that some people can learn songs just by listening to them. If there is a song they want to learn they listen to the song, notice what is happening, and then they try to find that sound on guitar.

Sometimes there may be a lot of trial and error involved; it can be done fast, or take a significant amount of time, but eventually they learn the song. This process is called **Transcribing.** This term is used loosely and it actually means to write down what you hear after you've figured it out.

I want to engrave in your mind that **learning songs by ear doesn't require any special musical talent**! It is something that you can train yourself to do; you can

literary train your ears and your mind to recognize what is happening in a song and where to find that sound on guitar, through trial and error.

This is hard. It is the hardest especially in the beginning, but guess what - "The harder the challenge is, the sweeter your reward will be!"

I don't know who exactly said this, but in this case it is definitely true. If you spend time and effort to learn songs the 'hard' way, the more you'll develop as a guitar player, and the better connection you'll develop between you and the instrument.

As you get used to figuring stuff out by ear from an external source, the better you'll become at being able to find the music within you and transfer it on guitar. You'll hear something in your head: a melody, a riff or a chord progression, you'll get some ideas about what to play and you'll be able to realize that idea on guitar much more easily. This is how masterpieces are and were written.

Even if you don't have aspirations to create your own music, working on your transcribing skills has other tremendous benefits. How do you think all those guitar legends you know learned guitar?

Sure, some of them must have had guitar teachers, but can you imagine legends like Eric Clapton or Joe Satriani learning a song from a tab or by looking for video guitar lessons online?

Almost all of them learned guitar predominately by listening and figuring it out for themselves. All this hard work they put in got them to where they are today, both in technical and musical sense.

So, even if you don't have aspirations to become a guitar legend, trying to learn songs (or anything) on guitar by ear is the best thing you can do to achieve your goals as a guitar player, whatever they may be.

I'm not saying you shouldn't be using tabs or video lessons, courses, etc. Tabs for example can be really useful when you want to check if what you figured out is correct (provided that tabs themselves are correct or from a credible source).

I don't want to lie to you, transcribing can be really hard and that's why it puts

many people off at the beginning. Good thing is that it gets easier as you do it.

What I used to do in the beginning (and I still do it sometimes if I'm lazy), if there is a song that I really wanted to learn but it was too hard for me to figure out, I would just look for the covers of it on Youtube.

Many times I would find someone who has covered the song in a way that I really like, and I would analyze what he or she did in order to be able to play it. I would then compare their version with the original version, and I would often have those "a-ha" moments when I realize what else I could have done.

It is usually much easier to learn someone's cover by ear than from the original version because there's only one guitar (usually), and you have all kinds of stuff happening on the recording (original version) that can impede what you're trying to hear.

Other times, their version might not sound the same as the recording (original version). Many guitarists who cover a song like to put their own spin to it. They play it in a different key, use different chord shapes, alter the melody a bit, etc. For example, check out Igor Presnyakov on Youtube, his covers are unique and quite complex 'all in one instrument' free interpretations of a song.

In this case, if I really liked their unique cover I would just learn that. If their cover is in a different key, and more often than not it is, I would just transfer the chords to the original key (I showed you how to do that in this book), and then I would be able to play along with the original recording.

Over time, I would search for ways to make it sounding more like the original recording, or I would simply work on creating my own arrangement/cover of it.

So let's say you just got in a new band, and your new band-mates want you to learn certain song. What If there aren't any tabs or covers for the song that you want to learn, there aren't any people who can show it to you, or the covers that are available (if any) aren't suitable for you?

The only way to learn this song now is from the original recording. If that is too hard to figure out, well you're in a difficult position. :)

Don't worry, you can literary learn **any** song by ear and figure out how to play it on guitar, even if there aren't any guitar parts in a song! That's why this is often called "The art of transcribing".

You may be clueless as to where to begin in your first few attempts to transcribe a song. Luckily, there is a process that can be a followed along with a few tools which be used to make this process much more easier and efficient for you.

Efficient is the key word here. With the correct process you'll be spending less time learning a song, but with the same amount of transcribing, while gaining even greater benefits.

That's why I'm preparing for you a free guide where I share everything I know about transcribing, the process that I and many pro players I've learned from, go through when attempting to learn a song, along with the tools that help me with this in numerous ways.

If you want to get that, check out the next section.

Get Your Questions Answered, Plus

How to Get Your Free Gifts

Basically, if you have any questions about what's being taught in any of my books, or if it's any guitar related question, feel free to ask. I will try my best to help you (if possible) with my response in a reasonable amount of time, depending on how much questions I get.

How can you ask me questions?

You can subscribe to my email list, and reply to the welcome email that I send you.

Please only ask guitar related questions. I'm a real person like you, and I hate spam just as much as you do.

I'm also preparing some free gifts that I'll be giving away to my subscribers only. Those include: 1. **A guide on how to learn songs or anything on guitar by ear**. I'm really excited about this one because what I'm sharing is not really taught anywhere else but it is **very** valuable.

2. I'm also working on a free **Guitar for Beginners Workbook** and **Guitar Fretboard Mastery Workbook**, where I will share with you the best exercises that you can implement and improve your knowledge and your technique. If you liked my books, you're going to love these!

3. A full guide on all the practice tools and guitar accessories that I use and recommend.

I don't have an ETA on when will any of this be available unfortunately, but I can tell you that at least one will be finished by the end of February, and as I've said, I'll be giving them out for free. There will also be more content like this that I'll be sharing with you from time to time, because I really value my subscribers!

Also, if you're on my email list, you'll be notified when my next two books (3rd and 4th in this series) come out. These are going to be big! I'm really working

hard on this and in the process I'm also expanding my knowledge. It's super exciting!

Lastly, I want to tell you that I really respect your email privacy, I will never-ever spam you! I just want to build a connection to people who read and enjoy my content and to whom I can help learn guitar. I truly believe that if more people played music, the world would a much more magical place to live in!

I'll only be sharing with you the stuff that you'll love and enjoy!

Here is the link where you can subscribe: **www.guitaryourday.com**

I'm also in the process of building this site and soon there will be some cool stuff there. I'll let you know about this.

Conclusion

Thank you for reading this book. It's the 2nd book in this series and there will be a 3rd and 4th one out sometime in 2016. I hope that you're aware of the amazing value I've shared with you in this book. It took me years to figure all this out and learn how to use it, and I'm still learning new stuff almost every day.

Thankfully, with the help of this book you can learn all this much, much faster than me, in much less time! This was my main goal with this book.

Lastly, if you feel like this book has helped you in any way, it would mean a lot to me if you can spend just a quick minute and write an honest review. You can do so by following **this link** which will take you straight to the product review page on Amazon.

It is an unfortunate truth that most of the people who leave reviews do so with a malicious intent - they are dissatisfied with something, they belittle someone's work, and they do not provide any valid feedback which is needed in order to address their issues. They don't even make sense. These people are called 'haters', who don't have anything better to do than expressing their negativity about someone's work.

If you've read this far then you must have learned something from this book. If so, then I urge you once again, visit the link above and leave a review, tell me what you think, what did you learn, where can I provide more value... This kind of stuff really helps. Thank you.

Have an awesome day!

Nicolas Carter

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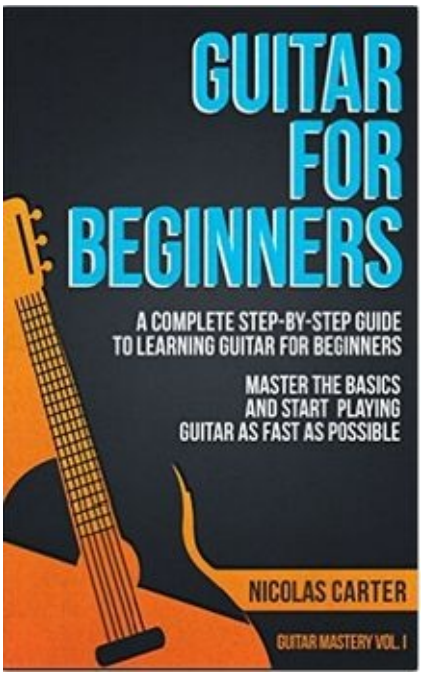

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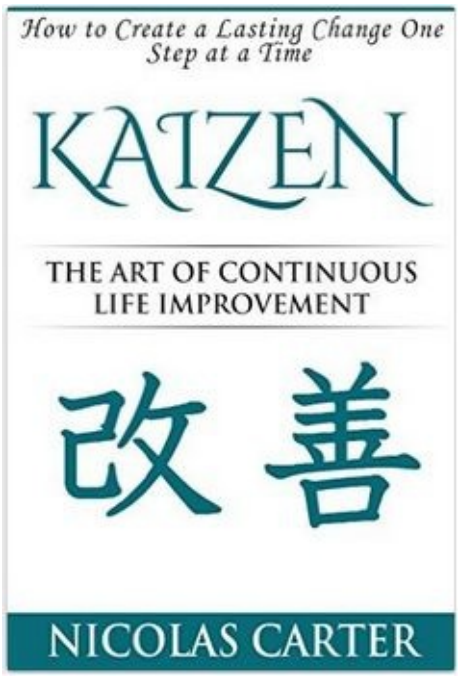

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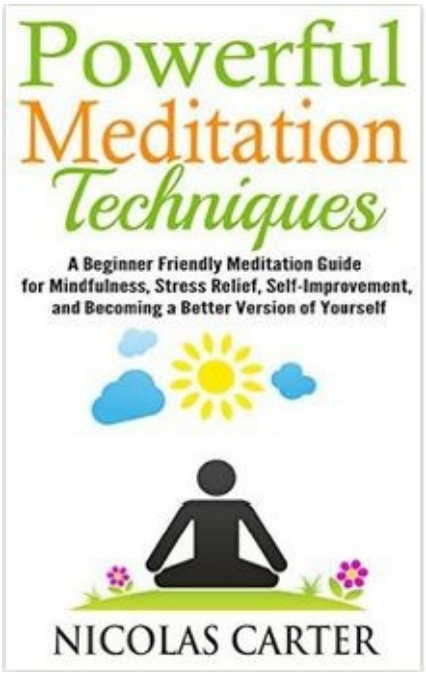
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Answers

- Complete Major scale chart to check your answers (Page 36)

Key	T	T	S	T	T	T	S
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**1**
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G
D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#	D
A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#	A
E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#	E
B	C#	D#	E	F#	G#	A#	B
F	G	A	Bb	C	D	E	F
Bb	C	D	Eb	F	G	A	Bb
Eb	F	G	Ab	Bb	C	D	Eb
Ab	Bb	C	Db	Eb	F	G	Ab
Db	Eb	F	Gb	Ab	Bb	C	Db
Gb	Ab	Bb	Cb	Db	Eb	F	Gb
C#	D#	E#	F#	G#	A#	B#	C#
G#	A#	B#	C#	D#	E#	F##	G#
D#	E#	F##	G#	A#	B#	C#	D#
A#	B#	C##	D#	E#	F##	G##	A#
F#	G#	A#	B	C#	D#	E#	F#

- Suspended triad chord exercise (Page 85)

Below are some examples of how you can play these chord triad types. For more difficult shapes I've included some fingering options.

Csus2 - X30010 - 'r i' (ring finger plays 3rd fret A, index 1st fret B, low E string is muted, D G and high e are open) Csus4 - X33010 - 'r p i'

Asus2 - X02200 - just hold the A chord and lift off your ring finger Asus4 - X02230 - 'i m p'

Gsus2 - 3X0203* - 'm r'

Gsus4 - 3X0013* - 'r i p'

Esus2 - 024400 - 'i r p'

Esus4 - 022200 - just add the pinky to 2nd fret G while holding E chord Dsus2 - XX0230

Dsus4 - XX0233

* For Gsus2/Gsus4 your middle/ring finger needs to lean over a little bit and rest on the A string so that it is properly muted. Gsus4 requires a little bit stretch so you'll need to practice that.

- **Diminished and augmented triad chord exercises (Page 89)** C dim - X3454X - 'i m p r' (index plays 3rd fret A, middle 4th fret D, pinky 5th fret G, ring 4th fret B, both E strings are muted) C aug - X321XX

G dim - 3XX32X - 'm r i' (try to mute that D string with the tip of your ring finger) G aug - 3X1003 - 'r i p' (requires a bit of stretch) D dim - XX0131 - 'i p m' or 'i p i' (2nd one requires a barre with your index) D aug - XX0332 - 'm r i'

A dim - X0121X or 5XX54X - 'i r m' or 'm r i'

A aug - X0322X - 'm i i' (uses a barre with your index) or 'r i m'

E dim - XX23X3 or 0120XX - 'i m r' or 'i m'

E aug - 03211X - 'r m i i'