

BARRE CHORDS

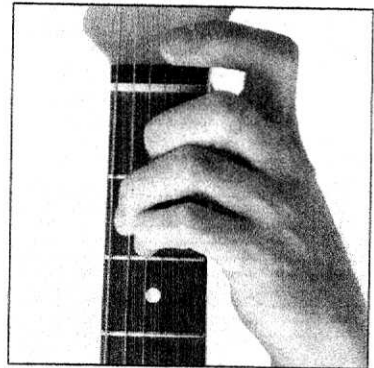
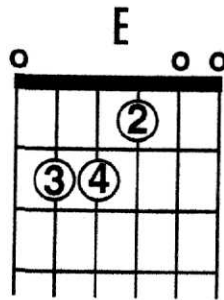
Barre chords are chords in which two or more strings are depressed using the same finger. Most barre chords cover five or six strings and contain no open strings. The fingering shapes are movable and can be shifted up or down the neck to different positions to produce other chords of the same quality.

E-TYPE BARRE CHORD

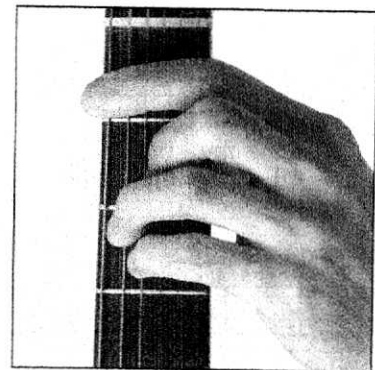
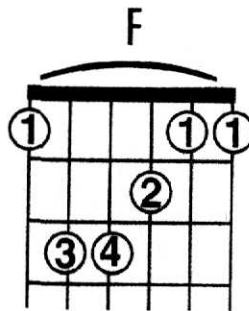
One of the most useful movable barre chords is the one based on the open E chord. The root note of this E shape is on the sixth string. Therefore, this shape will be used to play major chords up and down the sixth string.

Follow these steps to form the E-type barre chord.

1. Play an open E chord, but use your 2nd, 3rd, and 4th fingers.

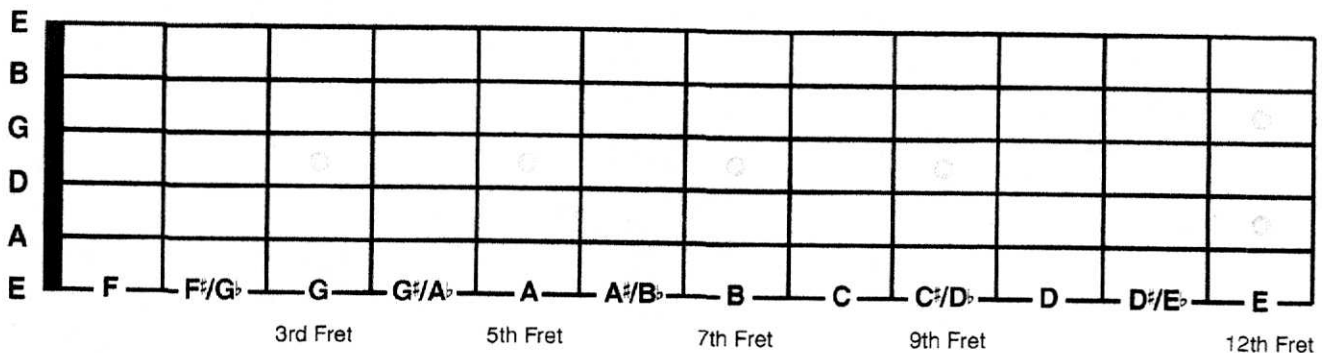


2. Slide this chord shape up one fret, and add your 1st finger across the 1st fret, forming a barre.

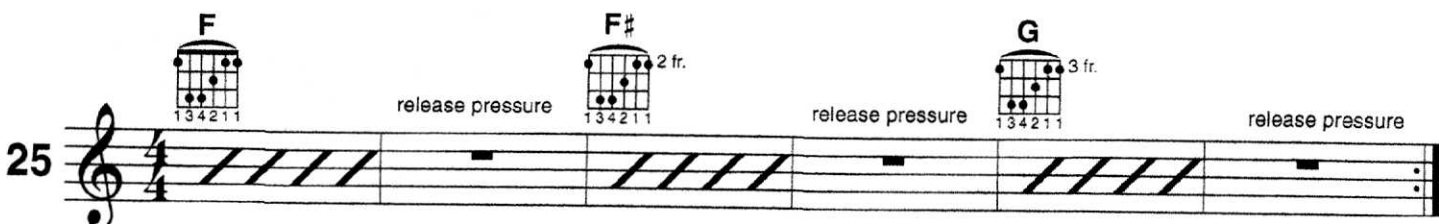


Strum all six strings to play your first barre chord. Make sure each string rings out clearly. Strike each note one at a time to test for clarity.

This particular barre chord is F major because its root is F on the sixth string. You can apply this same shape to any root note along the sixth string:

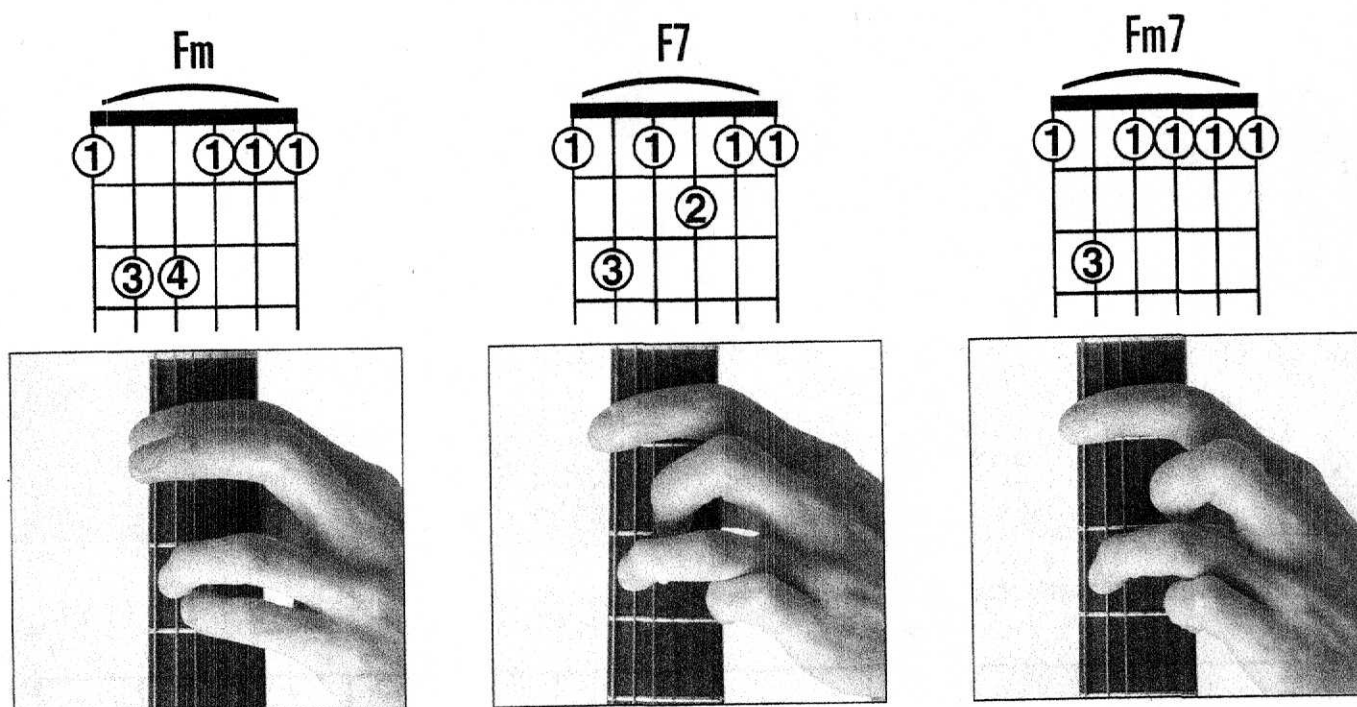


Now try the following barre chord exercise to get used to the feel of the movable shape.



Once you are familiar with the basic feel and movement of the E-type major barre chord, it is easy to adapt this shape to form minor, seventh, and minor seventh barre chords.

If you subtract your 2nd finger from the major barre chord, you have a minor barre chord. If you subtract your 4th finger from the major barre chord, you have a seventh barre chord. If you subtract your 2nd and 4th fingers from the major barre chord, you have a minor seventh barre chord. Study the photos and diagrams below.



Try using these new barre chords in the examples below.

The image shows three musical staves, each with four measures of music. Each measure contains a barre chord diagram and a musical staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The chords and their fret positions are:

- Staff 1:** Bm (7 fr.), A (5 fr.), G (3 fr.), A (5 fr.).
- Staff 2:** Gm7 (3 fr.), Cm7 (8 fr.), Gm7 (3 fr.), D7 (10 fr.).
- Staff 3:** C (8 fr.), Am (5 fr.), F (3 fr.), G7 (3 fr.).

BARRE CHORD TIPS

Having difficulty at first in playing barre chords is normal. Here are some tips to help you:

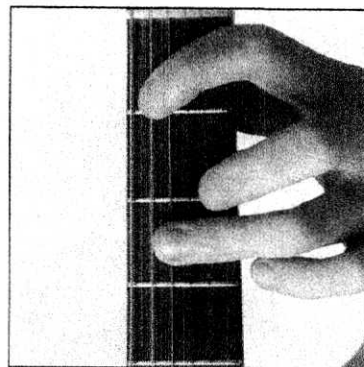
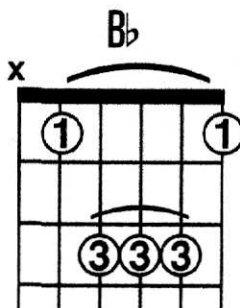
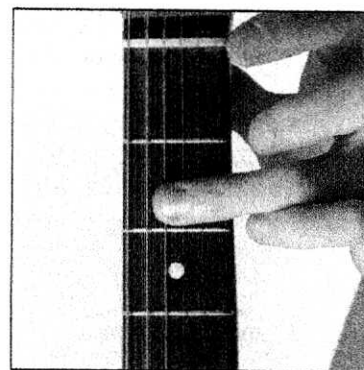
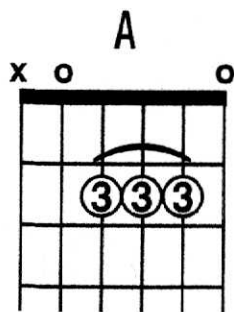
- Instead of holding your first finger totally flat, rotate it a little onto its side nearest the thumb.
- Place your left thumb directly behind the first-finger barre for additional support.
- Move your elbow of your left arm in close to your body, even to the point that it's touching your body at the waist.

A-TYPE BARRE CHORD

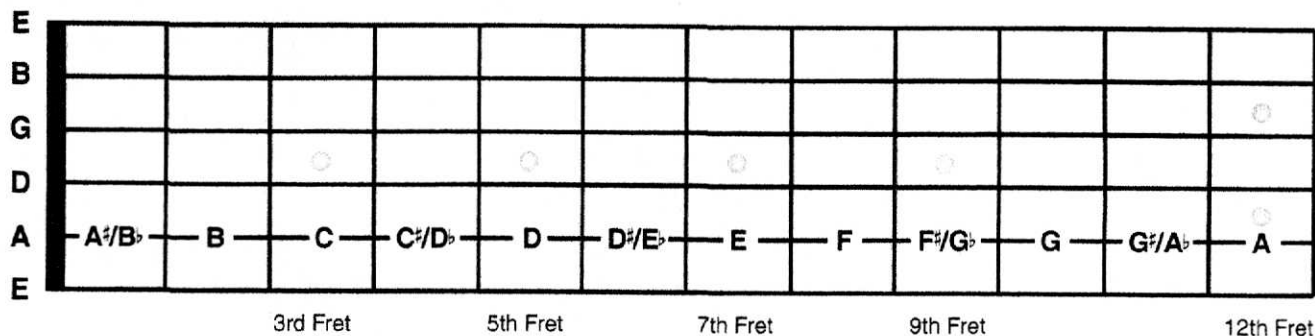
The open A chord can also be converted to a barre chord. This shape will have its root on the fifth string. Follow these steps:

1. Play an open A chord, but use your 3rd finger to barre across strings 2-4.
2. Slide this chord shape up one fret, and add your 1st finger across the 1st fret, forming a barre.

The new B_b barre chord can be tricky at first. If you are having trouble elevating the middle knuckle of your 3rd finger, you may want to avoid playing the first string (either by not striking it with the right hand or by muting it).



Practice the A-type major barre chord up and down the neck. Remember: the root of this shape lies along the fifth string.



Now, use the major barre chord shape you just learned to play the following exercises.

Exercise 29: A sequence of four measures in 4/4 time, each containing a barre chord shape. The chords are C (3 fr.), F (8 fr.), G (10 fr.), and C (3 fr.).

Exercise 30: A sequence of four measures in 4/4 time, each containing a barre chord shape. The chords are C (3 fr.), Eb (6 fr.), Bb (10 fr.), and C (3 fr.).

Playing barre chords on a electric guitar is easier than playing them on an acoustic guitar. This is because the **string gauges** (the thickness of the strings) are lighter on an electric guitar and the **action** (distance of the strings to the fretboard) is lower than on an acoustic.

The three barre chord shapes below are derived from the A-type major barre chord you just learned.

B \flat m

B \flat 7

B \flat m7

The following exercises combine the four A-type barre chords.

C

E7

F

G

31

D

Em7

F#m7

Em7

32

Sometimes you will see barre chords written in standard notation and tablature.

CLASSIC ROCK

33

TAB

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|
| 7 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 10 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| 7 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 10 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| 5 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 10 | 10 |