

SESSION 1- Starting Off Right



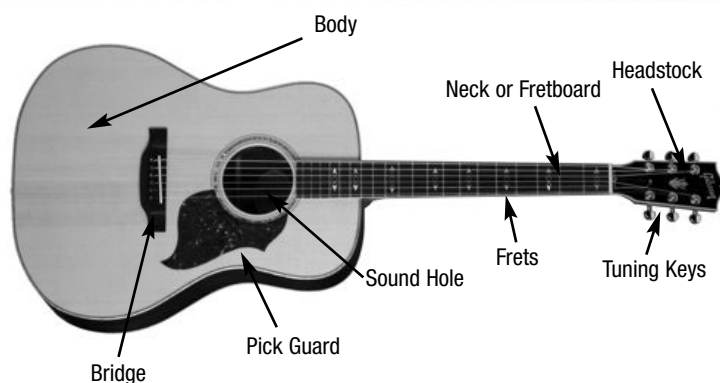
Estimated Time to Learn These Concepts - 1 Week

"It's easy to play any musical instrument: all you have to do is touch the right key at the right time and the instrument will play itself."

~ J.S. Bach

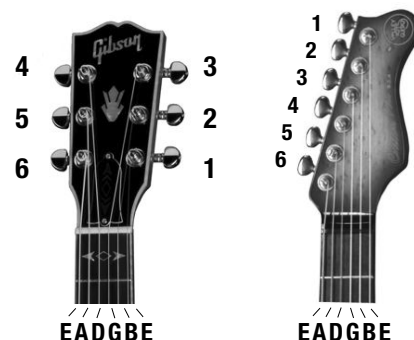
The Parts of the Guitar

There are three main types of guitars, the *steel-string acoustic*, the *nylon string* or *classical guitar*, and the *electric guitar*.



The Names of the Strings

The six strings of a guitar are numbered from first to sixth starting on the thinnest string and counting up to the thickest string. The strings also have letter names that correspond to each string. Memorize the names of your strings.



Proper Right Hand Technique



Hold the pick between your thumb and first finger. The thumb and pick should form a 90 degree angle. The pick should be sticking out from underneath the thumb a 1/4 to 1/2 of an inch.



Bracing your hand gives your hand the needed stability to accurately switch between strings. Although there are many different ways to brace, placing your pinky on the soundboard right below the first string is the most common way. You don't need to press hard.

Proper Left Hand Technique



Hold your thumb on the back of the fingerboard on the upper side of the neck. Be careful not to put your thumb on top of the neck. Your wrist should be low with some air space between your palm and the neck of the guitar.



Your four fingers should be evenly spaced. Notice how the middle two fingers are coming straight onto the fretboard. Your first and fourth fingers are curved slightly toward the frets.

Tuning the Guitar

Your guitar will need to be tuned before playing. Tuning involves tightening or loosening the strings to raise or lower the pitch to match a constant pitch. There are three main ways to tune your guitar. You can tune your guitar by using an electronic tuner, or you can tune by “ear” using the other strings of the guitar, or you can tune to a keyboard.

Tuning with an Electric Tuner

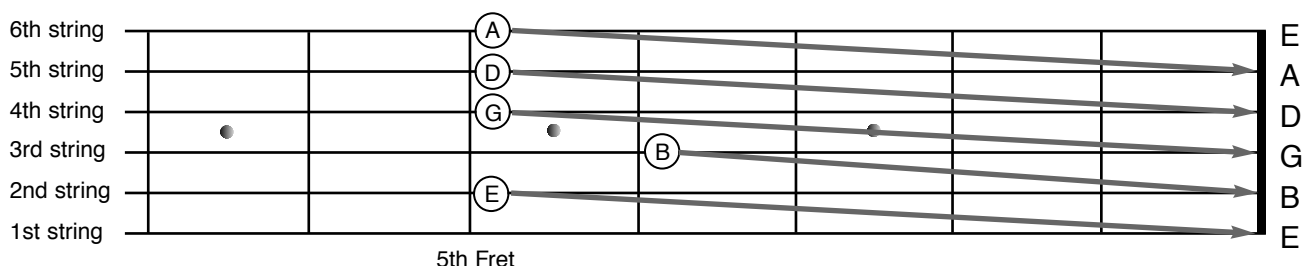
Many electric tuners come with a built in microphone for use with an acoustic guitar. If you are using an electric guitar you can plug your instrument cable directly into the tuner. According to the directions of your specific tuner, it will display whether you need to tighten or loosen the string in order to be in tune. Electric tuners are an easy to use, fast, and accurate way to tune your guitar.



Tuning by Ear

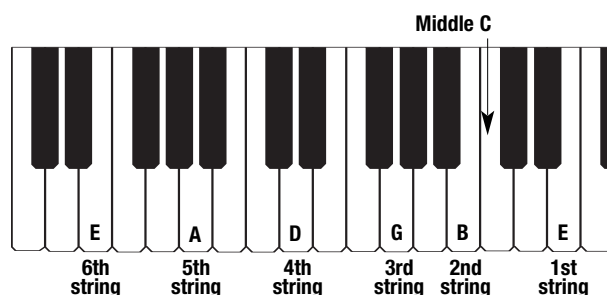
You can also tune your guitar by listening carefully to the other strings and tuning each string to the others. Here is the process.

- Put your finger on the fifth fret of the sixth string. Now, play the sixth string and the open fifth string. Listen to the two pitches. If the open fifth string sounds lower than the sixth string then tighten the fifth string tuning key until the two notes match. If the open fifth string sounds higher than the first note then loosen the fifth string tuning key. You always adjust the tuning keys of the open string, not the string that you are fretting.
- Next, play the fifth fret on the fifth string and the open fourth string underneath it. Listen to the two pitches carefully and adjust the open fourth string accordingly.
- Play the fourth string at the fifth fret. Listen and tune the open third string to it.
- To tune the second string, play the third string at the fourth fret and tune the open second string to it. This is the only string that does not use the fifth fret as the reference.
- Lastly, play the second string fingered back at the fifth fret and tune the open first string to it.



Tuning to a Keyboard

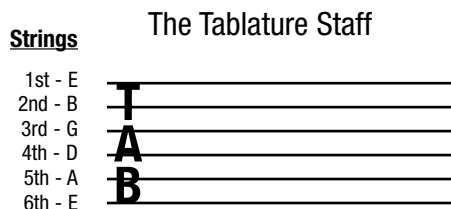
You can also tune your guitar to a keyboard or piano. The open strings of a guitar correspond to certain notes on a keyboard.



How to Read Guitar Tablature

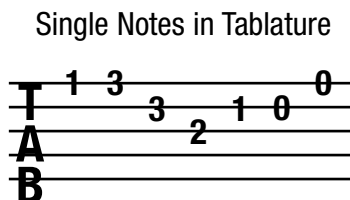
TABLATURE is a type of musical notation that guitarists have developed to describe what strings on the guitar are being played at any point and what frets need to be fingered.

Figure 1



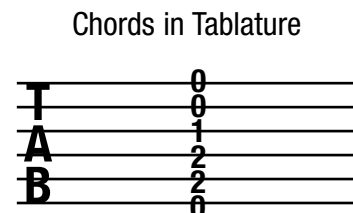
The 6 lines correspond to the 6 strings on your guitar.

Figure 2



The numbers tell you which frets you need to put your fingers on and which strings to use. In this example you would play the first string fretted at the first fret. The next note would be the first string at the third fret. Then, the second string at the third fret and so on.

Figure 3

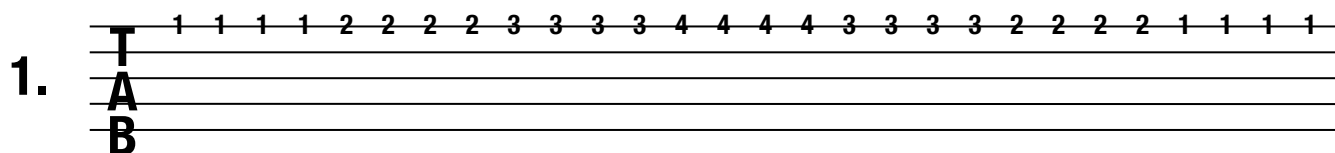


In this example you would play all of the strings at the same time. The first, second and sixth strings would be open. Your first finger would fret the first fret on the third string. The fourth and fifth strings would have fingers on the second frets of each string.

Finger Exercises

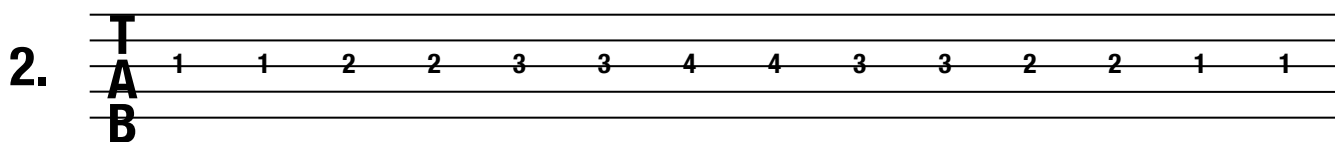
These finger exercises are designed to build coordination between your right and left hand. Proper picking and fingering hand coordination is vital to good controlled guitar playing.

Directions: Play each finger pattern on each string. Start on the first string, then the second, third, etc... Although a little difficult at first, these exercises quickly build the motor skill control needed to play the guitar effectively. Practice with an even, steady rhythm. The goal is control, not speed.



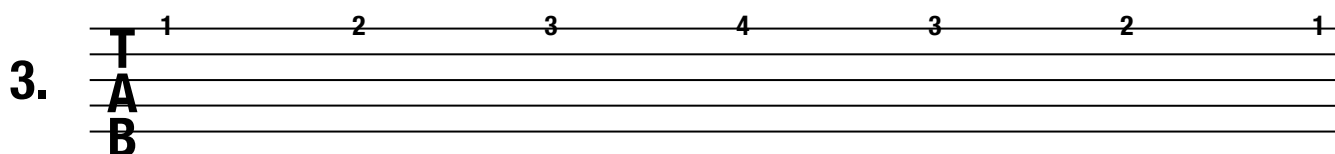
Right Hand Picking: Down-Up-Down-Up

Repeat for all Strings



Right Hand Picking: Down-Up

Repeat for all Strings



Right Hand Picking: All Down

Repeat for all Strings

4. **T** 1 2 1 3 1 4 1 3 1 2 1
A
B

Repeat for all Strings

5. **T**
A
B 4 3 4 2 4 1 4 3 4 2 4 1

Repeat for all Strings

How to Read Chord Blocks

CHORD BLOCKS are diagrams that tell you how a chord is to be played. They include information about which frets are to be played by which fingers and which strings are to be played or not.

Strings ----->

6th 5th 4th 3rd 2nd 1st
 E A D G B E

← - Nut

1st Fret
 2nd Fret
 3rd Fret
 4th Fret

Chord Name - → **C**

Don't Play String - → X

Put 1st Finger on 2nd String at 1st Fret

Put 2nd Finger on 4th String at 2nd Fret

Put 3rd Finger on 5th String at 3rd Fret

← - Play Strings Open

· An open circle means play the appropriate string open.
 · A filled circle means play the note on that particular fret and string.
 · An X means to not play that string.

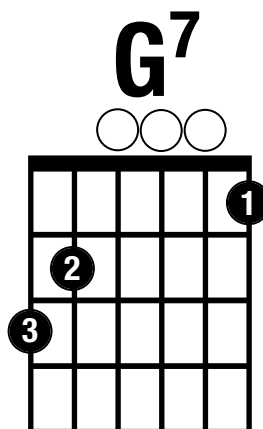
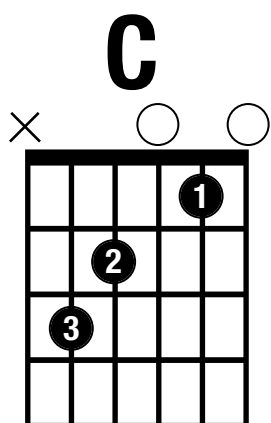


Session 1 Assignment

- Do all finger exercises on all of the strings daily until there is no soreness in fingers and they can be played without hesitation. (pages 4-5)
- Memorize the names of the strings. (page 2)
- Practice the C & G7 chord exercises. Each note should sound out clearly. Try not to hesitate between chords. (page 6)

The C and G7 Chords

The first two chords to be learned are the C and G7. Form and play each chord. The numbers tell you which fingers to use. The C chord uses only 5 strings, so be careful not to play the sixth string. The G7 uses all six strings.



Chord Exercises

1. **C** **G7** **C** **G7** **C**

 ◇ | ◇ | ◇ | ◇ | ◇ |

2. **C** **G7** **C**

 / / / / / | / / / / / | / / / / / | / / / / / | / / / / / |

Strum chord for each slash.

3. **C** **G7** **C** **G7** **C**

 / / / / / | / / / / / | / / / / / | / / / / / | / / / / / |

Strum chord for each slash.

Practicing is the Only Way to Improve

In order to make good progress, you should practice at least 15 minutes a day. If you can do 30 minutes, that would be great. You will only improve with effort. Consistent daily practice yields better results faster.