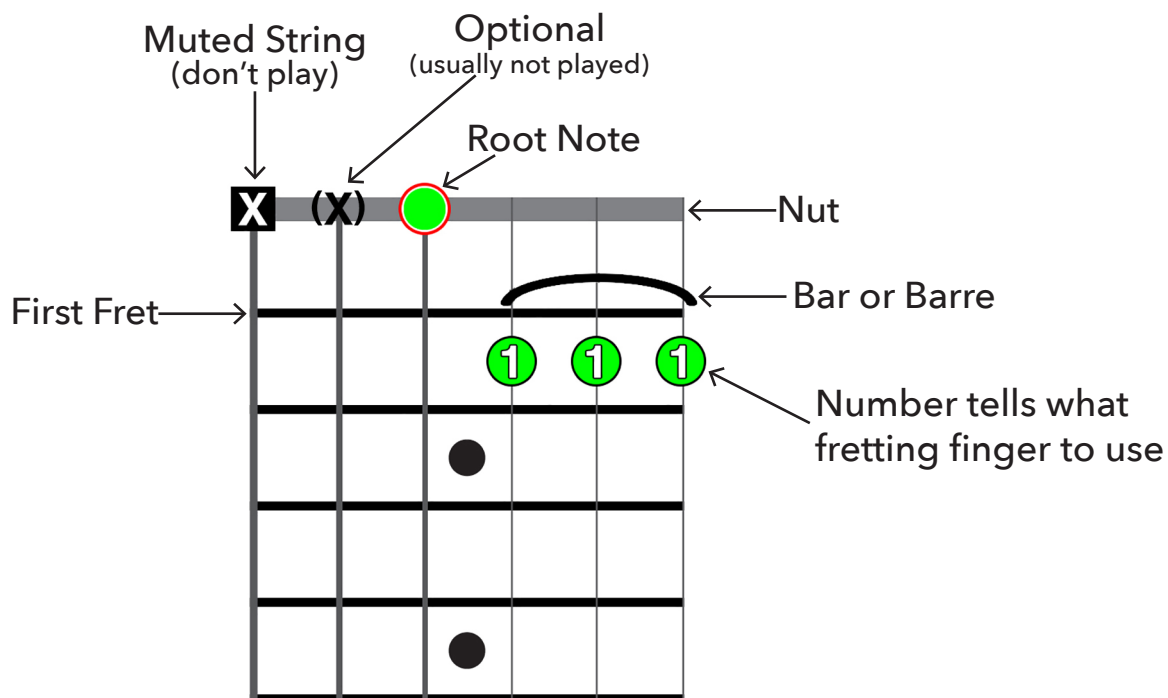




How to Read Chord Stamps



The above diagram is called a chord stamp. It allows us to easily read chord shapes. Many chord stamp illustrations vary, but for our example, let's go over the following:

The red/green dot represents the root of the chord; the note that we build the chord upon. Essentially, it's the note that the rest of the chord is based on (i.e. "D", "D-", "D7" chords would all have different "fingerings", but would all have the same root, D.) Often times, the root is the lowest sounding note in the chord.

The number within the green circle represents the fretting hand finger that should be pressed down on that particular place on the neck. "O" means open, or play that string without a finger on it. Sometimes I will put a "T" if I want you to bring your thumb up and over the back of the neck to play certain notes. Your fingers are notated: Index=1, Middle=2, Ring=3, Pinky=4. The semi-circle arc located above the three 1's on the chord represent a bar. A bar is when you lay your finger across several strings - like a bar. This can be tricky in the beginning, but don't over-think the process! Typically, a new player will only be able to bar 2 or 3 notes at a time. As your hand gets stronger, you will be able to bar all 6 strings when necessary!

The "X" means "don't play that string", or "mute that string". It should not vibrate or make any sound when you play the chord. The "(X)" means that you can play the note, but you usually would not. Technically, this particular note could be played in the chord without any "dissonance" (disagreeable notes/sound). If you do choose to play it, the chord will still sound "harmonic" (agreeable notes/sound).

You'll notice that I've not only provided with you with 2 pages of chord stamps for the most often used open chords, but I've also included a page of blank chord stamp templates so you can jot down new chords as you learn them! It's really exciting when you discover a cool, new chord you've never heard before!