

Bar Chords

As a beginner we all start by learning open chords on guitar. However those chords are quite limited :

- In terms of music genres, the major and minor open chords are mainly used in pop songs. If you want to play other genres, there is a great chance you will need bar chords.
- In terms of sound, open chords are rich because they benefit from the resonant sound of open strings. Nonetheless, only using major and minor open chords will make you sound bland. In order to enrich your sounds you should learn bar chords as they will open a door to a new sound dimension.
- In terms of pitch, which defines the highness or lowness of a sound, open chords are limited because you can not produce higher sounding chords. Using a capo won't help if you make songs that use both low and high chords. Plus using bar chords allows you to play chords on the whole guitar neck because they are **movable shapes**.
- In terms of tonality. Indeed you can not play all chords using open chords. For example try to play a simple F chord on your guitar using open chords, you just can't. So if you need to play in different tonalities you have to learn bar chords.

There are so many more reasons why you should not restrict yourself to only play open chords. Learning bar chords will allow you to enter the *intermediate guitar player* scene. This is an **unavoidable step** in order to learn more advanced concepts such as suspended chords, seventh chords, extended chords, the CAGED system etc.

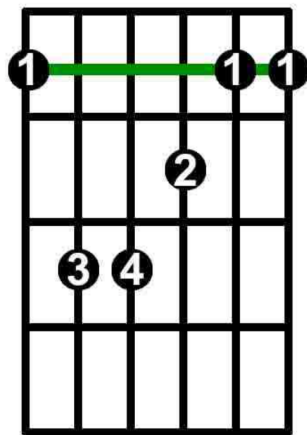
Disclaimer : the theory behind bar chords is easy, especially if you have understood all the previous beginner lessons. However, starting practicing bar chords is a pain because it is hard for the hand and the fingers for the neophytes. **It takes months to play bar chords** properly without hurting your fingers. Don't worry it is normal !

Four essential shapes

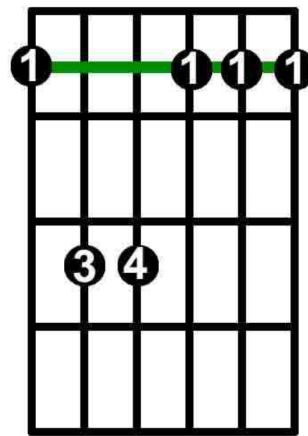
Here are the four main bar chord shape.

- The E Shape shows how to play respectively a major and minor bar chords on the whole neck where the root of the chord is in the low E string
- The A Shape shows how to play respectively a major and minor bar chords on the whole neck where the root of the chord is in the low A string

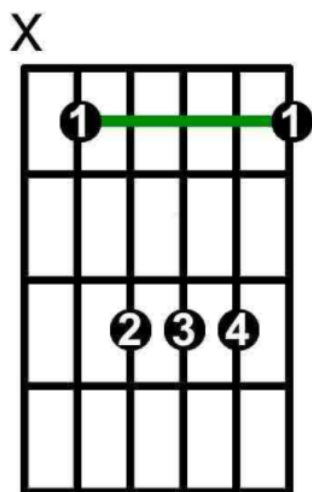
E shape



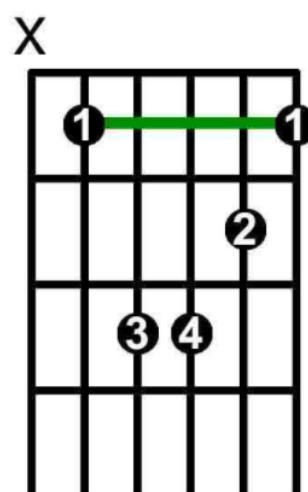
Em shape



A shape



Am shape



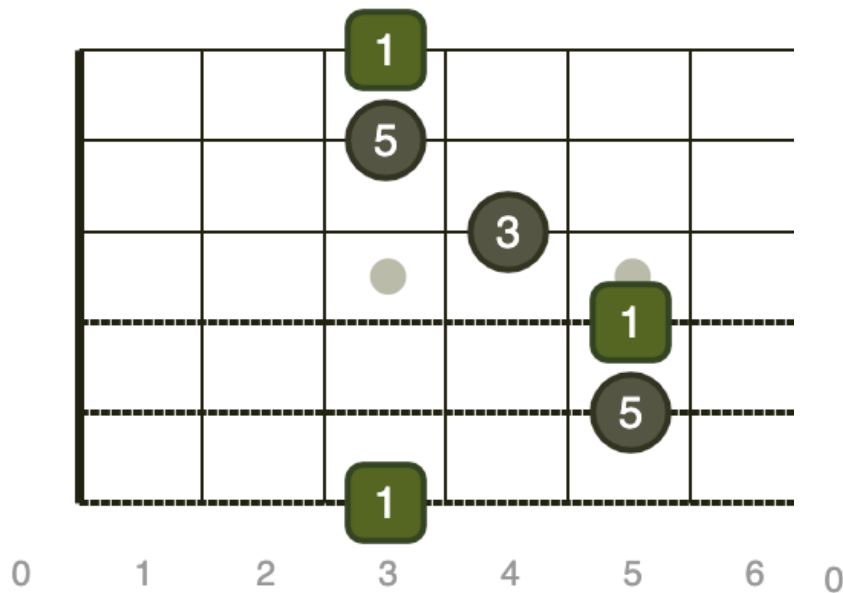
The number here indicates the finger to use to play each bar chord shape. The finger number one represents the index. The fourth is the pinky finger. Beware, when playing any A shape bar chord, make sure not to make the low E string rings.

Intervals in bar chords

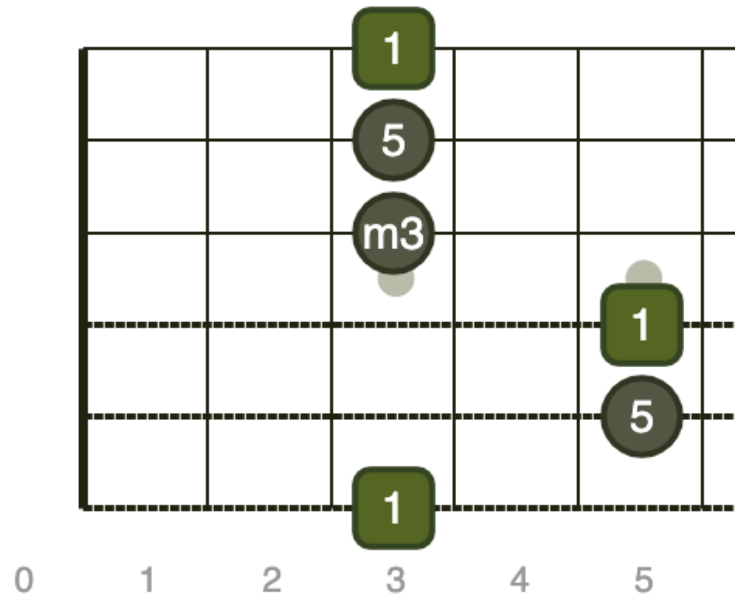
The four essential bar chord shapes are made up of intervals from the root, the lowest note of the chord. This is what makes those bar chord have the sound they have – major or minor. Take time to understand each note and the role of each note in the four bar chord shapes.

Also take time to understand that these **shapes are movable** : this means that a G major / minor bar chord will have the same shape as a X major / minor bar chord.

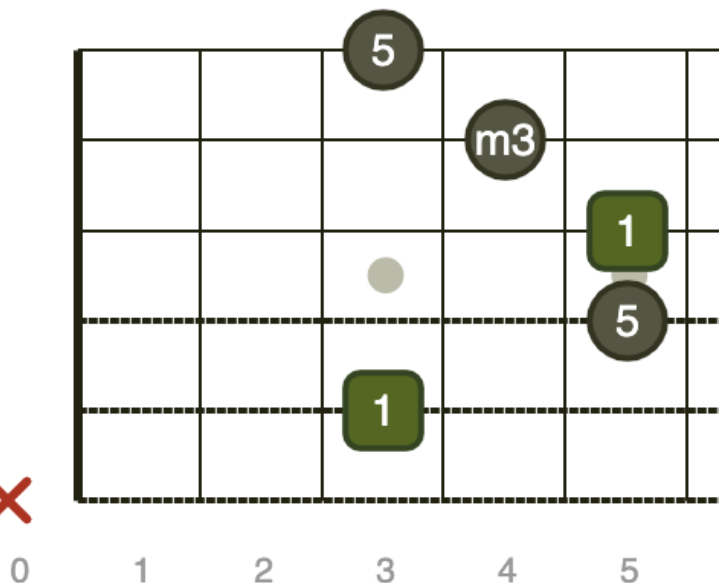
G



G m



C m



C

