

Learn to Play the Guitar in Just 112 Days,
More or Less
Randy Wimer

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Week 1

Introduction

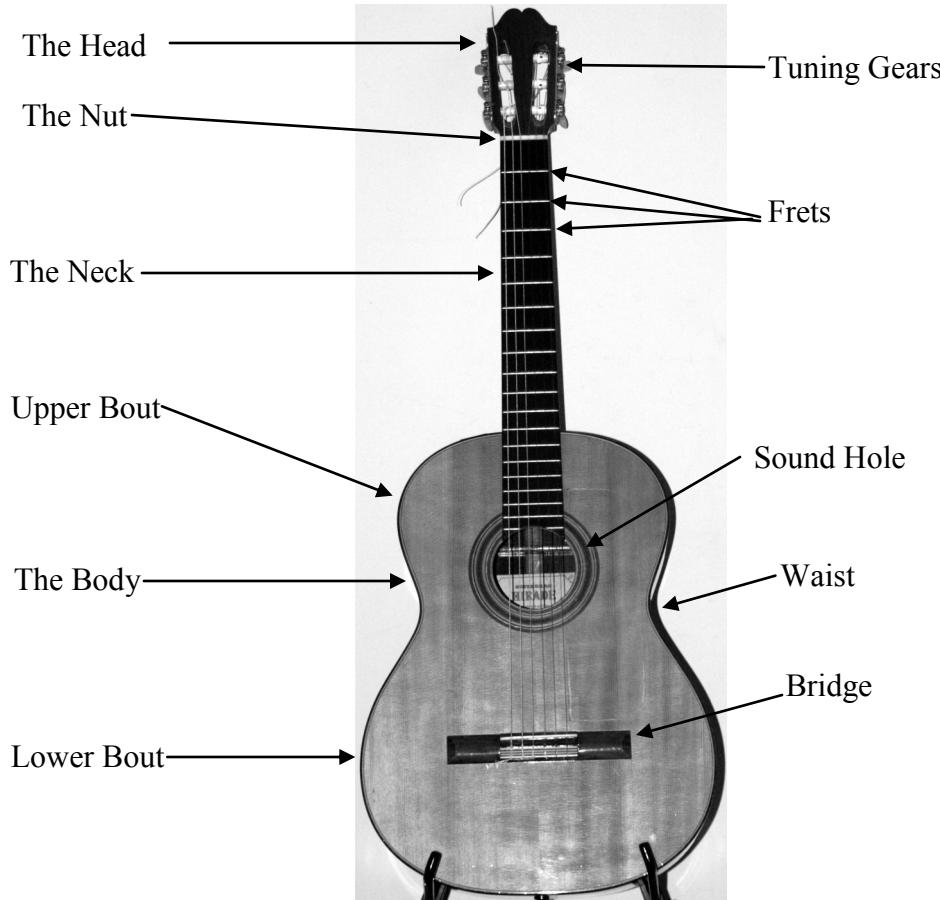
Why oh why, you may ask, does the world need another beginning guitar method? The simple reason, as any experienced guitar teacher will tell you, is that beginning guitar methods tend to... what's the word I'm looking for... Oh yeah. They suck. And I'm sure that unenlightened readers will conclude that this method is no exception. But at least it will suck in a different way (does that mean it might blow?).

I've debated the organizational scheme of this material for many years. I've decided on the integrated presentation of materials on reading music and learning techniques of rhythm guitar. The pages dealing with notes carry the A label, chords the B label. Feel free to step through the material at different rates, though you may find that some of the later chord material requires understanding of rhythms presented in the note section.

I've made every effort to make sure the information in this work is accurate - the snide comments and flippant attitude notwithstanding. If you feel some overwhelming need to correct something please don't hesitate to comment through the contact page of my website, www.wimerguitar.com.

First Things

The Parts of the Guitar



Holding the Guitar

Statement of Personal Bias: Okay, I'm primarily a classical guitarist, these days. That means I approach technical issues (including how to hold the instrument) from that perspective.

It wasn't always thus; I started as a rock player, gravitated to jazz and then classical. In my early years of playing I thought the way classical guitarists held their guitars was at least silly, if not a little less than masculine. With time and experience I've come to understand the wisdom of the classical position: it anchors the guitar at four points making it extremely stable.



Many steel string players hold the guitar like this: legs crossed, guitar on right leg, upper bout against the chest and enough pressure from the right forearm to keep the guitar stable.



This position is very similar but instead of crossing the legs, a foot stool is used under the right foot to get the leg elevated.



You'll see flamenco guitarists use this position, similar to the one above with the left ankle closer to the right knee, and the back of the guitar closer to the player's body.



This is the traditional classical position: left leg raised by a foot stool, guitar on left leg, back of the guitar at the lower bout resting against right leg, upper bout against chest and right forearm lightly resting to provide some stability.

Here's the bottom line; there are two concrete rules: 1) the neck of the guitar should never dip below a line parallel to the floor; and 2) neither hand is used to support the weight of the instrument. The pictures illustrate some popular options.



This position is identical to the classical position but instead of a foot stool I'm using a device called the neck up to raise the guitar to the correct position while I keep both feet on the floor. This is much easier on the lower back.



A typical folding foot stool.

A Neck-up. There are other similar devices; Gitano makes one, there's one called a guitar A-frame.

The Right hand, how to strike the string

At this point you need to decide how you want to begin. You can strike the strings with a pick; alternating your index and middle fingers; or just use your thumb. If you use a pick, hold it in the manner shown and use all down strokes until instructed otherwise.



Don't let too much of the point of the pick stick out past your fingers. Avoid making a fist - use enough pressure to keep the pick secure but no more.

If you use your fingers, rest your thumb on the sixth string, pretend (or not) that there's a tennis ball under your wrist to get the approximate height of the wrist and strike the strings alternating the index (i) and middle (m) fingers. It's easiest to start with a rest stroke - that simply means when you hit the first string, bring the finger through and let it rest on the second string.



Index finger prepares to strike the third string.



Index finger rests on fourth string after striking third string.

Some students have trouble with the techniques described above. It might be easier, just to get started, to hit the strings with the right hand thumb.



Thumb prepares to strike third string



The thumb rests on the second string after striking the third.

The left hand: Pressing on the strings to produce a Particular note or chord

Big rule: Never use more force than necessary. Here's the goal, you want to push down on the string until it touches the desired fret. Usually you want to do this without touching any of the other strings. **The farther behind the fret you are, the harder you have to push down to get a clear sound.** So you want to be as close to the fret as you can without actually getting on it. You'll want to play on the ends of the fingers and you'll want to keep the fingers curled. Watch your wrist position - it should be in a neutral position, not bent much in either direction. Keep the thumb towards the center of the back of the neck, somewhere behind the area between the first and second frets.



In the first picture the third finger is pushing down the first string; notice that the other fingers remain ready to push a string down but they have very little tension in them. (Above) Notice the position of the thumb, it remains straight and positioned as described in the text.

(Left) This picture approximates what you should see when you look down at your left hand.

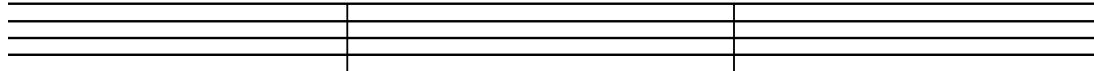
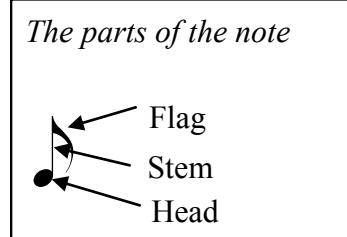
Communicating Music

There are multiple methods of communicating musical intent for the guitar. There is, of course, traditional written music. There is a specialized system or writing music for fretted instruments called tablature. There are various kinds of diagrams depicting the guitar neck. We will examine all of these.

Standard Notation

English speaking countries name notes using the first seven letters of the alphabet, A through G.

Standard notation is written on a system of five lines and four spaces called a staff. Each position on the staff corresponds to one of the letter names. The head of the note is placed on a line or space and named accordingly.



The Staff

A clef sign appears at the beginning of a staff to give you a starting point for the alphabetical sequence. The two common clefs are treble or G clef and the bass or F clef.

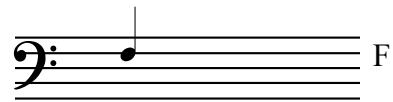
Treble Clef

The loop of the treble clef circles the G note .



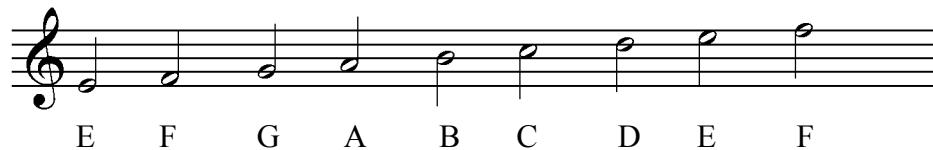
Bass Clef

The dots of the bass clef are on either side of the F note.



Guitar music is written on the treble clef.

It may be useful to remember the old elementary school mnemonics - the names of the lines are E G B D F, **Every Good Boy Does Fine**. The names of the spaces spell the word face.



Here's a little practice. Fill in the boxes with the names of the notes below.

The two most noticeable elements of a note are its pitch, determined by its location on the staff, and its *duration*, or how long the note is sustained. We've discussed pitch, let's move on to rhythms. When you listen to music you are aware of an underlying pulse. Each of those pulses is a beat. Keep that definition in mind. In written music a couple of numbers follow the clef sign; this is ***the time signature***.



Virtually every book you read will tell you that the top number tells you how many beats per measure and the bottom number tells you what type of note gets one beat. I hate that - it's accurate information that is at this point useless. Here's my take: we have to keep track of where we are in the music. We can't just count sequentially..."and a one, two, three, four...three hundred seventy five...That would be silly. We need to group the counts. That's what the top number tells us. In the example, we would count 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, etc.

Types of Notes



Eighth note



Quarter note



Half note



Whole note

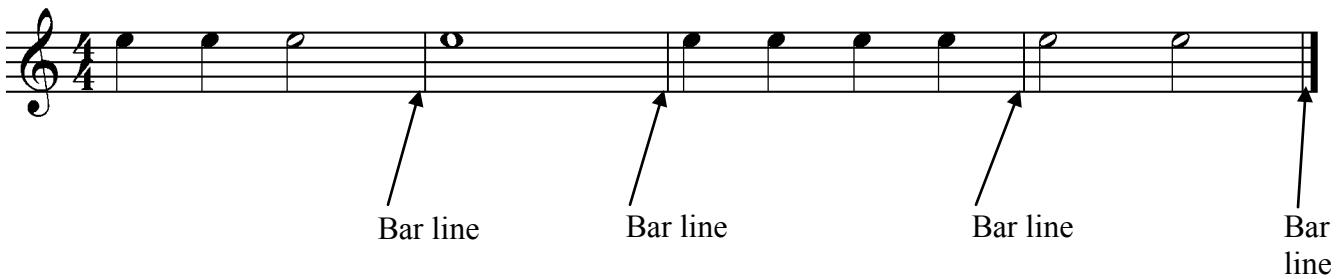
The different types of notes are used to convey how long the note lasts. The values of the notes are related to each other by a factor of two; a whole note is twice as long as a half note; a half note is twice as long as a quarter note; etc. You can think of the bottom number telling you which type of note gets one count. In the example the 4 tells you a quarter (1/4) gets one beat. If the time signature was 3/8, an eighth note would get one beat. In most of this book the bottom number will be 4, so a whole note would get 4 beats, a half note would get 2 beats and an eighth note would get a half beat. Just be aware the system is designed to be flexible.

An alternate way to arrive at note values is to realize the bottom number of the time signature always tells you how many beats a whole note would receive.

Remember, when I say a note gets four beats, that means you hit the string once and let it sustain for four beats, not strike the string four times.

Measures and Bar lines

As a useful way to help keep your place in a piece of written music, it is divided into sections called measures or bars. Remember the top number of the time signature? Once the proper number of beats has been written, a vertical line is placed in the music. This is called a bar line and the space between the bar lines is called a measure (or bar).



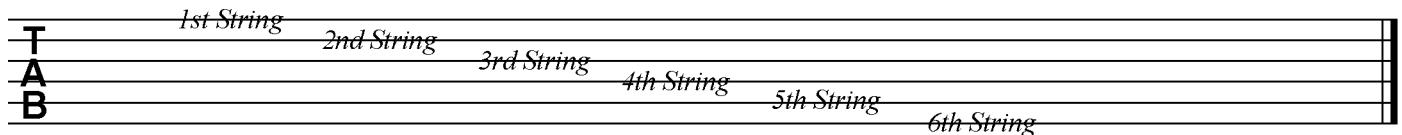
For practice, add the bar lines to the music below.



"common time" - the C is an abbreviation for that.

Tablature

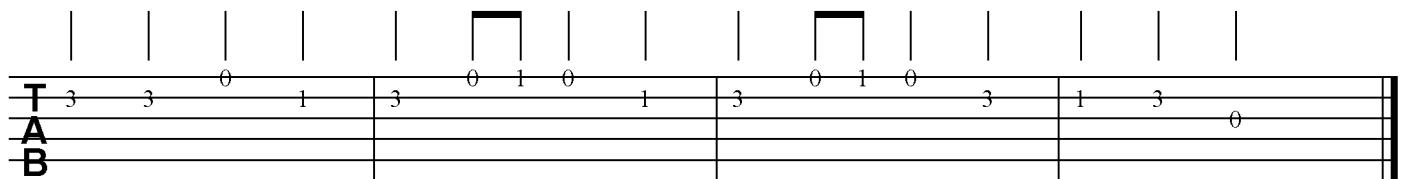
Tablature is a very old system of writing music for fretted instruments. Standard notation supplanted tablature in the 18th cent. and by the time I started playing, in the early 1960s, tab was relatively uncommon. It grew in popularity over the years, aided by its use as the main method of writing for related instruments, like the banjo. The internet explosion is responsible for the current vigorous interest in tab. Any text editing program will allow you to create tabs - notation requires specialized and (relatively) expensive software. Here's how it works.



As indicated, each line represents a string, the top line for the first string and the bottom line for the sixth. Numbers will appear on the lines representing the fret number.



The example above is a G scale. The first number, 0, tells you to play the third string, open. The inherent weakness of tab is the lack of standardized rhythmic notation. That is sometimes addressed by the addition of stems above the notes.

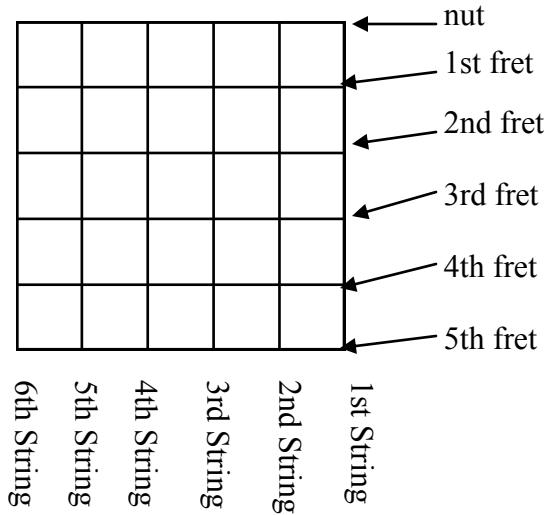


I think it is at its best when paired with standard notation.

A composite image showing standard notation (top) and tablature (bottom) for a G scale. The standard notation shows a 4/4 time signature, a key signature of one sharp, and a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes. The tablature shows the corresponding fingerings and string numbers.

Frames (Grids, Chord diagrams, Fret charts)

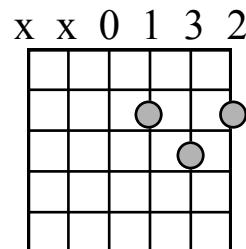
As my heading indicates, these very useful little charts are called many different names. I use them for many things but most commonly for showing the finger positions for chords.



Dots will tell you where to put your fingers; numbers above the dots tell you which fingers to use. Here's an example:

The 0 indicates an open string. The Xs indicate strings that are omitted when strumming the chord.

D



Students need to know that some misguided folks rotate these diagrams 90 degrees to the left. I understand the logic, the strings and frets line up with guitar in a more realistic manner - but **this is not reality**. Really. Hey, truth of the matter, it's my experience that the way I lay the diagrams out is much more common, but it's really just whatever you get used to.

Tuning

Buy a tuner. It's the 21st century. The Chinese are turning these things out by the tens of thousands. They're cheap and they'll make your life measurably easier. So, go to your local music store, plop down your \$15 - \$20; buy the tuner and make the person who sells it to you demonstrate how to use it.

Having given you my best advice, I still feel morally bound to show you the time honored method of getting the guitar in tune with itself that's been used for generations:

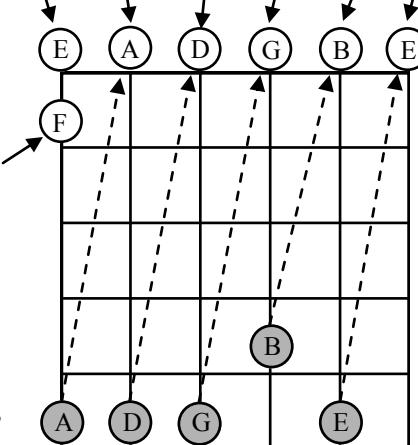
1. Tune the 6th (lowest, closest to the ceiling) string. (See, here is where this method breaks down. If you have something that will give you a reference for the 6th string, chances are it could give you the pitches for the other strings as well. If you don't have a keyboard or something to get you a reference pitch, and you don't have perfect pitch, you have to guess, which at this point is not a great idea.)
2. Once the 6th string is tuned, press down on it at the fifth fret. That is your reference for the open 5th string. If the 5th string is too high (and your guitar is strung properly), turn the tuner knob clockwise to lower the pitch. Conversely, if it's too low, turn the tuner knob counter-clockwise to raise the pitch. ***Hit the string and let it ring as you turn the knob so you can hear how much of an adjustment you're making.*** Tuning gears vary greatly as do strings and guitar quality. What might take half a turn on one guitar could take the smallest segment of a turn on another.
3. Repeat this step for the 5th and 4th strings (go to the fifth fret of the 5th string for the sound of the open 4th string), and the 4th and 3rd strings.
4. To tune the 2nd string **go the fourth fret of the 3rd string**, not the fifth.
5. To tune the 1st string, return to the fifth fret of the 2nd string for your reference.

If you happen to have a keyboard and know where the notes are on it, you can use this chart to get the reference pitches for the six strings



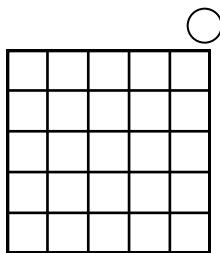
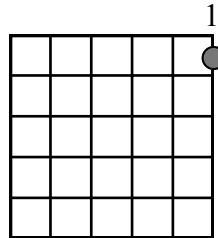
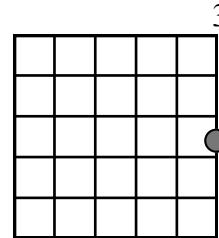
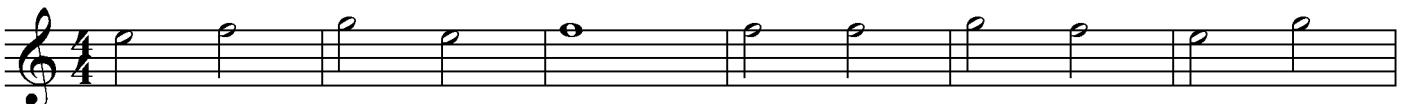
Back to step 1 above: If you're brave, you can get a reference for the 6th string from you telephone (land line, not cell). The dial tone is a combination of an F and A note. The lowest note (and the one most of my students sing when asked to match the tone) is the F. The F is at the first fret of the 6th string. So, in a crunch, hold down the first fret of the 6th string, listen to a dial tone and try to match it. Then proceed with the rest of the above steps (illustrated in the diagram at right).

There are many tuning aids online. Simply do a search for "online guitar tuner" and take your pick. And after you've tried all this, seriously, **buy a tuner.**



Week 2
Notes on the 1st String

E, open

F, 1st finger
1st fretG, 3rd finger
3rd fret**Exercise 1****Exercise 2**

The exercise below is in 3/4 time. Remember to count in groups of 3; "1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3," etc.

Exercise 3

Are we having fun yet? If you say yes, I fear for your reason but power to you. For those normal readers, **it gets better**. Just hang in there a while longer. Before we expand beyond these first three notes, let's look at a couple of other features of musical notation.

Rests: a note tells you to make a sound. A rest indicates the opposite, a period of silence. Every note has a corresponding rest, calling for the same number of beats of silence.

Eighth rest Quarter rest Half rest Whole rest

For many instruments a rest is a passive thing, it requires no action. A violinist simply stops moving the bow; a flute player simply stops blowing (if such a thing is possible, *just kidding*). This is not always the case for guitarists. Consider the following:

Remember that the rest indicates silence. When you get to the rests on beats 2 and 4 you have to stop the vibrating first string, otherwise it will continue to ring and sound like the half notes in the second measure. If you are using your fingers, simply stop the string with the finger that will play the next note. If you are using a pick, rotate your right wrist and bring the pinky-finger side of the palm of your hand down against the string. If the note is fretted, an F or G, say, you can stop them by releasing the pressure with the left hand. There is a danger there, though, of creating a buzz at the end of the note. Be sure to listen and make sure the sound is what you're trying for.

Dotted notes: A dot placed after a note increases its value by half; for the mathematically inclined, multiply the value of the undotted note by 1.5 to get its dotted value. The examples below are based on the bottom number of the time signature being a 4, meaning a quarter note gets one beat.

Half note, 2 beats. Dotted half note, 3 beats

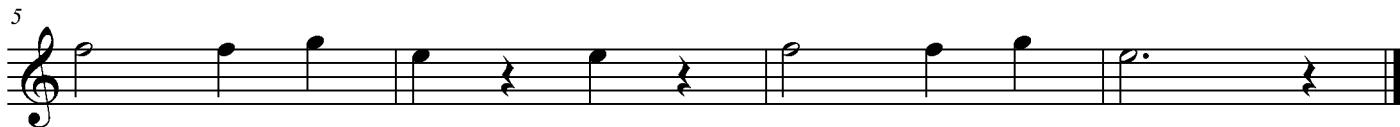
Whole note, 4 beats Dotted whole note, 6 beats

Quarter note, 1 beat Dotted quarter note, 1 and 1/2 beats (we'll get to that later.)

Exercise 4



Exercise 5



Practice Tips

If you haven't read the essay about practice in Appendix 2 of this book, do so now! It will help you. If you've never read music before, try these things. Before you play each exercise go through it and say aloud the names of the notes. Then practice counting the rhythms aloud and clapping when you should play the notes. Count aloud as you play. We're only dealing with three notes so far. The melodies in these exercises are not meant to be memorized - they aren't that wonderful. What we're trying to do is build the eye-hand coordination; see the note, play the note. The more you read, the easier it will become. To that end, after you've played each exercise, play it backwards. Play up and down the page instead of side to side - do anything you can do to increase the number of exercises you play.

First Chords

Chords are nothing more than combinations of notes. We use the same 7 letters to name them but we add a quality (or color) such as “major” or “minor”. If no quality is specified it’s assumed that the chord is major. Minor chords are labeled with a lowercase m or with a minus sign (-). I use these five chords not for any musical reason, but to facilitate the physical challenge of learning how to get the fingers to work this way. The word *strum* means quickly brushing across the specified strings. If you’re using a pick, simply rest the pick on the lowest string without an X and then, using the elbow and wrist, bring the pick through the rest of the strings. If you’re using your fingers, for right now, use your thumb in the manner described for the pick.

At first, concentrate on getting a good, clear sound from the chords. Try to eliminate buzzy strings (usually caused by either not pushing hard enough on the string or by being too far behind the fret) and dead strings (caused either by lack of pressure or by a finger pushing down an adjacent string leaning into and touching the offending string). Check this by playing the chords one string at a time before strumming them.

| C | Am | E | Em | A |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| x 3 2 0 1 0 | x 0 2 3 1 0 | 0 2 3 1 0 0 | 0 2 3 0 0 0 | x 0 2 3 4 0 |
| | | | | |
| | | | | x 0 1 2 3 0 |

Your first challenge is to memorize the chords. **Here’s another tip:** for each chord, say aloud where each finger is. For example, with the Em chord, say, “2nd finger, 5th string, 2nd fret; 3rd finger, 4th string, 2nd fret.” Close your eyes. See if you can picture where your fingers are supposed to be. Open your eyes, place your fingers, strum the chord and say the name of the chord aloud. Release the fingers; place them again, strum and again say the name of the chord. Repeat this process five to ten times. You’ll memorize the chords within a few practice sessions by doing this.

The difficult thing about chords is not getting a good sound, nor memorizing; it’s changing from one to another. Don’t try the chord changing exercises until the chords are memorized. Notice the exercises use the chords in the sequence given above. Here’s why. To move from C to Am, it’s the 3rd finger that moves. From Am to E the shape stays the same, try to move the fingers as a unit. From E to Em, it’s just the 1st finger that changes. Em to A uses the 2nd and 3rd fingers as a unit and adds or removes the 4th finger.

Here's how these work.

Don't forget to check the time signature to tell you how to count.

Tells you what
chord to play.

Slashes indicate rhythms, in this case strum on each beat.



First chord changing exercise

Treat each line as a separate exercise. Slow and even is much better than quick and choppy. In other words, ***slow down!***

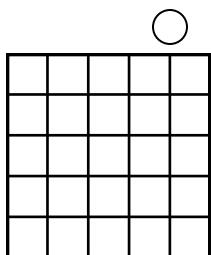
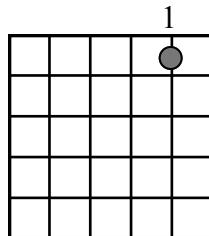
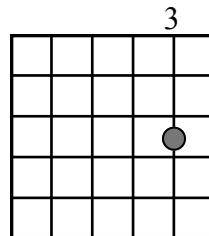
A musical score for four staves of a 4/4 time signature. The top staff starts with a C major chord (E, G, B) and continues with a repeating eighth-note pattern. The second staff starts with an A minor chord (A, C, E) and continues with a repeating eighth-note pattern. The third staff starts with an E major chord (B, D, G) and continues with a repeating eighth-note pattern. The bottom staff starts with an E minor chord (C, E, G) and continues with a repeating eighth-note pattern. The score consists of four staves of music, each with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The chords are indicated above the staves, and the music is represented by eighth-note patterns.

Something new, the symbol at the end of each line is a *repeat sign*.

As written, these indicate you should play each line twice. A section bracketed with repeat signs (the dots face right at the beginning of the repeat and towards the left at the end) is to be played twice.

Week 3
Notes on the 2nd String

B, open

C, 1st finger
1st fretD, 3rd finger
3rd fret**Exercise 6**
Exercise 7

5

Exercise 8

5

Duets are a valuable tool for the beginning student. They provide a full sounding piece of music to play while forcing the student to play in strict rhythm. Recordings of all the duets in the book are available as mp3s on the website.

Duet #1

RLW

Student

Teacher

7

13

Here's a nice long exercise using just the six notes we've learned so far. Don't forget to try reading backwards, up and down the page, or any configuration you can think of. The goal is to train yourself to see the note and get the fingers in the right place with a minimal amount of thinking, and the key to that is practice and repetition.

1

5

9

13

17

21

25

29

Here are four new chords. Start with the D and G. Notice that the D2 is just a D with the 2nd finger removed and the Cmaj7 is the same as a C with the first finger removed. I've given two fingerings for the G - the top is preferred but many students find it difficult to use the little finger at first. By all means feel free to use the bottom fingering but be aware eventually you will need to use the top fingering. Using the 2nd, 3rd and 4th fingers also facilitates changing from a C to a G and back again (the 2nd and 3rd fingers can move as a unit from the fourth and fifth strings to the fifth and sixth.)

What do all those crazy numbers mean? Well, chords are merely combinations of notes from a scale (we'll get to those soon). The 2 in D2 tells us to use the 2nd note of a D scale in that chord, the 7 in Cmaj7 tells us to use the 7th note of a C scale. Don't get hung up on this now. I just want you to know that there is a logic in the chord names that will become clearer as you study further.

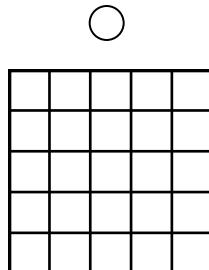
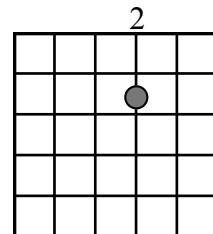
Chord Changing Exercises, set 2

D Am C D

A blank musical staff with five measures. The first measure is in D major, the second in A minor, the third in C major, the fourth in G major, and the fifth in D major. The staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp.

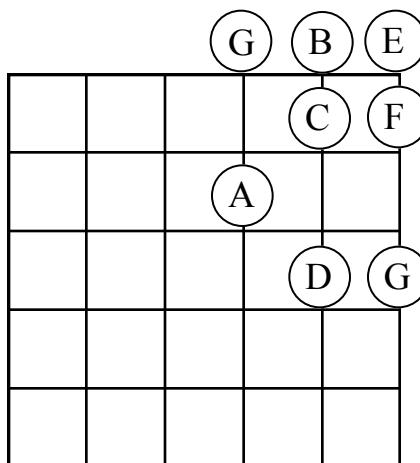
Week 4
Notes on the 3rd String

G, open

A, 2nd finger
2nd fret

Review

We've now learned 8 notes on the top three strings. Use this as a handy review. **Numbers next to notes designate fingers of the right hand, not frets.** It is convenient that at this point those numbers are the same but you cannot assume that will be the case. Circled numbers refer to strings.



G

A

B

C

D

E

F

G



Duet # 2

RLW

A musical score for the Teacher's part in a duet. The score is in 4/4 time, with a treble clef. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins with a whole note followed by a half note, then a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The second staff begins with a whole note followed by a half note, then a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The music is written on a staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4.

A musical score for piano, page 9, featuring a treble clef and four measures of music. The score consists of four staves of five-line music. Measure 1: The first note is a quarter note. The second note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The third note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The fourth note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. Measure 2: The first note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The second note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The third note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The fourth note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. Measure 3: The first note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The second note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The third note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The fourth note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. Measure 4: The first note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The second note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The third note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The fourth note is a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note.

A musical staff in treble clef, starting with a whole note. It continues with a half note, a whole note, a half note, a whole note, an eighth note, and another eighth note. The measure ends with a bar line.

F.A.R.

D A_m G D

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of four measures. The first measure is labeled 'D'. The second measure is labeled 'A_m'. The third measure is labeled 'G'. The fourth measure is labeled 'D'.

D A C C Maj⁷

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of four measures. The first measure is labeled 'D'. The second measure is labeled 'A'. The third measure is labeled 'C'. The fourth measure is labeled 'C Maj⁷'.

T.I.E.

G G D C

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of four measures. The first measure is labeled 'G'. The second measure is labeled 'G'. The third measure is labeled 'D'. The fourth measure is labeled 'C'.

G D C G

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of four measures. The first measure is labeled 'G'. The second measure is labeled 'D'. The third measure is labeled 'C'. The fourth measure is labeled 'G'.

E_m C G

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of three measures. The first measure is labeled 'E_m'. The second measure is labeled 'C'. The third measure is labeled 'G'.

A_m C E_m D

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of four measures. The first measure is labeled 'A_m'. The second measure is labeled 'C'. The third measure is labeled 'E_m'. The fourth measure is labeled 'D'.

C G C G

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of four measures. The first measure is labeled 'C'. The second measure is labeled 'G'. The third measure is labeled 'C'. The fourth measure is labeled 'G'.

A_m C G

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of three measures. The first measure is labeled 'A_m'. The second measure is labeled 'C'. The third measure is labeled 'G'.

Week 5

Accidentals

Has it yet occurred to you to wonder about the notes on the 2nd frets of the first and second strings? To know that you have to understand a little more about the way music works.

First: the smallest space (interval) between two notes is called a half-step. On a guitar, that is equivalent to simply moving from one fret to the next. The space from E to F, or from B to C is a half-step. It's not a giant leap to the **second** thing: **a whole step is two half-steps.** The space from F to G, C to D, and G to A is a whole step. Here's what you really (really) need to know: **there are whole steps between all of the notes except E and F, and B and C, which are separated by half-steps.**

In the table below each box represents a half-step.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| A | | B | C | | D | | E | F | | G | | A |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|

The empty spaces are named using **sharps (#)** or **flats (b)**.

The conventional explanation is a sharp raises a note a half-step and a flat lowers a note a half-step. For the purposes of completing our chart, each blank space can be named from the notes on either side - the first blank can be the A raised a half step, **A#**, or the B lowered a half-step, **Bb**. Don't let the fact that the same note can have two names bother you. The two names are referred to as **enharmonic tones** and which name is chosen is determined by the context. Here is the completed chart.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|---|-------|---|-------|---|---|-------|---|-------|---|
| A | A#/Bb | B | C | C#/Db | D | D#/Eb | E | F | F#/Gb | G | G#/Ab | A |
|---|-------|---|---|-------|---|-------|---|---|-------|---|-------|---|

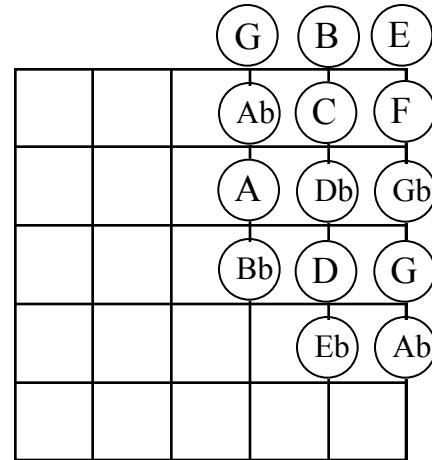
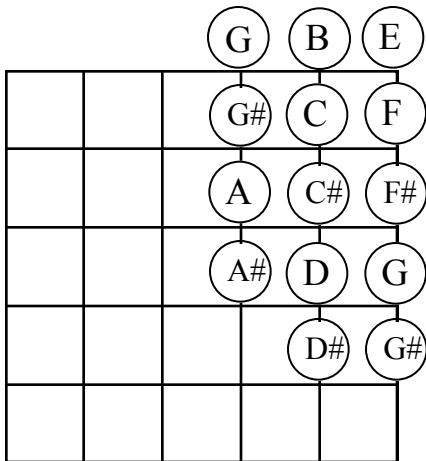
In written music a sharp or flat affects all notes of the same pitch that follow it until the next bar line.

5

As you may imagine, sometimes it's necessary to cancel the effect of a sharp or flat.

That's the purpose of a **natural (b)**.

Collectively, sharps, flats and naturals are called *accidentals*. The frames below add the sharps and flats to the eight notes you already know. Pay attention to the location of the Eb and the Bb. These can sometimes confuse beginning students.



The Accidental Waltz

RLW

Scales and Key Signatures

Now that you understand whole steps, half steps, sharps and flats, you can start to learn some scales. “Oh no!” I can hear you saying. Why do music teachers insist that their students learn scales? Are we sadists? Is it because we had to learn the damn things - so do you? Well, yeah, but really, no, really...there’s a good reason....just give me a minute. Oh yeah, **almost everything involved in understanding Western music** (hemisphere, not country &) **has its foundation in the simple major scale**... the do re mi fa thing. Good enough reason?

Scales are easy - every major scale has the same pattern of whole steps and half steps: whole, whole, half, whole, whole, whole, half. There are eight notes; there are whole steps between all the notes except the third and fourth, and the seventh and eighth.

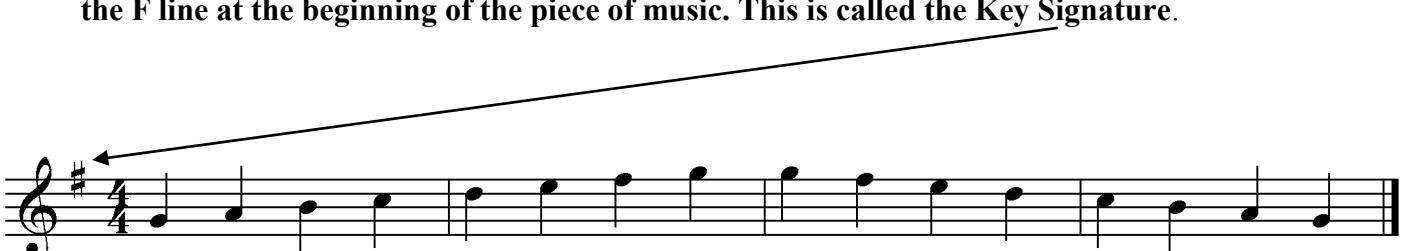
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| C | | D | | E | F | | G | | A | | B | C |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|---|

C is the only note where you can start the pattern of whole and half steps and land on only natural notes. Every other major scale contains at least one sharp or flat. Here’s your first scale: **The G major scale**.



| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|----|---|
| G | | A | | B | C | | D | | E | | F# | G |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|----|---|

When you hear someone talk about a song being in the key of G or the key of C, what they mean is the melody and the chords of that song are primarily constructed from that scale: **a song in the key of G uses the notes of a G scale as its starting point**. So, every F in that piece will be sharped. Rather than use the sharp sign every time, **a single sharp is placed on the F line at the beginning of the piece of music. This is called the Key Signature**.



The Tie

One more new thing...I know, I know but you get to rest your brain for a while after this. What if you wanted a note to sustain longer than one measure? That happens pretty often and the way we write that is to use **a tie**. In

this example, you wouldn’t pluck the whole note E in the second measure; you’d just let the note continue to ring. Remember, when you see the curved line connecting two notes, you won’t pluck the second one.



G Scale Etude

Remember, the C is an abbreviation for
4/4 time

RLW

The musical score consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (G major), and a 'C' indicating 4/4 time. The second staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The third staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth note patterns, with a fermata over the eighth note in measure 10.

Duet in G, One

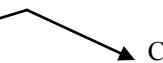
RLW

The musical score consists of two staves of music. The top staff is in 3/4 time and features a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The bottom staff is also in 3/4 time and features a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth note patterns, with a fermata over the eighth note in measure 10.

Duet in G, Two

Try strumming these chords to make your
Own accompaniment.

RLW

G  C

G

C

1

Em

Am

D

5

9

13

Week 6

Using Tablature

Many students are already quite familiar with tablature and have spent many an hour learning almost-accurate versions of deathless, angst ridden songs by their favorite semi-literate people-who-have-somehow-gotten-recording-contracts. But I'm not bitter. Tablature is explained on page 10. I know very well that reading music does not come easily to everyone. For that reason, scattered throughout the rest of the book, some pieces will have a blank tab staff under the notes. If you're having trouble with the notation, translate it to tab. Often, doing the translation will help you better understand the notes and will lead to you not needing the tab at all.

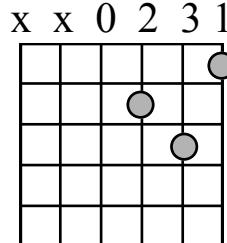
*Chords are for accompaniment.
Think of it as duet part. Don't let
them distract you from the notes.*

An Error in Translation

RLW

For those of you keeping score, last week no new chords were introduced. We're making up for that now. To play the chord accompaniment for the previous piece you need a new chord, Dm.

Dm



And while we're stopped, we might as well add some more new chords. Take heart. We'll stick with these chords for a while. No more new ones for a few weeks.

Seventh Chords

Our next group of chords will be some 7th chords, more correctly called **dominant 7ths**. "More with the numbers," I hear you say. Remember that numbers in chord names simply refer to notes of a scale that have been added to the basic chord. In this case the 7th tone of the scale, or, more precisely, the b7th tone. The major 7th chord, like the Cmaj7 we learned in the last chord lesson, contains the natural 7th. That chord will always be named a "major 7". When you just see the number 7, it is a dominant 7th chord and contains the lowered (flattened) 7th (b7). If all that is too much information, don't worry about it and just memorize the shapes. It is helpful to compare these shapes to their major chord counterparts - for example the E7 is just like the E chord with the third finger removed; the A7 is like an A with an open 3rd string; the G7 is like a G with the 1st string note lowered (some students like to think of a G7 as a C shape that's been expanded. D7 is like a D that's been turned upside down. And B7 is like... well, B7. Just learn it.

| | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| A7 | D7 | B7 | E7 | G7 |
| x 0 2 0 3 0 | x x 0 2 1 3 | x 2 1 3 0 4 | 0 2 0 1 0 0 | 3 2 0 0 0 1 |
| | | | | |

R.R.

| | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|---|
| A m | D 7 | G 7 | C |
| | | | |

7th Chord Exercise

RLW

1 A D E E7 A A7 D

6 G A A7 D D7 G C

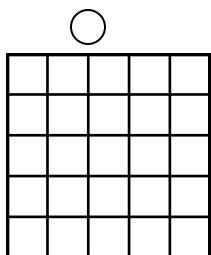
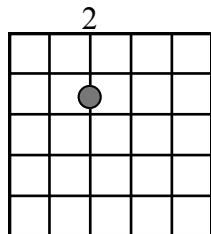
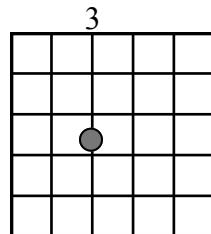
11 D D7 G G7 C Am D7

16 G7 B7 Em Am B7 Em E7

21 Am A7 G E7

Week 7
Notes on the 4th String

D, open

E, 2nd finger
2nd fretF, 3rd finger
3rd fret

Minor Melody

RLW



More Scales

As you learn more of the notes on the guitar, it's a good idea to expand the scales you can play. Feel free to use the tablature staff or not. Remember that numbers next to notes refer to fingers of the left hand, *not frets*.

D major scale

E major scale

F major scale

Notice the sharps and flats in each scale. Those will become the key signatures you'll see at the beginning of pieces of music.

Key of D



Key of E



Key of F



Melody in D

RLW

4 D G D

5 D m G D

Melody in F

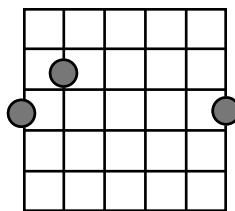
RLW

A musical score for piano, featuring four staves of music. The top staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 3/4 time signature. The second staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The third staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The fourth staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. Measure numbers 1 through 25 are indicated on the left side of the staves.

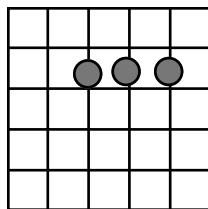
Primary Chords in a Key: I IV V

As you play more songs, you will notice that the same groups of chords appear over and over. Some chords just seem to naturally work together. That's because chords are built from scales and chords that are built from the same scale fit together in a natural sounding way. Each note in the scale has a chord built from it. The chords will be major or minor (or diminished, but we haven't dealt with those yet) depending on its location in the scale. Major chords are built from the first, fourth and fifth notes of the scale. This is often abbreviated using roman numerals, as in the paragraph heading. In addition, the fifth chord can be either a major chord or a 7th chord. The chart below is an easy reference for how chords are related in keys. Remember, the first chord in each row tells you what key you are in.

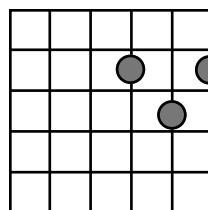
I
G
3 2 0 0 0 4



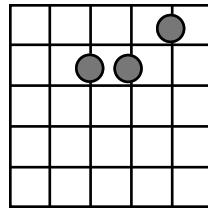
A
X 0 2 3 4 0



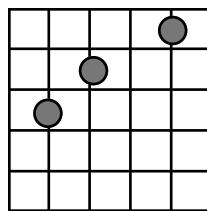
D
XX 0 1 3 2



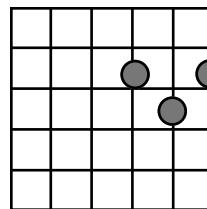
Am
X 0 2 3 1 0



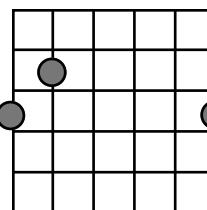
IV
C
X 3 2 0 1 0



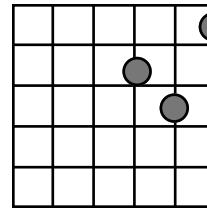
D
XX 0 1 3 2



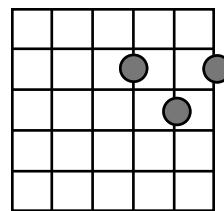
G
3 2 0 0 0 4



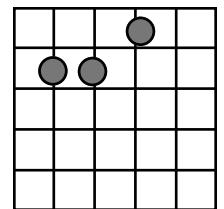
Dm
X X 0 2 3 1



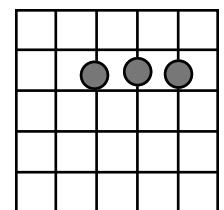
V
D
XX 0 1 3 2



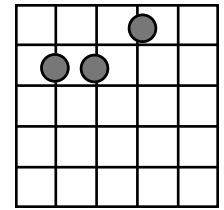
E
0 2 3 1 0 0



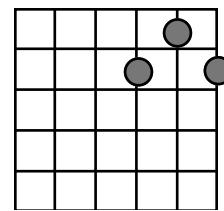
A
X 0 2 3 4 0



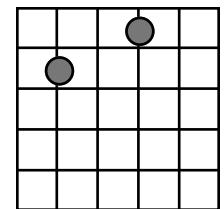
E
0 2 3 1 0 0



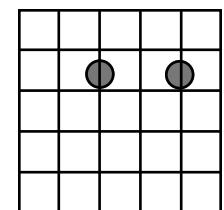
V7
D7
XX 0 2 1 3



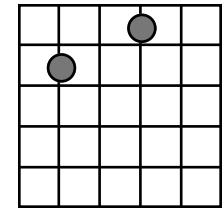
E7
0 2 0 1 0 0



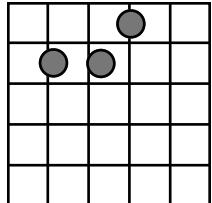
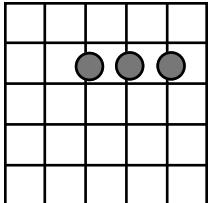
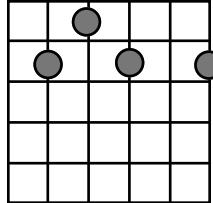
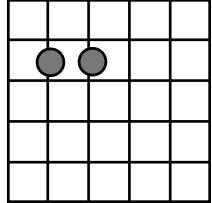
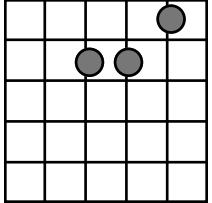
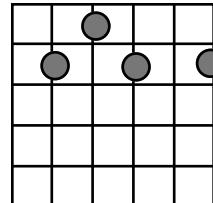
A7
X 0 2 0 3 0



E7
0 2 0 1 0 0

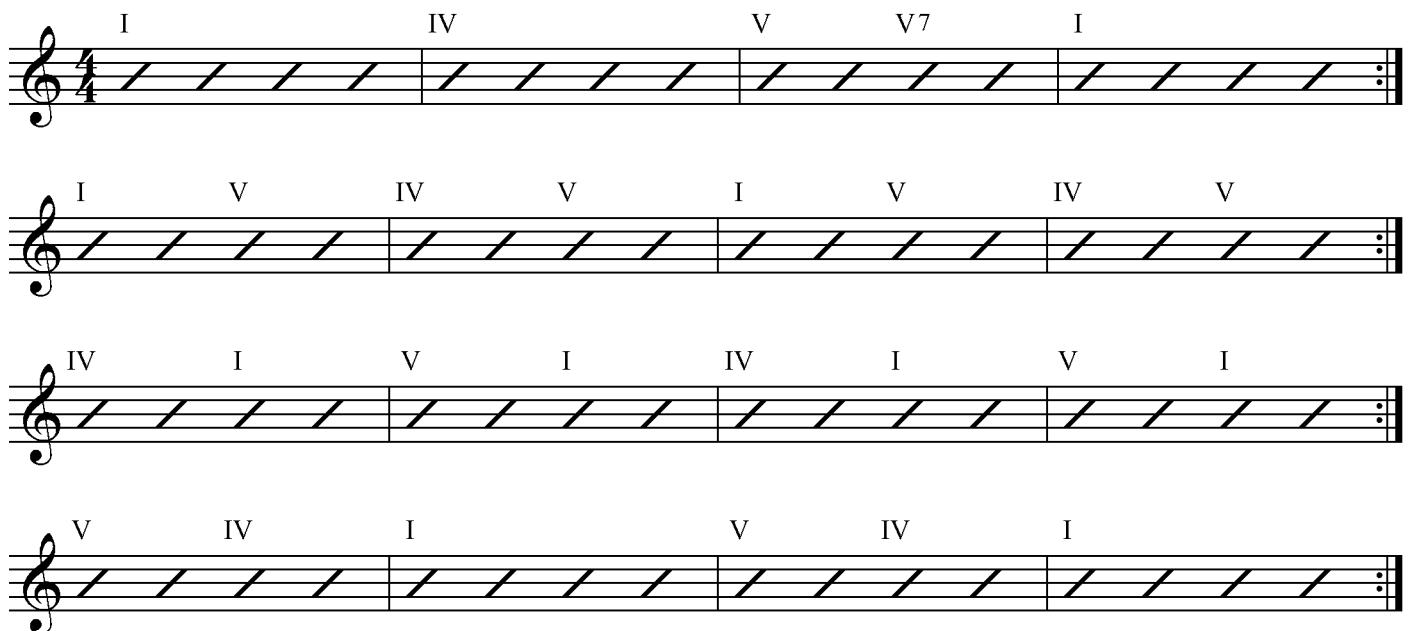


The 5th chord in the key of E is B. We don't know that chord yet but we know B7. In minor keys (yes there are minor keys, we'll deal with that later) the first and fourth chords are minor and the fifth is major or 7th.

| I | IV | V7 |
|--|--|--|
| E 0 2 3 1 0 0 | A X 0 2 3 4 0 | B7 X 2 1 3 0 4 |
|  |  |  |
| Em 0 2 3 0 0 0 | Am X 0 2 3 1 0 | B7 X 2 1 3 0 4 |
|  |  |  |

Chord Exercise - Apply to all Keys

Each line is a separate exercise and don't forget the repeat signs.

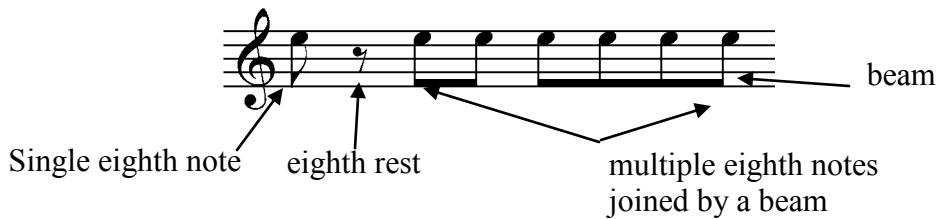


The image shows four blank musical staves, each consisting of five lines and four spaces. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a '4' indicating 4/4 time. The second staff begins with a treble clef. The third staff begins with a treble clef. The fourth staff begins with a treble clef. Each staff ends with a repeat sign (double bar line with two dots) and a 'C' indicating common time.

Week 8

The Eighth Note

Until now the fastest notes you've encountered are the quarter notes. The next step up is the eighth note. A single eighth note has a flag on the stem. Two or more are joined together by a single beam.



Here's how it works. You have to split the beat in half. The easiest way to do that is to insert the word 'and' between the numbers; "One and Two and Three". Think of the rhythm of the song "Happy Birthday".

From this point on, rhythms become a more difficult, and important, part of the music you learn. Get used to looking at the rhythm of a tricky measure separately - I encourage you to count the passage out loud; count it out loud and clap the rhythm at the same time. Then pick up your guitar and play it. Here are some more eighth note rhythms to practice.

Duet with Eighth Notes

RLW

2

Measures 1-4 of the duet. The top line (Treble clef) consists of eighth notes. The bottom line (Treble clef) consists of quarter notes. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

5

Measures 5-8 of the duet. The top line (Treble clef) consists of eighth notes. The bottom line (Treble clef) consists of eighth notes. The key signature changes to one flat (B-flat). The word "Fine" appears at the end of the second system.

Fine

Fine

9

Measures 9-12 of the duet. The top line (Treble clef) consists of eighth notes. The bottom line (Treble clef) consists of quarter notes. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

13

Measures 13-16 of the duet. The top line (Treble clef) consists of eighth notes. The bottom line (Treble clef) consists of quarter notes. The key signature changes to one flat (B-flat). The instruction "D.C. al Fine" appears at the end of the second system.

D.C. al Fine

D.C. al Fine

The preceding duet has two new features: a new kind of repeat, the **D.C. *al fine*** which literally translates as to the head until the end. The **D.C. (Da Capo)** sends you to the beginning of the piece you're playing. The *al fine* tells you to look for the word "fine", which is the Italian word for "end".

This is the first duet where you should play both parts. The second part will be playable after this next section:

Playing Two notes at a Time

This is really no different than reading one note. In the preceding duet look at the first pair of notes in the second line. The top note is an "F", so put your first finger on the F, 1st string, 1st fret. The lower note is a "D", so put your third finger on the 2nd string, 3rd fret. If you are using a pick, do a "mini-strum" and hit the two strings. If you are using your fingers use your middle finger (m) on the 1st string and your index finger (i) on the 2nd string.

Measure 5 presents a different situation. The notes are not on adjacent strings. If you are using a pick, use the pick to play the E on the 4th string and reach up with your middle finger to pluck the 2nd string C note. This combination of pick and fingers is sometimes called **hybrid picking**. Fingerstyle players should use their thumb to play the 4th string and either their middle or index fingers to hit the 2nd string.

With the advent of playing more than one note at a time comes the possibility of playing more than one part.

When the parts are written on the same staff, the part to be played with the thumb will usually have the stems going down and the part to be played with the fingers will have the stems going up. I have used the conventional letters for the **right hand fingers: p for thumb; i for index; m for middle; and a for ring**. These letters are from the Spanish words for those fingers, *pulgar, indice, medio* and *anular*. When you play more than one note you use a **free stroke**; instead of bringing the fingers through the string and resting on the next, swing the finger through the string, back and up toward the palm. See the pictures in Appendix 3.

Students who prefer to use a pick can simply use the pick instead of the thumb and use the middle and ring fingers instead of the index and middle.

Variation on a Familiar Tune

RLW

In this piece there are several things to watch. Notice that the melody notes (the E, F# and G in the first 3 measures) are of a different duration than the accompaniment. That means that in the second measure you need to keep your 3rd finger down on the F# for the full 3 beats while you play the notes with the downward stems. From measures 5 through 7 the bass notes sustain while the melody is played in quarter notes.

In the third measure you'll notice the “-3”; the dash indicates the third finger has slid into the G note from the previous F#. You don't necessarily want to hear the finger slide, the dash indicates that the finger doesn't lift from the string. In some pieces that can provide an anchor for the left hand.

In measure 5, notice that the last note has two stems, one up and one down. This is quite common in guitar music. It just means that the A note is functioning as both a melody note and an accompaniment note. It completes the 3 quarter note of the melody at the same time it is the third beat of the lower part.

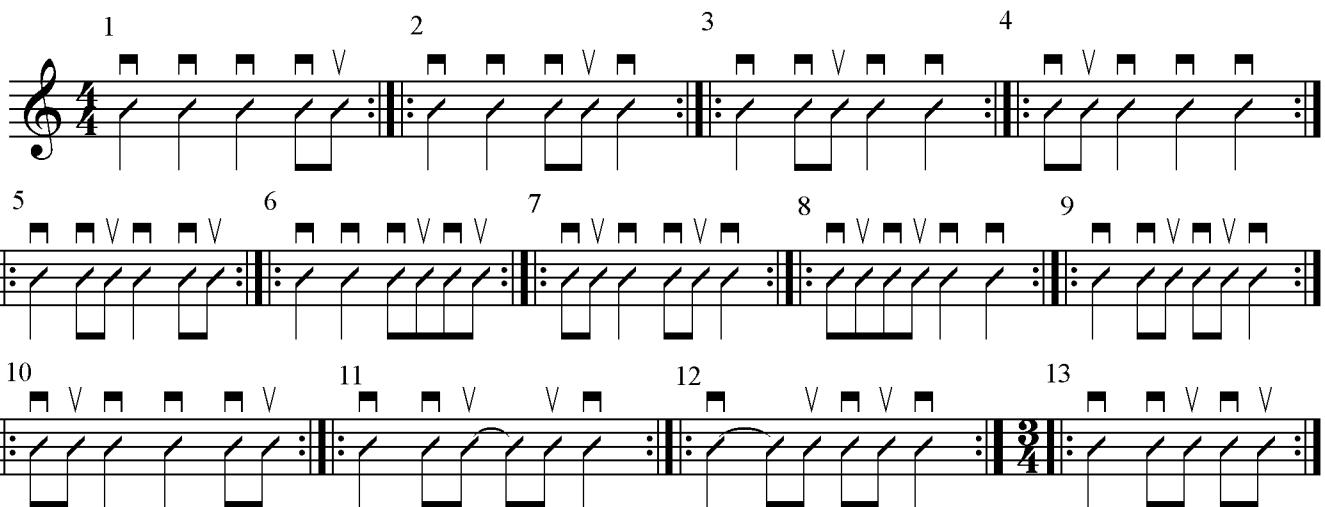
Finally, in the third measure, there is a natural sign in front of the D note. This natural is not really necessary since the bar line cancelled out the D# from the previous measure. Sometimes editors like to make sure you remember that, however, and will include what's called a “courtesy accidental” as a reminder. And to point out how inconsistent this practice might be, I omitted a courtesy accidental on the C natural in measure 5.

Getting Some Variety in Your Strumming

So, about this time you're getting pretty tired of just strumming on 1, 2, 3 and 4. After studying the section on eighth notes in your text we can create some more interest in your playing by applying the rhythms below. Remember, you strum down () on the beat and you strum up () on the *and*. Don't try to play too fast and don't be embarrassed to **count the rhythms out loud**. If you're using a pick the upstroke is an easy addition. If you're using your fingers you need to make a choice: you can either strum down with the thumb and up with the fingers, producing a mellower sound; or you can strum down with the fingers and up with the thumb, striking the strings with the nails for a brighter sound.

You don't have to hit all the strings on an upstroke. Often times 2 or 3 strings are enough. The additional effort to hit all the strings can cause the rhythms to sound forced and unnatural.

Guitar



These examples use a system called "rhythmic notation". Instead of a particular pitch, the notes indicate a rhythm to be played. The rhythmic notation symbols are showed below with their corresponding notes.



Another way to break up your strumming is to mix in some individual notes. Here's how a typical country/folk kind of accompaniment might be played: In 4/4 time, play the lowest note of the chord on 1, strum the rest of the chord on 2, pick the next lowest note in the chord on 3, and strum the rest of the chord on 4. **To make it even more interesting, with any of the exercises above, play the lowest note of the chord on the first beat and finish the measure strumming, as usual.**

Keep in mind that as you add complications with your right hand (strumming patterns or finger-picking) it becomes important to slow your practice. If things aren't going well, don't be afraid to practice each hand separately.

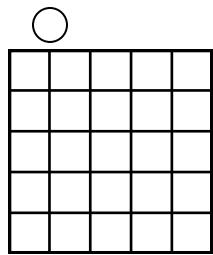
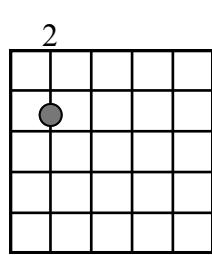
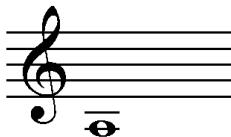
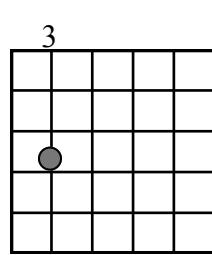
Assignment: Go back to the chord exercises on pages 20 and 23. Apply 3 or 4 of the rhythms to them. Try the trick of playing only the bass note on the first beat - you should start to hear things that sound more like the rhythm guitar parts to songs than just exercises. For additional practice use the exercises on page 35.

Week 9

Notes on the 5th String

We've learned all the notes within the staff. But, just when you thought you had it easy, the staff can be extended up and down by adding lines to it. The added lines are called *leger lines* and simply continue in alphabetical order, just like the staff. All of the notes on the fifth string use one or more leger lines. Give yourself a little extra time to study these new notes. It's the old eye-hand thing and we're adding a new element.

A, open

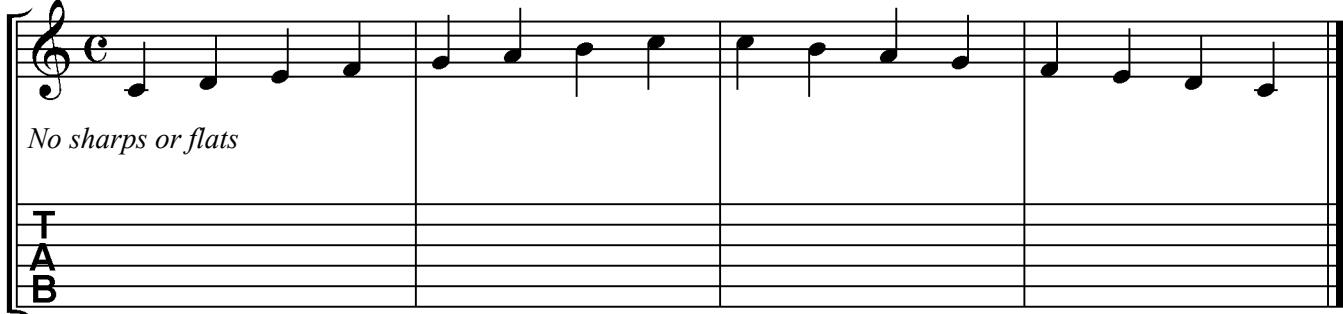
B, 2nd finger
2nd fretC, 3rd finger
3rd fret

5

5

More Scales

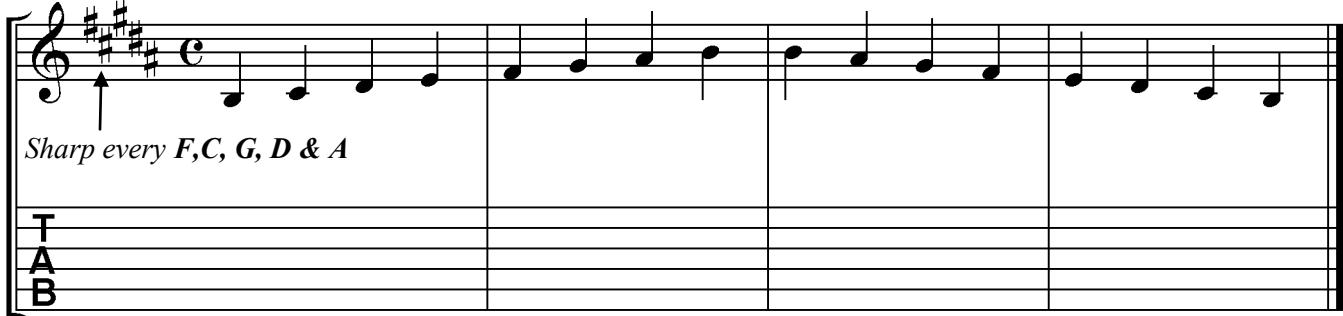
C major



Sheet music for C major. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth notes. The tablature below shows the notes on a six-string guitar neck, with the top string being the 6th string (B). The tablature is labeled with T, A, and B.

No sharps or flats

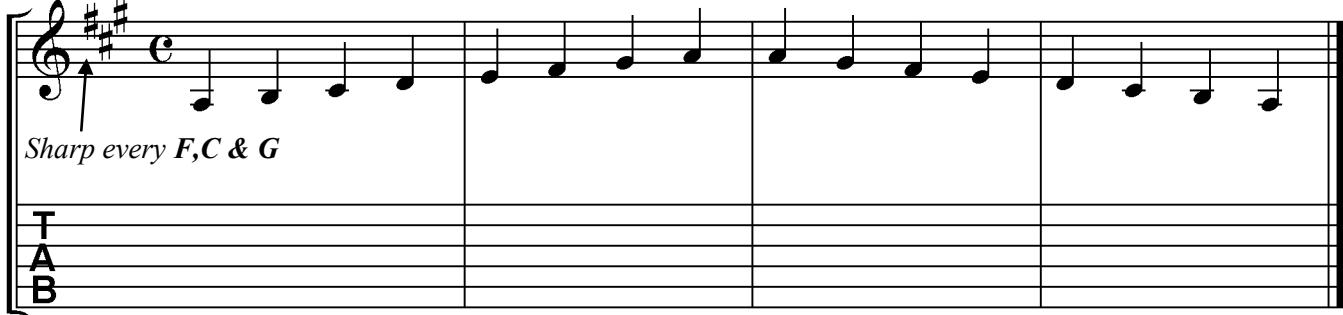
B major



Sheet music for B major. The key signature is four sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#). The melody consists of eighth notes. An arrow points to the first sharp in the key signature. The tablature below shows the notes on a six-string guitar neck, with the top string being the 6th string (B). The tablature is labeled with T, A, and B.

Sharp every F, C, G, D & A

A major



Sheet music for A major. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The melody consists of eighth notes. An arrow points to the first sharp in the key signature. The tablature below shows the notes on a six-string guitar neck, with the top string being the 6th string (B). The tablature is labeled with T, A, and B.

Sharp every F, C & G

You'll hear the terms "fingerstyle" and "fingerpicking" often. These are simply the informal labels used for the style of playing we've already discussed. Since this is a generic beginners book, not one specifically for classical, folk, rock or the like, I've tried to include instructions on how to play the pieces with either your fingers, a pick, or a combination of the two. This next section, however, is specifically for your fingers, so give the pick a rest for a week and give this a try.

I'm using the tablature here in a different way. The lines are still the strings but instead of numbers I'm giving you the chord I want you to hold down with the left hand and the letters tell you which fingers of the right hand play the strings. Remember to use free strokes with the fingers (Appendix 3). Again, each line is a separate exercise.

C A m C A m

5

C A m C A m

1950's Dead Teenager Song

Johnny Generic

D.C. al Coda

D.C., D.S., Coda, Fine: Following the Musical Roadmap

The piece above uses a new repeat device, the D.C. al Coda, *Da Capo al Coda*. Here's what you have to understand, written music uses a number of devices to save writing the same music more than once. So, if there's a section somewhere in the piece that's going to be repeated at the end, but doesn't connect in a fashion that allows the use of straight repeat sign, either a D.S. or a D.C will be used. The D. _ tells us to go somewhere else in the piece. If it's followed by a C or Capo, that means to go to the very beginning of the piece (*capo* means head). The D.S. tells to go to a place in the music marked with this symbol, which carries the rather biblical sounding moniker, *the sign*. The rest of the phrase tells us what to do after we've gone wherever it was we were going. Still with me?

The phrase *al fine* means until the end, *fine* being Italian for end. So with a D.S. al fine, you go back to the place marked with the sign (I resist the temptation to get all Old Testament and say, "bearing the mark of the sign") and play until you reach the measure with the word *fine* under it. *Al Coda* is slightly trickier. The coda acts as a musical bridge. With a D.S. al Coda, you go to the sign and play until you reach the first measure with the coda sign. You then skip all the way to the second coda sign in the piece.

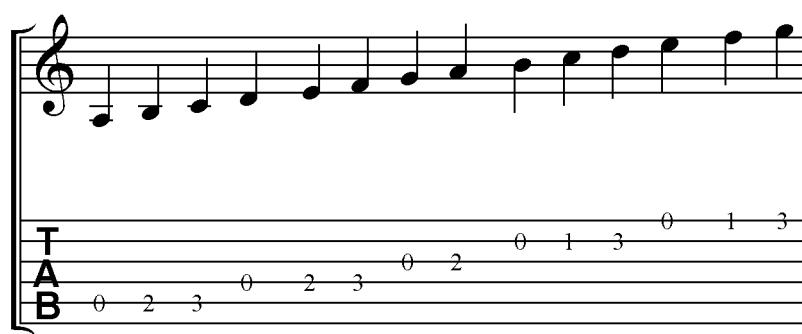
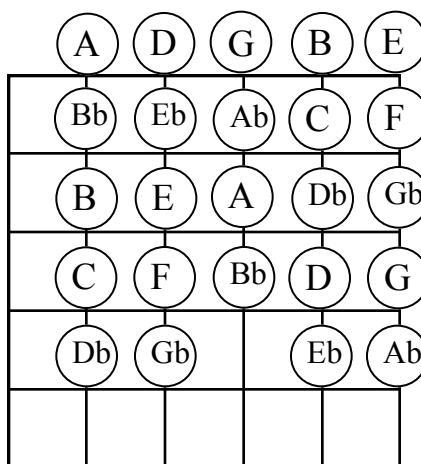
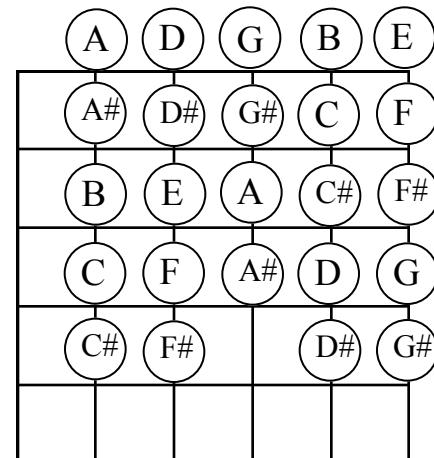
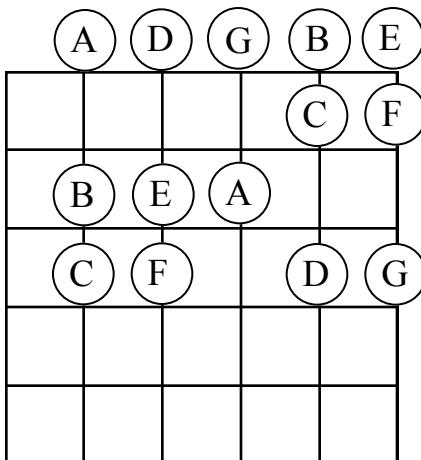
In the piece above, when you reach the end of the second line you see the D.C. al Coda. The D.C. sends you back to the beginning of the first line and you play, *ignoring the repeat this time*, until you get to the end of the fifth measure of the second line, with the coda sign above the end of the measure. You then skip down to the last measure of the piece, and you're done. Simple, yes? Don't worry, you get used to it.

Week 10

Review

Okay, you've made it this far let's take a moment to review and reinforce what we've studied so far. You've learned notes on the first through 5th strings; you've learned how to count rhythms; you've learned how tablature works; and you've learned to navigate through a piece of written music. On the chord side of things, you've learned a fair number of open chords; you've learned how to get some variety in your strumming patterns; you've learned how chords are related to one another in groups, and you've learned some basic fingerpicking. Not bad.

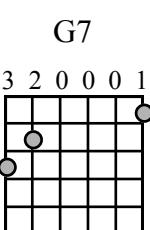
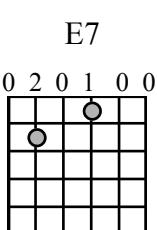
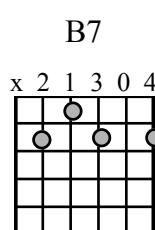
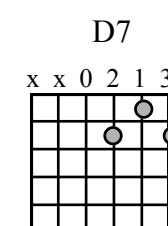
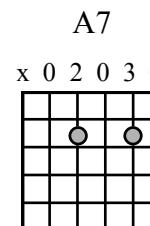
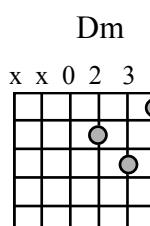
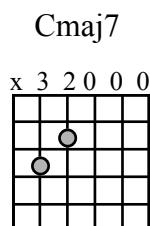
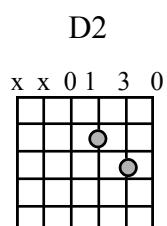
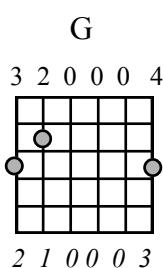
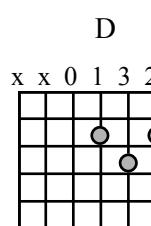
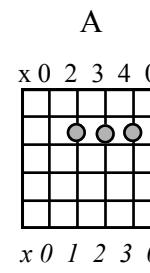
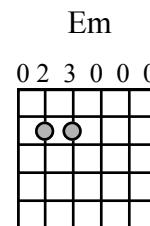
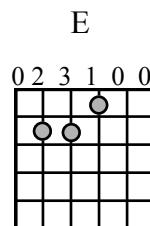
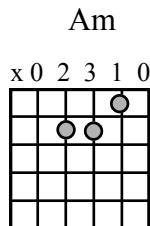
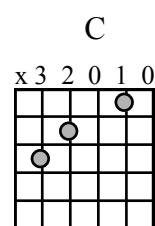
Note Review



Key Signatures



Chord Review



Review Duet

A

RLW

Music score for Review Duet, featuring three staves of music with tablature and chords.

Staff 1: Treble clef, 3/4 time, key signature of one flat. The music consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth note patterns.

Staff 2 (Tablature): Shows the strings (T, A, B) with corresponding fingerings: 0, 0, 2, 3.

Chords: D m, C, D m, C, D m.

Staff 3: Treble clef, 3/4 time, key signature of one flat. The music consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth note patterns.

Staff 4 (Tablature): Shows the strings (T, A, B) with corresponding fingerings: 3, 0, 1.

Chords: C, B♭, A7, D m, C.

Staff 5: Treble clef, 3/4 time, key signature of one flat. The music consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth note patterns.

Staff 6 (Tablature): Shows the strings (T, A, B) with corresponding fingerings: 3, 3, 1, 3, 0, 2.

Chords: D m, A7, D m, F, C, D m.

In the “Review Duet” remember to flat the B notes. In the second part (the third line), I’ve written a specific strum pattern. The first beat of the measure is the lowest note of the chord, then you finish the measure by strumming the indicated rhythm. Remember, strum down on the beat and strum up on the ‘and’. In measures 6, 7, 14 and 15 play the notes and don’t worry about the chord shapes (you don’t know them all yet, anyway).

I included the tab staff for the first part. I filled in a few measures for you. Use it if you need it. Ignore it if you don’t.

The 12-Bar Blues Progression

This could be the only thing you learn to do and people will think you know what you’re doing. There are countless songs based on the blues progression - lots of old rock and roll and more than a few country songs use this sequence of chords as a base. The basic blues progression is a sequence of the I, IV and V chords. Here’s the formula:

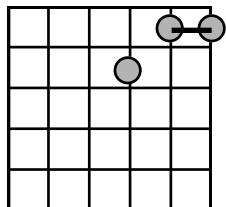
In a lot of blues based songs major chords and dominant 7th chords are interchangeable. In fact, the sevenths give the progression a ‘bluesy’ sound. Here are two examples. You should work this progression in the other keys from pages 34 and 35.

Week 11

Small Bar Chords, Finally the F

Every chord you've learned so far contains at least one open string, hence the term "open chord" (not to be confused with "open voicing" you theory class veterans). Some chords contain no open strings. Often, in these chords, one finger will be used to cover more than one string. This produces a "bar", sometimes spelled "barre". We'll start with a little baby bar, the Dm7.

Dmin7



In the picture at right notice how the first finger is separated from the second, leaning back to press the strings with the side of the last segment of the index finger.



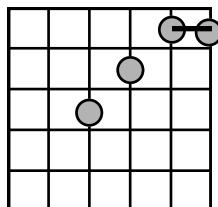
D m7

G7

CMaj7

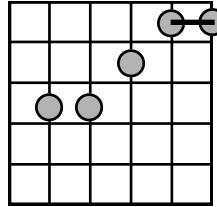
After playing the exercise try an F chord by adding the 3rd finger on the fourth string, as below.

$$\begin{matrix} & & & F \\ X & X & 3 & 2 & 1 & 1 \end{matrix}$$



This is what I usually call the ukulele F. It works but it's a bit thin. The next version of the F chord is fuller and adds a note on the fifth string.

F/C
X 3 4 2 1 1

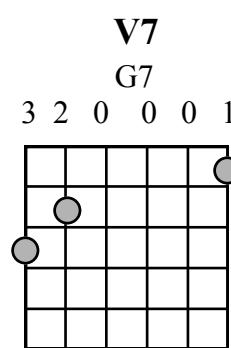
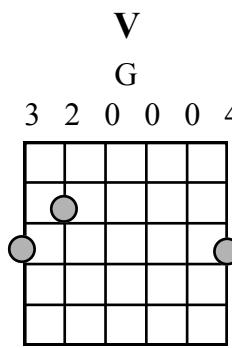
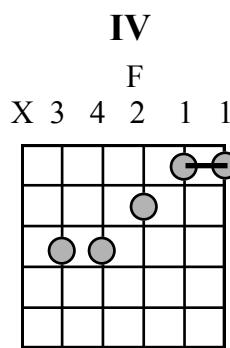
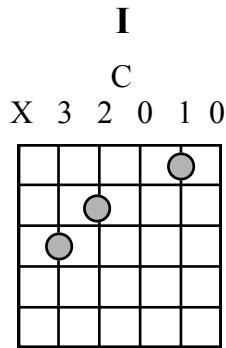


This chord makes a good pairing with the C chord. Try holding a C chord - to change to the F your 1st and 3rd fingers stay put; the 2nd finger shifts from the fourth string to the third; the little finger comes down on the fourth string; the first finger rolls and leans into the two-string bar.

This is the first time we've encountered the X/X format of naming a chord. You know that a chord is made from several different notes. The note that names the chord is called the *root*. The notes can be in any order and any note can be the lowest note of the chord (*the bass*). All the chords you've learned so far have had the root notes in the bass (*root position*). We use the / symbol when we want a note other than the root in the bass. In this example we're playing an F chord but the lowest note, the fifth string, is a C note. We'd notate this as F/C and we read that as "F with a C bass".

More information than you need warning: A chord with a chord-tone other than the root in the bass is called an *inversion*. So F/C is an inverted F chord because C is a note in the F chord. The / can be used to indicate a non-chord tone in the bass as well, say F/G or "F with a G bass". This is not an inversion since G is not a note in the F chord. So, all inversions are written with the /, but all chords written with the / are not inversions. Clear? Don't worry, the more you learn about the way music works, the easier all this gets.

With the F chord we get another I, IV, V group.



You should go back and play all the I IV V exercises in the key of C.

Minor Keys

We touched briefly on minor keys in the section on I IV V chords. Minor scales have the same interval pattern as major scales **but** with a different starting point. Start any major scale on its 6th note and you get its ***relative minor***.

C major *6th note = A* A minor scale

There are different types of minor scales. The scale above is called a ***natural or pure minor***. The ***harmonic minor*** (below) sharpens the 7th note in the natural minor.

A musical staff in G clef. The notes are: A (downward arrow), B (downward arrow), C (downward arrow), D (downward arrow), E (downward arrow), F (downward arrow), G (upward arrow), A (upward arrow).

Am Study

RLW

A m E A m D m A m E

T
A
B

A musical score for a single melodic line, likely a guitar or ukulele part. The score is in common time and consists of six measures. The key signature is A minor (no sharps or flats). The melody starts on A (the 5th fret of a standard tuning guitar), moves to G (the 4th fret), then to C (the 3rd fret), then to F (the 1st fret), then to G (the 3rd fret), and finally to C (the 3rd fret). The melody is primarily composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some eighth-note pairs and sixteenth-note pairs. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef, and the letter 'm' is placed above the staff to indicate the measure number.

Prelude in Am

Matteo Carcassi

1

A m i m i m i i F x x 3 2 1 x D 6 x x 0 2 0 x E 7 x x 2 1 4 x

T
A
B

5

A m i m i a i m i G7 1 C 4 E 7

p x 0 x 2 1 x 2 x 2 x 0 0 1 x 3 x 0 1 0 x 2 x 2 1 4 0

9

A m F D 6 E 7 A m E/A

x 0 x 2 1 x x x 3 2 1 x x x 0 2 0 x x x 2 1 4 x x 0 x 2 1 x x 0 x 1 0 0

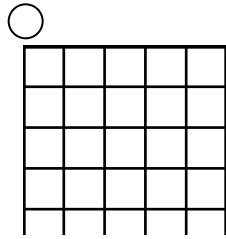
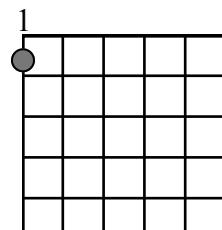
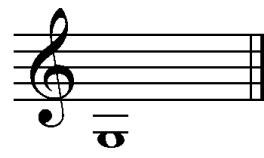
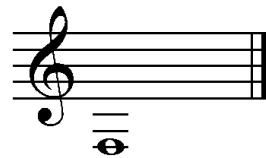
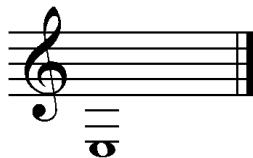
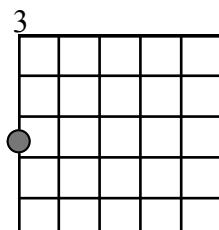
13

A m E 7/A A m 8

x 0 x 2 1 x x 0 x 1 4 0 x 0 x 2 1 x

Week 12
Notes on the 6th String

E, open

F, 1st finger
1st fretG, 3rd finger
3rd fret

4

T
A
B

5

5

9

9

You're on the home stretch now (I felt compelled to throw in a sports metaphor somewhere in the book). Here are two reading exercises using all six strings, from the Carcassi method. The first is just the natural notes, the second a bit more ambitious with a healthy mix of accidentals.

Reading Study 1

Matteo Carcassi

7

14

Reading Study 2

Matteo Carcassi

8

15

22

29

36

ii, iii and vi: The minor chords in a major key

You've studied the I IV V chords. Remember that the roman numerals refer to what note in the scale the chord is built from. ***In major scales the second, third and sixth notes build minor chords.*** This is sometimes shown by using lower case roman numerals, as in the heading. So, in the key of G, the I IV and V are G, C and D. The minor chords are Am, Bm and Em. (You'll learn the Bm chord next week.) Take a look at the "1950s Dead Teenager Song" on page 44. the first four measures of that piece are a very common chord progression: I vi IV V. In combination with it's close relative, the I vi ii V, this chord progression is responsible for hundreds of songs, from "I Got Rhythm" by Gershwin to "Every Breath you Take" by Sting. Here's some practice.

Week 13

Two-Octave Major Scales

From a note to the next occurrence of a note with the same letter name is an *octave*. Why? Count with me: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Rather than call the distance from A to A an eighth, it's referred to as an octave (octo - 8). The three scales below cover two octaves. Eventually you even get a few three octave scales! Isn't that exciting?! Control your enthusiasm.

G Major

5

F Major

E Major

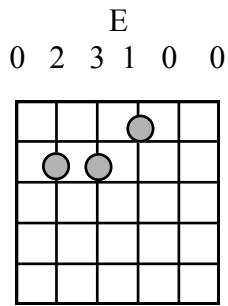
It's perfectly normal to have trouble remembering which notes to sharp or flat. ***Pencils are your friends.*** The only professional musicians I know who show up for a rehearsal without a pencil to make helpful markings in their parts are musicians who rarely work. If you keep missing an accidental, **write it in.** (By the way, clothespins are a good idea, too, but that's another story.)

Your First Scale Exercise

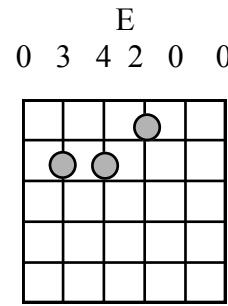
Full Bar Chords

We talked about bar chords two weeks ago. We used small bars, or partial bars, or if you want to be snippy, baby bars. A **full bar** uses the first finger to cover *all* the strings. Here are a few things to remember. Most people find it easier to press down on the side of the finger nearest the thumb. Use leverage to get the strings down by experimenting with the position of the thumb. Sometimes you need to use more or less of your index finger to cover the strings. You can use the weight of your left arm to help you pull back against the strings. Pay attention to the photos.

1. Start with a normal E chord.

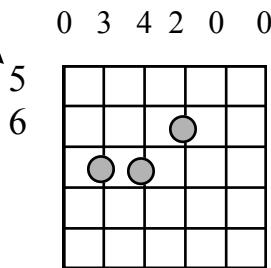


2. Replace the 1st, 2nd and 3rd fingers with the 2nd, 3rd and 4th.



3. Slide the fingers down the neck until the 2nd finger is on the sixth fret.

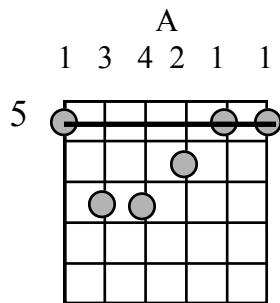
Means 5th fret



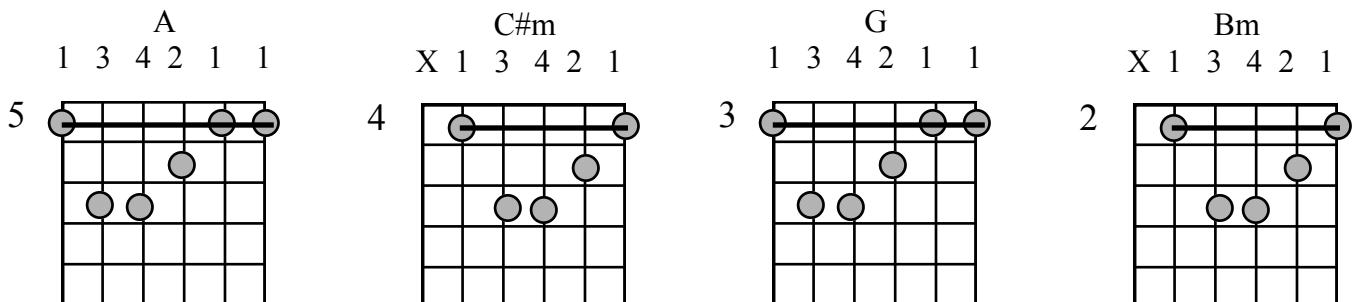
Before we set the bar (step 4) check the position of your thumb. It should be toward the center of the back of the neck, nearly opposite the 2nd finger. Don't overextend your wrist! It should be bent just enough to allow the 1st finger to be 'straight'. (The finger may have a little arch, that's normal.)



4. Lay the first finger all the way across all the strings at the fifth fret. Hands are different; guitars are different: you may have to experiment with the position. Some students do well imitating the picture at right. Some have to reach more, some less. Keep in mind that (for now) you're not trying to press all the strings, just the sixth and the first and second. Your other fingers are taking care of the fifth, fourth and third strings.



Here's a good exercise to get started. First, however, you might try changing back and forth from E to Am using your 2nd, 3rd and 4th fingers. ***Remember, the number to the side of the frame indicates the fret number.***



A C♯m G B m

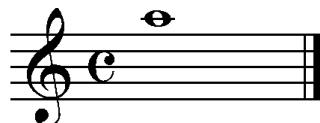
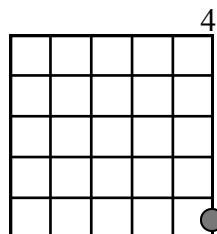
A musical score for a single melodic line, starting at measure 5. The key signature is A major (no sharps or flats). The melody consists of eighth-note patterns. The first measure (A) starts with a diamond-shaped note. The second measure (C♯m) starts with a diamond-shaped note. The third measure (G) starts with a diamond-shaped note. The fourth measure (Bm) starts with a diamond-shaped note. The melody continues with a series of eighth-note patterns, each starting with a diamond-shaped note.

Week 14

Three New Notes (Well, really one new and two Alternate positions, but who's counting?)

Don't get too excited but these are the last new notes you'll get in this book. The high A is just an extension up the first string. The B and E represent your introduction to one of the things that makes reading on the guitar a bit trickier than many other instruments. Most notes on the guitar occur in several places so when you're reading a piece of music sometimes you have to choose which place makes the most sense. This is another place when you'll see circled numbers used extensively. If I want a B at the 4th fret of the third string, I'll use a circled 3 near the note.

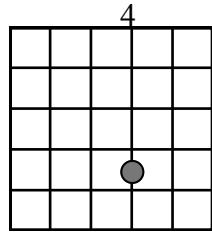
A, 4th finger
5th fret



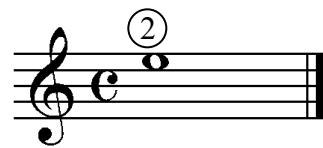
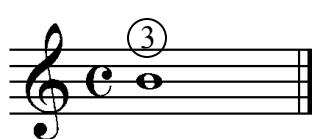
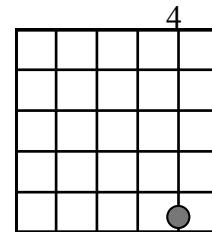
Wilson's Not-so-Wilde



B, 4th finger
4th fret



E, 4th finger
5th fret



Waltz (Opus 112, no. 1), Excerpt

Fedinando Carulli

i m i m i

p

7

12

The D in the second measure can be played with either the 3rd or 4th finger on the second string. Use your own judgment. (I use my little finger.) Remember the -2 and -1 in the last measure of the second line indicate that those fingers maintain their relative positions and slide up the same strings they're on from the previous measure. The first finger then slides back down the second string to grab the C note in the next measure.

Etude

RLW

RLW

5

The first measure above is a D chord. On the last beat, the 3rd finger slides up the second string to the 5th fret to play the E note. A “0” next to note indicates an open string.

Power Chords, One of the Great Cheats

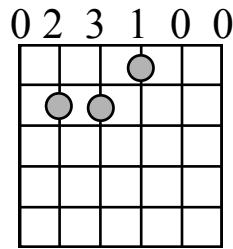
So you've been trying to play bar chords for a week now. A (very) few of you will be feeling okay about them. Some of you will be thinking about giving up on this whole enterprise. Most of you are wondering how long before I can play some songs, dammit?!

You will need bar chords. But you will also need power chords. And the good news is they are much easier than bar chords and they can be used as a substitute for bar chords - they won't sound as good but they'll get your foot in the door, or on the playing field or, *insert metaphor of your choice*.

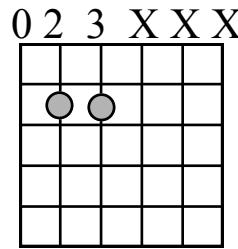
Here's the trade; I show you power chords but you have to learn a bit of theory so you understand them. You've played a number of scales working through this book. Chords are combinations of specific notes from a scale. Lets look at the C scale, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C. Major chords are the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of a scale, C, E and G. Minor chords lower the 3rd a half step, so Cm is C, Eb and G. **The third determines if a chord is major or minor. Power chords omit the third.** That leaves only the 1st, or root, and the 5th which is why power chords use the suffix "5". So an A power chord is written A5. You can use a C5 for a C minor but it won't have the same quality of sound, the same fullness. So, **keep working on the bar chords!**

Another visit to the more information than you need department - power chords have been around for hundreds of years - many composers like the ambiguity of not quite major or minor they allow. They became popular on the electric guitar in the 1970s among players who used a lot of distortion. Power chords have a clarity that gets lost when the third is added and there is a lot of distortion in the amplifier.

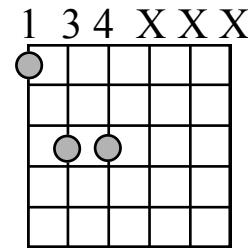
E



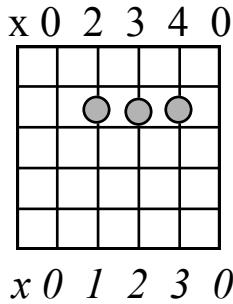
E5



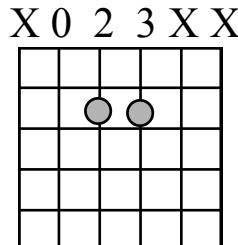
F5 (moveable shape)



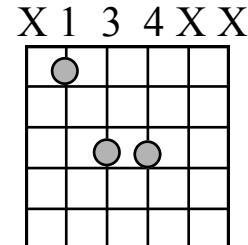
A



A5



Bb5 (moveable shape)



When playing the movable forms, lay your first finger across the 1st, 2nd and 3rd strings to mute them so they won't sound when you strum them. This should be a fairly natural thing to do for most of you (he says sarcastically). The movable forms are what you'll use as a bridge into bar chords. The lowest note of the chord is its root, the note that names the chord. So, if you know the names of the notes on the fifth and sixth strings you can cheat your way through most songs.

| 6th string | E | F | F# Gb | G | G# Ab | A | A# Bb | B | C | C# Db | D | D# Eb | E |
|------------|------|-------|-------|---|-------|---|-------|---|---|-------|----|-------|----|
| fret | open | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 5th string | A | A# Bb | B | C | C# Db | D | D# Eb | E | F | F# Gb | G | G# Ab | A |

Power Chord Ex. 1

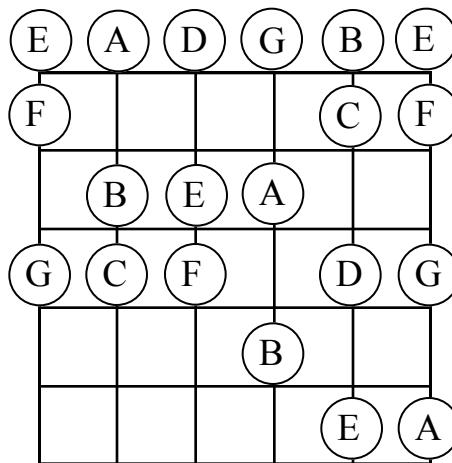
Instead of the normal down/up alternating you normally do on eighth notes, this exercise, and the following one, sound better with all down strokes. The **> sign is an accent** and means just that: hit that note a bit harder. Also, try a **palm mute**. Rest the palm of the right hand just in front of the bridge on the bass strings. When you hit the strings now you'll get a duller sound, more of a 'thud' - the kids seem to like this sound (as do lots of rock and blues players).

Power Chord Ex. 2

Week 15

Winding Up

Note Recap



Interval Studies

As we've discussed, an interval is the space between two notes. You measure an interval by counting, starting with either note as 1, count the steps until you get to the second note. For example, look at the chart above. The space from C to F is a 4th; C D E F; 1 2 3 4. It's that easy. Don't overcomplicate it. Certain intervals show up quite often as harmonies; thirds, sixths and tenths.

Thirds

Sixths

Music staff in G major, 4/4 time. Tablature below shows strings T, A, and B with fingerings: 0, 2; 0, 1; 3, 0; 2, 3; 3, 2; 0, 3; 1, 0; 2, 0; 2, 3; 0, 2; 4; 2, 4; 4, 2; 0, 4; 2, 0; 3, 2.

Tenths

Music staff in G major, 4/4 time. Tablature below shows strings T, A, and B with fingerings: 0, 1; 3, 0; 2, 3; 5; 5, 3; 2, 0; 3, 1; 0; 3, 0; 2, 3; 0, 2; 4; 4, 2; 0, 3; 2, 0; 3.

Interval Study in the Classical Style

tenths

Music staff in G major, 4/4 time. Tablature below shows strings T, A, and B with fingerings: 2, 0; 0, 3; 0; 1, 1; 2.

RLW

Music staff in G major, 4/4 time. Tablature below shows strings T, A, and B with fingerings: 2, 0; 0, 3; 0; 1, 1; 2.

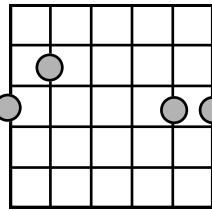
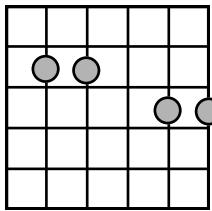
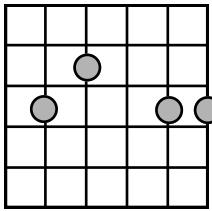
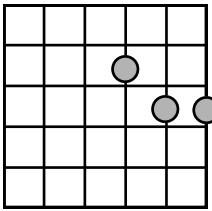
Music staff in G major, 4/4 time. Tablature below shows strings T, A, and B with fingerings: 2, 0; 0, 3; 0; 1, 1; 2.

Music staff in G major, 4/4 time. Tablature below shows strings T, A, and B with fingerings: 2, 0; 0, 3; 0; 1, 1; 2.

“Drone” Strings in Rhythm Guitar

Years and years ago I was fortunate to take a class with the great jazz guitarist, Johnny Smith. Something he said has stuck with me for 35 years, “the guitar is a forgiving instrument”. He was speaking about how you could play combinations of notes on the guitar that sound truly beautiful (‘really cool’ for those of you under 25) that wouldn’t sound that great if they were voiced across a string section, say, or a sax section. Drone strings are such an example.

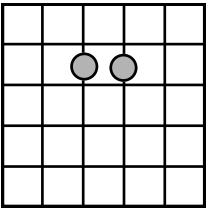
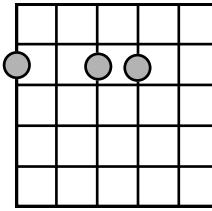
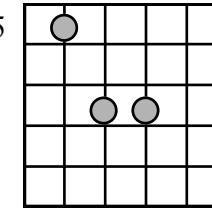
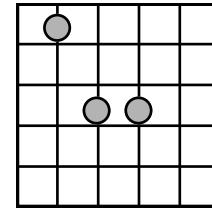
The trick is to keep a couple of notes ringing through all of the chords. Here’s a common example.

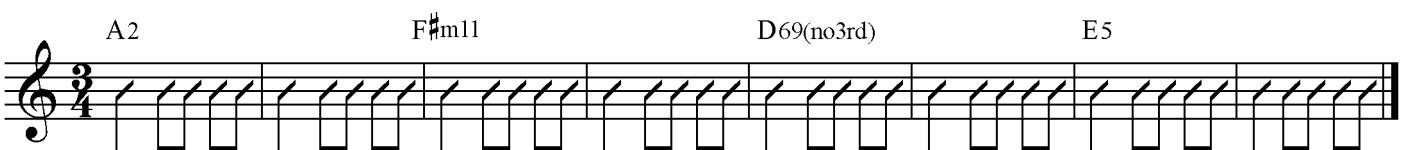
| G | Em7 | Cadd9 | Dsus4 |
|---|---|--|---|
| 2 1 0 0 3 4 | 0 1 2 0 3 4 | X 2 1 0 3 4 | X X 0 1 3 4 |
|  |  |  |  |
| G | Em7 | Cadd9 | Dsus4 |



The key to this is to keep the 3rd and 4th fingers anchored on the first two strings. This is the ‘drone’ I refer to. Notice that this is another take on the I vi IV V progression discussed earlier.

The next example uses the first two strings as the drone and moves a power chord shape around to create the chord movement.

| A2 | F#m11 | D69(no 3rd)* | E5 |
|---|---|--|---|
| X 0 3 4 0 0 | 2 X 3 4 0 0 | X 1 3 4 0 0 | X 1 3 4 0 0 |
|  |  |  |  |
| A2 | F#m11 | D69(no3rd) | E5 |



*This is a good example of naming difficulties that arise with these chords. To be accurate the chord name has to account for the drone notes. In this case the B and E notes are the 6th and 9th notes of the D scale, hence 69; but a D69 should have the 3rd or F#, which this chord lacks. That’s why some songs will have chords with very complex names that are relatively easy to play.

Week 16

Congratulations. You've made it to the end of the program. You've played scales, chord exercises and studies. Let's finish up with some tunes Mom and Dad might recognize so they won't think that the money spent on these lessons and the guitar were a total waste of money.

Remember - it's always a good idea to keep whoever's paying the bills happy.

“Greensleeves” introduces a new rhythm - a dotted quarter followed by an eighth note.



Greensleeves

Anon

This is a straight-forward version of the familiar tune. There are many versions of this centuries old melody and some use very different chords, both more complex and simpler. Next, lets turn the tune into a solo guitar arrangement. First we construct a “skeleton” by simply adding the bass note of the chord on the first beat of each measure. From there we can add varying degrees of complexity. In the first example as much of the chord as possible is added on the first beat. This works well for students who prefer a pick. The final example arpeggiates the chords and adds them to the melody. This is a more ‘classical’ approach.

Greensleeves (Skeleton Arrangement)

arr. RLW

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| A | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B | 0 | | 3 | | 3 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | |
| 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | | |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | |
| 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

Greensleeves

Anon

3

A m C G E m A m E

T 2 1 3 0 1
A 2 0 0 2 2
B 0 2 2 2 0

8 A m C G E m A m E A m

8

16 C G E m A m E

16

24 C G E m A m E A m

Greensleeves (II)

arr. RLW

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| A | | | | 0 | 2 | | 0 | | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | | | |
| B | | 0 | | 3 | | | 3 | | 0 | | 0 | 2 | | 0 | 2 | | 0 | 2 | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

The next two pieces are based on a blues in the key of E. The first is easier and is can easily be played with a pick. The model for this piece would be the style of John Lee Hooker. The second is meant to be played fingerstyle and is more in the style of the country-blues players. The key to making it work is to get the right hand thumb to be your metronome - it never varies from the even quarter notes. For both pieces: don't rush! This is blues; think steam rising off the bayou; air so heavy with heat, humidity and smells both pleasant and foreign that you need to change your shirt just walking from your room to the car. Think black and white, not Technicolor (showing my age here). This music *knows* how to take its time.

Blues in E (I)

Traditional

Blues in E (II)

RLW

1. 3 3 2 2 1 2. 3 2 1 3. 2 1

Okay, that's it. You can now play the guitar. Trust me.

And for those of you who are paying attention - I know you don't know how to play the A#dim chord in measure 6. That's why you need a private teacher now. Or you can wait, patiently, for the next volume in this series. Gee, it only took me 36 years of teaching guitar to write this one - you might have to hone that patience skill.

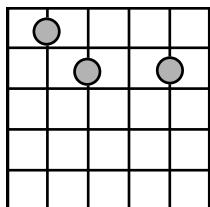
Keep practicing!

Appendix 1

Appendix 1

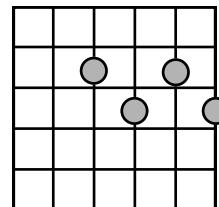
A#dim

X 1 3 0 4 X



A#dim

X X 1 3 2 4



You didn't think I'd just leave you hangin', did you?

Appendix 2

Ideas about Practice for Music Students

Randy Wimer

Your current level of musical accomplishment doesn't matter. Whether you are a complete beginner or semi-professional you are currently taking lessons and that means you have to *practice*. Many teachers never address the subject of *how to practice*, content with making an assignment and letting the student sort out for him/herself how to get the material into shape. In past years, I must confess, I've been guilty of that. For those of us fortunate enough to earn our livings as musicians, practice is such a part of our daily lives, we often don't even think about it. In response to my own stuttering replies to students who broach the subject with me, I've spent more than a little time thinking about it.

Like any other discipline, there are opinions about musical practice which seem diametrically opposed. For purposes of discussion I'll refer to those as the *drill instructor* school and the *warm and fuzzy* school. The drill instructor says you should have a set time of day to practice; you should practice scales for x minutes, etudes for y minutes, and repertoire for z minutes. Progress is made by grinding repetition of specific tasks and if you can't handle it get the hell out of my studio. The practitioner of the warm and fuzzy approach wants you to experience your practice organically. Let yourself unfold naturally in your practice session. Forcing a regimen creates rigid and uninspired performance. Let your innate sense of curiosity, coupled with a sincere desire to be a devoted servant of the music, be your guide during your practice time.

As with most things in life, both approaches have their place for all of us. In reality the practice sessions of each approach will not be all that different. Here are a few suggestions to help you make the most of your practice.

1. Attitude is everything. We've all experienced the cliché of the little boy confined to the living room, practicing his piano while staring out the window longingly at his friends having a grand time playing outside. Too often, as adult students, we approach practice as a responsibility. We're paying for these lessons, taking our teacher's valuable time and it's our duty to

spend the requisite time practicing. With time, responsibilities can become burdens. Burdens create resentment and the result is a several hundred dollar instrument sitting in the corner unused, inspiring guilt.

Practice isn't a duty, it's a release. It is that precious part of a day that you get to feed your creative side. Don't let yourself think, "I *have* to practice". *Want* to practice. Many times I *need* to practice, not for some upcoming performance but because I crave the release from the day's craziness. The feel of the guitar coming alive in my hands gives me more peace of mind than anything else in the world.

2. Pay attention to your environment. Turn off the TV. If practical, turn off the phone. Tell your significant other that you're unavailable for the next hour. You can't accomplish anything if your concentration is going to be broken every 90 seconds. As difficult as it can be, find a time and a place that is quiet and conducive to study.

3. Don't carry the day's stress into your practice session. You are not going to get that tricky passage under your fingers if all you can think about is how that SOB cut you off on 169 during your drive home. I do a couple of things to get myself mentally prepared to practice. First, stretch; really. I'm not talking yoga, here. Just take a minute and stretch your back, shoulders, arms and hands. That's what you'll be using during your practice time and it's good to get those muscles loosened up before you start. Second, take a minute to relax. Sit in your chair and focus on your breathing. Let your inner dialogue quiet down. These steps will make your practice much more relaxing and productive.

4. Have a goal. I could write another two pages on definition and setting of goals for musical practice - but you don't want to read that right now. In short, you have a long range goal or you wouldn't be here. You want to play a certain piece, or you want to accompany the children's choir, or you want to be a rock star and make a zillion dollars and lavish gifts on your former guitar teacher. With a little thought (and help from a teacher) the steps to attaining that goal can be defined. Then the steps can be broken down into smaller sections. Etc., etc. One of those little steps might be changing from one chord to another. But before you can do that you have to memorize the chords. These little tasks are the goals for your practice time. If you consistently have difficulty achieving your practice goals, then you are not breaking the steps into small enough segments. It's the old joke: How do you eat an elephant? One forkful at a time.

5. Give yourself breaks. Everyone has their own attention span. Find yours and don't ignore it. I have to stand up and move around every 20-30 minutes or I get a brain freeze. If I feel myself tensing up, the best thing to do is take five and maybe repeat number 3, above.

6. Remember, there's a reason it's called *playing*. Save time just to have fun. Try to play along with your favorite tunes. If you are just starting out, get your fingers in position and play a chord. Enjoy the sound of it. Feel the guitar vibrating against your body. It's really kind of amazing that this device of wood, glue and wire can produce these wonderful sounds. And you get to be the one who sends those sounds out into the ether. If that's not fun, I don't know what is.

Find what works for you. Some students need the discipline of a practice journal. Others need to feel free to work in a less structured manner. No matter. If you keep the ideas above in mind, you should have no trouble finding a comfortable, productive practice method.

Appendix 3

Right hand position and the free stroke

Right hand position is one of those topics that classical guitarists (myself included) will browbeat their poor students over until one or the other of them breaks down in tears (I never cry...just sob despondently). The truth is my hand position has changed over the years, in part from a natural evolution towards the ideal of “least tension necessary to produce the desired tone,” and in part from retraining after input from teachers and players I admire. I harbor no illusions that the students will finish this book with a perfect right hand position. I hope that reading this section and looking at the pictures will guide you towards a good starting place.

In the essay about practice I mentioned two schools of thought, the drill instructor and the warm and fuzzy type. My right hand is a result of combining good examples of both schools. One of the first good books I encountered that combined jazz guitar and classical technique was a collection of arrangements by the wonderful Brazilian guitarist, Laurindo Almeida. These are the steps he outlined to find a right hand position:

1. Plant your *i*, *m* and *a* fingers on the third (G) string, with the index finger just about even with the bridge side of the sound hole.
2. Place your thumb on the 1st (high E) string.
3. Without moving your hand move your thumb from the 1st string to one of the bass strings, the 6th (E) or 5th (A).
4. Leave your *i* finger on the 3rd string and place *m* on the 2nd string and *a* on the 1st string.

This accomplishes a couple of positive things: It puts the thumb and fingers in a place where each can move without interference from the other. It also brings the large knuckles of the right hand down to a place where the fingers can hit the strings with the proper motion. Unfortunately, these steps can also introduce unwanted tension in the hands of some students.

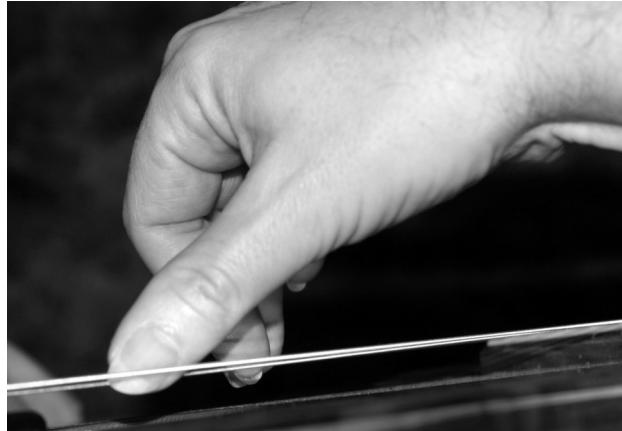
That's the drill instructor. The warm and fuzzy side comes from the incomparable Scott Tennant, author of “Pumping Nylon” and, judging from what he can do with his hands, most likely a mutant. Scott's steps are:

1. Drop your right hand to your side and let your hand, wrist and arm relax.
2. Curl your fingers slightly, as if you were picking up your guitar case.
3. Bring your arm up so that it's parallel with the floor, keeping your wrist and hand relaxed, with the fingers lightly curled.
4. Bring your hand in and rest the fingers on the strings, without letting the forearm come down on the guitar yet.
5. Let the forearm come down and rest some of the weight of the arm on the lower bout of the guitar.

At this point when I follow either method, I end up very close to the position you see in these pictures.



Notice the “X” between the thumb and the fingers. Without something close to this your thumb and fingers will not be able to operate on independent tracks.



This illustrates the “full plant”. The thumb rests on the 6th string and the *i*, *m* and *a* fingers are set on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd strings, prepared to play.



This shows the position of the *i* finger after completing a free stroke. Notice the finger segment closest to the large knuckle has moved in, toward the palm, as if making a fist. The second joint has completed the motion of swinging the finger through an arc toward the wrist. The last two segments of the fingers stay fairly straight and the tip joint stays loose. The most common mistake students make is trying to use the tip joint to originate the stroke. In truth, the tip joint moves the least of the three.





The middle finger moves just like the index, inscribing a smooth ellipse towards the wrist.



The ring finger follows the index and middle.

Appendix 4

Have you Met Lydian

RLW

This is a piece I wrote for the 7th or 8th lesson but discarded because it's a bit too difficult. I just couldn't let it go though. Anyone who gets the combined musical pun and little homage to Groucho in the title gets bonus points. In measures 11 and 13 the lowest note, F, is offset from the other notes. This is a typographical convention and has nothing to do with the timing of the note. The F is played with the other notes, not slightly after, like it might appear. If the F were placed directly under the G the two would make an unreadable mess on the page, hence, the offset. .