

CAGED System Chart.

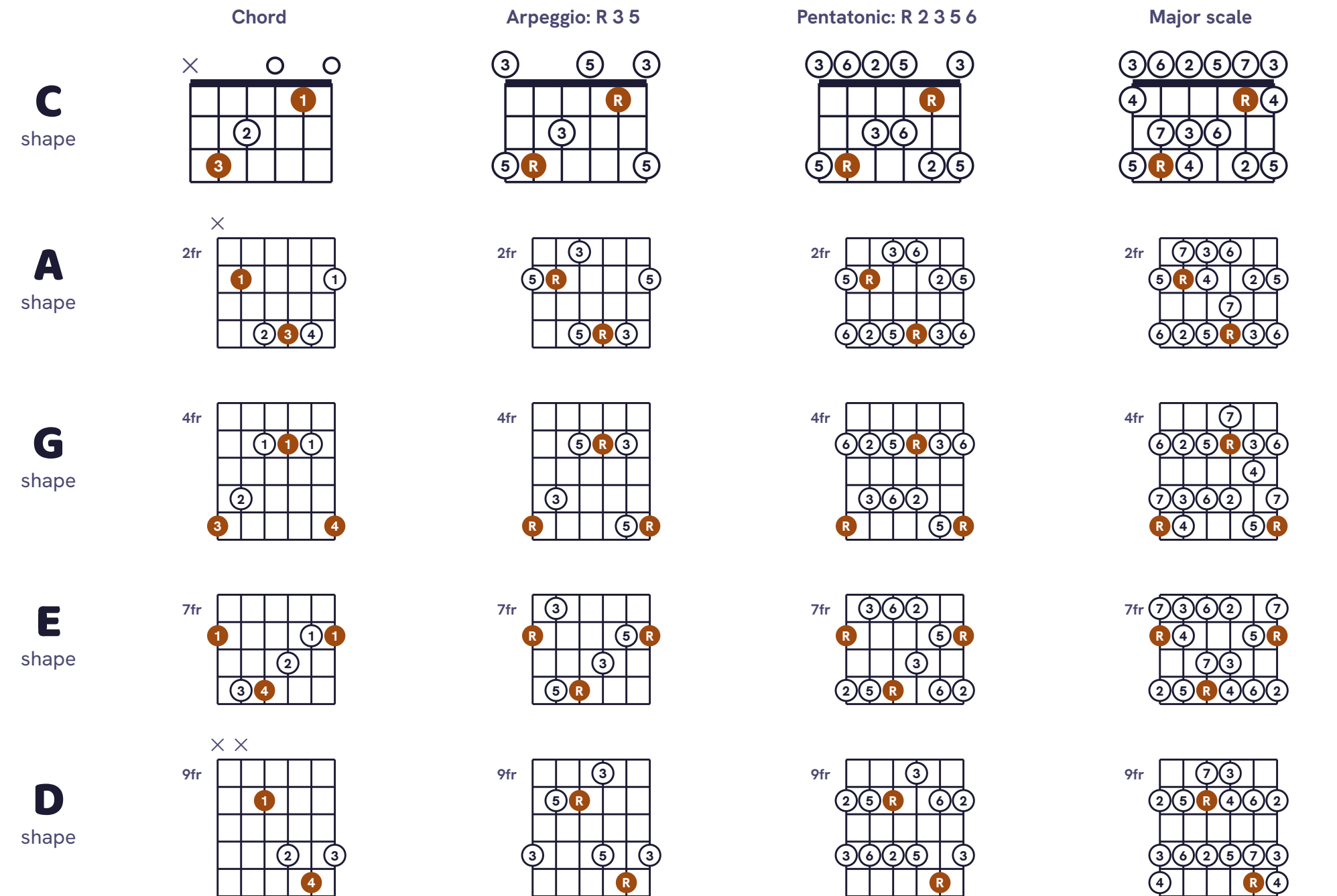
The five CAGED shapes of a C chord, each with its arpeggio, pentatonic and major scale, and how they join up the neck.

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CHORDS & HARMONY

The Five CAGED Shapes

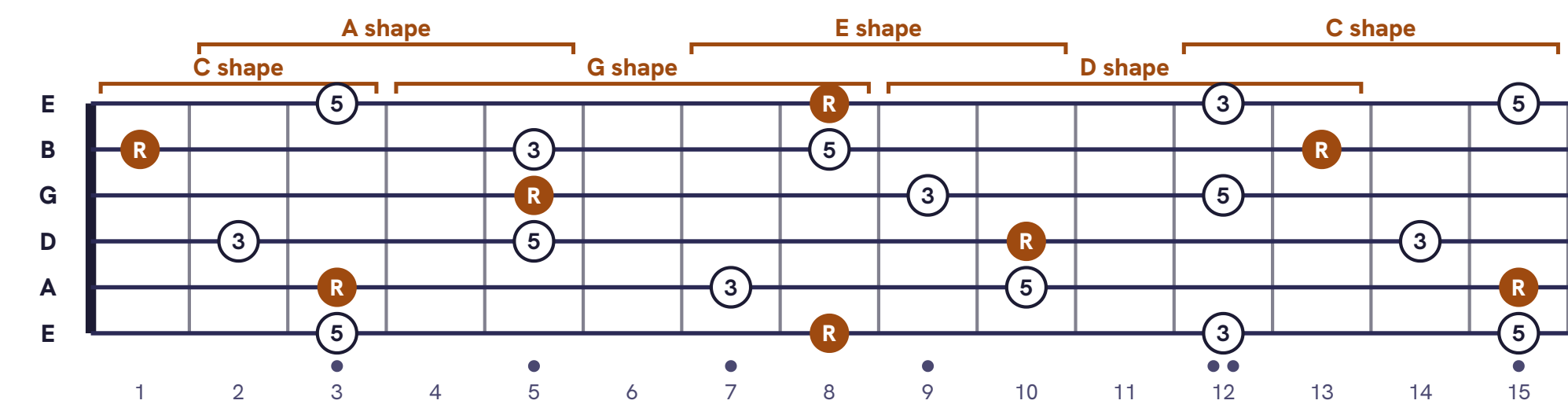
The open C, A, G, E and D chords, moved so each plays a C chord. Around each shape: the C major arpeggio, pentatonic and scale.



CHORDS & HARMONY

CAGED Up the Neck

The notes of a C chord, open to the 15th fret. The five shapes join end to end, always in the order C, A, G, E, D; after D the C shape starts again at the 12th fret.



PRACTICE TIP

Practise slowly. Speed comes from playing it right, not from playing it fast.

CHORDS & HARMONY

Using CAGED

Four ways the system helps.

One chord, five places

Any chord can be played with all five shapes, each a little higher up the neck. Pick the one nearest to where your hand already is.

In C

C open → A fret 3 → G fret 5 → E fret 8 → D fret 10

The order never changes

Up the neck the shapes always come C, A, G, E, D, then C again. In G, the open G shape comes first.

In G

G open → E fret 3 → D fret 5 → C fret 7 → A fret 10

Find the root first

Every shape is built around its roots: on the low E string (E and G shapes), the A string (A and C shapes) or the D string (D shape).

E, G low E string

A, C A string

D D string

Solo over the chord

The pentatonic around a shape fits the chord it surrounds, and its arpeggio notes (R, 3, 5) are the safest notes to land on.

R 3 5 = C E G

FOUNDATIONS

How to Read a Chord Box

A chord box is a picture of the guitar neck, standing up, as you look at it.

Lines Up and down: the six strings, low E on the left. Across: the frets.

Thick top line The nut: the box starts at the first fret.

3fr No nut: the box starts at the fret shown, here the 3rd.

1 2 3 4 Which finger: 1 index, 2 middle, 3 ring, 4 little.

○ Play the string open, with no finger on it.

× Don't play this string.

Coloured dot The root: the note that names the chord.

PRACTICE TIP

Say the note names out loud as you read.

