

Guitar Basics.

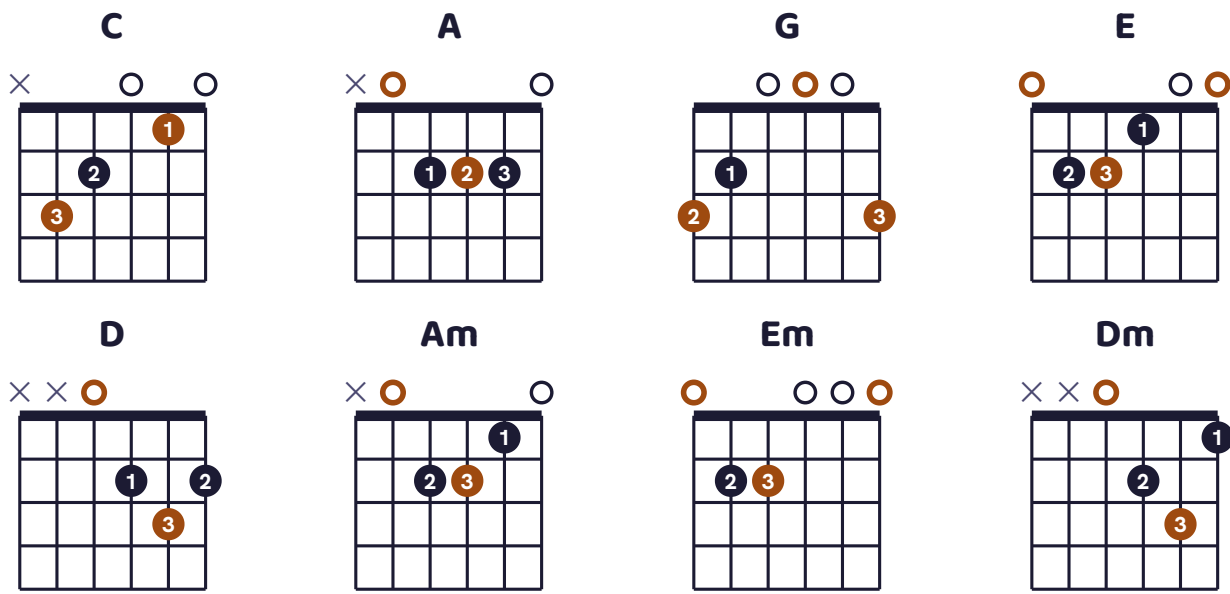
Your first chords, the notes on the neck, reading tab and the first scale shape.

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CHORDS & HARMONY

Open Chords

The first chords most guitarists learn. Strings run top to bottom, low E on the left; the thick line at the top is the nut.

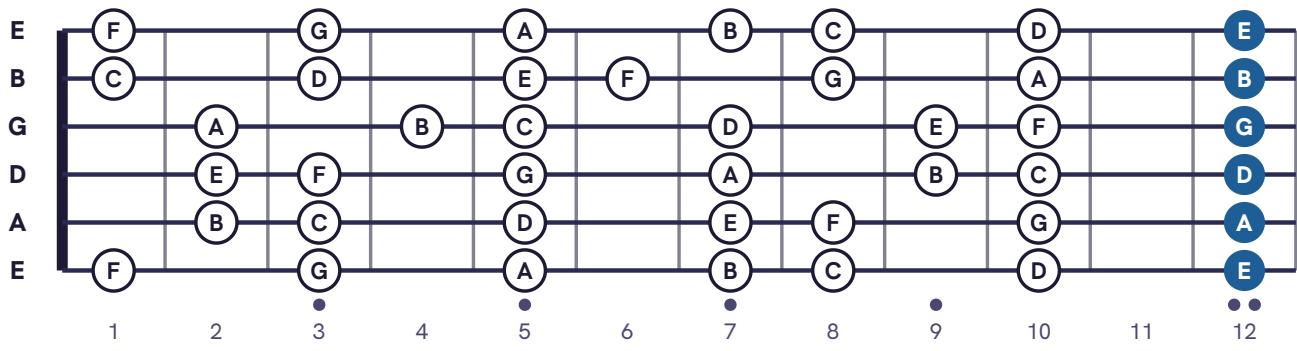


Numbers are fingers (1 = index). ○ play the open string, × don't play it. The colored dot is the root.

FOUNDATIONS

Notes on the Fretboard

Standard tuning, low to high: E A D G B E. Each fret raises a string by a half step, so the notes repeat from the 12th fret, an octave higher.



Natural notes are named; the sharps and flats sit on the frets between them (E-F and B-C have none). At the 12th fret (colored) each string is back on its own note, an octave up.

Learn the notes on the two lowest strings first: they name most chord shapes.

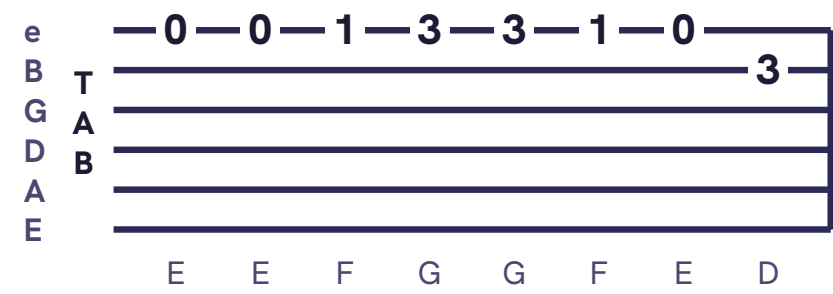
FOUNDATIONS

Reading Tab

Tab (tablature) shows where to play, not which note: read left to right.

Each line is a string, high E at the top. A number is the fret to press; 0 is the open string.

Ode to Joy (Beethoven), first phrase



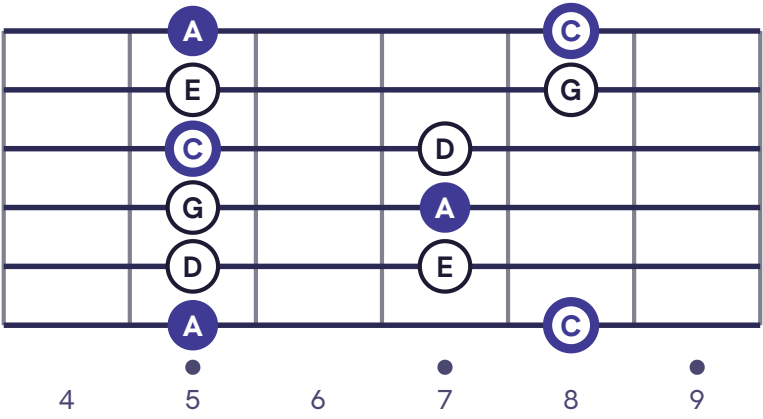
Techniques

- Hammer-on** Pick 5, then press 7 without picking again.
- Pull-off** Pick 7, then lift off to 5 without picking again.
- Slide** Slide up from 5 to 7 without lifting (\ slides down).
- Bend** Bend the 7th-fret note up until it sounds like the 9th.

SCALES & KEYS

Pentatonic Box

The most-used pentatonic shape, at the 5th fret, with two notes on every string. It is A minor pentatonic and C major pentatonic at once: the same five notes, A C D E G.



Solid dots: A, the home note of A minor pentatonic. Ringed dots: C, the home note of C major pentatonic. Start and end on A for a minor sound, on C for a major one.

Move the whole shape to change key: from the 3rd fret it is G minor or B major; from the 8th, C minor or E major.

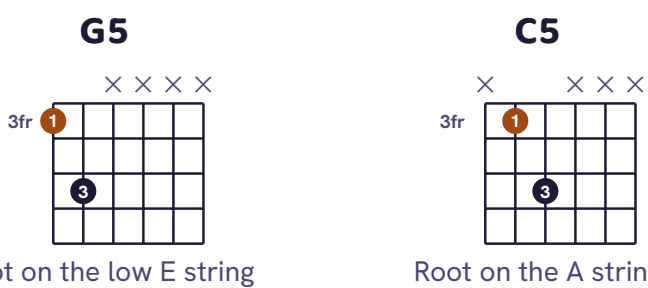
PRACTICE TIP

Say the note names out loud as you read.

CHORDS & HARMONY

Power Chords

Two notes, the root and the 5th, written with a 5 (G5). Neither major nor minor, so they fit almost anything, especially with distortion.



Colored dot: the root (it names the chord). The same shape works on any fret.

More: **A5** fret 5, low E string · **E5** fret 7, A string · **D5** fret 5, A string

RHYTHM

Note & Rest Values

NOTE	REST	NAME	BEATS IN 4/4
		Whole note	4 beats
		Half note	2 beats
		Quarter note	1 beat
		Eighth note	½ beats
		Sixteenth note	¼ beats

A dot adds half the note's value: a dotted half note = 2 + 1 = 3 beats.

Time signatures

Top number: how many beats in a measure. Bottom number: which note gets the beat (4 = quarter, 8 = eighth).

TIME	WHAT IT MEANS	USED FOR
4 4	4 quarter-note beats per measure	Most pop, rock and hip-hop C (common time)
3 4	3 quarter-note beats per measure	Waltz
2 4	2 quarter-note beats per measure	March, polka
6 8	6 eighth notes, felt as 2 beats of 3	Lilting, rolling (compound time)

CHORDS & HARMONY

Common Progressions

I **vi** Uppercase = major · lowercase = minor

NUMERALS	IN C	STYLE
I V vi IV	C · G · Am · F	Pop anthem
vi IV I V	Am · F · C · G	Same chords, starting on minor
I vi IV V	C · Am · F · G	'50s doo-wop
I IV V	C · F · G	Rock, folk, country
ii V I	Dm7 · G7 · Cmaj7	Jazz's most common move

12-Bar Blues

C7 I7	C7 I7	C7 I7	C7 I7
F7 IV7	F7 IV7	C7 I7	C7 I7
G7 V7	F7 IV7	C7 I7	G7 V7

The last measure (V7) is the turnaround back to the top; end the song on I7 instead.

PRACTICE TIP

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

