Guitar Basics.

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

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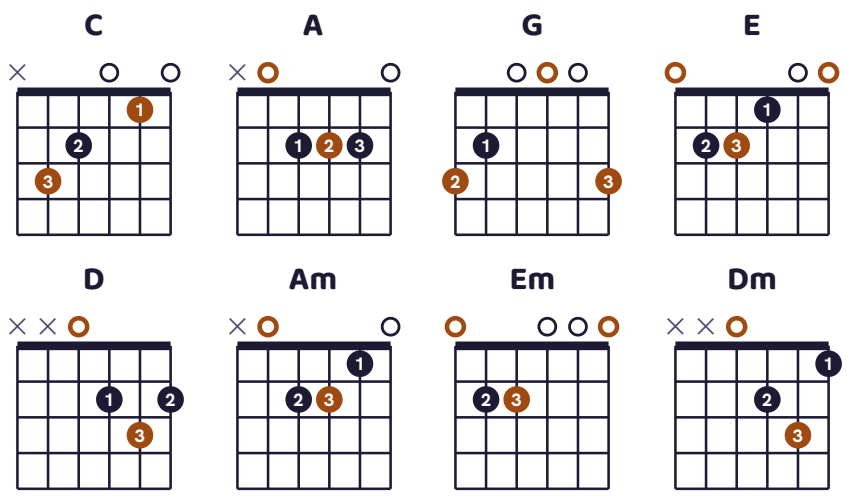
CHORDS & HARMONY

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.

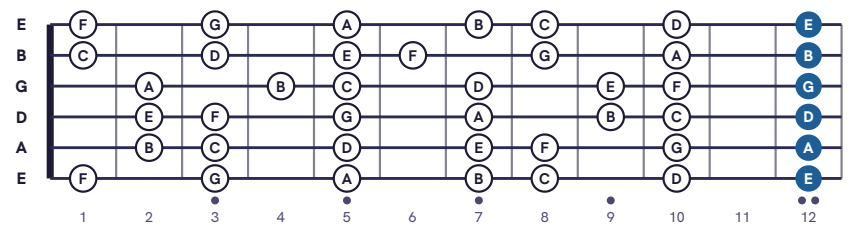


Numbers are fingers (1 = index). ○ play the open string, ✕ don't play it. The coloured dot is the root.

FOUNDATIONS

Notes on the Fretboard

Standard tuning, low to high: E A D G B E. Each fret raises a string by a semitone, 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 (coloured) 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.

PRACTICE TIP

Clap the rhythm before you play the notes.

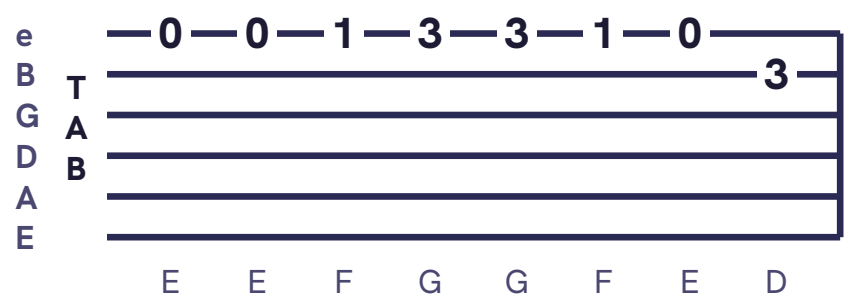
FOUNDATIONS

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

e –5 h 7– **Hammer-on** Pick 5, then press 7 without picking again.

e –7 p 5– **Pull-off** Pick 7, then lift off to 5 without picking again.

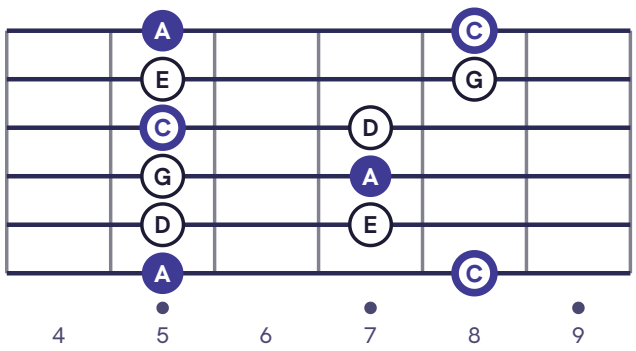
e –5 ⟋ 7– **Slide** Slide up from 5 to 7 without lifting (\ slides down).

e –7–b–9– **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

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

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.

Root on the low E string — Root on the A string

Coloured 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

PRACTICE TIP

Say the note names out loud as you read.

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