



Primary Guitar

45 Day Beginner Coursebook

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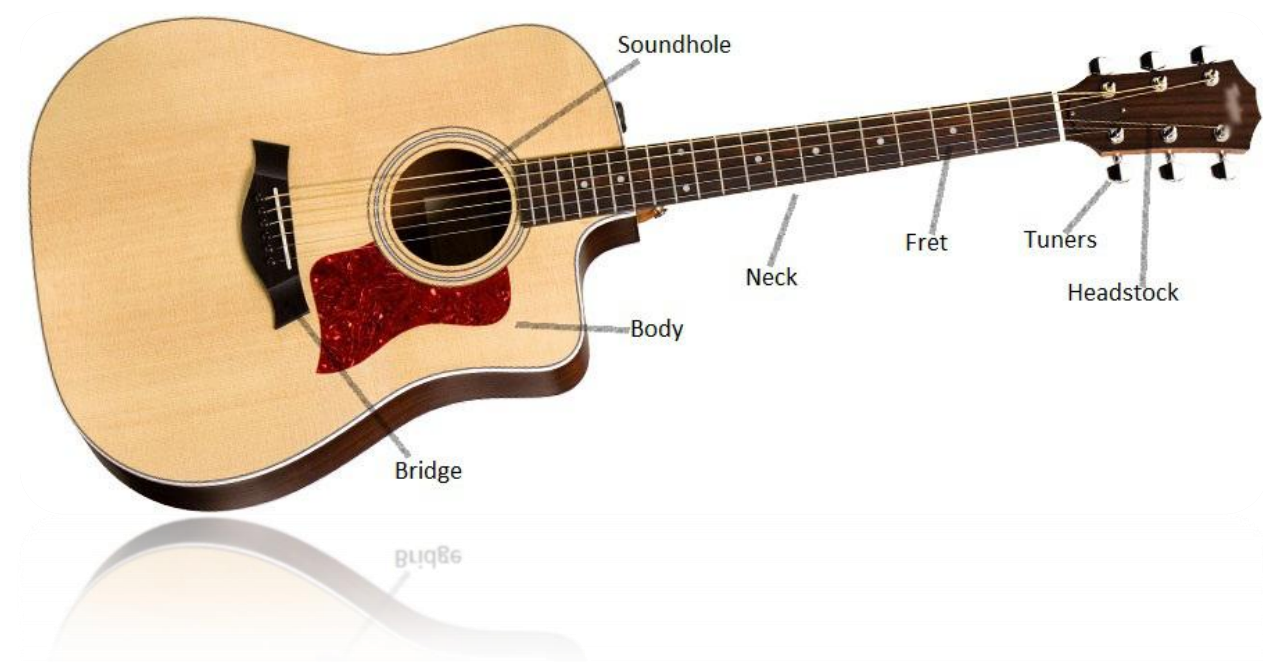
Day 1

Identifying the Parts of a Guitar

In your first lesson you'll learn some of the simplest aspects of playing a guitar; **parts and how to hold the instrument**. Before you start learning how to play, you want to have a working knowledge of what you're playing as well as a few accessories you might need. Let's get started.

Acoustic Guitar

The parts of an **acoustic guitar** will be slightly different than that of an electric guitar (pictured further below). The acoustic version is hollowed out and can be played effectively without amplification, sometimes causing it to be referred to as a **hollow body** guitar. These guitars are usually thicker and bigger and are better suited for beginners. However if you have an electric guitar instead of an acoustic you've got nothing to worry about.



Soundhole – A hole in the body of an acoustic guitar that promotes the resonating of the strings.

Body – The main shape and frame that makes up the bulk of the guitar.

Neck – Also called the “fretboard”, the neck of the guitar is a long piece of wood that houses all the frets.

Fret – A fret is the flat part of the fretboard between two pieces of metal. There are usually 22 or 24 frets on a fretboard.

Tuners – Also called “tuning pegs”, tuners are attached to the strings and can be either tightened or loosened thereby changing the pitch of the string.

Headstock – The piece of the guitar at the end of the fretboard that houses the tuners.

Bridge – A piece attached to the body of the guitar that holds the strings in place.

Electric Guitar

Electric guitars unlike their acoustic counterpart are not hollowed out and are sometimes referred to as **solid body guitars**. Electric guitars also require some form of amplification in order to produce volume. They usually have no soundhole and use metal parts and wiring in conjunction with the guitar's **body** to produce their sound.



Volume and Tone Knobs – These control volume and tonal qualities of the guitar when it is plugged into an amplifier.

Pickups – Also called “humbuckers”, pickups are a magnetic strip that electronically transmit the vibrations of the strings to the electronics of the guitar and ultimately to the amplifier.

Pickup Selector – The pickup selector is a switch that allows you to toggle between the two pickups, usually choosing one of the two, or both.

Cable Jack – A jack that allows a ¼ inch cable to be plugged in for the purpose of sending the guitar’s signal to an amplifier.

Throughout these lessons I’ll regularly be referring to these parts, so be sure and memorize which ones are which. You can use your own guitar to identify them or just do your best to remember the pictures I’ve provided.

Holding a Guitar

Sitting Down

When you're holding a guitar sitting down a strap is not required. If you strum with your right hand, the body of the guitar should rest on your right leg and vice versa. Your strumming arm will rest on the body of the guitar with your elbow bent just so your hand rests above the soundhole or pickups of the guitar. Your chording hand (left hand if you strum with your right) will reach under the fretboard and curl its fingers onto the frets also bending at the elbow as necessary.



Standing Up

If you're standing up you'll need to employ the use of a **guitar strap** which is pictured and discussed below. The strap will hook on the back and top of your guitar and enable it to hang securely from your shoulder. Again, your hands will be in the same position as they were in the "sitting down" arrangement except there will be less of a bend in your elbows.



Important Accessories

There are a few extra items you'll need to be familiar with before you start playing guitar. While there are a lot of different accessories and odd items you can purchase for your guitar the only two you really need to know about are **picks** and straps.

Picks

The guitar pick is something you hold in your hands in between your pointer finger and thumb along with your middle finger supporting the two. You then use the pick to both pluck individual strings and strum chords on the guitar.



Straps

Straps are simply used to hold your guitar up and make it easier to play while standing. The strap hooks onto pegs placed at the top and back of your guitar, then is worn over your left or right shoulder (depending on your handedness). If you strum with your right hand, it will go over your left shoulder and if you strum with your left hand the strap rests on your right shoulder.



Review Questions

1. What is the difference between the neck and a fret? _____
2. Based off of the composition of its body, what is another term for an electric guitar?

3. If you strum a guitar with your right hand, which shoulder should your guitar strap rest on?

4. Is it possible to play a guitar standing up without a strap? _____
5. Is there a difference between the way you would hold an acoustic or electric guitar?

6. What is the main function of a guitar's pickups? _____

7. What two parts of a guitar hold the strings? _____

Guitar Vocabulary

Bridge

Body

Soundhole

Neck

Fret

Tuners

Headstock

Pickups

Pickup Selectors

Volume and Tone Knobs

Cable Jack

Picks

Straps

Day 2

Stringing and Tuning Your Guitar

Guitar Strings

You can buy a set of **guitar strings** at any local or online music store of your choosing. Strings come in a variety of brands and sizes and while the brand is often going to be a matter of preference, the size or **gauge** of the string is something you will want to be familiar with.

A string's gauge is basically a measure of the thickness of the string. A typical guitar will have six strings each with its own gauge and thickness. **The thicker the string the lower and deeper sound it will produce.** If you are holding your guitar in the manner we discussed in **Day 1**, when you look down the first string you see will be the thickest string or the **sixth** string. The strings get incrementally thinner as you go down each one. A typical or "medium" guitar string gauge will start with the lowest string at **.048**, or in other terms, about one half of one tenth of an inch thick.

The size of that thickest string is usually used to denote the overall size in a pack of strings. So if you're looking for a medium set of strings you would be looking for a set of .048s. Thicker and thinner gauges are available ranging from .038 to .056 and are sought out by guitar players based on preference.

String Gauges by Number

The **6** denotes the thickest string on your guitar as described in the paragraph above. Each string gets incrementally thinner until you get to the lightest string at .009.

6	5	4	3	2	1
.048	.036	.026	.016	.013	.009

Stringing Your Guitar

When you remove the strings from the pack each string will be individually labeled in a paper or plastic sleeve with its gauge. Identify the thickest string as it is the one you will want to put on the guitar first.

Depending on your guitar, you'll either need to place the strings under pegs on the bridge or pull them through holes on the bridge. Typically an acoustic guitar will have pegs as part of the bridge, and an electric guitar will have a metal piece with holes through it that make up the bridge as pictured below.



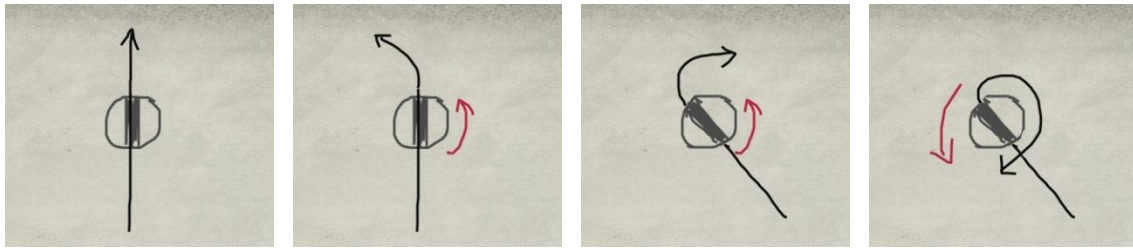
If you're attempting to string an electric guitar, it's also possible that the strings will need to go through the back of the guitar through a **back plate** with six holes in it. That plate will look something like the following picture.



Push the string through those holes and out the top of the bridge. Regardless of what kind of guitar you are stringing go through this process for all six strings. Once you have all of the strings run through the bridge, you'll be ready to pull them through the tuners and begin tightening.



If you remember from **Day 1**, the tuners are little winding pegs on the head stock of your guitar that allow you to either loosen or tighten the strings. In order to attach the strings to the tuners, start with the thickest string and pull it through the small hole in the first tuner giving yourself about two or three inches of slack. You then want to wrap the slack *underneath* the string itself. The process is pictured below.



Once you have the string tucked under itself you should be looking at something like the picture below.



Begin to tighten the tuning peg until the string has wound around the peg three or four times. By then the string should be tightened and ready to tune.



Tuning Your Guitar

There are a lot of different tunings available to an aspiring guitar player. However at this point in the learning process, you only have to worry about one.

Standard Tuning

E A D G B E

This is what is known as **standard tuning**. Going from the thickest string to the thinnest, when you play any of the strings as an open note (without pressing down any frets) these are the notes you should hear.

Remember how the string gauges were laid out? Keep in mind that the same order applies here. The thickest string will be the low E, the second thickest will be the A, third would be D and so on.

6	5	4	3	2	1
(E)	(A)	(D)	(G)	(B)	(E)

How Do I Tune to These Notes?

Tuning to these notes can be tough as it requires a developed and intuitive ear to do so without a tuner. For most beginners it's wise to go down to the local music shop or online and invest in a small tuner for your guitar. Most are under \$20 and are a huge help when you're starting out. Once you have gotten familiar with using the tuner and with what these notes sound like, you'll be able to do some of the tuning by ear. Most guitar players use a tuner no matter how advanced they are. It's just too difficult to find the right pitch without one, hence learning how to use one is time well spent.

An electric guitar will plug straight into a tuner, however if you're playing an acoustic guitar, most tuners have microphones and will allow you to tune your instrument just as effectively.



In the case of this tuner, an arrow will indicate whether your pitch is too high (sharp) or too low (flat). Use the tuning pegs to either tighten or loosen the strings until you reach the middle point for whatever note you're trying to tune to.

Review Questions

1. How many strings are typically used on a guitar? _____
2. Which two parts of a guitar are the strings attached to? _____
3. In standard tuning, what notes are each of the strings tuned too? _____
4. Would the third string from the top be the third thickest or third thinnest string? _____
5. If a string is tuned too high, would it be tuned too sharp or too flat? _____

Guitar Vocabulary

Guitar Strings
Gauge
Medium Gauge
Light Gauge
Heavy Gauge
Back Plate
Standard Tuning
Guitar Tuner

Day 3

How to Read Tablature

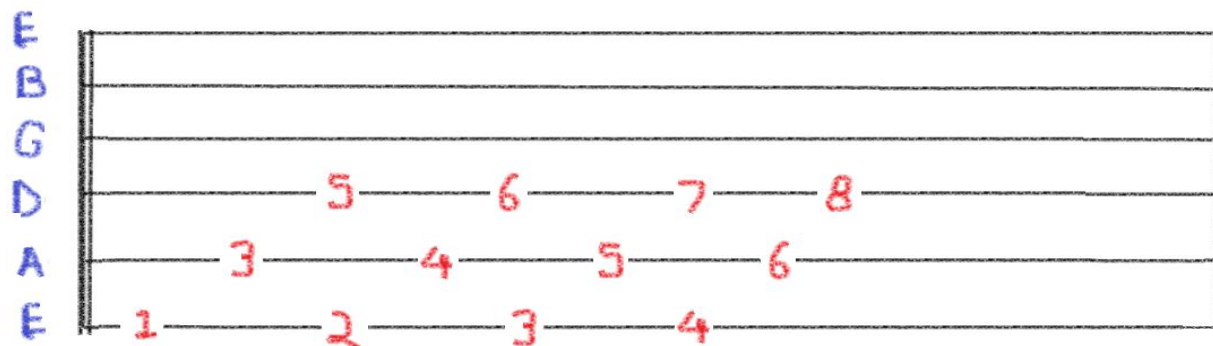
Recognizing Tablature

Tablature or “tabs” is a more simple and straightforward way to read music on the guitar. While it is simpler than reading music, guitar players don’t use it just because they do not want to, or cannot read sheet music. Tabs are just a much more efficient and sensible way of putting guitar music on paper. Before you get into the rest of these lessons, you will need to know what they are, be able to recognize them and know how to read them

A sheet of tablature usually shows up in the following format using plain text and numbers to illustrate notes on the fretboard.

```
E | -----10--13--15-----  
B | -----10--13-----15--  
G | -----10--12-----  
D | -----5--7--10--12-----  
A | -----3--5--7-----  
E | --3--5-----
```

Personally, I find this to be extremely boring and hard to look at. I’ve always preferred to read and write tabs like they had been sketched out with a colored pencil. Therefore I’ll present them to you in the following form.

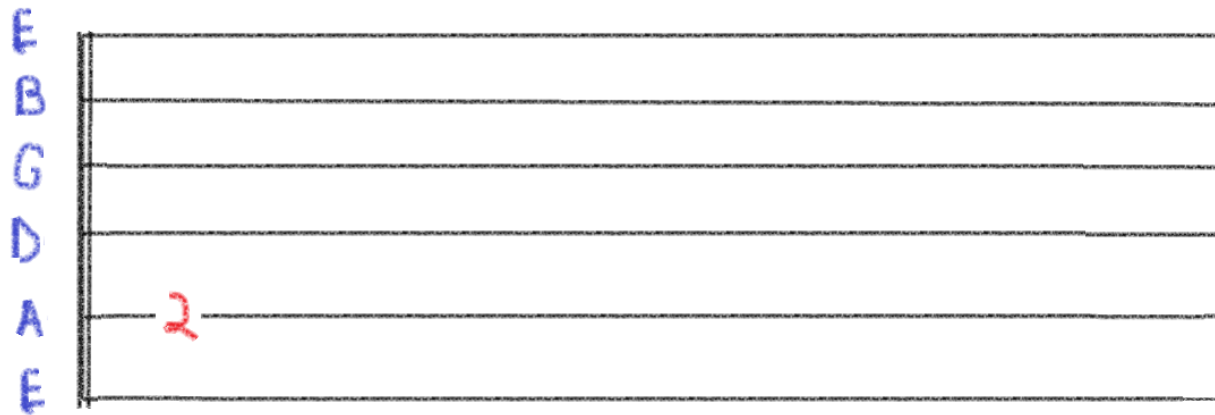


You’re seeing the exact same concept, but in my opinion, it’s softer on the eyes and less fatiguing when you’re trying to actually learn a song or a riff on your guitar.

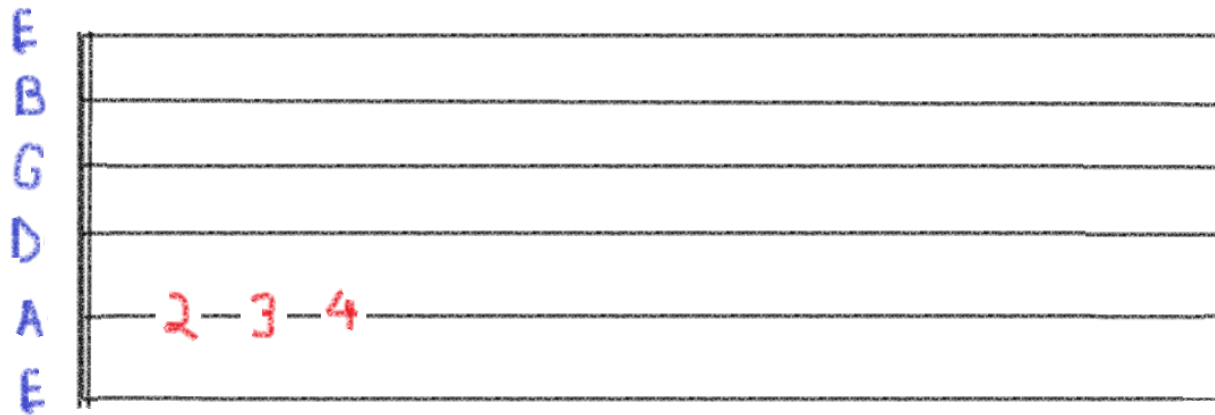
Reading Tablature

Reading tablature is very simple. Every guitar tab will have six lines representing the six strings on the guitar. When you are looking at it on paper the line at the top will represent the high E (thinnest string) while the lowest one will represent the low E (thickest string). If you see one number by itself on one of the lines, it represents a single note to be played. That number indicates which fret you are to press down in order to play the note and the string it is on tells you which string is to be played.

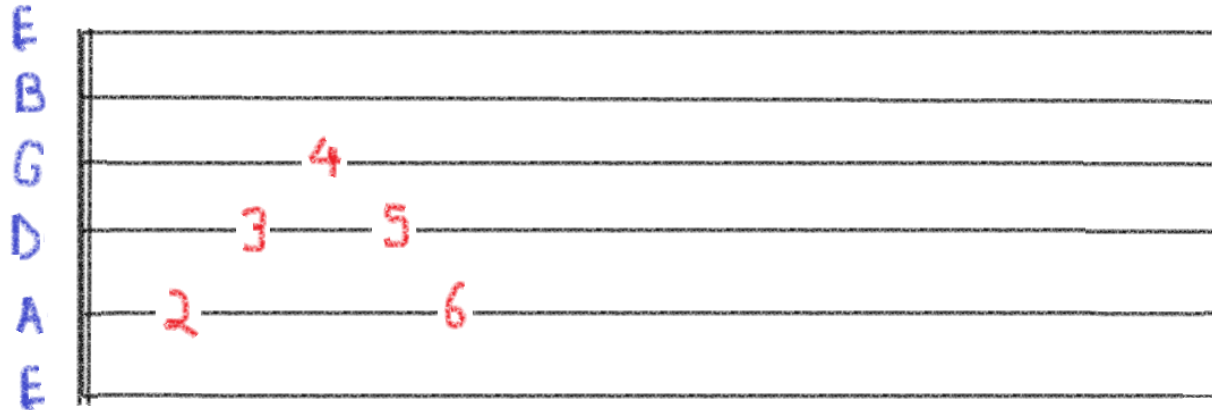
So what would you play when faced with the following tab? We know that each line represents a string, and since we've been over the notes of each string during **Day 2** we know that the second string from the top is an A. We also know from the tab that we would play the second fret. We have all the information we need to play that single note.



If you're dealing with a series of single notes, you play them in the order they are given going from left to right. *You always play from left to right, regardless of the fret number or what string it is given on.* In the following example you would play the **2**, **3** and **4** in the order they are given.



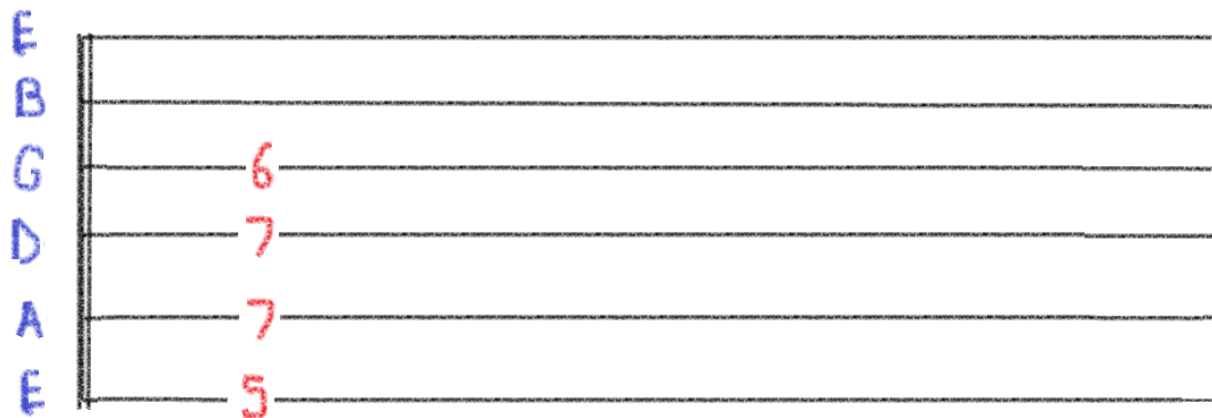
So how would you handle several single notes on different strings? You got it: Left to right.



The next thing you need to know is how to recognize **chords** on a sheet of tablature. Since we have not yet covered your first chord, or even defined a chord for you, we will cover the concept here with a quick definition and then get more in detail for the next few lessons.

A chord is simply a **collection of two or more note played at one time to create one dominant sound.**

When you see this in tablature you'll see a collection of numbers tacked one on top of the other, indicating several notes that are to be played together at the same time.



There are other symbols and concepts as it relates to tablature, but for right now, being able to recognize single notes and chords is all you need to be familiar with.

Review Questions

1. How do you know which string is which on a piece of tablature? _____
2. The numbers on tablature indicate what? _____
3. When reading tablature which direction do you read in? _____
4. In tablature, how is a chord distinguished from a single note? _____

Guitar Vocabulary

Tablature

Day 4

How to Play a Single Note on the Guitar

Simple Step

Lessons on how to play a **single note** on the guitar don't turn up too often. In fact, most of the early lessons you'll see will revolve around playing entire chords, before you've even learned how to play one note. We are going to take a different approach here and look at how to play just one single note on the guitar.

Proper Positioning

In **Day 1** we covered proper hand and arm positioning, so if you're having trouble remembering the details go back and review that lesson before continuing.

As you are grasping the fretboard you will use your thumb to anchor your hand in place by wrapping it around the top of the fretboard. You will then curl your fingers up towards the strings and onto the frets. If there is a bend in wrist make sure that the bend is less than 180 degrees. The following pictures illustrate this proper posture.

**** Photo of Thumb View ****

**** Photo of Forefinger View ****

Playing the Note

In order to play a note on the guitar you simply chord the note with your first finger on the fretboard. We will start with that finger since it's the strongest. Now instead of explaining where the note is, I will provide you with the tablature and let you figure it out for yourself. If you forget how to read the tabs, review the lesson from **Day 3** and you should be good to go.

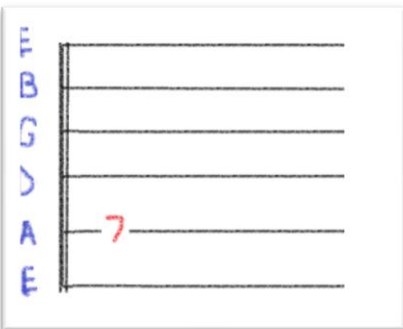
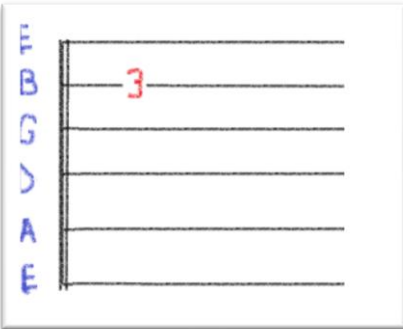


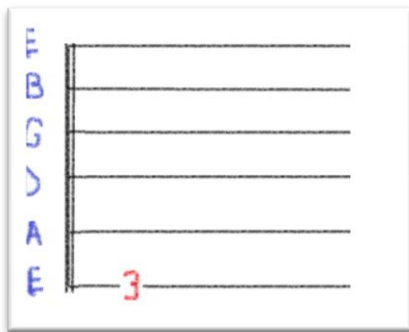
Once you find the note all you need to do is press down on the fretboard at that location (in this case, the second fret on the second string), and pluck the string with your other hand either with a pick or your fingers. That is all there is to it. You have played your first note on the guitar. Let's try a few more.

As you are practicing this you want to focus on two things:

1. **Pressing hard on the fret to get a clean sound.**
2. **Pressing in the middle of the fret to avoid buzzing.**

You will almost certainly here clips, chirps and buzzing sounds when you first start out. The problem is likely that you are not accomplishing one of those two steps. Make sure to press hard and firm, and also be certain that you are pressing close to the middle of the fret and not too close to the metal pieces on either side. Your fingers might hurt for awhile, but overtime they will toughen up and you will be getting clean notes without effort.





Review Questions

1. What are the notes of each open string on the guitar?

- A. DADGBE
- B. EAGDBE
- C. BEADGE
- D. EADGBE
- E. None of the above.

2. When reading tablature, what do the horizontal lines represent? _____

3. How many frets are typically on a guitar?

- A. 18-20
- B. 22-24
- C. 25
- D. 26-28
- E. 12

4. What two things will help avoid buzzing when playing a single note? _____

5. Are pickups typically used on an acoustic or electric guitar? _____

6. Let's say you are using a tuner and the low E is tuned too high. What word could you use to describe it being too high?

- A. Pointed
- B. Flat
- C. Even
- D. Chorded
- E. Sharp

Guitar Vocabulary

Single Note

Day 5

Playing Multiple Single Notes

Direction

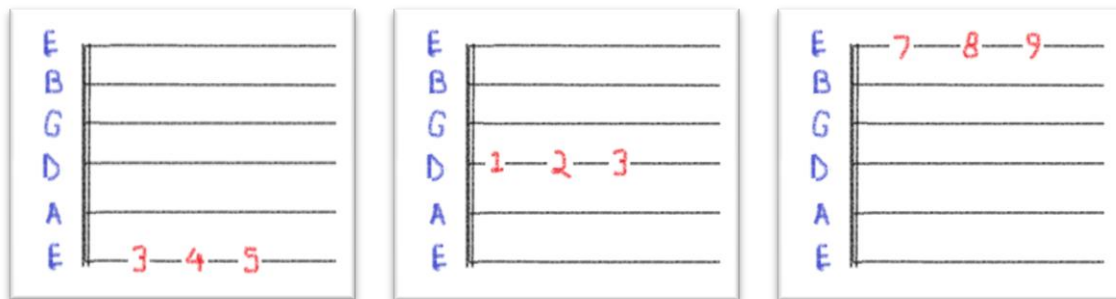
When you are playing multiple single notes you have two options you can choose from depending on how far apart the notes are.

1. You can keep your hand in place and use other fingers to reach the notes.
2. You can move your hand entirely in order to engage the notes more comfortably.

How you handle this has a lot to do with the size of your hands and the span of your fingers. Typically your **fret span** will be measured from the bottom frets (where the frets are bigger), and will be around four or five frets. Aside from that, it is a judgment call that you have to make on the fly. We will isolate some situations that are ideal for keeping your hand in place and that are ideal for moving your hand.

Staying in Place

The following tabs are all of multiple notes that are meant to be played *without moving your hand*. The first note in each tab will be played by your first finger. As you move to the next three or four notes, the fingers you use to play those notes are chosen at your own discretion.

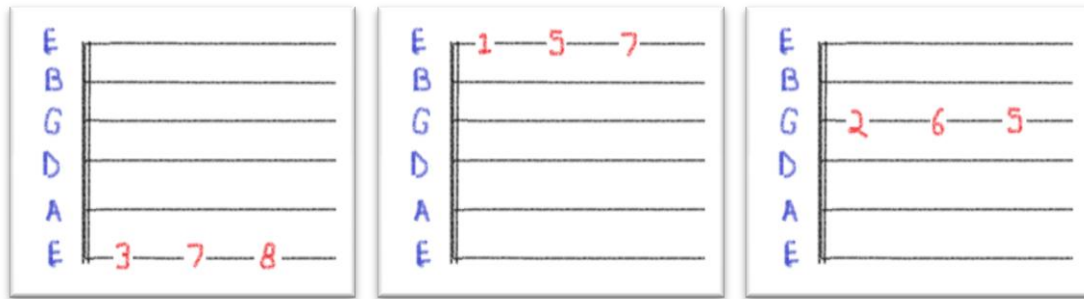


When playing these notes the best way to approach it is with your first, second and third finger in that order. The idea is to just get you used to using multiple fingers while keeping your hand in one place.

Moving Your Hand

The notes in the above tabs are all very close to one another, given three at a time and all in order. While this does of course occur when playing guitar, it is not always the norm and you need to be able to adjust when notes are farther apart. The following tabs present you with an opportunity to do that. In

order to play these notes you will have to move your hand at least once, and when you do, the fingers you use to play the notes are once again up to you.



The examples I have given you should be a template for coming up with your own tabs and note sequences. What you want to focus on is getting clear notes, strengthening your fingers and understanding the concepts.

Review Questions

1. What is the technical term for an electric guitar? _____
2. What is the typical size of the thickest string in a set of medium gauge strings?
 - A. 036
 - B. 048
 - C. 040
 - D. 050
 - E. 021
3. What direction do you read tablature in? _____
4. What are two tactics you can employ to play “cleaner” sounding notes? _____
5. What guitar part is *not* unique to an electric guitar?
 - A. Pickups
 - B. Tuning Pegs
 - C. Volume Knobs
 - D. Wiring
 - E. Metal Bridge
6. What are the two options you have when faced with a sequence of single notes? _____

Guitar Vocabulary

Fret Span

Day 6

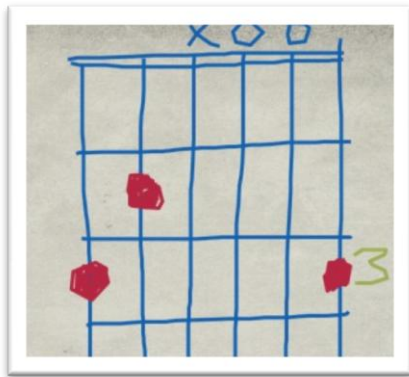
Learning the G Chord

The Chord Structure

Learning chords on the guitar can be tough on a beginner's fingers and can take a lot of time to get comfortable with. Do not get too hung up on how tough it may be. All you need to do is take it slowly and concentrate on getting the chords you *do* know to come out nice and clear.

A chord itself is made up of several notes played at one time. The letter of the chord, in this case **G**, tells us the **key** of the chord. Rather than remember every single note you need to play to make the chord, you just remember that it is a "G chord".

I will provide with a chart so you can visualize the **chord structure**. If you don't know how to read the chord charts don't worry too much. It's similar to tablature, and I will explain it regardless.





This is your basic **G** chord. It's technically called "G major", but you don't need to worry about that major tag yet. Just recognize that it is in the key of **G**. The six vertical lines represent the six strings on the guitar. It might take some getting used to since when reading tablature, the horizontal lines represent the strings, but try to visualize it all the same. The chart reads left to right, meaning that the left most line would be considered the sixth string (the thickest one), and the right most line would be considered the first string.

The green **3** to the right of the chart indicates the fret number. Therefore in this chart you are seeing the first three frets on the fret board. The blue **Xs** and **Os** at the top of the chart mark either an **open string** or **muted string**. The **Os** are open and the **Xs** are muted. The **O** simply means that you play that open string when playing the chord. The **X** means that you mute it with your palm or finger, which we will discuss later.

The red dots indicate which notes you play on the fretboard. You know from those dots where you will play notes and how many fingers you will need. Again the strings go left to right and thickest to thinnest. Let's take a look at what we will be playing.

First Red Dot: First string on the third fret.

Second Red Dot: Second string on the second fret.

Third Red Dot: Sixth string on the third fret.

Try and get comfortable with that finger placement. The guidelines for which fingers to use where, is usually whatever is most comfortable for you, but here are some loose suggestions.

First Red Dot: First string on the third fret. – **Middle Finger**

Second Red Dot: Second string on the second fret. – **Pointer Finger**

Third Red Dot: Sixth string on the third fret. – **Ring Finger**

**** Photo of G Chord Coming ****

Strumming and Picking the Chord

When you are comfortable with the chord and where your fingers are, you want to get used to both **strumming** and **picking** the chord. Strumming means you start at the top of the strings and “strum” down through all six. Picking means you pick out each string of the chord individually.

Try both methods, but regardless of which one you are doing, put the following concepts into practice.

Strive for a clean sounding chord. – You are destined to have some string buzzes on a regular basis. As you are learning this chord, make sure to weed them out by pressing harder and making sure that your fingers are not muting strings that do not need to be muted. A string can be muted or can buzz by simply coming into slight contact with your skin, so make sure your positioning is correct. If you are still getting buzzes, try pressing the fret harder or making sure you are pressing closer to the middle of the fret away from the two metal strips. It will take time but the more you work at this, the clearer your chords will be

Strum down then come back up. – Simply strumming down all six strings once, then strumming backwards back up all six strings once, and repeating that pattern will help you at least start to learn how it is supposed to feel.

When you pick through the chord, examine each note so it comes out clean. – You will really start to notice where you are going wrong when you pick through each note individually. Take your time here and adjust as you need to until each note that is not supposed to be muted, is coming out completely clear and crisp.

Review Questions

1. What note is the sixth string tuned to? _____

2. What do the six vertical lines on a chord chart represent?

- A. Frets
- B. Strings
- C. Pickups
- D. Notes
- E. None of the above.

3. What is another term for an acoustic guitar? _____

4. What do the horizontal lines on tablature represent? _____

5. What does an X on a chord chart signify? _____

6. What does an O on a chord chart signify? _____

Guitar Vocabulary

Key

Chord Structure

Open String

Muted String

Day 7

Learning the C Chord

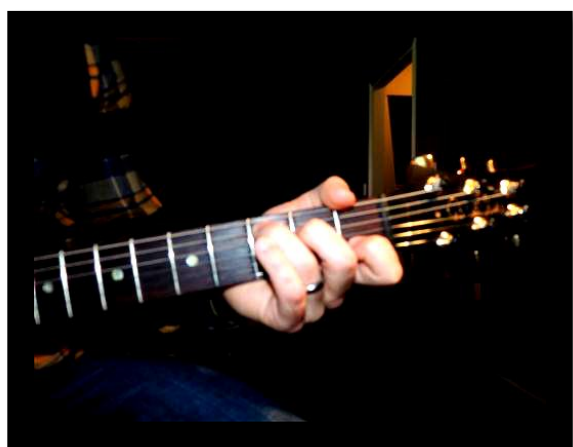
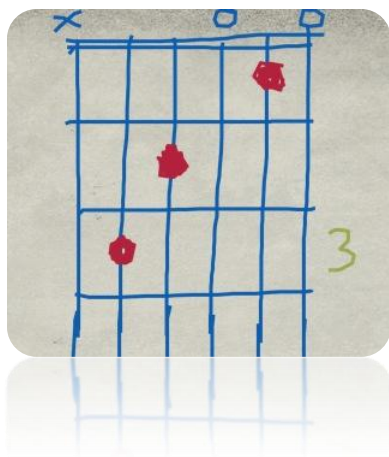
The Chord Structure

As a guitar player you will be adding chords for a long time. You will never learn them all, and especially during your earlier years you will be adding chords on a constant basis. We covered the **G** chord on **Day 6** and we will continue with that by covering the **C** chord today

The reason I am following up with the **C** chord is that the G-C chord combo makes up a fairly typical **chord progression**. A chord progression is simply a group of two or more chords that are played together to create a piece of music. When choosing what order to cover chords in, I will follow the most typical chord progressions of today's modern music, and teach you each one in that order.

These progressions are usually made up of three or four chords in total, so once you have gone through a week or two of these courses, you will have a strong familiarity with a useful chord progression.

Since we have already covered how to read chord charts in **Day 6** I will simply provide you with the chart and then move on with the details.



The same strumming and picking techniques we have already discussed apply. One thing you will notice here is that your fingers will take on more of a curved shape, so you will need to be especially careful not to mute notes that don't require it. Note that the sixth string (left most string) *will* be muted. This can be done with your thumb curling around, or just by not playing it.

First Red Dot: Second string on the third fret. – **Ring Finger**

Second Red Dot: Second string on the second fret. – **Middle Finger**

Third Red Dot: Sixth string on the third fret. – **Pointer Finger**

Strumming and Picking the Chord

As I stated earlier, the same strumming and picking techniques apply. One thing you want to be aware of with the **C** chord is that you don't need to play the low-E (the thickest string). You will only play the bottom five strings; both when you are strumming and when you are picking.

Review Questions

1. Do the lines that indicate guitar strings on sheet of tablature run horizontally or vertically? _____
2. What are the six guitar strings tuned to? _____
3. What is a chord progression? _____
4. How many notes do you need to play the G chord from Day 6?
 - A. 5
 - B. 3
 - C. 6
 - D. 2
 - E. None of the above.
5. What do the Xs on a chord chart mean? _____

Guitar Vocabulary

Chord Progression

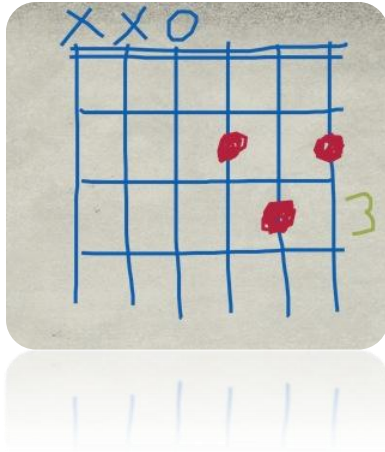
Day 8

Learning the D Chord

The Chord Structure

In the last lesson I introduced the concept of chord progressions and told you that I would be teaching chords within the context of the most typical chord progressions of today's modern music. Thus far you have learning **G** and **C**, a group which is a progression all its own. However today we will complete this progress by learning the **D** chord which will give us the **G-C-D chord progression**. The G-C-D progression is one of the most typical, and will be heavily utilized on the guitar.

If you need to review the chord chart, go back to **Day 6** and refresh your memory. Once you are ready, here is the chord chart and recommended finger placement.



First Red Dot: Third string on the second fret. – **Pointer Finger**

Second Red Dot: Second string on the third fret. – **Ring Finger**

Third Red Dot: First string on the second fret. – **Middle Finger**

Strumming and Picking the Chord

This chord will be a little easier than the first two, as all your fingers will be closer together. As usual, you will want to be careful that your fingers are not muting strings by accident, especially since they are so close together for this chord. Also note that the sixth and fifth strings are muted. The best way to handle this is to remember to just not play those two notes. When strumming or picking you only need to play the bottom four strings.

Review Questions

1. When tuning your guitar, what does “too sharp” and “too flat” mean? _____

2. What are two tactics you can use to play “cleaner” sounding notes? _____

3. What does “Fret Span” refer to? _____

4. What is the typical size of a “medium” gauge string?

- A. 036
- B. 040
- C. 048
- D. 025
- E. None of the above.

5. How can you tell which strings should *not* be played on a chord chart? _____

Guitar Vocabulary

G-C-D Chord Progression

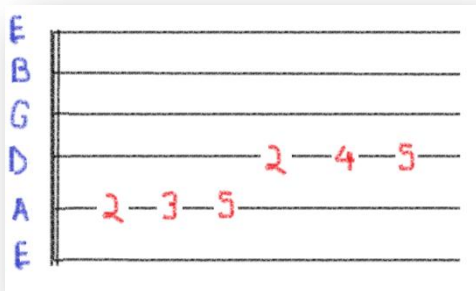
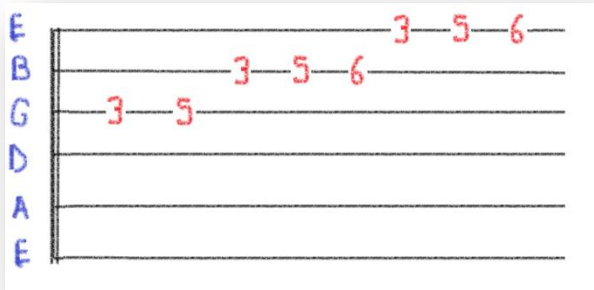
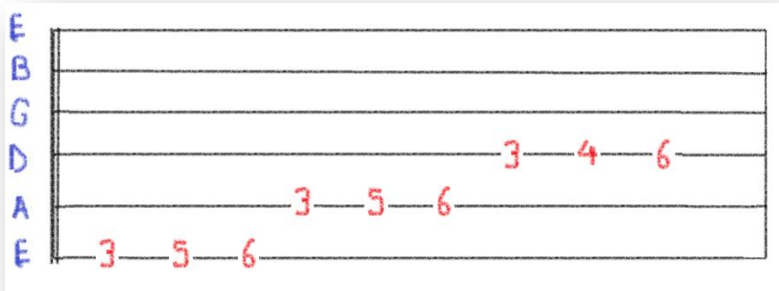
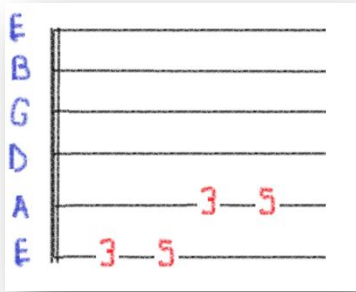
Day 9

Basic Scale Patterns

Learning the Patterns

A **scale** is simply a group of single notes strung together in a pattern that are of a particular musical variety. There are many different scales including major, minor, blues, pentatonic and many others. Knowing those at this point is not necessary and we will get to them in future lessons. However we need to start laying the foundation for learning those scales by taking three and four note patterns and beginning to practice them. This will be similar to the **Day 5** lesson on playing multiple notes.

I will lay out some simple note combinations on tablature and I want you to play them both forwards *and* backwards. As always, you need to take this very slowly and concentrate on note clarity and not speed. Try and memorize these patterns as much as you can, as it will serve you well when you are learning actual scales.



Fingers and Playing the Notes

Wherever you have a group of three or four notes, try to use three or four different fingers for those notes. What I mean is to try avoiding moving one finger (usually your pointer finger) from note to note to note. That is terribly inefficient and it will result in your weaker fingers (usually your ring and pinky fingers) not developing enough. Take the last tab for example. Practices using your pointer, middle and pinky fingers for the **2-3-5** line then use your pointer, ring and pinky fingers for the **2-4-5** line.

Practice

As you practice these patterns keep in mind what you are hearing and try to memorize the sounds of moving up and down the fretboard. For example, if you move up two frets: What did that sound like? How about if you move down two frets? What about moving up one or three frets? Try and remember these sounds and the corresponding movement. We will go over more patterns and eventually get to full scales in the next few lessons.

Review Questions

1. What is a chord progression? _____
2. If you are tuning your guitar and the pitch is too low, is it too flat or sharp? _____
3. What do the Os on a chord chart signify? _____
4. What is the typical fret span of a guitar player?
 - A. 2 Frets
 - B. 3-4 Frets
 - C. 4-5 Frets
 - D. 6 Frets
 - E. None of the above.
5. What is a scale in guitar terms? _____

Guitar Vocabulary

Scale

Day 10

Learning the E Major Chord

In this lesson we will start learning another chord progression by covering how to play an E chord. In this case we will introduce a new concept, as you will need to discriminate between the **E major** chord and the **E minor** chord.

Major and Minor Chords

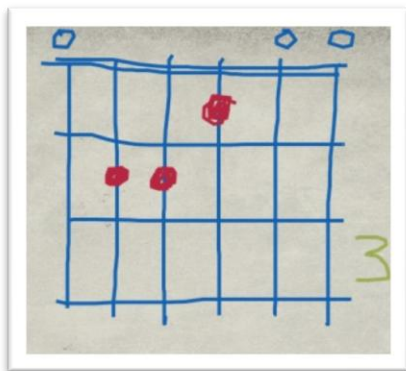
There are many different kinds of guitar chords, but the major and minor chords are two of the most basic and typical chords that you will come across. The major and minor designation basically signifies the sound of the chord. An easy way to think about it is this.

The Major Chord Sound – More of an upbeat, positive sounding chord. The major chords sound “happy” and forward moving.

The Minor Chord Sound – More of a regressive and negative sound. The minor chord sound is “sad” and more of an ominous sounding chord.

The Chord Structure

In this lesson the only **E** chord you will have to worry about is **E major**. Like the other we have learned so far, it is a basic open chord that is essential when you are learning guitar basic. It is a little bit of an easier chord because you will play all six strings and will not have to worry about muting. Here’s the chart.





First Red Dot: Fifth string on the second fret. – **Middle Finger**

Second Red Dot: Fourth string on the second fret. – **Ring Finger**

Third Red Dot: Third string on the first fret. – **Ring Finger**

Strumming and Picking the Chord

As I have already said, when you strum or pick the chord, you will play all six strings and will not have to worry about any muted notes. As always, make sure you are getting every note to come out clean and using both basic up and down strumming techniques as well as individually picking each string.

Review Questions

1. On guitar tablature, what do the horizontal lines represent? _____
2. What two things can you do to reduce buzzing when playing notes? _____
3. What is the standard tuning? _____
4. How do you define a chord progression? _____
5. What is the difference between strumming and picking a chord? _____

Guitar Vocabulary

Major Chord

Minor Chord

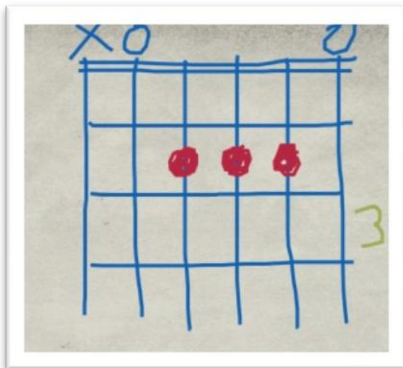
Day 11

Learning the A Major Chord

The Chord Structure

Since you have just learned **E Major** in **Day 10's** lesson, we will build off of that chord into another chord progression by learning **A Major**. **A** is the second in a sequence of three chords you will be learning to complete your second chord progression. The first progression we covered was **G-C-D**. This one will be **E-A-B**.

The **A Major chord** is straight forward, yet does require some finger strength. The chart will show that you will have three notes; all right on top of one another. You will need to squeeze three fingers onto one fret, which will probably be new to your fingers; though with time will start to feel natural. Here is the chart.



Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot: Fourth string on the second fret. - **Pointer Finger**

Second Red Dot: Third string on the fourth fret. - **Middle Finger**

Third Red Dot: Second string on the fourth fret. - **Ring Finger**

Strumming and Picking the Chord

For this chord you only have one muted note, which is the sixth string. You can mute this note simply by not playing it. When you strum take special care to avoid hitting that sixth string, as it will muddy your **A** chord with a low **E** and end up distorting the sound. Pay close attention to bunched up three notes so that you are getting them to come out clear without any buzzing.

Review Questions

1. What do the Xs on a chord chart signify?

- A. Notes
- B. Breaks
- C. Mutes
- D. Open Strings
- E. Chords

2. How many notes do you play when you play an E Major chord?

- A. 2
- B. 6
- C. 4
- D. 12
- E. 4

3. What is the definition of a chord progression?

4. What kind of guitar uses a soundhole to resonate the strings?

5. What string size group would a .048 gauge string be a part of?

6. How many notes do you play when you play an A Major chord?

- A. 5
- B. 6
- C. 1
- D. 4

E. None of the above.

Day 12

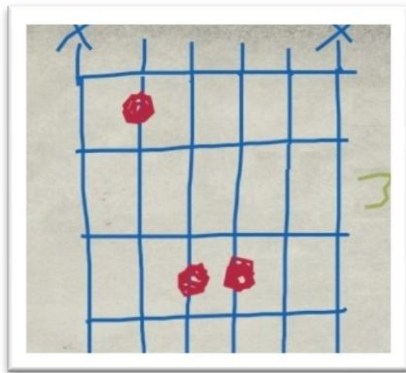
Learning the B Chord

The Chord Structure

In pursuit of the **E-A-B** chord progression, we have already covered **E** and **A** major. The last piece of the puzzle is your first **B** chord, which coincidentally, will also be your first **bar chord**. A bar chord refers to a chord in which you use one finger to press down two or more notes on the same fret. If you are a bit worried about the difficulty of this, do not be too intimidated. I will give you a variation of this chord that works just as well, thereby avoiding the need to bar any notes.

Your trouble with this chord could lie in your ability to stretch fingers, as you will use your ring and pinky fingers to reach two frets up from where your pointer finger will be anchored. It will be tough at first, but keep after it and press through until you are comfortable with the stretch. Keep in mind, you do not learn these chords in one day. Rather these lessons are designed to introduce concepts to you that you can work on for weeks and months at a time, and eventually master them as you are moving on with newer material.

The same applies here, so let's give this **B** chord a shot.





Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot: Fifth string on the second fret. - **Pointer Finger**

Second Red Dot: Fourth string on the fourth fret. - **Ring Finger**

Third Red Dot: Third string on the fourth fret. - **Pinky Finger**

Strumming and Picking the Chord

You are looking at two mutes for this chord; both the low and high **E**. The high **E** will probably be muted just by your hands resting in place for the bar chord. For the low **E** make sure you do not play the string (thickest string), so you will not really have to bother muting it. There are different ways to accomplish it, but just do whatever is most comfortable for you.

Review Questions

1. What is a standard guitar tuning?

- A. DADGBE
- B. EADGBD
- C. BAEGDE
- D. DADDGE
- E. None of the above.

2. How many notes do you play when you play a C chord?

3. What do the vertical lines on a chord chart represent?

4. What is the definition of a chord progression?

5. What is the difference in sound between a major and minor chord?

- A. Sharp and Dull
- B. Positive and Negative
- C. Loud and Soft
- D. Sharp and Flat
- E. None of the above.

Guitar Vocabulary

Bar Chord

Day 13

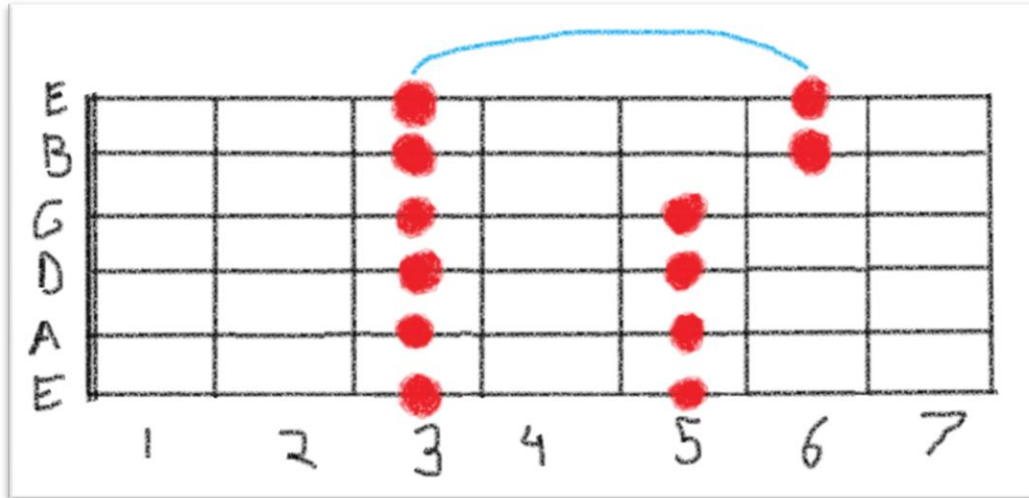
The First Basic Scale

Structure

Scales are useful and memorable partly because of the pattern they follow. When playing guitar you need to establish and memorize these patterns, both visually and audibly. The first “scale” I am about to show you is not even technically a scale. It has no real name or musical designation. Rather it is just a simple jog for your fingers up and down the fretboard.

Since you have already learned how to play single notes in **Day 4**, then multiple notes in **Day 5** and even practiced some basic scale patterns in **Day 9**, I would say that you are more than ready to take the next step.

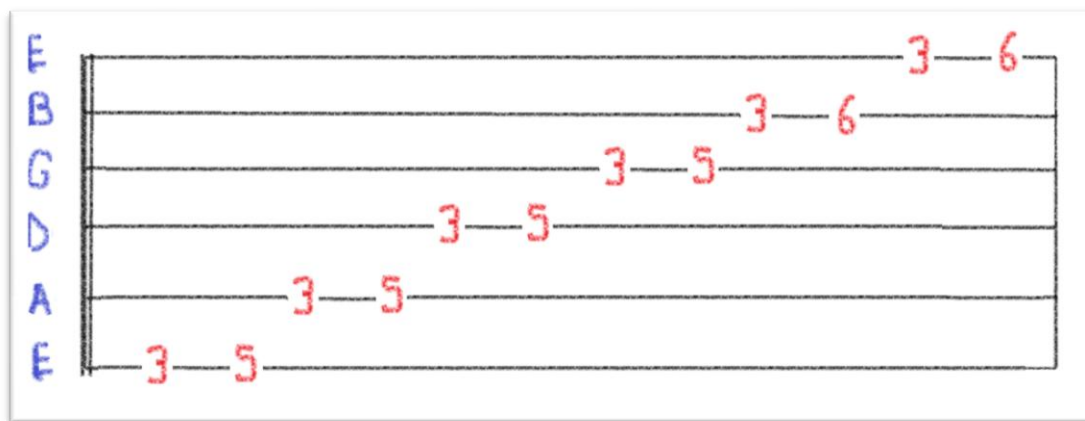
I will introduce yet another chart to you in this chapter, which I will simply call a **scale chart**. While it looks kind of new and unfamiliar, it is just another take on tablature. When you are reading it you will read left to right *and* top to bottom. For an example, I will give you the scale this lesson is focused on and then explain how to interpret the chart.



You can think of this chart as a mix between tablature and a chord chart. You can probably tell right away what represents the strings and frets. The horizontal lines labeled with the standard tuning letters are the strings, and the numbered vertical columns are the frets.

The red dots tell you what notes to play for the scales, and once again, the only thing you have to remember is that you will play them *left to right and top to bottom*. Hence you will start at the left-most dot on the sixth string and work your way to the right-most dot on the first string.

If I were to show you in a tablature form, it would look like this.



From this point on, I will not provide you with tabs if I have already provided a scale chart. For this lesson, use the tab to further understand the scale chart, but plan on leaning on the chart fully in the future.

Playing the Scale

Once you understand where the notes are the best way to go about actually learning and playing the scale is to just start slow down and make sure you get each note coming out clean. One thing you want to avoid is using one finger to play each note. What I mean is, do not use your pointer finger moving from note to note, and rather use the fingers that are most appropriate according to their placement. Let me try and be more specific.

For the first part of the scale you are playing on frets **3** and **5**. For the first note, you will use your pointer finger and that is fine. However to jump up two frets and get that second note, use your ring finger instead of just moving your pointer finger. For the lines where you jump from frets **3** to **6**, your pointer and pinky fingers are most appropriate.

Above all just take it slow and get comfortable with the movement. Try to memorize sounds as much you are memorizing where your fingers are. The sound and finger placement go hand in hand when you are actually putting a scale like this into practice.

Review Questions

1. What is the proper definition of a scale in guitar terms?
2. What is the proper definition of a chord progression in guitar terms?
3. What accessory do you need if you want to play the guitar standing up?
 - A. Pick
 - B. Pickups
 - C. Strap
 - D. Stand
 - E. Strings
4. What is the difference between the notes and key of a chord?
5. How many notes are played in a D chord?

Guitar Vocabulary

Scale Chart

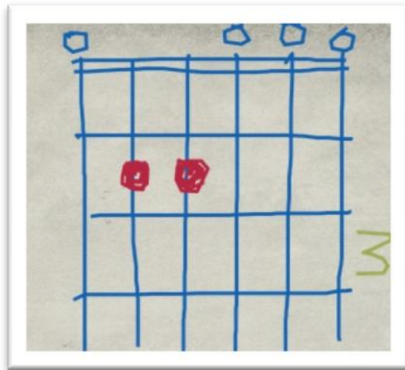
Day 14

Learning the E Minor Chord

The Chord Structure

If you have gone through the first 13 days, you are already developing a strong foundation of chords that you can build on. I want to start introducing minor chords so that you can start working on them as you practice the ones you have already learned. **E Minor** is a great place to start.

The chord is easier on your fingers than most, as you will only need to chord two notes in order to complete it. All six strings are played which also adds to its simplicity.



Strumming and Picking the Chord

As usual practice the chord by strumming both up and down through all six strings. As I mentioned before there is not any need to mute strings, so pick through each one and make sure they come out clean.

Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot – Pointer Finger

Second Red Dot – Middle Finger

Review Questions

1. What do the horizontal lines on a scale chart represent?
2. What do the numbers on a scale chart represent?
3. How does a scale chart signify notes to be played?
 - A. Numbers
 - B. Dots
 - C. Frets
 - D. Lines
 - E. None of the above.
4. In tablature, what do the numbers mean?
5. Which strings do you play when playing an E minor chord?
 - A. All of them.
 - B. 3
 - C. 2
 - D. 6
 - E. None of them.

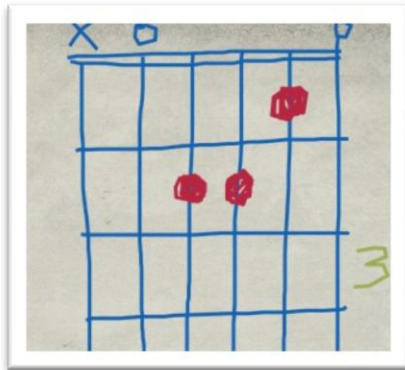
Day 15

Learning the A Minor Chord

The Chord Structure

We will continue to build our chord vocabulary by adding another minor chord today. In **Day 14** we covered **E minor** which was your first minor chord. This time we will jump to **A minor** which will be very similar but with some added complexity.

The chord itself will have the open fifth string (open **A**) as the root note, and will require three chorded notes instead of two.



Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot – Middle Finger

Second Red Dot – Ring Finger

Third Red Dot – Pointer Finger

Strumming and Picking the Chord

Keep in mind that the sixth string will be muted for this chord, which means you will have to pay careful attention that you are only playing those other five strings. Try and apply this practice while strumming both up and down and of course while picking each string individually.

Note from the **suggested positioning** that you will be tucking your pointer finger down in order to get that last note. This might feel odd at first, but I would encourage you to stick with that arrangement and see how it goes. In the long run, it will help to limber up your fingers and give you greater dexterity. Take care to make sure that these notes are coming out clear, especially if you are having trouble with the finger arrangement.

Review Questions

1. What is the difference in the sound of a major and minor chord?
2. How many notes do you chord when you are playing an E minor chord?
3. How many strings do you play when playing an A minor chord?
4. What do the vertical lines in a chord chart represent?
5. What two tactics can you employ to reduce string buzzing when you are trying to play chords?

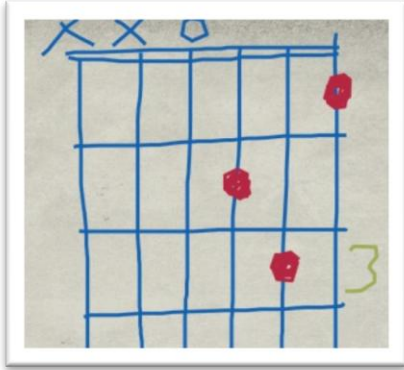
Day 16

Learning the D Minor Chord

The Chord Structure

We will cover one more minor chord before mixing up topics again. The last two days have both been spent learning the **E and A minor chords**, so today we will cover another minor chord you should see quite often: **D minor**.

The **D minor** chord is very similar to **A minor** with some slight variations. Your ring finger here will stretch a little bit more in order to create the base **D** chord, while your pointer finger will again be tucked underneath to grab the note that will make the chord a minor one.



Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot – Middle Finger

Second Red Dot – Ring Finger

Third Red Dot – Pointer Finger

Strumming and Picking the Chord

This chord truly is a difficult one to grasp. To this day I struggle with being able to get to it with enough quickness. While quickness is not a concern for you yet, you do want to make sure all your notes are clean, especially that last one where your pointer finger is being used. It will stretch your hands, but work with it as best you can and it will eventually start to click.

Keep in mind that you have the sixth and fifth string muted here, so you will only want to play the last four.

As a word of encouragement, you do *not* need to have all these chords down pat the same day you learn them. I am only trying to expose you to the concepts and get chord structures and notes in your mind so that you can be practicing them for weeks and months to come. Theoretically you should still be practicing things you saw in the first few days. If there are things that just do not click for you, keep after it, and give yourself a few weeks or even months to really learn the material.

Review Questions

1. What is the difference in sound between a major and minor chord?
2. How many vertical lines are on a chord chart?
3. How many horizontal lines are on a sheet of tablature?
4. Are pickups typically found on an electric or acoustic guitar?
5. How many string do you strum or pick when playing a D minor chord?

Day 17

Early Improvising - Adding Notes to the Basic Scale

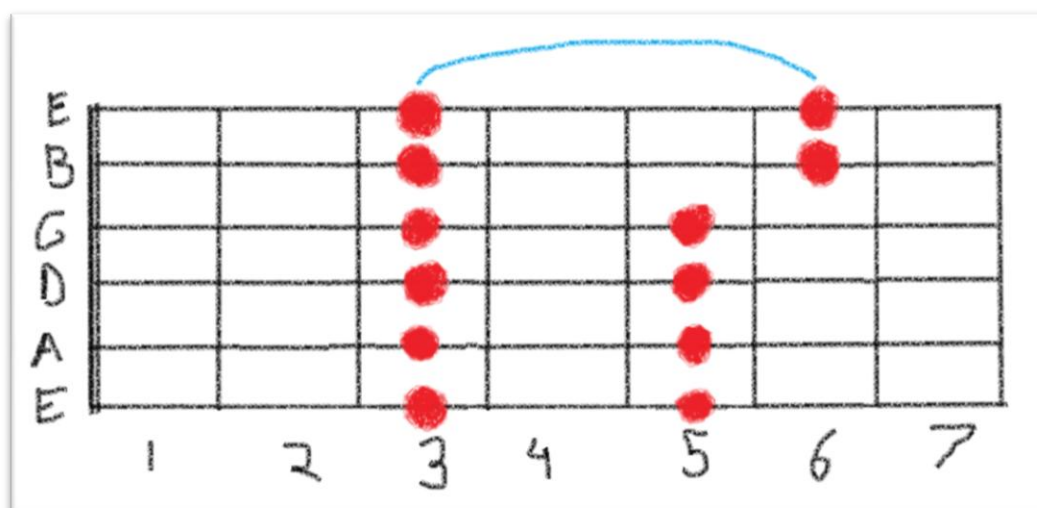
Why Add Notes?

Our title is pretty self explanatory. We are going to take the basic pattern we learned on **Day 13** and add some notes to it, for fun, and for the purpose of developing your ability to **improvise**.

Improvising is an important part of playing guitar and it is something that all players need to be able to do. All it really means is that you are playing a variety of unscripted notes within a certain structure. You already have the structure in the scale you learned on **Day 13** so now we are going to apply the unscripted notes. How are we going to do this? Basically, I will give you a few options and then let you choose.

Developing Your Ability to Improvise

Let's take the scale we learned on **Day 13** and look at it again.



There is nothing too tricky about it, and we already have a set of notes to play. So how do we tell what notes we can use? The first piece of advice I will give you, is to just *try something*. You may even have done this already, but just try a few different notes, either before, in-between or after the ones you already know, and just see how they sound. Do they sound good or bad? Do they fit? Ask these questions as you experiment with different notes and when you find something that “works” or “sounds good”, remember it.

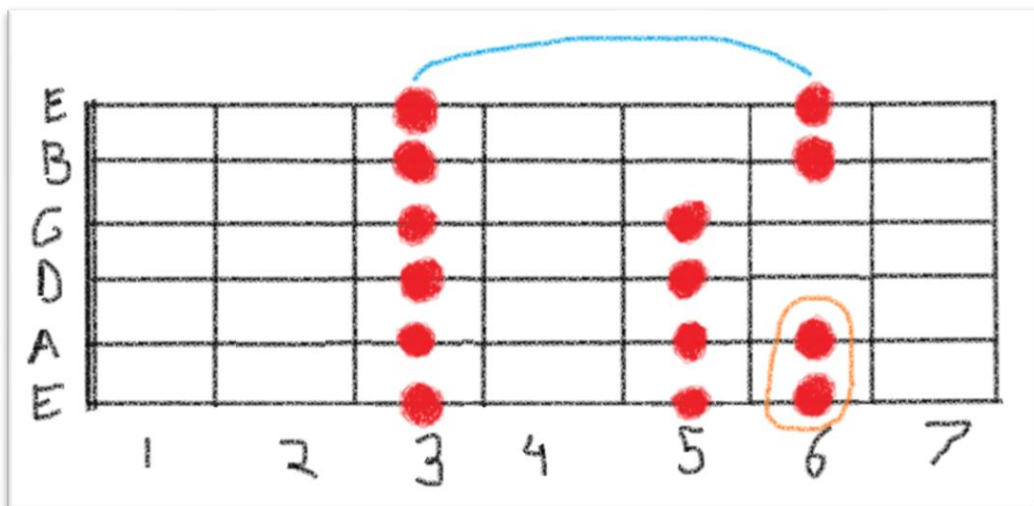
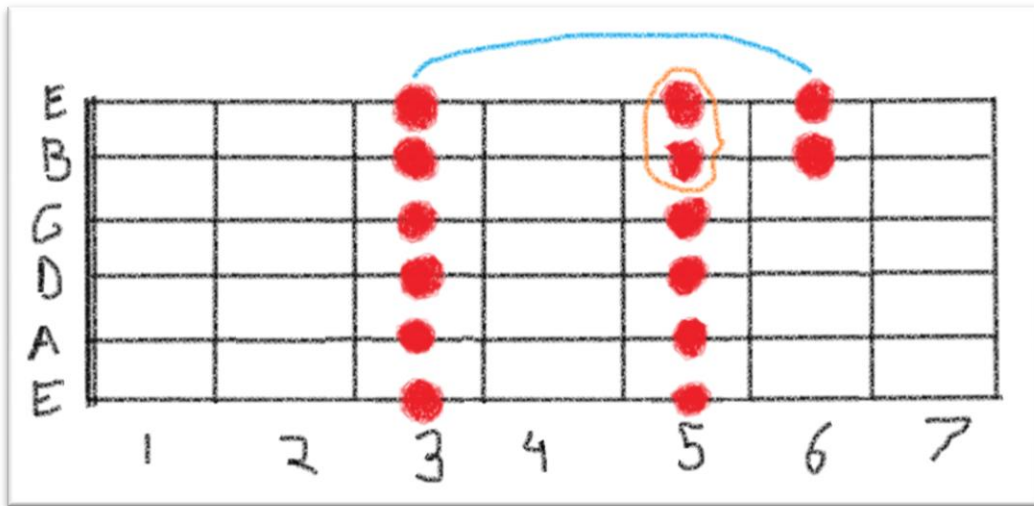
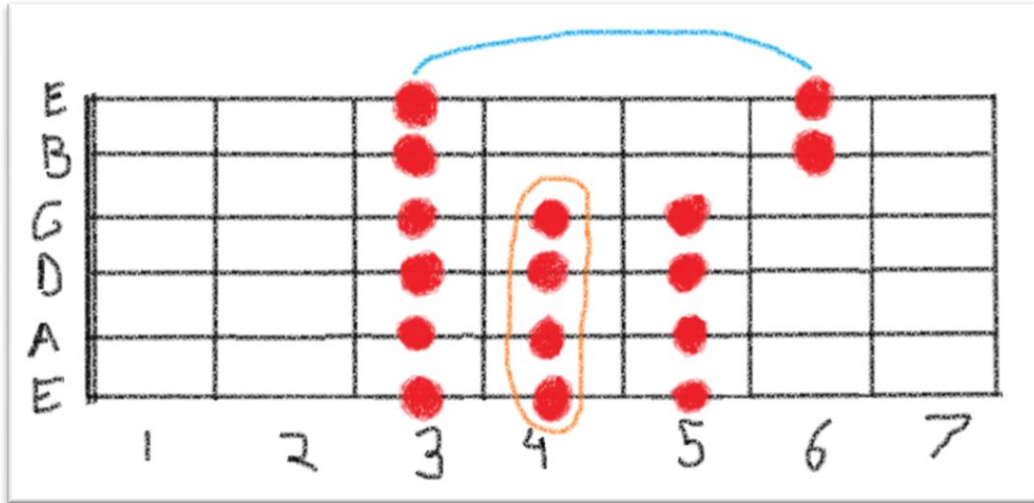
To give you some options, I will lay out some guidelines and the same scale chart from **Day 13** with some of my own added notes to help you develop your ability to build off of these patterns.

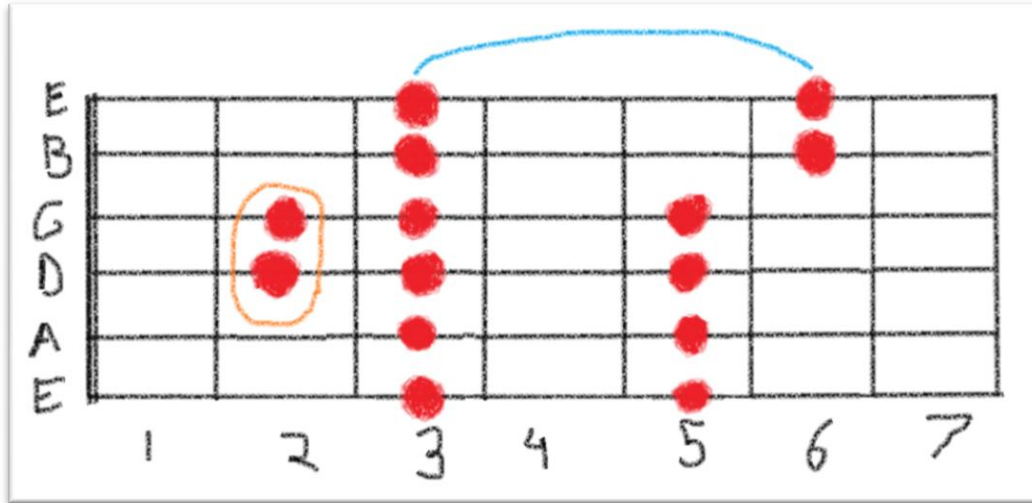
Where to Add Notes?

There are three areas you have to work with when you have a scale like the one above.

1. Notes before the scale.
2. Notes within the scale.
3. Notes after the scale.

Here are a few scale charts that bubble in some of these new notes. Try them and then go ahead and try to come up with your own, referring to my examples if you need help or ideas. The added notes are highlighted by an orange circle.





So you can see that by adding just a few extra notes, we can really open up this scale into something much more useful and possibly even musical. I do want to remind you, this is not complex at *slow speeds*, therefore it is crucial for you to play these slowly and learn them without worrying about speed. In later lessons we will cover speed building exercises and give you specific scales and tabs designed to help you increase speed naturally. For now though, you just want to concentrate on notes, smoothness and clarity. Playing even the simplest scales at high speed jumps the difficulty from beginner to advanced right away, so keep the speed low and do not worry about shredding yet. I will definitely get you there in good time.

Review Questions

1. What is the proper definition of a scale in guitar terms?
2. What do the Xs represent on a chord chart?
3. What do the Os represent on a chord chart?
4. How strings do you play when playing a G major chord?
5. How many notes do you chord when playing a G major chord?

Guitar Vocabulary

Improvise

Day 18

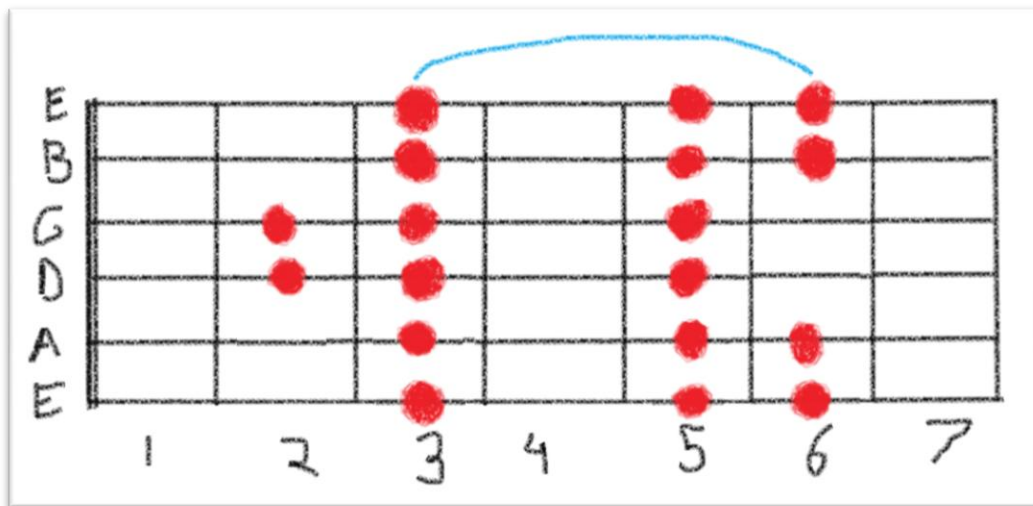
Creating a New Scale Pattern from Day 17

Using What We Have Learned

In **Day 17** we looked at some improvising options by adding some notes to the basic scale we learned in **Day 13**. A good way to take advantage of this is to play through the scale *with* some of the added notes all at the same time. If you came up with some of your own material please feel free to use it. However for this lesson's purposes we will use my examples from **Day 17**.

Putting it All Together

Instead of putting all the scale diagrams on this page, I will trust that you can review those if you need to. All we are doing is taking all the notes we added in the four diagrams and putting them together to make a new scale pattern to follow. Here is a possible result.



It might seem complex but all we are doing is taking what we came up with in **Day 17** and putting it all together. What we have come up with is somewhat of a semblance of a complete guitar scale. What you want to be thinking about here is how we got from our basic pattern to the improvised notes, then back to a pattern. Once we start learning actual scales this concept will help them make a lot more useful and practical sense to you.

Review Questions

1. What do the letters on a scale diagram represent?
2. In the scale diagrams I have been using, what do the red dots represent?
3. In the context of guitar playing, what does improvise mean?
4. How can you expand your learning once you have learned a basic scale or pattern?
5. What is the difference between a scale and a chord?

Day 19

Learning the Notes of the Sixth and Fifth Strings on the Fretboard

Notes by the Fret

You know already that every string has a default note when it is tuned properly. The typical tuning is the standard **EADGBE** tuning. The first two strings will ring notes of **E** and **A** when they are played as open strings, but what about on up the fretboard? Every fret has a note value on up to the 12th fret. After that 12th fret, the notes repeat.

Frets 1 through 12 for the Sixth String (Low - E)

(1) (12)
F - F# - G - G# - A - Ab - B - C - C# - D - D# - E

Frets 1 through 12 for the Fifth String (Low - A)

(1) (12)
A - A# - B - C - C# - D - D# - E - F - F# - G - G# - A

Memorizing

The only way to get this in your head is just to flat out memorize it. I used to just play each note going up and then back down the fret board and say the note to myself. Whatever method you choose just make sure that when it is all said and done, that you can recall all of these notes for the fifth and sixth strings. The advantage here is that if you know the low **E** string's notes, you will know the one for the high **E** as well. Also keep in mind that after the 12th fret, the notes start over, so basically the 12th fret is just a higher version of that string's open note.

Review Questions

1. Find the note for fifth string on the 10th fret.

2. Find the note for the sixth string on the 3rd fret.

3. Find the note for the sixth string on the 5th fret.

4. Find the note for the sixth string on the 12th fret.

5. Find the note for the fifth string on the 15th fret.

Day 20

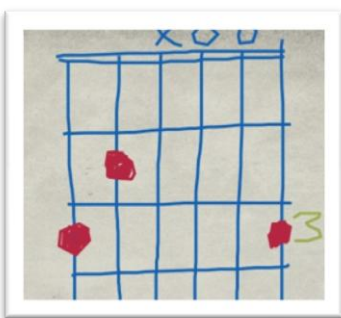
Simpler G Chord

Simplifying the Chords

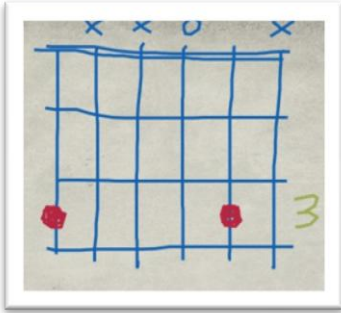
You have already learned a **G major** chord on **Day 6** and have applied that to the **G-C-D chord progression**. That progression as I have told you before shows up a lot and is very useful for a guitar player to know. What I want to do now is show you an easier way in which you can learn and play that progression that will not require you to move your hand nearly as much.

The Chord Structure

As usual, we will take it one chord at a time starting with the **G** chord. You should recognize a **G major** chord as seen in the following chart.



Now, we are going to eliminate the second red dot and move the last one up to the second string to get the following chord.



Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot – Middle Finger

Second Red Dot – Ring Finger

Strumming and Picking the Chord

Now with this chord you want to think about *anchoring your ring finger*. Throughout this chord progression that finger is going to stay in place and will not have to be moved. Also you will have to recognize that there are three muted notes for this chord, most of which will be muted naturally by the positioning of your hand. Pick through each note and make sure that you are getting the mutes where you need them and the clear notes as well. You will be playing a **G** chord that is simpler, yet comes out clearer with what is (in my opinion) a better sound.

Review Questions

1. How many notes do you play when you play a G major chord?

2. How many notes do you play when you play a D major chord?
3. What is the difference in sound between a major and minor chord?
4. How many muted chords are in the simplified G chord?
5. How many notes do you chord in the simplified G chord?

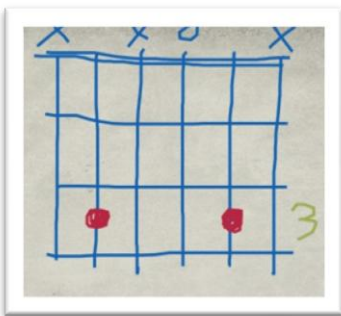
Day 21

Simpler C Chord

The Chord Structure

As you learned on **Day 20** we are in the middle of relearning the **G-C-D chord progression**. The simpler chords I am showing you are the same ones you learned before, but are stripped down to be easier to play and (in my opinion) sound better and cleaner.

Today we will tackle the **C** chord variation and to be honest, there is not a whole lot you need to change from the **G** chord you learned yesterday. Simply move your middle finger from the sixth string, to the fifth one.





Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot – Middle Finger

Second Red Dot – Ring Finger

Strumming and Picking

Right away you should see how much easier it is to change from the **G** to the **C** using this method. Simply move your middle finger from one string to the other. The only tricky part is getting the string muting down, though that will come with time. Practice this both with the up and down strumming pattern, and by picking each individual string. Also begin work on changing from the **G** to the **C**. Remember that you will do so by leaving your ring finger anchored on the last note and moving your middle finger between the sixth and fifth string on the third fret.

Review Questions

1. In the simpler version of the G-C-D chord progression, which finger stays in one place?
2. How many notes do you play in the simplified G chord variation?
3. Find the note for the first string on the 6th fret.
4. Find the note for the sixth string on the 13th fret.
5. How many notes do you mute when you play the simplified C chord variation?

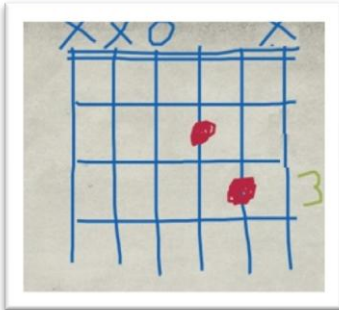
Day 22

Simpler D Chord

The Chord Structure

Today we will complete the simplified **G-C-D chord progression**, so you can start practicing it all at once. The simplified **D** chord is probably the easiest of the three, and again, you will only be moving your middle finger and leaving your ring finger anchored.

This variation of **D** is pretty much the same one you saw on **Day 8** however you will leave out a note and mute a string making the chord somewhat easier to play. Here is the chart.



Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot - Pointer Finger

Second Red Dot - Ring Finger

Strumming and Picking

As usual, spot your muted notes and make sure you are getting those down. The high **E** will be muted, along with the sixth and fifth strings, giving you the open third string as your bass **D** note and the rest of the chord to make a full, clean ringing **D**. The next lesson will be on utilizing these three chords together and taking advantage of the chord progression. For now just make sure you get the **D** down to a science.

Review Questions

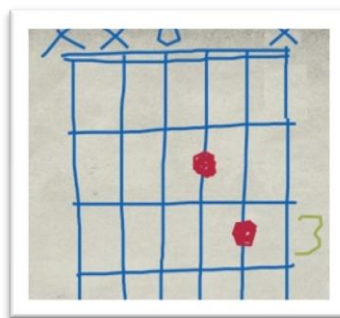
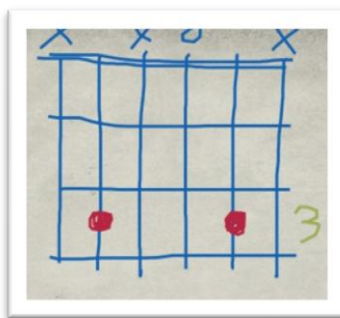
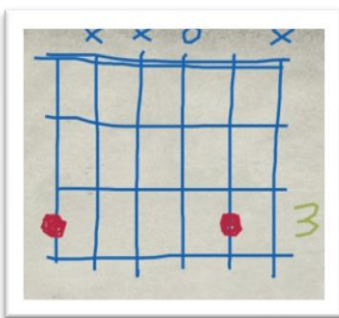
1. How many notes do you mute in the simplified **C** chord?
2. In the simplified **G-C-D** progression, how many fingers do you need to move to change chords?
3. What is the most typical medium string gauge?
4. How many notes do you mute in the simplified **D** chord?
5. How many notes do you play in the simplified **D** chord?

Day 23

The Simplified G-C-D Chord Progression

Something You Already Know

Over the last three days we have covered simplified versions of the **G**, **C** and **D** chords. While you are clear on the chords and have probably even started to play through the progression on your own, I want to devote at least today to talking about the progression itself and essentially reviewing finger placement and movement. Just for your convenience, here are the three chords.



Playing Through the Chords

The note that should catch your eye right away is the one on the third fret and second string (open **B**), because it is the same throughout all three chords. That means that when you are playing that chord progression, you never need to take your finger off that note.

When playing through this chord progression...

Use your ring finger for the second string, third fret note and do not ever lift it to change chords. Only move your middle finger to change the value of the chord.

When practicing this progression, try and adhere to these guidelines, as they will enable us to add more chords in this manner later, which will give you almost a full complement of open chords that you can play with two fingers.

Review Questions

1. Find the note for the fifth string on the 8th fret.
2. Find the note for the sixth string on the 17th fret.
3. Find the note for the first string on the first fret.
4. In a simplified G chord, how many notes do you play?
5. In a simplified D chord, how many notes are muted?

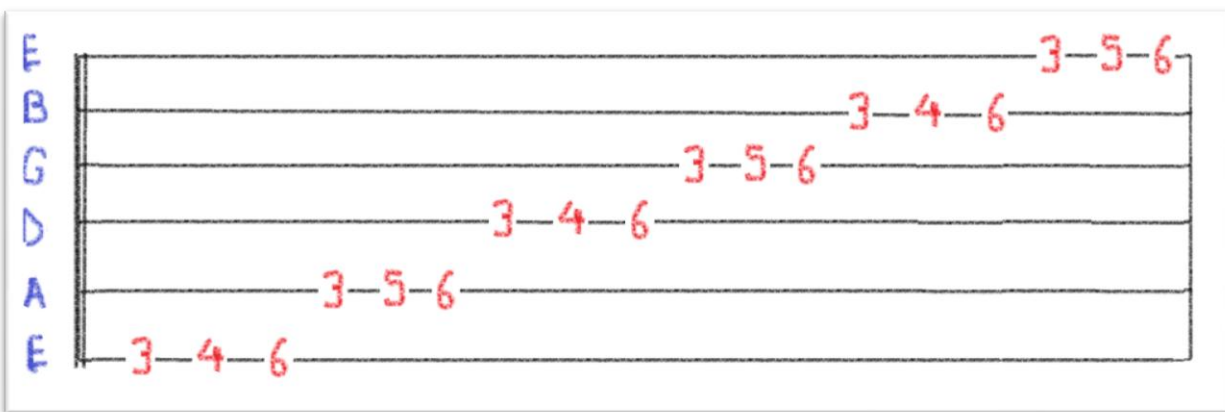
Day 24

Early Speed and Stretching Exercises

Preparing For Scales

Before we dive into the abyss that is guitar scales, I want to prepare you with a couple days of speed and stretching exercises that will get your fingers ready to tackle actual scales. Now I know I have used the word “speed” but do not focus too much on that aspect of this lesson, as the exercises are designed to develop speed (ironically enough) by taking things slowly.

The exercises here are simple, but similar to **Day 9** they will mimic the same basic patterns you will be playing through when playing actual scales. Let's get started.

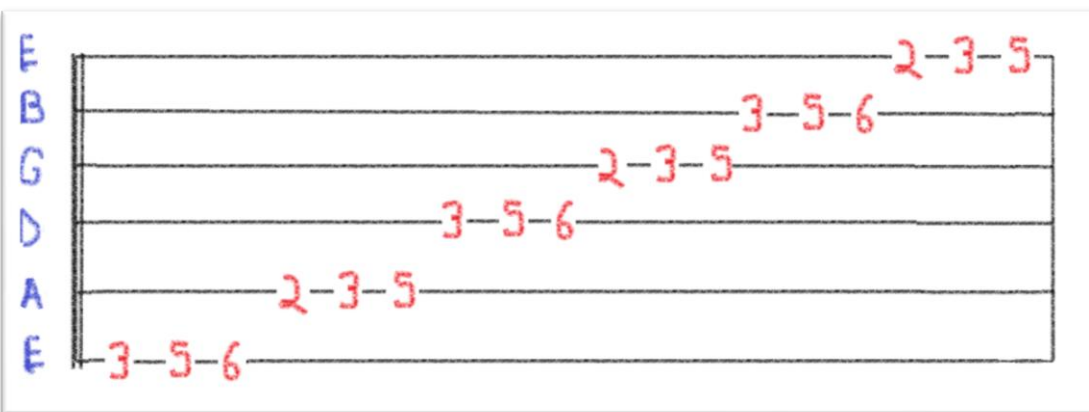


Your fingers should go in the following order:

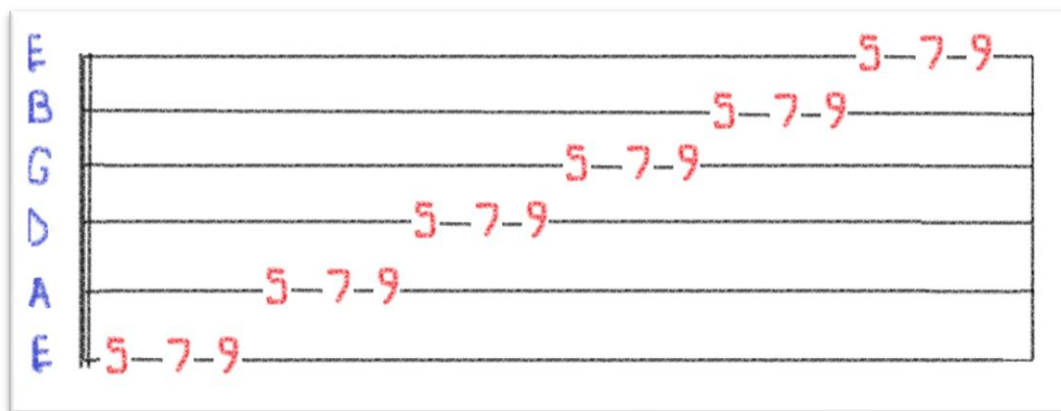
Pointer – Middle – Pinky

Pointer – Ring – Pinky

The pattern simply alternates top to bottom between the third and sixth fret. Just take things slow and understand the process.



The same finger positioning and rules apply here. Avoid the urge to speed up, instead concentrating on stretching your fingers and getting clean notes.



Here you are a little farther up the fretboard, so the stretch is easier. However you are spanning five frets. Use the following pattern when choosing fingers.

Pointer – Middle – Pinky

If that is just not comfortable for you, experiment with what works best. The important thing is to be able to stretch your fingers, especially your pinky, which is typically the weakest when it comes to catching notes on a fretboard.

As you have probably already realized, these pieces do not sound very good, and do not hold a lot of musical value in and of themselves. However they do help build flexibility and dexterity in your fingers, which will go a long way once we start really utilizing scales.

Review Questions

1. How many open notes are in a G Major chord?
2. Find the notes for the sixth string on the 2nd fret.
3. Find the notes for the first string on the 11th fret.
4. You are starting two out of the three exercises in this lesson on the sixth string 3rd fret. What note is that?
5. You are ending the last exercise in this lesson on the first string 9th fret. What note is that?

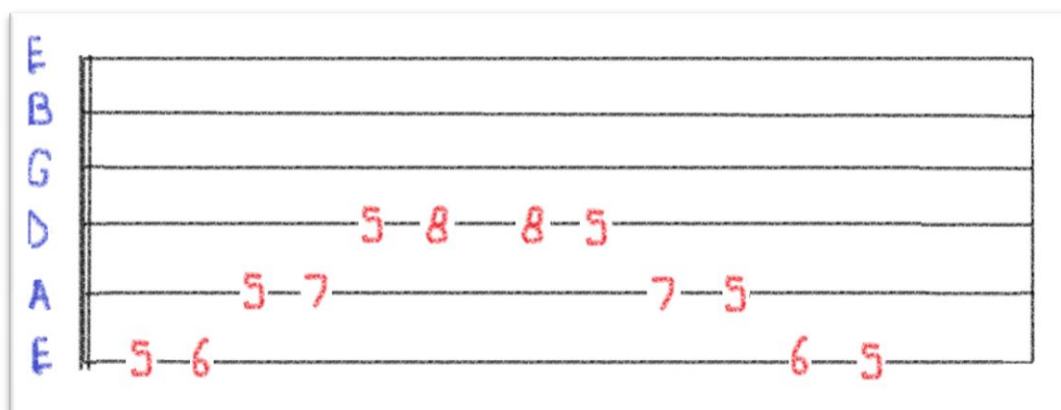
Day 25

Early Speed and Stretching Exercises Part II

Preparing for Scales

Yesterday I introduced you to some exercises designed to prepare you for playing scales. Today I want to build on that and give you just a couple more similar exercises before we jump into some guitar scales.

The main thing we are seeking to accomplish is to get all four of your fingers on your chording hand involved while building some stamina and flexibility moving forward. The exercises are simple in that all you have to do is follow the tabs. Here is your first one.



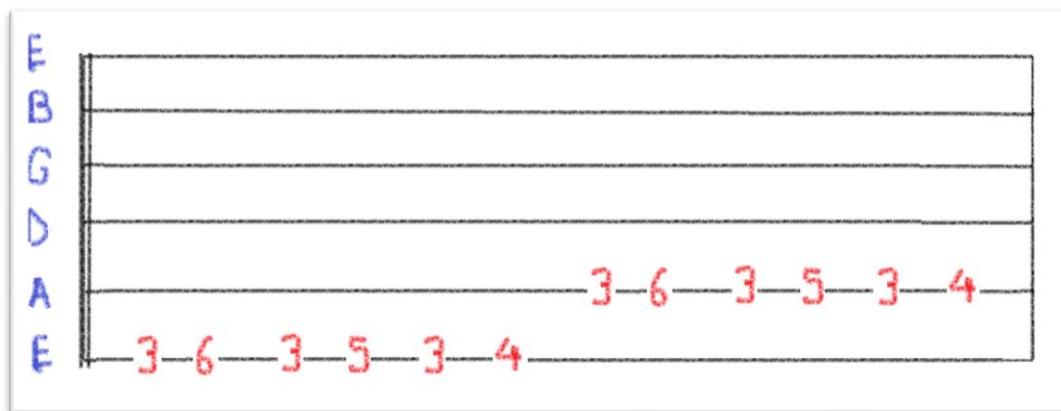
Suggested Positioning

5 – 6: Pointer and Middle Finger

5 – 7: Pointer and Ring Finger

5 – 8: Pointer and Pinky Finger

Coming back down everything will just be the opposite; pinky to pointer finger, etc.



I have only tabbed this riff for two strings, however if you are feeling ambitious, you can repeat the process on all six strings. I will leave that decision up to you.

Review Questions

1. In this lesson's last exercise, what are all the notes being played on the sixth string?
2. In this lesson's first exercise, what are the last two notes on the sixth string?
3. How many mutes are in the simplified G chord?
4. What do the Os on a chord chart represent?
5. True or false: Speed is the most important thing to be focusing on when learning scales.

Day 26

Pentatonic Blues Scale Part I

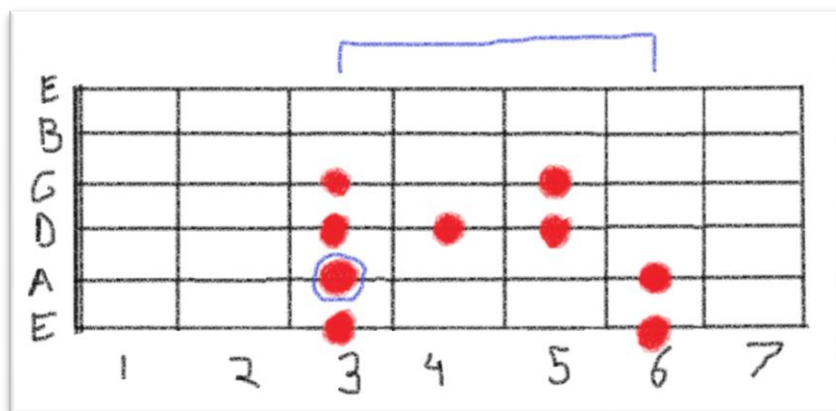
Learning the Pattern

Today I will introduce your first *real* scale, though do not get too nervous, because we will only actually cover two thirds of it today. Your goals when learning any part or all of a scale should be two-fold:

1. Remember where your fingers go.
2. Remember how it sounds.

The sound is every bit as important as the placement. You can get your placement right, but if the sound and melody is not registering in your mind, then you are not really accomplishing anything. If you need to work for awhile on just knowing where your fingers go than that is fine, but in time start to really key in to what you are hearing, in addition to where your fingers are going.

Those are your marching orders, and here is your scale chart.



A couple things to note here right off the bat: Your scales do have keys, which you should already be familiar with from going over chords. The key is not something you need to be overly concerned with right now, but just know that I have circled the **root note** which indicates the scale's key with a blue circle. You know from **Day 19** how to figure the notes on the first two strings, so you should be able to tell that the root note for this scale is **C**.

Like I said, it should not be your biggest concern at this point. Just make sure to keep it in mind moving forward.

Playing Through

When playing this scale you want to be sure and take things slowly and try to discern which fingers are most appropriate to hit most notes. I have been giving you suggestions up to this point, but from here on out I want you to try and discern this on your own. You know that simply moving your pointer from note to note is not a valid or beneficial approach and you have seen from the **Day 24** and **Day 25** exercises where I have identified which finger positions are most appropriate for the 2, 3 and 4 fret spans. Hence you have all the tools you need to understand this on your own.

Review Questions

1. What is the key of the scale in this lesson?
2. What is the root note of the scale in this lesson?
3. What do the horizontal lines in the scale diagram represent?
4. What are your two goals when learning to play a scale?
5. What do the numbers in the scale diagram represent?

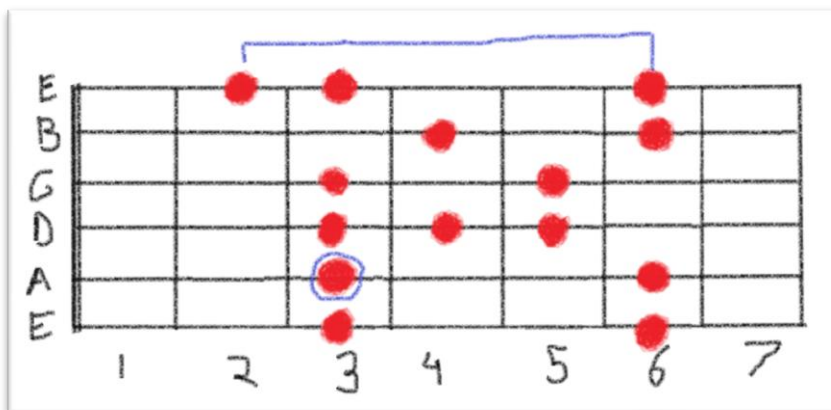
Day 27

Pentatonic Blues Scale Part II

The Finished Product

You have already gone through the first two thirds of this scale, but today I want to talk a little bit about the overall sound before we finish up with the full pattern.

For right now, all you need to know is that **pentatonic** scales are very commonly used in western music, and in this case you are playing a pentatonic scale with a **blues** twist. This simply means that the scale will have a “bluesy sound”, and if you are familiar with blues as a style of music, you know that it lays the bedrock for most modern music, and particularly for rock and roll. For right now that is all you need to know about this scale, aside from the rest of the notes. Here is the completed pentatonic blues scale.



Playing Through

The same concepts as before apply. It is up to you as to which fingers you use, but at this point you have all the tools you need to figure that out on your own. My advice once you have gotten the gist of the entire scale is to play it through from top to bottom, then to play it all the way back from bottom to top.

Review Questions

1. What is the root note of the scale in this lesson?
2. In this lesson, there is a red dot on the sixth string and sixth fret. What note is that?
3. In the chart in this lesson, what do the letters represent?
4. In this lesson, what are the notes of the three red dots on the sixth string?
5. What key is this scale given in?

Guitar Vocab

Pentatonic

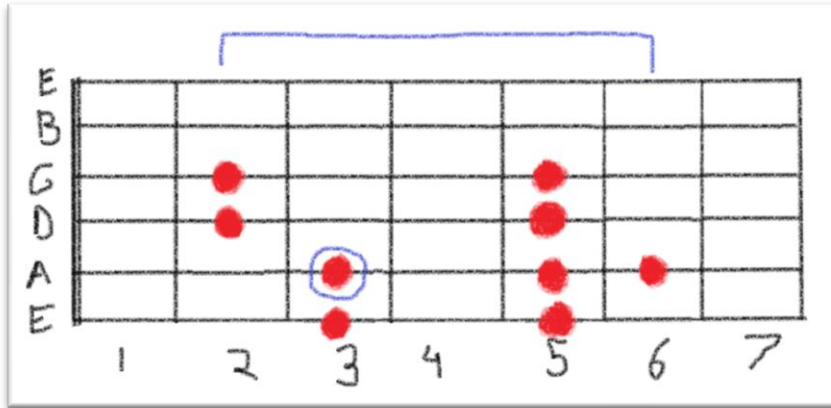
Blues

Day 28

Major Blues Scale Part I

Learning the Pattern

We will start into another scale today, and like the first, it will be broken up into two days to keep things at a more manageable pace. This is another blues scale; however it is a major scale instead of a pentatonic. The major scale is similar to the pentatonic, and is likewise commonly found in today's music. Again you do not need to worry about the logistics, but just focus on memorizing the sound and understanding the pattern.



Playing Through

The same rules apply here. Continue to think about the pattern, sounds, and how those things relate to the distance between the frets. Play all the way through the scale from top to bottom; then again from bottom to top picking each note and making sure they all come out clean.

Review Questions

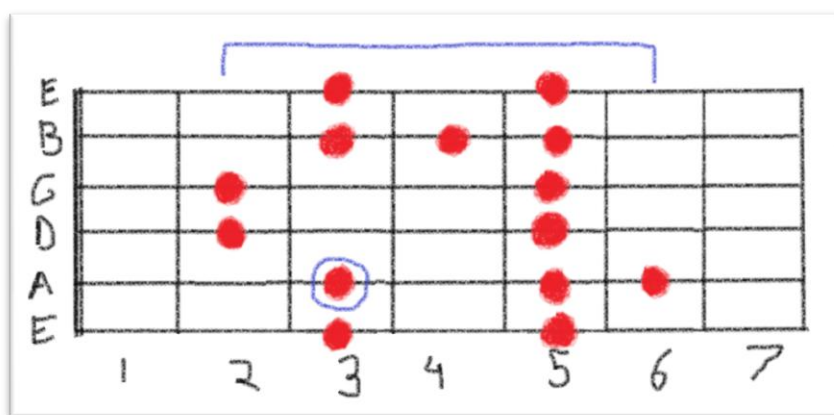
1. What is the root note of the scale in this lesson?
2. What is the note of the note at the fifth fret on the fifth string on the scale in this lesson?
3. What do the numbers in the scale diagram in this lesson represent?
4. True or False: You should pay close attention to the sound of a scale, but not the distance between frets.
5. What are your two goals when learning any scale?

Day 29

Major Blues Scale Part II

Learning the Pattern

Today we will finish up the Major Blues Scale and play through the entire thing. Blues scales are a good starting point for beginners since their sound is a little more familiar, and the patterns are easier. Here is the complete scale.



Playing Through

By now you know the process, and at this point a good practice habit would be to play through both the pentatonic and major blues scale and start to get familiar with the sounds and be able to distinguish between the two.

Review Questions

1. How many notes are played in the above scale?
2. How many notes are played in the scale from Day 28?
3. On the scale in this lesson, what are the two notes on the sixth string?
4. What about the three notes on the fifth string?
5. On the scale chart, what do the vertical lines represent?

Day 30

First Basic Bar Chord

Chord Structure

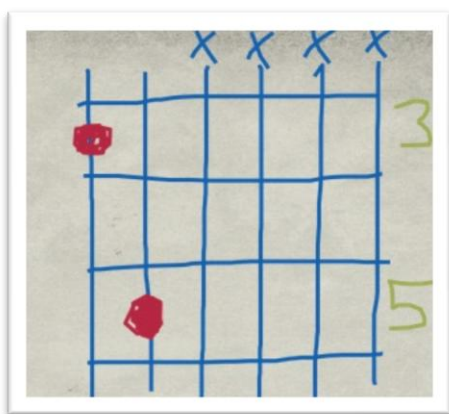
A **bar chord** is simply defined as a chord where one or more fingers are used to press down more than one string. Therefore what you are going to learn in this lesson is not technically a bar chord, but will set the foundation for almost every bar chord you will ever play.

On the guitar, a typical bar chord will start with your pointer finger and your ring finger. This chord, though useful, is designed to get you used to playing chords in a barred format using those two fingers as anchors.

One thing you want to realize is that unlike open chords that can only be played at one spot on the fretboard, a bar chord can be played at any of the 22 or 24 frets available. Therefore, if you learn one bar chord you have learned 20 plus new chords that you can use.

All you need to do to change chords is move your hands up and down the fretboard while maintaining the finger positioning.

With all that in view, here is the basic chord structure to get you started.





Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot – Pointer Finger

Second Red Dot – Ring Finger

The stretch might be difficult at first but if you have to practice without strumming or picking and just pressing the chord down, then that is fine. The suggested positioning in this case is *highly* recommended, so try and get used to it if you can.

Strumming and Picking

Once you are comfortable with the chord, try some simple down strokes and then come back up through the chord. Make sure to mute all of the last four strings. This should happen naturally as your palm will be resting over the entire fretboard, but pick through each string just to make sure. Getting the mutes correct with bar chords is very crucial and should be given some substantial practice time.

Review Questions

1. What is the definition of a bar chord?
2. True or False: The chord pictured in this lesson is technically a bar chord.
3. What is the root note of the chord being played?
4. What do the Xs represent on a chord chart?
5. In the chord given what note is your ring finger playing?

Guitar Vocab

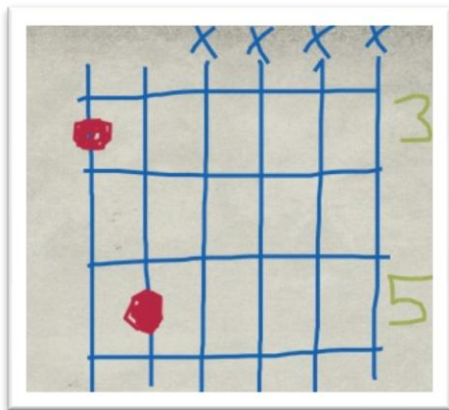
Bar Chord

Day 31

Moving the Basic Bar Chord

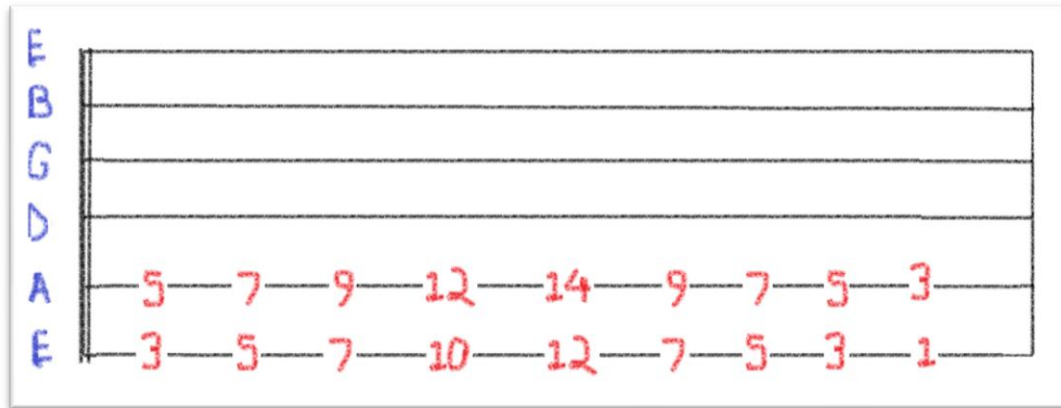
Moving Around the Fretboard

Once you learn any bar chord you can move it to any fret on the fretboard. Every time you learn a new bar chord the next course of action should be to apply that bar chord to the rest of the fretboard. Once you are comfortable with the basic chord structure, you should then begin to move that structure to different frets. Let's review the chord before we get started.



Now in order to illustrate the movement I will use tablature. You might not even need it, as the concept is quite simple. Play this chord, and then move your hand up or down the fretboard to a location of your choice and then play the chord again. A few pointers:

- 1. Do not take your hand too far off the fretboard if you can help.**
- 2. While you move to a new location on the fretboard, loosely maintain the position of your hand.**
- 3. Make sure to press hard on the notes and be certain that your notes are coming out as needed.**



Now these are really just suggestions and are meant help you understand the concept and idea behind what you are doing. Take it slow if you need to, and feel free to play the chord wherever you want. Just work on getting used to the positioning and movement.

Review Questions

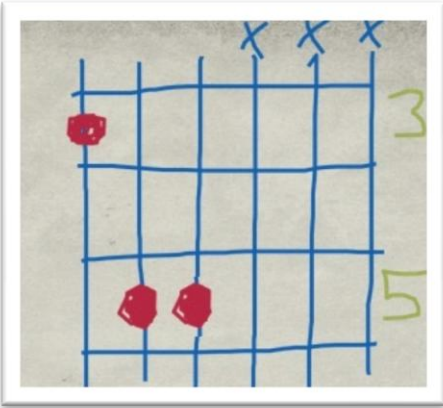
1. True or False: You can play a bar chord on any fret.
2. What do the horizontal lines in tablature represent?
3. Starting on the third fret, what are the two notes used in the bar chord pictured in this lesson?
4. What is the note of the open sixth string, assuming a standard tuning?
5. What do the Xs on a chord chart represent?

Day 32

Expanding the Bar Chord Part I

Expanding the Chord Structure

The last couple of days have been spent working with a basic bar chord framework. Today we are going to continue that work by adding one more note to the chord to make it a little bit fuller. Everything you have learned over **Day 30** and **Day 31** will continue to apply here; however you will likely have to re-learn the chord and work on building some strength, because the note we will be adding will have to be chorded by your pinky finger. Here is the chart.



Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot – Pointer Finger

Second Red Dot – Ring Finger

Third Red Dot – Pinky Finger

Strumming and Picking

Again, all the prior techniques apply. You will want to make sure that your strings are muted, but the key here will be to make sure you are getting that third note with your pinky. If you do not have a lot of strength in that finger, take this as an opportunity to work on that aspect of your playing ability.

Review Questions

1. What do the numbers in the chord chart provided in this lesson represent?

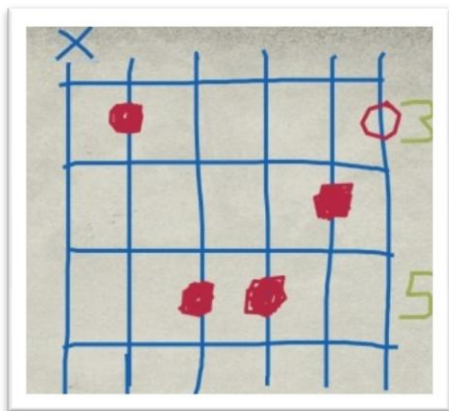
2. Find the note from the sixth string on the 12th fret.
3. Find the note from fifth string on the 5th fret.
4. What do the vertical lines in this chord chart represent?
5. In the chord chart provided, what note corresponds to the first red dot in the sixth string?

Day 33

Learning the C Minor Chord

Chord Structure

After spending a couple days on bar chords, we will delve back into minor chords and continue building our chord vocabulary by learning a variation of C minor. While there are a few ways to play C minor, I will show you the most typical variation available. The work you did on bar chords was partly to prepare you for this, and a few other minor chords that are bar style.





Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot – Pointer Finger

Second Red Dot – Ring Finger

Third Red Dot – Pinky Finger

Fourth Red Dot – Middle Finger

It looks tough I know, but if you were able to get the bar chords in **Day 30** and **Day 32** down, then the only thing you need to do differently here is use your middle finger to grab that last note.

The last circle that is not filled in is an optional note. If you were to play it, you would play it with your first finger by pressing down over all the strings. That makes it a true bar chord. You would be using your first finger to press down both notes and would therefore be “barring” all five of the strings. If you want to try that, then go for it. Otherwise, do not worry too much about it. You are still developing your hand strength and I would not expect you to be able to bar five strings yet.

Strumming and Picking

When you strum through the chord use the up and down motion as usual. If you are getting buzzes or broken notes pick through each note individually and make sure they are coming out clean. Pay particular attention to the note being played by your middle finger, as that could be a source of difficulty considering it is a new position for your hand.

Review Questions

1. What is the difference in sound between a major and minor chord?
2. True or False: The chord given in this lesson is not technically a bar chord.
3. What is the key of this chord?

4. What does the red unfilled dot signify?

5. If the unfilled red dot were to be played, what note would it be?

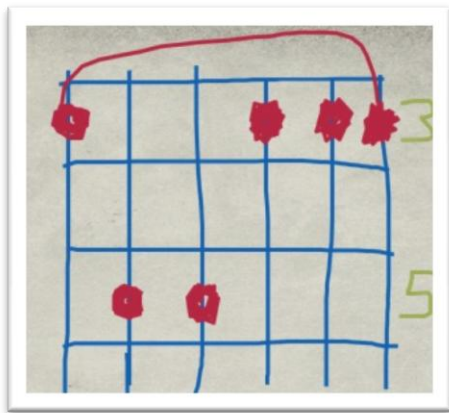
Day 34

Learning the G Minor Chord

The Chord Structure

The **G** minor chord is going to be similar to the **C** minor you played on **Day 33**. The main difference is that you will not need your middle finger to play any of the notes. However you will have to bar several notes to make the chord work

There are easier ways to play this chord, and I will show you them in future lessons. However it is beneficial right now for you to learn the most typical methods and get the hang of those before moving on to other variations.





Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot – Pointer Finger
Second Red Dot – Ring Finger
Third Red Dot – Fourth Finger
Fifth Red Dot – Pointer Finger
Sixth Red Dot – Pointer Finger
Seventh Red Dot – Pointer Finger

This chord will be tough, but give it a substantial amount of time and try your best to strengthen your first finger enough to where you can bar the all six strings. If you are not able to get things coming out clear, take a break from it and then come back after awhile.

Strumming and Picking

All the same strumming and picking techniques apply here. Your challenge will be getting the last three barred notes to come out clean. It will take time but make sure you apply enough pressure with your pointer finger to get all those notes ringing.

Review Questions

1. Does the chord pictured fit the technical definition of a bar chord?
2. What do the vertical lines on the above chord chart represent?
3. What do the numbers on the above chord chart represent?

4. What are the open notes of the sixth and fifth strings?

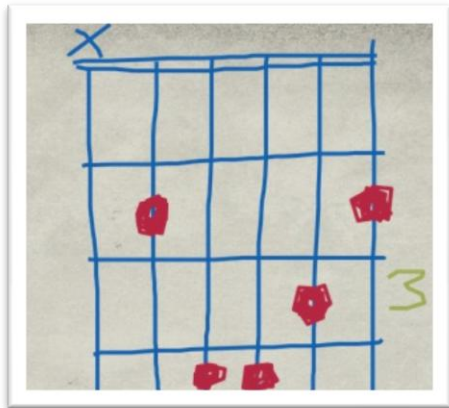
5. What is the root note of the chord in this lesson?

Day 35

Learning the B Minor Chord

Chord Structure

Today we are going to cover the **B** minor chord which is played *exactly* the same as the **C** minor from **Day 33**. The only difference is that you will move the entire chord down one fret. If you recall that the root note for the **C** minor was on the fifth string, and you know the notes for all the frets on the fifth string, you can conclude that the **B** is just one fret down from the **C**. Here is the **B** minor chart.



Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot – Pointer Finger

Second Red Dot – Ring Finger

Third Red Dot – Pinky Finger

Fourth Red Dot – Middle Finger

Fifth Red Dot – Pointer Finger

That fifth note on the first string can be optional, though it is better practice to try and play it. If you cannot bar the chord than that is fine, but try and work your way up to it, especially as your middle finger gets comfortable with this position. Remember, everything here is exactly the same as the **C** minor chord from **Day 33** so this should all be familiar to you.

Strumming and Picking

Again, you will want to focus on the note being played by your middle finger as it is probably going to be the note most prone to buzzing and ringing. Continue to pick through each one individually to find out where your problem areas are. Remember to keep pressing hard and aiming for the middle of the frets.

Review Questions

1. What is the root note of the chord in this lesson?
2. True or False: The first red dot and third red dot from the chord in this lesson is the same note.
3. Find the note from the fifth string on the 2nd fret.
4. Find the note from the sixth string on the 10th fret.
5. Find the note from the first string on the 5th fret.

Day 36

Playing Combo Notes

Two Notes at a Time

It sounds simple, but playing two notes at a time is something that can take some getting used to. In this particular lesson I am referring to two notes on two strings right next to each other. In other words I will not give you two notes in this lesson that have one or more strings separating them. Everything will be on two back to back strings; sixth and fifth, fourth and third and so on.

As always, standard tuning is assumed, so we will go over two-note combos using the following string combinations.

6th and 5th

5th and 4th

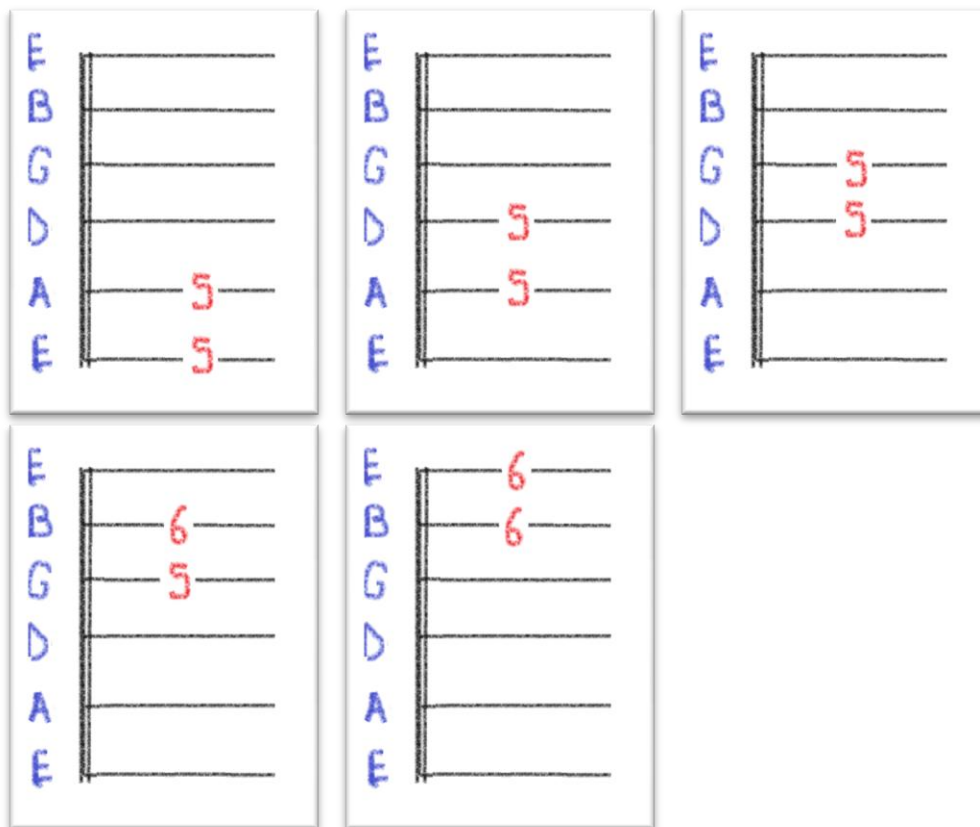
4th and 3rd

3rd and 2nd

2nd and 1st

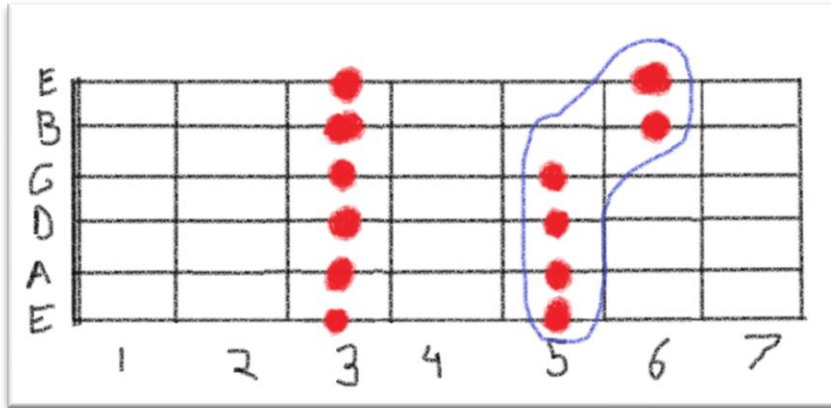
I will illustrate this with tabs for each group, and will do so on the fifth fret. Keep in mind that once you learn the note combos on the fifth fret, you can move them anywhere on the fret board.

Combo Note Tabs





You probably have noticed that once we get to the 3rd and 2nd strings the pattern deviates and moves up to the sixth fret. You may not realize it, but you already know why this is. Remember **Day 13**? On **Day 13** we covered the first most basic scale you would ever learn. Does anything look familiar?



As you can see, the pattern that has already been introduced in the scale and can be used to draw up combo notes that work and build off of what we have already learned.

Suggested Positioning

As far as which fingers to use, I would recommend getting accustomed to using your pointer and middle finger together, as well as your middle and ring finger together. Try a variety of both of those combinations at different locations on the fretboard.

Review Questions

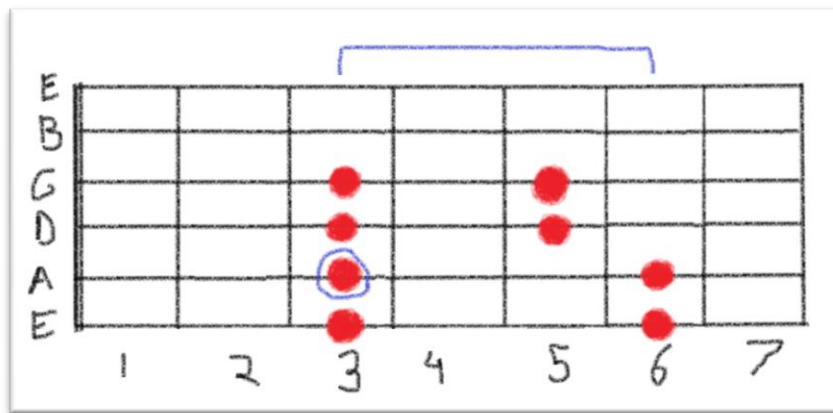
1. In the scale diagram given in this lesson, what do the letters represent?
2. In the tabs given in this lesson, what do the horizontal lines represent?
3. What is the difference in sound between a minor and major chord?
4. In the scale given in this lesson, what is the root note of the scale?
5. In the scale given in this lesson, what is the note from the sixth string on the third fret?

Day 37

Pentatonic Minor Scale Part I

Learning the Pattern

Up to this point we have learned two scales, the Pentatonic Major and the Major Blues scales on **Day 26** and **Day 28**. Today we will tackle the Pentatonic Minor scale, which should be relatively simple after the first two. The Pentatonic Minor scale is very similar to the Pentatonic Blues scale with only minor variations. Here is the chart.



Playing Through

This should all be familiar to you, though you will want to pay attention to the difference in sound between this and the Pentatonic Blues scale from **Day 26**. As usual, we are only covering about two third of the scale in order to keep the pace slower.

Review Questions

1. What is the root note of the scale in this lesson?
2. What is the key of the scale in this lesson?
3. What do the numbers in a scale diagram represent?
4. What do the letters in a scale diagram represent?

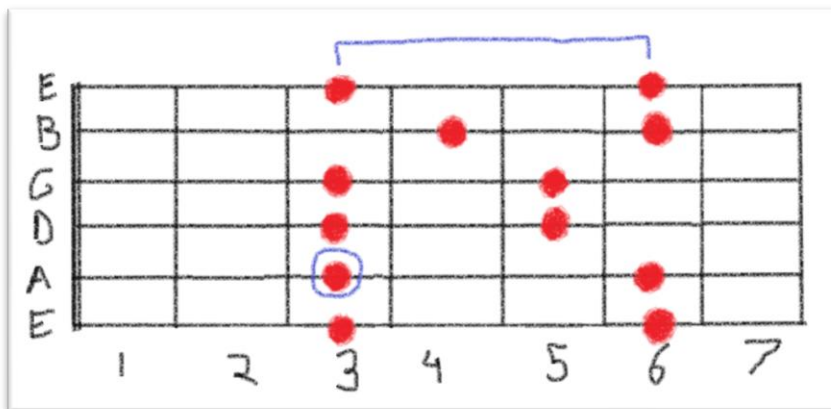
5. In this scale diagram, what note is on the sixth string at the 6th fret?

Day 38

Pentatonic Minor Scale Part II

Learning the Pattern

Today we will finish the Pentatonic Minor Scale that we started in **Day 37**. Breaking the scale up into two different parts gives you a chance to practice it on two separate occasions, and makes it less likely to be overwhelming. As I mentioned before the pattern is similar to scales that you have already learned, so none of this should be foreign to you.



Playing Through

In terms of stretching this scale does not demand a lot. In fact, it is probably one of the easier ones you have learned. Pay close attention to the difference in sound between this and the other two scales we have covered.

When playing through the notes, go as slow as you need to in order to maintain clear notes. Playing guitar in a sense is like weightlifting, where you do not want to sacrifice form for speed or more weight. Just take it slow here.

Review Questions

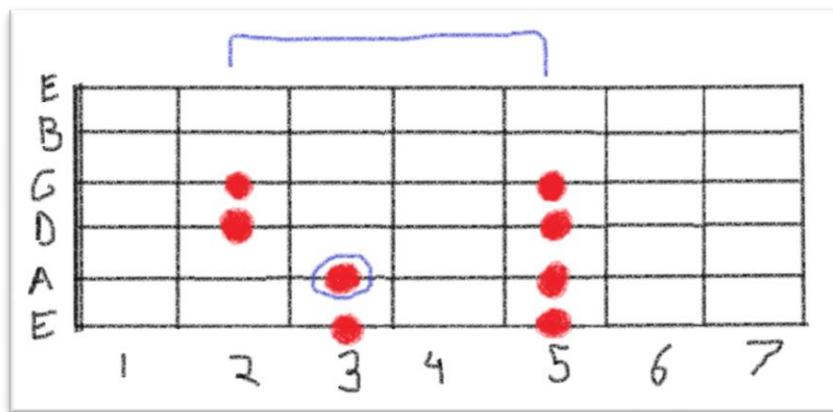
1. What are the notes on the sixth string of the scale given?
2. What are the notes on the fifth string of the scale given?
3. What are the notes on the first string of the scale given?
4. What is the maximum fret-span of this scale?
5. What is the root note of this scale?

Day 39

Pentatonic Major Scale Part I

Learning the Pattern

To follow up the Pentatonic Minor scale we have learned over **Day 37** and **Day 38** we will now cover the Pentatonic Major scale. When playing this scale, you will want to pay particularly close attention to the difference in sound that it has compared to the minor version of the scale. The pattern is one of the easiest you will play, but take advantage of that simplicity by really keying into what you are hearing and how it fits with other sounds.



Playing Through

This is a very easy scale so take your time and memorize the pattern. Keep in mind the “major sound” compared to the minor sound. Remember to play from top to bottom then to work your way backwards from bottom to top.

Review Questions

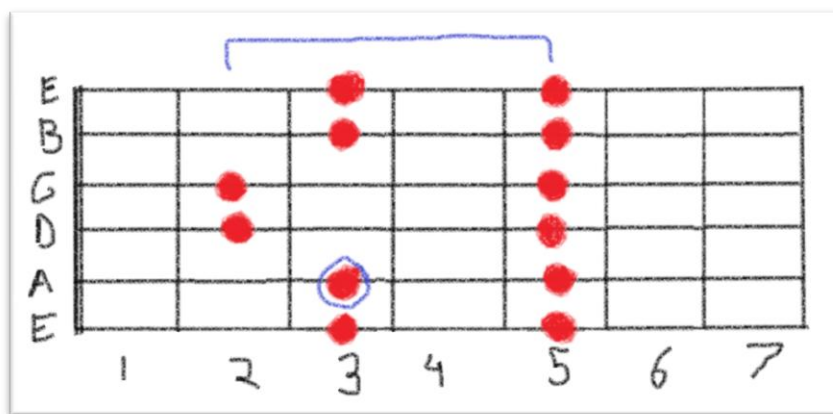
1. What is the difference in sound between a minor and major scale or chord?
2. What are the notes in the given scale on the sixth string?
3. What are the notes in the given scale on the fifth string?
4. What do the letters on a scale chart represent?
5. What do the numbers on a scale chart represent?

Day 40

Pentatonic Major Scale Part II

Learning the Pattern

Today we will complete the Pentatonic Major scale and play through the whole thing. As I have already said, it is very simple in form, though still a necessary part of a beginner guitar player's scale vocabulary. Eventually you will be able to take aspects of this scale and apply it in other areas of playing. Therefore the more you learn now the easier things will be down the road.



Playing Through

Play through the full scale top to bottom then going backwards from bottom to top. As always, do not speed up until you are comfortable and can do so without sacrificing note quality.

Review Questions

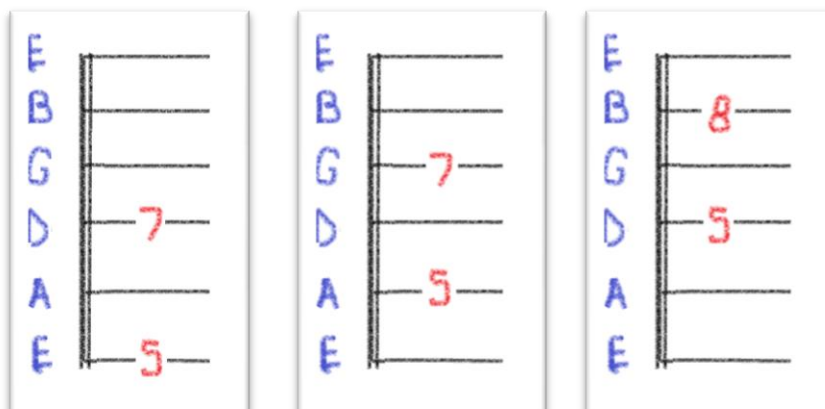
1. What is a typical standard tuning for a guitar?
2. What key is this scale given in?
3. What is the fret span of this scale?
4. From the scale given, what notes are played on the sixth string?
5. What about the first string?

Day 41

Combo Notes Part II

Separated Combo Notes

On **Day 36** we covered what I simply called “combo notes”. In this lesson, I want to give you a little more practice with this concept, but this time introduce some two-note combos that are separated by one string. The following tabs give you three new combinations to start practicing.





Suggested Positioning

When you are playing these chords, using your pointer and ring finger for the first two, then your pointer and pinky finger for the last one should be the most comfortable approach. Now I know these are chords but you should think of them more as lead combo notes. One thing to recognize is that for each chord, *they are both the same note*. For example, on the first chord you will probably recognize that the note at the fifth fret on the sixth string is an **A**. Well, the note at the 7th fret on the fourth string is also an **A**. That applies to the other two chords as well for their corresponding notes.

When you get the positioning down, try sliding the chord up and down the fret board. The combo gives you a fuller sound and can be used as short lead pieces or chord substitutes.

Review Questions

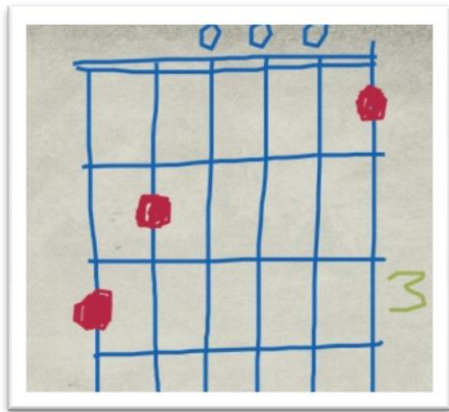
1. Find the note on the fifth string at the 5th fret.
2. Use the answer from question number 1 to find the note on the third string at the 7th fret.
3. True or False: There is more than one type of G chord.
4. What is the open third string tuned to?
5. What is the key of the first chord given in this lesson?

Day 42

Learning the G7 Chord

Chord Structure

7th chords will have a distinctly bluesy sound, and are something you want to have in your chord vocabulary at an early stage. We will start with **G7** and work our way down the line like we did with the others. The **G7** chord is similar in structure to the G major chord you have already learned, so this should not be too difficult for you.



Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot – Ring Finger
Second Red Dot – Middle Finger
Third Red Dot – Pointer Finger

Strumming and Picking

The chord in your hands will feel more like the **C** major from **Day 7** since you will have your fingers curled in a like manner. You are not likely to struggle too much with the physics of the chord, but pay attention to the sound since it is a 7th chord, and as always, be sure that all your notes are coming out clean. You will not have any muted notes to worry about in this case.

Review Questions

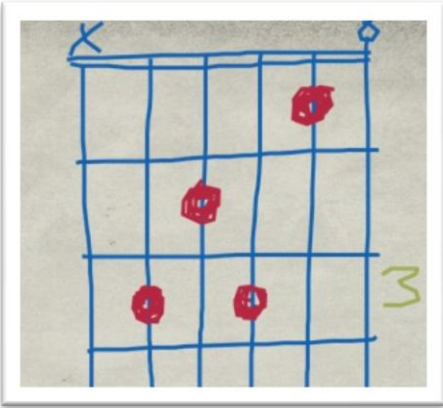
1. What sound do 7th chords produce?
2. How many notes do you mute in the G7 chord?
3. What do the Xs in a chord chart represent?
4. How many notes do you chord in the C major chord?
5. Find the note on the sixth string at the 12th fret.

Day 43

Learning the C7 Chord

Chord Structure

With the **G7** chord under our belt, we will move right into the **C7** version. The **C7** chord will be a little bit tougher and will require all four fingers to play correctly. However it is the same curled finger position so the practice you have had from **Day 42** should be sufficient to prepare you.



Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot – Ring Finger
Second Red Dot – Middle Finger
Third Red Dot – Pinky Finger
Fourth Red Dot – Pointer Finger

Strumming and Picking

The only mute you need to worry about is the sixth string. You will not need to worry too much about muting it if you take care to not play it when you strum. Pick through the five strings of the chord to make sure all your notes are clear. Once you are comfortable with that, try some simple up and down strumming.

Review Questions

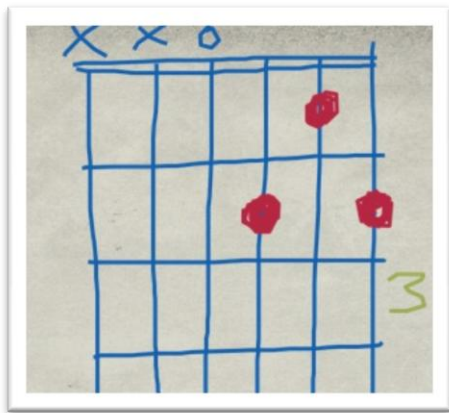
1. How many notes do you play in the C7 chord?
2. How many mutes are in the G7 chord?
3. What is the difference in sound between a major and minor chord?
4. What do the Os represent on a chord chart?
5. What do the numbers represent on a chord chart?

Day 44

Learning the D7 Chord

Chord Structure

If you are comfortable with the basic **D** chord from **Day 8** then you are not likely to struggle with today's **D7** chord. The only difference is your positioning on the second string. Instead of chording the third fret, you will chord the first fret.





Suggested Positioning

First Red Dot – Middle Finger

Second Red Dot – Pointer Finger

Third Red Dot – Ring Finger

Strumming and Picking

Remember that the fifth and sixth strings are muted on this chord. You will play the fourth string since it is your open **D** that will act as the bass note of the chord. The rest is just a matter of getting the notes to come out clean. Your fingers will be bunched up, but walk through each note as always to make sure there is no buzzing.

Review Questions

1. How many strings do you mute in the D7 chord?
2. How many strings do you mute in the C7 chord?
3. How many notes do you play in the G7 chord?
4. What do the horizontal lines represent on a chord chart?
5. What do the numbers represent on a chord chart?

Day 45

Strumming Patterns Part I

Basic Strumming Patterns

You have already been doing some basic up and down strumming patterns as you have been learning chords. What we want to do today is actually dissect what you are doing and practice the strumming itself, now that you have got some chords in your system.

Today we will play a few chords and focus on just a simple up and down strumming pattern. You will not have to worry about palm muting or anything really technical, just strum the chord on the way down and strum on the way up. Here is the process in plain English.

Basic Strumming Patterns

When you strum a guitar, you start above the strings making contact on the way down, then again making contact while you pull your hand back up.

Start above the string and strum down making contact.

Pull your hand back to the original starting position making contact on the way up.

Practice this process with the following chord progression in this order:

G – Strum Down – Strum Up – change to **C** – Strum Down – Strum Up – change to **D** – Strum Down – Strum Up

E – Strum Down – Strum Up – change to **A** – Strum Down – Strum Up – Change to **B** – Strum Down – Strum Up

Review Questions

1. What two directions do you strum a guitar?
2. When getting ready to start a strumming pattern, do you typically start above or below the strings?
3. What is the difference between the minor and major chord sound?
4. How many strings do you mute in the G7 chord?
5. How many strings do you mute in the D7 chord?

