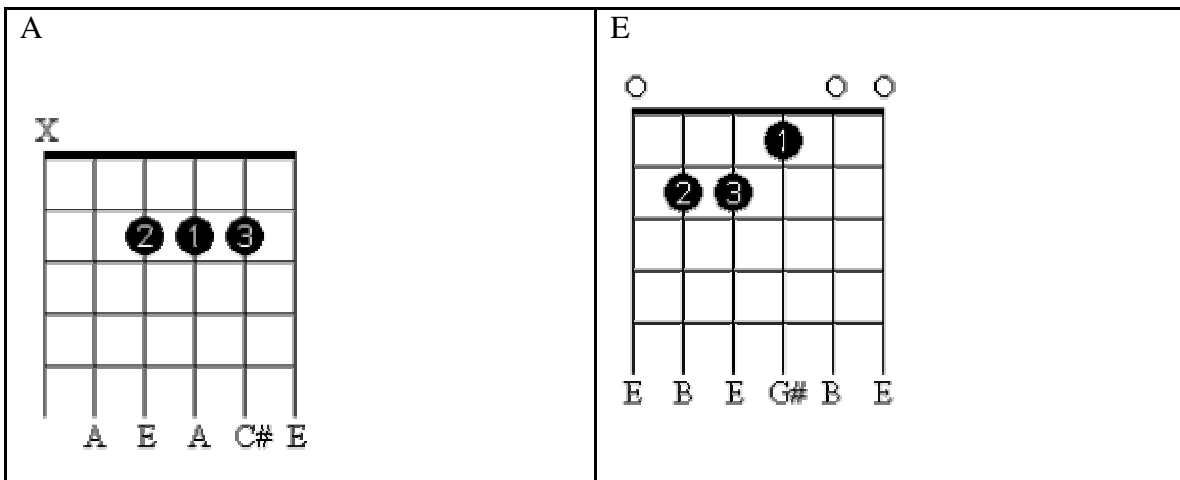


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## I. First Chords – Key of A

### Part 1- 2 Chords



1. The easiest chords to get started with are the A and E chords. In the diagrams above, the vertical lines present the strings, the horizontal lines represent the frets, and the dots represent the fingertips. Zeros over the strings indicate open strings, numbers are the left or fretting hand fingers, and an “x” indicates that a string is not played.

3. When changing from A to E and back, lift 2 & 3, slide 1, and replace 2 & 3. Try this warmup exercise in A, using 4 down-strums only per measure at 1 beat each: 4/4 / A / E / E / A //

4. Songs with A and E: Practice these until you can change chords without stopping. (Click on the links to hear the songs on YouTube)

[Skip To My Lou](#) – 4/4 / A / A / E / E / A / A / E / A //

[Tom Dooley](#) – 4/4 / A / A / A / A / A / A / E / E / E / E / E / E / E / A / A //

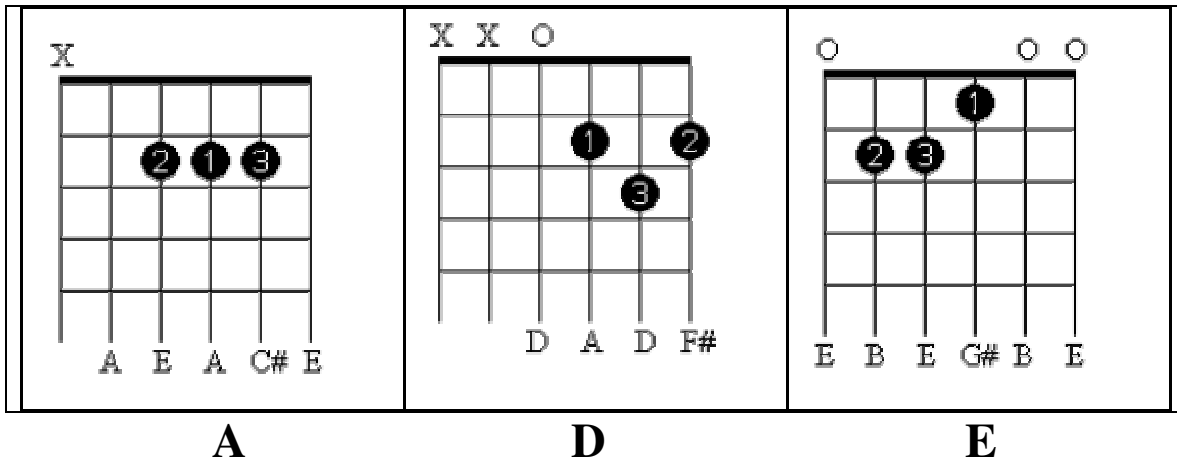
[Aiko Aiko](#) – 4/4 / A / A / A / E / E / E / E / A //

[Jambalaya](#) – 4/4 //: A / A / E / E / E / E / A / A //

[Down in the Valley](#) – 3/4 / A / A / A / A / E / E / E / E / E / E / E / E / A / A / A / A //

5. Speed changing: Look at your left hand, don't stop the strum, jump to the next chord.

Part 2 - 3 chords



6. In the diagrams, the vertical lines present the strings, the horizontal lines represent the frets, and the dots represent the fingertips. Zeros over the strings indicate open strings, numbers are the left or fretting hand fingers, and an "x" indicates that a string is not played.

7. Warm-up exercise- 4 downstrums on each chord: 4/4 / A / D / E / A / A / E / D / A //

8. How to change chords: A → D, D → A. Hold 1, lift 2, slide 3, replace 2.  
D → E, E → D, A → E, E → A. Lift 2 and 3, slide 1, replace 2 and 3.

Fingerings chart for the A, D, and E chords

Chord	Finger	String	Fret
A	1	3	2
	2	4	2
	3	2	2
D	1	3	2
	2	1	2
	3	2	3
E	1	3	1
	2	5	2
	3	4	2

4. Songs in A - 4 strums per measure in 4/4, three strums per measure in 3/4.

[Leaving on a Jet Plane](#) - 4/4 / A / D / A / D / A / D / E / E //

[Amazing Grace](#) - 3/4 / A / A / D / A / A / A / E / E / A / A / D / A / A / E / A / A //

[Blowin' In the Wind](#) - 4/4 / A / D / A / A / A / D / E / E :// (3x)  
/ D / E / A / A / D / E / A / A //

[Key to the Highway](#) - / A / E / D / D / A / E / A / A //

## II. How to Learn 1000 Songs on Guitar in 30 Minutes By Glenn Weiser. From Metroland, 5-22-03.

*The following article by me appeared in Metroland, an alternative newsweekly in Albany, NY. Hopefully you'll find the instructions below an easy to follow first lesson in playing chords.*

I only moonlight as a wordsmith here; my main line of work is teaching guitar and other instruments privately. So for a freebie introductory guitar lesson that will—no kidding—teach you how to play a thousand songs in a half-hour, get your ax, tune it up, and have a seat in a chair that doesn't have arms.

Hold the guitar in your lap so the neck tilts up at about a 30-degree angle. Then place your thumb on the back of neck behind the first fret and parallel to it. The knuckle should rest on the middle of the neck with the tip of the thumb bent slightly. Curl the fingers of your left hand just above the strings, and place the tip of your middle finger on the fourth string (the strings are numbered from highest to lowest in pitch), just to the left of the second fret. The finger should not touch the strings on either side. If you have long nails on your left hand, clip them before proceeding further.

Press the string hard enough to get a clear note when you pluck the string. Leave the middle finger in place and then put the tip of the ring finger on the second string, second fret, which as before means just to the left of the fret bar. Next place the index finger on the second fret of the third string behind the other two, and scrunch it up as close to the second fret as you can get it without pushing the other fingers over the fret bar. This is an A major chord.

Take a pick and hold it in between the thumb and index finger of your right hand. Strum downward, and use the wrist as much as you can rather than the elbow. The strum should be quick and light; avoid either bashing the strings or letting the pick slowly ripple across them. Next, tap your foot at the speed of a slow walk and count from one to four. Strum the A chord four times, once per tap. This is one measure of A in 4/4 time, which is the time signature of most popular music.

Practice foot-tapping and strumming together, playing consecutive measures of A until you start to get the feel of playing with a steady beat. Do not pause in between measures.

Next come the D major and E major chords, which with the A chord give you the three primary chords in the key of A. The D chord is fingered as follows: first finger on the third string, second fret, second finger on the first string, second fret, and third finger on the second string, third fret. For the E chord, put the first finger on the third string, first fret, the second finger on the fifth string, second fret, and the third finger on the fourth string, second fret.

Now try playing the chords in the following sequence, strumming four times per chord: A-D-E-A-A-E-D-A. In the beginning you'll find it takes a couple of seconds to change chords, but with practice you'll be able to do it without hesitating. Here are some pointers for changing chords in the key of A: when going from A to D, or D back to A, hold the first finger in place (it is on the same note in both chords), lift the second finger, slide the third finger along the second string rather than lifting and replacing it, and then replace the second finger. For all the other changes—E to D, D to E, A to E, and E to A—lift the second and third fingers, slide the first finger along the third string, and then replace the second and third fingers. Now play the chord sequence again using these techniques while tapping your foot.

Once you've done that, play the following sequence of chords, again with four evenly timed strums per chord at a walking tempo: A-A-A-A-D-D-A-A-E-D-A-A. This is known as the 12-bar blues pattern, and was originated in the Deep South probably around 1890 to accompany the three-line-verse form of the blues.

So what about those thousand songs, you might be thinking. Well, the 12-bar pattern can be found in almost every kind of American music, including rock, folk music, country, bluegrass, and jazz. All you have to do is learn these three chords and the blues form and you'll know literally thousands of songs on the guitar.

## Right-Hand Techniques, Part 1: Strumming

The first right-hand skill you need to develop on guitar is strumming. First is the basic downstrum, and then down-up strumming.

1. The basic downstrum: In three-four time, strum three times per bar, once per beat, counting, "One, two, three." The accent is on "1." In four-four time, strum four times per bar, once per beat, counting, "One, two, three, four." The accents are on "1" and "3."

↓ ↓ ↓  
3/4 /1 2 3 /

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓  
4/4 /1 2 3 4 /

When the accents fall on "2" and "4," it is called a backbeat.

2. Down-up Strumming: Here we use eighth-note rhythms to create a more lively effect. In three-four time, count, "one and two and three and." In four-four time, count, "one and two and three and four and."

Here are some down-up strums in both three-four and four-four:

¾ time strums-

↓ ↓↑ ↓      ↓ ↓↑ ↓↑  
 / 1 + 2 + 3 + /    / 1 + 2 + 3 + /

4/4 time strums-

↓ ↓↑ ↓↑ ↓      ↓ ↓↑ ↓ ↓↑      ↓ ↓↑ ↓↑ ↓↑      ↓ ↑ ↓↑ ↓↑ ↓↑  
 / 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + /    / 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + /    / 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + /    / 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + /

3. The “Latin,” or syncopated strum has accented strums on “1” and “2 &,” and no strum on “3” in 4/4 time.

↓ ↓↑ ↑↓      ↓ ↓↑ ↑↓↑      ↓ ↓' ↓ ↓'  
 / 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + /    / 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + /    / 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + /

The symbol ‘ indicates the tacet-let the strings off the neck with the fingers on the strings.

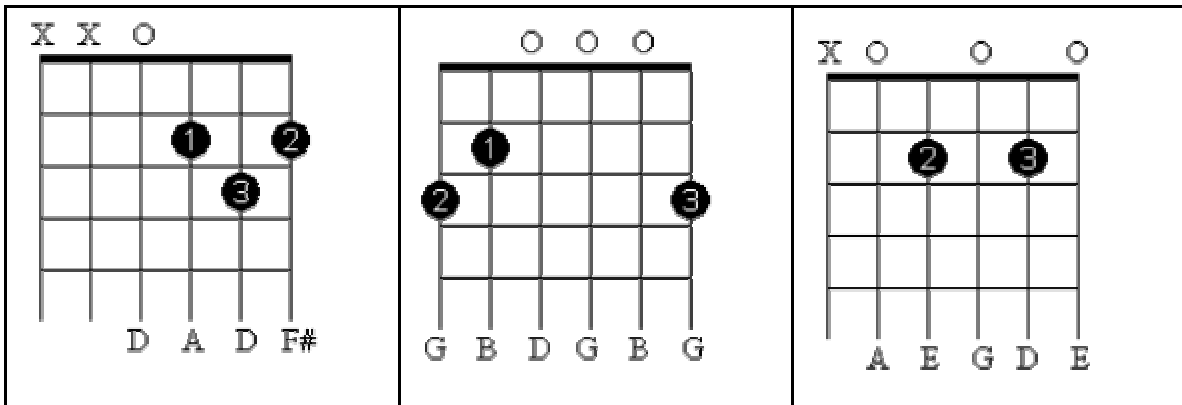
5. The swing strum: In 4/4, each beat is divided in thirds, called triplets. It is counted, “ 1 trip-let, two triplet,” etc. Strum down on “1,” count “trip,” and strum up on “let.”

↓      ↑      ↓      ↑      ↓      ↑      ↓      ↑  
 1 trip-let   2 trip-let   3 trip-let   4-trip-let

The triplet strum is a down-up-down pattern- 1 trip-let   2 trip-let   3 trip-let   4-trip-let

### III. Key of D –3 Chords

Glenn Weiser



D

G

A7

1. Warm-up exercise, downstrums only: 4/4 / D / G / A7 / D / D / A7 / G / D //

(you can also play A7 with your index finger on the fourth string and the middle finger on the second string)

2. Speed Changing: D → G, G → A7, A7 → D. First downstrums, then down –up strums.

3. Chord building exercise- Try changing from the D chord to partial G chords as a preparation for the change from D to the full G. Begin with switching from D to a G chord with only the first string fretted, Then try switching from D to a G chord with only the sixth and fifth strings fretted. Finally try switching from D to the full G chord

4. Songs in D (all songs are in 4/4 unless otherwise noted): (Click on the links to hear the song on YouTube)

[Truck Driving Man](#) - /D/D/G/G/D/D/A7/A7/D/D/G/G/A7/A7/D/D//

[The Lion Sleeps Tonight](#) - /D/G/D/A7//

[Bad Moon Rising](#) /D/AG/D/D/D/AG/D/D/D/AG/D/D/D/AG/D/D//  
chorus //G/G/D/D/A7/G/D/D//

[Wabash Cannonball](#) /D/D/D/G/A7/A7/A7/D/D/D/D/G/A7/A7/A7/D//

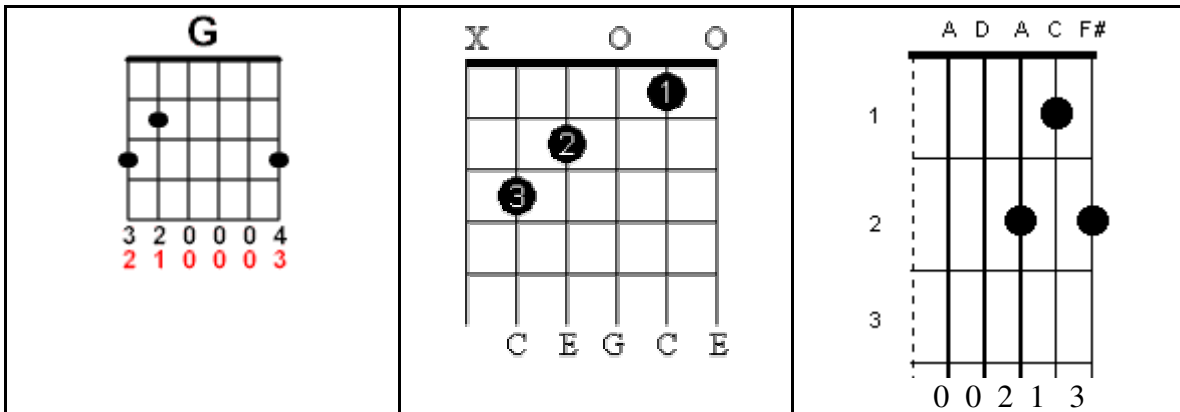
[I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry](#) - 3/4 /D/D/D/D/D/D/D/D/G/G/D/D/D/A7/D/D//

[The Banks of the Ohio](#) /D/D/A7/A7/A7/A7/D/D/D/D/G/G/D/A7/D/D//

[Move It On Over](#) - /D/D/D/D/G/G/D/D/A7/A7/D/D//

[Your Cheating Heart](#) - /D/D/G/G/A7/A7/D/D/D/D/G/G/A7/A7/D/D//  
//G/G/D/D/E/E/A7/A7/D/D/G/G/A7/A7/D/D//

## IV. Chords in the key of G



**G**

**C**

**D7**

1. Warm-up exercise, downstrums only. Use the 2-3-4 fingering of the G chord.

: 4/4 / G / C / D7 / G / G / D7 / C / G //

2. When the G chord is preceded or followed by the C chord, the 2-3-4 fingering of G is preferred.

3. Changing chords- G to C: Lift and replace 2 & 3, place 1. C to D7, D7 to C: hold 1.

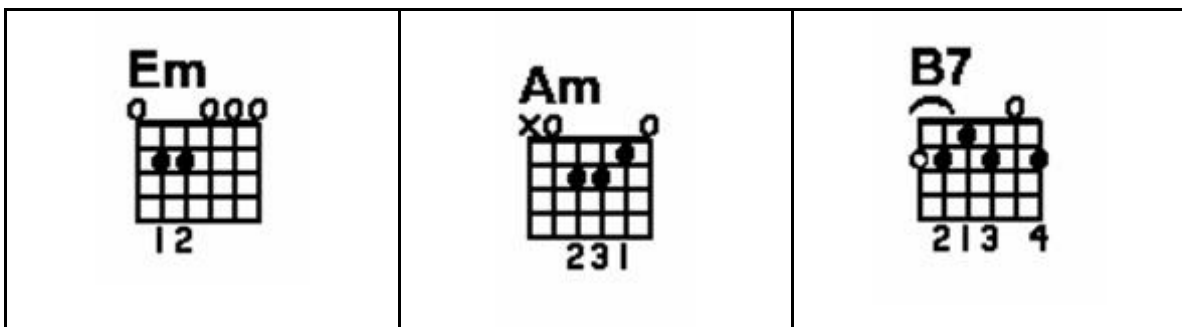


6 & 4. Barre A form- 5 & 4, or 5 & 6. In  $\frac{3}{4}$ , the first bass note is followed by two strums; in  $\frac{4}{4}$ , play both bass notes with strums after each.

4. Playing fingerstyle. As an alternative to using the pick, you may pick the bass strings with the thumb and use the backs of the fingers (the nail side) to brush the treble strings. For the down-up technique, brush down and then up with the other (palm) side of the index finger on the offbeats. This is how Maybelle Carter of the Carter Family played guitar.

5. These are only the rudiments of this style. Many embellishments can be added as you advance, including hammers and pulls, connective bass runs, and, ultimately, the playing of the complete melody line in the bass interspersed with strums in the treble. To hear this bass-melody style, listen to the recordings of the Carter Family.

## VI. Chords in the keys of Em and Am



Em

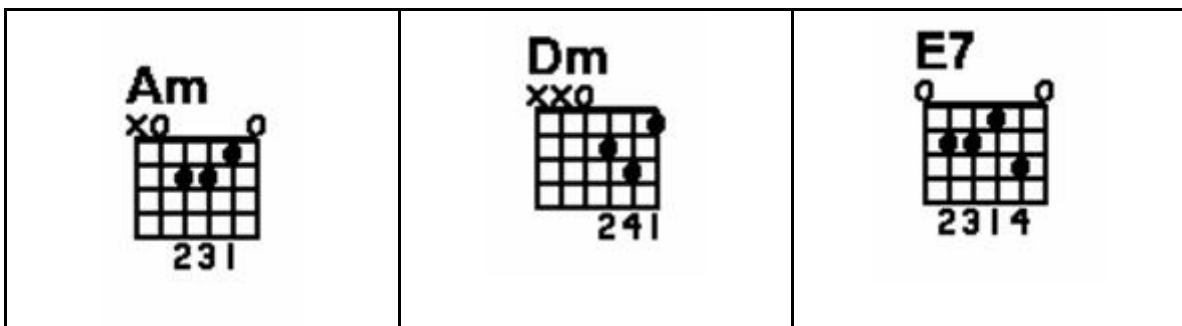
Am

B7

1. Warm-up exercise, downstrums only:  $\frac{4}{4}$  / Em / Am / B7 / Em / Em / B7 / Am / Em //

2. Speed Changing: Em  $\rightarrow$  Am, Am  $\rightarrow$  B7, B7  $\rightarrow$  Em. As usual, first downstrums, then down-up strums.

3. Changing from Em to Am and back-hold 2. Em can also be played with 2 and 3.





E / E / E //

[Bury Me Beneath the Willow](#) - 4/4 / E / E / A / A / E / E / B7 / B7 / E / E / A / A / E / B7 / E / E /

[In The Pines](#) - 3/4 / E / E / A / G / B7 / B7 / E / E //

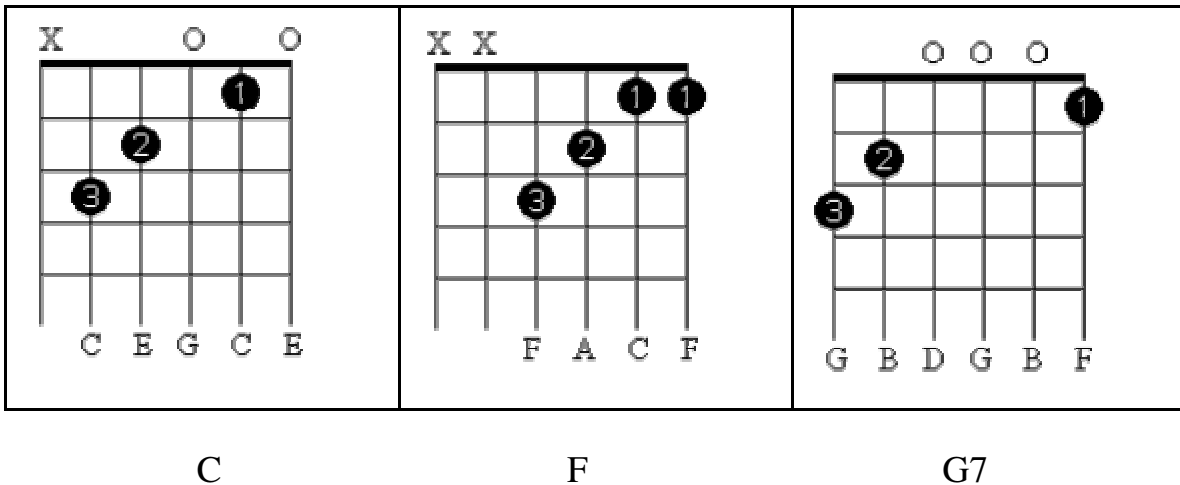
[Hey Joe](#) - / C / G / D / A / E / E / E / E //

[Mystery Train](#) - 4/4 / A7 / A7 / A7 / A7 / E / E / E / E / A7 / A7 / A7 / A7 / E / E / E / E / B7 / B7 / B7 / B7 / E / E / E / E //

[Shotgun Blues](#) - 4/4 / E / E / E / E7 / A / A / E / E / B7 / A / E / E //

[Red River Valley](#) - 4/4 / E / E / A / A / E / E / B7 / B7 / E / E7 / A / A / B7 / B7 / E / E //

## VIII. Key of C



1. Warm-up exercise, down-strums only: 4/4 / C / F / G7 / C / C / G7 / F / C //

2. The “short” F chord - Place your index finger flat over first two strings on the first fret, with the fingertip touching the third string. Then arch your left wrist downwards and forwards so that the distal knuckle (the one closest to the fingertip) of the index finger bends in, firmly pressing the first two strings down onto the fretboard. The short F chord is more dependent on wrist positioning than the other open chords.

3. Speed Changing: C → F, C → G7, G7 → C.

4. First Songs in C: (Click on the links to hear the song on YouTube)

[Okie from Muskogee](#) - 4/4 / C / C / C / C / C / C / C / G7 / G7 / G7 / G7 / G7 / G7 / G7 / G7 / C / C //

[Keep on the Sunny Side](#) - 4/4 / C / F / C / C / C / C / G7 / G7 / G7 / G7 / C / C / G7 / G7 / C / C // C / C / F / C / C / C / G7 / G7 / C / C / F / C / C / F / C / G7 / C / C //

[San Francisco Bay Blues](#) - 4/4 / C / F / C / C / F / F / C / C / F / F / C / A7 / D7 / D7 / G7 / G7 / C / F / C / C / F / F / E7 / E7 / F / F / C / A7 / D7 / G7 / C / C // C / F / C / C / F / F / C / C / F / D7 (Fm6) / C / A7 / D7 / D7 / G7 / G7 / C / F / C / C / F / F / E7 / E7 / F / F / C / A7 / D7 / G7 / C / C //

[Goin' Down The Road Feeling Bad](#) - 4/4 / C / C / C / C / C / F / F / C / C / F / F / C / Am / C

/ G / C / C //

[Let It Be](#) - 4/4 / C / G / Am / F / C / G / F / C // (2x) / Am / G / F / C / C / G / F / C // F / C / G / C //

[Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out](#) - 4/4 / C E7 / A7 / Dm A7 / Dm / F B7 / C A7 / D7 / G 7 /

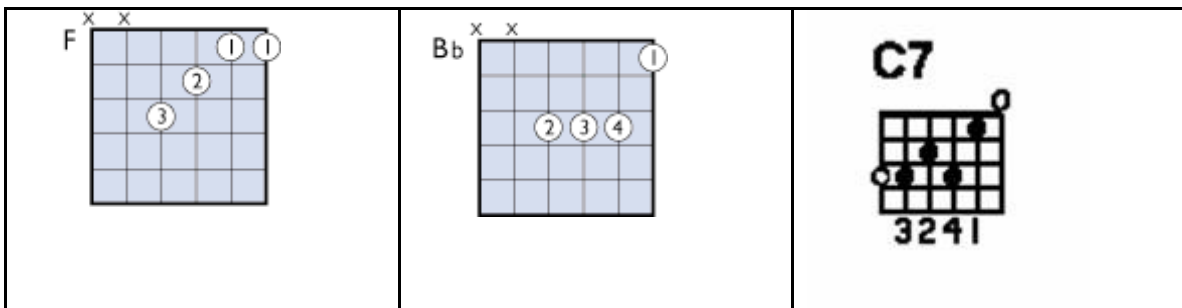
/ C E7 / A7 / Dm A7 / Dm / F B7 / C A7 / D7 / G 7 C // (ending tag) / A7 / D7 G7 / C //

[Shake, Rattle and Roll](#) - 4/4 / C / C / C / C / F / F / C / C / G 7 / F / C / C //

[When the Saints Go Marching In](#) - 4/4 / C / C / F / F / C / C / G / G 7 / C / C / F / F / C A7 / D7 G7 / C / C //

Chorus // C / C / C / C / C / C / G / G 7 / C / C / F / F / C A7 / D7 G7 / C / C //

### IX. Key of F



F

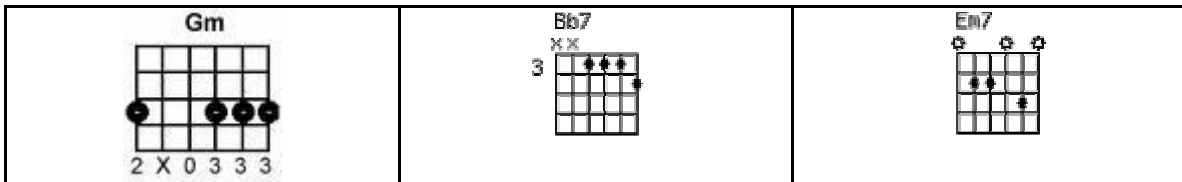
Bb

C7

1. Warm-up exercise, downstrums only: 4/4 / F / Bb / C7 / F / F / C7 / Bb / F //

2. Speed Changing: F → Bb, Bb → C7, C7 → F. First downstrums, then down – up strums as always.

Additional Chords- the fingering of Em7 is 012040, Bb7 is xx1113



Gm

Bb7

Em7

4. First Songs in F: (Click on the links to hear the song on YouTube)

[Sweet Little Angel](#) - 4/4 / F / Bb / F / F7 / Bb / Bb / F / F / C7 / Bb / F / F //

[Chantilly Lace](#) - / C7 / C7 / F / F / C7 / C7 / F / F / Bb / Bb / F / F / C7 / C7 / F / F //

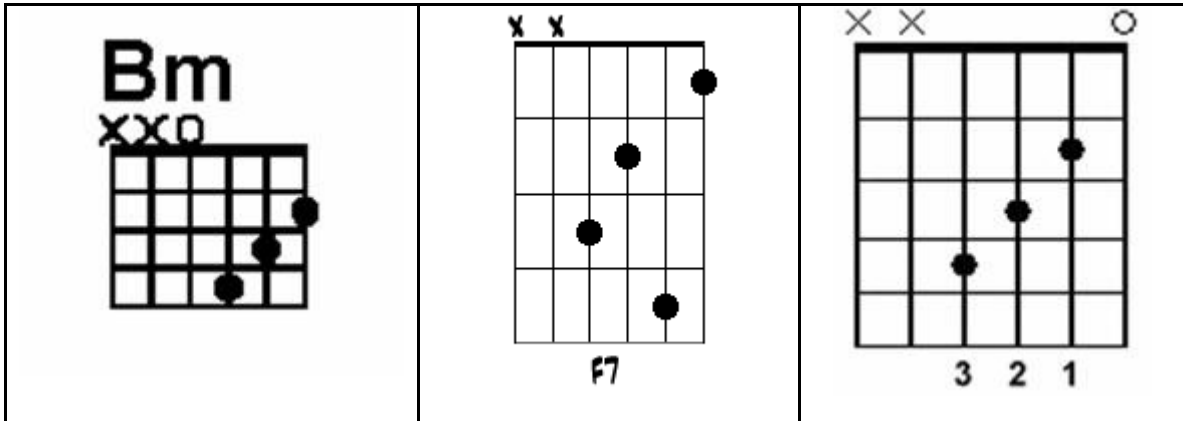
[Give Me One Reason](#) - / F / Bb C7 / F / F / Bb / Bb C7 / F / F / C7 / Bb / F / F //

[My Babe](#) / F / F / F / F / F / F / C7 / C7 / F / F / Bb / Bb7 / F / C7 / F / F //

[Michael Row the Boat Ashore](#) - / F / F / Bb / F / Am / Gm / F C7 / F //

[Yesterday](#) - / F / Em7 A7 / Dm - - C / Bb C7 / F - - A7 / Dm G / Bb F - - // Em7 A7 /

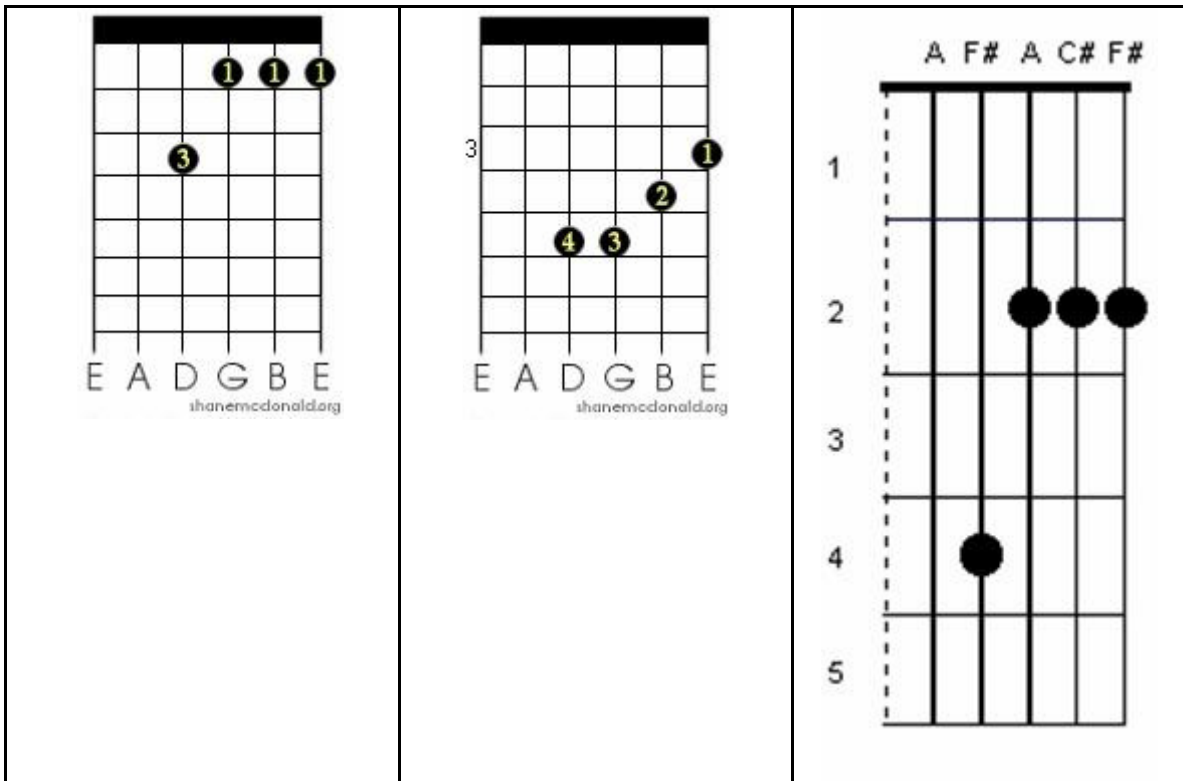
X. More Chords



**Bm**

**F7**

**F#7**



**Fm**

**Cm**

**F#m**

Songs:

[St. James Infirmary](#) - 4/4 / Am E7 / Am / Am Dm / E7 / Am E7 / Am / F7 E7 / Am //  
 Alberta - 4/4 / Am / F7 E7 / Am E7 / Am / C / F G7 / C / C7 / F / Em / C C7 / F D7 / C  
 A7 / D7 G7 / C F / C //

[Nowhere Man](#) - 4/4 / C / G / F / C / F / Fm / C / C // (2x) Em / F / Em / F / Em / Dm /

Dm / G //

[Mama Tried](#) - / A / D / A / D / A / A / E / E / A / D / A / D / A / E / A / A // A / A / D / A / F#m / F#m / E / E / A / A / D / A / A / E / A / A //

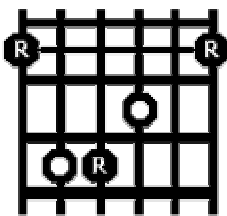
[Tennessee Waltz](#) -  $\frac{3}{4}$  / D / D / D7 / G / D / Bm / E7 / A7 / D / D / D7 / G / D / A7 / D / D // D / F#7 / G / D / D / Bm / E7 / A7 / D / D / D7 / G / D / A7 / D / D //

[The Shanty Song](#) - 4/4 / G / G7 / C / Cm / G E7 / A7 D7 / G / G //

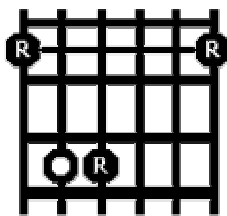
## XI. Barre Chords

### Six basic barre chord shapes

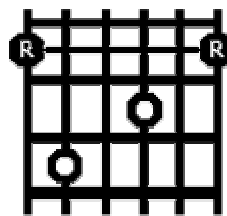
'E' shaped chords (rooted on 6th string):



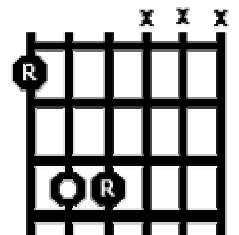
Major



Minor

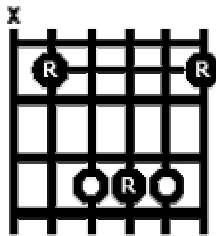


Seventh

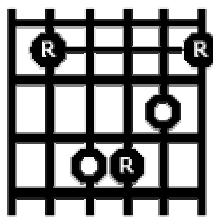


Power Chord

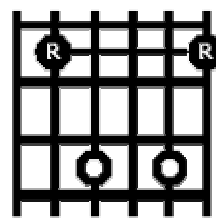
'A' shaped chords (rooted on 5th string):



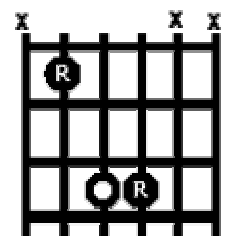
Major



Minor



Seventh



Power Chord

Barre chords are made by clamping a finger, usually the index, down flat on two or more strings. Full barre chords have the index finger over all six strings, which makes them more difficult than open chords. To play a full barre chord, first make sure you thumb in is back of and at right angles to the neck with the knuckle in the middle of the neck and the left wrist arched downward. The index finger should be straight from the proximal knuckle (where the finger joins the hand) to the tip, and the middle knuckle should be over the second string. With the exception of the Bb, all the chords above are full barre chords. The Bb is a ring finger barre chord.

2. The chords in the first row are E-form barres and can be thought of as a way to make a chord with a root of E movable. The root note is on the sixth string. Those in the second row are A-form barre chords and allow a chord with a root of A to be moved. A-form barres have the root on the fifth string. In the Bb chord, the first finger hold holds down the fifth string with the tip touching and muting the sixth string, while the ring finger holds down the second, third, and fourth strings and mutes the first string.

You can use the fingerboard chart below to determine what the pitch of the various barre chords will be at each fret.

### Guitar Fingerboard Chart

E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb
B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb
G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb
D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db
A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab
E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI

## XII. 12 Bar Blues

Every rock, blues, country, folk, and bluegrass musician should know the 12-bar blues in the seven most string-friendly keys. They are: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and G. The flat keys other than F are most often used in jazz, and aren't dealt with here. Blues is useful as the easiest way to jam when musicians have no other songs in common. It can be played with any groove, and is an ideal way to develop improvisational skills. Many famous American songs in every genre use this chord progression.

1. First, you need to know what the I, IV, and V7 chords are in each key. For this, memorize the chart below. The key is named after the I chord.

I	IV	V7
A	D	E7
B	E	F#7
C	F	G7
D	G	A7
E	A	B7
F	Bb	C7
G	C	D7

2. Below is the 12-bar blues pattern. Each of the three lines of the usual verse form (A-A-B) occupies four measures. Blues is played in 4/4 time (12/8 is really tripletized 4/4).

I	I or IV	I	I
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IV	IV	I	I
V7	IV or V7	I	I or V7

In the second bar, IV is often substituted for I in a variation called the “quick change.” In the eighth bar, V7 is sometimes used in place of IV (as in many Chuck Berry songs). In the final bar, V7 is usually used before a repeating a chorus-this called a “turnaround” - and I is used for the last chorus. Seventh chords can also be substituted throughout.

Minor key blues, which should also be learned, has a minor I and IV, and a dominant V7 as in major key blues.

3. 12-bar blues in 7 keys. These should be memorized.

- In A: / A / A or D / A / A / D / D / A / A / E7 / D or E7 / A / A or E7 //
- In B: / B / B or E / B / B / E / E / B / B / F#7 / E or F#7 / B / B or F#7 //
- In C: / C / C or F / C / C / F / F / C / C / G7 / F or G7 / C / C or G7 //
- In D: / D / D or G / D / D / G / G / D / D / A7 / G or A7 / D / D or A7 //
- In E: / E / E or A / E / E / A / A / E / E / B7 / A or B7 / E / E or B7 //
- In F: / F / F or Bb / F / F / Bb / Bb / F / F / C7 / Bb or C7 / F / F or C7 //
- In G: / G / G or C / G / G / C / C / G / G / D7 / C or D7 / G / G or D7 //

## Guitar Scales in the Open Position

Key of C Major

**Key of G Major**

T G F# E F# G A B C D E F# G A B C D

A 3 2 0 2 3 0 2 3 0 2 4 0 2 0 1 3

B 3 0 2 3 0 2 4 0 2 0 1 3

T E F# G F# E D C B A G F# E D C B A G

A 0 2 3 2 0 3 1 0 2 0 4 2 0 3 2 0 3

B 0 3 2 0 3

**Key of D Major**

T D C# B A G F# E F# G A B C# D E F# G

A 0 4 2 0 3 2 0 2 3 0 2 4 0 2 4 0

B 3 2 0 2 3 0 2 4 0 2 4 0

T A B C# D E F# G F# E D C# B A G F# E D

A 2 0 2 3 0 2 3 2 0 3 2 0 2 0 4 2 0

B 2 0 2 3 0 3 2 0 2 0 4 2 0

**Key of A Major**

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

T  
A  
B

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

T  
A  
B

**Key of E Major**

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

T  
A  
B

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

T  
A  
B