

GuitarZ ForEver

Guitar Chords

Your first chords

Open Chords... When you first start playing guitar, the easiest chords to play are the ones requiring the least amount of fingers, and in the least awkward positions. This usually means that one or more open strings are involved, meaning that you play that string but you don't need to place a finger on it.

Open chords are the foundation for the rest of guitar. They are one of the first things any guitarist should learn **WHEN LEARNING GUITAR CHORDS**. The first thing to know is this: *they aren't easy*. They will take a lot of time and practice to be able to play well and change between them quickly. These are my comments and experiences with open guitar chords.

Major chords are perhaps the most common type of chord found in Western music, and are traditionally the first chords that a beginning guitarist learns.

Chord Construction – A major chord is simply the 1st, 3rd, 5th and occasionally the 7th notes of the major scale played together.

Let's look at the C major scale. Following the Whole step, Whole step, Half step, Whole step, Whole step, ,Half step pattern, the C major scale is made up of the notes: C, D, E, F, G, A, B. Numbering the notes, C is the 1st., D 2nd., E 3rd., F 4th., G 5th., A 6th., B 7th.. (There's no need to count C twice.) Following the 1st, 3rd and 5th note arrangement for chord construction, C, E and G played together make up the C major chord.

“To help remember the most common major chords is the the word CAGED. “

This stands for the guitar chords. Each of these chords has its own special fingering which we will go over in this lesson, and gradually these shapes will become second nature to you (trust me on this). When someone said that rock and roll is basically "three chords and an attitude", the three chords they were talking about are some subset of the chords you will learn in this lesson. If you can play these guitar chords comfortably, you can play some blues, Beatles, Nirvana, and a lot of other cool music.

The Chordz

C Major

A Major

G Major

E Major

D Major

CAGED is system of fret board patterns for chords, scales, and arpeggios. It is derived from the unique tuning of the guitar. The C, A, G, E, and D basic chord patterns are just the beginning of the CAGED system. They are the first step in opening up a door to total fret board domination.

Every other chord, scale, and arpeggio can be built from these 5 patterns. It has been rumored that Jimi Hendrix's vast abilities stem from his knowledge of the CAGED system and look at what it did for him. Understanding and mastering the CAGED system is the greatest achievement for any guitarist and [Guitarz Forever.com](http://www.guitarzforever.com) *wants to show you even more!*

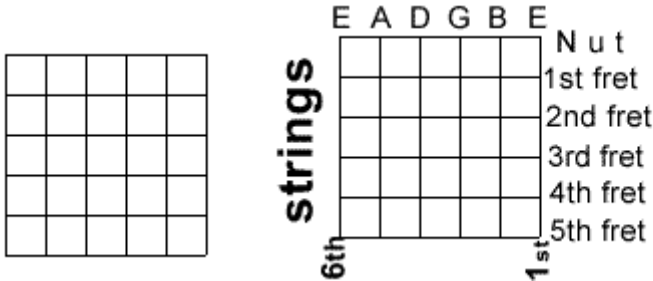
First Things First

How To Read A Guitar Chord Diagram

Chord diagrams show you how to play new chords.

Below is a blank chord diagram. Think of it as a picture of your guitar sitting in front of you.

The 6 vertical lines represent the 6 strings on a guitar (low E on left side, high E on right). The horizontal lines represent frets except for the top line which is the nut of the guitar.



● dots on the diagram tell you what fret and string to place your fingers. Numbers inside the dots tell you which finger to use.

○ White dots or circles mean to play the string open (an open string is a string that is played without any notes being fingered on the fretboard).

X on the diagram means to not play that string.

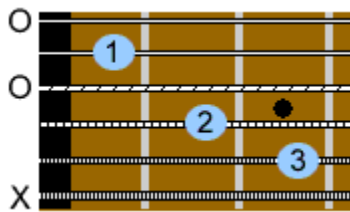
Here's how the fingerings are mapped out on your hand:



The C Major Chord

Let's start with the C Major chord, which is also referred to as just a 'C chord'. For now, it probably isn't particularly important to know why it's called a C Major or what it means to be 'Major'. In practice, the main thing is to know how to play it and what it's called, so that when you jam with your friend and they say 'play a C chord', you know what to do.

The fingering for a C chord is shown below



For now, I don't want you to worry about strumming or rhythm. I just want you to concentrate on each chord, how it sounds, and how it feels under your fingers. Also, keep in mind that becoming comfortable with these fingerings and switching back and forth between them is one of the hardest tasks you'll ever endure and is usually the difference between those who have fun playing their guitar, and those that keep it in the case under their bed.

So what does this mean? This is a typical guitar chord chart. Each string can have one of three options:

Thus, the chart for the C chord above tells us the following:

1st String - Play it open

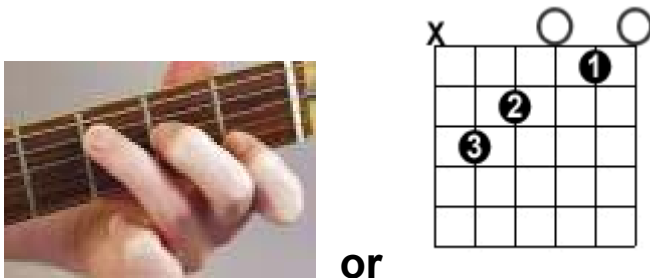
2nd String - Put your index finger on the 1st fret

3rd String - Play it open

4th String - Put your middle finger on the 2nd fret

5th String - Put your ring finger on the 3rd fret

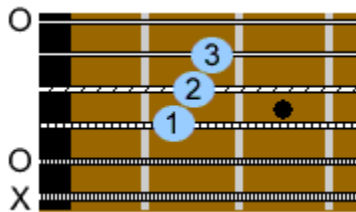
6th String - Don't play it



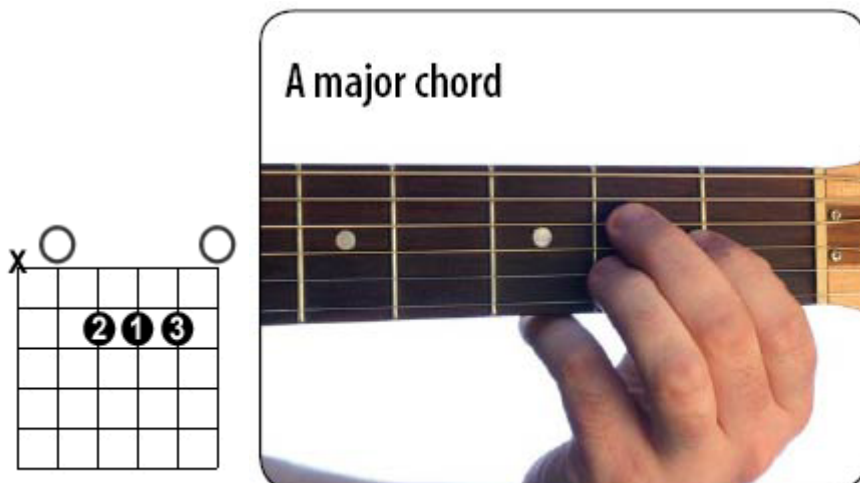
or

So try it out. Put your fingers in place and strum it. It's OK if some notes don't ring. That's natural. In time, all the notes will ring loud and true. The important thing is that you just played a C chord! One of the reasons why the C chord is a good first chord is that it lays out on the fret board in a very natural way for your hand. You'll find this not to be the case for some of the other CAGED chords.

The A Major Chord



The fingering for an **A Major chord** is a little more difficult than the C chord, especially if you have big fingers or a small guitar. The main thing is that you have to play the 2nd fret on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th strings in order to play an A major chord. The fingering for an A major chord is shown below. Also, note that the chart shows exactly where your fingers should go for this fingering. The notes are staggered a bit along the second fret because there isn't enough room to align all three of your fretting fingers vertically across the neck:



Thus, the chart for the A major chord above tells us the following:

1st String - Play it open

2nd String - Put your ring finger on the 2nd fret

3rd String - Put your middle finger on the 2nd fret

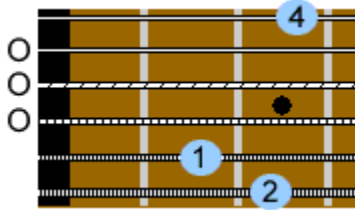
4th String - Put your index finger on the 2nd fret

5th String - Play it open

6th String - Don't play it

So try it out. Put your fingers in place and strum it. It's OK if some notes don't ring. That's natural. Note that if another fingering feels better, then by all means go with that. I think it's all right to use your ring finger to play the 3rd string, and middle to play the 2nd string. Because it's easier to move to a D Major chord using this fingering (more on the D Major chord later in this lesson.)

The G Major Chord



There are a few different ways to finger a G Major chord, and the fingering presented below is just one of them. I like this particular fingering because if you're feeling adventurous, you can add your 3rd (ring) finger to the 2nd string, 3rd fret (just below the pinky), and give the g major chord a bit more punch. The more traditional way to finger it is to use your 2nd and 3rd fingers in place of your 1st and 2nd fingers in the chart below, leaving your 1st (index) finger free. The reason for this is to allow you to shift more easily to a C or G7 chord:

Thus, the chart for the G chord above tells us the following:

1st String - Put your pinky on the 3rd fret

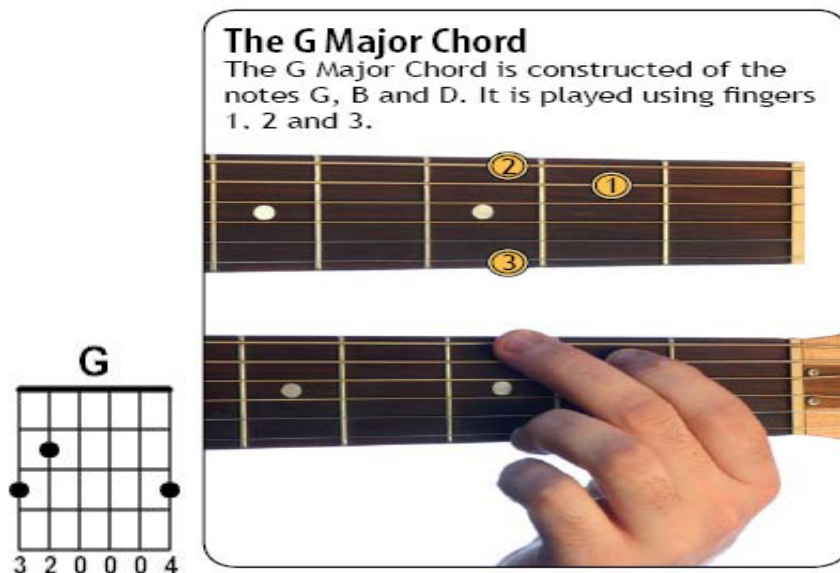
2nd String - Play it open

3rd String - Play it open

4th String - Play it open

5th String - Put your index finger on the 2nd fret

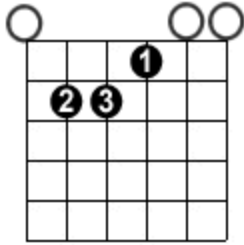
6th String - Put your middle finger on the 3rd fret



So try it out. Put your fingers in place and strum it. It's OK if some notes don't ring. That's natural. Note that if another fingering feels better, then by all means go with that. This is the first chord in which we get to play all 6 strings, so you don't have to be precise in your strumming.

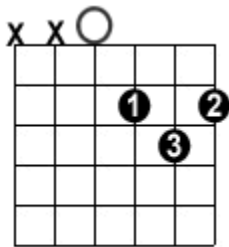
The Last Two Chords

The E major chord



And the....

The D major chord



The CAGED system is derived from the unique tuning of the guitar. To sum it up: there are 5 basic major chord patterns on the guitar. These basic chord patterns are the C, A, G, E, and D chords. There are also minor chord version of these 5 basic patterns which we'll go over in another e-book.

You'll notice that there are chords that seem to be missing such as **F chords** and **B chords** as well as chords with sharps or flats. Well, these chords don't have their own patterns. To play them (and **all** the other major and minor chords for that matter) you have to use one of the patterns on this page, so your **first step** is to master the chords on this page.

When you've got them down, it's time to learn their movable versions and how to apply them to the fretboard. Learn and memorize each chord pattern. Take your time to insure that you are playing them correctly.

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