

NBN GUITAR

ESSENTIALS PRIMER

FOR BEGINNERS

COURSE BOOK



Joshua Rogers

FOREWORD

Hello Fellow Guitarist!

My name is Joshua Henare Rogers and I am the creator of the NBN Guitar Essentials Primer for Beginners.

In the years leading up to my first guitar lesson it dawned on me that I had always enjoyed music, and in particular - singing. I enjoyed it so much that I ended up being the only boy in the James Street Primary School Choir at the tender age of ten. Little did I know that three years later I would be attending my first guitar lesson.

You could say I always had a passion for music, dancing, and to a lesser degree performing in plays and school productions. Even now I love trying to dance with my young son when he grooves out to the latest K-pop tunes on YouTube.

I've been in more bands and musical collaborations than I can remember, and I have been fortunate enough to make a career performing original music (cowritten with a great friend) and covers around the world with incredible musicians that have all influenced me in one way or another during my peregrinations.

When I started out I never thought that the guitar would become 'my thing'. Everyone that knows me always asks how my playing is or what I'm up to musically. They ask because music and I have become inextricably intertwined as the decades disappear.

I have received about four and a half years of formal guitar lessons by absolutely incredible guitar teachers. In addition to this I have been constantly surrounded by incredible lecturers and musicians during my time at university, and as my own musical journey continued thereafter.

I have a Licentiate Diploma in Classical Guitar Performance (with Distinction) from the Trinity College of London; a Certificate in Business Studies from the Waiariki Institute of Technology; and I am currently studying towards my teaching registration with the Institute of Registered Music Teachers in New Zealand.

In addition to being taught I have also spent a significant amount of time as a guitar teacher. My first official teaching position came to me when I was just seventeen years old as a night class teacher at the high school I attended at the time. During those night classes I learned many valuable skills, the most memorable of which was planning lessons. It was also around that time that I developed the NBN Guitar style of teaching.

I've never explained this publicly before, however NBN stands for Note-by-Note and I realised it was a 'thing' when I taught my cousin how to play Spanish Romance one note at a time. Thankfully, he was (and still is) a great guitarist so he picked it up fairly easily. This is when it dawned on me that complicated pieces of music can be taught in this

way as long as the teacher is patient enough and willing to go against the snobbish consensus that classical music must be read from a score and not taught in such a way.

Fast forward almost twenty years and I decided to share the NBN style of guitar teaching guitar on YouTube. When I started I didn't even expect to get to 100 subscribers, yet as the years passed so too did several subscriber milestones on the channel. Like many other YouTubers, my first subscribers were my closest friends and my girlfriend (now my wife)! Since then the lessons on channel have helped thousands of guitarists around the world to learn techniques, pieces, and songs that they never thought they ever could or would.

My subscribers' support and the continued insistence of my wife whom is also a professional musician, led to the creation of this course – and I am eternally grateful to them all for believing in my methods and me.

The course you are about to embark upon represents approaches to learning guitar that have been gathered from many years of being a teacher, a student, and asking questions of current guitar pedagogy, followed by creating answers to the biggest challenges new players encounter.

Most guitar courses tend to focus mainly on the physical side of guitar playing without addressing the many psychological challenges that come with trying to play and dare I say master an instrument. I wanted to spend a bit of time sharing more than just “Your finger goes here” or “Don't do it like this.” My goal is to provide you with additional tools that can help you overcome the plateaus, gear limitations, feelings of inadequacy that most of us experience at one time or another.

Let your fingers fly!

Introduction

"A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." – Lao Tzu (Ancient Chinese Philosopher)

When I started playing the guitar many years ago I had no idea that all these years later it would bring me to you today. I'm genuinely excited and I hope that this is the first step of many that you, your guitar, and I will take together.

My first lesson was horrific and it made me think my teacher hated me. My fingers ached; they refused to do what I wanted them to do. I had to borrow guitars for every lesson because I didn't even have my own guitar; the other students seemed way better than me, and yet...I started to enjoy it. In spite of all of that I began to love playing or more accurately - trying to play.

I discovered that playing music made me appreciate it in an entirely different way than merely listening to it. Honestly, it felt like I'd found the unlock code to an esoteric world full of wonder and magic that was in plain sight but remained invisible to most – not unlike the train platform to Hogwarts in the Harry Potter movies.

I started to make new friends that played all kinds of instruments; we shared ideas; we wrote awful songs; we pretended to be rockstars into the wee small hours. I also found great joy just playing my guitar peacefully, alone in my room, while my family watched tv and ate snacks in the living room.

During this time I realised I was part of something. I wasn't exactly sure what that something was, however I felt like I had started a very special journey. I didn't care that I didn't know where I was going and it didn't matter. I was just happy to be along for the ride with my trusty guitar as sidekick and confidante.

Life is a journey, and learning guitar is a journey within that journey. Our lives are full of ups, downs, trials, tribulations, circles and squares, yet I'm beyond grateful that the guitar has been a refrain in the song that is my life's journey. Every now and again when I turn on my metronome I ponder how it may have clicked off the many beats of my life if I hadn't decided to see what this piece of wood and strings was all about.

My name is Joshua Rogers - welcome to the NBN Guitar Course for You!

Grab your guitar – your journey is about to begin.

Course Overview

This course is comprised of modules. Within each module are lessons and exercises that are numbered and named for easy reference.

You can find and navigate to any course content in this eBook quickly and easily by clicking on a module, lesson or exercise in the table of contents.

Each module begins with an overview where I explain what you will learn in the module. Modules are usually comprised of instructional videos, music scores, quizzes, and exercises aimed at gradually building and strengthening your technique, theory, and mental fortitude.

I strongly recommend that you finish one module before proceeding to the next, otherwise you may find yourself struggling unnecessarily with material that is too advanced which leads to frustration, which in turn hinders progress.

At the end of each module is a checklist. The checklist is there to encourage you to learn all of the important information in the module before moving to the next one. Only tick each box if you truly believe you agree with the accompanying statement.

The course has been designed to introduce you to guitar using classical guitar fundamentals. It avoids rushing in with lofty promises of teaching you to play songs because that approach often ends in tears. Beginners feel compelled to play exactly like the song, only to discover their efforts are futile, progress slows, and in the worst case they give up entirely.

Instead, you and I are going to play the long game. We trade short-term thrills for long-term gains and ability. Crafting technique and theory over time resulting in a consummate guitarist that is armed with the techniques and theoretical knowledge to confidently make music alone and collaboratively.

During this course you will learn how to:

- Strum and pick with your fingers
- Recognise the symbols used to name the fingers on both hands
- Name all the strings on the guitar
- Understand two different time signatures
- Count different rhythms, name notes, dotted notes, and their values
- Read tablature and develop an awareness of music notation
- Recognise and understand the effect of sharps and natural signs
- Play eight different chords and a chord progression that is used in thousands of songs
- Play Ode to Joy, Malagueña Facil, and the 12 Bar Blues in A
- Accompany and be accompanied by another player

- Interpret the meaning of several musical symbols and score indications
- Four different scales including G major, A Pentatonic Major, D Pentatonic Minor, and E Pentatonic Major
- Improvise and create your own solos using the A, D and E Pentatonic Scales
- Cope and deal with finger pain, lack of progress, information overload, poor motivation and more
- Use classical guitar techniques for both hands
- Communicate and share your experiences with like-minded people on their own journey's via the NBN Guitar Community Forum

All exercises and pieces or songs are played at 60bpm (sixty beats per minute). In classical terms this tempo is known as *Adagio* and it was chosen because it is considered neither too slow nor too fast.

Four or three clicks are played at the beginning of every exercise or song to set the tempo and to serve as an introduction before you are required to begin.

I estimate the course to take anywhere from two to four months to complete, based on completing either one or two modules every week.

House Keeping & Essential Equipment

Below are some tips to help you get through the course in good time with minimal stress and interruptions:

- Get your guitar set up by a luthier or guitar technician
- Buy a metronome, guitar tuner, and a stand
- Keep your guitar in good condition
- Have a spare set of strings handy
- Keep snacks and a drink nearby
- Practice in a quiet tidy space
- Tell people your routine
- Minimise distractions

Let your fingers fly!

Josh

Table of Contents

FOREWORD	0
Introduction	2
Course Overview	3
House Keeping & Essential Equipment	4
Module 1	10
Overview	10
Lesson 1: Naming the First Three Strings	10
Exercise 1a: 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd Open Strings.....	10
Lesson 2: Abbreviations for the Picking/Strumming Fingers	10
Lesson 3: Fretting/Fingering Hand Thumb Positions.....	11
Lesson 4: Basics of Tablature and Music Notation	12
Exercise 4a: Tablature Explanation	12
Exercise 4b: Demonstrating Tablature using the G simple chord.....	12
Lesson 5: The 80:20 Rule	13
Module 2	14
Overview	14
Lesson 1: Strumming & Strumming Symbols	14
Lesson 2: Chord Definition & Chord diagram	15
Lesson 3: G Major Chord & The Fretting/Fingering Hand	15
Lesson 4: Strumming Practice	17
Exercise 4a: Down Strum	17
Exercise 4b: Up Strum	17
Exercise 4c: Down & Up Strum	17
Exercise 4d: Up & Down Strum	18
Lesson 5: Reducing Hand & Finger Pain	18
Module 3	20
Overview	20
Lesson 1: E Minor Chord.....	20
Lesson 2: Changing From G Major (simple) To E Minor (simple).....	20
Lesson 3: Semibreves/Whole Notes	21
Lesson 4: Understanding Counting, Bars & Measures.....	21
Exercise 4a: Using the numbers	22
Exercise 4 b: Removing the numbers	23
Lesson 5: Difficulty with Chords & Chord Changes	23
Module 4	25
Overview	25
Lesson 1: C Major Chord (simple)	25
Exercise 1: Strumming the C major chord.....	25
Lesson 2: Changing From E Minor (simple) to C Major (simple)	26
Lesson 3: G - Em - C Chord Progression.....	26
Lesson 4: Basic Hand Position and Picking with Thumb and Fingers	26

Exercise 4a: Picking with Thumb, Index, and Middle using Em	27
Exercise 4b: Picking with thumb, index, and middle using the G - Em - C chord progression	28
Module 5.....	29
Overview	29
Lesson 1: D7 Chord	29
Exercise 1: Picking or Strumming the D7 chord.....	30
Lesson 2: Pivoting from C Major (simple) to D7 (simple).....	30
Exercise 2a: C - D7 Chord Change using Pivoting & Preparation.....	30
Lesson 3: G - Em - C - D7 - G Chord Progression using Preparation, Pivoting, and Guiding	31
Lesson 4: Minims/Half Notes & Crotchets/Quarter Notes	32
Lesson 5: Counting & Strumming Minims & Crotchets	32
Exercise 5a: Counting indications above all measures	32
Exercise 5b: Counting indication above first two measures only	32
Exercise 5c: Counting indication above first measure only	33
Exercise 5d: Counting indication removed.....	33
Exercise 5e: Start with up strums	33
Exercise 5f: Alternate strumming starting with a down strum.....	34
Exercise 5g: Alternate strumming starting with an up strum	34
Lesson 6: Strumming & Rhythm (Keeping Time) Issues	34
Module 6.....	36
Overview	36
Lesson 1: Naming the Last Three Strings	36
Lesson 2: Classical/Fingerstyle Hand Position & Thumb Movement.....	37
Lesson 3: Picking Patterns	37
Exercise 3a: P, i, m, i with open strings.....	38
Exercise 3b: P, i, m, i with chords	38
Exercise 3c: P, m, i, m with open strings	39
Exercise 3d: P, m, i, m with chords.....	39
Exercise 3e: m, i, P, i with open strings	39
Exercise 3f: m, i, P, i with chords	40
Lesson 4: Information Overload.....	40
Module 7.....	41
Using The Progression In The Real World	41
Module 8.....	42
Overview	42
Lesson 1: Open Strings First Octave	42
Lesson 2: G Major Scale with Preferred Fingering.....	43
Exercise 2a: G Major Scale with preferred fingering (first octave)	43
Exercise 2b: G Major Scale with alternative fingering (first octave).....	44
Exercise 2c: G Major Scale First Octave Progressive	46
Lesson 3: Open Strings Second Octave	47
Exercise 3a: Open Strings Second Octave	47
Exercise 3b: G Major Scale Second Octave with Fingering	48
Exercise 3c: G Major Scale Second Octave Progressive	49

Lesson 4: G Major Scale Two Octaves.....	49
Exercise 1: G Major Scale Two Octaves (with preferred fingering)	50
Lesson 5: A Brief Explanation of Scales and Octaves	50
Lesson 6: Lack of Progress	51
Module 9.....	52
Topics for Discussion	52
Lesson 1: The Importance of Routine.....	52
Lesson 2: Listening for Guitar in Songs	52
Lesson 3: Finding a Role Model.....	52
Lesson 4: Taking your Guitar Everywhere	53
Lesson 5: Happy Accidents versus Mistakes.....	53
Module 10.....	54
Overview	54
Lesson 1: Alternate Picking.....	54
Exercise 1a: Alternate Picking i, m (m, i)	54
Exercise 1b: G major scale alternate picking open strings i, m (m, i)	55
Exercise 1c: G major scale with fingering second octave i, m (m, i).....	55
Lesson 2: G Major Scale Alternate Picking First Octave	56
Exercise 2a: Alternate picking i, m	56
Exercise 2b: G major scale alternate picking open strings i, m (m, i)	57
Exercise 2c: G major scale with fingering first octave.....	57
Lesson 3: G Major Scale Two Octaves with i, m (m, i)	59
Module 11.....	60
Overview	60
Lesson 1: Ode To Joy.....	60
Exercise 1a: Recognise 1st & 2nd Time Repeats	61
Exercise 1b: Dotted Crotchet/Dotted Quarter Note	61
Exercise 1c: Quaver and Beamed Quavers	62
Lesson 2: G - D7 Chord Change	64
Lesson 3: A7 - D7 Chord Changes, C Natural & Repeat Two Bars Symbols	65
Lesson 4: G, D7, Em & A7 Chordal Accompaniment	68
Lesson 5: Learning & Playing Two Different Guitar Parts for Ode to Joy	68
Exercise 5a: You play the Melody (guitar 1)	69
Exercise 5b: You play the Chords (guitar 2)	69
Lesson 6: Reading Music & Tablature.....	70
Module 12.....	71
Overview	71
Lesson 1: 3/4 Time Signature, Repeat One Bar Symbol, G# & F	71
Lesson 2: Counting & Inverted Pedal Point.....	73
Lesson 3: E Major Chord.....	74
Lesson 4: A Minor Chord.....	75
Lesson 5: E – Am – E chord Change.....	76
Lesson 6: E & Am Chordal Accompaniment.....	77
Lesson 7: Learning & Playing Two Different Guitar Parts for Malagueña Facil	77

Exercise 7a: You play the Melody (guitar 1)	77
Exercise 7b: You play the Chords (guitar 2)	77
Lesson 8: Overcoming the Lack of Motivation	78
Module 13.....	79
Overview	79
Lesson 1: Riff with Open Strings and New Beams	79
Lesson 2: Full Riff	81
Lesson 3: A7, D7, and E7	82
Lesson 4: E7 - D7 - A7 - E7 - A7 Chord Changes.....	84
Lesson 5: Learning & Playing Two Different Guitar Parts for the 12 Bar Blues in A	84
Exercise 5a: You play the Riff (guitar 1)	85
Lesson 5b: You play the chords (guitar 2).....	86
Lesson 6: Comparison with Others	86
Module 14.....	87
Overview	87
Lesson 1: Improvising with A Pentatonic Major over A7	88
Exercise 1a: Changing rhythm	89
Exercise 1b: Changing one note	89
Exercise 1c: Changing a note in every bar	89
Exercise 1d: Changing rhythm and notes.....	89
Exercise 1e: Introducing a note from outside the scale (brackets)	90
Exercise 1f: Introducing two notes from outside the scale (brackets).....	90
Exercise 1g: Changing rhythm and adding two notes from outside the scale	91
Lesson 2: Improvising with D Pentatonic Major over D7	91
Lesson 3: Improvising with E Pentatonic Major over E7	92
Lesson 4: Improvising over 12 Bar Blues in A.....	92
Module 15.....	94
Topics for Discussion	94
Lesson 1: Lack of Guidance.....	94
Lesson 2: Maintaining Consistent Practice Habits	95
Lesson 3: Developing Proper Technique	95
Lesson 4: Equipment Limitations.....	96
Module 16.....	97
Overview	97
Lesson 1: Dexterity 'Spider'	97
Lesson 2: Vertical Stretching	98
Lesson 3: Horizontal Stretching	100
Lesson 4: Full Versions of G, C, & Em	102
Exercise 4a: G major	102
Exercise 4b: E minor.....	103
Exercise 4c: C major	103
Lesson 5: Playing Chords with Arpeggios	104
Module 17.....	106

Congratulations!	106
Where To From Here?	106
Practice Journal.....	106
Glossary of Terms	107

Module 1

Overview

In this module you and I are going to learn the nomenclature of the first three strings, the numbers assigned to the fingers on the fretting/fingering hand, the pros & cons of the three most common thumb positions of this hand, and how to read tablature.

Lesson 1: Naming the First Three Strings

In this lesson we are going to learn the names & numbers of the first three strings on the guitar.

Knowing the names and numbers of the strings is beneficial because it allows us to communicate quickly & effectively when transferring information. An open string refers to a string that has no fingers placed upon it along the fretboard.

I recommend memorising these before moving on to the next lesson.

Exercise 1a: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Open Strings

I will play the exercise using my thumb to play each string:

- E, B, G
- 1, 2, 3
- 1st, 2nd, 3rd

Exercise 1: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Open Strings

1 E 1st string open 2 B 2nd string open 3 G 3rd string open

T
A
B

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 2: Abbreviations for the Picking/Strumming Fingers

Each finger on the picking/strumming hand has a name. The name of each digit along with its abbreviation is:

- Pulgar/Thumb (P/T)
- Index (i)
- Middle (m)
- Annular/Ring (a)
- Chiquito/Little finger (c/e)

The Spanish word for the thumb and little fingers are *pulgar* and *chiquito* respectively, and their appearance here may seem somewhat out of place, however the abbreviation *P* (not *T*) and *c* (not *l*) are ubiquitous in classical guitar scores. In modern music scores the letters *T* and *e* have become more commonplace. It should be noted that the *chiquito* finger is rarely used unless it is to play chords that have five or more notes.

Lesson 3: Fretting/Fingering Hand Thumb Positions

The importance of the position of the fretting hand thumb is often overlooked when starting out on the guitar. This does not seem problematic at first, however this can come back to haunt us when we begin to learn more difficult chords and more complex music.

Therefore, I want you and I to take more time to understand the impact the three most thumb common thumb positions have on our playing, and why I favour one position in particular.

- *Grabber*. In this position the thumb loops over the top of the neck and it originates from grabbing the guitar and holding it by the neck. It feels extremely natural and comfortable
- *Thumbs Up*. In this position the thumb sticks up and protrudes above the neck of the guitar. It can also feel quite natural.
- *Unseen*. In this position the thumb is behind the neck and is virtually invisible when viewed from an audience’s perspective. Out of the three positions this is the position that feels most unnatural

Let us explore the pros & cons of each thumb position in more detail using the table below.

	Comfort (Beginners)	Stretch	Overall
Grabber	High	Worst	Good, especially when bending strings
Thumbs Up	Medium	Better	Bad, offers the least amount of versatility
Unseen	Medium/Low	Best	Best, except when bending strings

Playing the guitar can be quite an uncomfortable experience due to the strings and neck causing fingertip, hand, and wrist pain. We often tend to seek the path of least resistance which is why most guitarists love looping their thumb over the top of the

neck, however we can develop better technique from the beginning by trying to use the Unseen position wherever possible.

Lesson 4: Basics of Tablature and Music Notation

Reading tablature and music notation is truly wondrous because it unlocks an esoteric world full of delightful music from different time periods and cultures. Although reading music & tablature is by no means necessary when playing the guitar, I want you and I to consider it as part of the journey rather than something separate and distinct.

Exercise 4a: Tablature Explanation

Tablature has six lines that run horizontally across the page. At the beginning you can see the word TAB written vertically across six lines that run horizontally from left to right to inform you that this is the tablature system. Tablature uses these lines to represent strings and numbers on those lines to indicate which fret we should play on any given string. It is a beautiful and extremely intuitive system that is relatively easy to learn, enabling rapid acquisition of wonderful compositions and songs

I will play lesson 4a:

- 0 written on the top line = E open or String 1 open or 1st string open
- 0 written on the next line = B open or String 2 open or 2nd string open
- 0 written on the next line = G open or String 3 open or 3rd string open

Exercise 4a: Tablature Explanation

The image shows a musical score for Exercise 4a. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef in 4/4 time, with three measures of music. The first measure has a whole note on the 4th line (F4). The second measure has a whole note on the 5th line (G4). The third measure has a whole note on the 6th line (A4). The bottom staff is a tablature system with six lines labeled T, A, B, and three measures of '0' on the top three lines.

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 4b: Demonstrating Tablature using the G simple chord

In this lesson I will play a G simple chord to demonstrate how to play a number other than 0 on a string. The number 3 is written on the E string. This means we play the note on the 3rd fret of the E (string 1, 1st string) like this. You can use any finger on your fretting hand to finger the note. Make sure you place your finger as close to the fret as possible.

Moving along we can see that the next two notes are the same as the notes we played in lesson 4a – B, followed by G.

Exercise 4b: Demonstrating Tablature using the G chord

7 E 8 B 9 G 10 G (simple)

3 0 0 3 0 0

Lesson 5: The 80:20 Rule

Pareto's Principle is a popular saying that is prominent in the business world. In essence it states that 80% of outcomes result from 20% of inputs. When it comes to applying that to guitar I find it looks something like this:

“ You'll find yourself spending 80 percent of your time on 20% of the song.”

In my experience it's more like 95% of your time on 5% of the song. Many songs and pieces of music have one or two annoying bars where you may find yourself struggling. Ways to get past these roadblocks will be discussed in upcoming modules so keep going!

Module 2

Overview

In this module you and I will learn how to strum up and down, how to interpret a chord diagram, a simplified version of the G major chord, and the names and optimal positioning of the fretting hand fingers.


Lesson 1: Strumming & Strumming Symbols

Strumming is one of the most endearing qualities of the guitar. Pictures of people sitting at campfires or in a comfy chair strumming away on their acoustic guitar to entertain themselves and others compel us to learn a few songs so we can do the same. It therefore comes as no surprise that strumming is one of the first techniques aspiring guitar players want to learn.

Strumming differentiates itself from picking (or plucking) by how the guitar sounds when it is strummed versus picked. When you strum it is difficult to discern individual notes; they sound like a collection of notes; in contrast, picking usually involves playing one or two strings at the same time usually to form an easily recognisable melody or solo.

In lesson 1 we are going to learn how to strum using the first three open strings. You will learn that these three open strings are an E minor chord! In the previous module we picked each string individually, now we are going to strum these three strings all at once. We can use our thumb or any finger to gently strum across the strings in downwards and upward motions. Looking at the tablature we can see that the tablature numbers are all vertical which indicates they should all be played at the same time i.e. strummed.

Lesson 1: Strumming and Strumming Symbols



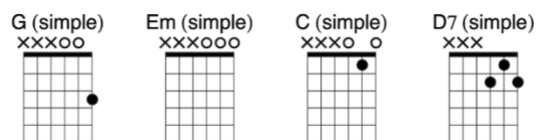
Let's use our index finger to strum by flicking it out like this. Push through the strings towards the ground. Look at the tabs and you will see a **Staple-shaped symbol** above the notes. This symbol represents a **down strum**, which means your strumming finger moves towards the ground. Moving along we see a **V-shaped symbol** that represents an **up strum**, which means your strumming finger moves upwards away from the ground.

At this stage just focus on flicking your finger out, pulling it back, and keeping your hand steady.

Lesson 2: Chord Definition & Chord diagram

A chord is defined as three (different) notes played at the same time, and a chord diagram indicates where to place the fingers to form the chord. The chord diagram appears as if you are looking at your guitar held vertically in front of your face.

- Bold horizontal line represents the nut
- Horizontal lines are the frets
- Vertical lines are the strings going from the thinnest string E on the right, to the thickest string (also E) on the left.
- O indicates that string is played open
- X indicates that string is not played
- Black circles represent your fingers

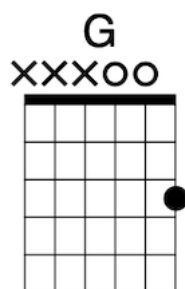


Lesson 3: G Major Chord & The Fretting/Fingering Hand

The G major chord is made up of three notes – G, B, and D. The version you are learning here has two G notes and one B note, and because of this it does not fit the definition of a true chord and would be called a G5, but for our needs we'll just call it G major (simple)

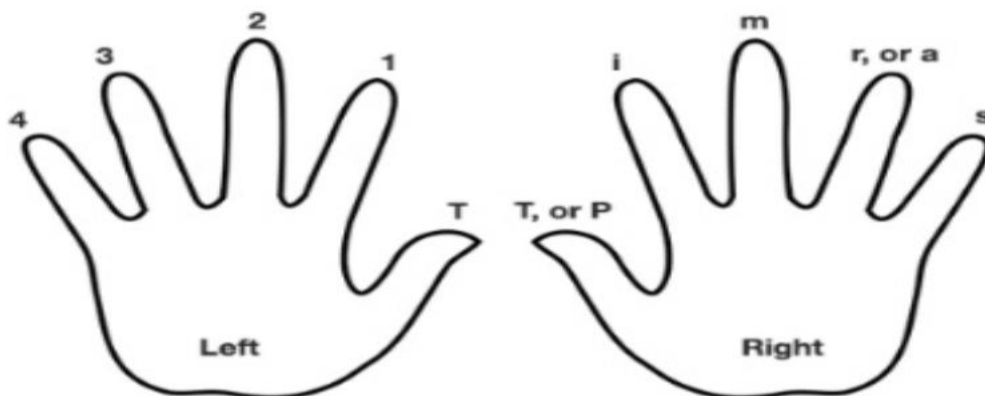
The G major chord diagram indicates the following:

- E string, 3rd finger third fret (G note)
 - B string open (B note)
 - G string open (G note)
- Other strings are not played (X)



The great thing about chord diagrams is that they can be used to represent every chord on the guitar. Chord diagrams will be used extensively in the upcoming modules to help you learn all of the chords that are in the course. If you forget a chord it will be in the glossary for fast easy referencing.

The fretting or fingering hand uses numbers to represent each finger. They are numbered thus:



1, 2, 3, 4 and T represents the thumb. In this course we will not be using the thumb of the fretting hand to finger any notes.

When we place a finger on the fretboard, we should aim to position it as close as we can to the fret for two main reasons:

- Less pressure is required to make the note sound good (less pressure = less pain)
- The likelihood of the note sounding good is greatly increased

If we place our finger too far from the fret the probability of the note not sounding correct is greatly increased. Usually beginner guitarists that aren't aware of good finger placement are forced to over-compensate by pressing much harder to make the note sound good, instead of focusing on correct finger placement.

At this time we should also pay close attention to what the other three fingers (1, 2, and 4) are doing. Usually we are so fixated on the finger that we're using we totally forget about the other fingers. I strongly urge you to look at your other fingers when you are playing the note on the third fret for the G major chord. You and I should try to keep them close to the strings and make sure the thumb is in the Unseen position at the back of the neck.

Lesson 3: G Major Chord & The Fretting/Fingering Hand

We will discuss the reasons why in the next module.

Lesson 4: Strumming Practice

In the following exercises we will learn to strum using down and up strums

Exercise 4a: Down Strum

I will play lesson 4a.

Exercise 4a: Down Strum

TAB

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 4b: Up Strum

I will play lesson 4b.

Exercise 4b: Up Strum

TAB

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 4c: Down & Up Strum

I will play lesson 4c.

Exercise 4c: Down & Up Strum

TAB

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 4d: Up & Down Strum

I will play lesson 4d.

Exercise 4d: Up & Down Strum

19 3 20 3 21 3 G(simple)

V 3 0 0 D 3 0 0 V 3 0 0

T A B

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 5: Reducing Hand & Finger Pain

Physical challenges that present themselves after you begin playing guitar are not always obvious when you first consider playing. This is often attributable to great players giving the impression that the guitar is blissfully easy to play and somewhat easy to master. The reality is that the guitar is one of the most difficult of all instruments because it is a stringed instrument that requires almost constant pressure from our fingers to create notes.

Below are the four most common complaints from students that I have taught over the past thirty five years:

- My fingers hurt
- My wrist is sore
- My hand is cramping
- My fingertips are so tender

I will explain why these things are happening, and provide a few suggestions to help deal with the very real issue of pain.

When we do things that are physically demanding (especially when starting out) we often encounter discomfort and pain. It is important to understand that whilst this may be unexpected, it is natural and normal. Our bodies need time to adapt to the new challenge being presented, but rest assured your body will begin to adapt to playing the guitar immediately, however the stamina and toughening process is so gradual that it is virtually imperceptible.

Learning the guitar involves moving our fingers, keeping our hands in certain positions, and even positioning our body in a way that can seem extremely foreign and weird in the early stages. Even the first few chords can seem like strange and cruel torture; your fingers feel on fire; the strings are cutting through your tender fingertips without mercy, and your hand feels like it's going to fall off! Even professional guitarists that have been on the journey for many years may still encounter finger and hand pain. For what it's

worth I still get sore fingers and hands when I play demanding classical pieces or tricky electric guitar solos.

I want to give you five bullet points that I hope will really help you deal with the pain that comes with the territory:

- Accept that mild discomfort & some pain is part of the process
- Remind yourself to relax often (3 deep breaths)
- Brief practice sessions (10 – 15 minutes max)
- Savour mini rests in between chords
- Know you are building resilience

Module 3

Overview

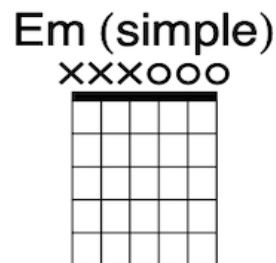
In this module we are going to learn the E minor chord, changing from G major to E minor, correct fretting hand finger positioning, the importance of keeping fingers close to the strings, 4/4 time signature, and what semibreves or whole notes are.

Lesson 1: E Minor Chord

The E minor chord is made up of three notes – E, B, and G. In a happy coincidence those three notes happen to be the first three strings open! The version you are learning is Em/G, but for our needs we'll just call it E minor (simple).

The E minor chord diagram indicates.

- E string open
- B string open
- G string open
- Other strings are not played (X)



Lesson 1: E minor chord
Em (simple)

Lesson 2: Changing From G Major (simple) To E Minor (simple)

Woohoo!!! It's time to pat yourself on the back because you are about to play your first chord change. This is a big moment so strap yourself in and get ready.

When playing lesson 2 let's focus on a few things:

- Keep the 3rd finger close to the 3rd fret
- Only apply as much pressure with the 3rd finger as you need to
- Keep your other fingers close to the strings when you're playing the G chord
- When you change to the E minor chord, instantly relax, and only lift your 3rd finger a little bit (we want to keep it close so that it is ready to play on the 3rd fret again)

I will play lesson 2.

Lesson 2: Changing from G major (simple) to E minor (simple)

G (simple) Em (simple) G (simple) Em (simple)

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 3: Semibreves/Whole Notes

Semibreves (also known as whole notes) are the hollow sideways ovals that you have seen above the tablature in the staff from module 1. When you see a semibreve or a whole note it lasts a total of four beats.

I will play lesson 3.

Lesson 3: Semibreves/Whole Notes

8 9 10 11

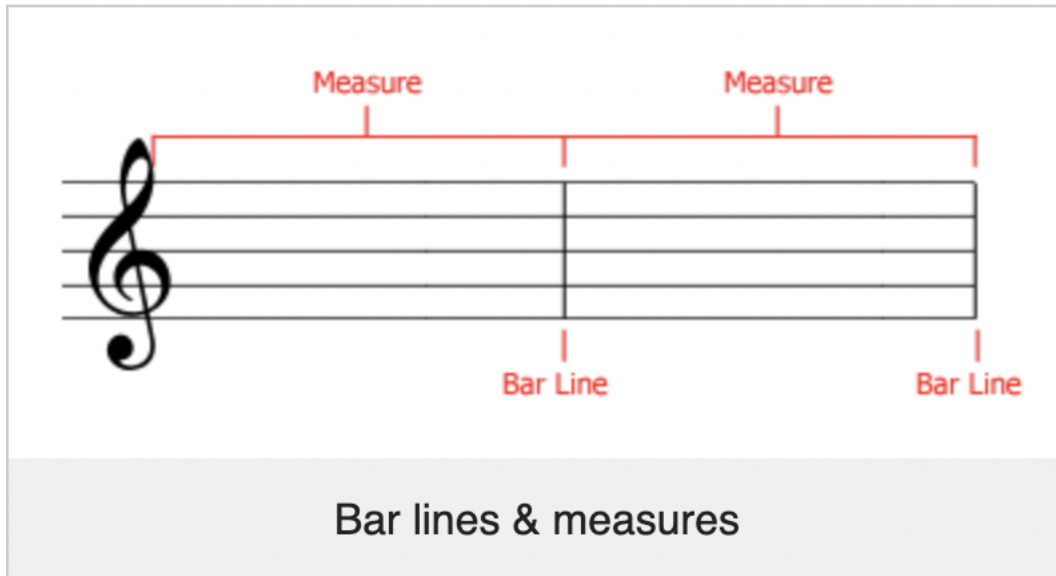
Now it's your turn!

Lesson 4: Understanding Counting, Bars & Measures

Counting is a super important part of music, and in most musical situations counting accurately and staying in time is preferable to playing a billion notes perfectly at all the wrong times!

You may have noticed that at the beginning of all the exercises there are two 4s written on top of one another in the five lines (known as the staff) above the tabs. This is known as a Four Four time signature (Four Four time), and simply means that there are four crotchet or quarter note beats per bar. At this stage in the game we don't need to concern ourselves with crotchets or quarter notes, instead, we focus on the fact that there are four beats in each bar or measure i.e. we count to four in every measure.

The words *bar* and *measure* are interchangeable because they represent the same thing – a group of beats determined by the time signature. The vertical line that dissects the lines we see in the tabs and the staff at regular intervals is called a *bar line*.



In 4/4 time we should count up to four (giving each count an equal length of time) then move to the next bar or measure.

In the following exercises I want you to keep counting as you play from the beginning to the end.

Exercise 4a: Using the numbers

In this exercise you will see I have written the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 above the semibreves.

I will play exercise 4a.

Exercise 4a: Using the numbers

	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

Now it's your turn!.

Exercise 4 b: Removing the numbers

This exercise is identical to 4a, however I have only written beat counts above the first two bars because we want to avoid crowding the score with numbers and symbols.

Try playing all of the bars, counting to four without relying on the numbers above the measures.

I will play exercise 4b.

Lesson 4b: Removing the numbers

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 5: Difficulty with Chords & Chord Changes

Aaaaarrrrrrggggggghhhhhhhh!!!

Nothing causes more frustration to guitarists embarking on their journey than playing chords and chord progressions. Chords contort our fingers into mind-boggling positions, appearing so grotesque and inhuman that we can barely accept our poor little appendages are capable of manoeuvring to, let alone maintaining such unnatural shapes for the duration of a song.

Individual chords are tricky, then we have the unconscionable task of changing chords, compounded by the requirement to change these chords at the correct time! It therefore comes as no surprise that chords, and changing from one chord to another, are the biggest sources of annoyance and resentment when starting out.

Below are several bullet points that will help you to understand why chords and chord changes are so excruciating to a novice:

- Painful
- Enigmatic and unusual
- Difficult to do and remember
- Sound awful when played incorrectly

You may have realised these points combined have a *compounding effect*. Usually playing a chord is painful; chords are mysterious and we simply do not encounter them in normal life; they can be notoriously difficult to remember and even more difficult to play. Finally, there are so many things that can go wrong when we play chords, from putting our fingers on the wrong string and/or fret, to unwittingly deadening strings that should be ringing, or inadvertently playing strings that should be silent.

Here are some tips that can help to alleviate the chordal frustration you may be experiencing:

- Study the chord diagram closely, visualise the chord on the guitar, then attempt
- Rest your fingers and shake out your hand often when learning a new chord
- Commit to memorising the current chord BEFORE learning the next chord
- Know all chords in a progression before playing through the progression
- Seek solace knowing most songs only use three or four chords
- Say the chord's name as you play it
- Change chords without playing (don't strum or pick)

Module 4

Overview

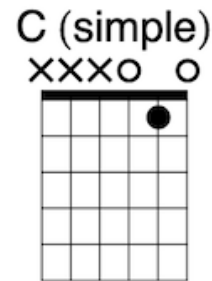
In this module we will learn the C major chord (probably the most played chord in all of history), changing from G major to E minor to C major, the first of three fretting hand principles known as *Preparation*, and how to correctly move the fretting hand fingers and thumb.

Lesson 1: C Major Chord (simple)

The C major chord is made up of three notes – C, E, and G. The version you are learning here is C/G, but for our purposes we'll just call it C (simple).

The C major chord diagram indicates:

- E string open
- B string, 1st fret first finger (C note)
- G string open
- Other strings are not played (X)



Exercise 1: Strumming the C major chord

In this exercise we are going to strum the C major chord several times with either our thumb or a finger.

I will play exercise 1:

Exercise 1: Strumming the C major chord

C (simple)

The image shows musical notation for Exercise 1. It consists of a treble clef staff in 4/4 time, followed by three measures of a C major chord (simple). The first measure is marked with a '1' above the staff, the second with a '2', and the third with a '3'. Below the treble staff is a guitar-specific notation with three lines labeled T (thumb), A (index), and B (middle). The first measure shows '0' on the T line and '1' on the A line. The second measure shows '0' on the T line and '1' on the A line. The third measure shows '0' on the T line and '0' on the A line. The notation ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Now it's your turn!

When we try to play the C major chord quite often the E string will sound muffled. This is usually caused by the underside of your first finger accidentally touching it. Don't burn your guitar or throw it out the window just yet because this can be rectified by moving your thumb into the *Unseen* position before trying again. We may also need to move the fingertip around a little bit to get it into a better position.

Lesson 2: Changing From E Minor (simple) to C Major (simple)

Preparation is a common term used by classical guitarists that refers to hovering our fingers above where they are needed prior to them being used. No fingers are being used when we play an E minor chord which presents the perfect opportunity to prepare the 1st finger above the 1st fret on the B string in anticipation of the C major chord that follows. Preparing our finger(s) in this way allows us to actively predict what is going to happen, prepare for it in advance, thereby increasing the probability of playing the right note(s) on time.

I will play lesson 2:

Lesson 2: Em - C Chord Change

Em (simple) C (simple) Em (simple) C (simple)

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 3: G - Em - C Chord Progression

Now we are adding the G chord to the progression we learned in the previous lesson. Let's play the exercise remembering to keep our fingers close to the fretboard, relax during the E minor, and prepare for the C major.

I will play lesson 3:

Lesson 3: G - Em - C Chord Progression

G (simple) Em (simple) C (simple)

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 4: Basic Hand Position and Picking with Thumb and Fingers

Up until this point we have focused on strumming. Now it is time to move on to picking! Picking opens up a world of possibilities on the guitar that will give you the techniques to play a far wider variety of music and songs. Picking is more challenging than strumming simply because a higher degree of accuracy and control over each finger is required.

A great basic hand position will enable you to produce a better tone more consistently, your fingers will move more easily, which in turn allows you to play for longer while

reducing the chance of pain or developing conditions such as RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury) and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

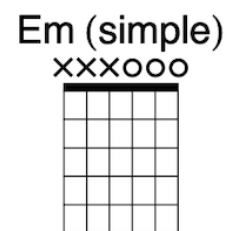
Two fairly simple ideals to strive for are:

1. Flat wrist
2. Straight wrist

Two habits to avoid are:

- Anchoring the chiquito (little finger) on the soundboard
- Anchoring your wrist on the soundboard

I will demonstrate the motion of the thumb and fingers using the E minor chord:



All finger movement begins and is controlled with the large joints of the hand. The following points yield more power, better tone, and less effort during finger movements:

- Thumb moves from its large joint downwards.
- Fingers move from their large joints towards the underside of the palm
- Fingertips relax as they cross the string – just like a paint brush travelling across a canvas
- Visualise all fingers and thumb as a single unit rather than individual digits

Exercise 4a: Picking with Thumb, Index, and Middle using Em

I will play exercise 4a:

Exercise 4a: Picking with Thumb, Index, and Middle using Em

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 4b: Picking with thumb, index, and middle using the G - Em - C chord progression

I will play exercise 4b:

Exercise 4b: Picking with thumb, index, and middle using the G - Em - C chord progression

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. It shows three measures of music, each containing a single chord symbol: G in measure 14, Em in measure 15, and C in measure 16. The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with strings labeled T, A, B. It shows the fretting for each chord: G (3 on D, 0 on others), Em (0 on all), and C (0 on all).

Now it's your turn!

Module 5

Overview

In this module we will learn the final chord in the progression – D7. Learning this chord completes the entire progression. I am not exaggerating when I say that there are hundreds (if not thousands) of famous songs that use this exact chord progression.

Below are just a few examples:

- Unchained Melody by Righteous Brothers
- Stand by Me by Ben. E. King
- Perfect by Ed Sheeran
- I Don't Care by Ed Sheeran and Justin Bieber
- Every breath you take by The Police

We will also learn the second and third fretting hand principles known as *Pivoting* and *Guiding*.

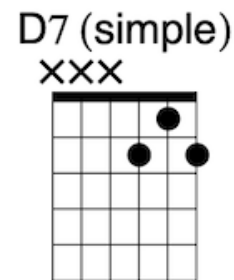
Lastly, we will learn to recognise *minims* or *half notes* and *crotchets* or *quarter notes*.

Lesson 1: D7 Chord

The D7 chord is made up of four notes – D, F#, A, and C. The version you are learning here is D7/A, but for our purposes we'll just call it D7 (simple).

The D7 chord diagram indicates:

- E string, 3rd finger second fret (F# note)
- B string, 1st finger first fret (C note)
- G string, 2nd finger second fret (A note)
- Other strings are not played (X)

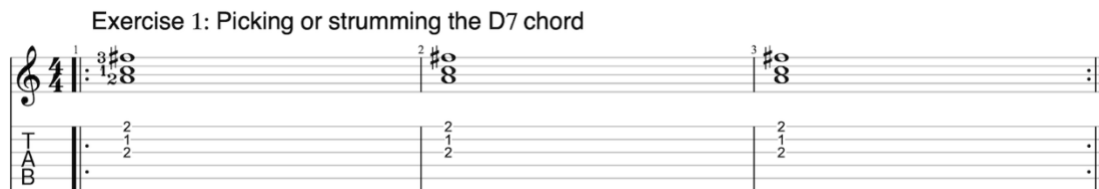


Exercise 1: Picking or Strumming the D7 chord

In this exercise we are going to pick or strum the D7 chord several times using either picking as demonstrated in the previous module or strumming.

I will play exercise 1 strumming first followed by picking:

Exercise 1: Picking or strumming the D7 chord



Now it's your turn!

When we try to play the D7 chord quite often the B string will sound muffled. This is usually caused by the underside of your second finger accidentally touching it. Resist the urge to smash your guitar against a tree just yet because this can be rectified by checking the position of your thumb. Chances are it has slipped into either the Grabber or the Thumbs up position. If it has, move it into the *Unseen* position before trying again. We may also need to move the fingertip of the second finger around a little bit to get it into a better position.

Lesson 2: Pivoting from C Major (simple) to D7 (simple)

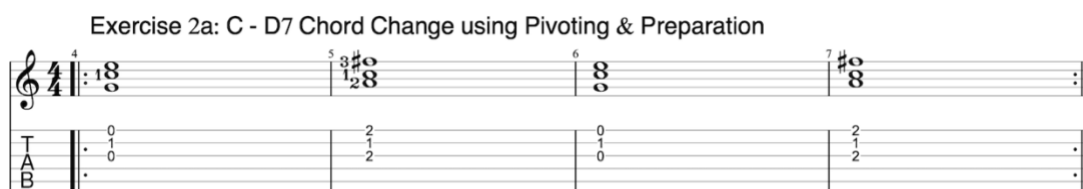
During this lesson we are going to learn the *Pivot* principle. The pivot is probably one of the most underutilised techniques in a guitarists' bag of chord-changing tricks. Chord changes are a huge source of frustration for beginners, yet with pivoting you and I can make chord changes far less stressful and way more fun!

Pivoting is simply keeping a finger or fingers at the same fret and string between chords.

Exercise 2a: C - D7 Chord Change using Pivoting & Preparation

I will play exercise 2a and I want you to observe my 1st finger on the B string 1st fret. It will *pivot* as I change chords from C to D7:

Exercise 2a: C - D7 Chord Change using Pivoting & Preparation



Now it's your turn!

Lesson 3: G - Em - C - D7 - G Chord Progression using Preparation, Pivoting, and Guiding

Now we are adding the D7 chord to the progression we learned in the previous module.

We will also learn to apply the third fretting hand principle of *Guiding*.

Guiding is where we shift a finger along the same string from one chord to another. In this exercise we will guide our 3rd finger on the E string 2nd fret to the 3rd fret when changing from D7 to G. Keep the finger on the string but slightly reduce the pressure to make the guide shift movement easier – voila!

Let's play the exercise remembering the following:

- Flat and straight wrist
- Keep fingers close to frets
- Relax where possible (especially during the E minor)
- Prepare 1st finger for the C chord
- Prepare the 2nd and 3rd fingers for the D7 chord
- Pivot with the 1st finger when changing from C to D7
- Guide with the 3rd finger along the E string from the 2nd fret to the 3rd when changing from D7 to G

I will play lesson 3:

Lesson 3: G - Em - C - D7 - G Chord Progression using Preparation, Pivoting, and Guiding

G (simple) Em (simple) C (simple) D7 (simple) G (simple)

8 9 10 11 12

sl.

TAB

3 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 2 1 2 3 0 0

Now it's your turn!

Phew! Rest assured that all of these things will become very natural as your guitar journey progresses. It may seem overwhelming at first, but you can make it – I know you can.

Lesson 4: Minims/Half Notes & Crotchets/Quarter Notes

In module 3 lesson 4, we learned what a semibreve is. In this lesson we will learn minims and crotchets, otherwise known as half notes and quarter notes respectively.

Minims and crotchets have a head and stem. A minim has a hollow head, whereas a crotchet has a black head. In 4/4 time a minim lasts for two beats and a crotchet lasts for one beat.

I will play lesson 4:

Lesson 4: Minims/Half Notes & Crotchets/Quarter Notes

Semibreve/Whole Note Minim/Half Note Crotchet/Quarter Note

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 5: Counting & Strumming Minims & Crotchets

The exercises presented in this lesson will help you to learn how to count minims and crotchets. The focus is more on counting than getting the up and down strums correct. These exercises can also be picked using P, i, m as learned in module 4 lesson 4 if you're feeling adventurous, however we will cover that in-depth in the next module.

Let's play the exercise remembering the following:

- Use an E minor chord if playing the entire chord progression is too much
- Try tapping the rhythm before attempting to play
- Play and count at the same time
- Have fun

Exercise 5a: Counting indications above all measures

I will play exercise 5a:

Exercise 5a

1 2 3 1 4 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 5b: Counting indication above first two measures only

I will play exercise 5b:

Exercise 5b

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 5c: Counting indication above first measure only

I will play exercise 5c:

Exercise 5c

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 5d: Counting indication removed

I will play exercise 5d (note all counting indications are now gone):

Exercise 5d

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 5e: Start with up strums

I will play exercise 5e:

Exercise 5e

Now it's your turn!

I tend to encourage observations like this in students because it helps them to realise that in some instances playing the guitar is not completely removed and distinct from real-world activities.

Rhythm and Keeping Time are often considered to be synonymous. Although the two are related, they are also inherently different from one another. Rhythm is the overall *'feel'* of a song or piece of music that can be metaphorically viewed as it's *'flavour'*, whereas keeping time is centred on playing notes or *'adding ingredients'* at the right time within the rhythmic context.

Keeping Time when playing a song or exercise is a multifaceted aspect of playing any musical instrument that is made easier with the following:

- Resisting the urge to play *'up to speed'* before you're fully capable of doing so
- Using a metronome to provide the tempo and beats
- Counting along with the metronome
- Playing along with the metronome
- Knowing all chords and changes
- Knowing the time signature

Module 6

Overview

In this module you and I are going to learn the nomenclature of the last three strings, we will learn to anchor the fretting hand fingers and to play the chord progression using picking instead of strumming

Lesson 1: Naming the Last Three Strings

In this lesson we are going to learn the names & numbers of the first last strings on the guitar:

- D, A, E
- 4, 5, 6
- 4th, 5th, 6th

As mentioned in module 1, learning the names and numbers of the strings is beneficial because it allows us to communicate quickly & effectively when transferring information.

I will play lesson 1:

Lesson 1: 4th, 5th, and 6th Open Strings

D 4th string open A 5th string open E 6th string open

T
A
B

0 0 0

Now it's your turn!

I recommend memorising these before moving on to the next lesson.

Exercise 3c: P, m, i, m with open strings

I will play exercise 3c:

Exercise 3c: P, m, i, m with open strings

18 19 20 21 22

p m i m p m i m

TAB

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 3d: P, m, i, m with chords

I will play exercise 3d:

Exercise 3d: P, m, i, m with chords

23 24 25 26 27 28

p m i m p m i m

TAB

Now it's your turn!

I want you to begin exercises 3e – 3f by placing your middle finger on the 1st string and preparing your thumb and index finger above the 2nd and 3rd strings noting:

- Thumb (P) always plays the G string, moving downward from the largest joint
- Index (i) always plays the B string, moving towards the palm from the largest joint
- Middle (m) always plays the E string, moving towards the palm from the largest joint
- Fingertips brush across the strings gently

Exercise 3e: m, i, P, i with open strings

I will play exercise 3e:

Exercise 3e: m, i, P, i with open strings

28 29 30 31 32

TAB

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 3f: m, i, P, i with chords

I will play exercise 3f:

Exercise 3f: m, i, P, i with chords

33 34 35 36 37

m i p i m i p i

TAB

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 4: Information Overload

We live an age where information is more accessible than it has ever been in human history. Whilst this presents unprecedented ways and opportunities to acquire new skills, it also brings difficulties such as determining which information is useful, relevant, and applicable to your situation.

When it comes to learning the guitar the same can be said. Beginning guitarists are confronted with a new language that possess physical, mental, and emotional components.

From the physical side we need to endure pain specifically but not restricted to our fingers, hands, back and shoulders.

From the mental side we need to learn a new written language that has dots, symbols, and foreign words that are specific to music.

From the emotional side we need to manage joy, disappointment, and a raft of other emotions that have a direct influence on motivation levels.

Information management can be improved by:

- Completing modules in the order they are presented
- Finishing this course before starting a new one
- Minimising information from outside sources
- Using the glossary as a quick reference

Module 7

Using The Progression In The Real World

This module is all about applying what you have learned so far to real world songs that many people in the western world are familiar with.

This is where I direct you to the NBN Guitar YouTube channel to further your learning. There you will find a selection of songs that have been specifically created for this course. All of the songs use the G – Em – C – D7 chord progression and the 4/4 time signature. The strumming and finger picking patterns that you have mastered can all be used interchangeably with any of these songs.

A link to the playlist is below:

Now that you are about halfway through I want to offer you words of encouragement to stay the course. I know that at times you may wonder why I ask you to play endless exercises that seem to have no real-world value, and my only answer is that this process is to prepare you in the same way that a mountain climber spends time building their stamina, skills, and experience on smaller hills and mountains before attempting to climb Kilimanjaro or Everest. I leave you with this quote:

“By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail.” – Benjamin Franklin (Founding Father of the United States of America)

Module 8

Overview

In this module you are going to learn your first scale – G major. You will also learn to relate the terms ascending and descending to scales. We will also develop an understanding of rest strokes, free strokes or apoyando and tirando. We will also use the annular finger for the first time.

Lastly, we will begin using the 4th finger of the fretting hand.

Lesson 1: Open Strings First Octave

I will play the first octave of the G major scale with P (Thumb)

When we are confronted with something complex and new it can seem overwhelming and impossible. In this sense the guitar is no different. Scales and scale passages (long runs in music that use scales) appear completely beyond our ability to decipher and play. Enter open strings to save the day!

I learned many years ago that it is often easier to separate tricky challenges on the guitar into the right hand and the left hand. In this instance we are going to simply play open strings instead of trying to learn everything at once.

The G major scale over the first octave ascending and descending has the following:

- E string – one note
- A string – three notes
- D string – three notes
- G string – one note (for now)

That was ascending. This is descending (the reverse of ascending)

- G string – one note
- D string - three notes
- A string – three notes
- E string – one note

If we look through lesson 1 we can see how this appears in tab and notation.

I will play lesson 1:

Lesson 1: Open Strings First Octave

Anchor i & m fingers

1 2 3 4

p p p p

TAB

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Now it's your turn.

Don't forget to anchor i and m on the first two strings as indicated in the score and play the notes with P.

Lesson 2: G Major Scale with Preferred Fingering

Now it is time to introduce the fretting hand to the action! In the score you can see that we will be using the 4th finger for the very first time. Typically, we are reluctant to use the 4th finger because it is very weak and we seem to get through life just fine without using it.

If using the 4th finger is too much at this stage you can use alternative fingering suggested in exercise 2b instead, because it accomplishes the same thing using the first three fingers, but it will introduce an avoidable position shift when we come to the second octave.

Technical points to note:

- Keep i & m anchored on the first two strings
- Move the thumb downwards toward the ground
- Keep your fingering thumb in one position (resist the urge to move it)
- Keep the hand very steady
- Wrists flat and straight
- Go slow and plan ahead

Exercise 2a: G Major Scale with preferred fingering (first octave)

I will play exercise 2a:

Exercise 2a: G Major Scale with preferred fingering (first octave)

5 6 7 8

TAB

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

Ascending:

- E string 3rd finger third fret
- A string open; 2nd finger second fret; 3rd finger third fret
- D string open; 2nd finger second fret; 4th finger fourth fret (new note F#/F sharp)
- G string open

Descending:

- G string open
- D string 4th finger fourth fret; 2nd finger second fret; open
- A string 3rd finger third fret; 2nd finger second fret; open
- E string 3rd finger third fret

When playing this scale we assign one finger to each fret. This means the 1st finger is plays any notes on the 1st fret of any string; the second finger play any notes on the 2nd fret of any string; the third fingers plays any notes on the 3rd fret of any string; and the 4th finger plays any notes on the 4th fret of any string.

This approach aims at minimising moving our hand unnecessarily. Remember we're aiming to be lazy so don't move if you don't have to!

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 2b: G Major Scale with alternative fingering (first octave)

This exercise is exactly the same as exercise 2a however we are using different fingers to fret the notes of the scale.

I will play exercise 2b using alternative fingering:

Exercise 2b: G Major Scale with alternative fingering (first octave)

The notation shows the G Major Scale with alternative fingering (first octave) in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff shows the notes: G2 (open), A2 (open), B2 (open), C3 (2nd fret), D3 (3rd fret), E3 (4th fret), F#3 (5th fret), G3 (5th fret), A3 (4th fret), B3 (3rd fret), C4 (2nd fret), D4 (1st fret), E4 (open), F#4 (2nd fret), G4 (3rd fret). The guitar tablature staff shows the fret numbers for each string: E (3, 0, 2, 3), A (0, 2, 4, 0), D (0, 4, 2, 0), G (3, 2, 0, 3). The notation includes fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and fret numbers (0, 2, 3, 4, 5) for each note.

Ascending:

- E string 2nd finger third fret
- A string open; 1st finger second fret; 2nd finger third fret
- D string open; 1st finger second fret; 3rd finger fourth fret
- G string open

Descending:

- G string open
- D string 3rd finger fourth fret; 1st finger second fret; open
- A string 2nd finger third fret; 1st finger second fret; open
- E string 2nd finger third fret

This fingering option is perfectly acceptable and it is important to note that it is merely an alternative to the suggested fingering in exercise 2a. There may be instances where this is the best way to finger the scale – it depends on the situation. My reason for having a preference is because I want you to start using the 4th finger; the more it used the stronger and more accurate it becomes.

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 2c: G Major Scale First Octave Progressive

This exercise is the longest so far and poses a couple of neat challenges.

- Memory. There's a lot going on here to push your memory along because we are constantly ascending and descending incrementally
- Stamina. The length of this lesson keeps your fingers active for quite some time
- Rhythm. There are seventeen bars to read that are constantly changing the grouping of the minims and crotchets
- Tab/Music reading. Eighteen bars will force you to read the music

I will play exercise 2c:

Exercise 2c: G Major Scale First Octave Progressive

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 3: Open Strings Second Octave

Now it is time to learn the second octave of the G major scale.

I will play the second octave of the G major scale with the index, middle, and annular fingers.

Exercise 3a: Open Strings Second Octave
Circled numbers followed with lines indicate which string the notes are on

Let's take a quick look at the score because there is a new symbol which is a circled number followed by broken lines. This simply represents which string to play if you are reading notation. Because we are using the tabs this symbology is unnecessary, however when reading notation it is often used to aid the guitarist because the lines in the musical staff do not represent strings.

Seeing these symbols gradually builds your awareness of the many musical symbols that are used in both tablature and notation. Even though you may not need them yet, they may come in handy in the future should you delve deeper into playing and reading music.

As we did in exercise 2a we shall first try the new octave with open strings before introducing the fingering.

Exercise 3a: Open Strings Second Octave

In this exercise we assign one picking finger to each string:

- Index to the G string
- Middle to the B string
- Annular to the E string

Before playing rest each finger on its respective string, then lift slightly and hold until you begin to play. The annular finger moves exactly the same way as the index and middle fingers upwards towards the palm with a relaxed fingertip.

Relax your picking fingers immediately after they've played each note and return them to their original position as quickly as possible.

Remember to keep your fingering thumb in one position behind the neck – don't move it if you don't have to.

I will play exercise 3a:

- G string open two times with index
- B string open three times with middle
- E string open three times with annular

That was ascending. This is descending (the reverse of ascending)

- E string open three times with annular
- B string open three times with middle
- G string open two times with index

Exercise 3a: Open Strings Second Octave
 Circled numbers followed with lines indicate which string the notes are on

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 3b: G Major Scale Second Octave with Fingering

I will play exercise 3b introducing the fingering:

- G string open; 2nd finger second fret
- B string open; 1st finger first fret; 3rd finger third fret
- E string open
- E string 2nd finger second fret; 3rd finger third fret; 2nd finger second fret; open
- B string 3rd finger third fret; 1st finger first fret; B string open
- G string 2nd finger second fret; open

Exercise 3b: G Major Scale Second Octave with Fingering

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 3c: G Major Scale Second Octave Progressive

This exercise is very similar to exercise 2 and poses similar challenges:

- Memory. There's a lot going on here to push your memory along because we are constantly ascending and descending incrementally
- Stamina. The length of this lesson keeps your fingers active for quite some time
- Rhythm. There are seventeen bars to read that are constantly changing the grouping of the minims and crotchets
- Tab/Music reading. Eighteen bars will force you to read the music

I will play exercise 3c:

Exercise 3c: G Major Scale Second Octave Progressive

The score is in 4/4 time and consists of 18 bars. It is presented in four systems, each with a musical staff and a guitar tablature staff. The tablature staffs are labeled T, A, and B. The first system covers bars 39-42, the second covers bars 43-47, the third covers bars 48-52, and the fourth covers bars 53-56. The music is a progressive scale starting on G4 and ending on G5.

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 4: G Major Scale Two Octaves

The time has arrived to join both of these scales together into a single two octave scale. This scale covers two octaves which means we will be playing all of the strings for the first time.

Points to note:

- Thumb plays all notes on the 6th, 5th, and 4th strings
- Index plays all notes on the G string
- Middle plays all notes on the B string
- Annular play all notes on the E string

Lesson 6: Lack of Progress

Progress is defined as *‘the process of gradually improving or getting nearer to achieving or completing something’*.

Applying this definition to the pursuit of learning to play guitar is problematic for several reasons. Namely, studying guitar is, in most instances, a very private affair. We tend to practice in the confines of a bedroom or living room, often alone, without constant guidance from a teacher or mentor. This in itself means that we often have to gauge and measure our own progress, which is something we may never have done in our entire lives up to that point. Also, as a beginner, how do you know if you are making any progress at all? There are no tests, very little if any accountability to anyone, and generally no requirement to excel for any other reason than personal satisfaction.

Because of this somewhat unique situation I propose using each lesson in each module as a means of measuring your progress. Your progress can be measured in terms of outcomes. Knowing the outcome of each module clearly will be an invaluable tool to keeping track of your progress as a guitarist and a musician.

Let us use Module 2 as an example of using the **S.M.A.R.T** set of criteria, viz:

- **Specific.** I will play the G major chord beautifully, from memory
- **Measurable.** I can listen to it being played by Josh, then compare it with my performance
- **Achievable.** Although this stretches my ability I can do it because it only requires one finger and an easy strum
- **Realistic.** I know the names of the first three strings and I my fingers are capable of this
- **Time-bound.** I can do this by Monday next week because I have 3 x 15 minute practice sessions scheduled before then to learn the G major chord

In addition to the above, the following are also able to expediate progress:

- Play your guitar regularly
- Use the exercises in Module 16 as a warm up before you start practicing
- Practice chords, scales, and the dexterity and stretching exercises to ensure your body, hands, and fingers are challenged by, and exposed to many different angles, positions, and pressure differentials

Module 9

Topics for Discussion

Lesson 1: The Importance of Routine

I would like you to think of routine like the sun rising and setting. In the past I would have used tv programme schedules, however with the advent of binge watching entire seasons of shows provided by streaming services, it no longer seems appropriate.

Routine gives us and those around us stability, and it enables us to plan out parts of our lives with relative certainty. Routines also set boundaries for others to respect. If your friends and family know your routine they'll respect it more often than not because it also represents some form of discipline.

Routine essentially shows the world that you're serious about something – in this case it's the GUITAR!

Lesson 2: Listening for Guitar in Songs

Even though the guitar is not heard as often as it once was in popular music, it is still one of the world's most accessible and loved instruments. The electric guitar gained immense popularity in the 1950s and from that time until the late 1990s it was not uncommon for most bands to have a guitarist or two. The guitar and the piano are the primary instruments used by musicians to compose music because they are polyphonic, which simply means they can play a lot of notes at the same time.

This means you and I have many chances to hear the guitar in songs, especially songs in genres such as folk, rock, jazz, and metal. Metal and rock are not metal and rock without distorted guitar riffs and soaring guitar solos played on V-shaped guitars slung low and loud. Folk music is often characterised by a casually dressed boy or girl next door type playing their acoustic guitar and singing; smoke-filled jazz bars pulse with the sound of hollow-body electric guitars sharing a sonic stage with pianos and double basses.

Listen carefully to music to see if there's a guitar in there somewhere, and seek solace knowing that even if there isn't you can still play it on guitar.

Lesson 3: Finding a Role Model

Finding people we look up to and respect in the guitar world is a good thing. They can be a constant source of inspiration and strength during our journey. My role models were Joe Satriani, John Williams, and Julian Bream. To this day I still sometimes imagine them sitting in the audience or looking over my shoulder when I'm practicing, encouraging and guiding me through exercises and pieces.

The world's best musician's always have someone that they cite as being a role model. Sometimes it was someone that they knew very intimately, or sometimes they were no more than a poster on a wall and a cassette tape in a stereo.

Find your role models, but remember to bring your own sound to the mix.

Lesson 4: Taking your Guitar Everywhere

I take my guitar almost everywhere I go. I've been doing that since I started playing. Whenever I go on trips one of the first things I sort out is which guitar I'm taking and how I'm going to travel with it. I'm writing this in a small room in Korea and a guitar is right beside me on the bed!

My guitar has been with me in planes, train, and automobiles. I also had my guitar on my back during my bike ride from Petone to Victoria university in Wellington, New Zealand regularly when I was studying music. When a tailwind was blowing the guitar acted like a musical sail propelling me towards my uni guitar lessons at allegro speeds, but when it was a headwind the tempo and effort required was very different indeed. My Ibanez PGM30's neck was broken when I fell off a scooter in Bali on my way home from a gig at a club called La Vida Loca right on the beach. Thankfully a local guitar luthier wizard was able to replace it the next day without too much hassle.

Take your guitar to work, throw it into your car when you're going somewhere, take it to the park or the beach, play it in the stairwell, play it in bed, play it to your animals.

I'll leave you with a line from the movie Backdraft starring Kurt Russel. I imagine my guitar saying this to me if I'm walking out the door without it:

"You go, we go".

Lesson 5: Happy Accidents versus Mistakes

My wife introduced me to Bob Ross years ago, and some people that have watched my YouTube videos reckoned I sounded like him and give off a similar vibe. I'm not sure if that's true or not, but what I can say is that he has an endearing approach to teaching people how to paint. His calm demeanour and soothing voice is full of encouragement and makes us believe that we can all paint and create like he can.

During one of his episodes he said "There are no mistakes, only happy accidents." I thought that was absolute gold. Those few words give us the courage to just keep on going even when we sound terrible and our fingers feel like they're glued together. Happy accidents is a sublime phrase to conjure up when nothing seems to be going right on the six-stringed box of joy...

Module 10

Overview

In this module we will learn alternate picking with the index and middle fingers using the G major scale over two octaves.

Lesson 1: Alternate Picking

Alternate picking is simply walking with your fingers just like a person walks with two legs. It is far more efficient than trying to rapidly pick notes with the same finger and will ultimately result in you becoming a far better guitarist that is capable of playing an extremely broad range of music.

The most common form of alternate picking is index to middle and vice versa. It looks something like this – *i m i m i m* or *m i m i m i*. More advanced players will alternate between other fingers such as *m a* or *i a*. It is also possible to alternate between a finger or fingers and thumb as we will see in module 12.

Famous players that use alternate picking are Mark Knopfler (Dire Straits), Lindsay Buckingham (Fleetwood Mac), Ritchie Kotzen, and Mateus Mancuso. Bass players often favour alternate over using a pick. I don't know why this is but as a guess I think it's because of the greater distance between the strings.

Exercise 1a: Alternate Picking i, m (m, i)

This exercise allows you to practice alternate picking without the added stress of trying to finger notes with the fretting hand at the same time. It uses a simple pattern of four notes per string. I suggest beginning with the index finger completing the exercise, then repeat it beginning with the middle finger.

I will play exercise 1a alternating index to middle:

- G string open four times
- B string open four times
- E string open four times
- B string open four times
- G string open four times

Exercise 1a: Alternate picking i, m
Repeat with m, i

T
A
B

Now it's your turn!

Repeat starting with the middle finger.

Exercise 1b: G major scale alternate picking open strings i, m (m, i)

This exercise is the same as above, however this time we are playing the open strings exactly as we learned them in module 8 lesson 3a.

I will play exercise 1b, alternating index to middle:

- G string open two times
- B string open three times
- E string open five times
- B string open three times
- G string open two times

Exercise 1b: G major scale alternate picking open strings i, m

Repeat with m, i



Now it's your turn!

Repeat starting with the middle finger.

Exercise 1c: G major scale with fingering second octave i, m (m, i)

The fingering is introduced in this exercise. This can be quite a massive leap in terms of technical challenges so go slow, plan ahead, and if it is too difficult head back to the previous lesson and module 8 lesson 3c until you are confident to return to this exercise.

I will play exercise 1c alternating index to middle:

- G string open; 2nd finger second fret
- B string open; 1st finger first fret; 3rd finger third fret
- E string open; 2nd finger second fret; 3rd finger third fret; 2nd finger second fret; open
- B string 3rd finger third fret; 1st finger first fret; open
- G string 2nd finger second fret; open

Exercise 1c: G major scale with fingering second octave

Repeat with m, i



Now it's your turn!

Repeat starting with the middle finger.

Lesson 2: G Major Scale Alternate Picking First Octave

The time has arrived to play the first octave using alternate picking.

There is an extremely important technique to note in this lesson.

- Rotation. Rotate the wrist towards the bridge when playing the wound strings (the strings with metal wrapped around them) to minimise the 'scraping' sound produced by the nail dragging across the metal windings

If you are playing without fingernails this won't be a concern, however if you are using nails you will notice that when you pick the wound strings the nail scrapes across the strings creating an undesirable sound. When we arrive at the unwound strings we can straighten the wrist again.

Exercise 2a: Alternate picking i, m

This lesson involves alternate picking on the wound strings for the first time.

- Arcing. As you move from the 6th string to the 1st string and back to the 6th string your forearm should move in an *arc* that rotates from the elbow. This motion provides a very smooth transition through the strings

Avoid pumping your entire forearm forwards like a piston or a punch. This is a very unpredictable and unstable way of moving the hand from string to string that is likely to cause many unnecessary mistakes.

I will play exercise 2a alternating index to middle:

- E string open four times
- A string open four times
- D string open four times
- G string open four times
- B string open four times
- E string open four times
- B string open four times
- G string open four times
- D string open four times
- A string open four times
- E string open four times

Exercise 2a: Alternate picking i, m

Repeat with m, i

14 15 16 17

18 19 20 21

22 23 24

Now it's your turn!

Repeat starting with the middle finger.

Exercise 2b: G major scale alternate picking open strings i, m (m, i)

I will play exercise 2b alternating index to middle:

- E string once
- A string three times
- D string three times
- G string once
- D string three times
- A string three times
- E string once

Exercise 2b: G major scale alternate picking open strings i, m

Repeat with m, i

25 26 27 28

Now it's your turn!

Repeat starting with the middle finger.

Exercise 2c: G major scale with fingering first octave

I will play exercise 2c:

- E string 3rd finger third fret
- A string open; 2nd finger second fret; 3rd finger third fret
- D string open; 2nd finger second fret; 4th finger fourth fret; 2nd finger second fret; open
- A string 3rd finger third fret; 2nd finger second fret; open
- E string 3rd finger third fret

Exercise 2c: G major scale with fingering first octave

Repeat with m, i

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 3: G Major Scale Two Octaves with i, m (m, i)

I will play lesson 3 alternating index to middle:

- E string 3rd finger third fret
- A string open; 2nd finger second fret; 3rd finger third fret
- D string open; 2nd finger second fret; 4th finger fourth fret
- G string open; 2nd finger second fret
- B string open; 1st finger first fret; 3rd finger 3rd fret
- E string open; 2nd finger second fret; 3rd finger third fret; 2nd finger second fret; open
- B string 3rd finger third fret; 2nd finger second fret; open
- G string 2nd finger second fret; open
- D string 4th finger fourth fret; 2nd finger second fret; open
- A string 3rd finger third fret; 2nd finger second fret; open
- E string 3rd finger third fret

Exercise 3: G Major Scale Two Octaves with i, m

Repeat with m, i

33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40

TAB

Now it's your turn!

Repeat starting with the middle finger.

Many musicians practice scales as part of their daily routine as a warm up or simply to develop their technique and/or theory knowledge. Scales and arpeggios have been and continue to be one of the best ways to build finger strength, callouses, and dexterity on any instrument, with the guitar being no exception. As such, I urge you to incorporate the exercises in this module into your routine.

Module 11

Overview

In this module you are going to learn your first song – Ode to Joy by Ludwig van Beethoven. You will also learn what a key signature is, sharp and natural signs, 1st and 2nd time symbols, quavers or eighth notes, and the effect of a dot behind a note.

On top of this you will also learn the A7 chord and how to play along or accompany someone by learning two different guitar parts for Ode to Joy.

Lesson 1: Ode To Joy

I will play lesson 1 to give you an opportunity to hear how it sounds:

Lesson 1: Ode to Joy

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13.

This lesson is jam packed (excuse the pun) with new and exciting material.

Believe it or not there are no new notes in this piece! You have played all of these in the G major scale many times before. Now, we finally get to use them to play an actual piece of music for the first time!

Before we dive in let's take a look at the new symbols starting with the # sign to the left of the 4/4 time signature at the beginning. This indicates a key signature of either G major or E minor. In this instance the key is G major. Because we are focused on reading tablature in this course this won't mean much, however if we read the notation the key signature shows us that every F is an F sharp (F#).

Sharpening a note raises it in pitch by a semitone (module 8 lesson 5). On the guitar it means moving it along the fretboard by one fret i.e. F is on the 1st fret of the E string, but if it is sharpened it moves to the 2nd fret on the E string and is called F sharp (F#). You

may recall that in the G major scale we have notes on the E string 2nd fret and D string 4th fret, both of which are F sharps. If you go back and have a look in module 8's notation you will see the # symbol in front of the notes indicating that the notes are raised by a semitone.

The reason they have sharp symbols in front of them in module eight is because the F# is absent from the key signature. If I had placed it there, the # signs in front of the F notes would have been unnecessary. From this you may deduce that using key signatures can greatly simplify notation by removing the need for sharp signs all over the score, however key signatures have no effect in tablature.

Exercise 1a: Recognise 1st & 2nd Time Repeats

Two identical new symbols are the 1st and 2nd time repeat marks above measures four and five. They indicate the first time playing through and the second time playing through. As we play through the first time we play bar four and then return to bar one, however after playing bar three we skip bar four and proceed to bar five which is the 2nd time through. Using these repeat indications simplifies scores considerably and probably saved a lot of ink, paper, and time back in the day.

I will play through exercise 1a so you can see the effect of the first and second time repeat indications:

Exercise 1a: Recognise 1st & 2nd Time Repeats

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 1b: Dotted Crotchet/Dotted Quarter Note

The next symbol in bar five is a *dotted crotchet/ dotted quarter note*. The *dot* behind the note head simply adds on half of what the notes' original value is to the note. A crotchet is worth one beat, the dot adds half a beat, so the resulting dotted crotchet's new value is one and a half beats. Look above the notes in bar five and you will see that I have added plus symbols between the regular 1 2 3 4 beat indications. These are to aid you when counting. Say "And" whenever you see a plus symbol:

- 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +)

Each "and" falls on a half beat, therefore the first note in bar five is counted:

- 1 and 2 (this is a total of one and a half beats)

I will play exercise 1b to provide you with an opportunity to hear dotted crotchets/dotted quarter notes being counted:

Exercise 1b: Dotted Crotchet/Quarter Note

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 1c: Quaver and Beamed Quavers

The next new symbol is a new type of note called an *eight note* or a *quaver* and it has a head, stem, and tail. A crotchet has a black head and is identical to a quaver except the quaver has a cute little tail at the end of the stem. In 4/4 time a crotchet lasts for one beat whereas a quaver lasts for half a beat.

I will play exercise 1c to give you an opportunity to hear the quaver being counted:

Exercise 1c: Quaver and Beamed Quavers

Now it's your turn!

The final new symbol are is the *beam* that join two quavers together in bars seven and eight on beat two of each bar. *Beams* join notes to make them easier to read by grouping them together.

I will play exercise 1c again focusing on the two pairs of beamed quavers:

Exercise 1c: Quaver and Beamed Quavers

Now it's your turn...again!

Let's learn the whole piece.

Now, I will teach you the entire piece note by note by going through **lesson 1** one note at a time.

Before we start apply these technical fundamentals:

- Keep fingering thumb in one position for the entire song
- Position fingers as close to the frets as possible
- Relax completely when the opportunity arises
- Keep your fingers close to the strings

All notes are quarter notes played once unless indicated otherwise:

- B string open two times; 1st finger first fret; 3rd finger third fret two times; 1st finger first fret; open
- G string 2nd finger second fret; open two times; 2nd finger second fret;
- B string open; open
- G string 2nd fret second finger; 2nd fret second finger

Repeat from the beginning (bar 1 to 3)

- **Skip to bar 5** observing the 2nd time repeat
- G string 2nd fret second finger; open two times

Bar 6 onwards:

- G string 2nd fret second finger two times
- B string open
- G string open; G string 2nd fret second finger
- B string open; 1st fret first finger; open

- G string open; 2nd fret second finger
- B string open; 1st fret first finger; open
- G string 2nd fret second finger; open; 2nd fret second finger
- D string open
- B string open two times; 1st finger first fret; 3rd finger third fret two times; 1st finger first fret; open
- G string 2nd finger second fret; open two times; 2nd finger second fret;
- B string open
- G string 2nd fret second finger; open two times

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 1: Ode to Joy

I strongly suggest using the score to learn this rather than listening to me teach it note by note for the simple fact that it may be easy to lose track of where you are when I am speaking.

Lesson 2: G - D7 Chord Change

Although we are familiar with both of these chords they have not been played in this order before. Our chord progression has C – D7, not G to D7. Therefore we need to practice this change so that we are well prepared to provide chordal accompaniment when someone else is playing the Ode to Joy melody.

Guide and preparation principles are here:

- 3rd finger guides back and forth along the E string between the 3rd and 2nd frets
- 1st and 2nd fingers prepare in advance for the D7 chord

I will play lesson 2:

- E string 3rd fret 3rd finger
- B string open
- G string open

Guide 3rd finger and prepare 1st and 2nd fingers for the D7 chord

- E string 2nd fret third finger (guide)
- B string 1st fret first finger (prepared during G chord)
- G string 2nd fret second finger (prepared during G chord)

This chord change introduces the first true position change unless you chose the alternative fingering for module 8 when playing the second octave. Prepare to move your thumb back and forth along the neck when shifting between these two chords. Only move it sideways a little bit, not up and down!

I will play lesson 2 again to demonstrate the thumb movement as we change back and forth between the two chords:

Lesson 2: G to D7 Chord Change

Now it's your turn!

Repeat the lesson as many times as necessary.

Note: There is an alternative to moving the thumb that involves playing the G chord with the 4th finger instead of the 3rd, and playing the D7 chord with the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd fingers. Attempting this alternative is entirely up to you.

I will play lesson 2 showing this alternative approach:

- E string 3rd fret fourth finger
- B string open
- G string open

Prepare 1st, 2nd, and 3rd fingers for the D7 chord as usual

Now it's your turn.

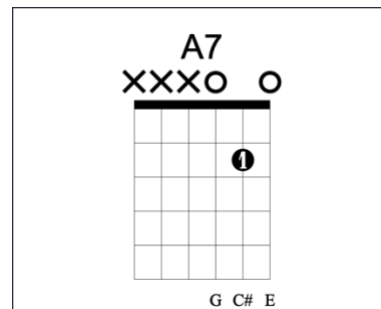
Lesson 3: A7 - D7 Chord Changes, C Natural & Repeat Two Bars Symbols

It is time to learn the A7 chord

The A7 chord is made up of four notes – A, C#, E, and G. The version you are learning here is A7/G, but for our purposes we'll just call it A7.

The A7 chord diagram indicates:

- E string open
- B string, 2nd fret first finger (C# note)
- G string open
- Other strings are not played (X)



The A7 chord comes after the E minor chord which means we should prepare the 1st finger above the 2nd fret on the B string during the E minor.

I will play lesson 3 to demonstrate the preparation of the 1st finger:

Lesson 3: A7 - D7 Chord Changes, C Natural & Repeat Two Bars Symbols

Now it's your turn!

Next comes the change from A7 to D7. This involves guiding the 1st finger from the 2nd fret on the B string to the 1st fret, and during the A7 we should begin preparing the 2nd and 3rd fingers for the D7.

I will play lesson 3 to demonstrate the guiding and preparation from A7 to D7:

Lesson 3: A7 - D7 Chord Changes, C Natural & Repeat Two Bars Symbols

Now it's your turn!

Bar 38 has a new symbol known as a *natural*. You can see in the score that it occurs in the D7 chord after the A7 chord. A *natural* symbol neutralises the effect of a sharp or a flat. In this case the C# from the A7 chord becomes C natural in the D7 chord. When sharps are neutralised the note is lowered in pitch by a semitone (one fret) – C sharp to C natural (B string 2nd fret to 1st fret)

Special Note * *Lesson 3 outlines an important discipline when learning a new piece. This discipline involves isolating the most difficult parts of songs or pieces, determining why they are difficult, and subsequently developing a method that will ensure success when you reach those measures.*

In this song I know that *the most difficult bars are bars six to nine*. These bars have beamed quavers, chord changes that occur every two beats, a new chord, and chord changes that we have not seen before. All of these things add up to making this part quite a workout when compared to the rest of the piece.

I strongly urge you to look through tablature, sheet music, or chord charts of new songs and pieces before you play or as you're playing through it slowly. Take note of the hard parts, work out why they're hard, then isolate and spend more time perfecting those measures.

This may be a good time to head back to module one's section explaining the 80:20 rule.

By adopting this approach you will become a much better player in a shorter amount of time.

Lesson 4: G, D7, Em & A7 Chordal Accompaniment

In this lesson we will learn and practice the harder chord changes in Ode to Joy. We will be using guiding and preparation to help us through.

I will play lesson 4:

Lesson 4: G, D7, Em & A7 Chordal Accompaniment

1 2 3 4

1. 1 2 3 4

G D7 G D7

41 42 43 44

i *m*

2. 1 2 + 3 4 1 2 + 3 4

D7 G D7 G D7 G D7 Em D7 D7

45 46 47 48 49

G D7 G D7 G

50 51 52 53

1 + 2 + 3 4

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 5: Learning & Playing Two Different Guitar Parts for Ode to Joy

In this lesson we will be learning about accompanying another player in the same song. As most of us know songs usually have more than one instrument playing because more instruments tend to make music sound fuller and richer. In light of this we will assign the melody of Ode to Joy to guitar 1, and the chordal accompaniment (chords) to guitar 2.

Backing tracks for each guitar part are in the lesson so that you can practice playing along with them. If you have a friend that can play, teach them both guitar parts and then you can jam along together – honestly it doesn't get much better than making music with another person!

Exercise 5a: You play the Melody (guitar 1)

I will play exercise 5a:

Exercise 5a: You play the Melody (guitar 1)

Chords: G, D7, G, D7, D7, G, D7, Em, A7, D7, G, D7, G

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 5b: You play the Chords (guitar 2)

I will play exercise 5b:

Exercise 5b: You play the Chords (guitar 2)

Chords: G, D7, G, D7, D7, G, D7, D7, G, D7, G

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 6: Reading Music & Tablature

This is directly related to information overload.

As children we grow up learning to read, write, and speak as part of our existence. We seldom (if ever) think of it consciously during our journey to adolescence and adulthood. This is why children seem to pick up reading & playing music more easily than adults if both playing and theory are taught at the same time. They simply accept it as an integral part of their musical odyssey, and do not generally differentiate between the two i.e. playing and theory.

Older learners are capable of differentiating between the two quite easily, and thus are able to figure out relatively quickly that the guitar can be played to a very high level without any musical theory at all. This is why we see many players that can play extremely well without being able to read a single note of music or tablature.

The approach I present in the course is one of *combinations* that I learned from my first guitar teacher. He taught me how to read music, music theory and playing, by combining all three elements into a song or exercise. It never dawned on me that I could learn the guitar without reading music and chord diagrams because it all seemed inextricably woven into one musical whole.

I encourage you to look at reading music & tablature through a long-term lens, and answer the following questions referencing the benefits of knowing the language or languages you currently speak and write:

- What are the advantages of learning to read music and tablature?
- Why is learning to read any language (not just music) beneficial?
- What will being able to read music/tabs enable me to do?

Module 12

Overview

In this module will learn how to play a piece of music called Malagueña Facil, two new notes on the 6th string, the 3/4 time signature, a bit of theory called inverted pedal point, and how to play confidently with other musicians.

Lesson 1: 3/4 Time Signature, Repeat One Bar Symbol, G# & F

I will start this lesson by playing through Malagueña Facil.

In this lesson we encounter a new time signature 3/4. This is known as the Three Four time signature, and simply means that there are three crotchet or quarter note beats per bar. In 4/4 we counted to four in every bar; now we will only count to three.

I will play lesson one to demonstrate (try counting along with me):

Lesson 1: 3/4 Time Signature, Repeat One Bar Symbol, G# & F

1 2 3

2 3 4 5

TAB

0 4 2 0 3 2 0 3 1 0

In bar one you may notice the second note is a new note known as G#, played on the E string 4th fret with the fourth finger. This G# can feel quite uncomfortable to play because it forces the fretting hand upwards and the thumb downwards. If you haven't been practicing the Unseen thumb position from module 1, playing the new G# with the fourth finger may cause a few issues.

Here are a few tips:

- Keep your thumb in the Unseen position
- Maintain all fingers in an upright position
- Hold all fingers as close to the E and A strings as you can
- Keep your hand as steady as possible
- Prepare fingers above notes before you have to play them

All of these tips will give you the greatest chance of playing Malaguena really well with the least amount of effort in the long run.

Now, I will teach you the bass line in lesson 1, one note at a time:

- E open; 4th fret fourth finger (G#)
- A string 2nd fret second finger

Play this two times, then:

- A string open; 3rd fret third finger; 2nd fret second finger; open
- E string 3rd fret third finger; 1st fret first finger (F)

Lesson 1: 3/4 Time Signature, Repeat One Bar Symbol, G# & F

1 2 3 2 3 4 5

Now it's your turn!

Two of the reasons for introducing this piece to you is to encourage holding your hand in the best position while using all four fingers.

In bar two there is a new symbol which simply means repeat the preceding bar. This means bar two is exactly the same as bar one in every way. In bar four there is a new note known as F, played on the E string 1st fret with the first finger.

I will play the lesson again to demonstrate:

Lesson 1: 3/4 Time Signature, Repeat One Bar Symbol, G# & F

1 2 3 2 3 4 5

As you can see we should anchor *i* and *m* on the first two strings, playing all bass notes with *P* (thumb). From this point forward all notes that are played with the thumb will be referred to as bass notes because they sound quite deep and are played on the strings that are often called bass strings (even though they're not on a bass guitar).

- Anchor index and middle on the first two strings
- Play all notes with the thumb

I will play lesson 1 again:

Lesson 1: 3/4 Time Signature, Repeat One Bar Symbol, G# & F

1 2 3

1 2 3 4 5

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 2: Counting & Inverted Pedal Point

This lesson introduces playing the guitar in a way that most of us find quite intoxicating and thrilling because for the first time we are creating the illusion of two guitars playing at the same time, when in reality it's just one!

Before we get to that we do need to learn how to count Malaguena. By following the score you will see that in-between each bass note there is an open E quaver. Each bass note appears on count 1 2 3, whereas each open E appears on the + or *ands*.

I will play lesson 2 to demonstrate the counting:

Lesson 2: Counting and Inverted Pedal Point

1 + 2 + 3 +

6 7 8 9 10

Now it's your turn!

This compositional technique is known as *inverted pedal point*. It sounds fancy but all it really means is that there is one note that stays constant while other notes change around it. If the notes that are changing are lower in pitch than the pedal (the note that doesn't change) it is said to be *inverted pedal point*. If the notes that are changing are higher in pitch than the pedal is it simply *pedal point*. The term pedal point originates with the organ and its ability to sustain notes indefinitely using the pedal keyboard located at the players' feet. The Swedish neoclassical guitarist Yngwie Malmsteen has great examples of pedal point throughout his music.

When playing the open E pedal notes remove the anchored fingers and hold them just above the strings. The E notes can be played with any finger or if you're particularly adventurous you can use alternate picking with different patterns:

When we try to play the E major chord we may hear the following issues:

- B string sounds muffled
- G# on the G string sounds muffled

The muffling is caused by the same issues for the chords in previous modules. Usually, the muffled B is caused by the first finger on the 1st fret slightly touching it. The muffled G# is caused by the third finger on the 2nd fret slightly touching it. These problems can be easily fixed by making sure your thumb is in the Unseen position, ensuring your fingers are approaching from the front of the fretboard, not from underneath.

I will play lesson 3:

Lesson 3: E Major Chord

Now it's your turn!

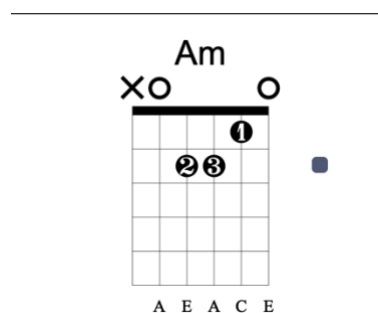
Lesson 4: A Minor Chord

Things are really heating up because now we're going to learn a chord that uses five strings. It can use all six strings, however that changes the nature (and name) of the chord, so we'll try to avoid hitting the sixth string, although it's perfectly fine if you do.

The A minor chord is made up of three notes – A, C, and E.

The Am chord diagram indicates:

- E string open
- B string 1st fret first finger
- G string 2nd fret third finger
- D string 2nd fret second finger
- A string open
- E string not played (X)



I will play lesson 4:

Lesson 4: A Minor Chord

Now it's your turn!

When we try to play the Am chord we may hear a muffled E open string. This is caused by the 1st finger on the first fret of the B string touching it. This can be easily fixed by making sure your thumb is in the Unseen position, ensuring your fingers are approaching from the front of the fretboard, not from underneath.

The Am chord comes after the E chord which presents an opportunity to *transfer* the entire shape of the E chord down one string. The E chord shape is identical to the Am shape, therefore we can retain our chord shape as we move across the strings.

We should always be on the lookout for opportunities to make things simpler. Keep your fingers close and think of them as one big finger instead of three individual ones.

Lesson 5: E – Am – E chord Change

In this lesson we will practice transferring the E shape pattern down by one string creating an Am chord; then moving it back up to return to the E chord.

I will play lesson 5 to demonstrate the chord changes:

Lesson 5: E - Am - E Chord Change

Now it's your turn!

Remember the key is to be LAAAAAZY! I encourage you to **constantly look** for ways to use *pivoting*, *preparation*, *guiding*, and *transfers* like this to make your guitar life easier, less stressful, and perhaps most importantly – less painful.

Lesson 6: E & Am Chordal Accompaniment

I will play lesson 6:

Lesson 6: E & Am Chordal Accompaniment

E Am E

24 25 26 27 28

TAB: 0 4 2 0 4 2 0 3 2 0 3 1 0

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 7: Learning & Playing Two Different Guitar Parts for Malagueña Facil

In this lesson we have another chance to add to our experience as an accompanist. Malagueña builds upon the foundation we established during Ode to Joy in module 11. For the sake of consistency we assign the Malagueña melody to guitar 1, and the chordal accompaniment (chords) to guitar 2 just like we did with Ode to Joy.

Backing tracks for each guitar part are in the lesson so that you can practice playing along with them. If you have a friend that can play the two of you can jam along with each other – this is about as awesome as it gets!

Exercise 7a: You play the Melody (guitar 1)

I will play exercise 7a:

Exercise 7a: You play the melody (guitar 1)

E Am E

29 30 31 32 33

TAB: 0 4 2 0 4 2 0 3 2 0 3 1 0

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 7b: You play the Chords (guitar 2)

I will play exercise 7b:

Exercise 7b: You play the Chords (guitar 2)

E Am E

34 35 36 37 38

TAB: 0 4 2 0 4 2 0 3 2 0 3 1 0

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 8: Overcoming the Lack of Motivation

My definition of motivation is *'the force or reason that continuously compels us to get something done.'*

Bearing this in mind you and I can see that we need to have a *strong reason* to continuously complete the course modules and subsequently become more competent on our guitars. The absence of a strong reason will lead to an absence of motivation; the presence of a strong reason will lead to steadfast motivation.

This inevitably compels me to discuss one question and one statement that have gained immense popularity in recent times:

- What's your why?
- Choose your sacrifice

Let's explore each in turn and how they apply to motivation.

"What's your why?" is simply asking why are you learning the guitar? Only you can answer this question accurately. Your answer should be as genuine and honest as it can be.

Here's a bit of my own story about my *Why...*

My reason for learning guitar in the early days was to increase my popularity with girls! I wish it was something more noble than that, but it's important to remember that I was a hormonal teenager in the 80s and all I ever saw on TV was guys with guitars in rock bands adored by the ladies. Naturally, I came to the conclusion that if I played guitar the ladies would be flocking around me in no time.

As time passed, I began to love the guitar, and my original *why* was replaced by joy of accomplishing things with the instrument and feeling like I truly belonged in the musical realm.

Choose your Sacrifice. Usually (but not always), acquiring a new skill or taking up a new hobby means something else has to be sacrificed. This is not always immediately apparent, however it is important to realise that playing *more* guitar means doing less of something else. There are only 24 hours in a day which means something has to give if you want to learn guitar and music. Simply put – make sure that *the reason for learning the guitar has a higher priority than the activity or activities that are being sacrificed.*

Module 13

Overview

This module introduces us to our first riff inside a chord progression known as 12 Bar Blues. We will also learn a new version of the A7 and D7 chords with new fingerings, and a slight modification of the E major chord to E7 that we learned in module 12 for Malagueña. We will explore playing the riff with two strings at the same time.

Lastly, we'll take a look at a new beam that joins four quavers together.

Lesson 1: Riff with Open Strings and New Beams

A riff is a term specific to music that refers to a series of notes (a melodic motif) that recurs throughout a song. Riffs are usually very recognisable and can be extremely simple or extremely complex. Some riffs become more famous than the songs themselves. Perhaps the most famous guitar riff of all time is Ritchie Blackmore's opening riff to 'Smoke on the Water' by Deep Purple. Another iconic riff is played by Slash as the intro to Guns N' Roses most famous song 'Sweet child o' mine'.

This lesson will explore playing a riff using two adjacent strings across three pairs of strings.

I will play the entire riff:

As you can see I play two strings at a time:

- A and D strings
- D and G strings
- E and A strings

I have used the most difficult section of the song as the material for lesson 1.

Remember, it is important to try to find the hardest parts of songs, isolate, work out why it's hard, then formulate an approach to mastering that part or section.

I will play lesson 1:

- A and D string open 8 x
- D and G strings open 8 x
- E and D strings open 8 x (then repeat)
- Bar 4 A and D strings open 1 x

Lesson 1: Open Strings

Now it's your turn!

Before we move to lesson 2 let's take a look at the picking hand. This riff can be played in the following ways:

- P strumming
- P and i picking
- i and m picking

You may notice that they each have their own distinct sound – similar, yet different. I suggest playing each way to build your technique.

Up until now you have trusted my counting, but it is time to take a look at the appearance of the quavers, and how their look changes from bar to bar.

In bar 1 they are all separated and appear as they did in bars 4, 5, and 13 of Ode to Joy. In bar 2 they are grouped in pairs of two, joined by a beam as they were in bars 7 and 8 of Ode to Joy.

However, in bar 3 the beam has been extended, joining four quavers together. This makes reading the notation much easier. Once again, this doesn't matter too much when reading tabs, nevertheless I want you to take a good look at it to familiarise yourself with beaming.

The rest of the module will beam quavers into groups of four.

I will play lesson 1 again and this time I would like you to play closer attention to the beams.

Lesson 1: Open Strings

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 2: Full Riff

The time has come to bring our fretting hand into the mix. We will be using fingers 1, 3, and 4 with the exact same pattern across the three pairs of strings. This riff may look super scary but rest assured because the pattern is the same its bark is worse than its bite.

I will play lesson 2:

- A open with D string 2nd fret 4th fret 5th fret 4th fret for four measures
- D open with G string 2nd fret 4th fret 5th fret 4th fret for two measures
- A open with D string 2nd fret 4th fret 5th fret 4th fret for two measures
- E open with A string 2nd fret 4th fret 5th fret 4th fret for one measure
- D open with G string 2nd fret 4th fret 5th fret 4th fret for one measure
- A open with D string 2nd fret 4th fret 5th fret 4th fret for one measure
- E open with A string 2nd fret 4th fret 5th fret 4th fret for one measure

Lesson 2: Full Riff

5 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13

14 15 16 17 A7

Now it's your turn!

This totals 12 bars and is the reason why the progression is called the 12 Bar Blues. I have called this 12 Bar Blues in A because we are based around the note A. From a harmony perspective, this moves around between three modes or scales called A Mixolydian, A Pentatonic Minor, or A Melodic Minor. This kind of theory is not for the faint hearted and is likely to give you a migraine, so let's move on before our minds melt.

There are a couple of options for the fretting hand when playing this riff.

1. We can leave all of our fingers on as we play the riff
2. We can release our fingers as soon as they've played their note

Leaving them on means they're ready when we come back from the 5th fret, but we may get tired more quickly

Releasing our fingers lowers the strain of holding the notes, but it may open us up to more mistakes.

I suggest trying both methods because both ways are equally acceptable and useful.

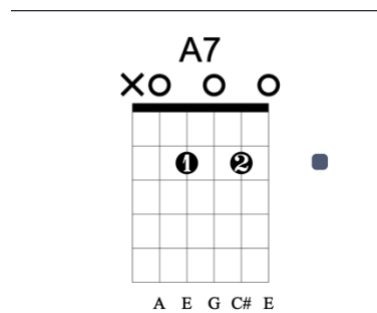
Lesson 3: A7, D7, and E7

A7 and D7 are chords we have learned in earlier modules, However, this lesson builds upon the fingerings we have encountered in previous modules. The E7 is a new chord, but you will see that it is very similar to the E major chord from Malagueña Facil.

This A7 chord is made up of four notes – A, C#, E, and G

The A7 chord diagram indicates:

- E string open
- B string 2nd fret third finger
- G string open
- D string 2nd fret second finger
- A string open
- E string not played (X)



We play the A7 chord with the third and second fingers because that makes it very easy to transfer those two fingers to the D7 chord in a similar way to how we transferred from the E to Am and back in Malagueña!

When we try to play the A7 chord we may hear the following issues:

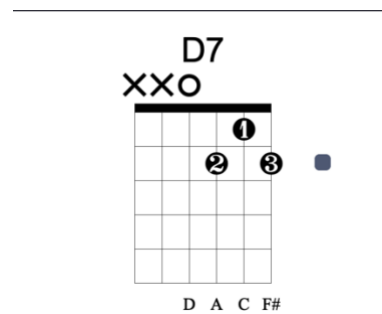
- E open string sounds muffled
- G open string sounds muffled

The muffling is caused by the same issues for the chords in previous modules. Usually, the muffled E is caused by the third finger on the 2nd fret of the B string slightly touching it. The muffled G is caused by the second finger on the 2nd fret of the D string slightly touching it. These problems can be easily fixed by making sure your thumb is in the Unseen position, ensuring your fingers are approaching from the front of the fretboard, not from underneath.

The D7 chord is made up of four notes – D, F#, A, and C. This version simply adds the D open string to the chord we already know and love.

The D7 chord diagram indicates:

- E string 2nd fret third finger
- B string 1st fret first finger
- G string 2nd fret second finger
- D string open
- A string is not played (X)
- E string is not played (X)



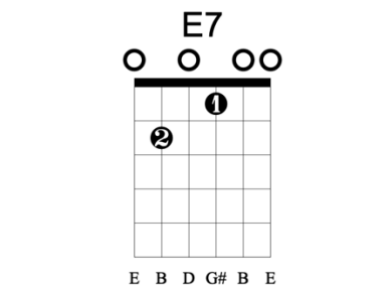
There are usually no new issues for the D7 chord when we add the D open string. Refer to module 5 or the glossary if you need a refresher.

The E7 chord is made up of four notes – E, B, G#, and D.

The E7 chord simply removes the third finger from the D string 2nd fret, leaving it open.

The E7 chord diagram indicates:

- E string open
- B string open
- G string 1st fret first finger
- D string open
- A string 2nd fret second finger
- E string open



This can introduce a new issue which is the D open string sounding muffled. It can also undermine the strength we feel with the E major chord. When we remove the third finger to play the E7 our hand may feel less stable than it did with the full E chord.

This is attributable to an imbalance between the pressure exerted by the thumb against the fingers. The thumb and fingers are always pressing against one another with their forces usually cancelling one another out resulting in balance.

If you have ever tried bending the strings upwards like this without using the *Grabber* thumb position you'll immediately feel the desire to loop your thumb over the top. This is to counteract the upwards force generated by the fingers pushing up. With our thumb looped over the top *restored balance in the force we have*.

All we need to do is play the E7 more often and our thumb will begin to naturally reduce the pressure it exerts against the back of the neck.

Now that we have learned all of the new chords, let's try playing them one after another. Feel free to use strumming or picking to play the lesson.

I will play lesson 3:

Lesson 3: A7, D7, & E7 Chords

The musical notation for Lesson 3 consists of three measures. Measure 18 is A7 (3#), measure 19 is D7 (3#), and measure 20 is E7 (3#). The guitar tablature below the staff shows the following fret numbers for each string (from top to bottom):

| Measure | Treble (T) | Alto (A) | Bass (B) |
|---------|------------|------------|------------|
| 18 (A7) | 0, 2, 0, 2 | 0, 2, 0, 2 | 0, 2, 0, 2 |
| 19 (D7) | 0, 2, 1, 2 | 0, 2, 1, 2 | 0, 2, 0, 2 |
| 20 (E7) | 0, 0, 1, 0 | 0, 0, 1, 0 | 0, 2, 0, 2 |

Now it's your turn.

Lesson 4: E7 - D7 - A7 - E7 - A7 Chord Changes

I feel you may be wondering why I am not playing the entire piece with chord changes in the lesson, so let me offer an explanation.

The first 8 measures are relative easy because there are so few chord changes, however the last five measures have a chord change for each bar. This means that if you can play the last five measure really well, the rest will be a relative walk in the park.

I know I may be repeating myself a lot, however I must stress that developing the skill of finding the most challenging parts of songs and spending most of your time working on that will develop your guitar playing much faster and be a better use of your precious time.

I will play lesson 4:

Lesson 4: E7 - D7 - A7 - E7 - A7 Chord Changes

The musical notation for Lesson 4 consists of five measures. Measure 21 is E7 (3#), measure 22 is D7 (3#), measure 23 is A7 (3#), measure 24 is E7 (3#), and measure 25 is A7 (3#). The guitar tablature below the staff shows the following fret numbers for each string (from top to bottom):

| Measure | Treble (T) | Alto (A) | Bass (B) |
|---------|------------|------------|------------|
| 21 (E7) | 0, 0, 1, 0 | 0, 0, 1, 0 | 0, 2, 0, 2 |
| 22 (D7) | 0, 2, 1, 2 | 0, 2, 1, 2 | 0, 2, 0, 2 |
| 23 (A7) | 0, 2, 0, 2 | 0, 2, 0, 2 | 0, 2, 0, 2 |
| 24 (E7) | 0, 0, 1, 0 | 0, 0, 1, 0 | 0, 2, 0, 2 |
| 25 (A7) | 0, 2, 0, 2 | 0, 2, 0, 2 | 0, 2, 0, 2 |

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 5: Learning & Playing Two Different Guitar Parts for the 12 Bar Blues in A

In this lesson we are adding even more to our experience as an accompanist. The riff and chordal accompaniment reinforces the foundation we established during Ode to Joy in module 1.

For the sake of consistency we assign the riff to guitar 1, and the chordal accompaniment (chords) to guitar 2 just like we did with Ode to Joy and Malagueña.

Backing tracks for each guitar part are in the lesson so that you can practice playing along with them. If you have a friend that can play the two of you can jam along with each other – welcome to the world of blues and rock!

Exercise 5a: You play the Riff (guitar 1)

I will play exercise 5a:

Exercise 5a: You play the Riff (guitar 1)

The musical score for Exercise 5a is presented in three systems, each with a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. Measure numbers 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 38 are indicated above the treble clef staff. The tablature staff shows fret numbers for each string (T, A, B). The first system (measures 26-29) shows a sequence of chords and notes. The second system (measures 30-33) continues the sequence. The third system (measures 34-38) includes a first ending bracket over measures 37 and 38, and a second ending bracket over measure 38.

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 5b: You play the chords (guitar 2)

I will play exercise 5b:

Lesson 5b: You play the chords (guitar 2)

39 A7 40 41 42 43 D7

44 A7 45 46 47 E7

48 D7 49 A7 50 51

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 6: Comparison with Others

Now that we've learned a couple of songs/pieces that we can play with others something interesting may start to happen.

As humans we're constantly comparing things as part of our prewired survival mechanisms. Which route is fastest, which apple is tastiest, which interest rate is higher? Comparisons drive our decision-making processes and provide a means of measuring how efficient and effective the results of our efforts are.

This segues logically to comparing ourselves with other guitarists. Let me tell you that nothing is more inspiring AND soul-destroying than a quick "Amazing guitar players" search on YouTube. I can virtually guarantee that within the space of thirty seconds you'll want to do one of the following:

- Practice ALL DAY LONG
- Burn your guitar

At this point I think the best thing to do is just take three deep breaths and laugh. Enjoy the comparisons and use them to fuel your efforts. Remember that you are on a special journey that is uniquely yours. Revel in the music, rejoice with your guitar, and let your fingers fly!

Module 14

Overview

In this module we are going to dive into the infinite depths of *Improvisation*. We're going to learn three types of scales that are all derived from the G major scale that can be used to compose your own solos, and we're going to talk about confidence and the importance of Bob Ross' famous saying "There are no mistakes, only happy accidents" and how we can apply that quote to our own unique journey with the guitar.

When my first guitar teacher Mr. Peter Thwaites asked me to make up a solo (otherwise known in the musical world as improvise or improvisation) I froze. I was a thirteen year old teen that idolised my teacher and looked up to him like he was a shining Golden Guitar God from the heavens ready to pass judgement like the T-800 from Terminator. I lamented that I couldn't do it; I trembled as I told him how my scales were crap, my fingers were slow; how I'd only been playing for a couple of weeks, and most fearfully that I couldn't play anywhere near as well as he could.

To his credit he ignored me!

Then he started playing the 12 Bar Blues in A and his eyes glittered with a mischievous twinkle and he looked at me and simply said "Don't worry about it. Just play! Shuzbutt". This happened more than thirty five years ago, however I remember it as vividly as I remember my first lesson with him struggling to do a D chord. I also recall being amazed that he could talk and continue playing without missing a beat – at the time I thought it was magic and something I would never be capable of.

I share this with you because I want you to know that I've been exactly where you are right now. I've sat where you're sitting and I know the score. Playing stuff that is written down is hard enough and now I have the sheer audacity to ask you to make something up out of nothing even though you may think you absolutely suck?

I'm still in contact with Mr. Thwaites through social media (isn't it funny how no matter how old we get we still tend to call our teachers by their last names?) although I haven't seen him personally since 1990.

I'll be forever grateful to him not only for what he taught me on the guitar, but also for the priceless life lessons he imparted along the way – one of which was to forgive myself. So I say to you "Forgive yourself for playing the worst sounds in the universe, forgive yourself for breaking out in a sweat, forgive yourself for nerve-induced palpitations and let me be your Mr. Thwaites."

I'm not here to judge you, I'm here to guide you.

Let's play this!

Lesson 1: Improvising with A Pentatonic Major over A7

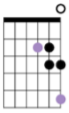
The diagram above the first bar shows you where to place your fingers, similar to a chord diagram with the exception being it does not show you the order in which they are played. I think this it has its merits when it comes to improvisation because it's saying "Here are the notes, play them however".

I will play lesson 1:

- G string 2nd fret second finger
- B string 2nd fret second finger; 3rd fret second finger (guide from the 2nd to the 3rd fret)
- E string open; 3rd fret second finger; 5th fret fourth finger; 3rd fret second finger; open
- B string 3rd fret second finger; 2nd fret second finger (guide from the 3rd fret to the 2nd fret)
- G string 2nd fret first finger

Lesson 1: Improvising with A Pentatonic Major over A7

A Pentatonic Major



set in stone, however they can really help a lot with giving you ideas about how to change up the scales.

Exercise 1a: Changing rhythm

Changing the rhythm is a great way to improvise. We've added a couple of quavers to liven things up.

I will play exercise 1a:

Exercise 1a: Changing rhythm

T
A
B

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 1b: Changing one note

Changing one note can have a big impact on expectations.

I will play exercise 1b:

Exercise 1b: Changing one note

T
A
B

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 1c: Changing a note in every bar

Changing to different notes in every bar can really liven things up.

I will play exercise 1c:

Exercise 1c: Changing a note in every bar

T
A
B

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 1d: Changing rhythm and notes

Combining different rhythms and notes definitely brings your improvisation skills up

I will play exercise 1d:

Exercise 1d: Changing rhythm and notes

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 1e: Introducing a note from outside the scale (brackets)

This is kind of scary but fear not, because this is an integral part of improvising. Even if your note sounds like it belongs in a different dimension just enjoy it and consider it as part of the process.

I will play exercise 1e:

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 1f: Introducing two notes from outside the scale (brackets)

Easy! We introduced a note from outside of the scale earlier, now we're just adding another one. If you're can't remember which notes are in A Pentatonic Minor refer back to lesson 1

I will play exercise 1f:

Now it's your turn!

Exercise 1g: Changing rhythm and adding two notes from outside the scale

This is the grand finale! Now we're doing everything from changing rhythms to adding multiple new notes.

I will play exercise 1g:

Exercise 1g: Changing rhythm and adding two notes from outside the scale

22 23 24

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 2: Improvising with D Pentatonic Major over D7

The diagram above the first bar shows you where to place your fingers. Notice that it starts similarly to Malagueña on different strings.

I will play lesson 2:

- D string open; 4th fret fourth finger
- G string open; 2nd fret second finger
- B string 1st fret first finger; 3rd fret third finger; 1st fret first finger
- G string 2nd fret second finger; open
- D string 4th fret fourth finger; open

Lesson 2: Improvising with D Pentatonic Major over D7

D Pentatonic Major

D7

25 26 27

Now it's your turn!

From this point on I will not provide any ideas for improvising. Instead I will provide a numbered list using the seven exercise titles from lesson 1 as a guideline:

1. Changing rhythm
2. Changing one note
3. Changing a note in every bar
4. Changing rhythm and notes
5. Introducing a note from outside the scale

6. Introducing two notes from outside the scale
7. Changing rhythm and adding two notes from outside the scale

3...2...1...Improvise!

Lesson 3: Improvising with E Pentatonic Major over E7

This is the final scale to learn for improvising.

I will play lesson 3:

- D string 2nd fret second finger
- G string 1st fret first finger; 2nd fret second finger
- B string open; 3rd fret third finger
- E open
- B string 3rd fret third finger; open
- G string 2nd fret second finger; 1st fret first finger
- D string 2nd fret second finger

Lesson 3: Improvising with E Pentatonic Major over E7

Now it's your turn!

Remember to use this numbered list using the exercise titles from lesson 1 and 2 as a guideline:

1. Changing rhythm
2. Changing one note
3. Changing a note in every bar
4. Changing rhythm and notes
5. Introducing a note from outside the scale
6. Introducing two notes from outside the scale
7. Changing rhythm and adding two notes from outside the scale

3...2...1...Improvise!

Lesson 4: Improvising over 12 Bar Blues in A

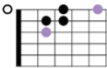
Now the time has come to put all of this hard work together by applying everything you have learned about improvising to the chord progression and riff that make up the 12 Bar Blues in A.

What you are about to hear is a totally improvised solo using the three pentatonic scales in this module. I will attempt to incorporate all of the ideas from the numbered guidelines. Feel free to try to copy me if you want to, however the ultimate goal is to have you making up your own stuff, letting your fingers fly where they will.

I will play lesson 4:

Lesson 4: Improvising over 12 Bar Blues Riff in A

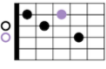
A Pentatonic Major



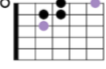
A7



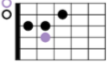
D Pentatonic Major



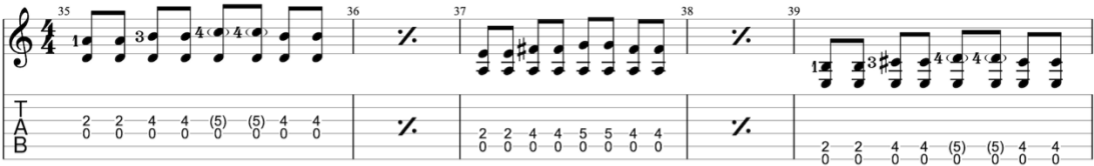
A Pentatonic Major



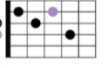
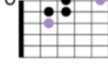
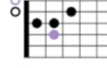
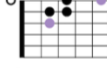
E Pentatonic Major




D7 **A7** **E7**



D Pentatonic Major **A Pentatonic Major** **E Pentatonic Major** **A Pentatonic Major**

D7 **A7** **E7** **A7**



In the score you will see I have written the scale that you should use above the bars. There is heavy use of bar repeat symbols in the score so make sure you pay attention to those so you know which scale to use over each chord.

Remember if you get lost don't worry about it – it's all good. There's a funny saying in the jazz community when things start to sound a bit wrong "Don't worry man, it's all jazz." This cracks me up to this day.

Take three deep breathes...now it's your turn!

Module 15

Topics for Discussion

Lesson 1: Lack of Guidance

One of the most salient reasons for doing the NBN course is community. As I mentioned earlier, studying the guitar is usually a somewhat lonely pursuit; studying the guitar online can be even lonelier because the face-to-face component of in-person lessons is absent.

The community that you are now part of is a brilliant resource where guidance can come from me, other players at varying levels, and the occasional guest that I will invite in to share their knowledge. This means that there will always be someone there to guide you and offer assistance.

I also encourage you to seek out a teacher in your area, or an online teacher if you feel that you would benefit more from guidance that is specifically tailored to you.

Some of the pros and cons of *Online vs One-to-One* are outlined in the table below:

| Online | | One-to-One | |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| Pros | Cons | Pros | Cons |
| Cheaper | | Tailored to individual students | More expensive |
| Can access 24/7 | | | Cannot access 24/7 |
| No need to travel | | | Must travel or have teacher come to you |
| | Accountability, motivation, and guidance may be lower | Accountability, motivation, and guidance can be higher | |

I have taught tens of thousands of students in-person, online one-to-one, and via my instructional videos, and I can confidently say that nothing really beats in-person with a great teacher if that is an option. I was self-guided from the age of 16 onwards until I went to university at the age of 19 because there was no teacher in my area in New Zealand. As a matter of fact, I was the guitar teacher for night classes in the nearest town during my last two years at high school!

Lesson 2: Maintaining Consistent Practice Habits

This is a real doozy. There's a popular saying doing the rounds at the moment which is "Life gets in the way". I'm not a fan of that saying because it's kind of ridiculous, however I get what it means. Things pop up and into our lives, and the next thing we know, we haven't played the guitar for two weeks or a month.

My suggestion here is to try to play your guitar whenever the opportunity presents itself. I took my guitar everywhere I could when I was younger. Even now, whenever I go on a trip I will always try to take a guitar with me.

Here are a few tips to increase your consistency:

- Use the NBN Guitar Practice Routine Spreadsheet
- Keep your guitar on a guitar stand for easy access
- Find little pockets of time to play
- Visit the NBN and other guitar communities regularly
- Remember your why, your reason, and your sacrifice

Lesson 3: Developing Proper Technique

Technique is the way we do something. There is a tendency in the music world to focus heavily on technique because the notion that technique will give you and your audience the most satisfaction exists. Instead I offer an alternative based on my years of experience playing and teaching around the world. I posit that technique should enable you to do what you want to do and it is merely a means to an end.

I have played concerts and gigs where I made a terrifying number of mistakes, was out of time, missed cues, had equipment failures, and yet I had great fun and so did the audience. If you ever start to play live in front of people you will soon realise that they want to be moved emotionally, which is a combination of the right technique, not necessarily the best technique, and establishing a connection with the audience.

Most, if not all musicians are always working on some technical aspect of their playing. I watched Rick Beato interview a 64 year old Joe Satriani (one of my all-time favourite guitarists whom I met in 2018) and Joe is still working on technique! Most of us would listen to Joe and think he's got it all sorted and then some. But no, this isn't the case. He's still working on stuff just like you and I.

What I'm trying to say is work on your technique but don't let it hold you back from having fun and connecting with people.

Lesson 4: Equipment Limitations

At some point in time we have probably looked at a tool we use and said to ourselves “This thing is crap. I wish I had a better one.” Guitars are a tool we use to make music, and like all tools some are better than others for varying reasons.

The great thing with guitars is they come in all shapes and sizes, colours and styles, and sometimes most importantly – price. I mention this because it means we can buy awesome guitars for very little money. In fact, if you look hard enough you could probably find one for free. It also means that guitars are so prolific and popular that they can be art pieces as well as fully functional working instruments.

An acoustic or classical guitar in your hands becomes a fully functioning orchestra that does not require anything else to make music. An electric guitar will need an amp and electricity to realise its full potential, however you can still learn with an electric guitar if you don't have those things.

I'd like to take the time to mention something important concerning your guitar. I cannot overstate the importance of having your guitar correctly set up by a guitar tech or luthier. I mentioned this in the course overview when you first started the course. Having your guitar set up to suit you is one of the best investments you can make.

A few reasons for a good set up for your guitar are stated below :

- Easier to play. The action will be set at a height you find comfortable, which will encourage you to play more
- Sounds better. A setup includes new strings and can may correct intonation issues
- Polish and clean. Keeping your guitar clean and sparkly can help it to last longer

If you don't have these pieces of equipment by now I strong suggest acquiring them somehow:

- Guitar tuner. Apps, electronic tuners, a tuning fork, piano can all be used to help you tune your guitar
- Guitar stand. A great guitar stand is super important because it'll prevent your guitar from being damaged after it slides off the chair
- Spare strings. You never know when a string will break so keep a spare set of strings handy just in case
- Music stand. Nothing makes you look like a serious musician more than a music stand. You can also place your scores, tablet, pencils and snacks on a good one!

Module 16

Overview

In this module we will be learning our first stretching exercises. These exercises act as a precursor to learning the full version of G, Em, and C that we covered in the first few modules. We will revisit pivoting and preparation, ending with a list of additional songs that can be played with the progression.

Lesson 1: Dexterity 'Spider'

This lesson is very difficult to create with the software I use, therefore the best course of action is to watch me play and listen carefully to my instructions rather than relying on the matching score.

My first teacher Mr. Thwaites taught me this and it freaked me out because it really does look like a creepy spider walking across your guitar. I've literally scared people when they've watched me do this, and now you can too!!!

I will play lesson 1:

Start with all fingers on the 6th string with each finger occupying its own fret. It doesn't matter where you begin, then:

- Move fingers 1 and 3 at the same time to the A string
- Move fingers 2 and 4 at the same time to the D string
- Move fingers 1 and 3 at the same time to the G string
- Move fingers 2 and 4 at the same time to the B string
- Move fingers 1 and 3 at the same time to the E string
- Move fingers 2 and 4 at the same time to the E string

This is the halfway mark – take a rest.

- Move fingers 1 and 3 at the same time to the B string
- Move fingers 2 and 4 at the same time to the G string
- Move fingers 1 and 3 at the same time to the D string
- Move fingers 2 and 4 at the same time to the A string
- Move fingers 1 and 3 at the same time to the E string
- Move fingers 2 and 4 at the same time to the E string

Lesson 1: Dexterity

The musical notation for Lesson 1: Dexterity is presented in four systems, each consisting of a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature (TAB) staff. The time signature is 4/4. Fretboard diagrams are provided above the notes to show fingerings.

- System 1:** Treble clef notes: 1 (F4), 2# (F#4), 3 (G4), 4 (A4), 1 (F4), 3 (G4), 2# (F#4), 4 (A4), 2# (F#4), 4# (B4), 1 (F4), 3 (G4). TAB: 5 6 7 8 | 5 7 6 8 | 6 8 5 7.
- System 2:** Treble clef notes: 4 (A4), 5 (B4), 6 (C5), 7 (D5), 5 (B4), 7 (D5), 6 (C5), 8 (E5), 6 (C5), 7 (D5), 8 (E5). TAB: 5 7 6 8 | 6 8 5 7 | 5 7 6 8.
- System 3:** Treble clef notes: 7 (D5), 8 (E5), 7 (D5), 8 (E5), 8 (E5), 7 (D5), 8 (E5), 9 (F#5), 8 (E5), 7 (D5), 8 (E5). TAB: 5 6 7 8 | 5 7 6 8 | 6 8 5 7.
- System 4:** Treble clef notes: 10 (A5), 11 (B5), 12 (C6), 13 (D6), 11 (B5), 12 (C6), 13 (D6), 12 (C6), 11 (B5), 10 (A5). TAB: 5 7 6 8 | 6 8 5 7 | 5 7 6 8 | 5 6 7 8.

Now it's your turn...to scare your friends!

Lesson 2: Vertical Stretching

Many guitar chords involve our fingers spreading out across the guitar both horizontally and vertically. This lesson will assist you when playing the upcoming full G and C major chords, that require more vertical distances between your fingers.

I recommend starting on the 1st fret because the vertical stretch isn't as far, however there is more of a horizontal stretch, therefore feel absolutely free to start wherever you feel comfortable.

This exercise increases with difficulty as you travel away from the 1st fret, so as you get better at it, consider moving along the fretboard towards the 9th fret.

This lesson is also very difficult to create with the software I use, therefore the best course of action is to watch me play and listen carefully to my instructions rather than relying on the matching.

I will play lesson 2:

Start with all of your fingers on the G string with each finger occupying its own fret. It doesn't matter where you begin. Only move one finger at a time, noting that the other three fingers should remain on their own frets on the G string. After a finger has completed its pattern, return it to the G string before using the next finger:

- 1st finger to A string then B string (repeat)
- 2nd finger to A string then B string (repeat)
- 3rd finger to A string then B string (repeat)
- 4th finger to A string then B string (repeat)

This is the halfway mark – take a rest.

- 1st finger E string to E string (repeat)
- 2nd finger E string to E string (repeat)
- 3rd finger E string to E string (repeat)
- 4th finger E string to E string (repeat)

There are a couple of interesting observations to note:

- Third finger usually struggles to do the E 1st string because of our hand's physiology
- Fourth finger has accuracy issues because of the small size of the fingertip, the vertical distance involved, and thumb placement

I recommend persevering with the exercise because your third finger will limber up, and your fourth finger's accuracy will improve with use. You may need to rotate your hand pivoting from the thumb to increase your 4th fingers chance of reaching the E 6th string.

Lesson 2: Vertical Stretching

14 1# 2 3# 4

15 1# 1 1

16 1 1 1

17 2# 2

18 2# 2 2

19 3 3 3

20 3 3 3

21 4# 4 4

22 4# 4 4

23 4# 4 4

24 3 3 3

25 3 3 3

26 2# 2 2

27 2# 2 2

28 1 1 1

29 1 1 1

30 1# 2 3# 4

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 3: Horizontal Stretching

This purpose of this exercise is to increase your lateral stretching on the guitar because some chords on the guitar require a lot of lateral flexibility and control to do well.

Although I have written this on the G string at the 5th fret, I encourage you to try it all across the fretboard and on every string. The closer you move towards the 1st fret the more difficult it becomes to do. This is because the distances between the frets increases. I also find that some players experience increasing difficulty as they move from the 1st to the 6th string.

Some tips to help you out:

- Relax after every note
- Shake your hand out to release tension if required
- If you are in pain STOP; if you experiencing mild discomfort continue
- Keep your thumb in the Unseen position and be prepared to move it horizontally when required

I will play lesson 3.

- First and second fingers alternating between the 5th and 6th frets
- First and second fingers alternating between the 5th and 7th frets
- First and third fingers alternating between the 5th and 7th frets
- First and third fingers alternating between the 5th and 8th frets
- First and fourth fingers alternating between the 5th and 8th frets
- First and fourth fingers alternating between the 5th and 9th frets

Then we reverse it:

- Fourth and first fingers alternating between the 9th and 5th frets
- Fourth and first fingers alternating between the 8th and 5th frets
- Third and first fingers alternating between the 8th and 5th frets
- Third and first fingers alternating between the 7th and 5th frets
- Second and first fingers alternating between the 7th and 5th frets
- Second and first fingers alternating between the 6th and 5th frets

Lesson 3: Horizontal Stretching

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 |
| 5 6 5 6 5 6 5 6 | 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 | 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 | 5 8 5 8 5 8 5 8 |

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 |
| 5 8 5 8 5 8 5 8 | 5 9 5 9 5 9 5 9 | 9 5 9 5 9 5 9 5 | 8 5 8 5 8 5 8 5 |

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 |
| 8 5 8 5 8 5 8 5 | 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 | 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 | 6 5 6 5 6 5 6 5 |

Now it's your turn!

Lesson 4: Full Versions of G, C, & Em

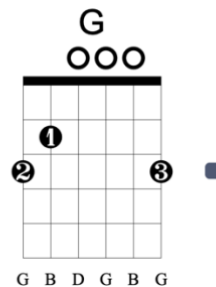
In this lesson we are going to expand and replace the simple chords we learned in the early modules with these versions. These chords really illustrate the full potential of the guitar and are the chords that you will continue to use most often from this day forward.

Exercise 4a: G major

The full G chord is made up of three notes – G, B, and D.

The G chord diagram indicates:

- E string 3rd fret third finger
- B string open
- G string open
- D string open
- A string 2nd fret first finger
- E string 3rd fret second finger



When we try to play the full G chord we may hear a muffled D open string. This is caused by the first finger on the second fret of the A string touching it. This can be easily fixed by making sure your thumb is in the Unseen position, ensuring your fingers are approaching from the front of the fretboard, not from underneath.

I will play exercise 4a:

Exercise 4a: G major

G
3 0
3
2 3
3
0
0
2
3

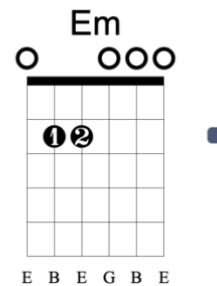
Now it's your turn!

Exercise 4b: E minor

The full E minor chord is made up of three notes E, B, and G.

The chord diagram indicates:

- E string open
- B string open
- G string open
- D string 2nd fret second finger
- A string 2nd fret first finger (pivot from the G chord)
- E string open



When we try to play the full E minor chord we may here a muffled G string. . This is caused by the second finger on the second fret of the D string touching it. This can be easily fixed by making sure your thumb is in the Unseen position, ensuring your fingers are approaching from the front of the fretboard, not from underneath.

I will play exercise 4b:

Exercise 4b: E minor

44

Em

T
A
B

0
0
0
2
2
0

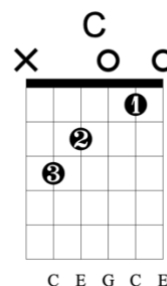
Now it's your turn!

Exercise 4c: C major

The full C major chord is made up of three notes C, E, and G.

The chord diagram indicates:

- E string open
- B string 1st fret first finger
- G string open
- D string 2nd fret second finger
- A string 3rd fret third finger
- E string not played (X)



The C major chord is a chord that really gives guitarists a lot of grief in the early days. I think that is attributable to three reasons:

1. It's the first chord that goes across three frets
2. It has an open G third string between two fingered notes which is often muffled by the second finger on the 2nd fret of the D string
3. It has an open E first string which is often muffled by the first finger on the 1st fret of the B string

These issues can be fixed by making sure your thumb is in the Unseen position, in-between and behind your second and third fingers. This thumb position forces your fingers to approach from the front of the fretboard, not from underneath.

If you try the C chord with the Grabber or Thumbs up positions you may discover the clarity of your chords is effected by thumb position.

I will play exercise 4c:

Exercise 4c: C major

Now it's your turn!

I will play through each chord showing you pivoting and preparation opportunities that exist between the chords.

- G to Em pivot on the 1st finger
- Em to C pivot on the 2nd finger

Lesson 5: Playing Chords with Arpeggios

These new full chords can now be substituted wherever they occurred in previous modules! I urge you to go back and try playing Ode to Joy and any other songs you may have learned from module 7 with these full chords.

Before you do I will suggest an alternative to strumming – arpeggios.

An arpeggio is a chord played one note at a time in rapid succession. The symbol in the score is a squiggly line with an arrow head pointing upwards (upwards indicates a rising pitch) Allow me to demonstrate using the G chord.

- Place the picking hand in the position outlined in module 6
- Move the thumb downward across the 6th, 5th, and 4th strings in a single smooth motion
- Pick the 3rd string with the index finger
- Pick the 2nd string with the middle finger
- Pick the 1st string with the annular finger

The thumb will always play the bass strings (6th, 5th, and 4th) and the index, middle, and annular fingers will always play the treble strings (3rd, 2nd, and 1st).

The C chord begins with the thumb on the 5th string

The D7 chord begins with the thumb on the 4th string

Remember to keep your picking hand steady, move from the largest joints, thumb moves downwards, fingers move towards the palm with fingertips gently brushing across the strings.

I will play lesson 5:

Lesson 5: Arpeggios

The musical notation shows a sequence of chords: G (measure 46), Em (measure 47), C (measure 48), D7 (measure 49), and G (measure 50). The D7 chord has a first ending bracket and a second ending bracket. The guitar tablature below the staff shows the fret numbers for each string (T, A, B) for each chord.

Now it's your turn!

Try out substituting strumming for arpeggios in all of the chord progressions and guitar 2 parts you have learned!

Module 17

Congratulations!

In the introduction I spoke about journeys and destinations and now it seems you and your guitar have arrived at the end of the course. Take a deep breath and pat yourself on the back – you’ve both earned it.

I want you to write down or record how you feel in this exact moment. Are you feeling elated, exhausted, disappointed, or sad perhaps? Consider letting everyone in the NBN Guitar Community Forum know that you’ve finished.

Reach out to me and let me know that you and your guitar have survived and hopefully thrived as you’ve progressed through the course.

This is huge so I encourage you to revel in the moment before letting your fingers fly again! I wish I was there right now so we could jam Ode to Joy, Malagueña, and the 12 Bar Blues in A together. However, because you’ve made it to the end it means we’ve probably already jammed together hundreds of times as you were discovering those gems throughout the course.

Before you go please keep reading on for a little bit more information about the next stage in your journey.

Where To From Here?

To the next course of course! Now that you are well and truly armed with the fundamentals.

Practice Journal

The importance of a solid practice routine cannot be overstated. We often lead hectic lives where there just isn’t enough hours in the day to get everything done. This is where being well organised and setting aside time to practice can really accelerate and guarantee steady progress on the guitar.

Make sure you complete your journal whenever you practice. Enter the date, time, and duration of your practice session. Also, try to write down your goals for that session. Although it states five, having just one or two goals is also perfectly fine.

Let your fingers fly!

Josh

Glossary of Terms

12 Bar Blues – a chord progression using I, IV, V in a set sequence over twelve bars.

Accompany/Accompaniment/Accompanist – providing musical accompaniment to another musician.

Acoustic guitar – a hollow body guitar with steel strings.

Adagio – slow and stately (44 -66bpm).

Alternate picking – picking successive notes with different fingers.

Anchoring – resting a finger, fingers, or palm on the strings or soundboard.

Annular – ring finger.

Apoyando – picking finger comes to rest on the string above after picking otherwise known as a rest stroke.


Arcing – the movement of the forearm across the strings pivoting from the elbow used to retain the picking hand's relative position to the strings.

Arpeggio – chords played one note at a time.

Ascending/Descending – usually associated with playing scales going up (ascending) and down (descending) in pitch.

Bar line(s) – vertical lines that dissect staves and tablature to separate the number of beats into groups defined by the time signature.

Bar – also known as a measure are comprised of a set number of beats indicated by the time signature.

Beam/Beamed  – a horizontal line or lines that join notes together, acting as a visual aid by simplifying the overall appearance of a score.

Bending – pulling or pushing the strings upwards or downwards across the fretboard.

Block chord(s) – playing all or some notes in a chord at the same time.

Bouncing – an uneconomical movement of the picking hand away from the guitar.

Carpal tunnel syndrome – a condition caused by pressure on the median nerve in the carpal tunnel of the wrist.

Chiquito – the Spanish word for the little finger.

Chord – a group of three or more different notes sounded together.

Chord diagram – a visual representation of chord shapes using the fingerboard, strings, and fingers.

Chord progression – a sequence of chords.


Classical – a style of music that is usually considered to be ‘serious’ that encompasses music from the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Neo-Romantic, and Modern eras of music.

Classical guitar – a hollow body guitar that uses nylon, carbon, and gut strings. It can also refer to a style of playing guitar that centres around playing classical music.

Classical guitar style – technique that is associated with classical guitar and classical music.


Claw – an undesirable condition whereby the fingers of the picking hand curl up unnecessarily after picking.

Counting – the practice of counting beats in music with the intent to stay in time and accurately track one’s current place in a score.

Crotchet/Quarter note  - a note having the time value of a quarter of a whole note or half a half note, represented by a large solid dot with a plain stem; a quarter note.

Curling – an undesirable technique where the fingers of the picking hand ‘curl’ up after picking instead of remaining relatively straight.

Dotted note (Dot) – a note whose length has been extended by half of its original value.

Down strum  – strumming the strings in a downward motion towards the ground.

Electric guitar – a guitar that is able to be amplified.

Finger positioning – that practice of keeping left and right hand fingers in the optimal position.

Fingering – the placement of the fingers onto the strings and fretboard.

Flat b – a musical term that denotes a pitch that is lowered by a semitone.

Folk – a style of music associated with the common folk of a country.

Free stroke(s) – picking movement where the finger moves towards the underside of the palm after picking controlled by the third joint.

Fretboard – a thin piece of wood that houses the frets. It is often made from ebony and adheres to the neck.

Frets – thin metal bars that are housed in the fretboard. Each fret represents an interval of a semitone.

Fretting – a term used interchangeably with fingering. Also used to differentiate between the picking and fingering hands.

Guiding (Guide) – a very useful technique where a finger or fingers stay on the same string between chord changes.

b – part of a written note that is attached to a stem. It can be coloured or hollow.

Horizontal stretching - exercises designed to improve the flexibility and dexterity of the fretting hand fingers.

Improvising/Improv – the act of inventing on the spot music without referencing a written score.

Jam – playing music with others in a casual manner; usually of an improvisatory nature.

Jazz – a genre of music that began in America in the later years of the 19th century.

Keeping time – the art of staying in time with the tempo of a piece or song.

Key signature – a set of sharp (#) or flat (b) symbols placed on the staff at the beginning of a song or piece.

Measure(s) – also known as a bar or bars, is a set number of beats delineated by bar lines, and determined by the time signature.

Melodic motif – a recurring musical idea.

Melody – the main part of a song or piece that listeners usually remember and can distinguish easily from other instruments in the music.

Metronome – a device used by musician's to keep at the right tempo.

Minims/Half note - a note having the time value of two quarter notes or half of a whole note, represented by a ring with a stem.

Music Notation – a written language used to express music.

Natural – removes the effect of a sharp or a natural.

Neck – the thin part of a guitar that joins the body to the head or headstock. The fretboard is attached to this.

Notes – musical pitches.

O – open string.

Octave – the distance between two notes that have the same name.

Pedal point/Inverted pedal point – playing notes around a single note that is either constantly sustained throughout or played in between every other note.

Pentatonic Major – the first, third, fourth, fifth, and flattened seventh notes of a major scale.

Pentatonic Minor – the first, flattened third, fourth, fifth, and flattened seventh notes of a major scale.

Picking pattern(s) – physically and/or harmonically recurring.

Picking/Plucking – the act of sounding the strings on guitar.

Pieces – music that does not contain lyrics.

Pivoting (Pivot) – a technique where a finger or fingers stay in the same position during a chord change.

Planting – resting picking fingers on strings before they are required to play.

Preparation (Prepare) – a technique whereby fingers are positioned in anticipation of the next chord.

Pulgar – the Spanish word for thumb.

Pumping – describes an undesirable movement of the picking hand forearm that resembles the motion of a piston in an engine.

Quaver/Eighth note ♩ - a note having the time value of an eighth of a whole note or half a quarter note, represented by a large dot with a hooked stem.

Repeat one bar sign ✖ – repeat the previous bar exactly.

Repeat sign ||: :|| – repeat all bars/measures that are in between.

Repeat two bars sign – repeat the previous two bars exactly.

Rest stroke(s) - picking movement where the finger comes to rest on the adjacent string after picking controlled by the third joint.

Rhythm - a strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound.

Riff - a short repeated phrase in popular music and jazz, typically used as an introduction or refrain in a song.

Rotation – the desired type of movement from the elbow of the picking hand when moving across strings.

RSI – Repetitive Stress Injury.

Scale – any set of musical notes ordered by various sets of semitone and tone intervals.

Scale passage – melodic ideas in songs that incorporate scales or parts of scales.

Score – a term that describes musical pieces or songs that are written out using traditional music notation.

Semi breves/Whole note - a note having the time value of two half notes or four quarter notes, represented by a ring with no stem.

Semitone – a distance of one fret.

Sharp # - a musical term that denotes a pitch that is raised by a semitone.

Solo – used to describe a musician that performs alone, or a section in a music where a musician takes a leading role.

Songs - a short poem or lyrics set to music that is meant to be sung.

Stem – a thin vertical line that is attached to the head of a note. It may also have a tail attached to it.

String indication – a circled number (sometimes followed by a dotted line) used exclusively in music notation that shows which string a note or notes should be played on.

Strings – made from a multitude of materials, with varying thicknesses, applications, and sonic characteristics these are hit, picked, and strummed to create sounds on the guitar.

Strumming (Strum) – a pendulum-like movement used to sound the strings.

Tablature – a system of writing for the guitar and certain other stringed instruments that shows the position of a finger on a given string.

Tail – the part of a musical note that extends out from the stem.

Time signature - A time signature is a convention in Western music notation that specifies how many note values of a particular type are contained in each measure (bar).

Tirando – the Spanish word for free stroke.

Tone – a distance of two frets.

Up strum V - strumming the strings in an upward motion towards the ceiling.

Vertical stretching – exercises designed to improve the flexibility and dexterity of the fretting hand fingers.

X – unplayed string.