
BEGINNERS:

3

SKILLS

YOU CAN MASTER
RIGHT NOW!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Before We Start: Tune Your Guitar	2
1 Learn These 4-5 Cords	3
2 Learn Some Basic Strumming	8
3 Learn Some Covers	12
Bonus: Where to Find Over 700 Guitar Song Lessons	13

Learning to play the guitar is meant to be fun and exciting.

Unfortunately, start Googling some beginner guitar tips and you might soon think otherwise.

Beginner guitar content is often too focused on basic skills like holding a guitar, guitar anatomy, finger exercises, and restringing.

And I don't know about you, but I haven't heard many students dying to learn how to restring their guitar or practice endless hours of finger exercises.

But it doesn't have to be like this:

Learning to play the guitar can still be a fun and exciting, even for the most inexperienced players.

You just have to know where to start.

Here I'm going to share **3 simple things you can learn on the guitar right now** to ensure your learning experience is as fun as possible.

Finally, we'll also briefly explore where to go to further your playing once you've nailed these guitar basics.

Before We Start: *Tune Your Guitar*

Before you dig into the the other tips on this list, make sure your guitar is in tune.

There's a couple of ways you can do this:

First of all, you can ask someone to tune it for you.

Don't be disheartened or embarrassed to do so. John Darnielle from The Mountain Goats used to take his axe to the local music store every time it went out of tune.

Alternatively, you can tune it yourself.

Most beginner guitar packs will come with a chromatic tuner that'll help you do this.

If you don't have a chromatic tuner, use your smartphone to download a tuning app for either Android or IOS. These apps are usually relatively cheap or even free.



Remember to tune your guitar to standard tuning (EADGBE)

While there are hundreds of different guitar tunings out there, the tips we'll cover in this article are designed to be used with standard tuning.

1 Learn These Chords

So, now that your guitar is in tune, have a shot at playing.

The best place to start for beginner guitarists is to learn these 4 chords:

G, E minor, C, and D.

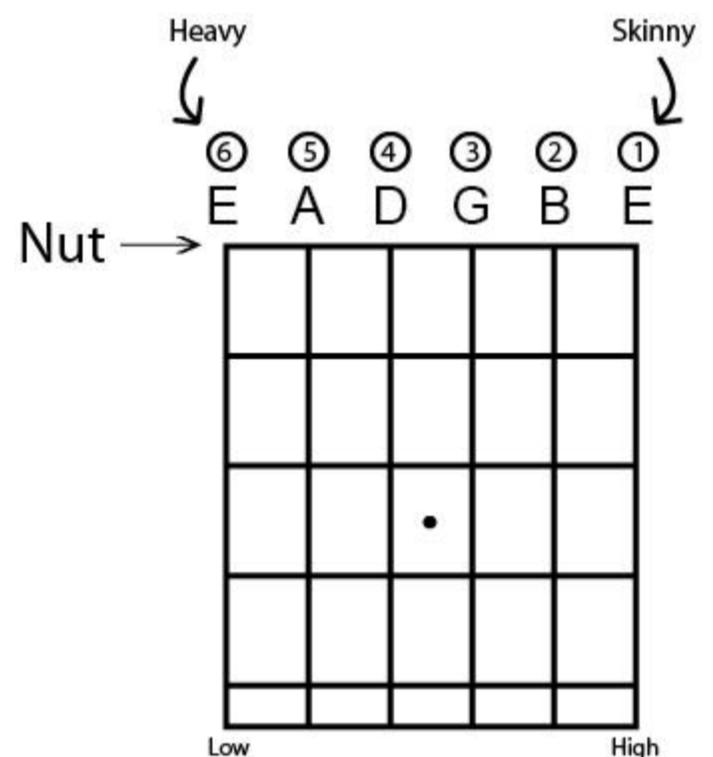
If you want to step things up a little, try learning A minor as well.

The numbers in these diagrams below indicate which finger is used.

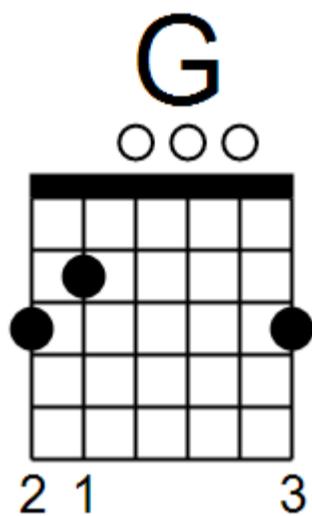
1 is your index finger, 2 is your middle finger, 3 is your ring finger and 4 is your pinky finger.

The “O” indicates you strum that string open, meaning you strum the string even though no finger is pressing on it.

The “X” indicates you do not strum that particular string.



1 Learn These Chords



Hint: There are a few variations of the G chord, so don't get confused.

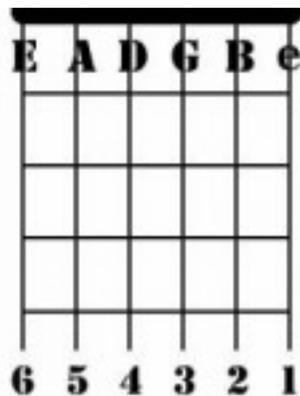
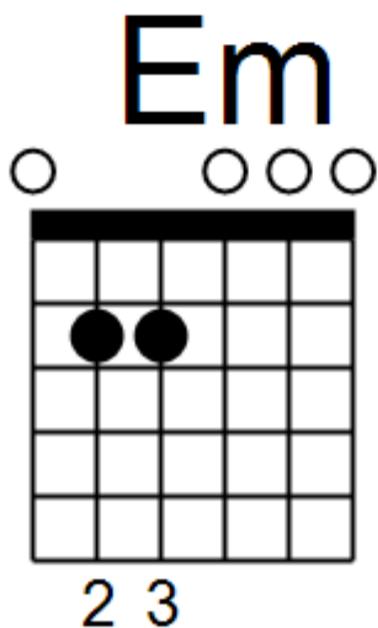
Below is the G chord displayed on the Chord Finder from GuitarTricks.com:

You can see the numbers on the top indicate the fret number. The frets on the simple black and white chord diagrams are just the rows of squares. Looking at both of these you can see how the diagrams relate to the actual guitar.



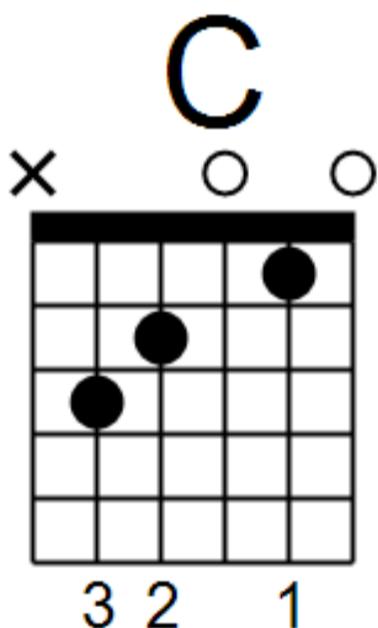
Chord Finder from GuitarTricks.com

1 Learn These Chords



Your middle finger (2) goes on the 5th string (A) on the 2nd fret.

Your ring finger (3) goes on the 4th string (D) on the 2nd fret.



Your index finger (1) is on the 2nd string (B) on the 1st fret.

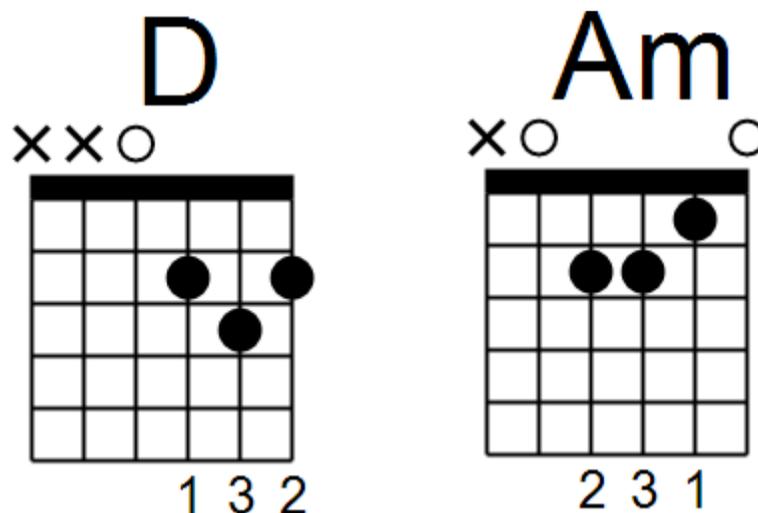
Your middle finger (2) is on the 4th string (D) on the 2nd fret.

Your ring finger (3) is on the 5th string (A) on the 3rd fret.

The X indicates you don't play the 6th string (E).

The O indicates you play the 3rd and 1st strings (G, e) open, meaning you strum them.

1 *Learn These Chords*



Without going into too much theory, these are the I, vi, IV, and V chords of the G major scale.

They are basically the backbone of modern songwriting and have been used in hundreds of the most popular songs from the past century.

They make for a great place to start when learning the guitar.

Plus, they are also “open chords” and are a lot easier to play than barre chords, which involve using one finger to simultaneously fret all 6 strings.

You can use a capo to transpose these chords and play along with your favorite songs even if they aren’t composed in the key of G major.

Learning these chords will take at least a few solid hours of practice.

1 *Learn These Chords*

Not only will you need to remember the chord shapes, but your hand and fingers will need to get used to holding down these chord shapes so that all notes ring out clearly.

The basics of learning the guitar involves teaching your hand to do things it normally wouldn't do. And that, unfortunately, takes time.

Luckily, the internet is full of free resources you can use to help you.

Youtube, for example is a great place to start. Simply search for “how to play G chord guitar” and you’ll immediately find tons of free tutorials from other players.

You’ll likely experience some pain in your hand and wrist, and if you’re using a steel string guitar you may also find the strings hurting the tips of your fingers.

Just remember, this is all normal, and the more you practice the faster your hand will get used to gripping these chords.



2 *Learn Some Basic Strumming Patterns*

As you're practicing your first 4 or 5 chords on the guitar, double up your practice and experiment with some basic strum techniques.

This will help you play more rhythmically rather than just bashing out one chord after another.

Strumming patterns are usually broken down into “down” and “up” strokes.

As you can imagine, down strokes involve strumming a chord from the lowest sounding string to the highest (or from 6th to 1st, if you're familiar with some guitar lingo).

An up stroke, on the other hand, is performed in reverse; by strumming a chord from the highest sounding string to the lowest (1st to 6th).

Guitar strumming lessons will usually break down the beats of a bar (usually into 8th notes, or 8 beats) and tell you in which direction to strum on each beat.

For example, a basic guitar strumming lesson will usually look like this:

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

D U D U

2 *Learn Some Basic Strumming Patterns*

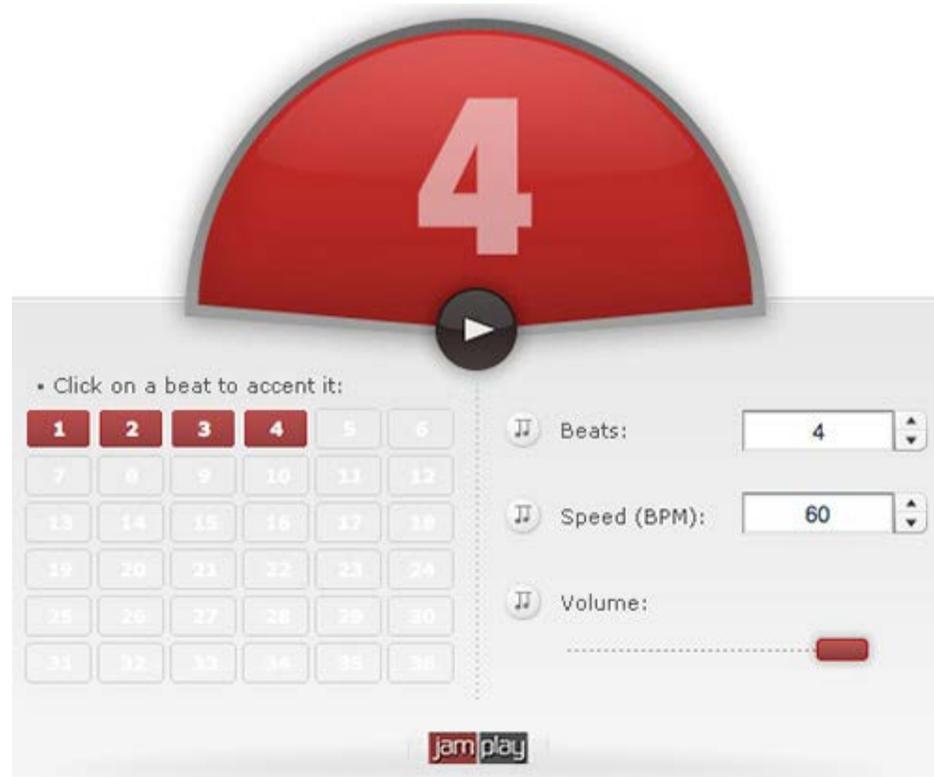
It's a good idea to use a metronome when learning different strum patterns as it allows you to hear the individual beats of a bar.

Plus, playing along to the click of a metronome simultaneously teaches you to play in time, which is important for when you start playing along to songs or with other musicians.

Some guitar tuners may double up as a metronome while some beginner guitar kits will include a metronome among other accessories.

Alternatively, download a metronome app for your smartphone. Again, these are usually cheap or even free.

Some popular guitar learning websites like JamPlay have metronomes in their dashboards.



2 *Learn Some Basic Strumming Patterns*

Remember, there are hundreds of strumming patterns out there, some of which are extremely complex.

Start by researching some basic strumming patterns on Google or Youtube.

Alternatively, try learning the 3 basic patterns outlined below.

You can practice strumming patterns with just 1 chord, which simultaneously helps you build up strength in your fretting hand, as well as finesse in your strumming hand.

3 basic strumming patterns every beginner should learn:

D= Down stroke

U= Up stroke

DX= Muted down strum

“The All-Down Strum Pattern”

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

D D D D D D D D

This might seem simple, but it’s an important pattern to learn. Plenty of rock songs are built on a driving, all-down guitar strumming pattern.

2 *Learn Some Basic Strumming Patterns*

“The Alternating Strumming Pattern”

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

D U D U D U D U

This pattern uses down and up strokes on all beats of the bar. Again, it seems simple but it’s an important one to know.

“The Muted Strum Pattern”

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

D U DX U D U DX U

This last pattern involves a muted down strum. This involves letting off the pressure on your fretting hand just enough so the strings don’t ring out.

Alternatively, you can also perform this by strumming down and simultaneously muting the strings with your palm. However, this is usually a bit more difficult and takes a little extra practice.

3 Learn Some Covers!

Once you manage to get down the chords mentioned above and at least a few standard strum patterns, you're ready to start learning some basic songs.

Here are **10 great songs** to learn that use the chords discussed at the beginning of this article.

Make sure you play along to them to get a feel for the song and its unique rhythm.

Also remember to learn songs that you love.

Learning the guitar is meant to be fun, and you're more likely to have fun learning songs that you really like.

List	Title	Artist	Style
1	Sweet Home Alabama	Lynyrd Skynyrd	Acoustic
2	Hotel California	Eagles	Rock
3	Every Rose Has Its Thorn	Poison	Rock
4	Simple Man	Lynyrd Skynyrd	Rock
5	Runaway Train	Soul Asylum	Acoustic
6	Kiss From A Rose	Seal	Acoustic
7	Wild Horses	The Rolling Stones	Acoustic
8	Over My Head	Fleetwood Mac	Acoustic
9	House of the Rising Sun	Animals	Rock
10	Achy Breaky Heart	Billy Ray Cyrus	Country

Where to Find Over 700 Guitar Song Lessons



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So, you've learned some basic chords and strumming patterns and you're slowly building up your repertoire of covers.

Now what?

To take your guitar playing to the next level, I recommend you learn more about the website GUITARTRICKS.COM.

This site is dedicated to providing easy step-by-step guitar lessons for beginners, from an award-winning curriculum.

By signing up for the service, you'll automatically get access to hundreds of tabs and lessons to learn your favourite songs from world-class artists.

Best of all, [Guitar Tricks offers a free 14-day trial for all students](#), meaning you can check out the service before committing for the long term.

To find out more about Guitar Tricks and their awesome lessons, [you can read my in-depth review here](#).

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