

Book II

Sounds and Techniques

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"Sheldon, I'm leaving you. I'm moving in with your best friend, and I'm taking the furniture, the car, and the dog. Maybe this will all help you to finally learn all those minor chords on your guitar."

In this book . . .

We get into the meat of things — really playing guitar. We warm you up with basic major and minor chords and then add a bit of zest to the recipe: 7th chords. And we give the right hand (or left, if you're a lefty) its due in a chapter on rhythm techniques. We cover playing melodies in position in the last chapter.

Here are the contents of Book II at a glance.

Chapter 1: Basic Major and Minor Chords	77
Chapter 2: Adding Spice: Basic 7th Chords	95
Chapter 3: The Left Hand: Chord Techniques	107
Chapter 4: The Right Hand: Rhythm Techniques	121
Chapter 5: Playing Melodies in Position and in Double-Stops	139

Chapter 1

Basic Major and Minor Chords

In This Chapter

- ▶ Playing the basic guitar chords
- ▶ Playing songs with basic major and minor chords
- ▶ Sweatin' to the oldies progression

Accompanying yourself as you sing your favorite songs is one of the best ways to pick up basic guitar chords. If you know how to play basic chords, you can play lots of popular songs right away — from “Skip to My Lou” to “Louie Louie.”

In this chapter, the major and minor chords are organized into families. A *family of chords* is simply a group of related chords. They're *related* because you often use these chords together to play songs. The concept is sort of like color-coordinating your clothing or creating a balanced meal. Chords in a family go together like peanut butter and jelly (except that chords in a family are less messy). Along the way, you expand your guitar-notation vocabulary as you start to develop your chord-playing and strumming skills.



Think of a family of chords as a plant. One of the chords — the one that feels like home base in a song (usually the chord you start and end a song with) — is the plant's root, and the other chords in the family are the different shoots rising up from that same root. Together, the root and shoots make up the family. Put 'em all together and you have a lush garden . . . er, make that a *song*. By the way, the technical term for a family is *key*. So you can say, “This song uses A-family chords,” or “This song is in the key of A.”

Playing Chords in the A Family

The A family is a popular one for playing songs on the guitar because, like other families in this chapter, its chords are easy to play. That's because A-family chords contain *open strings* (strings that you play without pressing down any frets). Chords that contain open strings are called *open chords*, or *open-position chords*. Listen to “Fire and Rain,” by James Taylor, to hear the sound of a song that uses A-family chords.

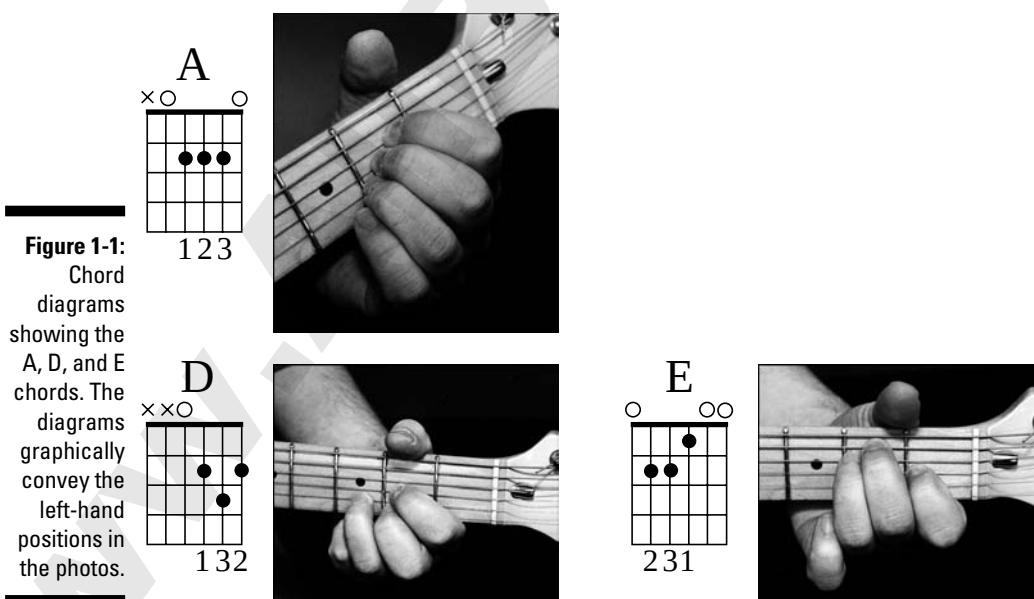
The basic chords in the A family are A, D, and E. Each of these chords is what's known as a *major* chord. A chord that's named by a letter name alone, such as these (A, D, and E), is always major.

Fingering A-family chords

When fingering chords, you use the “ball” of your fingertip, placing it just behind the fret (on the side toward the tuning pegs). Arch your fingers so the fingertips fall perpendicular to the neck. And make sure your left-hand fingernails are short so they don't prevent you from pressing the strings all the way down to the fingerboard. Figure 1-1 shows the fingering for the A, D, and E chords — the basic chords in the A family. (If you're unclear about reading chord diagrams, check out Chapter 2 in Book I.)



Don't play any strings marked with an X (the 6th string on the A chord and the 5th and 6th strings on the D chord). Strike just the top five (5th through 1st) strings in the A chord and the top four (4th through 1st) strings in the D chord. Selectively striking strings may be awkward at first, but keep at it and you'll get the hang of it. If you play a string marked with an X and we catch you, we'll revoke your picking privileges on the spot.



Playing callusly

Playing chords can be a little painful at first. (We mean for you, not for people within earshot; c'mon, we're not *that* cruel.) No matter how tough you are, if you've never played guitar before, your left-hand fingertips are *soft*. Fretting a guitar string, therefore, is going to hurt.

This situation isn't weird at all — in fact, it's quite normal for beginning guitarists. (Well, it's weird if you *enjoy* the pain.) You must develop nice, thick calluses on your fingertips before playing the guitar can ever feel completely comfortable. You may take weeks or even months to build up those protective layers of dead skin, depending on how much and how often you play. But after you finally earn your calluses, you never lose

them (completely, anyway). Like a Supreme Court justice, you're a guitar player *for life*.

You can develop calluses by playing the basic chords in this chapter over and over again. As you progress, you also gain strength in your hands and fingers, and become more comfortable in general while playing the guitar. Before you know it's happening, fretting a guitar becomes as natural to you as shaking hands with your best friend.

As with any physical-conditioning routine, stop and rest if you feel tenderness or soreness in your fingers or hands. Building up calluses takes time, and you can't hurry time (or love, for that matter, as Diana Ross would attest).

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques

Strumming A-family chords

Use your right hand to strum these A-family chords with a pick, your thumb, or the back of your fingernails (in a brushing motion toward the floor). Start strumming from the lowest-pitched string of the chord (the top-most as you hold the guitar) and strum toward the floor.

A *chord progression* is a series of chords that you play one after the other. Figure 1-2 presents a simple progression in the key of A and instructs you to strum each chord — in the order shown (reading from left to right) — four times. Use all *downstrokes* (dragging your pick across the strings toward the floor) as you play. Listen to Track 2 to hear the rhythm of this progression and try to play along with it.

Figure 1-2:
A simple
chord pro-
gression in
the key of A
(using only
chords in the
A family).



Track 2, 0:00

After strumming each chord four times, you come to a vertical line in the music that follows the four strum symbols. This is a *bar line*. It's not something that you play. Bar lines visually separate the music into smaller sections known as *measures*, or *bars*. (You can use these terms interchangeably; they both mean the same thing.) Measures make written music easier to grasp because they break up the music into little, digestible chunks. (See Chapter 4 in Book I for more on the basics of the musical staff.)

Don't hesitate or stop at the bar line. Keep your strumming speed the same throughout, even as you play "between the measures" — that is, in the imaginary "space" from the end of one measure to the beginning of the next that the bar line represents. Start out playing as slowly as necessary to help you keep the beat steady. You can always speed up as you become more confident and proficient in your chord fingering and switching.

By playing a progression over and over, you start to develop left-hand strength and calluses on your fingertips. If you want to play a song right away, you can. Skip to the section "Playing Songs with Basic Major and Minor Chords," at the end of this chapter. Because you now know the basic open chords in the A family, you can play "Kumbaya." Rock on!

Playing Chords in the D Family

The basic chords that make up the D family are D, Em (pronounced "E minor"), G, and A. The D family, therefore, shares two basic open chords with the A family (D and A) and introduces two new ones: Em and G. Because you already know how to play D and A from the preceding section, you need to work on only two more chords to add the entire D family to your repertoire: Em and G. Listen to "Here Comes the Sun," by the Beatles (from *Abbey Road*), to hear a song that uses D-family chords.

Minor describes the quality of a type of chord. A minor chord has a sound that's distinctly different from that of a major chord. You may characterize the sound of a minor chord as sad, mournful, scary, or even ominous.



The relationship of the notes that make up the chord determines a chord's quality. A chord that's named by a capital letter followed by a small "m" is always minor.

Chord qualities

Chords have different qualities, which has nothing to do with whether they're good or bad little chords. You can define *quality* as the *relationship* between the different notes that make up the chord — or simply, what the chord sounds like.

Besides *major*, other chord qualities include *minor*, *7th*, *minor 7th*, and *major 7th*. The following list describes chord qualities:

- ✓ **Major chords:** These are simple chords that have a stable, positive sound.
- ✓ **Minor chords:** These are simple chords that have a soft, sometimes sad sound.
- ✓ **7th chords:** These are bluesy, funky-sounding chords.
- ✓ **Minor 7th chords:** These chords sound mellow and jazzy.
- ✓ **Major 7th chords:** These chords sound bright and jazzy.

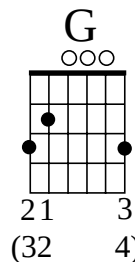
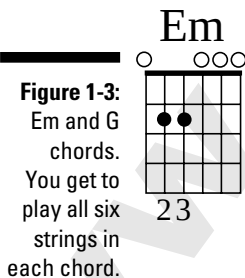
Each type of chord, or chord quality, has a different kind of sound, and you can often distinguish the chord type just by hearing it. Listen, for example, to the sound of a major chord by strumming A, D, and E. (For more on 7th, minor 7th, and major 7th chords, check out Chapter 2 in Book II.)

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques

Fingering D-family chords

Figure 1-3 shows you how to finger the two basic chords in the D family that aren't in the A family. You may notice that none of the strings in either chord diagram displays an X symbol, so you get to strike all the strings whenever you play a G or Em chord. Go ahead and celebrate by dragging your pick or right-hand fingers across the strings in a big *keraaaang*.





Try the following trick to quickly pick up how to play Em and to hear the difference between the major and minor chord qualities: Play E, which is a major chord, and then lift your index finger off the 3rd string. Now you're playing Em, which is the minor-chord version of E. By alternating, you can easily hear the difference in quality between a major and minor chord.



Also, notice the alternative fingering for G (2-3-4 instead of 1-2-3). As your hand gains strength and becomes more flexible, you want to switch to the 2-3-4 fingering instead of the initially easier 1-2-3 fingering. Why? You can switch to other chords faster using the 2-3-4 fingering for G.

Strumming D-family chords

In Figure 1-4, you play a simple chord progression using D-family chords. Notice the difference in the strum in this figure versus that of Figure 1-2. In Figure 1-2, you strum each chord four times per measure. Each strum is one pulse, or beat. Figure 1-4 divides the second strum of each measure (or the second beat) into two strums — up and down — both of which together take up the time of one beat, meaning that you must play each strum in beat 2 twice as quickly as you do a regular strum.

Practicing and getting good

It may sound obvious to say that the more you practice, the better you'll get, but it's true. Perhaps even better is this: *The more you practice, the faster you'll get good.* Although there's no set amount of practice time for "getting good," a good rule of thumb is to practice a minimum of 30 minutes every day. Also, it's generally agreed that practicing at regular intervals is better than jamming a week's worth of time (say, 3½ hours) into one practice session.

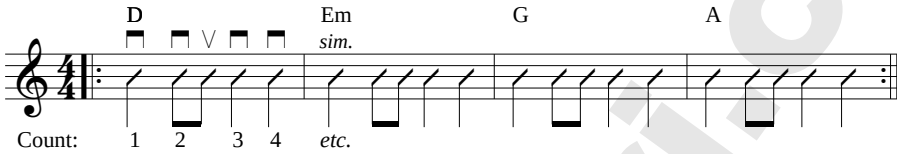
If at first you find a new technique difficult to master, stick with it, and you'll eventually get the hang of it. To get even better on the guitar, try the following:

- ✓ Set aside a certain time every day for practicing.

- ✓ Work on one or two goals at a time, such as learning a piece and an exercise.
- ✓ Get together with your guitar-playing friends and get them to listen to what you're doing.
- ✓ Create a practice environment where you have privacy and are away from distractions (TV, conversations, your mother bugging you to come to dinner, and so on).
- ✓ Watch videos of guitar players who play the kind of music you like and want to learn.

Figure 1-4:

This progression contains chords commonly found in the key of D.



The additional symbol  with the strum symbol means that you strum down (hitting the lower strings first), and  means you strum up. The term *sim.* is an abbreviation of the Italian word *simile*, which instructs you to keep playing in a *similar* manner — in this case to keep strumming in a *down, down-up, down, down* pattern.



If you're playing fingerstyle (strumming with your fingers), play upstrokes with the back of your thumbnail whenever you see the symbol .

Knowing the basic open chords in the D family (D, Em, G, and A) enables you to play a song in the key of D right now. If you skip to the section “Playing Songs with Basic Major and Minor Chords,” later in this chapter, you can play the song “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” right now. Go for it!

Playing Chords in the G Family

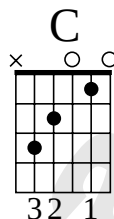
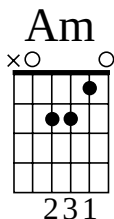
By tackling related chord families (as A, D, and G are), you carry over your knowledge from family to family in the form of chords that you already know from earlier families. The basic chords that make up the G family are G, Am, C, D, and Em. If you already know G, D, and Em (which we describe in the preceding sections on the A and D families), you can now try Am and C. Listen to “You’ve Got a Friend,” as played by James Taylor, to hear the sound of a song that uses G-family chords.

Fingering G-family chords

In Figure 1-5, you see the fingerings for Am and C, the new chords that you need to play in the G family. Notice that the fingering of these two chords is similar: Each has finger 1 on the 2nd string, 1st fret, and finger 2 on the 4th

string, 2nd fret. In moving between these chords, keep these first two fingers in place. Switching chords is always easier if you don't need to move all your fingers to new positions. The notes that different chords share are known as *common tones*. Notice the X over the 6th string in each of these chords. Don't play that string while strumming either C or Am. (We mean it!)

Figure 1-5:
The
fingering
for Am and
C chords.



Strumming G-family chords

Figure 1-6 shows a simple chord progression that you can play by using G-family chords. Play this progression over and over to accustom yourself to switching chords and to build up those left-hand calluses. It *does* get easier after a while. Promise!

Figure 1-6:
A chord
progression
that you
can play
using only
G-family
chords.

Track 2, 0:43

Count: 1 2 3 4 etc.

Notice that, in each measure, you play beats 2 and 3 as “down-up” strums. Listen to Track 2 on the CD to hear this sound.

Knowing the basic open chords in the G family (G, Am, C, D, and Em) enables you to play a song in the key of G right now. Skip to the section “Playing Songs with Basic Major and Minor Chords,” later in this chapter, and you can play “Auld Lang Syne.”

Playing Chords in the C Family

The last chord family we need to discuss is C. Some people say that C is the easiest key to play in. C is sort of the music-theory square one — the point at which everything (and, usually, everyone) begins in music. The C family is placed last in this chapter because it has lots of chords in its family — too many to master all at once.



The basic chords that make up the C family are C, Dm, Em, F, G, and Am. If you practice the preceding sections on the A-, D-, and G-family chords, you know C, Em, G, and Am. So in this section, you need to pick up only two more chords: Dm and F. “Dust in the Wind” by Kansas and “The Boxer” by Simon and Garfunkel use C-family chords.

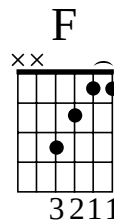
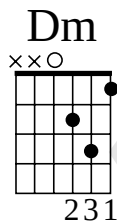
Book II

Sounds and
Techniques

Fingering C-family chords

In Figure 1-7, you see the new chords that you need to play in the C family. Note that both Dm and F have the second finger on the 3rd string, 2nd fret. Hold this common tone down as you switch between these two chords.

Figure 1-7:
Dm and F
chords. The
indication
(_) in the
F-chord
diagram
tells you
to fret (or
barre) two
strings with
one finger.



Many people find F the most difficult chord to play of the basic chords. That's because F uses no open strings, and it also requires a barre. A *barre* is what you're playing whenever you press down two or more strings at once with a single left-hand finger. To play the F chord, you use your first finger to press down both the 1st and 2nd strings at the 1st fret simultaneously.



You must exert extra finger pressure to play a barre. At first, you may find that, as you strum the F chord (hitting the top four strings only, as the Xs in the chord diagram indicate), you hear buzzes or muffled strings. Experiment with various placements of your index finger. Try adjusting the angle of your finger or rotating it on its side. Keep trying until you find a position for the first finger that enables all four strings to ring clearly as you strike them.

Strumming C-family chords

Figure 1-8 shows a simple chord progression using C-family chords. Play the progression over and over to get used to switching among the chords in this family and, of course, to help build up those nasty little calluses.

Figure 1-8:

A simple chord progression that you can play by using C-family chords.

Track 2, 1:10



Look at Figure 1-8. Notice the small curved line joining the second half of beat 2 to beat 3. This line is known as a tie. A *tie* tells you not to strike the second note of the two tied notes (in this case, the one on beat 3). Instead, just keep holding the chord on that beat (letting it ring) without restriking it with your right hand.

Listen to Track 2 on the CD to hear the sound of this strumming pattern. This slightly jarring rhythmic effect is an example of syncopation. In *syncopation*, the musician either strikes a note (or chord) where you don't expect to hear it or fails to strike where you do expect to hear it.



You probably expect to strike notes on the beats (1, 2, 3, 4). In the example in Figure 1-8, however, you strike no chord on beat 3. That variation in the strumming pattern makes the chord on beat 2½ feel as if it's *accentuated* (or *accented*). This accentuation interrupts the normal (expected) pulse of the music, resulting in syncopation. *Syncopation* breaks up the regular pattern of beats and presents an element of surprise in music. The balance between expectation and surprise is what holds a listener's interest.

To play a song that uses C-family chords right now, skip to the song “Michael, Row the Boat Ashore,” in the section “Playing Songs with Basic Major and Minor Chords,” later in this chapter. Bon voyage!

Playing Songs with Basic Major and Minor Chords

This section is where the *real music* happens — you know, *songs*. If the titles here hark back to bygone campfire days of your youth, fear not. These songs, although seemingly simple, illustrate universal principles that carry over into the — shall we say it? — *hipper* musical genres. Pick up these songs, and you’ll be playing the music of your choice in no time.



You may notice that all the strumming examples that we provide in this chapter are only four measures long. Must all of your exercises be limited this way? No, but songwriters do commonly write in four-measure phrases. So the length of these exercises prepares you for actual passages in real songs. You may also notice that each strumming example is in 4/4 time, which means that each measure has four beats. Most popular songs contain four beats per measure, so the 4/4 time signature in the exercises also prepares you to play actual songs. (See Chapter 4 in Book I for more on time signatures.)

In this section of actual songs, you sometimes play a single chord for more than a measure, and sometimes you change chords within a single measure. Listen to the CD to hear the rhythm of the chord changes as you follow the beat numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) that appear below the guitar staff.



After you can comfortably play your way through these songs, try to memorize them. That way, you don’t need to stare into a book as you’re trying to develop your rhythm.

If you get bored with these songs — or with the way *you* play these songs — have a guitar-playing friend play the same songs by using the strumming patterns and chord positions indicated. Listening to someone else play helps you hear the songs objectively, and if your friend has a little flair, you may pick up a cool little trick or two. Work on infusing a bit of *personality* into all of your playing, even if you’re just strumming a simple folk song.

Here’s some special information to help you play the songs in this section:

- ✓ **Kumbaya:** To play “Kumbaya” (the ultimate campfire song), you need to know how to play A, D, and E chords; how to strum using downstrokes; and how to start a fire by using only two sticks, a magnifying glass, and some dried leaves.



The first measure in this song is known as a *pickup* measure, which starts the song with one or more beats missing — in this case, the first two. During the pickup measure, the guitar part shows a *rest*, or a musical silence. Don't play during the rest; begin playing on the syllable “ya” on beat 1. Notice, too, that the last bar is missing two beats — beats 3 and 4. The missing beats in the last measure enable you to repeat the pickup measure in repeated playings of the song, and to make that measure, combined with the first incomplete one, total the requisite four beats.

- ✓ **Swing Low, Sweet Chariot:** To play “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” you need to know how to play D, Em, G, and A chords; how to play down and down-up strums; and how to sing like James Earl Jones.

This song starts with a one-beat pickup, and the guitar rests for that beat. Notice that beat 2 of measures 2, 4, and 6 has two strums instead of one. Strum those beats down and then up (▢ and ▽) with each strum twice as fast as a regular strum.

- ✓ **Auld Lang Syne:** To play “Auld Lang Syne” you need to know how to play G, Am, C, D, and Em chords; how to play down and down-up strums; and maybe what “Auld Lang Syne” means.

Measure 8 is a little tricky, because you play three different chords in the same measure (Em, Am, and D). In the second half of the measure, you change chords on each beat — one stroke per chord. Practice playing only measure 8 slowly, over and over. Then play the song. **Note:** In changing between G and C (bars 4–6 and 12–19), fingering G with fingers 2, 3, and 4 instead of 1, 2, and 3 makes the chord switch easier — the second and third fingers form a shape that simply moves one string.

- ✓ **Michael, Row the Boat Ashore:** To play “Michael, Row the Boat Ashore” you need to know how to play C, Dm, Em, F, and G chords and how to play a syncopated eighth-note strum.

The strumming pattern here is *syncopated*. The strum that normally occurs on beat 3 is *anticipated* — it comes half a beat early. This kind of syncopation gives the song a Latin feel. Listen to the CD to hear the strumming rhythm. Remember, on the Dm and F chords, you don't strum the lowest two strings (the 6th and 5th). For the C chord, don't strum the bottom string (the 6th).



Track 3

Kumbaya

Voice

Kum - ba - ya, my Lord, Kum - ba - ya.

Guitar

A D A

Count: 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 etc.

5

Kum - ba - ya, my Lord, Kum - ba - ya.

D E

9

Kum - ba - ya, my Lord, Kum - ba - ya.

A D A

13

Oh Lord, Kum - ba - ya.

D A E A

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques



Track 4

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

Voice

Swing low, sweet char - i - ot,

Guitar

Count: 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

com - in' for to car - ry me home. Swing - low, sweet

sim. Em A D
etc.

char - i - ot, com - in' for to car - ry me home.

G D A D

Track 5

Auld Lang Syne

Voice



Guitar

Count: 4 1 2 3 4 etc.

Chords: G, D, G, C

Technique: *sim.* (simulazione)

6

auld ac- quaint- ance be for- got and days of auld lang syne? For

Chords: G, D, Em, Am, D, G

10

auld lang syne, my dear, for auld lang syne, we'll

Chords: D, G, C

14

take a cup of kind- ness yet for auld lang syne.

Chords: G, D, Em, Am, D, G

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques



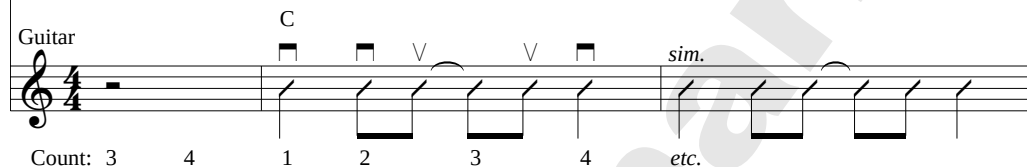
Track 6

Michael, Row the Boat Ashore

Voice



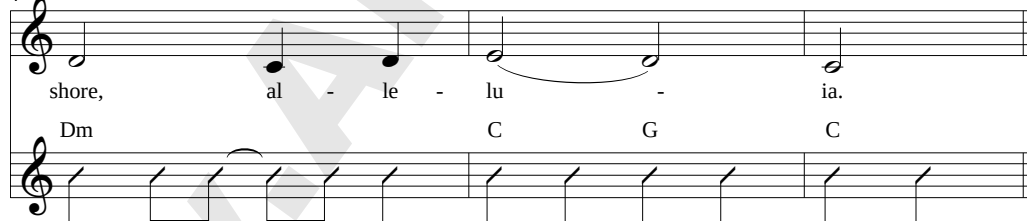
Guitar



4



7



Strumming the “Oldies” Progression

One cool thing you can do right now is play *oldies* — songs from the late '50s and early '60s such as “Earth Angel” and “Duke of Earl.” These songs are based on what’s sometimes called the *oldies progression*, a series of four chords repeated over and over.



You can play the oldies progression in any key, but the best guitar keys for the oldies progression are C and G. In the key of C, the four chords that make up the progression are C-Am-F-G. In G, the chords are G-Em-C-D. Try strumming the progression in each key by playing four down-strums per chord. Play the four chords over and over, in the sequence given.

The fun begins as you sing oldies while accompanying yourself with the oldies progression. You’ll find that one of the keys (C or G) better suits your vocal range, so use that key. Playing oldies can become addicting, but the good news is that you build up your calluses very quickly.

For some songs, you play four one-beat strums per chord; for others, you play eight, or two. Following are songs you can play with the oldies progression right now. How many times you strum each chord is noted next to each song title. Don’t forget to sing. Have fun!

- ✓ **All I Have to Do Is Dream:** Two strums per chord.
- ✓ **Blue Moon:** Two strums per chord.
- ✓ **Breaking Up Is Hard to Do:** Two strums per chord.
- ✓ **Come Go with Me:** Two strums per chord.
- ✓ **Duke of Earl:** Four strums per chord.
- ✓ **Earth Angel:** Two strums per chord.
- ✓ **Heart and Soul:** Two strums per chord.
- ✓ **Hey Paula:** Two strums per chord.
- ✓ **In the Still of the Night:** (By the Five Satins) Four strums per chord.
- ✓ **Little Darlin’:** Eight strums per chord.
- ✓ **Poor Little Fool:** Four strums per chord.
- ✓ **Runaround Sue:** Eight strums per chord.
- ✓ **Sherry:** Two strums per chord.
- ✓ **Silhouettes:** Two strums per chord.
- ✓ **Stay:** Two strums per chord.

- ✓ **Take Good Care of My Baby:** Four strums per chord.
- ✓ **Tears on My Pillow:** Two strums per chord.
- ✓ **Teenager in Love:** Four strums per chord.
- ✓ **What's Your Name:** Two strums per chord.
- ✓ **Why Do Fools Fall in Love?:** Two strums per chord.
- ✓ **You Send Me:** Two strums per chord.

Chapter 2

Adding Spice: Basic 7th Chords

In This Chapter

- ▶ Playing dominant 7th chords
- ▶ Playing minor 7th chords
- ▶ Playing major 7th chords
- ▶ Playing songs that use 7th chords

In this chapter, you begin to play what are known as *open-position 7th chords*. Seventh chords are no more difficult to play than the simple major or minor chords described in Chapter 1 in Book II, but their *sound* is more complex than that of major and minor chords (because they're made up of four different notes instead of three), and their usage in music is a little more specialized.

The situation's kind of like that of the knives in your kitchen. Any big, sharp knife can cut both a pizza and a pineapple, but if you spend a lot of time doing either, you figure out that you need to use the circular-bladed gizmo for the pizza and a cleaver for the pineapple. These utensils may not be as versatile or as popular as your general-purpose knives, but if you're making Hawaiian-style pizza, nothing beats 'em. The more your culinary skills develop, the more you appreciate specialized cutlery. And the more your ear skills develop, the more you understand where to substitute 7th chords for the more ordinary major and minor chords. The different 7th chords can make the blues sound "bluesy" and jazz sound "jazzy."

Seventh chords come in several varieties, and each type has a different sound, or quality. In this chapter, you meet the three most important types of 7th chords that you encounter in playing the guitar: dominant 7th, minor 7th, and major 7th.

Dominant 7th Chords

Dominant seems a funny, technical name for a chord that's called a plain "seven" if you group it with a letter-name chord symbol. If you talk about a C7 or A7 chord, for example, you're referring to a dominant 7th chord.



Actually, the term *dominant* refers to the 5th degree of a major scale — but don't worry about the theory.

The important thing is that you call the chords “dominant sevenths” merely to distinguish them from other types of 7th chords (minor 7ths and major 7ths). Note, too, that dominant has nothing whatsoever to do with leather and studded collars. You can hear the sound of dominant 7ths in such songs as Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs’ “Wooly Bully” and the Beatles’ “I Saw Her Standing There.”

D7, G7, and C7

The D7, G7, and C7 chords are among the most common of the open dominant 7ths. Figure 2-1 shows you diagrams of these three chords that guitarists often use together to play songs.



If you already know how to play C (which is introduced in Chapter 1 in Book II), you can form C7 by simply adding your pinky on the 3rd string (at the 3rd fret).

Notice the Xs above the 5th and 6th strings on the D7 chord. Don't play those strings as you strum. Similarly, for the C7 chord, don't play the 6th string as you strum.

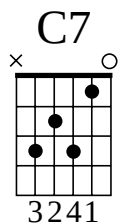
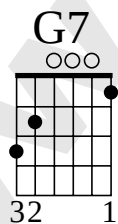
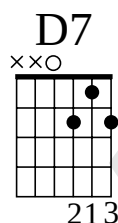


Figure 2-1:
Chord
diagrams for
D7, G7,
and C7.

Practice strumming D7, G7, and C7. You don't need written music for this exercise, so you're on the honor system to do it. Try strumming D7 four times, G7 four times, and then C7 four times. You want to accustom your left hand to the feel of the chords themselves and to switching among them.

If you want to play a song right now using these new chords, skip to the section "Playing Songs with 7th Chords," later in this chapter. You can play "Home on the Range" with the chords you know right now.

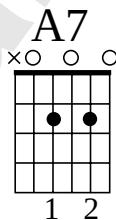
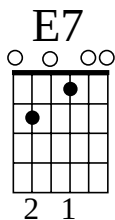
E7 and A7



Two more 7th chords that you often use together to play songs are the E7 and A7 chords. Figure 2-2 shows how you play these two open 7th chords.

If you know how to play E (check out Chapter 1 in Book II), you can form E7 by simply removing your third finger from the 4th string.

Figure 2-2:
Chord
diagrams for
E7 and A7.



This version of the E7 chord, as Figure 2-2 shows, uses only two fingers. You can also play an open position E7 chord with four fingers (as we describe in the following section). For now, however, play the two-finger version because it's easier to fret quickly, especially if you're just starting out.

Practice E7 and A7 by strumming each chord four times, switching back and forth between them. Remember to avoid striking the 6th string on the A7 chord.

If you want to play a song that uses these two open 7th chords right now, skip to the section "Playing Songs with 7th Chords," later in this chapter, and play "All Through the Night."

E7 (four-finger version) and B7

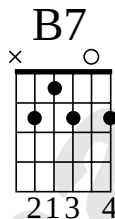
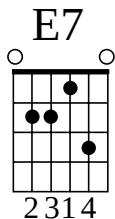
Two more popular open-position 7th chords are the four-finger version of E7 and the B7 chord. Figure 2-3 shows you how to finger the four-finger E7 and the B7 chords. Most people think that this E7 has a better *voicing* (vertical

arrangement of notes) than does the two-finger E7. You often use the B7 chord along with E7 to play certain songs. Remember to avoid striking the 6th string on the B7 chord.



If you already know how to play E, you can form this E7 by simply adding your pinky on the 2nd string (at the 3rd fret).

Figure 2-3:
Chord
diagrams
for E7 (the
four-finger
version)
and B7.



Practice these chords by strumming each one four times, switching back and forth. As you do so, notice that your second finger plays the same note at the same fret in each chord — the one at the 2nd fret of the 5th string. This note is a *common tone* (that is, it's common to both chords). In switching back and forth between the two chords, keeping this finger down on the 5th string makes switching easier. **Note:** Always hold down common tones whenever you're switching chords. They provide an anchor of stability for your left hand.

To use these chords in a song right now, skip to the section “Playing Songs with 7th Chords,” later in this chapter, and play “Over the River and Through the Woods.”

Minor 7th Chords: Dm7, Em7, and Am7

Minor 7th chords differ from dominant 7th chords in that their character is a little softer and jazzier. Minor 7th chords are what you hear in “Moondance” by Van Morrison and the verses of “Light My Fire” by the Doors. Figure 2-4 shows diagrams for the three open-position minor 7th (m7) chords.

Notice that the Dm7 uses a two-string *barre* — that is, you press down two strings with a single finger (the first finger, in this case) at the 1st fret. Angling your finger slightly or rotating it on its side may help you fret those notes firmly and eliminate any buzzes as you play the chord. The 6th and 5th strings have Xs above them. Don't strike those strings while strumming.

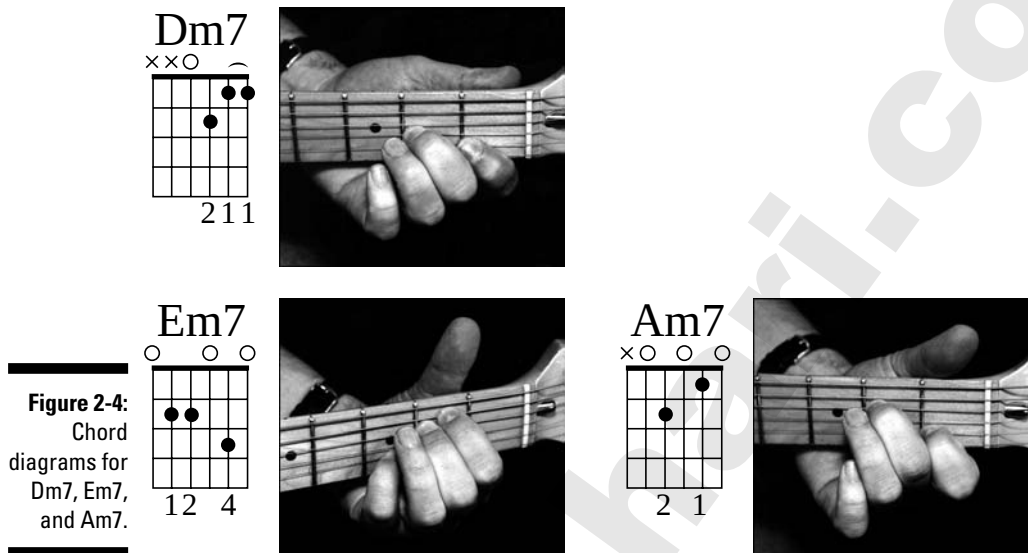


Figure 2-4:
Chord
diagrams for
Dm7, Em7,
and Am7.



TIP

You finger the Am7 chord much as you do the C chord that's explained in Chapter 1 in Book II; just lift your third finger off a C chord — and you have Am7. In switching between C and Am7 chords, remember to hold down the two common tones with your first and second fingers to switch between the chords much more quickly. And if you know how to play an F chord (see Chapter 1 in Book II), you can form Dm7 simply by removing your third finger.

Major 7th Chords: Cmaj7, Fmaj7, Amaj7, and Dmaj7

Major 7th chords differ from dominant 7th chords and minor 7th chords in that their character is bright and jazzy. You can hear this kind of chord at the beginning of “Ventura Highway” by America and “Don’t Let the Sun Catch You Crying” by Gerry and the Pacemakers. Figure 2-5 shows four open-position major 7th (maj7) chords. (For more major 7th chords, check out Appendix A.)

Notice that Dmaj7 uses a three-string barre with the first finger. Rotating the first finger slightly on its side makes it easier to play. Don’t play the 5th or 6th strings as you strike the Dmaj7 or Fmaj7 (see the Xs in the diagrams in Figure 2-5). And don’t play the 6th string on the Amaj7 or Cmaj7.

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques

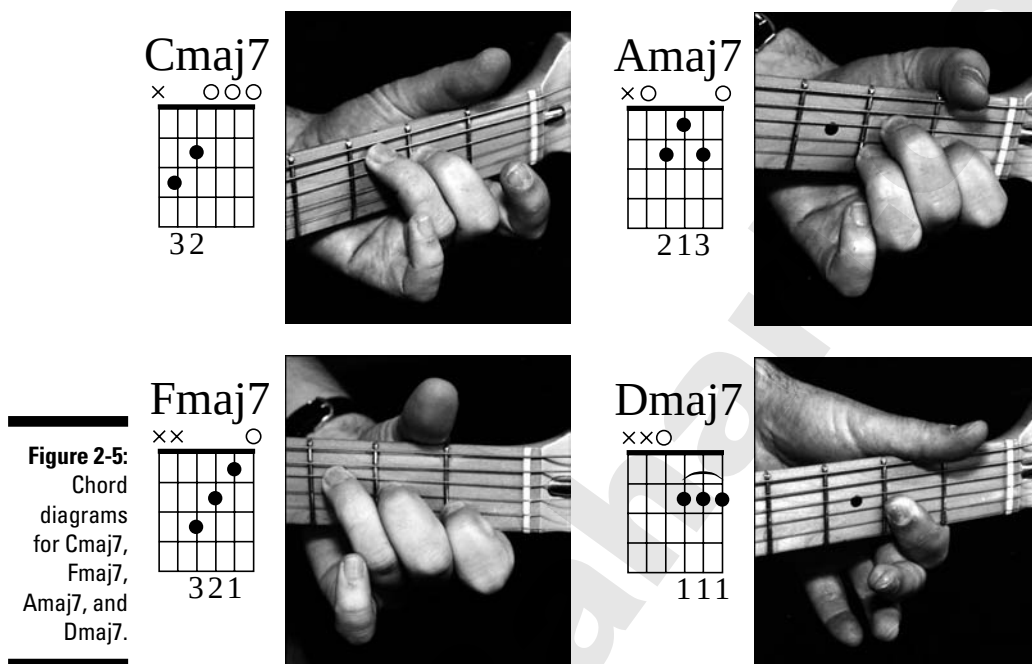


Figure 2-5: Chord diagrams for Cmaj7, Fmaj7, Amaj7, and Dmaj7.



TIP In moving between Cmaj7 and Fmaj7, notice that the second and third fingers move as a fixed shape across the strings in switching between these chords. The first finger doesn't fret any string in a Cmaj7 chord, but keep it curled and poised above the 1st fret of the 2nd string so you can bring it down quickly for the switch to Fmaj7.

Practice moving back and forth (strumming four times each) between Cmaj7 and Fmaj7 and between Amaj7 and Dmaj7.

Playing Songs with 7th Chords

Listen to the CD to hear the rhythm of the strums of the songs in this section as you follow the slash notation in the guitar part. If you have difficulty remembering how to finger the chords, refer to the earlier sections in this chapter, check out the Cheat Sheet in the front of the book, or consult Appendix A. Don't try to play the vocal line. It's there only as a reference.

Here is some useful information about the songs to help you along:

- ✓ **Home on the Range:** To play "Home on the Range," you need to know how to play C, C7, F, D7, and G7 chords; how to play a "bass strum strum" pattern; and how to wail like a coyote.

In the music, you see the words *Bass strum strum* over the rhythm slashes. Instead of simply strumming the chord for three beats, play only the lowest note of the chord on the first beat and then strum the remaining notes of the chord on beats 2 and 3. The *sim.* means to keep playing this pattern throughout.

- ✓ **All Through the Night:** To play “All Through the Night,” you need to know how to play D, G, E7, and A7 chords; how to read repeat signs; and how to stay awake during this intensely somnolent ditty. Use the two-finger E7 for this song.

In the music, you see *repeat signs* (two dots that look like a colon) that tell you to play certain measures twice. In this case, you play measures 1, 2, 3, 4, and then measures 1, 2, 3, 5.

- ✓ **Over the River and Through the Woods:** To play “Over the River and Through the Woods,” you need to know how to play A, D, E7, and B7 chords; how to strum in 6/8 time; and the way to Grandma’s house (in case your horse stumbles and you need to shoot it). Use the four-finger E7 for this song.

The 6/8 time signature has a lilting feel to it — sort of as though the music has a gallop or limp. “When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again” is another familiar song played in 6/8 time. Count only two beats per measure — not six (unless you want to sound like a rabbit that’s had three cups of coffee).

- ✓ **It’s Raining, It’s Pouring:** To play “It’s Raining, It’s Pouring,” you need to know how to play Amaj7 and Dmaj7 chords and how to sing in a really whiny, annoying voice. Use all downstrokes on the strums.

This song is a jazzed-up version of the old nursery rhyme “It’s Raining, It’s Pouring,” also known as the childhood taunt “Billy Is a Sissy” (or whichever personal childhood nemesis you plug in to the title). The major 7th chords you play in this song sound jazzy and give any song a modern sound.

- ✓ **Oh, Susanna:** To play “Oh, Susanna,” you need to know how to play Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, Am7, D7, Dm7, G7, and C chords and how to balance a banjo on your knee while traveling the Southern United States. Use all downstrokes on the strums.

This arrangement of “Oh, Susanna” uses three types of 7th chords: dominant 7ths (D7 and G7), minor 7ths (Dm7, Em7, and Am7), and major 7ths (Cmaj7 and Fmaj7). Using minor 7ths and major 7ths gives the song a hip sound. Lest you think this attempt to “jazz up” a simple folk song comes from out of the blue, listen to James Taylor’s beautiful rendition of “Oh, Susanna” on the 1970 album *Sweet Baby James*. He actually says “banjo” without sounding corny.



Track 7

Home on the Range

Voice

Oh, give me a home where the buf - fa - lo

Guitar

C Bass Strum Strum C7 Bass Strum Strum F sim.

Count: 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 etc.

5 roam, where the deer and the an - te - lope play, _____

C D7 G7

9 — where sel - dom is heard a dis - cour - ag - ing

C C7 F

13 word, and the skies are not cloud - y all day. _____

C G7 C



Track 8

All Through the Night

1. Sleep, my child, and peace at - tend thee, }
 2. Guard - ian an - gels God will send thee, }

D G E7 A7
sim.

Count: 1 2 3 4 etc.

3

1. all through the night. night.
 G A7 D D

2.

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques

Track 9

Over the River and Through the Woods

1. O - ver the riv - er and through the woods to
 2. O - ver the riv - er and through the woods. Oh

Count: 1 2 1 2

3. Grand - moth - er's house we go. The horse knows the way to
 how the wind does blow! It
etc.

6. car - ry the sleigh through the white and drift - ed snow.
A B7 E7

9. 2. stings the toes and bites the nose as o - ver the ground we go.
D A D A E7 A

Track 10

It's Raining, It's Pouring

It's rain - ing, it's pour - ing, the

Amaj7 Dmaj7 Amaj7 Dmaj7

Count: 4 1 2 3 4 etc.

old man is snor - ing. He went to bed and he

Amaj7 Dmaj7 Amaj7 Dmaj7 Amaj7 Dmaj7

bumped his head and he could - n't get up in the morn - ing.

Amaj7 Dmaj7 Amaj7 Dmaj7 Amaj7 Dmaj7

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques



Track 11

Oh, Susanna

1 — come from Al — a — bam — a with a

Cmaj7 Dm7 Em7 Fmaj7

Count: 1 2 1 2

4 ban — jo on my knee. I'm — goin' to Lou' — si —

Am7 D7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Dm7

etc.

7 an — a, my Su — san — na for to see.

Em7 Am7 Dm7 G7 C

Chapter 3

The Left Hand: Chord Techniques

In This Chapter

- ▶ Trying your hand at open-position chords
- ▶ Jump-starting with power chords
- ▶ Mastering barre chords

Chords are built in the left hand and realized as sound by strums from the right hand. In Chapters 1 and 2 in Book II, you start to work with chords to enable your left hand to turn the strings into a meaningful arrangement, so when you strum them it makes at least enough sense for you to check your tuning. But you don't create music on the guitar by strumming something once and letting it sit there ringing indefinitely. Music has to move. The two ways to do that are to strum cool rhythms and to play awesome-sounding chords.

For now, don't worry about what your right hand is supposed to do. You can execute the figures and rhythm charts in this chapter by playing one strum (that is, one downward stroke across the strings) per slash. Things get fancier in Chapter 4 in Book II, but playing one strum per slash allows you to concentrate on your left-hand chord work.

Of course you don't *have* to play the music here using only the one-stroke-per-beat approach. If the spirit moves you — and the musical feel allows — try throwing in some in-between, up-and-down strums to get your music moving a bit. Just don't let any right-hand fanciness get in the way of the business of switching chords.

Fingering or “grabbing” chords is the hardest thing beginning guitarists encounter — much harder than anything the right hand has to do. In this chapter, then, you tackle some chords and then focus on ways to get them memorized and under your fingers quickly. This chapter makes it easy on you, too, by including chord changes that require little more than sliding one chord form around on the neck. (Rock guitar styles are used to illustrate, but keep in mind that many of this chapter's techniques are applicable to other styles besides rock.)

Playing Open-Position Chords

Open-position chords, so named because they involve unfretted strings, are allowed to ring open, along with the fretted notes. Open-position chords have a “jangly,” pleasing quality and are sometimes called “cowboy chords” — probably because you can play simple, plaintive, spur-janglin’, chip-kickin’ songs with them.

Figure 3-1 is a chart of 24 chords that comprise just about all the useful open chords you use to play guitar. If you’ve never tried your hand (pun intended!) at open-position chords, refer to Chapters 1 and 2 in Book II for in-depth lessons on how to form and play these fundamental chords.

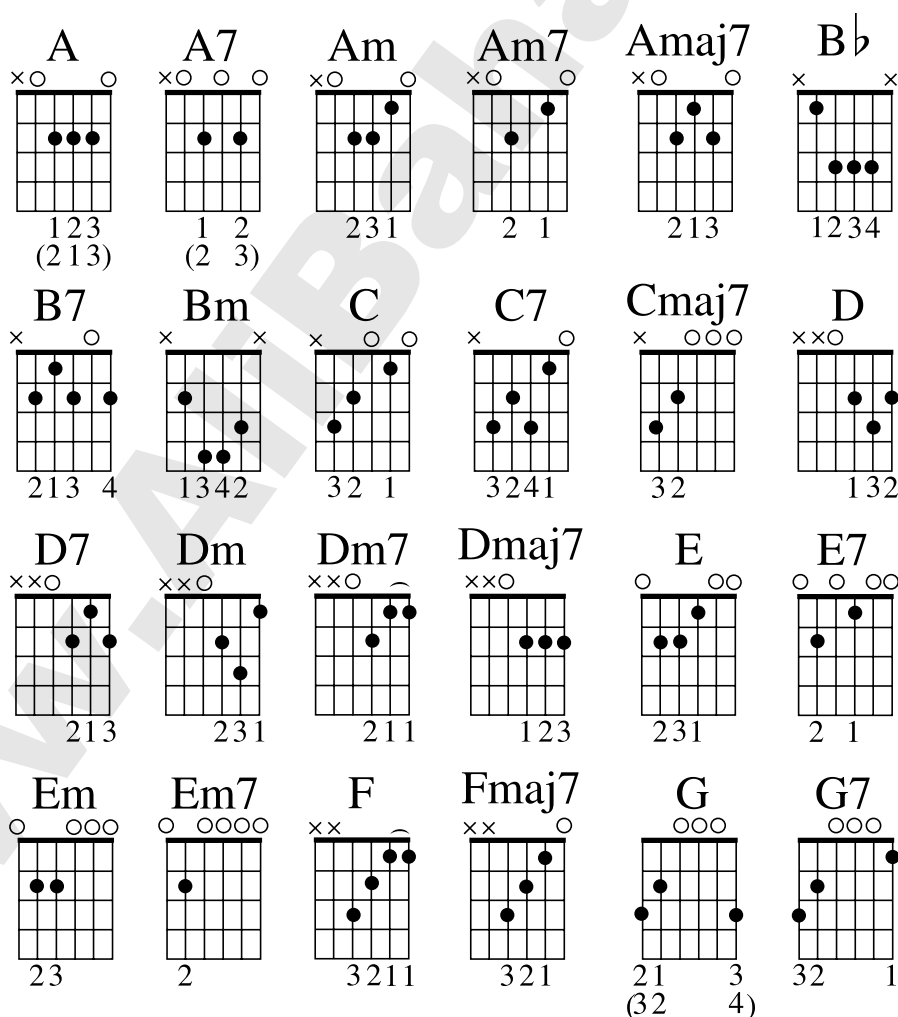


Figure 3-1: A handy chart of 24 open-position chords and their fingerings.



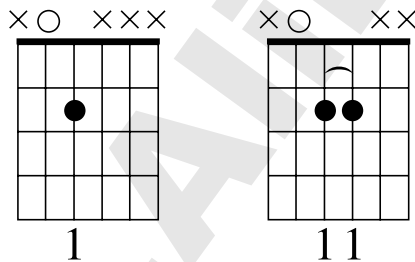
An X over a string means it's *not* played or sounded; an O indicates an open string that *is* sounded when strumming. (Chapter 2 in Book I introduces chord diagrams.) There's more than one way to form some chords. Note that alternate fingerings appear below the primary ones.

Putting Power Chords into Play

Now it's time to put the cowpokes out to pasture. Some guitar players, notably rock guitarists, tend to favor power chords. *Power chords* are even easier to finger than open-position chords, and they provide a simple means for moving beyond those first three frets. They represent rock guitar playing in all its raw and rugged glory, and after you understand how to use the 6th and 5th strings to name them, placing them on the neck is as easy as A-B-C $\sharp$.

A *power chord* is a two- or three-note chord that contains only the root and 5th degree of the chord. A two-note power chord contains the root on the bottom and the 5th degree on top. A three-note power chord is built from the bottom up as root, 5th, root, so it has a root at the bottom, the 5th on top of that, and then the root again, one octave higher than the chord's lowest note. (See Chapter 4 in Book I and Chapter 3 in Book VII for more about 5ths and other musical degrees and notes.) An A power chord, then, can be played either one of the two ways shown in Figure 3-2.

Figure 3-2:
Two ways
to play an
A power
chord.



Missing from power chords is the all-important 3rd degree. In the traditional sense, a chord is defined as three or more different notes, so a power “chord” is something of an exception. The 3rd of a chord is what determines whether the chord is major or minor. As you may have noticed from playing an open-position A chord, the *flat 3rd* (one-and-a-half steps up from the root) makes the chord minor, and the *major 3rd* (two whole steps, or four half steps, up from the root) makes the chord major. In either chord, though, the root and the 5th don't change. So take away the 3rd and you have a chord that is actually neither major nor minor: It can function as either without being “wrong.” This ambiguity is precisely what makes power chords so versatile.



Power chords have another desirable quality, other than their stark construction and open sound: They sound great when played with distortion. This is because distortion imbues tones with *harmonics*, or different high-pitched notes in varying degrees of intensity, that make a sound much more harmonically rich than a nondistorted sound. Heavy distortion doesn't sound as good on full major or minor chords, because the harmonics of those closely spaced intervals (the root, 3rd, and 5th) clash in the upper registers, making the sound brittle and strident. But with just the root and 5th, the upper harmonics get close enough to dance together beautifully without stepping on each other's toes. (Book III talks more about distortion and harmonics.)

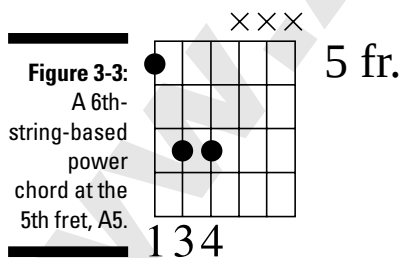
Moving power chords

Unlike their open-position brethren, most power chords don't incorporate open strings and are therefore *moveable chords*. Any chord that you can move from one position on the neck to another without rearranging your fingers is a moveable chord. Because they're moveable, not to mention minimal, you can switch from any power chord to another without twisting your fingers up like so much linguini. If you can count to 12 and recite the alphabet up to the letter G, you can find every power chord. Welcome to Easy Street.

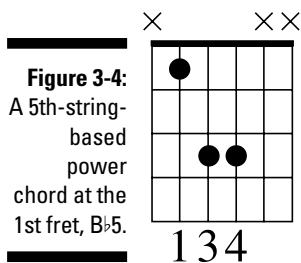


Power chords take their name from the root note, as all chords do. In a G power chord, G is of course the root. Because power chords incorporate only the root and the 5th, they are often referred to as "5" chords. When you see a chord written "G5," it's a G power chord.

The power chord shown in Figure 3-3 has its root on the 6th string. Because the note on the 6th string at the 5th fret is A, it's an A power chord (A5). Move the whole chord up a step (two frets) and it becomes B5. Likewise, move it down a step and it's G5. Move it down one more step and it becomes — any guesses? — F5.



The 5th-string-based power chord looks almost exactly the same except it's shifted over a set of strings. Figure 3-4 is a 5th-string-based power chord played at the 1st fret.



Like the 6th-string-based power chords, you can move around 5th-string-based chords with ease. Move the B $\flat$ 5 up a whole step (two frets) to get C5, up another step to D5, and so on.

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques

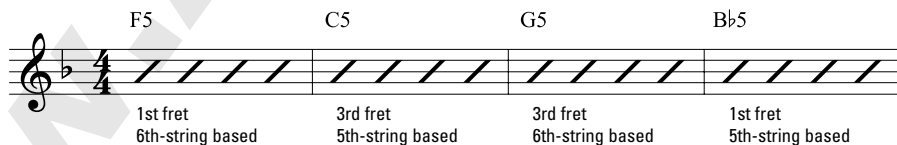
Pulling the power together

Position is the term used to describe where a chord is placed on the neck. A chord's position is named for the fret where you plant your first finger. It doesn't matter which string you're on, just which fret. The 5th-string-based B $\flat$ 5 from the previous section is in *first position*. The first power chord you played — the 6th-string-based A5 at the 5th fret — is in 5th position.

Before you jump onstage with Aerosmith, try mixing up 6th- and 5th-string-based power chords. Because power chords have so few notes and always assume the same shape, it's a breeze to move them around the neck. Figure 3-5 is a typical power-chord progression.

Figure 3-5:
Mixing
6th- and 5th-
string-based
power
chords in a
single
progression.

Track 12



You don't have to keep up with the performance you hear on the CD track when trying to finger and strum these chords. Just try switching the chords *in time* — that is, after every four beats.



Much like you need the individual words to form the sentences that describe thoughts and ideas, so too must you have individual chords that can be later arranged into longer musical segments, called *chord progressions*. Chord progressions form the structure, or harmonic framework, for songs.

Getting Behind the Barre

So now you're slinging power chords all over the neck, and you're thinking that all you need to be a rock god is a pair of leather pants and some friends who don't smell so good. Well, pull your Lear jet back into the hangar for a minute. Although countless songs have been written using only the chord forms covered earlier in this chapter — open-position and power chords — your musical vocabulary is about to expand a thousandfold. It's time to saddle up to barre chords.

The term *barre chord* strikes fear into the hearts of beginning guitarists everywhere. Technically, a barre chord is just a chord where your left hand's first (index) finger lies flat across the strings, forming a "bar," with the rest of the chord made up by other fingers. Nevertheless, the term usually carries with it connotations of medieval torture practices.

Beginners have trouble with barre chords because they seem to require an inordinate amount of strength. Although strength is certainly involved, you don't need quite so much of it after you become good at playing barre chords. Playing barre chords is like riding a bicycle: It's really tough at first, but then it becomes second nature.

The Barre Chord Creed

Memorize the Barre Chord Creed for the most important aspects to learning and mastering barre chords. Here are the tips to keep in mind:

- ✓ **Press firmly.** You don't need to embed the strings permanently into your flesh, but do apply strong, even pressure with your first finger. Rotate the finger slightly onto its side — the side away from the second finger.
- ✓ **Thumb it.** Keep your thumb placed directly in the center of the neck's back. This is where the strength comes from. You'll know you're doing it right when the heel of your hand gets sore. Isn't this the greatest?
- ✓ **Keep your arms in.** Try not to let your elbow stick out at your side like a chicken wing. Pull your elbow into your side if you can, and keep your left shoulder relaxed and down.

- ✓ **Be fat-free.** Make tiny adjustments so the fleshy parts of your fingers aren't touching adjacent strings, causing them to buzz or muffle. Keep your knuckles rounded and try to press straight down on the strings, instead of from the side. Also make sure that a string isn't running directly under the crease in the knuckle between your first and second finger joints.



Barre is the Spanish word for *bar*, and guitarists use this spelling because a lot of guitar notation uses Spanish terms (the same way other terms in music, such as *piano* for “soft,” *fortissimo* for “very loud,” and *scuza plisa tu pasa di pasta* for “the band is hungry” are in Italian), and because *barre* distinguishes itself from *bar*, the metal arm on the bridge of some guitars.

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques

Playing E-based barre chords

Barre chords are formed as open-position-based chords with an added barre (your first finger) placed over the top. The first step is to finger an open-position E form (see Chapter 1 in Book II for a detailed explanation if you're a bit rusty). But instead of using your first three fingers, fret the chord with your second, third, and fourth fingers. This leaves your first finger free to barre.



Right now, the nut — that slotted bar between the headstock and the fretboard — is acting like a barre. You're going to move the whole chord up and take over the nut's job with your first finger.

1. Slide all the fretted notes up (away from the headstock) exactly one fret.
2. Lay your index finger down in the first fret, across all six strings, parallel to the nut.
3. Minding the Barre Chord Creed, apply pressure and strum away.

Congratulations. You're now playing an F barre chord (see Figure 3-6). And, in a manner of speaking, you are now the nut.

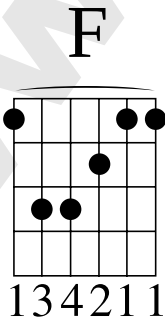


Figure 3-6:
The F barre
chord.

Unless you're the type weakened only by kryptonite, you'll have trouble getting the F chord to sound good and feel comfortable. In the beginning, playing an F chord strains your hand, muffles the strings, and causes you to holler at various inanimate objects. This is normal.



Barre chords are harder to play in the first few frets, where the nut offers resistance, and they're also harder way up the neck, where the action is higher and the frets are narrower. When you can form the F chord immediately, without agonizing through the steps shown above, try moving your F chord to the 5th fret (where, by the way, it becomes an A chord). It should be easier to press the strings down here than at the 1st fret.

Moving the E-form barre chord around the neck

All barre chords are moveable chords — that's the beauty of 'em. Now that you've formed a barre chord (and can play it so the strings, when strummed, ring through clearly), you're ready to move this sucker.



You've already had a glimpse of the thinking involved because you've moved power chords around the neck. (And some brave souls followed the advice in the last section to move the F chord up to the 5th fret.) Apply what you know about moving power chords to barre chords. The only difference is that you're moving *more* notes per chord.

To identify which chords you're playing on the neck as you move around, take the 6th-string shortcut. Because the lowest string of the guitar is called E, you can use the name of the notes on the 6th string to tell you where to play a given E-based form, just as you did with power chords. For example, the 5th fret of the E string is A, so the chord formed at the 5th fret using an E form is A. This shortcut enables guitarists to place chords on the fretboard by using the lowest note of the chord as the guide. (An "E-form" barre chord can also be called a 6th-string-based chord.)

Other E forms: Minor, dominant 7, minor 7, and 7sus

So far, you've built and moved only the E major barre shape. As you know from open-position chords, there are chordal varieties other than major. Chords that are given simple letter names (E, B $\flat$, D) are majors — all others are qualified (E minor, B $\flat$ minor7, D7sus).

Here's where your hard labor on that first barre pays off. Having successfully wrangled the E major barre-chord form, you can easily start adding other chord qualities. All of these forms can be played with small, easy changes to the E major barre. And all of them correspond directly with open-position E chords you already know. You are about to be so very happy.

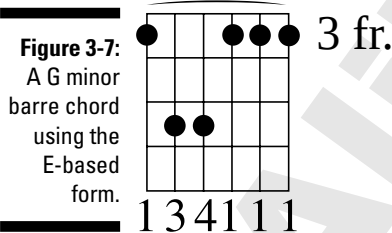
To make things even easier for yourself, try these new forms at the 3rd fret, where it starts getting more reasonable to finger chords *sans* buzz and rattle.



Using the 6th-string shortcut described in the preceding section, you know that an E barre form played at the 3rd fret is a G chord. So if you play these forms in 3rd position, they'll all be G chords of one type or another. But pay attention to the shapes, which you'll move around, rather than the chords' letter names.

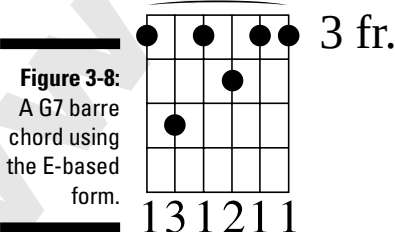
To change a G major into a G minor, lift your second (middle) finger. Let the newly exposed note — 3rd string, 3rd fret — ring out with the rest of the barred notes. Yeah, that's all there is to it! Figure 3-7 shows a 3rd-position G minor barre chord.

Gm

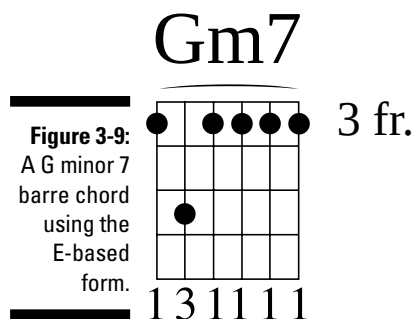


To change a G major into a G7 (also known as G dominant 7; see Chapter 2 in Book II), lift the fourth finger, as shown in Figure 3-8.

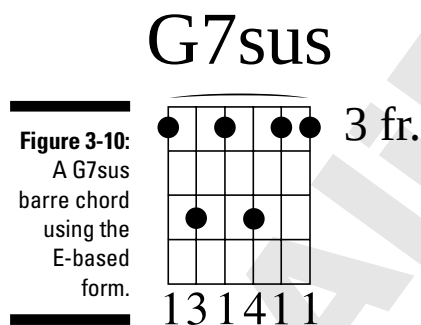
G7



To change a G major into a Gm7 (G minor 7; see Chapter 2 in Book II), lift the second and fourth fingers, as shown in Figure 3-9.



To change a G major into a G7sus (where the 3rd degree is *suspended*, or raised a half step, to the 4th degree), lift the second finger and move the fourth finger over to the 3rd string as shown in Figure 3-10.



You've just learned four new chord forms — which, because they're applicable anywhere from 1st to 12th position, give you 48 new chords. Holy harmony. Go write a song already.



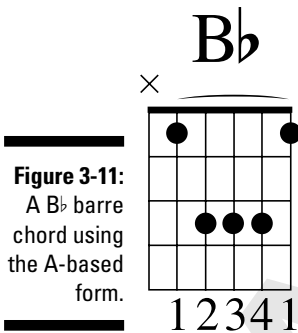
Create your own exercise by moving these forms all over the neck. Then switch between forms as you move them around: Play a major chord in 1st position, a minor in 3rd, and a dominant 7 in 8th. You may just stumble onto the next "Freebird." We could use a new "Freebird."

Playing A-based barre chords

Just as the family of E-based barres have open-position E forms (they are simply open-position shapes with a barre in front of them), A-based barres have open-position A forms. To form these chords, apply the same logic used to get from an open-position E major chord to a 1st position F major barre. No need to reinvent the wheel — save your creativity for your playing or your excuses for practicing at 2 a.m.

To create an A-based barre chord (see Figure 3-11), grab a plain ol' open A major (check Chapter 1 in Book II if you need a refresher), but use fingers 2, 3, and 4, instead of 1, 2, and 3, and then follow these steps:

1. Slide all the fretted notes up exactly one fret.
2. Lay your index finger down in the 1st fret, across the top five strings, parallel to the nut.
3. Minding the Barre Chord Creed, apply pressure and strum away.



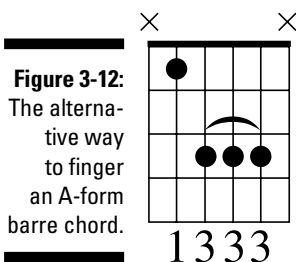
For A-based barre chords, the barre is shorter: Your first finger needs to span only the top five strings.



You don't have to barre all six strings for the A-based barre because its root is on the 5th string: It's a 5th-string-based form. If your index finger does lie across the 6th string (which can be hard to avoid), be careful not to strum the 6th string with your right hand. You may want to let your index finger lay limply on that bottom string, which will help mute the sound if you strum it accidentally. Be careful, because the results can be horrific when you start moving the A-based barre chord around the neck. An open low E string against a 6th-fret E $\flat$ major chord? Ick.



The hard part about this chord is pulling up the third-finger knuckle so the barred 1st string can sound. Because most guitarists find that to be too much trouble, they just end up playing the inner four strings (2 through 5) on the A major form. When they do this, they no longer have to make a barre out of the first finger — just the third finger — which makes this a pretty easy chord to play. Try Figure 3-12, compare it with your success on the previous fingering, and choose which form works best for you.



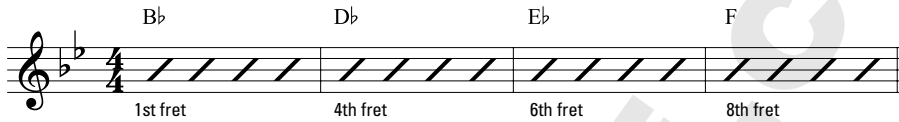
Astute players who aren't yet blinded by pain may have spotted something familiar in the bottom strings of the A and E barre forms: power chords. All three lower strings of the A major and E major barres contain the same notes as their power chord counterparts. Also, you may recall that power chords don't carry a chord's 3rd degree; in keeping, the bottom three strings of the A minor and E minor barre shapes are identical not only to their power chord counterparts but to their major brethren. Wow. Full circle, dude.

Moving the A-form barre chord

Because you can play a B $\flat$ chord as a barre chord, you can now play all 12 A-based major barre chords (the entire chromatic scale). All A-based chords are moveable and get their name from the 5th string (just as the open A chord does, and similar to how the E-chord form derives its name).

Figure 3-13 uses all A-based major barre chords. Say the names of the chords aloud as you play them at their corresponding frets. Listen to and play along with the CD to check your work. Don't worry about matching the strumming pattern you hear on the CD; just strum along at your own pace and switch between chords after every bar.

Figure 3-13:
A progression using
A-based
major barre
chords.



Track 13

A forms: Minor, dominant 7th, minor 7, 7sus, and major 7

Everything you already know about moving chords around the neck carries over to other barre-chord forms. Playing the minor, the 7th, or the minor 7 versions is no more physically demanding than playing the major barre forms; it's just a matter of learning the fingering.

You can follow the numbered list in the section “Playing A-based barre chords” for creating the other versions of these A-based forms, or you can just try to form them after placing your first-finger barre over the appropriate fret and forming the chords from your remaining three fingers.

Figure 3-14 is a chart of five chord forms in A. The possible chord forms extend beyond these five, but these are key for playing most rock music.

You can find barre forms that directly correspond with open-position chords. For example, the 5th-string-based D minor played in 5th position has all the same notes (though some in different octaves) as the open-position D minor.

The number of chords you now can play up and down the neck is just plain incalculable. You are a veritable font of chord knowledge. Dip into the fountain and enjoy this progression, which alternates between E- (6th-string) and A-based (5th-string) forms as the chords descend the neck. The changes in Figure 3-15 fit Bob Dylan's “Lay Lady Lay.”

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques

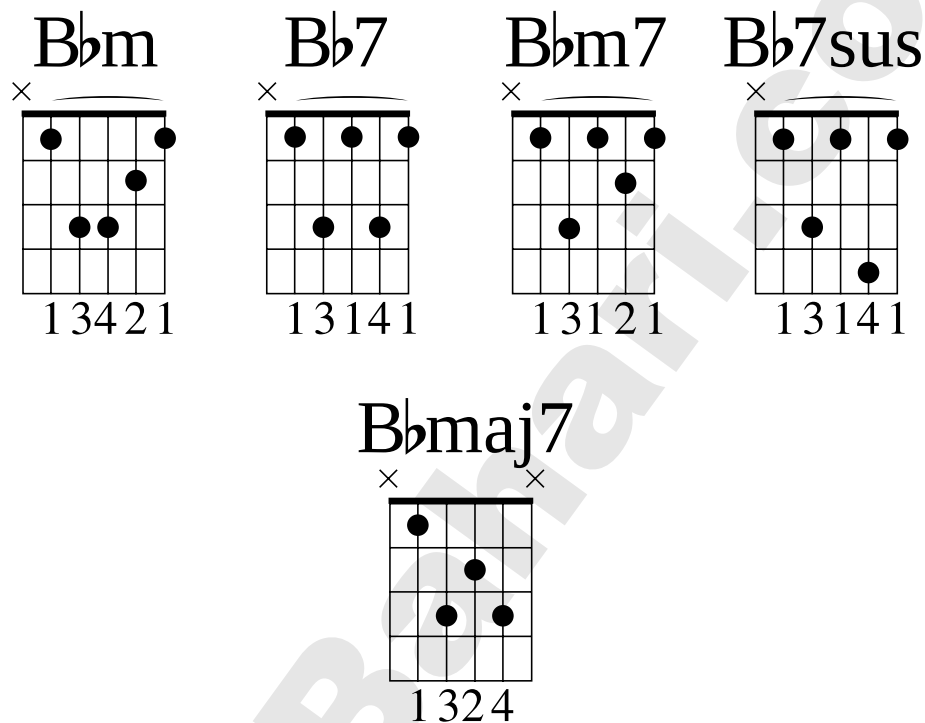


Figure 3-14:
The A-form
versions
of minor, 7,
m7, 7sus,
and major
7 barre
chords.

Figure 3-15:
A progres-
sion with
alternat-
ing E- and
A-based
forms.

Track 14

A C#m G Bm

5th fret 6th-str. root 4th fret 5th-str. root 3rd fret 6th-str. root 2nd fret 5th-str. root

Chapter 4

The Right Hand: Rhythm Techniques

In This Chapter

- ▶ Strumming with your right hand
- ▶ Switching up downstrokes and upstrokes
- ▶ Using your palm to mute and accent

The right hand marshals the chords and notes you form in the left hand into the sounds you actually hear. The right hand of a rhythm guitarist drives the rhythm section, weaving together the bass and drums and providing the underpinning for the singer, lead guitar, or other melodic instruments. Whether it's playing in a steady eighth-note groove, a funky 16 feel, or a hard-swinging shuffle, the rhythm guitar and the right-hand strumming that propels it forge the chords and riffs that you learn into a moving musical experience.

In this chapter you discover many different ways you can strum the guitar to make the rhythm fit different styles and feels. These variations help keep your music vital sounding and help you develop your skills as a rhythm guitarist — one who provides the backing and the foundation to support the melody, and who can act as the glue between the other rhythm instruments, such as the bass and drums.



As in Chapter 3 in Book II, this chapter uses rock as a genre to illustrate guitar techniques. You can apply the skills in this chapter to other genres.

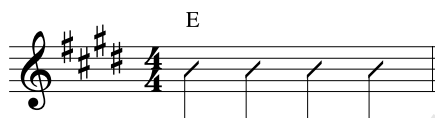
Strumming Along

Strumming is defined as dragging a pick (or your fingers) across the strings of the guitar. In Chapter 3 in Book II, you drag the pick in a downward motion (toward the floor) to sound the chords formed by the left hand, but you don't try to do anything except that. In doing even that, however, you create rhythm.

If you “pick-drag” in regular, even strokes, one per beat, adhering to a *tempo* (musical rate), you’re strumming the guitar in rhythm. And that’s music, whether you mean it to be or not. More specifically, you’re strumming a quarter-note rhythm, which is fine for songs such as the Beatles’ “Let It Be” and other ballads. For the record, strumming an E chord in quarter notes looks like the notation in Figure 4-1. Note that the figure uses rhythm slashes to show that you should play the entire chord, as opposed to note *heads* (which indicate only a single pitch).

Figure 4-1:
Playing an
E chord in
one bar of
four quarter
notes.

Track 15



The hardest part of learning rhythm guitar is realizing — and then maintaining — all the repetition involved. It’s not what people expect when they pick up the guitar and want to learn a smorgasbord of cool licks and great riffs. But being able to play *in time* with unerring precision and rock-steady consistency is an essential skill and a hallmark of solid musicianship. Most rhythm playing in rock involves a one- or two-bar pattern repeated over and over, varying only where there are accent points that the band plays in unison.

After you learn to play consistently, you can then deviate from the established pattern you lay down and work on your own variations, as long as they’re tasteful, appropriate, and not too numerous. Like a rock ‘n’ roll rebel once said, “You have to know the rules before you can break them.”

Downstrokes

A *downstroke* (indicated by the symbol ▮) is the motion of dragging the pick down, brushing across multiple strings on the guitar in the process. Because you execute a downstroke quickly (even on slow songs) the separate strings are sounded virtually simultaneously. If you play three or more notes this way, you produce a chord.

Strumming in eighth-note downstrokes

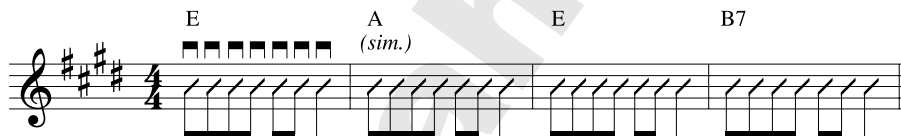
To get out of the somewhat plodding rhythm of a quarter-note-only strumming pattern, you turn to eighth notes. As the math implies, an eighth note is one half the value of a quarter note, but in musical terms that equates to twice as fast, or more precisely, twice as frequently.

So instead of playing one strum per beat, you now play two strums per beat. This means you must move your hand twice as fast, striking the strings two times per beat, instead of once per beat as you did to produce quarter notes. At moderate and slower tempos, you can do this easily. For faster tempos you use alternating upstrokes and downstrokes (explained later in this chapter). For playing the progression in Figure 4-1, however, simply using repeated downstrokes is easiest.

Figure 4-2 uses eighth notes for the first three beats of each bar and a quarter note for the last beat of each bar. The quarter note allows you a little more time to switch chords between the end of each bar and the beginning of the new bar. Isn't that humane?

Figure 4-2:
Eighth-note
progression
using down-
strokes.

Track 16



The term *sim.* in the music notation tells you to continue in a similar fashion. It's typically used for articulation directions, such as down- and upstrokes.

Reading eighth-note notation

Notice that instead of the previously used slashes, you now resort to slashes with *stems* (the vertical lines coming down from the note head) and *beams* (the thicker horizontal lines that connect the stems). Quarter notes have single stems attached to them; eighth notes have stems with beams connecting them to each other. An eighth note by itself, or separated by a rest, has a little flag instead of a beam.



Even though this newly introduced notation denotes specific rhythmic values (quarter notes, eighth notes), the note heads are still elongated and angled — not the same kind of smaller, rounded note heads used to indicate individual pitches. The symbols used in this chapter are still rhythm slashes that tell you *how* (in what rhythm) to play, but not exactly *what* (the individual pitches) to play. Your left-hand chord position determines the pitches.

Upstrokes

An upstroke (indicated by the symbol $\vee$) is just what it sounds like: the opposite of a downstroke. Instead of dragging your pick down toward the floor, you start from a position below the strings and drag your pick upward across the strings. Doing this comfortably may seem a little less natural than

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques



playing a downstroke. One reason for this is that you're going against gravity. Also, some beginners have a hard time holding on to their pick or preventing it from getting stuck in the strings. With practice, though, you can flow with the ups as easily as you can with the downs.

You use upstrokes for the upbeat (offbeats) in eighth-note playing, as the strokes in between the quarter-note beats.

When you start playing, don't worry about hitting all the strings in an upstroke. For example, when playing an E chord with an upstroke, you needn't strum the strings all the way through to the sixth string. Generally, in an upstroke, hitting just the top three or four strings is good enough. You may notice that your right hand naturally arcs away from the strings by that point, to an area above the center of the guitar. This is fine.

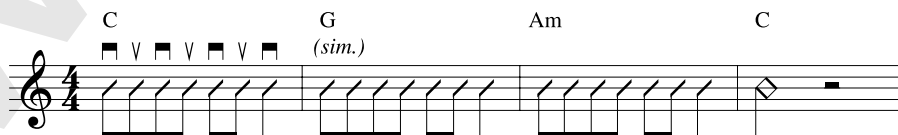
Upstrokes don't get equal time with their downwardly mobile counterparts. You typically use upstrokes only *in conjunction* with downstrokes. Whereas you can use downstrokes by themselves just fine — for entire songs, even — very rarely do you use upstrokes in isolation or without surrounding them on either side with downstrokes. (Some situations do call for just upstrokes.)

So you should first tackle upstrokes in their most natural habitat: in an eighth-note rhythm figure where they provide the in-between notes, or *offbeats*, to the on-the-beat downstrokes.

Combining downstrokes and upstrokes

The easiest way to perform an upstroke smoothly is in its reciprocal response to a downstroke. Play Figure 4-3 with a relaxed, free-swinging up-and-down arm motion, working to get equal emphasis on each stroke, and being aware that your downstrokes will naturally include more (and lower) string-strikes than your upstrokes. The time signature is 4/4, which means the measures contain four beats, and each quarter note receives one beat.

Figure 4-3:
Down-
strokes and
upstrokes
for eighth
notes.



Track 17

At this easygoing tempo, you can probably play Figure 4-3 with all downstrokes. If you try that, however, you discover that it introduces a tenser, more-frantic motion in your own strumming motion, which is not in character with the song's mellow feel. Frantic motion can be a very good thing in rock, though. Figure 4-12 later in this chapter, for example, shows you how an all-downstroke approach on a faster song is more appropriate than the easy back and forth of alternating downstrokes and upstrokes.



Whether an eighth-note pattern takes an all-downstroke or downstroke-upstroke approach is determined more by the feel, rather than the speed. (Although it is physically easier to play eighth notes with alternating strokes.)

Playing a combination figure

Quarter notes and eighth notes make up much of medium-tempo-based music, so Figure 4-4 shows how a progression might use a mixture of quarters and eighths to help convey different rhythmic intensity levels in a song.

Figure 4-4:
Strumming
in quarter
notes and
eighth
notes.

Track 18



Be aware that you not only have to control the strums in your down and up picking, but which strings you strike in each chord as well. Don't forget that you play only the top four strings in a D chord and only the top five for C.

Strumming in 16ths

Sixteenth notes come twice as fast as eighth notes, or four to the beat. That can seem pretty twitchy, so 16th notes are almost always played with alternating downstrokes and upstrokes. Some punk and metal bands play fast 16th-note-based songs with all downstrokes, but their songs are usually about pain and masochism, so it's understandable, given the circumstances. The acoustic guitar part in the Who's "Pinball Wizard" is a classic example of 16th-note strumming.

You start off with a progression played at a medium tempo, using a common 16th-note figure. Figure 4-5 is based on an R&B progression and uses a repeated 16th-note scheme. True *syncopation* (rhythms employing dots and ties) stays out of the picture until later in the chapter.

Figure 4-5:
A medium-tempo progression using 16th notes.

If the rhythmic notation seems like it's getting a little dense, don't worry too much about understanding the notation thoroughly or being able to play it at sight. What's important is to learn the figure, memorize it, and to play it correctly and with confidence. Listening to the CD repeatedly to learn this figure is okay, too. (Just don't tell your fourth-grade piano teacher we told you it was okay to memorize the recorded sound and not to read the music.)

Reading 16th-note notation

Sixteenth notes are indicated with two beams connecting their stems (or if they're by themselves, two flags).

Getting a shuffle feel

An important rhythm feel used extensively in rock is the shuffle. A *shuffle* is a lilting eighth-note sound where the beat is divided into two unbalanced halves, a long note followed by a short. Think of the riffs to such songs as Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog," the Beach Boys' "California Girls," Fleetwood Mac's "Don't Stop," and the Grateful Dead's "Truckin'." These are all based on a shuffle feel.



The shuffle is formed from triplets, where the beat is first subdivided into three equal parts. Then the first two notes are held together.

Rather than thinking about it too much, this simple exercise can help you hear the difference between straight eighth notes (equally spaced) and triplet eighth notes (the first held twice as long as the second):

1. **Tap your foot in a steady beat and say the following line, matching the bold syllables to your foot taps:**

Twink-le twink-le lit-tle star.

That's the sound of normal, equally spaced, straight eighth notes.

2. **Now in the same tempo (that is, keeping your foot tap constant), try saying this line, based in triplets:**

Fol-low the yel-low brick road.

That's the sound of triplets. In both cases you should keep your foot tap at exactly the same tempo and change only how you subdivide the beat internally.

3. Create shuffle eighth notes by sounding only the first and third notes of the triplet. You do this by sustaining the first note through the second or by leaving out that second note entirely.

The new sound is a limping, uneven division that goes *l-o-n-g-short, l-o-n-g-short, l-o-n-g-short*, and so forth.

A good way to remember the sound of triplet eighth notes (the basis of a shuffle feel) is the song “When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again.” If you tap your foot or snap your fingers on the beat and then try saying the lyrics in rhythm, you get:

When **John**-ny comes **march**-ing **home** a-**gain**, hur-**rah**

The bold type represents the beat, where the syllables coincide with your foot tap or finger snap. The phrase “Johnny comes” is in triplets, because each syllable falls on one note of the three in between two beats. The rest of the phrase, “marching home again, hurrah,” divides each beat into two-syllable pairs, the first syllable longer than the second. This is the sound of eighth notes in a shuffle feel.

Figure 4-6 is a shuffle feel that uses downstrokes and upstrokes. To reward you for saying “twinkle, twinkle little star” out loud while you tapped your foot, you get three new bonus chords that are easy to play and will give your shuffle progression a real lift.

Track 20

Figure 4-6: An eighth-note shuffle in G using downstrokes and upstrokes.

Chord diagrams for G6, C6, and D6 are shown below the notation:

- G6:** Fretboard diagram showing notes G (1), A (2), B (3), C (4), D (5), E (6), F# (7), and G (8).
- C6:** Fretboard diagram showing notes C (1), D (2), E (3), F (4), G (5), A (6), B (7), and C (8).
- D6:** Fretboard diagram showing notes D (1), E (2), F (3), G (4), A (5), B (6), C (7), and D (8).

Dividing a band's songs by straight eighths or shuffle feel

If you've never thought of songs by your favorite band as being in a straight-eighth feel or a shuffle feel, it's fun to go down their hits and see in

which category their individual songs belong. Here's how some of the Beach Boys' and the Beatles' hits break down:

The Beach Boys

<i>Straight Eighth</i>	<i>Shuffle</i>
Surfin' USA	Good Vibrations
Surfin' Safari	Barbara Ann
Kokomo	California Girls
I Get Around	Wouldn't It Be Nice
Fun, Fun, Fun	Help Me Rhonda

The Beatles

<i>Straight Eighth</i>	<i>Shuffle</i>
Hard Day's Night	Can't Buy Me Love
I Want to Hold Your Hand	Love Me Do
I Saw Her Standing There	Revolution
Yesterday	Got to Get You into My Life
Twist and Shout	Penny Lane

Actually, the chords aren't so much new as they are a one-finger variation of chords you already play. These new "chords" are easily executed by moving one and only one finger, while keeping the others anchored. It's the first step to getting both hands moving on the guitar, a really exciting accomplishment that makes you feel like a real guitar player. Have fun with this one!

The upstrokes still come at the in-between points — within the beats — but because of the unequal rhythm, it may take you a little time to adjust.

Mixing Single Notes and Strums

Rhythm guitar includes many more approaches than just simultaneously strumming the multiple strings of a chord. A piano player doesn't plunk down all of her fingers at once every time she plays an accompaniment part, and guitarists shouldn't have to strike all the strings every time they bring their pick down.

The pick-strum

Guitarists borrow a technique from their keyboard-plunking counterparts, who separate the left and right hands to play bass notes and chords, respectively. When guitarists separate out the components of a chord, they don't use separate hands, but combine both aspects in their right hand. Playing bass notes with chords is called a *pick-strum* pattern.

Separating the bass and treble so they play independently in time is a great way to provide rhythmic variety and introduce different chordal textures. Guitarists can even set up an interplay of the different parts — a bass and treble complementarity or *counterpoint*.

The boom-chick

The simplest accompaniment pattern is known by the way it sounds: *boom-chick*. The boom-chick pattern is very efficient because you don't have to play all the notes of the chord at once. Typically you play the bass note on the *boom*, and all the notes in the chord except the bass note on the *chick* — but you get sonic credit for playing twice.

Figure 4-7 shows a boom-chick, or bass-chord pattern in a bouncy country-rock progression.

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques

Track 21

Figure 4-7:
A bass-chord pattern in a typical country-rock groove.

The musical notation for Figure 4-7 is as follows:

- Chords:** C, F, G, C
- Bass Notes:** C, F, G, C
- Fingerings:** 0, 1, 2, 3
- Time Signature:** 4/4 (treble), 3/4 (bass)



The symbol *C* immediately to the right of the treble clef in Figure 4-7 is a shorthand way to indicate 4/4 time. The examples in this book use 4/4 to indicate music in 4/4 time, but many examples of printed sheet music use *C* to indicate *common*, or 4/4, time.

The moving bass line

An important musical device available to you after you separate the bass from the chord is the moving bass line. Examples of songs with moving bass lines include Neil Young's "Southern Man," Led Zeppelin's "Babe, I'm Gonna Leave You," the Grateful Dead's "Friend of the Devil," and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's "Mr. Bojangles." A moving bass line can employ the boom-chick pattern (see the preceding section).

Figure 4-8 shows a descending bass line, made even more effective by isolating the bass line from the chords. Although this is left-hand movement within a chord form, similar to the shuffle figure in Figure 4-6, you can think of this as new chord forms entirely, if that's conceptually easier for you.

Figure 4-8:
A moving
bass line
over a chord
progression.



When a chord symbol features two letters separated by a forward slash, it indicates the chord and the bass note over which that chord sounds. For example, *C/G* is a *C* chord with a *G* in the bass. In this case, the bass note is a chord member (the notes of a *C* chord are *C*, *E*, and *G*), but it doesn't always have to be that way. In the chord progression *C-C/B-C/A*, the bass notes *B* and *A* are not part of the chord but help to provide motion to another chord.

Disrupting Your Sound: Syncopated Strumming

After you develop a feel for strumming in different combinations of eighths, quarters, and 16ths, you can increase the rhythmic variation to these various groupings by applying syncopation. *Syncopation* is the disruption or alteration of the expected sounding of notes. In rock 'n' roll right-hand rhythm

playing, you do that by staggering your strum and mixing up your up- and downstrokes to strike different parts of the beats. By doing so, you let the vehicles of syncopation — dots and ties — steer your rhythmic strumming to a more driving and interesting course.

Syncopated notation: Dots and ties

A *dot* attached to a note increases its rhythmic value by half its original value. A dot attached to a half note (two beats) makes it three beats long. A dotted quarter note is one-and-a-half beats long, or a quarter note plus an eighth note.

A *tie* is a curved line that connects two notes of the same pitch. The value of the note is the combined values of the two notes together, and only the first note is sounded.

Figure 4-9 shows some common syncopation figures employing dots and ties. The top part of the table deals with dots and shows note values, their new value with a dot and the equivalent expressed in ties, and a typical figure using a dot with that note value. The bottom part of the table deals with ties and shows note values, their new value when tied to another note, and a typical figure using a tie with that note value.

Dots

 # of beats: 3	tie-equivalent: 	typical figure: 
 # of beats: 1½	tie-equivalent: 	typical figure: 
 # of beats: ¾	tie-equivalent: 	typical figure: 

Ties

 # of beats: 3	typical figure: 
 # of beats: 1½	typical figure: 
 # of beats: 1	typical figure: 
 # of beats: ½	typical figure: 

Figure 4-9:
Common
syncopation
features.

Playing syncopated figures

So much for the music theory behind syncopation. Now how do you actually play syncopated figures? Try jumping in and playing two progressions, one using eighth notes and one using 16th notes, that employ common syncopation patterns found in rock.

Figure 4-10 shows a useful syncopation scheme for an easy 4/4 rhythm at a moderate tempo. Pay close attention to the downstroke (▣) and upstroke (∇) indications. Because the normal flow of down- and upstrokes is interrupted in syncopation, it's important to remember which stroke direction to play a note to avoid getting your strums out of synch.

Track 22

Figure 4-10:
A common rock figure using eighth-note syncopation.

The figure shows two musical examples of syncopation in 4/4 time. The first example, labeled 'A5' and 'C5', shows a sequence of eighth notes with downstrokes (▣) and upstrokes (∇) indicated. The second example, labeled 'D5' and 'A5', shows a sequence of eighth notes with downstrokes (▣) and upstrokes (∇) indicated. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first example starts with A5 and C5, and the second example starts with D5 and A5. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Giving Your Left Hand a Break

If you listen closely to rhythm guitar in rock songs, you hear that strummed figures aren't one wall of sound — that minuscule breaks occur in between the strums. These breaks prevent the chord strums from running into each other and creating sonic mush. The little gaps in sound keep a strumming figure sounding crisp and controlled.

To form these breaks, or slight sonic pauses, you need to stop the strings from ringing momentarily. And we're talking very *small* moments here. Controlling the right hand's gas pedal with the left hand's brake pedal is a useful technique for cutting off the ring-out of the strings so they don't all run together.

Left-hand muting

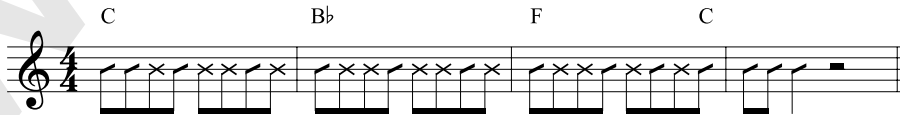
To get the left-hand to mute the in-between sound between any two chords, just relax the fretting fingers enough to release pressure on the fretted strings. These strings will instantly deaden, or muffle, cutting off sound. What's more, if you keep your right-hand going along in the same strumming pattern, you produce a satisfying *thunk* sound as the right hand hits all these deadened strings. This percussive element, intermixed among the ringing notes, creates an ideal rock rhythm sound: part percussive, part syncopated, and all the while driving. If you relax the left hand even further so it goes limp across all six strings, then no strings will sound, not just the ones the left-hand fingers cover.

Also, allowing your left hand to do the muting means you can keep your right hand going, uninterrupted, in alternating down- and upstrokes. The notation indicates a left-hand mute with an *X* note head.

Implying syncopation

Figure 4-11 is technically a straight-ahead down-and-up eighth-note strum in the right hand. But because you employ left-hand muting, the sound seems to cut off in just the right places, creating an almost syncopated sound. Your right hand isn't performing true syncopation, because it's playing straight through. It's just that some of the notes don't come through audibly. More than creating a syncopated sound, however, left-hand muting provides the guitarist with another means for controlling the strings' sound.

Figure 4-11:
Left-hand
muting
simulates
syncopation.





Left-hand muting is one of those rhythm techniques that guitarists just seem to develop naturally, almost as if it weren't a technique you *had* to learn because you'd invent it anyway, so obvious and useful is its benefit. And like riding a bicycle, left-hand muting is more difficult to execute slowly. So don't analyze it too much as you're learning; just strum and mute in the context of a medium-tempo groove. Your hands will magically synch up and you won't even have to think about it.

Although left-hand muting belongs to the hand not named in this chapter, its impetus is drawn from the right-hand motion. Plus, performing a left-hand mute is impossible without another hand to turn it into sound.

Suppressing the Right Hand

You can also mute with your *right* hand (using the heel of the palm), but this produces a different effect than left-hand muting. In right-hand muting you still hear the sound of the fretted string, but in a muted and subdued way. You don't use right-hand muting to stop the sound completely, as you do in a left-hand mute; you just want to suppress the string from ringing freely. Like left-hand muting, right-hand muting keeps your tone from experiencing runaway ring-out, but additionally it provides an almost murky, smoldering sound to the notes, which can be quite useful for dramatic effect. You sometimes hear this technique referred to as *chugging*.

You perform a right-hand mute by anchoring the heel of your right hand on the strings just above the bridge. Don't place your hand too far forward or you'll completely deaden the strings. Do it just enough so the strings are dampened (*damping* is a musical term which means to externally stop a string from ringing) slightly, but still ring through. Keep it there through the duration of the strum.



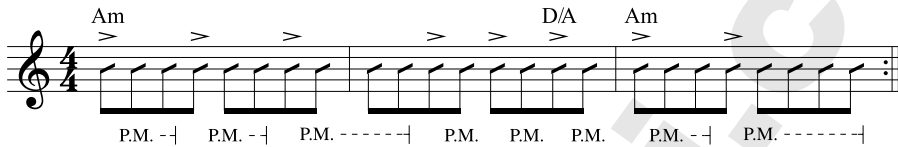
If a *palm mute* (as right-hand muting is known, abbreviated *P.M.*) de-emphasizes a string strike, then its evil twin, the *accent*, draws attention to a string strike. An accent is easy to execute: Just strike the string or strings harder than usual, and lift your right-hand palm from the strings as you do, to allow the strings to ring free. The result is that the accented strum stands out above the rest. An accent is indicated with a > just above or below the note head.

Palm mutes are much easier to perform if only one or two of the strings are struck, due to the restricted movement of the right hand caused by anchoring it to the strings' surface above the bridge. Figure 4-12 is a rhythm figure where you strike only the lowest note of the chord on the palm mutes, and the upper strings on the accents. Play this progression using all downstrokes to add intensity.

Track 23

Figure 4-12:

A rhythm figure with palm mutes and accents.



The interplay between the palm-muted notes and the accented chords creates a sound that makes it seem like two instruments playing.

Left-Hand Movement within a Right-Hand Strum

In this chapter you deal mostly with right-hand movement using static left-hand chord forms. When you begin to move the left hand in conjunction with the right, you uncover an exciting new dimension in rhythm guitar: left-hand movement simultaneous with right-hand rhythm. (It's what you flirted with in Figure 4-6, but you're now going to explore it fully.) This "liberating of the left hand" is also the first step in playing single-note riffs and leads on the guitar, which we get to in Chapter 3 in Book III.

Figure 4-13 features a classic left-hand figure that fits either a straight-eighth-note groove or a shuffle feel (although it's placed here in a straight-eighth setting). The changing notes in this example are the 5th degrees of each chord, which move momentarily to the 6th degree. So in an A chord, the E moves to F♯; in a D chord the A moves to B; and in an E chord the B moves to C♯.

This pattern is known by various names, but we call it the "5-6 move." (Clever, eh?) You can find it in songs by Chuck Berry, the Beatles, ZZ Top, and plenty of blues-rock tunes. The 5-6 move fits over any I-IV-V progression, but you see it here in the key of A.

Note that to more easily accommodate the 5-6 move, the figure supplies alternate chords and fingering to satisfy the A, D, and E chords. In each case the chords use only three strings, all adjacent to each other.

And even though it's in steady eighth notes, this progression should be played using all right-hand downstrokes. If you can throw in some palm muting (as is done on the CD), so much the better!

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques

Figure 4-13:
An eighth-note 5-6 move using all downstrokes and a moving left hand.

Giving Your Fingers Some Style

Fingerstyle, as the name implies, means you pluck the strings with the right-hand fingertips. For these times you can put the pick down, stick it between your teeth, or tuck it in your palm — whichever allows you to grab it the fastest after the fingerstyle passage is over.

Fingerstyle is especially suited to playing *arpeggios*, or chords played one note at a time in a given pattern. Fingerstyle is a much more simplistic way to play different strings in rapid succession, as you must do for arpeggiated passages. Generally speaking, the thumb plays the bass strings and the fingers play the upper three strings. Think of the opening figure to Kansas's "Dust in the Wind," Fleetwood Mac's "Landslide," or Simon and Garfunkel's "The Boxer," and imagine trying to play those patterns with your pick hopping frantically around the strings.

Position your right hand just above the strings, so your fingers can dangle freely but in reach of the individual strings. In Figure 4-14, the thumb plays the downstem notes and the right-hand fingers play the upper notes. (For you classical guitar aficionados out there: The standard way to notate the

right-hand fingers is with the letters *p*, *i*, *m*, and *a*, for the Spanish words for the thumb, index, middle, and ring fingers.) In the example here, you don't need to be that careful about which fingers play which strings, so the figure doesn't indicate any left-hand fingerings. But a good way to approach Figure 4-14 is to use the index finger to play the 3rd string, the middle finger to play the 2nd string, and the ring finger to play the 1st string. Work for an even attack in the fingers and a smooth flow between the thumb and the fingers.

Track 25

Book II

Sounds and Techniques

C

w/fingers
let ring

T	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
B	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	3

Am

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

Figure 4-14:
Fingerstyle
arpeggios
played with
the right-
hand thumb,
index, mid-
dle, and ring
fingers.

F G7 C

*T

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

*T = thumb

Of course, you don't *have* to play an arpeggiated passage fingerstyle if it's slow and there's relatively little string skipping involved. But for longer passages, or if the tempo is fairly rapid and the string skipping is relentless, work out the passage as a fingerstyle exercise.



Many players use a combination of pick and fingers when fingerpicking, called *hybrid picking*. Substitute the pick for the thumb, the middle finger for the index, and the ring for the middle finger.

Chapter 5

Playing Melodies in Position and in Double-Stops

In This Chapter

- ▶ Playing single notes in position
- ▶ Playing double-stops as string pairs
- ▶ Playing double-stops across the neck
- ▶ Playing songs in position and in double-stops

One of the giveaways of beginning players is that they can play only down the neck, in open position, and that they play only single-string melodies. As you get to know the guitar better, you find you can use the whole neck to express your musical ideas, and that you're not limited to plunking out just single notes.

In this chapter, you venture out of open-position base camp into the higher altitudes of position playing. You also pick up the technique of playing in double-stops along the way.

Playing in Position

As you listen to complicated-sounding guitar music played by virtuoso guitarists, you may imagine their left hands leaping around the fretboard with abandon. But usually, if you watch those guitarists on stage or TV, you discover that their left hands hardly move at all. Those guitarists are playing in movable position, or for short, *playing in position*.



Playing in position means your left hand remains in a fixed location on the neck, with each finger more or less on permanent assignment to a specific fret, and that you fret every note — except for open position, of course. If you're playing in *5th position*, for example, your first finger plays the 5th fret, your second finger

plays the 6th fret, your third finger plays the 7th fret, and your fourth finger plays the 8th fret. A *position*, therefore, gets its name from the fret that your first finger plays.

In addition to enabling you to play notes where they feel and sound best on the fingerboard — not just where you can most easily grab available notes (such as the open-string notes in open position), playing in position makes you look cool — like a nonbeginner! Think of it this way: A layup and a slam-dunk are both worth two points in basketball, but only in the latter case does the announcer scream, “And the crowd goes wild!”

Playing in position versus playing with open strings

Why play in position? Why not use open position and open strings all the time? Here are two key reasons:

- ✓ **It's easier to play high-note melodies.** Playing in open position allows you to play only up to the 4th or 5th fret. If you want to play higher than that, position playing enables you to play the notes smoothly and economically.
- ✓ **You can instantly transpose any pattern or phrase that you know in position to another key simply by moving your hand to another position.** Because position playing involves no open strings, everything you play in position is *movable*.



People have the idea that playing guitar in lower positions is easier than playing in higher ones. The higher notes actually aren't harder to play; they're just harder to read in standard notation if you don't get too far in a conventional method book (where reading high notes is usually saved till last). But here, you're not focusing on music reading but on guitar playing — so go for the high notes whenever you want.

Playing exercises in position

The major scale (you know, the familiar *do-re-me-fa-sol-la-ti-do* sound you get by playing the white keys on the piano starting from C) is a good place to start practicing the skills you need to play in position. Figure 5-1 shows a C major scale in 2nd position. Although you can play this scale in open position, play it as the tab staff in the figure indicates, because you want to start practicing your position playing.



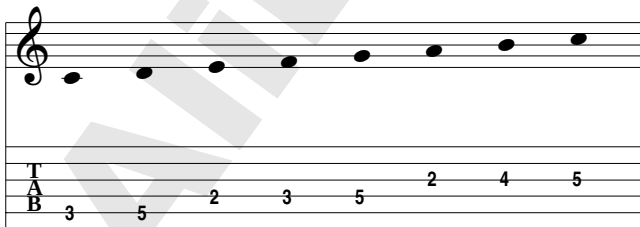
The most important thing about playing in position is the location of your left hand — in particular, the position and placement of the fingers. The following list contains tips for positioning your left hand and fingers:

- ✓ **Keep your fingers over the appropriate frets the entire time you're playing.** Because you're in 2nd position for this scale, keep your first finger over the 2nd fret, your second finger over the 3rd fret, your third finger over the 4th fret, and your fourth finger over the 5th fret at all times — *even if they're not fretting any notes at the moment.*
- ✓ **Keep all of your fingers close to the fretboard, ready to play.** At first, your fingers may exhibit a tendency to straighten out and rise away from the fretboard. This tendency is natural, so work to keep them curled and to hold them down over the frets where they belong for the position.
- ✓ **Relax!** Although you may think that you need to intensely focus all of your energy on performing this maneuver correctly or positioning that finger just so, you don't. What you're actually working toward is simply adopting the most natural and relaxed approach to playing the guitar. (You may not think it all that natural right now, but eventually, you'll catch the drift.) So take things easy, but remain aware of your movements. Is your left shoulder, for example, riding up like Quasimodo's? Check it periodically to make sure it stays tension free. Remember to take frequent deep breaths, especially if you feel yourself tightening up. And practice in front of a mirror from time to time.

Book II

Sounds and Techniques

Figure 5-1:
A one-octave C major scale in 2nd position.



Fingering: 2 4 1 2 4 1 3 4



Look at Figure 5-1 and notice that the score indicates left-hand fingerings under the tab numbers. These indicators aren't essential because the position itself dictates these fingerings. But if you want, you can read the finger numbers (instead of the tab numbers) and play the C scale that way (keeping an eye on the tab staff to check which string you're on). Then, if you memorize the fingerings, you have a *movable pattern* that enables you to play a major scale in any key.

Play the *one-octave scale* (one having a range of only eight notes) shown in Figure 5-1 by using both down- and upstrokes — that is, by using alternate (down and up) picking. Try it descending as well (you should practice all scales ascending and descending). This scale isn't on the CD; you already know how it sounds — it's the familiar *do re mi fa sol la ti do*.

Figure 5-2 shows a two-octave C major scale (one with a range of 15 notes) in the 7th position. Notice that this scale requires you to play on all six strings.

Figure 5-2:
A two-octave C major scale in 7th position.

Fingering: 2 4 1 2 4 1 3 4 1 3 4 2 4 1 2



To help you remember to hold your fingers over the appropriate frets all the time, even if they're not playing at the moment, and keep your fingers close to the fretboard, remember this twist on an old expression: Keep your friends close, your enemies closer, and your frets even closer than that.

Practice playing the scale shown in Figure 5-2 up and down the neck, using alternate picking. If you memorize the fingering pattern (shown under the tab numbers), you can play any major scale simply by moving your hand up or down to a different position. Try it. And then challenge the nearest piano player to a *transposing* (key-changing) contest using the major scale.



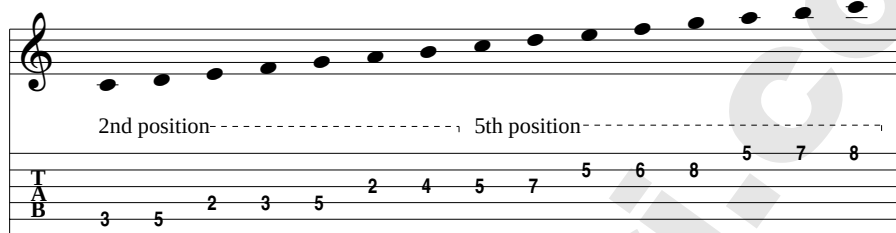
Play scales slowly at first to ensure clean and smooth notes; then gradually increase your speed. Start with a metronome at 60 beats per minute.

Shifting positions

Music isn't so simple that you can play it all in one position, and life would be pretty static if you could. In real-world situations, you must often play an uninterrupted passage that takes you through different positions. To do so successfully, you need to master the *position shift* like an old politician.

Andrés Segovia, legend of the classical guitar, devised fingerings for all 12 major and minor scales. Figure 5-3 shows how Segovia played the two-octave C major scale. It differs from the two scales in the preceding section in that it requires a position shift in the middle of the scale.

Figure 5-3:
A two-octave C major scale with a position shift.



Fingering: 2 4 1 2 4 1 3 1 3 1 2 4 1 3 4



Play the first seven notes in 2nd position and then shift up to 5th position by smoothly gliding your first finger up to the 5th fret (3rd string). As you play the scale downward, play the first eight notes in 5th position, and then shift to 2nd position by smoothly gliding your third finger down to the 4th fret (3rd string). The important thing is that the position shift sound seamless.

Someone listening shouldn't be able to tell that you shift positions. The trick is in the smooth gliding of the first (while ascending) or third (while descending) finger. Practice this smooth glide to make it sound uninterrupted and seamless. Isolate just the two notes involved (3rd string, 4th fret, and 3rd string, 5th fret) and play them over and over as shown in the scale until you can make them sound as if you're making no position shift at all.

Building strength and dexterity by playing in position



Some people do all sorts of exercises to develop their position playing. They buy books that contain nothing but position-playing exercises. Some of these books aim to develop sight-reading skills, and others aim for left-hand finger strength and dexterity. But you don't really need such books. You can make up your own exercises to build finger strength and dexterity. (And sight-reading doesn't concern you now anyway because you're reading tab numbers.)

To create your own exercises, just take the two-octave major scale shown back in Figure 5-2 and number the 15 notes of the scale as 1 through 15. Then make up a few simple mathematical combinations that you can practice playing. Following are some examples:

- ✓ 1-2-3-1, 2-3-4-2, 3-4-5-3, 4-5-6-4, and so on. (See Figure 5-4a.)
- ✓ 1-3-2-4, 3-5-4-6, 5-7-6-8, 7-9-8-10, and so on. (See Figure 5-4b.)
- ✓ 15-14-13, 14-13-12, 13-12-11, 12-11-10, and so on. (See Figure 5-4c.)

Figure 5-4 shows how these numbers look in music and tab. Remember, these notes are just suggested patterns to memorize and help build dexterity.

You get the idea. You can make up literally hundreds of permutations and practice them endlessly — or until you get bored. Piano students have a book called *Hanon* that contains lots of scale permutations to help develop strength and independence of the fingers. You can check out that book for permutation ideas, but making up your own is probably just as easy.

Track 26, 0:00

a)

etc.

Track 26, 0:10

b)

etc.

Track 26, 0:20

Figure 5-4:
Three
examples of
patterns to
help build
up the left
hand.

c)

etc.

Double-Stops



Double-stop is guitar lingo for playing two notes at once — something the guitar can do with relative ease but that's impossible on woodwinds and only marginally successful on bowed string instruments. (Actually guitarists lifted the term from violin playing but quickly made double-stops truly their own.) By the way, you do nothing special in fretting the notes of a double-stop. Fret them the same way you do chords or single notes.

You experience the guitar's capability to play more than one note simultaneously as you strum a chord, but you can also play more than one note in a melodic context. Playing double-stops is a great way to play in harmony with yourself. So adept is the guitar at playing double-stops, in fact, that some musical forms — such as '50s rock 'n' roll, country, and Mariachi music (you know, the music that Mexican street bands play) — use double-stops as a hallmark of their styles.

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques

Understanding double-stops

A double-stop is nothing more than two notes that you play at the same time. It falls somewhere between a single note (one note) and a chord (three or more notes). You can play a double-stop on adjacent strings or on nonadjacent strings (by skipping strings). The examples and songs that you find in this chapter, however, involve only adjacent-string double-stops because they're the easiest to play.

If you play a melody in double-stops, it sounds sweeter and richer, fuller and prettier than if you play it by using only single notes. And if you play a *riff* in double-stops, it sounds gutsier and fuller — the double-stops just create a bigger sound. Check out some Chuck Berry riffs — “Johnny B. Goode,” for example — and you can hear that he uses double-stops all the time.

Playing exercises in double-stops

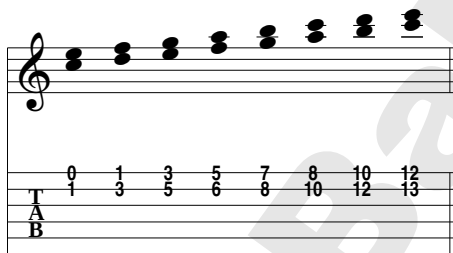
There are two general ways to play double-stops: You can play passages using only *one* pair of strings (the first two, for example) — moving the double-stops up and down the neck — or using *different* string pairs and moving the double-stops across the neck (first playing the 5th and 4th strings, for example, and then the 4th and 3rd, and so on).

Playing double-stops up and down the neck

Start with a C major scale that you play in double-stop *thirds* (notes that are two letter names apart, such as C-E, D-F, and so on), exclusively on the first two strings, moving up the neck. This type of double-stop pattern appears in Figure 5-5. The left-hand fingering doesn't appear below the tab numbers in this score, but that's not difficult to figure out. Start with your first finger for the first double-stop. (You need only one finger to fret this first double-stop because the 1st string remains open.) Then, for all the other double-stops in the scale, use fingers 1 and 3 if the notes are two frets apart (the second and third double-stops, for example) and use fingers 1 and 2 if the notes are one fret apart (the fourth and fifth double-stops, for example). With your right hand, strike only the 1st and 2nd strings.

Track 27, 0:00

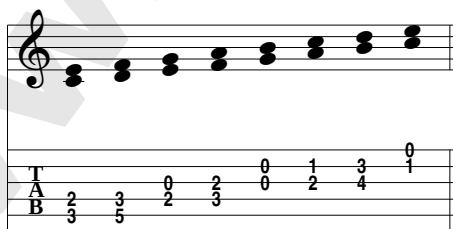
Figure 5-5:
A C major
scale in
double-
stops,
moving up
the neck.

*Playing double-stops across the neck*

Playing double-stops across the neck is probably more common than playing up and down the neck on a string pair. Figure 5-6 shows a C major scale that you play in thirds in open position, moving across the neck.

Track 27, 0:11

Figure 5-6:
A C major
scale in
double-
stops,
moving
across the
neck.



What's especially common in rock and blues songs is playing double-stops across the neck where the two notes that make up the double-stop are on the same fret (which you play as a two-string barre). Check out Books III and IV for more information on rock and blues.

Again, the example in Figure 5-6 doesn't show the fingerings for each double-stop. But you can use fingers 1 and 2 if the notes are one fret apart and fingers 1 and 3 if the notes are two frets apart.



Double-stops occur in the opening of Jimmy Buffett's "Margaritaville," Leo Kottke's version of the Allman Brothers' "Little Martha," Van Morrison's "Brown-Eyed Girl," Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode," and the intros to Simon and Garfunkel's "Homeward Bound" and "Bookends."

Playing Songs in Position and in Double-Stops

Certain keys fall comfortably into certain positions on the guitar. Songs are based in keys, so if you play a song in a particular key, the song will also fall comfortably into a certain position. Rock, jazz, blues, and country lead playing all demand certain positions to render an authentic sound.

Telling you that the melody of a song sounds best if you play it in one position rather than another may seem a bit arbitrary to you. But trust us on this one — playing a Chuck Berry lick in A is almost impossible in anything *but* 5th position. Country licks that you play in A, on the other hand, fall most comfortably in 2nd position, and trying to play them anywhere else is just making things hard on yourself.



The best position for a certain style not only sounds best to your ears, but also feels best to your hands. And that's what makes playing the guitar so much fun.

Play the two songs in this section by reading the tab numbers and listening to the CD; notice how cool playing up the neck feels instead of playing way down in open position, where those beginners play.

When you're playing in position, remember to keep your left hand in a fixed position, perpendicular to the neck, with your first finger at a given fret and the other fingers following in order, one per fret. Hold the fingers over the appropriate frets, close to the fretboard, even when they're not fretting notes.

Here is some useful information to help you play the songs:

- ✓ **Turkey in the Straw:** To play this song, you need to know how to play in 7th position (see the section “Playing in Position,” earlier in this chapter) and what saying “day-day to the wagon tongue” means.
- ✓ **Aura Lee:** To play this song, you need to know how to play double-stops up and down the neck on the 1st and 2nd strings (see the aptly entitled section “Playing double-stops up and down the neck,” earlier in this chapter) and how to gyrate your pelvis while raising one side of your upper lip.

You play this arrangement of “Aura Lee” — a song made famous by Elvis Presley as “Love Me Tender” — exclusively on the first two strings, moving up and down the neck. In the double-stop scales that you practice in Figures 5-5 and 5-6, the two notes of the double-stop move up or down together. In “Aura Lee” the two notes of the double-stop sometimes move in the same direction and sometimes in opposite directions. Other times, one of the notes moves up or down while the other remains stationary. Mixing directions makes an arrangement more interesting. Play and listen to “Aura Lee” to hear this for yourself.

Notice that the left-hand fingerings appear under the tab numbers. If the same finger plays successive notes, but at different frets, a slanted line indicates the position shift (as in measures 5, 7, and 9). For your right-hand picking, use all downstrokes. Remember to repeat the first four bars (as the repeat signs around them indicate) before continuing to bar 5. And make the song tender, just as Elvis did. Uh-thank yew verrah much.

Track 28

Turkey in the Straw

G

As I was a - go - ing on down the road with a

7 10 8 8 10 8 7 9 10 7 7 7 8 10

Fingering: 1 4 2 2 4 2 1 3 4 1 1 1 2 4

D7 G

ti - red team and a heav - y load, I cracked my whip and the

7 7 7 10 8 10 7 10 10 7 10 8 8 10 8 7 9 10

D7 G

lead - er sprung, I says day - day to the wag - on tongue.

7 7 7 8 10 7 10 10 7 8 10 7 8 10 8

Book II

Sounds and
Techniques

Track 29

Aura Lee

C D G7 C

(1.) As the black-bird in the spring 'neath the willow tree
(2.) sat and piped, I heard him sing, sing of Au-ra Lee.

Fingering: 1 4 3 4 4 1 4 4 3 1 3 4
3 1 1 1 1 3 1 2 2 2 2 1

C C+ C6 C7 F Fm C

Au - ra Lee, Au - ra Lee, maid of gold - en hair, Au - ra Lee.

Fingering: 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12
8 8 9 10 10 11 10 10 9 9 8 8

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

D G7 C

sun - shine came a - long with thee and swal - lows in the air.

Fingering: 12 12 13 12 10 5 10 10 8 7 5 7 8
8 8 10 8 7 7 7 7 6 6 6 6 5

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