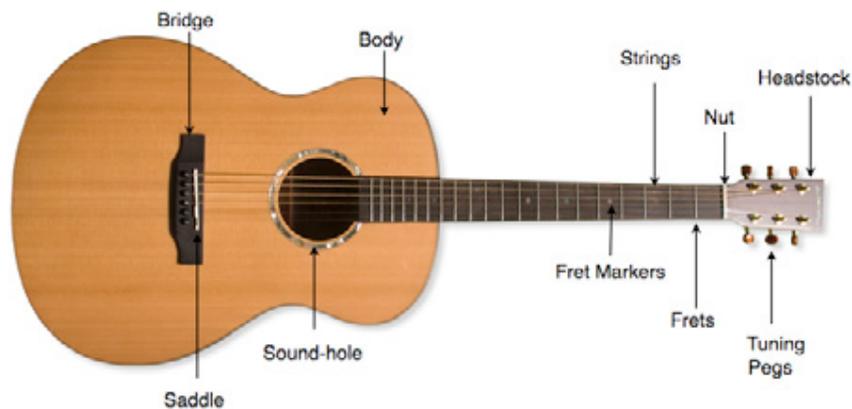


The Anatomy of the Guitar

Before we start playing, it's important to be familiar with some terminology which will be used throughout these lessons.



The diagram above shows the components of a modern, steel string acoustic guitar. From left to right:

- The Bridge - anchors the strings, and supports the saddle.
- The Saddle - sets the length of the strings, from the saddle to the nut.
- The Sound-hole and Body - together, amplify the strings.
- The Neck - supports the fingerboard and frets.
- The Fingerboard and Frets - holding a string with your finger against the fingerboard behind

a fret will give you a note. The frets are positioned to shorten the string, giving different notes or pitches.

- The Strings - cross the neck, and body between the saddle and the nut.
- The Strings - cross the neck, and body between the saddle and the nut.
- The Headstock - supports the nut and tuning pegs.
- The Nut - sets the length of the strings at the headstock end.
- The Tuning Pegs - adjust the tension of the strings to the right pitch.

Tuning up

It doesn't matter how good you are on the guitar; if it's out of tune, it's not going to sound nice! For this reason, you should tune your guitar every time you pick it up.

Standard tuning, from the lowest string to the highest (thickest to the thinnest!) is: E,A,D,G,B,E, easily remembered with the mnemonic,

Eddie **A**te **D**ynamite, **G**ood **B**yee **E**ddie!

I recommend buying an electronic tuner, which can be picked up reasonably cheaply, and do all of the work for you!

Plectrums

A plectrum, or pick, is a tool used to pluck and strum the strings of the guitar. They come in all shapes, sizes and materials, although most are made from plastic. I recommend buying a variety of brands and thicknesses and trying them all out to find which you're most comfortable with.

Left Hand



I'll be suggesting which fingers of the left hand to use for chords and riffs throughout these lessons, so here they are numbered as they'll be referred to.

Right Hand



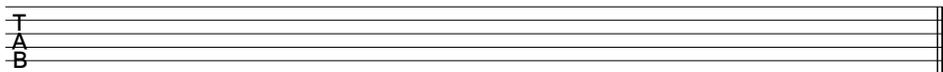
This photo shows how to correctly hold a plectrum, between the index finger and thumb of your right hand, with your index finger curled into an 'n' shape.

Notice that only a small area of the plectrum (the sharpest corner) is visible, any more will result in the plectrum getting caught in the strings, which can result in broken strings, broken plectrums and unpleasant noises!

Tablature

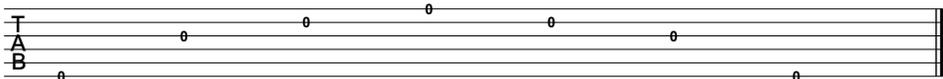
Tablature, or Tab, is a system of notation which has been developed uniquely for the guitar. In short, Tab shows us which strings to play, on which frets, in which order!

1



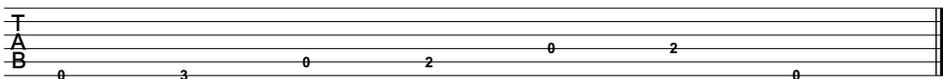
In example 1, each of the six lines represent a string: from the bottom line being the low E string, to the top line being the high E string.

2



So, in example 2, (reading from left to right) you would play the low E string open (pluck the string with your right hand, using a plectrum, and without fretting the string), followed by the G, B and e strings open, and then descend back down through them.

3

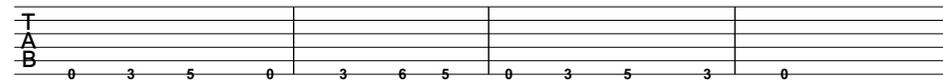


Example 3 introduces some fretted notes as well as the open strings. For this example you play the low E string open, then hold down the same string behind the third fret. Repeat this on the next two strings, but fretting the strings behind the second fret rather than the third.

Single Note Riffs

Now that you can read tab, you're ready to learn some riffs! Many guitar riffs can be performed just playing one note at a time, so let's look at a few classics.

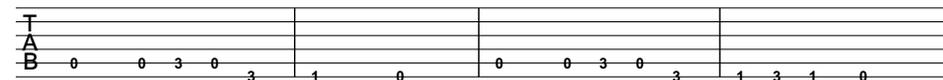
1 - Smoke on the Water



One of the most iconic guitar riffs of all time, Smoke on the Water is instantly recognisable. From the tab you can see that all of the notes used in this riff are located on the low E string; we'll be playing the string open, and at the third, fifth and sixth frets.

I recommend using the first finger of your left hand for the third fret, your third finger for the fifth fret, and your fourth finger for the sixth fret. You might be tempted to play all of these notes with your stronger first and second fingers, but it's important to build up the strength and coordination in all four fingers at the same

2 - Seven Nation Army - The White Stripes

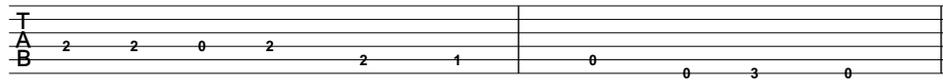


Moving forward, this next riff requires changing string, starting on the A string, and then moving down the the low E string. For this one, use your third finger for the notes on the third fret of each string, and your first finger for the first fret.

Minimising the movements of your hands and fingers like this will be key to becoming a fluid and accurate guitar player in the future, this approach is known as 'Economy of Motion'. Try going back to Smoke on the Water and minimising the movement in your left hand and fingers, you should consider this approach with everything that you play going forward.

Using this fingering, you'll notice that you only have to shift your left hand position very slightly throughout the riff.

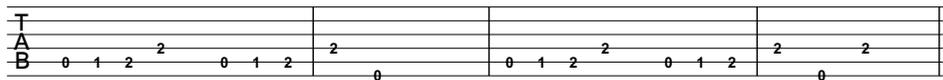
3 - Sunshine of your Love - Cream



Predictably moving on to three strings, this is another hugely famous riff which incorporates the D string. For this one, try using your third finger on the second fret of the D string, your second finger on the second fret of the A string, first finger on the first fret of the A string, and your fourth finger for the third fret of the E string.

Although it may seem over-complicated to use all four fingers for a relatively straightforward riff, coordinating all four of your fingers will be necessary when we move on to playing chords, so we'd may as well start now!

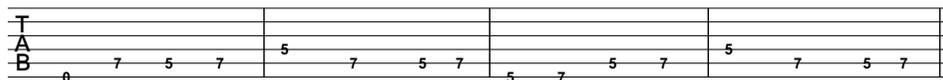
4 - Walk This Way - Aerosmith



You'll notice that this riff uses all of the same notes as Sunshine of Your Love but in a different order, so adopt the same fingering for each note.

ent order, so adopt the same fingering for each note.

5 - Superstition - Stevie Wonder

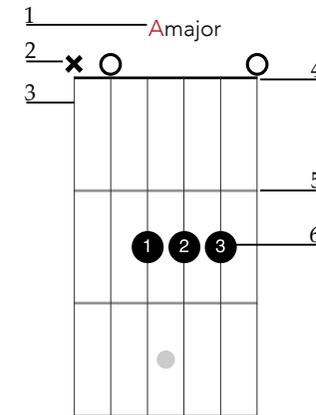


Moving away from the open position, here's a simplified version of a soul classic. Play this riff with just the first and third fingers

of your left hand; using your first finger for the notes on the fifth fret and your third for those on the seventh fret.

Playing Chords and Reading Chord Diagrams

A chord is three or more notes played simultaneously. Chords make up the foundation on which a song is built and, given that there are so many combinations of notes, studying them is a never ending endeavour. We're going to start with Open Chords, which use open strings as well as fretted strings. These open chords have been used widely in all styles of music and might sound familiar to you. Below is a labelled map of the fretboard which shows you how to hold an A major chord.



1 - Name of the chord.

2 - The 'X' above the nut indicates that this string isn't being used in this particular chord. You should mute any string marked X either with your thumb or another finger on your left hand, we'll go into muting strings in more depth later. The 'O' above the nut indicates that this string should be played open - that is, let to ring out without fretting a note on it.

3 - The leftmost vertical line is the low E (thickest) string, so the next one to the right is the A string, then the D string, with the rightmost line being the high E (thinnest) string.

4 - This topmost horizontal line is the nut.

5 - The horizontal lines are the frets. The one singled out in the diagram is the first fret, the next one down is the second and so on. As we get further up the neck, the frets will be numbered on the left-hand side.

6 - These numbered black dots show you which of the fingers of your left hand go where. So, for this A Major chord, your first finger will press down on the third string down (the D string) behind the second fret, your second finger will do the same on the second fret of the fourth string (the G string) and your third finger will go on the second fret of the fifth string (the B string).