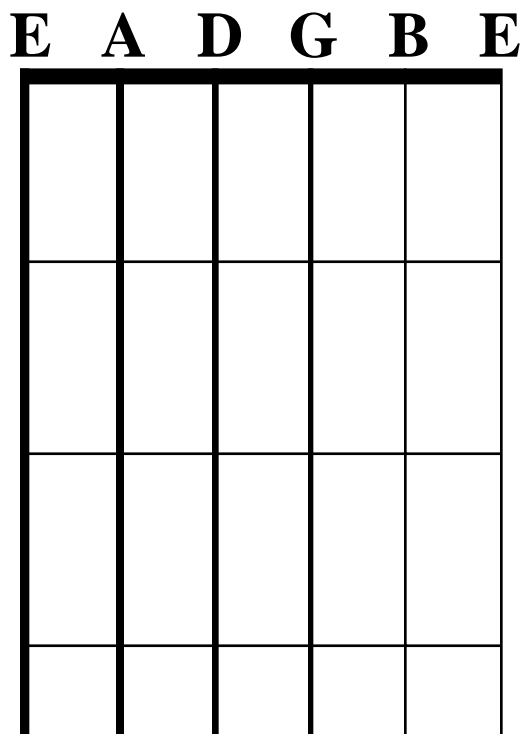


Lesson 1

Names of guitar strings

It is important to know the names of the 6 strings, for two main reasons:

- we refer to the strings by name when giving instructions
- we tune each string to the note it is named for



Notice that the 1st (thickest and lowest sounding) string and the 6th (thinnest and highest sounding) string are both E.

We call the thick one the **low E** string, and the thin one the **high E** string

Tuning

The easiest and most accurate way to tune your guitar is with an electronic tuner, which shows you visually when each string is in tune. Try to obtain one and learn to use it.

However, it is also important to be able to tune your guitar by ear to a given note for each string.

Listen to the notes on the first 6 CD tracks and try to adjust each string to sound the same as the given note. Each string is played four times, to give you a chance to listen and then adjust

Track 1 - low E

Track 2 - A

Track 3 - D

Track 4 - G

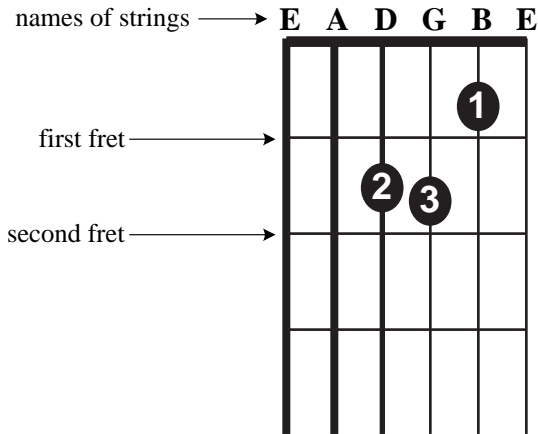
Track 5 - B

Track 6 - high E

After your guitar is in tune, play along with these six tracks a few times while mentally saying the name of each string, to get the names into your head.

Lesson 2

The A minor chord (Am)



- The numbers show which finger to use, on which string, in which fret.
 - * although frets are actually the metal bars on the neck, we say that a finger in the space just above the first fret is "in" in the first fret
- Press with the pad on the end of each finger, close to but not on top of the fret. Compare sound to Track 7 on CD.
 - * fingernails must be short to be able to press the strings properly
- A clear sound comes from pressing each string firmly, and arching the fingers so they don't touch other strings.
 - * while playing the chord, check each string to make sure it is not buzzing, or giving a "dead" sound. Compare to Track 8 on the CD.
- Don't press your palm up against the back of the guitar neck. You get a better finger angle if the heel of your hand is a bit away from the neck.

Track 7 has the Am chord, played four times. Listen, then play after each example, comparing your sound with the recording. **Track 8** has each string played one at a time for the Am chord, with the complete cycle repeated four times. Listen for four counts, then play after each example, trying to make every string sound clear.

The down-stroke

Hold your pick between your thumb and first finger, and strum down across all the strings. A down-stroke is indicated by the symbol ▣

1. Track 9

Am Am Am Am

Line 1 uses **whole notes**, which are held for four beats.
* symbols used in guitar chord parts look a little different than regular music notes because they use **rhythmic notation** to represent chords instead of individual notes, but the principles of note lengths are the same as regular music reading

Rest for one beat.
let your right wrist touch the strings to silence them

2. Track 10

Am Am Am Am

These are **half notes**, which are held for two beats.

The **dotted half note** is held for three beats.

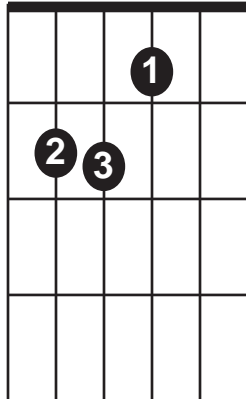
3. Track 11

Am Am Am Am

Quarter notes each get one beat.

Lesson 3

The E chord



Notice that the E chord is exactly the same shape as the Am chord, but it is moved over one string.

Track 12 has the E chord, played four times.

Listen, then play after each example, trying to make your chord sound like the recording.

Track 13 has each string played one at a time for the E chord, with the complete cycle repeated four times. Listen for four counts, then play after each example.

4. Track 14

5. Track 15

6. Changing chords Track 16

Am

half rest (two beats)

E

This piece is two lines long. Do not end until you reach the double bar line.

get ready to switch!

look ahead to see what's coming

Am

E

Am

quick switch with no rest between

Lesson 4

Adding up-strokes

Up-strokes, where you strum the strings by pulling the pick back up toward you, are indicated by the symbol ∇

Keep your wrist relaxed, not stiff. Don't "dig in" too hard on the up-strokes. You are really trying to catch only the two or three highest sounding (thinnest) strings. The wrist can rotate up slightly on the up-stroke.

Up-strokes are most often used on the second part of a pair of **eighth notes**, which divide a beat into two equal parts.

7. Track 17

Musical notation for Track 17 in 4/4 time. It consists of three measures of eighth notes. The first measure is Am, the second is E, and the third is Am. Each measure contains four eighth notes. The second and fourth notes in each measure have an up-stroke symbol (∇) above them. A repeat sign is at the end of the third measure, with an arrow pointing to it and the text "repeat sign - play the line again". Below the first measure, the text "eighth notes" is written.

A commonly used strum alternates down-strokes and up-strokes in continuous eighth notes. The strum will have a good feel to it if you add **accents** ($>$) on the **backbeats**, which are the second and fourth beats of each measure. *If you lighten up on the other strums the backbeats will be even more obvious.*

In exercise #8, the backbeats are indicated with arrows as well as accents.

8. Track 18

Musical notation for Track 18 in 4/4 time. It consists of three measures of eighth notes. The first measure is Am, the second is E, and the third is Am. Each measure contains four eighth notes. The second and fourth notes in each measure have an accent symbol ($>$) above them and a downward arrow pointing to them. Below the first measure, the text "accent (strum harder)" is written with an arrow pointing to the accent symbol.

This strum fits in well with a basic drum beat, where the drummer plays steady eighth notes on the cymbal, and accents the backbeats with the snare drum.

Here is a longer exercise using the backbeat strum with chord changes.

9. Track 19

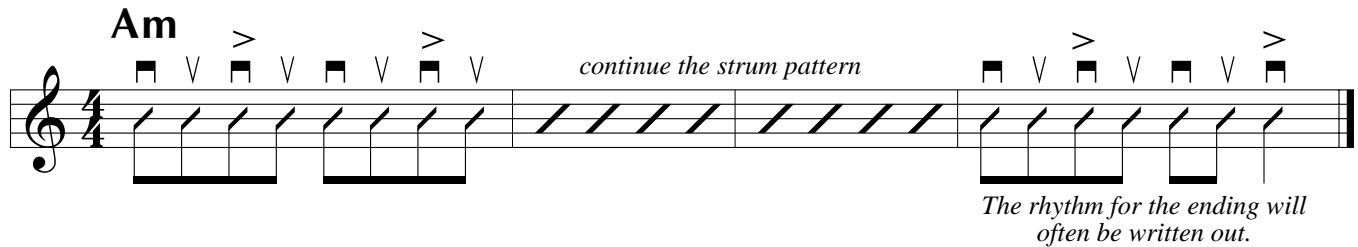
Musical notation for Track 19 in 4/4 time. It consists of two lines of eighth notes. The first line has two measures: Am and E. The second line has three measures: Am, E, and Am. Each measure contains four eighth notes. The second and fourth notes in each measure have an accent symbol ($>$) above them. Below the second line, the text "quick switch!" is written.

Lesson 5

Slash notation

Line 10 uses continuous eighth notes with no quarter note breaks. When a strum pattern repeats for several measures, we use **slash notation** which means keep playing the same pattern.

10. Track 20



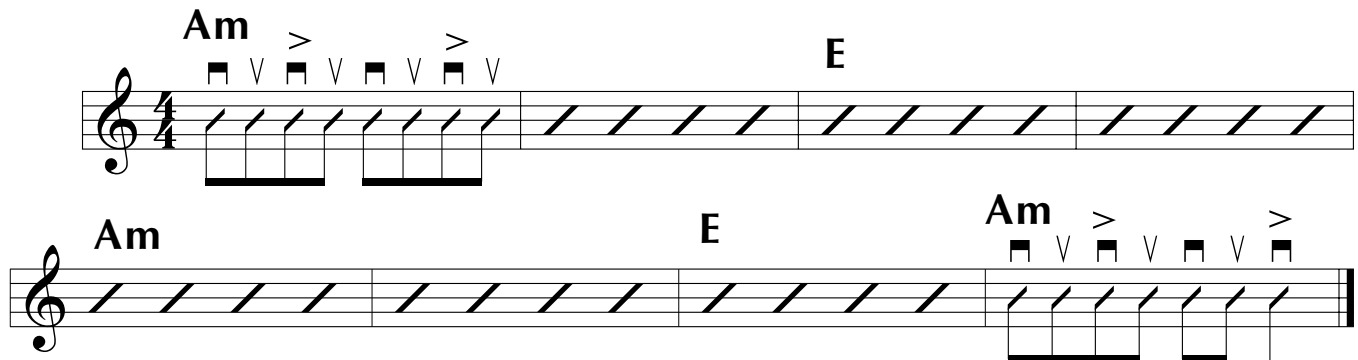
Am

continue the strum pattern

The rhythm for the ending will often be written out.

When there are no breaks in the strum, you have to switch chords quickly when there is a chord change.

11. Track 21



Am

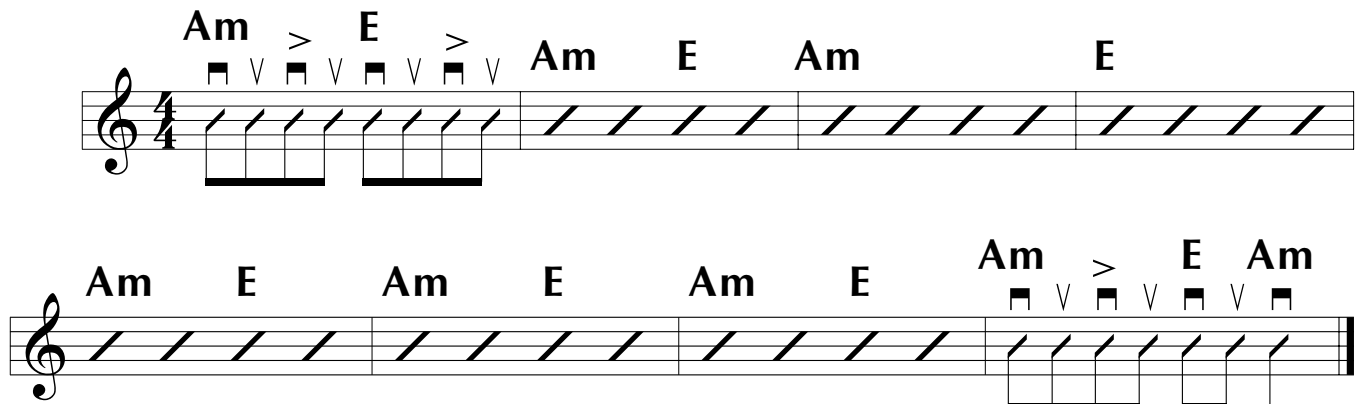
E

Am

E

For an extra challenge, try the following exercise where the chords sometimes switch in the middle of a measure.

12. Track 22



Am

E

Am

E

Am

E

Am

E

Am

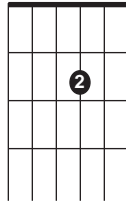
Lesson 6

Introduction to playing single notes and melodies

Chording, or rhythm guitar, is used for accompaniment.

The guitar can also be used as a **melody** instrument, playing single notes.

The first note we will learn is **A**. It is played on the G string, at the second fret. Use your second finger. Use a down-stroke with your pick *on just that string*. Let your pick come to rest against the next string.



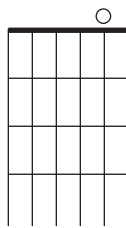
13. Track 23*



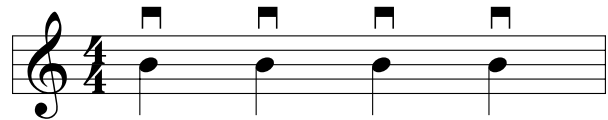
Memorize the location of this note on the staff. It is in the **second space**.

**On tracks 23 and 24 the line is played four times, with space for you to answer after you listen to each repetition.*

Our second note is **B**. This is played on the B string, without pressing the string at all. We call this using an **open string**. The little circle above the string indicates an open string.



14. Track 24*



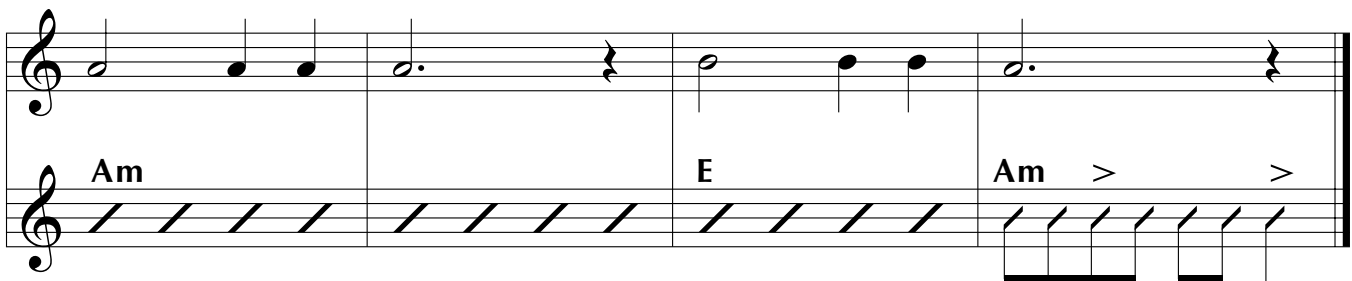
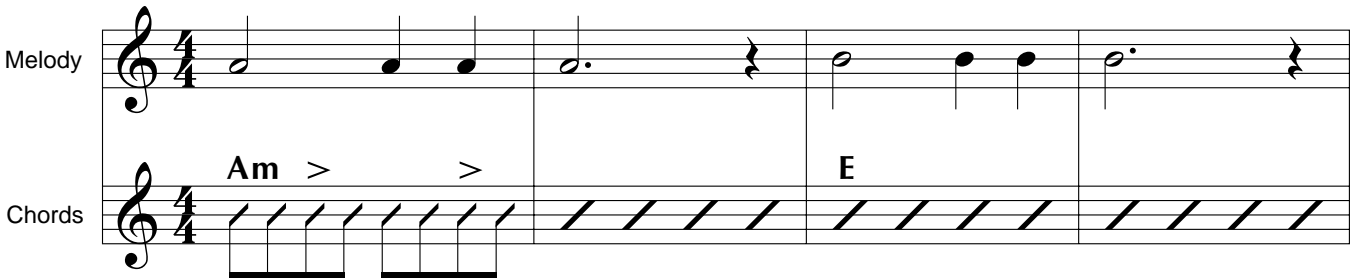
B is on the third line. Notes on the third line and higher are usually turned upside down, so they don't stick up too much.

15. Two-note melody Track 25 *For now, use downstrokes for all single notes.*



Notice that the following exercise has two parts - a melody part and a chord part. Team up with a partner and take turns on the two parts. *Note that the chord part is the same as Exercise #11.*

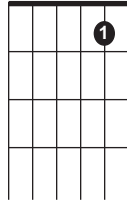
16. Track 26



Lesson 7

17. New note – C

The note C is played on the B string, at the first fret. Use your first finger.



Track 27 (four times, with space to answer between)



Introducing Tablature (TAB)

TAB is a system of representing guitar parts graphically. The TAB "staff" consists of six lines, which represent the six strings of the guitar. The numbers tell what fret to play for each note, using the string the number is written on. TAB is useful in combination with traditional music notation to help to quickly see how to play a part. The TAB gives the location of the note, and the music notation gives the rhythm.

18. Three note melody with TAB Track 28

T												
A	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	2
B												

19. Three note study Track 29

Remember, the TAB staff is not a separate part, but just another way of writing the melody.

Melody									
T									
A	2	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	
B									
Chords	Am	>	>			E			

Melody									
T									
A	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	
B									
Chords	Am			E			Am	>	>

Lesson 8

Introduction to Power Chords

Power chords are two-note chord voicings that are commonly used in certain rock and blues styles. They consist of a lower note that gives the chord its name, and another note five scale steps higher (which accounts for the other part of the name, the number 5).

Two of the easiest power chords are based on the open A and E strings, and are related to the two chords we have already learned.

Even though the higher note is in the second fret, **use the first finger**. This will allow use to use the other fingers for more advanced skills later.

Pick only two strings for each chord - the open string, and the one with the finger. Notice that all the other strings have an X above them, which means don't play that string.

20. A5

Track 30 - played 4 times with space to play between

The diagram shows a guitar fretboard with the first fret highlighted. Above the strings, 'X' marks are placed above the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th strings, and an 'O' is above the 1st string. A circled '1' is on the first fret of the 2nd string. To the right, a musical staff shows four quarter notes: A2 (open), A3 (2nd fret), E3 (open), and E4 (2nd fret). Below the staff, a tablature line shows 'T' above and 'A B' below, with fret numbers '0 2 0 2' under the strings.

21. E5

Track 31 - played 4 times with space to play between

The diagram shows a guitar fretboard with the first fret highlighted. Above the strings, 'X' marks are placed above the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th strings, and an 'O' is above the 1st string. A circled '1' is on the first fret of the 2nd string. To the right, a musical staff shows four quarter notes: E2 (open), E3 (2nd fret), A2 (open), and A3 (2nd fret). Below the staff, a tablature line shows 'T' above and 'A B' below, with fret numbers '0 2 0 2' under the strings.

22. Three Note Study using power chord accompaniment Track 32

This is the same tune as #19 in Lesson 6. See if you can read it without TAB.

The notation shows a melody line and a chord line in 4/4 time. The melody consists of quarter notes: A2, A3, E3, A2, E3, A3, E3, A2. The chord line shows A5 and E5 power chords. Below the chord line, it says 'use downstrokes on all power chords'.

The notation shows a melody line and a chord line in 4/4 time. The melody consists of quarter notes: A2, A3, E3, A2, E3, A3, E3, A2. The chord line shows A5, E5, and A5 power chords.

Lesson 9

Introduction to Finger Picking

Finger picking is used in softer, more "acoustic" styles. Instead of a pick, the thumb and fingers are used.

The thumb is responsible for the first three strings (low E, A, and D). The chord being played determines which string the thumb plays. The thumb does a downward motion. The sound is cleaner if a little bit of the nail contacts the string.

The first three fingers each have their own string - the first finger on the G string, the second finger on the B string, and the third finger on the high E string. The finger action is more of an upward pull toward the palm. Again, you get a clearer sound if a little bit of your nail contacts the string.

23. Simple quarter note finger picking pattern on Am Track 33

Am

This is not TAB - it is a diagram of what your **right** hand is doing. Notice that when picking Am, the thumb plays the A (2nd) string.

For the final held note, play your thumb and three fingers all together at the same time

The diagram shows a 4/4 time signature with a treble clef. The first three measures contain diagonal slashes representing a quarter note finger picking pattern. The fourth measure contains a quarter note chord with a diamond symbol above it. Below the staff are five horizontal lines representing guitar strings (E, B, G, D, A from top to bottom). Fingering numbers 1, 2, and 3 are placed above the B, G, and D strings respectively. A 'T' is placed below the A string. To the right of the diagram, a vertical list shows the string order for the final chord: 3 (high E), 2 (B), 1 (G), and T (A).

24. Simple quarter note finger picking pattern on E Track 34

E

Notice that when picking an E chord, the thumb plays the E (1st) string.

The diagram shows a 4/4 time signature with a treble clef. The first three measures contain diagonal slashes representing a quarter note finger picking pattern. The fourth measure contains a quarter note chord with a diamond symbol above it. Below the staff are five horizontal lines representing guitar strings (E, B, G, D, A from top to bottom). Fingering numbers 1, 2, and 3 are placed above the B, G, and D strings respectively. A 'T' is placed below the E string. To the right of the diagram, a vertical list shows the string order for the final chord: 3 (high E), 2 (B), 1 (G), and T (E).

25. Changing chords while finger picking Track 35

Am E

Remember that the thumb changes strings when you switch to the E chord.

Am E Am

back to Am thumb position

The diagram shows a 4/4 time signature with a treble clef. The first two measures are Am, the next two are E, and the final measure is Am. Each measure contains diagonal slashes representing a quarter note finger picking pattern. Below the staff are five horizontal lines representing guitar strings (E, B, G, D, A from top to bottom). Fingering numbers 1, 2, and 3 are placed above the B, G, and D strings respectively. A 'T' is placed below the appropriate string for each chord: A for Am and E for E. To the right of the final Am measure, a vertical list shows the string order: 3 (high E), 2 (B), 1 (G), and T (A).