

The First Fret Guitar Method

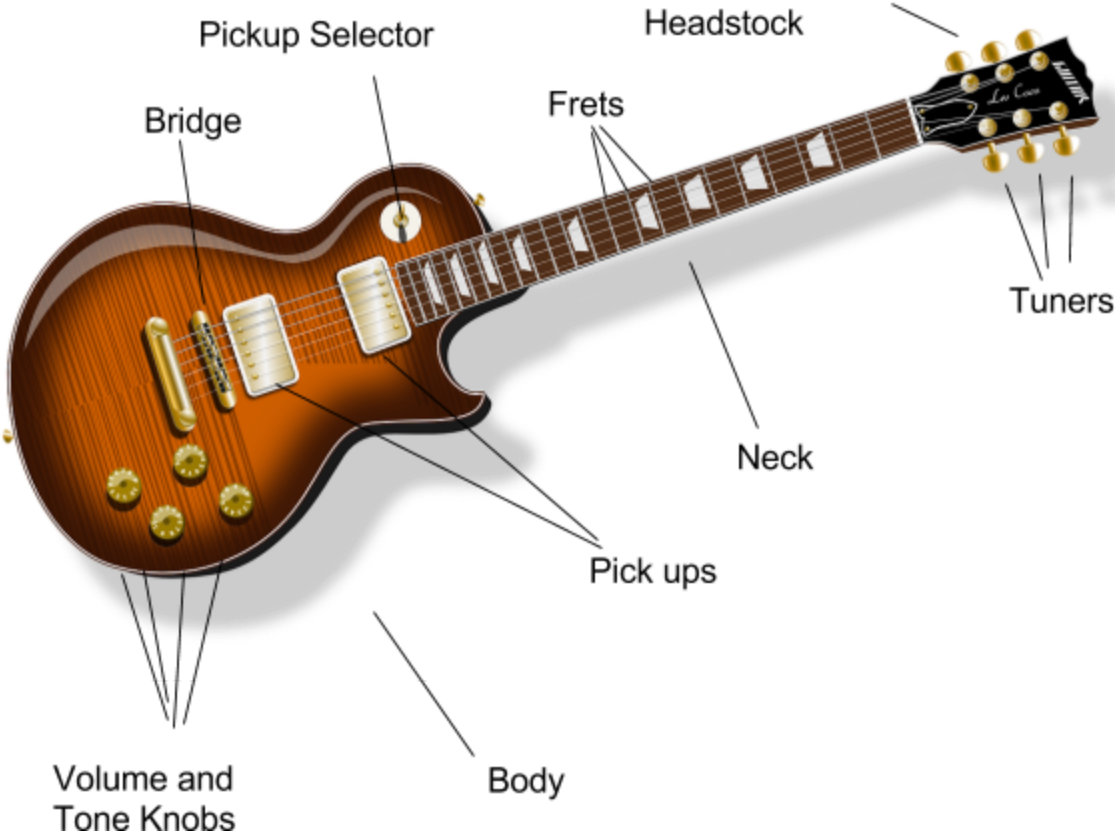
Pete Marten



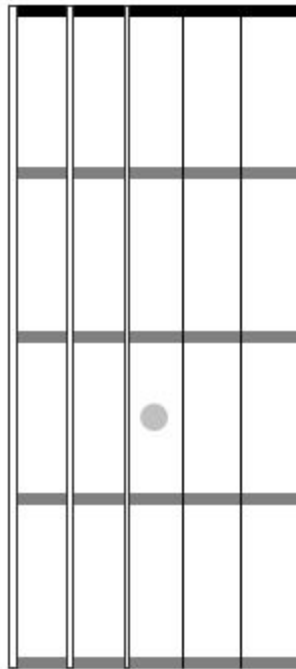
Lesson 1

- Parts of the Guitar
- Reading Chord Diagrams
- Left Hand Fingers
- Open String Note Names
- Essentials: Posture, fingering, holding a pick
- 1 Finger Guitar: Major Scale
- Picking Hand Tips
- Fretting Hand Tips
- Practicing
- Practice Plan 1

Parts of the Guitar



Reading the Chord Diagrams



- The lines going up and down are the strings
- The biggest string (on the far left) is the 6th string
- The thinnest string (on the far right) is the 1st string
- The lines going left and right are the frets
- The top black line going left and right represents the part of the guitar called the **nut**, it is either white or black on your guitar, and made out of plastic, bone, and sometimes graphite.

Important Information

- Sit up straight and relaxed in your chair
- The cutaway of the guitar should go on your right leg (for classical style posture, this part goes on your left leg)
- Never rest your left arm/elbow on your leg, this results in a bent over posture
- The headstock should be raised towards the ceiling just slightly
- The guitar should be close to your body in a snug, upright position

Picking Hand Tips

- Hold the pick with only your thumb and index finger
- Pick should be flat on the edge of your index finger
- Thumb grips the pick on the “pad”

Hint: If a police office dusted your guitar pick for fingerprints, they would only find a fingerprint of your thumb, not your index finger!

Fretting Hand Tips

- The hand on the neck presses down strings on a certain fret, this is what is called **fretting**
- Press the string down near the tip of your finger, come down on the string at a more perpendicular angle, not flat
- When fretting a note, place your finger near the actual fret, away from the headstock within the space
- Our fretting hand fingers each have a number and a name (the names you probably already know)
 - Index Finger=1
 - Middle Finger=2
 - Ring Finger=3
 - Pinky=4

Open String Note Names

Next we will memorize the names of the 6 strings

- The Biggest string is numbered 6, going all the way to the thinnest string, number 1
- The following is a helpful phrase to help you remember the names of the open strings.

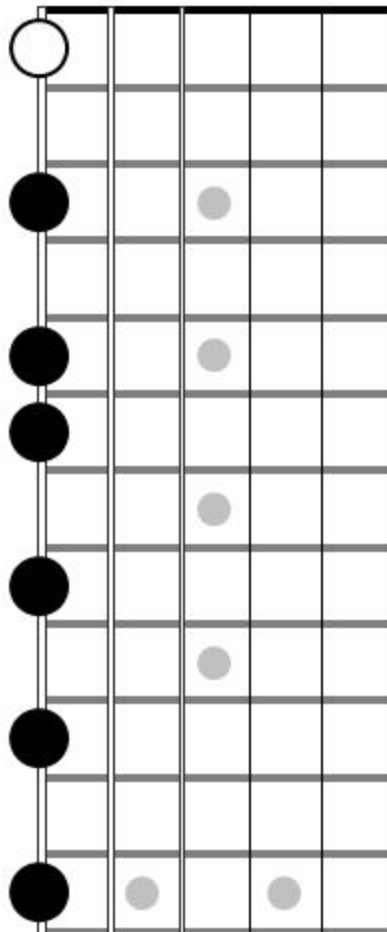
- 6 = **Elmo's** (Biggest String)
- 5 = **Awesome**
- 4 = **Dinosaur**
- 3 = **Gobbled**
- 2 = **Barney's**
- 1 = **Ear** (Thinnest string)

- Remember, the string is only given a letter as a name, it is not the "Barney" string, but the B string

1 Finger Guitar: The Major Scale

- Fret each note with your index finger
- Strike each note with a downwards (towards the floor) picking motion. This is called a **down stroke/down pick**.
- The numbers to the side of the diagrams represent fret numbers
- The notes in order are F-G-A-Bb-C-D-E
- After you have learned these 7 notes, try to make up different melodies, maybe even write your own song with them! Try to find the following melodies by ear: Happy Birthday, Ode to Joy, Star Wars, your favorite movie theme, etc.

1 Finger Scale



Practicing

- The key to success on guitar, or any instrument and most things in life, will be to spend time every day working on it.
- It won't take a ton of time in the beginning, in fact I would encourage only 15 minutes a day starting out
- If you can, invest in a guitar stand, and never keep your guitar sitting in your guitar case when you are at home! This prevents a week or two going by without you seeing your guitar while it waits for you in your closet. These little obstacles can be huge to overcome, and doing so will make you a better guitar player!

Practice Plan 1

- Memorize fret hand finger names/numbers
- Memorize each part of the guitar
- 5 Minutes-recite open string note names
- 10 minutes-Play 1 finger scale
 - Go up and down the scale
 - Make up different orders of the notes, play every other note, play the first 4 notes back and forth, try to be creative!

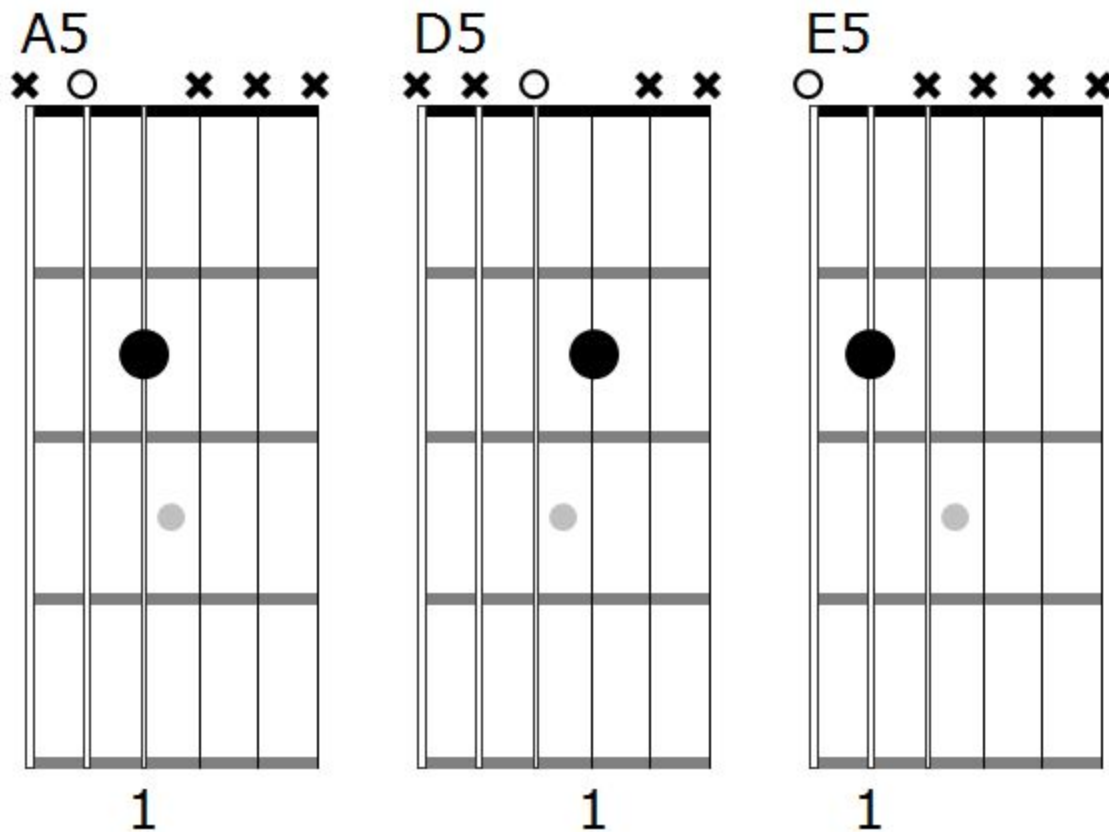
Lesson 2

- 3 Open Power Chords
- Building up to 3 power chord songs
- Reading Music Tips
- Practice plan 2



3 Open Power Chords

- **Power chord** is a slang word for this type of chord, it sounds really heavy and powerful, and is used in rock and roll a lot
- The number “5” after a letter name “ex. E5” means you will play a Power Chord
- When your hand holding the guitar pick, **picking/strumming hand** hits more than one string simultaneously, this is called **strumming**
- All of these chords use your index finger only
- Your strumming hand will strike only 2 strings
- The “O” above the string means you strum that string **open** (without a finger pressing down a fret on it)
- The X means you don’t play/strum that string at all!




Reading Music Tips

- The double line and double dot symbol “ ||: “ and “:|” means to repeat a section, everything within these 2 signs is repeated. This is called a **Repeat Sign**
- The **slash marks** under the chord symbols tell us how many times to play each chord (they have other meanings that we will learn later on!)
- The straight up and down line “ | “ is called a **bar line**, this divides the music into smaller chunks known as **measures** or also called a **bar**

Building up to the 3 Songs

The following is a set of exercises to build up our skills with power chords

1. A5 D5



E5 A5

Detailed description: This exercise consists of two measures. The first measure contains an A5 power chord, represented by a vertical bar with a colon and four diagonal slashes. The second measure contains a D5 power chord, also represented by a vertical bar with a colon and four diagonal slashes. The exercise is numbered '1.' on the left.

2. E5 A5



E5 D5

Detailed description: This exercise consists of two measures. The first measure contains an E5 power chord, represented by a vertical bar with a colon and four diagonal slashes. The second measure contains an A5 power chord, also represented by a vertical bar with a colon and four diagonal slashes. The exercise is numbered '2.' on the left.

3. A5 E5



Detailed description: This exercise consists of two measures. The first measure contains an A5 power chord, represented by a vertical bar with a colon and four diagonal slashes. The second measure contains an E5 power chord, also represented by a vertical bar with a colon and four diagonal slashes. The exercise is numbered '3.' on the left.

4. A5 E5



Detailed description: This exercise consists of two measures. The first measure contains an A5 power chord, represented by a vertical bar with a colon and four diagonal slashes. The second measure contains an E5 power chord, also represented by a vertical bar with a colon and four diagonal slashes. The exercise is numbered '4.' on the left.

5. A5 D5 E5 A5



Detailed description: This exercise consists of four measures. The first measure contains an A5 power chord, the second a D5 power chord, the third an E5 power chord, and the fourth an A5 power chord. Each chord is represented by a vertical bar with a colon and four diagonal slashes. The exercise is numbered '5.' on the left.

Practice Plan 2

- ❑ 5 Minutes 1 finger scale
- ❑ 10 Minutes open power chord exercises 1-5
 - ❑ Master 1 at a time, then move on to the others
 - ❑ Another strategy could be to focus on just one for each practice session each day