

TOTAL GUITAR LESSONS



BEGINNER GUITAR LESSONS: OPEN CHORDS

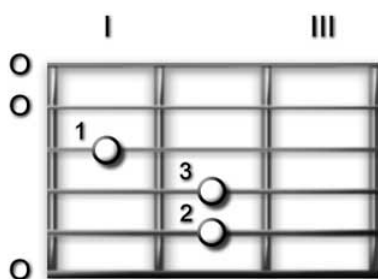
In the last lesson we learned where to find single notes on the guitar. When we play three or more notes at the same time we get a **chord**.

Chords are the foundation of almost every song, they define the **harmony**, they are essential in **comping** and in **rhythm** playing in every style of music and for a beginner they are priceless for strumming along any song: regardless of the complexity of the original arrangement we can always find a simple way to play a song on an acoustic guitar.

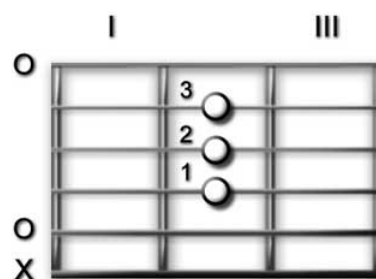
Like notes, we can find the same chord in different places on the fretboard and so we get different '**shapes**' or **positions**, some are simple and some are complex.

'**Open chords**' are shapes that use one or more open (not fretted) strings and are played on the first few frets, usually from the first to the third, and they have the advantage of being both **simple** and **rich** sounding, ideal for **strumming**. They are considered beginners' chords but their rich tone makes them an essential weapon in the arsenal of every pro guitarist.

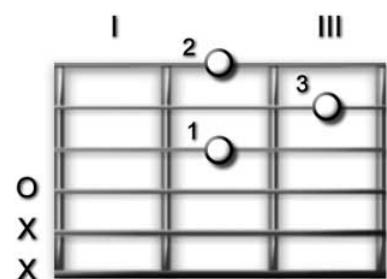
There are **three** fundamental **shapes** for open chords: the **E** shape, the **A** shape and the **D** shape (if you don't know how to read a chord diagram click [here](#)).



E shape



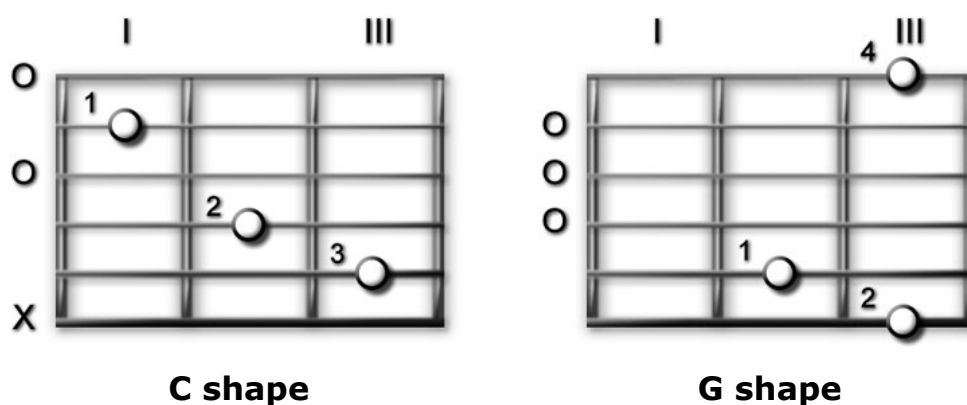
A shape



D shape

Starting from these basic **Major** shapes, with just a little finger shuffling, we can play almost any kind of chord (**minor**, **7th**, **sus** etc.) and we can transpose them using a **barre** so we can play virtually every chord: we can move an **E** Major to the 3rd fret with a barre and play a **G**, for example.

We can play an almost **infinite number** of open chords on the guitar but many of them are not as **flexible** as these three shapes. The most common of these chords are the **C** and **G** shapes: they have a beautiful and rich sound but we cannot use them to play, for example, **minor** chords and they're not very useful with a **barre** either.



Now let's find out how **minor** and **7th** chords are derived from the three **basic** shapes in the next [chapter](#).