



# Excerpt

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# Common Chords

These nine chords are the most common major and minor chords used in guitar. Thousands of songs have been written using just these chords. Learn them well.

- ❖ Reference the tablature for each chord as well as the picture to see which finger goes where on the fret board. Remember to arch well and squeeze!
- ❖ For the **A chord**, first reference the tablature. You can see that the top line (1<sup>st</sup> string) has a 0 on it. That means no fingers are needed, but you'll still play it when you strum. The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> strings each have a number 2 on them. This means your ring finger will hold down the 2<sup>nd</sup> fret on the 2<sup>nd</sup> string, your middle finger will hold down the 2<sup>nd</sup> fret on the 3<sup>rd</sup> string and your index finger will hold down the 2<sup>nd</sup> fret on the 4<sup>th</sup> string. Before you strum, take a look again at the tablature. There is a 0 written on the 5<sup>th</sup> string but nothing on the 6<sup>th</sup> string. So, start the strum on the 5<sup>th</sup> string and strum down. Remember to squeeze with your left hand as hard as you can, with your fingers right in the middle of the fret. The A chord looks like your fingers making a “number 3.” “Number 3” is a good memory trick for the A chord.
- ❖ The **D chord** is the “triangle chord” and starts on the 4<sup>th</sup> string. Arch your fingers, place them in the middle of the fret, squeeze and strum down.
- ❖ The **E chord** is the “upside down triangle chord.”
- ❖ The **G chord** is: “two little fingers on the two little strings; two big fingers on the two big strings.”
- ❖ The **C2 chord** is the same as the G chord, except that the top two fingers each move down one string.
- ❖ The **C chord** is the stretchy chord. Notice that each finger is on a different fret. The index finger is on the 1<sup>st</sup> fret, the middle finger is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> fret and the ring finger is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> fret.
- ❖ The **Em chord** is the same as an E chord, except that you lift the index finger off of the string. Strum all strings.
- ❖ The **Am chord** is the E chord moved down one string (for each finger). Begin on the 5<sup>th</sup> string and strum down.
- ❖ The **Dm chord** is the D chord, where the middle and index fingers trade places and then the index finger scoots back one fret. Begin on the 4<sup>th</sup> string and strum down.

**A (#3)**

**D** △

**E** ▽

1----0-----		----2---M-		-----0-----	
2----2---R-		----3---R--		-----0-----	
3----2---M-		----2---I--		----1---I--	
4----2---I--		----0-----		----2---R--	
5----0-----		-----		----2---M--	
6-----		-----		----0-----	

**G** (2 little fingers on the 2 little strings)

**C2** (looks similar to G)

**C** (stretchy chord)

1----3---P--		----3---P--		-----0-----	
2----3---R--		----3---R--		----1---I--	
3----0-----		----0-----		----0-----	
4----0-----		----2---I--		----2---M--	
5----2---I--		----3---M--		----3---R--	
6----3---M-		-----		-----	

**Em** (E without index finger)

**Am** looks like E

**Dm**

1----0-----		-----0-----		----1---I--	
2----0-----		----1---I--		----3---R--	
3----0-----		----2---R--		----2---M--	
4----2---R--		----2---M--		----0-----	
5----2---M-		----0-----		-----	
6----0-----		-----		-----	

*I=Index finger    M=Middle finger    R=Ring Finger    P=Pinky finger  
(Pointer finger)*

**Build Your Finger Strength and Flexibility**

*Practice, Practice, Practice.*

*Calluses will soon develop on the tips of your finger so they won't be as sore.*

*Squeeze a racquetball or stress ball in your spare time.*

*Gently stretch your fingers from time to time.*