

The 8 beginner guitar chords

The eight chords most beginners learn first are the open chords C, A, G, E and D major and A minor, E minor and D minor. Each uses the first three frets and some open strings. Learn E minor first: it needs two fingers. G and C are usually the last to feel easy.

The 8 chords · numbers are fingers, × don't play, ○ open, cream is the root

C C major · C E G x 3 2 0 1 0	A A major · A C# E x 0 2 2 2 0	G G major · G B D 3 2 0 0 0 3	E E major · E G# B 0 2 2 1 0 0
D D major · D F# A x x 0 2 3 2	Am A minor · A C E x 0 2 2 1 0	Em E minor · E G B 0 2 2 0 0 0	Dm D minor · D F A x x 0 2 3 1

Learn them in this order

1. Em, then E. Em needs two fingers. Add one finger and it becomes E.
2. Am, then A. Am is the E shape moved over a string. A packs three fingers into one fret.
3. D, then Dm. Two triangles on the top strings. Only the note on the high e string changes.
4. C, then G. The two widest grips. Leave them until the others feel easy.

How to practise it

1. Place one chord, strum once and pick each string slowly. Move any finger whose string buzzes or is muted.
2. Pick two chords, such as Em and Am. Switch between them for one minute, strumming once per chord, and count the changes.
3. Do it again tomorrow and beat the number. When a pair gets past 30 changes a minute, add the next chord.