

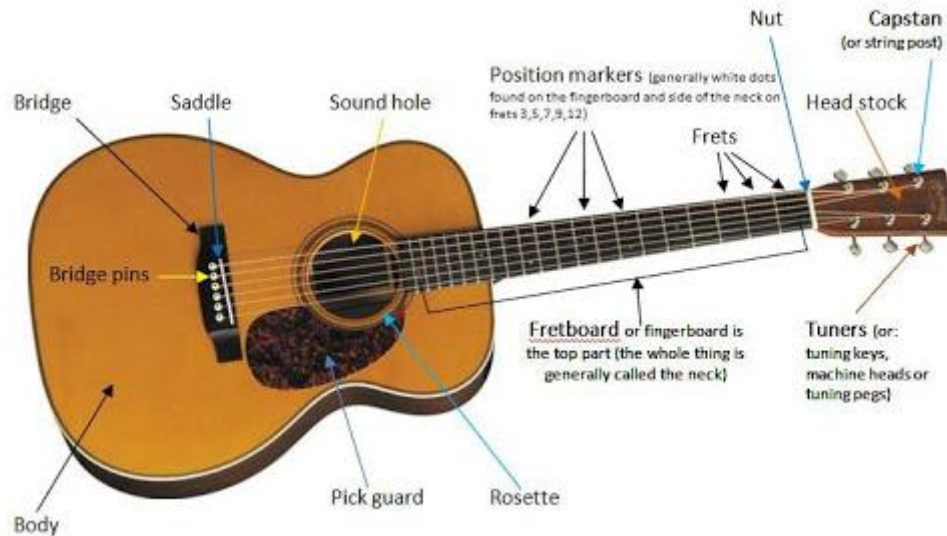
Small warning before the start of this course:

*This course, unlike the other courses, was created in consultation with a longtime guitarist, in order to have more legitimacy (since I am not a specialist in this instrument).
I would therefore like to sincerely thank Marnie Fournier-Boutault, guitarist for many years, for her help and invaluable advice during the development of this course.*

*If all goes well, with this course, and with a lot of training, you will be able to play the guitar.
Well, happy reading to you, work well, and good luck!*

Benjamin Maison

Ah, the guitar, what a great instrument ... But to know how to play it, you have to know which box corresponds to which note, and this is what we saw in the previous lesson. In this course, you will really learn to play the guitar.



1. Things you have to care about when you buy a guitar

- The soundboard

The best I can recommend is to take a solid wood guitar. Even if the first price guitars are attractive by their price, they are generally made of plywood. Certainly we can play with these guitars, but the sound produced will be less rich than with a solid wood guitar, a less good reaction to your playing as well as to your nuances will be noticed.

To find out if the soundboard is made of solid wood, I advise you to look at the edge inside the rosette.

- The handle

The shape of the neck is very different depending on the model of the guitar.

However, remember to check that the neck of the guitar is straight and well adjusted: a note played in the twelfth fret must sound exactly the same pitch as the harmonic played in this same fret, and no note should make it curl a rope.

- The shape

Apart from the aesthetic side of the guitar, the finish allows you to get an idea of the care taken in the manufacture of the guitar.

Put your finger on the upper and lower edge of the handle: you shouldn't feel the frets, the varnish should not be too thick and should be applied evenly.

- Last recommendation

Above all, ask the seller to mount new strings: you can not really judge the quality of a guitar with worn strings.

2. First steps

A) The grip of the guitar

Let's start with the position of the guitar in relation to your body.
You will be offered several positions here:



In this first position, called classic, we put the guitar on the right thigh, and we raise the left leg to support the top of the guitar.



In this second position, called folk, the guitar is placed completely on the right thigh, without support on the left leg.

B) The position of the right hand

The right hand is positioned at the rosette, the wrist very flexible, because you will play with the side of the thumb.



C) The position of the left hand

The fingers are almost perpendicular to the strings of the guitar. They press the strings in the middle of the box, closest to the fret (towards the rosette). The thumb is placed at the back of the handle (between the middle and the top of the handle), a bit like if you formed a clip with your hand (the fingers have to bridge and come to pluck each string without effort). The thumb should be flat against the wood.

It is thus positioned to facilitate the movement of the other fingers on the strings. Check that it stays in place because we tend to migrate it above the handle or parallel to it, which is no longer a correct position.



D) Tune and maintain your guitar

To learn how to tune your guitar, refer to the course “Learn to tune your guitar”.

What I recommend to you regarding the maintenance of your guitar is to go and have it “revised” by a professional twice a year (once in spring, once in autumn), because following temperature changes, the neck does not react the same way, and it can damage your guitar.

Also remember to change the strings also when you revise your guitar. After their wear depends on the frequency at which you play, but if you make a regular use of your guitar, changing the strings every 6 months seems to be a good idea.

3. Exercises to untie your fingers

The unlinking exercises are often off-putting, you don't really see the point. However they allow to "dissociate" the movements of the fingers, which will allow you thereafter to have a greater fluidity of movement. There are thousands of combinations of this type of exercise, you can even invent your own models. Don't forget to play with a metronome, which allows you to immediately acquire a well-placed sense of rhythm.

If you have the courage, practice these exercises with your eyes closed, they will allow you to obtain a mental map (visualization) of the neck of the guitar. You will see, in just a few days your guitar level will literally be multiplied!

Level 1

You can start **without a metronome**, just to familiarize yourself with the exercise. We will work first, the **1-2-3-4 formula** using:

- **index 1,**
- **middle finger 2,**
- **ring finger 3,**
- **little finger 4.**

You will work on the beginning of the handle.

- First empty string, then box 1, box 2, box 3, box 4,
- Second empty string, then box 1, box 2, box 3, box 4,
- Third empty string, then box 1, box 2, box 3, box 4, etc.

Then you make the return by starting from box 5 with your little finger, box 4 with the ring finger, box 3 with the middle finger, box 2 with the index finger, etc.

Which gives us the formula: 0-1-2-3-4 for the outward journey, 4-3-2-1 for the return.
At the pick (or your left hand), you will knock down, knock up.

Level 2

Place yourself for example fret 3 of your guitar and, on the low E string plays successively the frets 3 4 5 6 with the index fingers (1), Major (2), Annular (3), Auricular (4). If you play the pick, alternate a stroke down and a stroke up.

Once these 4 notes are played, go to the next string, the string of the, and so on, once you get to the treble E, wind the strings backwards: 4 3 2 1 and repeat the operation. If the space is still too large for your hands, start fret 5, it will be easier. The more you play towards the head of the neck, the more it will be "painful" on the hands because of the widening of the fingers which is more important. This is especially true on a classical guitar where the necks are sometimes quite large.

Level 3

More difficult, this exercise really begins the dissociation of the movements of the fingers, it is necessary this time to alternate, index, annular, major and auricular. Once you have covered all the strings, you must do the opposite path (4-2-3-1).

Level 4

It is a question here of working the formula 1-2-3-4 but by playing 1 and 3 on the low E string, and 2 and 4 on the E string. Then repeat this operation by changing strings. It's a fairly difficult exercise for a beginner, but it has the advantage of working the precision of the right hand for picks. Remember to alternate a blow down with a blow up.

Level 5

Now that you understand what types of exercises untie your hands, I suggest you invent your own exercises, it will make you want to play and do them.

The exercise advised by Marnie:

One of the exercises that she performs most often is the chain of these combinations on the indicated strings:

1-2-3-4 on the low E string

2-3-4-1 on the A one

3-4-1-2 on the D one

4-3-2-1 on the G one

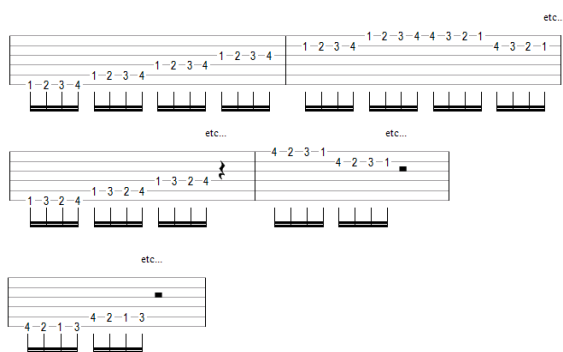
1-2-3-4 on the B one

2-3-4-1 on the high E one

4-5-3-2 on the high E one

5-2-3-4 on the B one, etc.

Example of exercise you can do:



4. The technique of the stationary chords

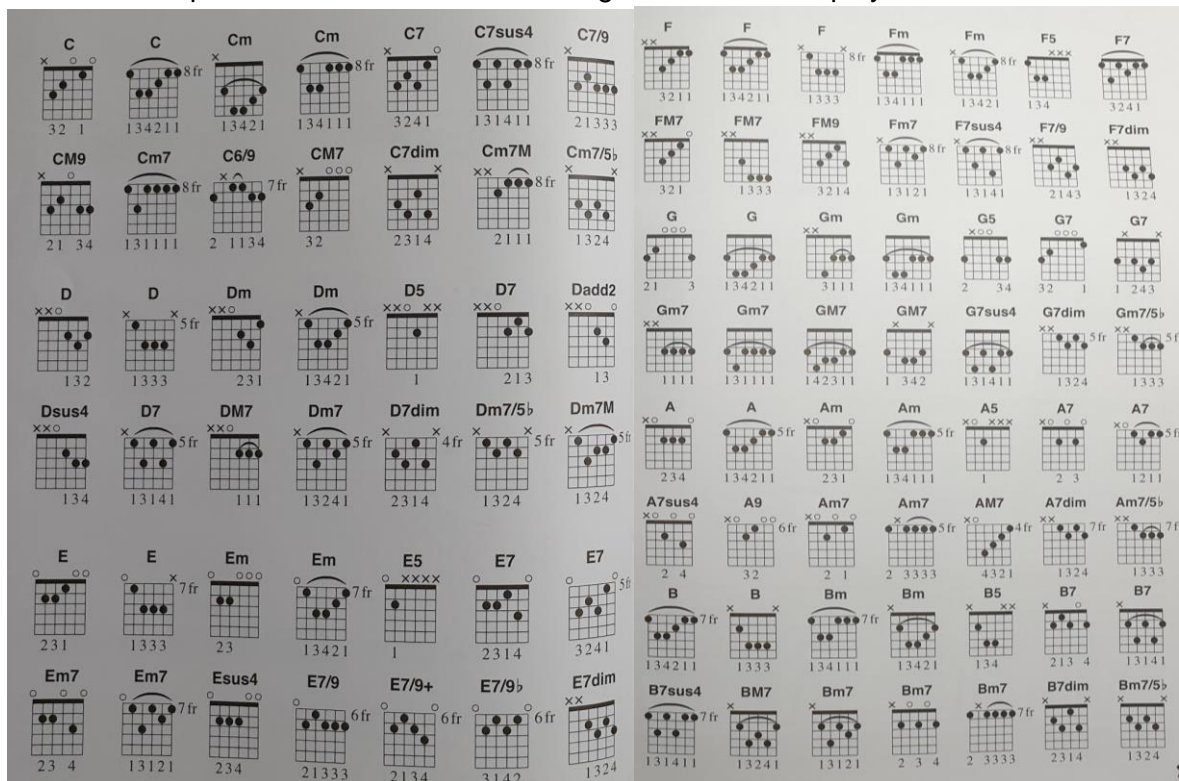
Here is an exercise that a famous guitar teacher advised me when I learned to play the guitar:

Plate a chord and make it sound clean (no buzz), and hold the position for 20 seconds. Then go to the next chord, and hold it in place for 20 seconds, pressing hard enough (but not hurting yourself, of course).

By doing this, you will develop a muscle memory very quickly, your fingers will remember each chord, and in a few days you will be able to chain even the most complex chords.

5. The essential chords

Here is a recap of the essential chords of the guitar and how to play them:



The crosses indicate that you should not play the strings on which they are positioned, the white circles indicate that you must play the empty string. The black circles indicate the box to press, and the number below indicates the finger with which to press.

6. To improve in stages

First step: Learning the chords

Well, there are no secrets, you have the above agreements, so no excuses. Come on, we learn them, courage!

Then, if in a song you find it difficult to chain either 2 chords or 2 "passages" (for example pass boxes 1 to 5 to those of 12 to 15 for example), do not hesitate to repeat the sequence of chords in question by making a loop, and then try again with a larger part of the song.

Second step: Strikethroughs, double strikethroughs, dead notes

The strikethrough is to put a finger in length on the same box for all the strings.

The double crossed out is to put a finger in length on the same box for all the strings, and another in length in the same box for some of the strings but not all!

Dead notes are percussive notes. To obtain them, the pressure is released from the left hand, which chokes the strings while continuing to play normally in the right hand. The sound therefore becomes percussive.

Third step: Transposition

To transpose a chord is to play that chord higher or lower. With the strikethrough, transposition is very simple: it's just a matter of moving the whole chord, and playing it one box higher or lower.

Another way to transpose an accompaniment is to use a capo.

Step Four: Game Effects with the Right Hand

Muting: the edge of the right hand slightly blocks the strings at the height of the bridge, and therefore it muffles the sound of notes and chords.

Percussive palms: the beat that you play is accompanied by a movement of the palm of the right hand, it is pressed on the strings by muffling the sound and transforms the notes into dead notes.

Fifth step: Fingerpicking and flatpicking

- The thumb (p) always plays the bass on the 3 lowest strings.
- The index (i), middle finger (m) and ring finger (a) are respectively positioned on the 3 sharpest strings.
- We put the strings in vibration with the tips of the fingers. The nails also participate in the creation of sound. Avoid pulling on the strings and snapping them.
- The fingers do not interfere with each other, they should never move away from the strings more than 1 cm after playing a note.

Sixth step: Improvisation: Game Effects

Hammer-on: Attack the 1st note with the right hand, then strike the handle with the third finger up to square 5, while keeping the first finger in place, because we only attack the 1st note.

Pull-off: It's the same as the hammer-on but in reverse, the two fingers are in place from the 1st note. Make a slight downward movement when the finger leaves the 1st note.

Slide: After playing the 1st note, slide from box 3 to box 5 with the 3rd finger. Again, we only play the 1st note.

Double stops: These are double notes usually played on 2 neighboring strings.

½ and full bend: We pull on box 10 to get the sound of box 11 (semitone bend), while with the full version, we shoot to get the sound of box 12 (bend of tone).

Classic bends: We play square 10 first and then shoot without re-attacking the note.

Release bends: We attack the bended note first, then we release without attacking.

NB: the guitar goes out of tune much faster if you do a lot of bend! So if you are working on a solo, for example, you will probably have to re-tune it several times while you play...

Vibrato: Roll the rope under your fingers, your movement will have an amplitude of 2 or 3 mm. Be careful, do not pull on the rope.

7. The 10 commandments of the guitarist

- 1) Lots of music, you'll be listening to.
- 2) With 2 days of rest in the week, half an hour a day you will work.
- 3) When you work, extremely concentrated you will stay.
- 4) Regularly you will register, and these registrations you will keep.
- 5) From month to month, to see your progress, you will often listen to these registers.
- 6) Always, at first, slowly you will play.
- 7) Your two hands, separately, you will work on.
- 8) With the right hand that performs the rhythm, you will begin.
- 9) With the left hand playing the notes, you will continue.
- 10) Never be discouraged you will!



Conclusion: THE TIPS TO REMEMBER

- Don't forget to untie your fingers before playing.
- Gradually learn chords, don't try to hold them all at once.
- Learn in stages, and only go to the next stage when you have mastered the previous stage.
- Always start with the right hand, then the left hand.