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## Learning New Chords



## Introducing Major and Minor Chords

In lessons one to six we have dealt with Power Chords only.

There are, however, many other chords which have more than the two notes found in a Power Chord or a 5 Chord.

These chords are played in every type of guitar playing and in every style of music. They are the basis of acoustic rhythm guitar playing but are equally found just as commonly in electric guitar playing.

The new chords we will be studying are divided into 2 main areas:

### **Major Chords** and **Minor Chords**.

To compare the sounds of major and minor chords watch and listen to our first video example.

#### **Video 1: Major and Minor Chords**

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You will hear how a minor chord sounds melancholy compared with a major chord.

There are many major and minor chords to learn, but in this lesson we are going to concentrate on 4 chords only. These are G, E minor, A minor and D7.

Many chords have numbers in the title. You need not worry about the reasons for the names of the chords at this stage. Full explanations will be given later when dealing with chord theory. For the moment though if a chord has an 'm' after the letter, for example Am, then this would be the chord of A minor.

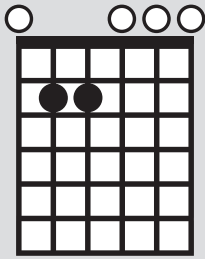
If no letter appears after the name of the chord then the chord is a major chord.

### Lesson Objectives

- Introducing the concept of **Minor** and **Major** Chords.
- Introduce the Chords of G, E Minor, A Minor and D7.
- Develop fluency in playing each of the new chords.
- Develop our ability to change chords fluently and in time.



## Chord of Em



You may have noticed on the **Chord Box** that above the strings which are not fretted that there are O's. This signifies that the strings are played and left **Open**.



## Introducing E Minor

The first chord that we are going to learn is called E minor.

Look at the Chord Box and try and play the chord to hear its sound, getting used to the hand position of the chord.

The tone of the Chord should be clear with all six strings being struck evenly. Aim to have all six strings at equal volume with no individual string sounding louder than the others. Ensure that the strumming hand is relaxed without tension in the wrist and arm. First, take a look at this technique store video.

### Video 2: Introducing Strumming

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Hold the plectrum in a relaxed manner without consciously gripping. Holding the plectrum too tightly tenses the hand and arm and can lead to a heavy, uneven and brash strumming stroke.

### Exercise 1

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The notes of the chord will play clearly if enough pressure is applied to them accurately. If any of the fingers, wrist or hand aches then the chord is being gripped too tightly!

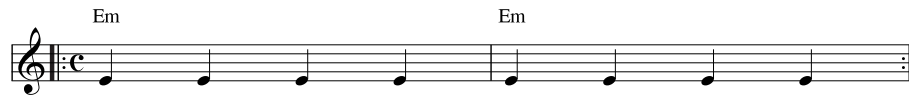
If any of the strings sound "dead" then it may be that a finger on another string is touching the dead string. Check to make certain that each finger is not touching one of the other strings.

Aim to have even **Strumming** strokes at about 60 beats per minute on the Guitar Xtractor.

Play the Chord of E minor against the rhythm below with even and relaxed down strums only. Use a clean sound on your Guitar.

### Exercise 2: Lesson007.igsInc.01

#### E minor



## Introducing the Chord of G (Major)

As with E Minor play the following exercise this time on a new chord – the G chord.

**REMEMBER!** Keep your strumming hand relaxed and don't grip the plectrum too tightly.

### Exercise 3

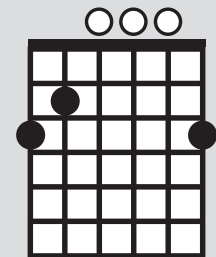
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### Exercise 4: Lesson007.igsInc.02

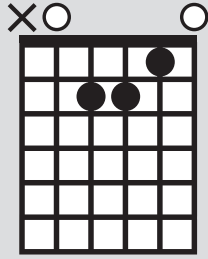
#### G



#### Chord of G



### Chord of Am



## Introducing the Chords of A Minor and D7

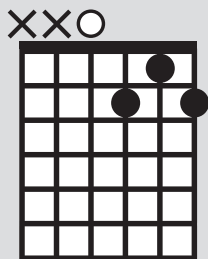
The next two Chords we will learn are A Minor and D7. Look at the Chord Boxes and try and form these two new chords. Use the multimedia files as always to help.

### Exercise 5

lesson007.igslntechstore.05

Notice how on our Am chord that we only play 5 strings, avoiding the Low E (6th string) with the plectrum. This is signified by the **X** on the chord box.

### Chord of D7



### Exercise 6

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With the D7 chord we only play the top four strings taking care to avoid strings E and A (6th and 5th) with the plectrum.

Being over careful when trying to avoid the lower strings in these chords can lead to an inhibited strumming stroke.

In my view at this stage of development the strumming technique is of greater importance so ensure the strumming technique is flowing smoothly and if the occasional “wrong” bass note is struck then so be it.

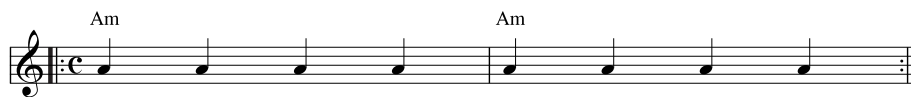
However, do remain aware of which strings are played in which chord.

Once the technique is assured and you have been playing for longer it will feel more natural to locate and play the correct bass note. (The bass note is the lowest sounding note in the chord).

Practise your new chords using the exercises that follow.

#### Exercise 7: Lesson007.igsInc.03

**Am**



#### Exercise 8: Lesson007.igsInc.04

**D7**



## Developing Fluency with our New Chords

Set the Guitar Xtractor to 60 beats per minute and strum on EVERY click. The aim is to land all fingers on the new chord on the first beat of the next bar.

One of the reasons that the Xtractor is so useful is that it forces you to keep playing even if the chord changes aren't quite perfect. It is very important to keep the rhythm going without stopping as eventually the chord changes will catch up with the strumming. Avoid pauses in between strums due to waiting on the fingers to form the chord shape.

Once the changes are fluent at this speed, gradually increase the tempo thereby increasing the speed at which the chords are changed.

Look for any common ground between two chords to help minimise movement. For example the first finger on the fretting hand occupies the same note on a G chord as it does on an E minor (5th string 2nd fret) so there is no need for it to move when these chords follow each other.

In the exercise below practise changing between the chord of G and the chord of Em.

### Exercise 9: Lesson007.igsInc.05





## Developing our New Chords

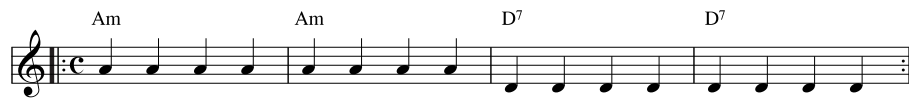
Once the change above has been perfected, move on to each of the following exercises in sequence.

The following exercises use all four of the chords that we've learned so far.

### Exercise 10: Lesson007.igsInc.06



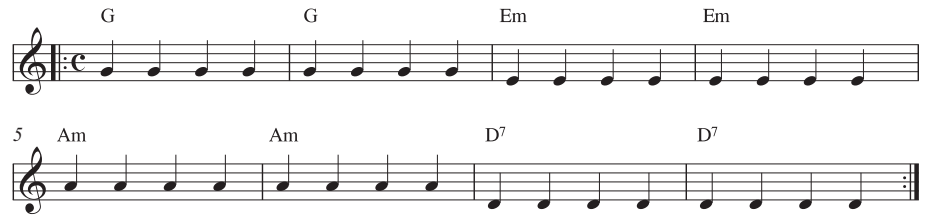
### Exercise 11: Lesson007.igsInc.07



### Exercise 12: Lesson007.igsInc.08



Once these exercises have been completed successfully move on to the following exercises where we change between all 4 Chords in one sequence. In the next exercise the 8 bars of music are played as one piece of music without a break.

**Exercise 13: Lesson007.igsInc.09**

Musical notation for Exercise 13, Lesson007.igsInc.09. The exercise is written in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of two staves. The first staff has four measures, each with a chord label above it: G, G, Em, and Em. The second staff starts with a measure rest labeled '5' and then has four measures with chord labels: Am, Am, D7, and D7. The melody consists of quarter notes in each measure.

## Developing our ability to change between our new chords

Our last exercise gets you to change the Chords at the beginning of every bar. As is always the case, set the Guitar Xtractor at a comfortable tempo and adjust accordingly as your fluency improves and you are able to form the Chords more easily.

**Exercise 14: Lesson007.igsInc.10**

Musical notation for Exercise 14, Lesson007.igsInc.10. The exercise is written in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of a single staff with four measures, each with a chord label above it: G, Em, Am, and D7. The melody consists of quarter notes in each measure.