

Guitar Chords 101: Construction and Fretboard Freedom

Learn to build and play triads, seventh chords, and voicings to unlock the fretboard for any music style, ideal for beginner to intermediate guitarists.

Guitar Instructor: Ethan Brooks • 5 sections • 50 lessons • 15.75h total

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About this course

Many guitarists memorize chord shapes but don't understand why the notes work together or how to move beyond basic patterns. This course shifts focus from shapes to the notes themselves, teaching you how chords are constructed from the ground up. You'll build a strong foundation in chord theory that directly applies to playing.

Through video lessons and hands-on assignments, you'll learn to construct and play triads, seventh chords, inversions, and various voicings. The course includes real case studies from different music styles and guidance on applying these concepts to songwriting and ensemble performance. Lessons are designed in short segments to fit into busy practice schedules.

Course curriculum

Foundations and Preparation

- **Understanding the Guitar Fretboard Layout (15m)**
Map out the notes across the neck to start visualizing chord positions.
- **Basic Music Theory for Chord Building (18m)**
Cover intervals and scales essential for understanding chord structures.
- **How Chords Are Formed from Scales (20m)**
Step-by-step guide to deriving chords from major and minor scales.
- **Introduction to Triad Construction (12m)**
Build major and minor triads from scratch using root, third, and fifth.
- **Playing Your First Triads on the Neck (25m)**
Practical session to locate and play triads in different positions.
- **Ear Training for Chord Recognition (10m)**
Develop listening skills to identify triad qualities by ear.
- **Common Open Chord Revisited with Theory (22m)**
Analyze familiar open chords to see their underlying construction.
- **Practice Routine for Fretboard Memorization (8m)**
Quick drills to reinforce note locations and chord shapes.

Core Chord Concepts

- **Major Triads Across the Fretboard (18m)**
Learn to play major triads in multiple positions using movable shapes.
- **Minor Triads and Their Sound (15m)**
Construct and apply minor triads, focusing on tonal differences.
- **Diminished and Augmented Triads (20m)**
Explore less common triad types for added harmonic color.
- **Introduction to Seventh Chords (25m)**
Build major and minor seventh chords from triads by adding the seventh.
- **Dominant Seventh Chords in Action (22m)**
Use dominant seventh chords in common progressions for blues and rock.
- **Minor Seventh Chords for Jazz and Soul (18m)**
Apply minor seventh chords in various musical contexts.
- **Chord Quality Identification Workshop (12m)**
Problem-solving session to distinguish between chord types by sound and structure.
- **Combining Triads and Sevenths in Progressions (30m)**
Practice mixing chord types to create smooth transitions.
- **Alternate Bass Notes with Basic Chords (15m)**
Add depth to playing by incorporating bass note variations.
- **Assignments: Building Chord Charts (10m)**
Create your own chord diagrams to reinforce learning.

Deep Dive into Voicings and Inversions

- **Understanding Chord Inversions (20m)**
Learn to rearrange chord notes for different voicings on the neck.
- **First and Second Inversions for Triads (18m)**
Play triad inversions to add movement in accompaniment.
- **Seventh Chord Inversions Explored (25m)**
Apply inversion techniques to seventh chords for richer sounds.
- **Voicing Techniques for Guitar (15m)**
Methods to spread chord notes across strings for clarity.
- **Guide-Tone Voicings Simplified (22m)**
Use root, third, and seventh to outline chords in ensemble settings.
- **Altered Chord Qualities Introduction (12m)**
Experiment with augmented, suspended, and other altered chords.
- **Real Case Study: Blues Chord Voicings (30m)**
Analyze and play voicings used in classic blues songs.
- **Practice Session: Inversion Drills (10m)**
Quick exercises to build fluency in moving between inversions.

Advanced Application and Styles

- **Drop 2 Voicings for Jazz Guitar (25m)**
Learn and apply drop 2 voicings for comping and soloing.
- **Drop 3 Voicings for Lower Register (22m)**
Use drop 3 voicings to add depth in rhythm playing.
- **Extended Chords: 9ths, 11ths, 13ths (30m)**
Build on seventh chords to create extended harmonies.
- **Altered Dominant Chords Explained (18m)**
Incorporate altered notes for tension and resolution in progressions.
- **Chord Melody Arrangement Basics (28m)**
Combine melody and chords in a solo guitar context.
- **Accompaniment Patterns for Different Styles (20m)**
Adapt voicings for rock, pop, folk, and country playing.
- **Ensemble Playing with Chord Knowledge (15m)**
Support other instruments by choosing appropriate voicings.
- **Songwriting with Advanced Chord Progressions (25m)**
Use chord construction to write original songs and riffs.
- **Case Study: Pop Song Chord Breakdown (32m)**
Dissect and play chords from a popular song to see theory in action.
- **Dynamic Control in Chord Playing (12m)**
Add expression through volume and attack variations.
- **Troubleshooting Common Chord Problems (10m)**
Solve issues with buzzing, clarity, and smooth transitions.

- **Assignment: Create a Chord Solo (18m)**
Apply all concepts to arrange a short piece for solo guitar.

Implementation and Next Steps

- **Building a Practice Plan for Chord Mastery (15m)**
Structure daily routines to integrate chord knowledge effectively.
- **Transcribing Chords from Recordings (20m)**
Use ear training to figure out chords in songs you love.
- **Chord Substitutions for Creative Playing (22m)**
Replace basic chords with more colorful options in progressions.
- **Voice Leading Between Chords (18m)**
Smoothly connect chords by moving individual notes minimally.
- **Applying Chords to Worship Music (25m)**
Case study on using voicings in contemporary worship settings.
- **Chord Vocabulary Expansion Techniques (12m)**
Methods to learn and remember new chord shapes quickly.
- **Gig-Ready Chord Strategies (30m)**
Prepare for live performance with efficient chord choices.
- **Collaborative Playing with Chord Theory (20m)**
Communicate with bandmates using shared chord knowledge.
- **Exploring Beyond Standard Tunings (15m)**
Introduction to how chord construction applies in alternate tunings.
- **Final Project: Chord-Based Composition (35m)**
Write and perform a piece that showcases your chord skills.
- **Review and Self-Assessment Guide (10m)**
Evaluate your progress and identify areas for further study.
- **Resources for Continued Learning (8m)**
Recommend books, tools, and communities to keep growing.

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