

Quick Tutorial on how to play guitar chords

Let's say you want to play the guitar but you don't know how. What this tutorial will do is teach you how to finger basic chords listed on the chord chart that are used in almost any chorus or hymn set in standard keys. You will need to start with a tuned guitar – see if someone can help you do this or do a web search for guitar tuning that gives you the tones to use on the guitar. Later on, you can purchase a tuner that will allow you to do this yourself. To play a chord for a song, just follow the steps:

1. You should find a selection of music that has the little names of chords over top of the words you sing. These are available at book stores, in your church, and on line. At first, pick songs you know so that it will be easier to discern when to change the chords to keep up with the music.
2. The chord chart picture shows the neck of the guitar, the 6 strings, and a dot where you should place your fingers, plus the number of the finger to be used for that chord. The vertical lines are the strings (left most is the lowest string) and the horizontal lines are the fret bars pressed into the fret board. Your left hand will play these chords, and the fingers are numbered with your index (pointer) finger as 1, middle finger as 2, ring finger as 3 and little finger as 4. The thumb is normally not used, but if it ever is, it is called T.
3. Hold the guitar body against your stomach and grasp the neck with your left hand with the thumb on the back (rounded portion) of the neck and your finger tips are used to play the indicated string on the chord chart.
4. Press your finger tip against the string between the metal frets on the fretboard to get the sound. It may take a few days to get the sound to be really clear, but this is normal and once you get the hang of it, you won't have any problem.
5. Put your fingers on all of the dots indicated for a given chord, and strum the strings with your right hand (use your thumb or a pick) to hear the melodious tones of the chord. Sound a bit muted or dull? Keep working at it until the sound clears up – but you shouldn't have to put a strangle hold on the neck to do this. Most good guitars require only modest pressure to get a good sound. If nothing works, take your guitar to a good music store and have them check it out for you to be sure the neck isn't warped or there isn't some other problem.
6. As you play the song, just use the guitar as rhythm for the singing – you won't be playing melodies – your voice is the melody. The hardest part in the beginning is changing from one chord to another in the song. Most times, this must happen quickly, and that takes practice. There is a phenomenon called muscle memory – with enough practice, your fingers will “remember” where to go for given chords and it will happen more quickly. One way to work on this is to simply practice moving from one chord to another without playing a song. Just finger and play one chord, then move to another, then back to the first, then go back and forth over and over again. This repetition develops muscle memory, but is a bit dull, so a way to accomplish this easier is to do it while watching something on TV. You don't have to play loud to make this

work, but you may discover that no-one wants to watch TV with you anymore. That simply allows you to watch what you want anyway, so no big deal.

7. Don't move to the barre chords on the bottom of the chart until you can play all the other chords really well – it will just frustrate you. Keep at it, and know that the more you practice, the faster you'll be able to play what you enjoy. 20 minutes a day should have you playing reasonably well in 2 months – no kidding!

Here's a few songs you can try to get you going:

Whole World In His Hands

^CHe's got the whole world in His hands,
^GHe's got the whole world in His hands,
^CHe's got the whole world in His hands,
^GHe's got the whole world in His ^Chands.

Amazing Grace

^GAmazing grace, How ^Csweet the ^Gsound,
That saved a wretch like ^Dme
I ^Gonce was lost, but ^Cnow am ^Gfound,
Was ^{Em}blind but ^Dnow I ^Csee ^G