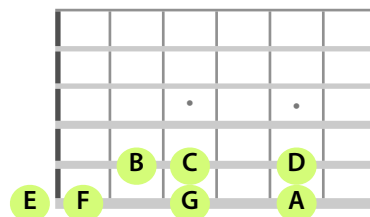


# Barre Chords & Songs

- You will soon be able to play any major or minor chord (like B $\flat$ , or Cm, or F $\sharp$ m).
- First, we need to **learn some of the notes** on the E and A strings:

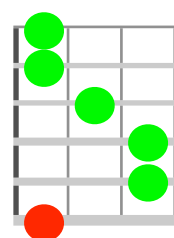
## EXERCISE:

- Practice finding each of these notes.
- Once you are confident, you can practice finding the
  - sharps (F $\sharp$ , C $\sharp$ , G $\sharp$ , D $\sharp$ , A $\sharp$ ) and
  - flats (B $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , D $\flat$ , G $\flat$ )

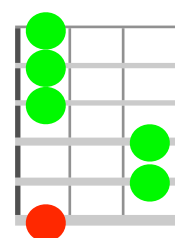


- Next we need to **learn the shapes** - lay your first finger down across the fret (this is making a 'barre'), and use your other fingers to hold the other notes. Remember to **relax** your hand.

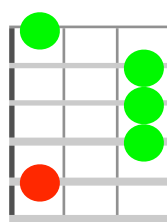
### 6-str. Major (E)



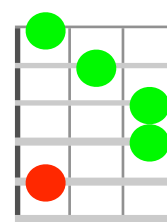
### 6-str. Minor (Em)



### 5-string Major (A)



### 5-string Minor (Am)



6-string shapes:  
root is on 6th (E)

5-string shapes:  
root is on 5th (A)

Put your fingers down in a set order:

1<sup>st</sup> finger, then stretch out with 3<sup>rd</sup>, then others lowest string to highest

- To play any barre chord, just find the root note, then:
  - if it's on the 6th string, play a 6-string shape, or if it's on the 5th string, play a 5-string shape
  - choose the major or minor shape

## EXERCISE: HOLDING & CHANGING CHORDS

### Exercise #1: Hand position

Imagine using your left hand to turn a door-knob fully to the left (assuming you're playing right-handed). That's your forearm position. Make sure you're in that position, and hold the position of the 6-string major barre chord (aka the 'E shape') on the 5th fret or so. BUT, don't press down. Lightly touch the strings, and make sure all your fingers and wrist are in perfect position. First finger should be flat and parallel to the fret, other fingers should be curled. If your pinky is straight, your wrist position is wrong, and you need to turn that door-knob further. **DON'T PRESS DOWN YET...** Your hand position should ONLY be adjusted when completely relaxed, and free of tension.

### Exercise #2: Emptying

Now, the idea is to practice pressing down (it's actually more like clamping your hand like a gentle vice around the neck - don't press harder than you would firmly shake someone's hand) without changing your hand position at all (which is hard, so do it slowly), then releasing ALL the tension out of your hand. I call this 'emptying' your fingers. Try breathing out as you empty, it helps you relax. Press down, then empty, over and over.

### Exercise #3: Shifting along the neck

While holding the shape, just move up a fret at a time for a few frets, then down again. Your hand should keep the exact same position when shifting - don't let your fingers fly away. BUT, each time, you should EMPTY - SHIFT - PRESS. Remember, EMPTY - SHIFT - PRESS.

Don't press for long (1 second at most). When you press, you can give a quick strum, but don't worry if there are bad notes. Remember, you need to adjust your hand position when EMPTY. If your hand position is correct, there will be no bad notes.

### Exercise #4: Moving from open chords

Try holding an open chord (vary your starting chord through C, A, G, E, and D), and shifting to a barre chord (same shape as before) on the first fret. You guessed it - EMPTY - SHIFT - PRESS - EMPTY. Don't hold the barre chord for long. Now, back to an open chord, then to a barre chord on the 2nd fret. Then back to an open chord, then 3rd fret, and so on...

When you're moving to the barre chord, you need to concentrate on emptying, and your hand position. Remember to turn that door knob fully, and get your fingers down in that set order.