

# LEARNING GUITAR OVER 50

A FRIENDLY GUIDE TO  
GETTING STARTED

BY AUTHOR

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*By Gary Chance*



# 1

## WHY LEARN GUITAR AFTER 50?

Learning guitar later in life is more than just a hobby—it's a powerful tool for mental clarity, stress relief, and creative expression. Whether you're retired, semi-retired, or simply ready to fulfill a lifelong dream, playing guitar can help improve memory, coordination, and bring joy to your daily routine.

- ◆ Mental clarity and brain health
- ◆ Stress relief and relaxation
- ◆ Creative expression and joy
- ◆ Improved memory and coordination

***"It's never too late to become a beginner."***



## 2

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT GUITAR

- ◆ **Acoustic vs Electric:** Start with what's comfortable
- ◆ **Nylon Strings:** Easier on fingers than steel
- ◆ **Size Matters:** Consider 3/4-size or concert-size if smaller hands or limited mobility
- ◆ **Budget:** \$150–\$400 is fine for a good beginner guitar

### Acoustic

Simpler, no amp needed

### Electric

Lighter strings, easier on fingers

### Nylon

Gentler on fingers, classical sound

### Steel

Louder, better for pop/folk





### 3

## GOOD GUITARS TO START WITH

TYPE	MODEL	WHY IT'S GREAT
<b>Acoustic</b>	Yamaha FG800	<b>Lightweight</b> , warm tone, durable
<b>Acoustic</b>	Fender FA-125	Affordable, <b>slim neck</b> for easy grip
<b>Classical</b>	Cordoba C3M	<b>Nylon strings</b> , soft on fingers
<b>Electric</b>	Squier Telecaster	Light body, <b>low tension strings</b>
<b>Travel</b>	Yamaha APXT2	<b>Compact</b> , ideal for smaller hands





# 4

## GUITAR ACCESSORIES CHECKLIST

ITEM	PURPOSE
<b>Medium Picks</b>	Easier strumming control
<b>Clip-on Tuner</b>	Keeps your guitar in tune
<b>Capo</b>	Play songs in different keys easily
<b>Padded Strap</b>	Extra comfort for shoulder/back
<b>Guitar Stand</b>	Keeps guitar safe and ready
<b>Gig Bag</b>	Protection during storage and travel
<b>Chord Chart</b>	Quick-reference visual aid





# 5

## SETTING REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Learning guitar takes patience and joy. At 50+, your goals should center around progress, not perfection.

### Realistic Expectations

- ◆ Practice 10–20 minutes daily
- ◆ Track small wins (e.g., switching between chords)
- ◆ Don't compare yourself to younger players
- ◆ Remember: consistency > intensity





## 6

# BUILDING A PRACTICE ROUTINE

## Practice Routine

Your routine should be flexible but focused. Here's a sample:

- ◆ **Warm-up (5 min)** Finger stretches, spider walk
- ◆ **Chord Review (5 min)** Em, G, C, D transitions
- ◆ **Strumming (5 min)** Down-up-down-up pattern
- ◆ **Song Practice (10 min)** Play along with simple songs

*End on a positive note — play something you love!*





# 7 WEEKLY PRACTICE TIMETABLE

A structured weekly plan helps you maintain consistency and track your progress effectively

### 💡 Practice Tips

- ✓ Adjust times based on your schedule and energy levels
- ✓ Focus on quality over quantity
- ✓ Rest days are important for muscle recovery
- ✓ Track your progress in a journal



DAY	GOAL	TIME PRACTICED	NOTES
Monday	Chords A & D	20 min	Good stretch progress
Tuesday	Strumming Practice	15 min	Tricky rhythm but fun
Wednesday	Song: Stand By Me	25 min	Can follow the verse
Thursday	C-G-Am Drill	20 min	Getting smoother
Friday	New chord: F	15 min	Barre chord challenge!
Saturday	Review + Fun	30 min	Played along with video
Sunday	Optional Jam	...	...

**8**

# FINGER & HAND EXERCISES (WITH CHART)

EXERCISE NAME	PURPOSE	FRETBOARD POSITION	FINGERS USED	DESCRIPTION
<b>1-2-3-4 Chromatic Run</b>	<b>Dexterity</b>	Frets 1–4 (all strings)	1-2-3-4	Play frets 1, 2, 3, 4 on each string ascending & descending.
<b>1-3-2-4 Finger Twist</b>	<b>Finger independence</b>	Frets 5–8 (any string)	1-3-2-4	Play pattern skipping fingers slightly to isolate movements.
<b>Spider Walk</b>	<b>Coordination</b>	Frets 5–8	1-2-3-4	Move fingers in opposite directions across strings (e.g., low E to high E).
<b>1-4 Stretch Drill</b>	<b>Stretching</b>	Frets 5–9	1-4	Stretch between index and pinky; avoid lifting other fingers.
<b>4-3-2-1 Reverse Chrom.</b>	<b>Control</b>	Frets 1–4	4-3-2-1	Same as chromatic but descending finger order.
<b>String Skipping Ladder</b>	<b>Accuracy + Speed</b>	Frets 5–8	1-2-3-4	Chromatic run skipping every other string.
<b>Rolling Fingers</b>	<b>Legato + Strength</b>	Any	2-3-4	Use one finger to press multiple frets on adjacent strings.
<b>Finger Tapping (Optional)</b>	<b>Coordination + Speed</b>	Frets 7–12	1 (left), T (right)	Tap with right-hand fingers while left-hand fingers hold notes.



## Fingers Exercise Chart

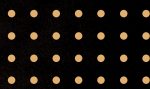
# Beginner's Finger Strength Exercise Lesson Notes

Hold fingers down along each string. Use the same finger as fret number.  
Use all downstrokes with the pick.

0 1 2 3    0 1 2 3    0 1 2 3    0 1 2 3

0 1 2 3    0 1 2 3    0 1 2 3    0 1 2 3

0 1 2 3    0 1 2 3    0 1 2 3    0 1 2 3



## 9

# LEARNING THE BASICS

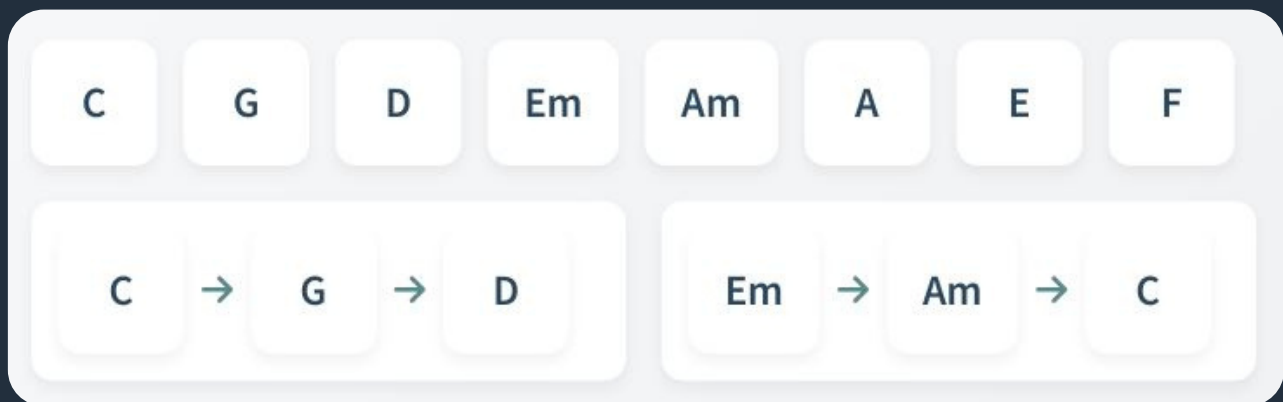
Master these fundamental techniques to build a strong foundation for your guitar journey

- ◆ **Tuning:** Use apps like **GuitarTuna** or **Fender Tune**
- ◆ **Holding the Pick:** **Thumb + index** grip
- ◆ **Posture:** Sit **upright** with **relaxed shoulders**
- ◆ **Strumming:** Start **slow**, count **out loud**
- ◆ **Chords:** Learn **Em, C, G, D, A, E, F, Am** first

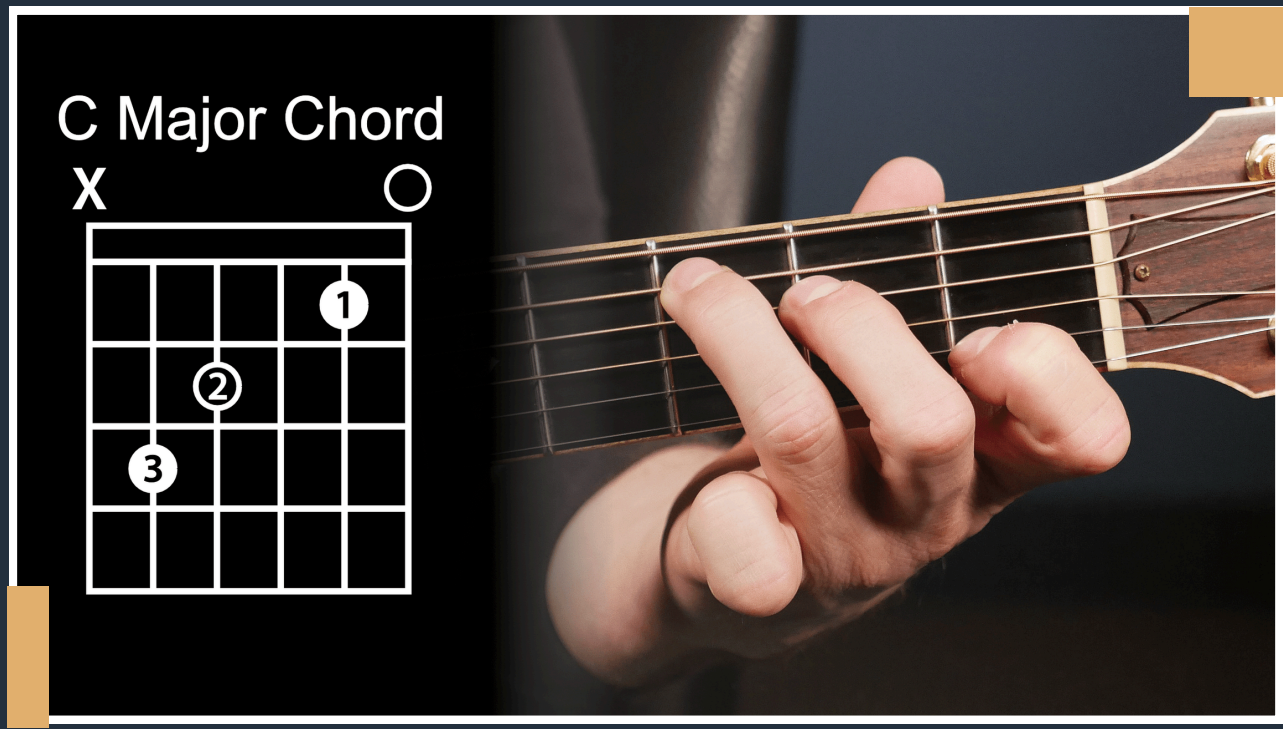


# 10 SIMPLE CHORDS & FIRST SONGS

🎵 Simple Chords to Play 100s of Songs



🎵 Learn C Major Chord





# Learn G Major Chord

**G Major Chord**  
○ ● ○

# Learn D Major Chord

**D Major Chord**  
X X ●



## 🎵 Learn E Major Chord

E Major Chord

● ○ ●

## 🎵 Learn E Minor Chord - Em

E Minor Chord

● ○ ○ ●



## 🎵 Learn A Major Chord

A Major Chord

X ● ○

## 🎵 Learn A Minor Chord - Am

A Minor Chord

X ● ○



## Learn F Major Barre Chord









## First Songs to Learn

### You Are My Sunshine

[C] You are my [G] sunshine, my only [C] sunshine, You make me [F] happy  
when skies are [C] gray, You'll never [F] know dear, how much I [C] love you,  
Please don't take [G] my sunshine [C] away

### Other easy songs:

-  Stand By Me (G, Em, C, D) 
-  Love Me Do (G, C, D) 
-  Three Little Birds (A, D, E) 



## 11 MASTERING CHORD CHANGES

- ◆ **1-Minute Drills:** Practice switching chords for 60 seconds straight
- ◆ **Steady Rhythm:** Keep consistent timing, even when slow
- ◆ **Anchor Fingers:** Keep fingers in place when possible between changes
- ◆ **Use a Metronome:** Start slow and gradually increase tempo





## 12 STAYING MOTIVATED

Maintaining enthusiasm is key to long-term progress and enjoyment.

- ◆ **Record Yourself:** Track your progress with weekly recordings
- ◆ **Join Groups:** Connect with local or online music communities
- ◆ **Reward Progress:** Celebrate with new picks or accessories
- ◆ **Remember Your Why:** Reconnect with your original motivation





# 13 ONLINE & OFFLINE RESOURCES

## ▶ YouTube Channels:

- ◆ Justin Guitar
- ◆ Marty Music
- ◆ GuitarZero2Hero

## 📱 Apps:

- ◆ Fender Play
- ◆ Yousician
- ◆ Ultimate Guitar (for chords & tabs)

## 📍 In-Person:

- ◆ Community center classes
- ◆ Private lessons (in-person or Zoom)

## 📖 Books:

- ◆ Hal Leonard Guitar Method
- ◆ Guitar for Absolute Beginners – Susan Mazer





## 14 FINAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

You're never too old to start something new.  
Playing guitar after 50 is not only possible — it's powerful.

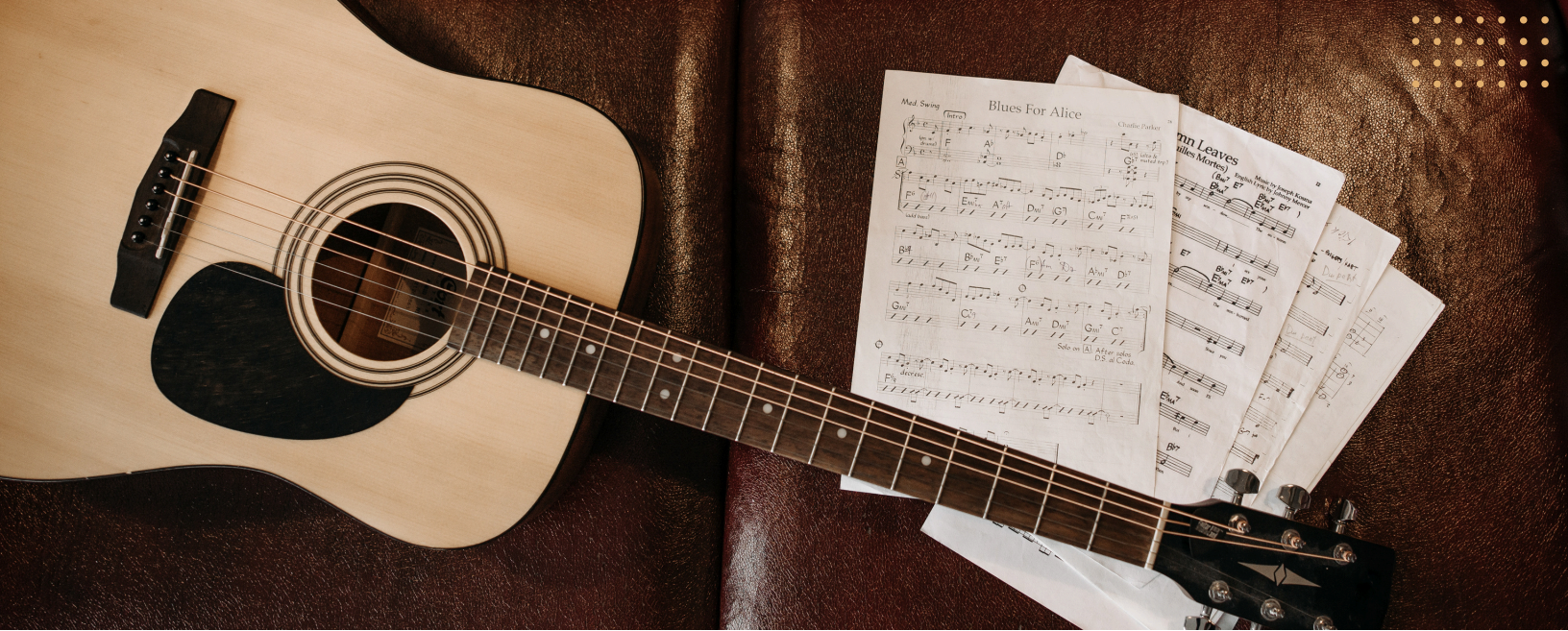
You have the patience, the focus, and the life experience to make music truly meaningful.

**Enjoy the journey — one chord at a time.**



- ◆ Keep strumming
- ◆ Keep smiling
- ◆ Your journey begins
- ◆ Enjoy the process





# 15 ADDITIONAL PRINTABLE EXTRAS

## Weekly Practice Tracker

DAY	GOAL	TIME PRACTICED	NOTES
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			



# Visual Chords Chart

## GUITAR CHORD CHART

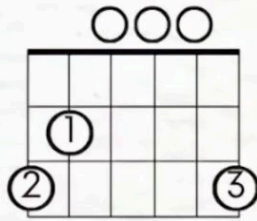
<b>A</b> 	<b>B</b> 	<b>C</b> 	<b>D</b> 	<b>E</b> 	<b>F</b> 	<b>G</b> 
<b>Am</b> 	<b>Bm</b> 	<b>Cm</b> 	<b>Dm</b> 	<b>Em</b> 	<b>Fm</b> 	<b>Gm</b> 
<b>A7</b> 	<b>B7</b> 	<b>C7</b> 	<b>D7</b> 	<b>E7</b> 	<b>F7</b> 	<b>G7</b> 
<b>Amaj7</b> 	<b>Bmaj7</b> 	<b>Cmaj7</b> 	<b>Dmaj7</b> 	<b>Emaj7</b> 	<b>Fmaj7</b> 	<b>Gmaj7</b> 
<b>Am7</b> 	<b>Bm7</b> 	<b>Cm7</b> 	<b>Dm7</b> 	<b>Em7</b> 	<b>Fm7</b> 	<b>Gm7</b> 



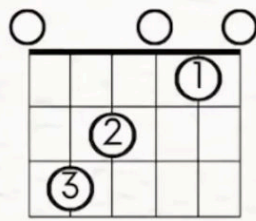
# Basic Chords Chart

## EASY GUITAR CHORDS

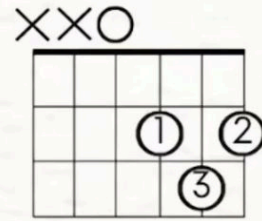
### G



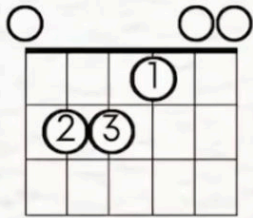
### C



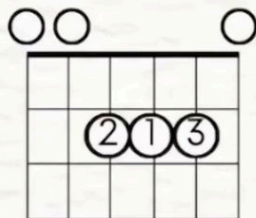
### D



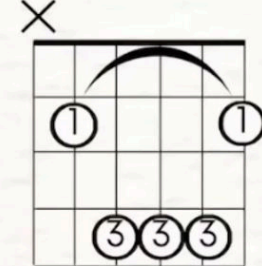
### E



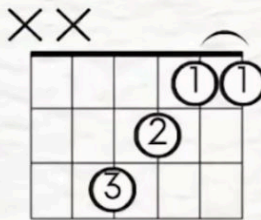
### A



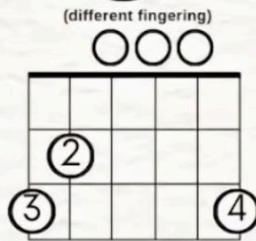
### B\*



### F\*



### G



Chord charts are meant to look like a guitar on it's back.

- ① goes on 2nd string, 1st fret.
- ② goes on 4th string, 2nd fret.

Legend:

