

# Lesson 2: Add Three Chords: C, G & D

*Your Mission: Learn how to finger three more chords and how to switch between all six chords comfortably.*

## Notational Shortcut

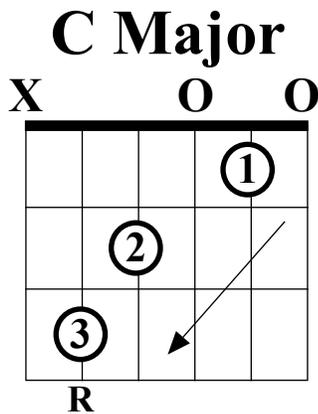
Okay. We need three bits of information to locate a single note:  
 (1) which **String** it's on, (2) which **Fret** to hold and (3) which **Finger** to use.

Let's do some abbreviating for the string and fret, at least. Instead of giving you a direction such as: "Play the 4th string at the 2nd fret," we'll say, "Play **4:2**."

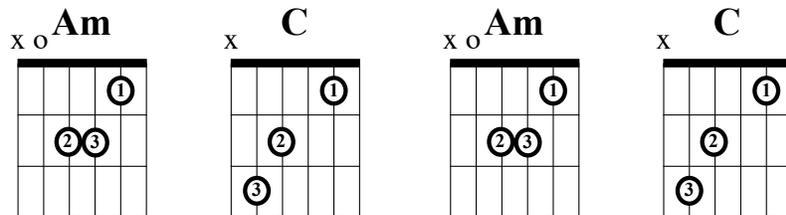
*First find the string, then find the fret.* We'll still name the finger.

Here's a new chord, **C Major**, or **C**, with the same happy Chord Quality as E Major.

But before you try to finger it, look back at the **Am**. *The only difference between Am and C is the placement of the 3rd finger.* Start with the **Am**, keep the 1st and 2nd fingers where they are, then shift the 3rd finger to **5:3**, which happens to be the **Root Note** of the chord, and the preferred bass note. Arch your fingers to avoid muting any strings, press hard to get the fingered strings ringing, and *mute* or *avoid* the open 6th string.

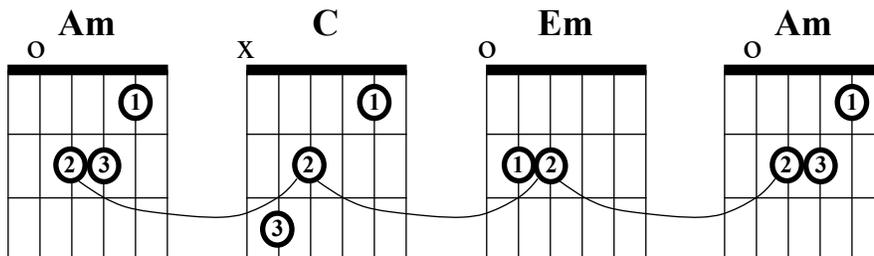


*Repeat these chord changes until they feel comfortable. You'll need to let your 2nd finger slip up and down the string a bit as you go from the cramped Am to the outstretched C.*

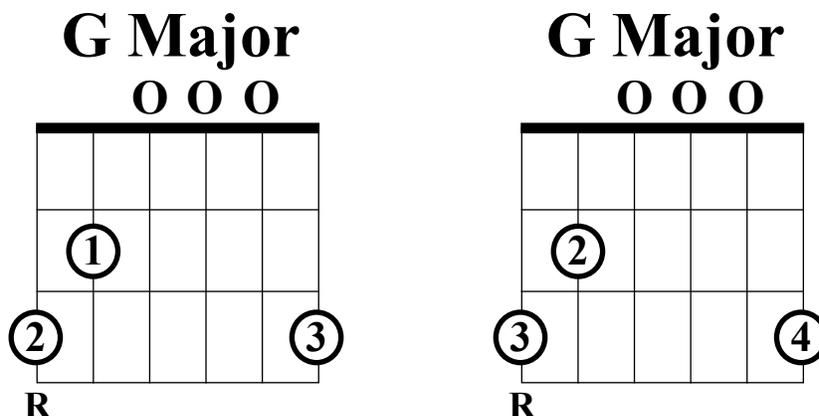


Let's look at the following chord sequence, where the **2nd finger** plays the role of an **Anchor finger**. We can hold down the very same finger at **4:2**, all the way through, adding a lot of stability in switching from **Am** to **C** to **Em** back to **Am**.

*Repeat this chord progression 3 or 4 times, or until it becomes smooth:*

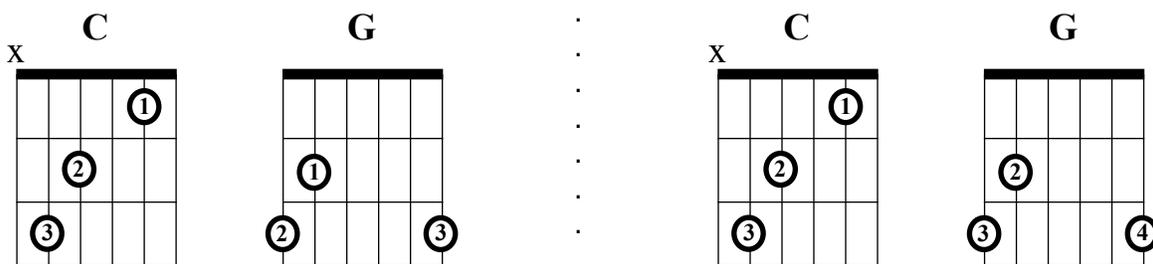


Let's throw another chord into the mix: **G Major**, or simply **G**.  
 Here are two alternate fingerings for **G**. They both ask you to spread certain adjacent fingers far apart, all the way from the 1st to the 6th string.  
*The Root Note is at 6:3*, so we want to hear the 6th string in the bass:



The first one is easier to play, and more natural to finger, because the stretch between the 2nd and 3rd fingers is not bad. But more often, the *second* fingering, with the stretch between the *3rd and 4th fingers*, is the preferred fingering.

Here's why: *We try to reduce how much jumping around we need to do when switching from chord to chord*, and the second fingering achieves this more often. Try switching from **C** to both of the **G** fingerings, and you'll see that your 3rd finger travels less when the split is between the 3rd and 4th fingers (1 versus 4 strings):



## *Playtime*

Let's practice the **C-to-G** chord change with the following songs. Again, the symbol for each chord is placed over the word or syllable where a Downstroke should be played. There are two versions of each Starting Note, a low one and a high one. *These happen to be the same notes, only an **octave** apart*. That is, they are 8 notes apart (octo = 8) in the "DO-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-DO" scale (known as the Major Scale [more later]).

Play either a **Downstroke** or a **Down-Up** combination for each occurrence of a **C** or **G** chord. *Play each tune twice and repeat from the top until comfortable.*

$C^{4x}$     c    c    c     $G^{4x}$     G    G    G  
*Camptown ladies sing this song, doo-dah, doo-dah*

$C^{4x}$     c    c    c     $G^{2x}$     G    C  
*Camptown racetrack five miles long, oh, the doo-dah day*

Starting Notes:

3:0 or 1:3

$C^{3x}$     c    c     $G^{6x}$     G    G    G    G    C  
*Happy Birth - day to you, Happy birth - day to you*

3:0 or 1:3

$C^{2x}$     c     $G^{2x}$     G     $C^{2x}$     c    G  
*Take me out to the ball - game, take me out with the crowd*

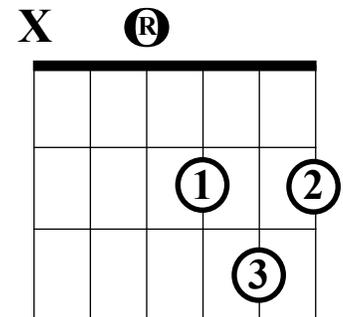
5:3 or 2:1

Next up is the **D Major** chord. The **D** chord shows up almost as often as the **G** chord, so it's another heavyweight.

Here's the fingering that most players favor.  
 Place the 1st finger at **3:2**, the 2nd finger at **1:2**  
 and the 3rd finger at **2:3** to form this triangle:

Placing the 3rd finger might give you some trouble. It needs to reach past the other two, more dominant fingers, and take extra care to come *straight* down onto the 2nd string. Stand up tall to avoid touching and muting the 1st string.

## D Major



**Do not let the 6th string ring open.** Not only is it not the **Root Note**, but it doesn't even belong to the **D** chord. In fact, it is the *open 4th string* that bears the lowest-pitched **D Root Note**, so that's really the note we want to hear in the bass. And the 5th string? It *does* belong to the **D** chord, but it's not the *preferred* bass.

Now we'll play the same two songs but this time in a different **KEY**, and we'll start discussing keys in the next lesson. For now, just observe the new Starting Notes and practice the chord changes between the **G** and **D** chords.

Try both forms of the **G** chord and try to decide which route you prefer.

*Play each tune twice and repeat from the top until comfortable.*

$G^{4x}$     G    G    G     $D^{4x}$     D    D    D  
*Camptown ladies sing this song, doo-dah, doo-dah*

$G^{4x}$     G    G    G     $D^{2x}$     D    G  
*Camptown racetrack five miles long, oh, the doo-dah day*

Starting Notes:

4:0 or 2:3

$G^{3x}$     G    G     $D^{6x}$     D    D    D    D    D    G  
*Happy Birth - day to you, Happy birth - day to you*

4:0 or 2:3

$G^{2x}$     G     $D^{2x}$     D     $G^{2x}$     G    D  
*Take me out to the ball - game, take me out with the crowd*

6:3 or 3:0