Guitar Guide

Psalms 33:1-3

[1] Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous;

it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

[2] Praise the Lord with the harp;

make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.

[3] Sing to him a new song;

play skillfully, and shout for joy.

Introduction: Before You Start

This guide is here to provide you with a collection of resources to help you grow and thrive as a worship guitarist at GRIP. With so many resources, videos, books and opinions out there, I recognise that it's not always easy to 'just get better' at guitar. My hope for this guide is that you will face less confusion in deciding **what** to learn, will be equipped with resources for **how** to learn, and will have some semblance of a progression for **when** it should be learnt.

As worship musicians I want to emphasise that it is **not** our calling to be perfect and flawless musicians, *dazzling* everyone with our wondrous abilities. I do want to recognise, however, that our musical abilities are gifts from God, and in the light of that, we should humbly pursue excellence, and ultimately seek to use these gifts for His glory.

Whilst I would love to see continuous growth in all of us as musicians, I also recognise that we live busy lives, so work through these resources *at your own* pace. Whilst they are designed to be completed accumulatively, with one following onto the next, if you feel like you are already well experienced in a particular field, or you know that you need to focus on a different aspect of guitar then feel free to jump around as you see fit. Don't assume you know everything though! I would encourage you to look through a resource fully before counting it off as completed.

I hope you all benefit from this guide, and if you have any questions, suggestions or corrections then please **let the Worship Core Team know**.

Resource 1: Open Chords

Brief

Whilst I would hope all of you guitarists are at least familiar with the concept of open chords, these resources are here to help build your understanding on what they are, how to use them effectively and also to introduce you to some more obscure chords, perhaps. Whether you're new to guitar or have been playing for years, take a minute to read through / watch each of these resources and I'm pretty sure you'll learn something new (I certainly did!).

Guide

As a GRIP guitarist, the only chords that you strictly **need** to be familiar with are the **major** and **minor** chords. The resources listed below do NOT cover **sharps (e.g. G#)** and **flats (e.g. Gb)** extensively, which will instead be covered in the **barre chords** resources, and are also essential for you to be familiar with. If you are already familiar with major and minor chords, feel free to learn some of the **dominant (e.g. E^7)** open chords in these resources below as an extension.

Resources

Basic Open Chords (+ Dominants!) and How to Best Play Them – YouTube

All Open Chords on Guitar - Beginner Guitar Lesson | Guitar Tricks

Basic Open Chords (+ Dominants!) – Blog

All Open Chords On Guitar - Guitar Tricks Blog

Summary & Contextualisation

Open chords are chords that contain open strings (strings that are played without your finger being on a fret). They give a very **full sound**, and are the building blocks of **barre chords**. At GRIP, most songs will be played in **major keys**, and will contain the following chords for each key respectively:

KEY OF SONG	COMMON CHORDS	*The common chords in any key.*				
	I	iim	iiim	IV	V	vim
Ab	Ab	Bbm	Cm	Db	Eb	Fm
A	A	Bm	C#m	D	E	F#m
Bb	Bb	Cm	Dm	Eb	F	Gm
B	B	C#m	D#m	E	F#	G#m
C	C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am
Db	Db	Ebm	Fm	Gb	Ab	Bbm
D	D	Em	F#m	G	A	Bm
Eb	Eb	Fm	Gm	Ab	Bb	Cm
E	E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m
F	F	Gm	Am	Bb	C	Dm
Gb	Gb	Abm	Bbm	Cb	Db	Ebm
G	G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em

The **shaded** rows are the most '*guitar-friendly*' keys, which any other key can be **transposed** to with the use of a **capo**.

Extension

As you may have noticed, each chord in a key is assigned to a fixed Roman numeral **number (e.g. IV = 4, vim = 6 minor)**. This is the basis of the **Nashville Number System**, which will be explored in more depth later on.

Resource 2: Capos

Brief

Capos are an essential tool for playing songs in *any* key. Open chords may be sufficient for keys such as C-A-G-E-D, however to play in Ab, for example, it all becomes so much more difficult. Once again, whether you're unfamiliar with capos or have been using them for a while, please take a look through the resources, there's lots to learn!

Guide

For GRIP, it would be great if every guitarist can be familiar with when to use a capo **naturally**, when to use a capo **creatively**, **how** to use a capo (inc. **transposing**) and how **not** to use a capo. The resources below will begin to outline many of these things, however it may also take some experimentation on your part, especially when it comes to the **tone** (sound characteristics) of various capo positions.

Resources

How to Use a Capo Practically – YouTube

Using a Capo | Beginner Guitar Tips

Capo Transposing

When you place a **capo** on the xth fret (e.g. 7th fret), the chords that you play are effectively **raised** x number of semitones.

A **semitone** is a **single movement** up or down the **chromatic scale** (half-step). The **chromatic scale** contains all notes: **A-A#-B-C-C#-D-D#-E-F-F#-G-G#-A** (or A-Bb-B-C-Db-D-Eb-E-F-Gb-G-Ab-A). Note that **neither B nor E have sharps** and **neither C nor F have flats**. As you can see, **sharps** and **flats** represent the same idea in opposite directions. A sharp **raises** a note by a half-step, and a flat **lowers** a note by a half-step. The difference only really matters in music theory notation, not in guitar playing at GRIP.

So, if you were to place a capo on the **1st fret** and play a C open chord, you are actually playing a **C#** (and Db) chord (**1** step up the chromatic scale). Likewise, if you place the capo on the **7th fret** and play a G open chord, you are actually playing a **D** chord (**7** steps up the chromatic scale).

Such that we don't get mixed up with terminology, a chord **shape** is the chord **you** play with the capo on, and the **chord** is the transposed chord it becomes, so in the above examples, the **C shape** with a capo on the 1st fret is a **C# chord**, and the **G shape** with a capo on the 7th fret is a **D chord**.

Where to Put a Capo – Chart

Where to Put Capo.pdf

Transpose a Key – Chart

Transposing a Key.pdf

NOTE:

This chart is primarily to be used in the **rare case** that you have to transpose an entire song by yourself. At GRIP, we have chord charts readily available in easier keys for any song that we deem to be in a *'difficult key'*.

When (and When Not) to Use a Capo

I would suggest that there are **two situations** in which you should use a capo for acoustic guitar.

Firstly, the **natural** use of a capo. If you were to be given a song in the key of Db (e.g. Firm Foundation), it will quickly become apparent that almost every chord in the key is a **sharp** or **flat** (e.g. C# / Db), and hence cannot be played with open chords. This would typically require **Barre chords**, which will be explored in greater depth in the next resource. Luckily, the capo can often be an easy alternative to Barre chords. Using a capo, you can change the **key** that you play the song to a more *'guitar-friendly'* key (C-A-G-E-D), and use the chords of **that** key instead. If you don't know where to place the capo to be able to play in one of those keys, check out the **Where to Put a Capo** resource.

Secondly, you may choose to use a capo for **creative** reasons. For multiple reasons, using a capo changes the **tonal characteristics** (sound) of the guitar, and sometimes, capos just sound more pleasing... There's no fixed guideline on when to use a capo for this purpose, so feel free to just **experiment** and see what works. It's worth considering that if the keyboardist is playing particularly **low**, you might like to play with a **higher** capo to fill in that **frequency range**, or if an electric guitarist were to be covering the **high end** AND the keyboardist is playing in the **lower ranges**, you might choose to place a capo somewhere in the **middle** to balance out the overall mix. Try and see!!

As for when **not** to use a capo? All I would say is to avoid playing too highly, as this can sound odd and distracting when playing with a full band. I would suggest that for the most part, the capo should be kept **at or below** the 7th fret in a live context, unless under exceptional circumstances such as playing with multiple acoustic guitarists.

Summary & Contextualisation

Capos are an immensely powerful tool for playing as a guitarist. They allow you to change the entire **key** you're playing in, whilst still retaining the same **chord shapes**. If you're worried about the difficulty of **transposing** *every single chord* for *every single song* while playing with a capo, not to fear!! Most chord chart providers online allow you to **transpose** the chord chart to whatever key you need on the spot. Also, at GRIP there are multiple chord charts available for each song classed as being in a *'difficult key'* ready for you to play with a capo.

Capos are sometimes necessary and sometimes a pleasant addition, so **experiment** and see what works, and **please** don't try getting away with a 12th fret capo at GRIP – it won't work.

Reminder

The chord **shapes** you are playing with a capo on are NOT the same **chords** that the keyboardist or bassist is playing, so be careful when communicating chords around the team.

Resource 3: Barre Chords

Brief

Barre chords are a fundamental tool for guitar that will allow you to play any chord in any key. At GRIP, we absolutely expect that you are familiar with a couple of individual barre chords (such as Bm), and would love you to have a solid foundational understanding of what they are, how they work and how to best play them. If you're unfamiliar as of yet, good thing you're here right now. Time to get learning!

Guide

At GRIP, we play many different songs in many different keys. A capo will be sufficient for many of them, but even playing in the key of E, for example, will require playing chords such as B, C#m, and maybe even F#m and G#m. Please take the time to learn about **barre chords** – **what** they are, **how** they work, and perhaps most importantly, **shortcuts** to play them as easily and best sounding as you can ;). They're not easy to learn, but they are a **massive** step in growing as a guitarist.

Resources

How to Play Barre Chords – Blog & Video

[Barre Chord Basics: An introduction to playing Barre Chords - Worship Tutorials]

Comprehensive Guide on Barre Chords – YouTube

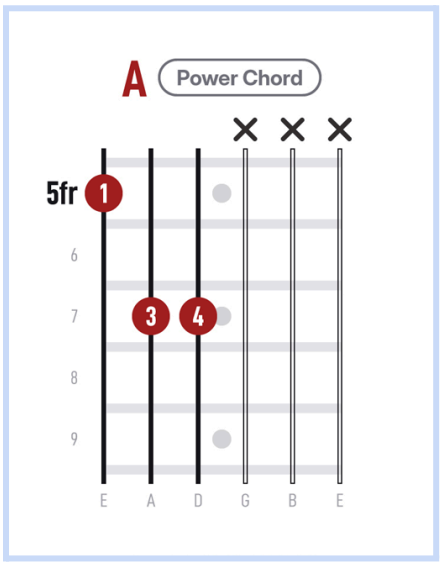
Fail-Proof Guide To Easy Barre Chords on Guitar

Summary & Contextualisation

Barre chords allow you to play **any** chord with **any** shape **anywhere** on the neck. They are versatile, inevitable and a real pain. Acting very much like a movable capo, every movement up or down a fret changes the **chord** (not shape) by one **semitone** (see **Capo Transposing**). There are many techniques as to how to play various barre chords. For example, in the key of E, you can leave the bottom two strings open and play **power chords** the whole time, and it'll still sound great (better actually)!! Whilst it may seem like a pain, don't avoid keys that involve barre chords (like E) by using some high positioned capo, it doesn't sound great. Sometimes, to play a barre chord you'll have to change your **finger configuration** to free up your index finger, but this is also something you will get used to with practice.

Extension

Power chords are a chord made up of two notes (and an octave), typically played on the E-A-D or A-D-G strings. They have a 1-5-1 chord structure (see **Constructing Chords & Chord Variations**), and are known for their *'powerful'* sound, hence the name. When playing on the E-A-D or A-D-G strings, the chord shape will always look like the one below, albeit being positioned at different frets and/or strings:



Resource 4: Strumming

Brief

Now that you have a solid understanding of major and minor chords, how to play them openly, how to play them with a capo and how to play them with barre chords, your fretting hand is well accounted for. Time to focus on your other hand. Strumming is an essential skill that every guitarist should be super familiar with. The most common idea when looking at strumming is that of a *'strumming pattern'*, a specific timing of upward and downward strokes to suit a particular song or beat. Other aspects of strumming include dynamics (how loud or soft to play) and technique (where to position your arm, which part of your arm to move, how to hold your pick etc).

Guide

At GRIP, we want every guitarist to be at least familiar with a couple of different **strumming patterns**, and how to play **dynamically** (adapting to the rest of the band). Firstly, it's good to become familiar with different **time-signatures**, particularly 4/4, 6/8 and 3/4. Then, understanding good **technique** is essential, as you don't want to ingrain bad habits. Following that, learning some **stock standard** strumming patterns is a great way to allow you to focus on **dynamic playing**, whilst still keeping in time. Once you've mastered those, you can move onto **transitioning** between strumming patterns. Finally, you can start to **create** your own strumming patterns (if you haven't already), and begin **improvising**. If you want, you can also extend yourself by learning other cool techniques such as **palm-muting** and **finger-picking**.

Resources

Time Signatures and Counting – YouTube

Time Signatures and Counting - Lesson 14: Beginner Guitar Course

Strumming Tips

5 Essential Guitar Strumming Tips for Beginners

Basic 4/4 Strumming Pattern - YouTube

Basic 4/4 Strumming Pattern - Lesson 15: Beginner Guitar Lesson Course

Basic 6/8 Strumming Pattern – YouTube

Basic 6/8 Strumming Pattern - Lesson 16: Beginner Guitar Lesson Course

How to Play With More Dynamics – Blog & Video

https://worshiptutorials.com/guitar-lessons/rhythm-and-strumming-how-to-play-with-more-dynamics

More 4/4 Strumming Patterns – YouTube

More 4/4 Strumming Patterns - Lesson 17: Beginner Guitar Course

Improvising and Transitioning Between Strumming Patterns

As the term **improvising** would suggest, there's no fixed way to go about making up or altering strumming patterns to achieve the feel you're after. I would suggest to just *experiment* again and again, and see what works. Hopefully if you're at this point, you already have a fairly good understanding of **dynamics** and have some basic **strumming-patterns** under your belt, so mix and match, remove strokes and add strokes, see what does what. Another good technique is to listen to the tracks of the songs you're playing and see what THEY play – you're bound to learn a tonne by doing this.

As for **transitioning** between strumming patterns, this is also an area of experimentation. It changes depending on **time-signatures**, **patterns**, **dynamics** and more, and is quite a fluid and changeable technique, so keep **practicing**!

Palm Muting – YouTube

Palm Muting | Beginner Guitar Tips

Beginner Finger-Picking – YouTube

Beginner Fingerpicking Guitar Lesson - How to play Fingerstyle Guitar For a Beginner

NOTE:

There are **many** different finger-picking patterns and techniques, so I would encourage you to do your own **research** and **experimentation** into this field if you would like to learn more.

Summary & Contextualisation

Strumming is an essential skill for any guitarist. There's so much to learn in this field, so I would suggest that the resources provided are helpful **guidelines** and **places to start**, but are by no means the end-all-be-all. At GRIP, we expect that you are at least able to strum with a variety of **patterns**,

considering that you will need a different pattern for each **time-signature**. I would also expect that you're able to play **dynamically**, adjusting your strumming **volume** and/or **strokes** depending on the rest of the band and/or requests from the Worship Leader and MD. Please take the time to learn about this area of guitaring **thoroughly**, as it will affect the overall dynamic of the band if you are unable to adapt well.

IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION

You DO NOT have to play all of the time. There are times that in a quiet and spontaneous moment your playing **will** complement nicely, but in the majority of cases, spontaneous or quiet moments should be left to the keys. If you're unsure, stick to the latter. Acoustic guitar in particular can **stand out** quite starkly, and can be a **distraction** during these moments. Finally, choosing not to play can actually **add** to the band's overall dynamics, which is often helpful.

Resource 5: Tone & Effects

Brief

Understanding the tone of a guitar is an important skill in any context. Whether playing at GRIP, school, recording or just at home, experimenting with and learning about tone can shape the way you play, and has an overarching effect on the way your guitar sounds to a listener. Tone also relates to effects, such as equalisers, reverbs, delays and compressors.

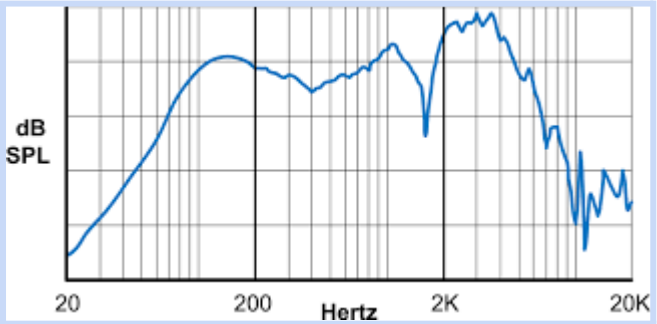
Guideline

At GRIP, whilst you won't necessarily be required to change your **tone**, and certainly won't be required to bring **effect pedals** (for acoustic guitar), having a solid foundational understanding can be a helpful **tool**. Firstly, understanding your **tone** can shape how you choose to play – harder or softer, higher or lower on the neck etc – and you may even choose to apply some of your own EQ (equaliser) to **balance** your sound. Understanding tone then leads onto effects, namely **EQ** for acoustic guitar, but also **delay**, **reverb** and **compression**.

Resources

Tone Explained

Guitar **tone** is an overarching term for the **sound qualities** and **characteristics** of a guitar. Every guitar differs in tone to some extent. Tone can be described with words such as **bright**, **dark**, **scooped**, **mellow** and **mid-heavy**, and can also be viewed on a **frequency spectrum** as shown below.



dB is a measure of loudness, Hertz is a measure of frequency.

Tone can also be changed with an equaliser, which many **plug-in** acoustic guitars will come pre-installed with (as shown below).

Bass and Treble are EQ controls

Often, **tone** is used as a word to describe the **overall** sound of a guitar, including any effects and amplification – just something to be aware of.

Aside from EQ, **tone** is influenced by many factors, such as the **wood** used to make the guitar, the **strings** on the guitar, the **shape** of the guitar and the **material** of the **nut** and **bridge saddle**.

Please also note that tone is **secondary** to how you play. A great guitarist can make a less-than-ideal tone sound amazing, but a horrible guitarist will make a great tone sound less-than-ideal.

Tone is largely **subjective**, but there are definitely some objectively bad tones out there. If you don't like something about your **tone**, check out the **Equalisation Resource** right below this one, and if you can, have a go at fixing it!

Equalisation

EQ + Compression Settings for Acoustic Guitar in Church

Equalisation is a powerful tool when **shaping** your tone. The most common classes of frequencies are:

- **Bass (~80-250Hz)**

  The **low** frequencies of an instrument or sound. Too much bass can lead to a **boomy** or **muddy** sound, and too little may result in a **tinny** or **weak** sound.

- **Low Mids (~250-500Hz)**

  The **low middle** frequencies of an instrument or sound. Too much **low mids** can lead to **muddiness** or **boxiness**, and too little may lead to a **hollow** or **thin** sound.

- **Mids (~500Hz-2kHz)**

  The **middle** frequencies of an instrument or sound. This is where most of the 'body' of a guitar sits. Boosting mids may bring an instrument **forwards** (more apparent) in a mix, and reducing mids leads to a **scooped** sound.

- **High Mids (~2-4kHz)**

  The **high middle** frequencies of an instrument or sound. Boosting these frequencies can add **bite**, **attack** and **presence**, however too much may lead to a **harsh** or **nasal** sound. Too little of these frequencies may result in the guitar getting **buried** (less apparent) in the mix. 2-3kHz in particular defines **pick attack** and **note clarity**.

- **Treble (4+kHz)**

  The **high** frequencies of an instrument or sound. These frequencies make a guitar sound **brighter** and **airy**, and also **stand out** more in a mix. Too much results in a **piercing**, **fizzy** or **sharp** sound, and too little can make the guitar sound **dull** and **lost** (less apparent) in a mix.

Some equalisers will allow you to change the individual **frequencies**, **scope** and **level** (volume), whereas others will only let you control levels for the **frequency classes** defined above.

Delay

How To Use Delay On Acoustic Guitar

Delay adds a repeating/echoing effect to an instrument or sound. For guitar, this can make it sound more **intricate**, **fuller** and just more **interesting**, however it should be used sparingly, as it can be a bit obsessive. Delays typically have the following **parameters** that define how it will sound:

- **Mix**

  The balance of the volume of the **original sound** and the **repeats**.

- **Tone**

  The **tone** (equalisation) of the **repeats**.

- **Feedback**

How many **repeats** occur / the **length** of the delay.

- **Level**

  The **output volume** of the effect.

- **Trail**

  Whether the effect will **finish** its **repeats** when turned off, or **shut off** immediately.

Reverb

Using Reverb on Acoustic Guitar

Reverb is commonly used for guitar, particularly to add a bit of **sparkle** and/or **fullness** to its sound. It can also give the impression of **space**, such as that of a **large room**. Reverb is made up of many tiny, blended **delays**, such that you no longer hear each individual repeat. This results in a more **ambient** or **spacious** sound, which sits behind the guitar. Reverb can also help to make chord changes **less abrupt**, due to its **continuous** nature. They typically have the following **parameters**:

- **Mix**

  The balance of the volume of the **original sound** and the **echo**.

- **Tone**

  The **tone** (equalisation) of the echo.

- **Feedback / Decay**

  The **length** of the reverb – how **long** before it becomes silent.

- **Level**

  The overall **output volume** of the effect.

- **Trail**

  Whether the effect will **finish** its echo when turned off, or **shut off** immediately.

Compression Explained – Blog

https://www.izotope.com/en/learn/guitar-compression?srsltid=AfmBOorKkmWYdtATELGyyteBVwNtBccYwHDf9TiIdRLicOIAgrXlGMli

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Summary & Contextualisation

Tone is a fundamental concept to understand, and it may or may not influence how and what you play. At GRIP, most of the EQing, and any other necessary effects will be handled by the **sound team**,

however if you do notice that the guitar is sounding a bit too **bright**, or **dark** and you have **tone controls** on your guitar, feel free to change them as necessary (unless otherwise advised).

When it comes to effects, there is **no expectation** for you to be bringing pedals on a Friday night (for acoustic guitar), however it's still great to have a **foundational** understanding of **how** they work, and **when** you can use them. If you do choose to purchase pedals out of your **own** interest, feel free to try them out at GRIP, but don't get caught up in the options to neglect the overall tone, and how it sits within the band.

Tone and effects are a **tool** to improve how a guitar sounds in a particular context, however they are still **secondary** to playing ability. How well you **play** will influence your sound the most.

Resource 6: CAGED System

Brief

The CAGED System is a chord system that outlines where multiple different chord shapes lie on the fretboard for a singular chord. It's a helpful tool for gaining proficiency in barre chords, and making quick decisions about which chord shape to play and where. It is also immensely helpful in determining where different scales lie on the neck (see **Constructing Chords & Chord Variations: Positions of the Major Scale**). Whilst it will still take practice to get used to, understanding the CAGED System is a great step in mastering barre chords, scales and ultimately the fretboard.

Guideline

The **CAGED System** is by no means a requirement for GRIP guitarists to know and understand, but if you're already **comfortable** with barre chords in theory, this is a great step to take in mastering them **practically**. Once you've learnt how the CAGED System works, I would encourage you to take time to sit down and practice with a bunch of different **chords**, getting used to where each different **shape** for that chord lies on the fretboard.

Resources

CAGED System – Blog

[CAGED System for Guitar]

CAGED System – YouTube

The CAGED System For Complete Beginners - Guitar Lesson

Summary & Contextualisation

The **CAGED System** provides a means of understanding the fretboard based on **chord shapes**, particularly C-A-G-E-D. Each chord is **consecutively** placed up the fretboard, allowing for easy **navigation** between various chords and shapes. I would encourage you to continue practicing these different chord shapes up and down the neck – **particularly** if you play electric guitar.

Resource 7: Nashville Number System

Brief

The Nashville Number System reshapes the classical understanding of chords as letters, and views them instead as numbers relative to a root chord. The use of this system makes for easier communication of chords between a band, especially when using a capo, and also makes more challenging skills such as playing by ear *that* much easier. The Nashville Number System is used by bands around the world, and in many churches, as a means of communicating chords on the fly, often through in-ears.

Guideline

I would personally **love it** if our team could start using the **Nashville Number System** on a regular basis. Whilst this is a **long-term** vision, it starts with small steps, so if you feel that you are comfortable with all of the other concepts explored in this guide, I would encourage you to learn this

system. By this point in your guitar journey, you'll probably already have a solid understanding of which chords are **commonly** played in different keys. With this understanding, you can start matching **numbers** to **chords**, and become familiar with what different numbers **sound** like, relative to a **root note** or **chord**. Once you start getting an idea for how they sound, you are **well** on your way to playing by ear, if you aren't already doing this. Of course, the Nashville Number System has many more applications than just playing by ear, such as **simpler communication** with other musicians, especially when using a capo.

I would note that **before** you start learning this system, you will need a basic understanding of the **major scale**. There is a resource below that will explain how it works in great detail, but you will only really need to understand the **steps** (W-W-H-W-W-W-H), and hence which notes are in which scale, because this corresponds to the **chords** in a **key**.

Resources

The Major Scale – Blog

Major Scale Patterns, Positions and Theory

*Read to the end of **Major Scale Pattern of Steps***

The Major Scale – YouTube

MUSIC THEORY for guitar

*Watch to **7:22***

Nashville Number System Explained – Blog

The Nashville Number System Demystified - InSync | Sweetwater

Nashville Number System Explained – YouTube

Nashville Number System BREAKDOWN (music theory made easy)!

Summary & Contextualisation

The **Nashville Number System** views chords as **numbers** relative to the **root** of the key along the **major scale**. In most cases, and certainly within worship, the chords follow a **maj-min-min-maj-maj-min-dim** pattern from **1-7**. The letter-number correspondence for all of the **common keys** (assuming a capo may be used) is given below.

KEY	I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii°	I
	1	2m	3m	4	5	6m	7°	1
C	**C**	Dm	Em	**F**	**G**	Am	B°	C
D	**D**	Em	F#m	**G**	**A**	Bm	C#°	D
E	**E**	F#m	G#m	**A**	**B**	C#m	D#°	E
F	**F**	Gm	Am	**Bb**	**C**	Dm	E°	F
G	**G**	Am	Bm	**C**	**D**	Em	F#°	G
A	**A**	Bm	C#m	**D**	**E**	F#m	G#°	A
B	**B**	C#m	D#m	**E**	**F#**	G#m	A#°	B

The **Nashville Number System** is used **globally**, both in churches and outside of, and is hence a great system for anyone learning guitar, or any instrument for that matter, to be familiar with.

Resource 8: Constructing Chords & Chord Variations

Brief

Many chord charts – most, I would suggest – contain not only major and minor chords, but also variations of those chords, such as maj^7, min^7, sus^2, sus^4, diminished and more. This resource will equip you with the skills to not only understand what these chords are and how to play them, but also how to 'construct' any given chord on guitar.

Guideline

Being able to **construct** and **adapt** chords is an amazing skill to have. It allows you to play more **creatively**, not limited to the stock standard chords you may have already learnt. You'll first need to

have a solid understanding of what the **major scale** is. Then, you can learn about the **positions** of various scales on the neck, which are built around the **C-A-G-E-D** chord shapes. Finally, you can learn about which **notes** are in which chord, and hence get a firm understanding of what makes a **major**, **minor**, **diminished**, **suspended**, **augmented**, **seventh** or **other** chord ':). These skills will also allow you to understand different chord **voicings** (different orders of notes in a chord, but the same notes).

At GRIP, we don't necessarily expect you to have an understanding of all of these concepts, but it would be great to see **growth** in this area for our team, especially if you are already confident in the other aspects of guitar outlined in this guide.

Resources

The Major Scale – YouTube

MUSIC THEORY for guitar

*Watch to **7:22***

The Major Scale – Blog

Major Scale Patterns, Positions and Theory

*Read to the end of **Major Scale Pattern of Steps***

*Optionally, also read **Major Scale Patterns and Positions on the Guitar Fretboard**, else use the resources below*

Positions of the Major Scale – YouTube

The Five Positions of the Major Scale for Guitar

Positions of the Major Scale – Blog & Video

https://www.guitarhabits.com/the-5-major-scale-caged-shapes-positions

Chord Formulas and Constructing Chords – YouTube

How to Build EVERY Chord on Guitar | How Chords Are Named | Chord Formula Guitar

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Summary & Contextualisation

This resource is absolutely moving towards the more **advanced** side of guitar, equipping you with the skills you need to play **any** chord in **any** scale **anywhere** on the neck. Understanding the **major scale** is an essential tool for understanding **chord theory**, and is also an incredibly useful tool for **improvisation** (particularly on electric guitar). Understanding the different scale **positions** and their relation to the

C-A-G-E-D chords and hence the **CAGED System** is incredibly useful for constructing different chord **shapes/voicings** and knowing **which** notes/chords you can play **where** on the fly. Lastly, understanding which **notes** are in which chords, whether major, minor, diminished, suspended etc, is a huge step in your guitar journey. No longer do you have to sit and watch as the keyboardist plays all the cool chords, now it's your turn!

It's worth noting that this section was quite **theory-heavy**, and as such, it's possible that you feel quite **overwhelmed** or **bogged down** (I certainly did when first learning!), so make sure to keep practicing, and try playing some different songs and/or genres to stick these ideas into your head.

Once again, at GRIP, it's not expected of you as a guitarist to be familiar, let alone **expert**, with all of these concepts (excepting the occasional sus or 7th chord), but if you've made it this far then that is *AMAZING*, so well done!
