

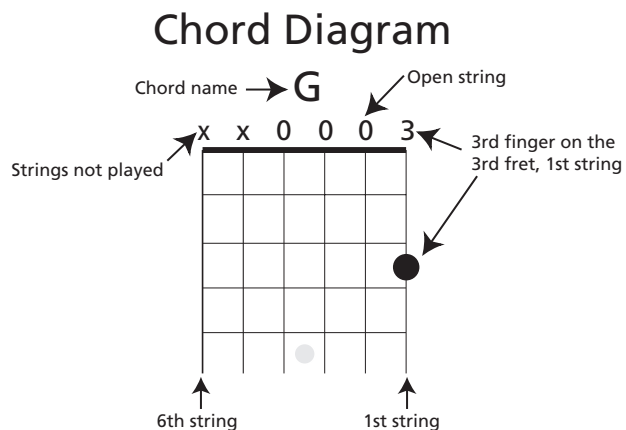
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First Chords and First Songs

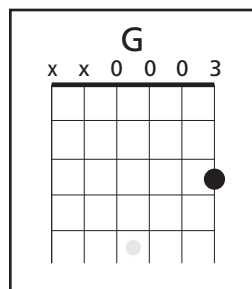
A *chord* is three or more tones played at the same time. *Chord diagrams* show you how to play chords. They represent the guitar neck oriented vertically. The vertical lines are the strings and the horizontal lines are the frets. The string to the far left is the thickest, lowest string—the 6th, low-E string. The black dots show you where to put your fingers, and the numbers on top indicate which left-hand fingers to use. An "X" means that a string should not be played, and a "0" denotes an open string.



R
O
C
K

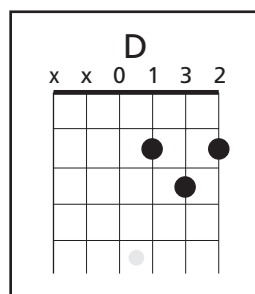
The G Chord

Put your 3rd finger on the 3rd fret of the 1st string. Strum the highest four strings by striking them downward (toward the floor) in one smooth motion with your pick or thumb.



The D Chord

Put your 1st finger on the 2nd fret of the 3rd string. Put your 3rd finger on the 3rd fret of the 2nd string. Put your 2nd finger on the 2nd fret of the 1st string. Strum down over the highest four strings.



Note About Practicing Chords

Play each new chord string by string. If a string sounds muffled, try to correct it using the Left-Hand Technique tips on page 10.

Basic Lead Guitar

Soloing is an important part of blues guitar, especially electric blues. Usually, blues players improvise their solos, spontaneously creating melodies as they go along. This requires some basic techniques and a vocabulary of musical ideas. The point of this chapter is to help you understand how this works and to get you started.

Note

A solo is usually *accompanied*, or backed up, by musicians known as the *rhythm section*; in the blues, this usually consists of a drummer, bass guitarist, and rhythm guitarist. The melodies in this chapter are in the key of A, so they sound good when accompanied by the chords of a 12-bar blues in A.

The Minor Pentatonic Scale

The *minor pentatonic scale* is the most frequently used scale in blues improvisation. It has five notes (“penta” is the Greek word for five) instead of the seven notes of the major scale, so it’s much easier to remember and use.

The A Minor Pentatonic Scale

Notice that, even though the scale has five notes (A–C–D–E–G), it can be repeated in different octaves.

Track 78

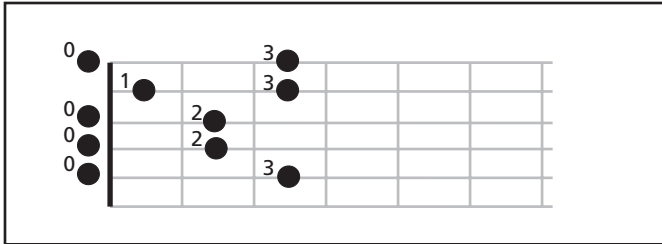
A C D E G A C D E G

T
A
B

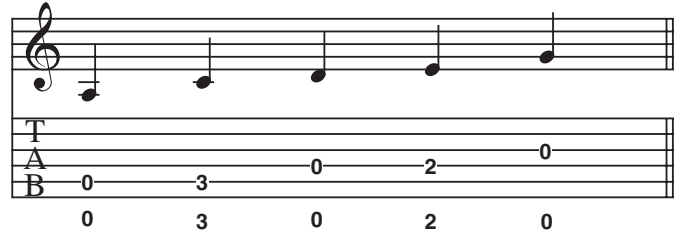
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Soloing Over a 12-Bar Blues—Revisited

Let's take one more spin through a 12-bar blues, improvising with the A Minor Pentatonic scale we learned on page 79. Notice that although the scale has only five notes, we repeat them on higher strings to create more note choices for improvising.



A Minor Pentatonic Scale



Below is another example of what you can do with this scale. As you know, you can play a solo using a few notes at a time; try this technique with the rhythm section for one open chorus after the example.



A Minor Blues Too

Swing 8ths

A	D	A	
T	1	1-1	1-1 2 1-2
A			2-2
B			
	1	1 1	1 1 2 1 2 2 2
5			
D	A		
T	3	3-3	1-1 2 1-2
A			2-2
B			
	3	3 3	1 1 2 1 2 2 2
9			
E	D	A	D
E			
T	0	1-1 2 1-2	0-0
A	2-2		
B			
	0	1 1 2 1 1	0 0