

The Secret Weapon for Bar Chords

Created by BCM

This handy device will make it much easier to form bar chords on your guitar. It is an effective tool that will give you immediate results. No more hours of frustration trying to make your index finger press down all six strings trying to get a good sound. When you use my training tool in conjunction with my Secrets to Bar Chords Instructional System your guitar playing skills will improve dramatically.

1. Remove the rubber band from around your bar sleeve lay it across the neck of your guitar at the 12th fret. Trim it 3/8 of an inch longer than the neck is wide with a pair of scissors.
2. Carefully slide your finger inside the sleeve being sure that there are no sharp edges on the molded plastic or where you have trimmed.
3. Look at your index finger. Hold it in front of your nose with the finer nail pointing skyward. Imagine a clock face with 12 o'clock being the center of your nail. Count around to the 7 o'clock position. This is where the dampening pad should be positioned. Peel of the backing and press the pad in the 7 o'clock position be sure that the pad runs parallel to your finger. Trim any excess material off.
4. Place your bar finger with the sleeve on the neck of your guitar at the 12th fret. Check to make sure that the pad completely covers all six strings. If it does not, adjust the sleeve up or down until you can easily cover all 6 strings with the pad using your finger.
5. You are now ready to begin my Instructional System. Read the Introduction. Then read Common Mistakes. Now you are ready to play. Set **Drill #1** on the table in front of you and enjoy.

The pads may wear after use so several are provided. Simply peel off the worn strip and replace with a new one. The drills can be played using the sleeve without the dampening pad. Once you have developed your bar playing skills you will be able to set aside the sleeve and forge ahead.

Bonus Bar

To make FORM 3 easier to play try trimming a sleeve and pad so that it will only cover three strings at a time and slide the sleeve over your third finger. Experiment with it you will love what you can do.

Introduction

Secrets to Bar Chords

Created by Billy Mosteferis ||| BCM|||

The purpose of this teaching system is to provide a simple means of learning how to play good sounding bar chords that will enhance your guitar playing ability. With the use of four basic bar chord forms you can play hundreds of songs. When my method of playing and reading bar chords is combined with your own understanding of open chords and chord tablature you will discover that you have acquired the ability to play great music.

My system allows you to play chords that would be complicated to finger and hard to remember if played in an open fret position. By using my notation system you can easily determine which of the four basic forms will best substitute for the open chord forms given in most popular music books. In addition, to converting the chords to simple forms and positions once notated it becomes very easy to transpose/ change keys. This allows you to adapt the music to your singing range or provide accompaniment in any key signature.

There are a few basic concepts that must be mastered to make this method work for you. The first is to develop a strong barring finger. This is the index finger. Enclosed in your training package the device that will aid you in developing this barring skill.

Place the plastic sleeve on your finger being careful not to pinch or cut your finger on any sharp edges that might be on your sleeve. If you want to smooth the edges more, you can use an emery board. The adhesive bar helps provide a more rigid base for your initial practice drills to master bar chords. Once you have developed a clean sound (no string buzzing or dead strings), then the drills should be performed without the plastic sleeve.

A Common Mistake

A common mistake made by beginners in attempting bar chords is trying to lay the index finger flat across the frets. This is not the most effective method. The joints and folds in the skin make it very hard to get a clean crisp sound. By rotating the finger slightly the contact point becomes the side of the finger and the joints are moved to a position where they are unable to interfere in the quality of the sound.

Try this experiment. Take the tip of your index finger and place it between the thumb and index finger of your pick hand so that the nail is being held by the index finger and the thumb is holding the meaty part beneath it. Gently flex it up and down notice that the finger flexes at all three joint points.

Now turn your pick hand so that your index finger is holding one side of your fingernail and the thumb is holding the opposite side. Now flex your finger. You cannot. Your joints are not designed to flex from side to side. Your finger is much more rigid and immobile. By turning your finger to the 7 o'clock position, (holding your finger in front of your nose so that the nail points towards the sky. Imagine a clock face and count around your finger to the 7 o'clock position), you are making it much stronger, an effective foundation or bar for your musical growth.

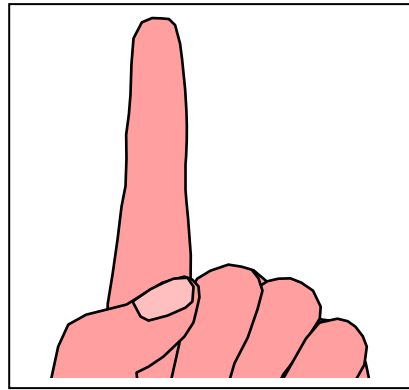
A good way to obtain this 7 o'clock position is to move the elbow in closer to your side. Effective playing position dictates that the elbow be slightly ahead of the ribcage and close to the side. If you look at your fingers while they are placed on the frets they should be slightly below your shoulder.

The neck of the guitar should be in a gradual incline from the body to the end of the neck. If you feel uncomfortable at first remember once you have developed the skill you can fine tune the positions to make them more comfortable.

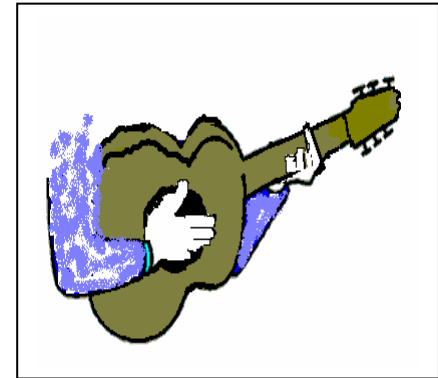
I want to make a few suggestions about strumming technique. It does not matter if you use a pick, your thumb, or a finger. What matters is that you strum slowly and rhythmically across the strings so that each sound can be clearly identified.

I highly recommend that you take the time to practice strumming with each of the implements listed above. Each one can be used to provide "special" textures to your music.

Your bar finger
will not bend
side to side.



The neck slopes
gradually upward
so fingers are
parallel to frets



Position is the Key Drill #1

In my system you must learn "positions" each Form is a fixed position and all reference points are the same in each FORM. The Zero position is when the bar, (first finger), is held over the nut, (the plastic bar that holds the strings in position over the frets). The fret positions refer to the point from the bar towards the body of the guitar. The chart below demonstrates the positions and if you remember that the bar is the foundation for all that follows you will catch on quickly.

Position your index finger with the sleeve in place over the first fret. Move it as close to the fret bar as you can without touching it. Position your thumb on the back of the neck so that the meaty flat part is about centered on the mid line of the neck. Many beginners put their finger above the mid line and this weakens the barring grip.

When you position your index finger and elbow correctly you will notice that the pressure point of the thumb is at the 4 o'clock position. (holding your thumb in front of your nose so that the nail points to the sky you count around to the 4 o'clock position).

1. Firmly squeeze your entire hand and arm all the way up to your shoulder. As you tighten your entire arm squeeze the index finger and thumb together. With your pick or thumb gently strum each string from low E (6) to high E. (1). Listen carefully to each string.
2. Release your grip relaxing all the way up to the shoulder.
3. Repeat the squeeze. Hold it and strum. Listen to each string.
4. Release. Repeat this ten times.

This is drill one.

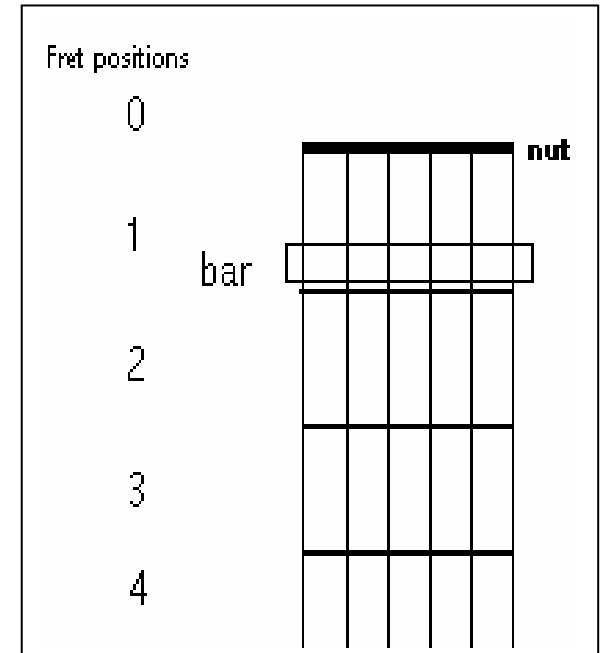
You want to do this drill at least 3 times each practice session. It helps to develop strength and allows you to develop an ear for the sound of each string. The intent is to be able to make each string ring clearly.

Be sure that you are using the 7 o'clock position on your bar finger.

Double check to see that your thumb does not creep up the back of the neck.

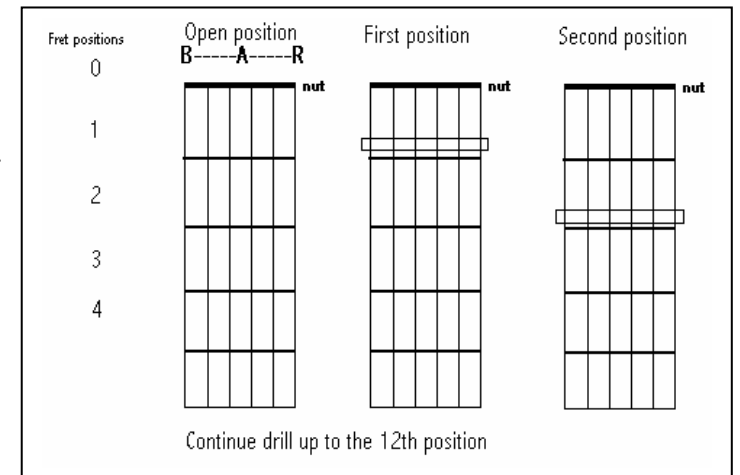
When you look at the fret bar it may appear that your finger is over the bar.

remember because you are pressing with the side of your finger you are not touching the bar.



Drill #2 Moving the bar.

1. Place the index finger above the first fret. Press and squeeze as directed in drill one. After strumming all six strings say out loud "one" release your grip.
2. Slide your finger down to the second fret bar. Press firmly, using your entire arm.. Strum each string. Say "two". Release.
3. Slide your finger to the third fret bar. Repeat this procedure until you have gone all the way to the 12th fret on your guitar.
4. Remember to listen to each string. Remember to count.. Remember to release before sliding. This is very important.



A good tip to remember is that your index finger and your thumb move as a complete unit. They do not move separately. In addition your hand and elbow are a part of that unit and all components should move as one. In other words, when you release the tension your entire arm moves to the next position. This is a critical skill that will allow you to master bar chords at a very rapid rate.

You should perform drill 2 at least 3 times during each practice session.

A simple variation to add interest to your drills is to skip a fret 1-3-5-7-9-11 or to do a repeating pattern like 0-3-5-7-0-3-5-7 repeat.

Take a minute to gloat. If you can play drill 2 correctly you have mastered 13 bar chords already. The next step is to learn their names and a way to notate them.

Minor 6th Chords You Already Know

The chords you are playing when you bar the six strings with your index finger in drill #2 approximate minor 6th chords. They are chords in FORM 1, the root of E major. In my system they are a variation possible when raising the 2nd,3rd, and 4th fingers while playing FORM 1. This will be explained in more detail in another lesson.

Below is an illustration of the chord names as you move up the neck. By learning the Names and numerical position on the neck of the guitar you will be able to play them easily while sight reading music later.

Position-	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Name-	Emin6	Fmin6	Gbmin6	Gmin6	Abmin6	Amin6	Bbmin6	Bmin6	Cmin6	Dbmin6	Dmin6	Ebmin6	Emin6

The open position, or the zero position is very critical. It is the naming position for all of our forms. Remember that the chord patterns repeat at the twelfth fret.

When playing drill 2 once you have mastered the sound and position of the bar as it moves up the neck begin reciting the name of the chord instead of the number of the fret.

Begin with **zero**, the open position , and recite the name of each chord with each strum. Remember knowing the name and the position is what makes sight reading and transposing easy, so learn it right the first time.

Interpreting the sound of chords is a tremendous skill to learn. When you develop your ear you will be able to identify many chords simply from their sound. This makes it much easier to learn a song off the radio or C D player.

Another advantage to learning bar chords and their positions is that when you see another person playing guitar in bar forms you can immediately identify the chords being played.

Drill #3 Using FORM 1 (I)

1. Look carefully at the illustration it shows you where to position your fingers to play FORM 1 chords. The second, third and fourth fingers should be positioned so that they contact the fret as close to the fret bar as possible. The third finger will be slightly higher than the second and fourth. This is acceptable.
2. Position your fingers so the bar is over the nut on your guitar neck. Place the fingers in the assigned position. Squeeze and strum FORM 1 in the **zero** position. Say the name of the chord and release.
3. Slide your bar to the first fret. Position it as close to the fret bar as possible. Squeeze and strum the strings. Recite the name of the chord in that position. Release.
4. Continue this process until you have gone up to the 12th fret. Practice this at least three times ascending and 3 times descending.

When doing this drill remind yourself that the fingers are working as part of the entire arm. They move in unison. They are not moved separately. It will take some perseverance to get this right, but being able to position your arm, hand and fingers as a unit is what will make you a great bar chord player.

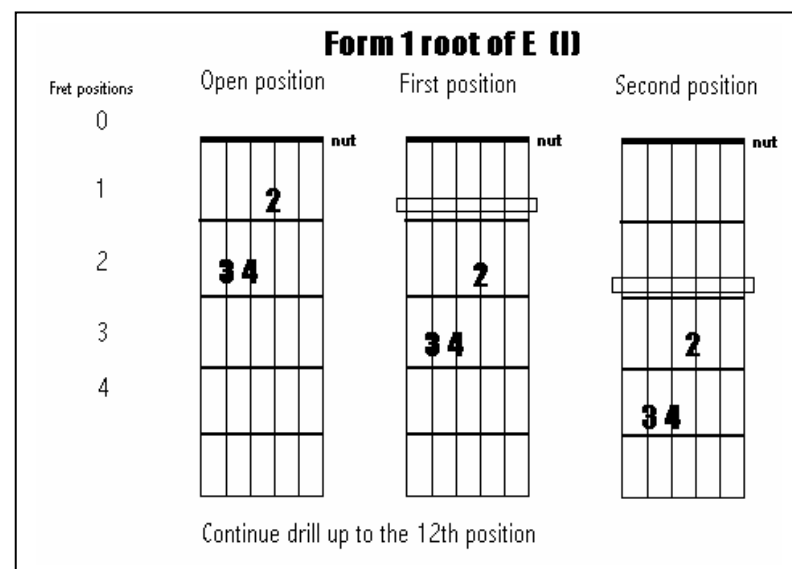
In addition to proper positioning remind yourself that you squeeze your entire arm and fingers with the same intensity. This is what gives you that high quality sound that we are striving for.

Table of Chords in FORM 1

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
E	F	Gb	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	Db	D	Eb	E
		F#		G#		A#			C#		D#	

The chords are listed in flats because most commonly in chord notation the flat is given not the sharp. The line below lists the chords with double names.

Pat yourself on the back you have learned 18 more chords.



Reading Chords off Sheet Music

It is now time for you to find a few songs that you might want to play. Look for music that has the chords written above the staff. To get the idea of the chord changes first look at the "Key Signature". This is the information given before the first measure of the song. A measure is the space created between two vertical lines drawn on the 5 horizontal lines.

There will be a notation telling you how many beats occur in each measure. The most common is 4/4 time, four beats per measure the quarter note gets one beat. For more on this refer to a music theory book.

Once you know the number of beats per minute and the chords required for the song you can strum the correct number of times for each measure. Look at the example below

G C C D G
4/4 //[] //[] //[] //[] //

If there is more than one chord per measure you divide the measure based on the location of the chord name. Look at my example.

G C D G C G C G
4/4 //[] //[] //[] //[] //[] //[] //

Some songs can have complicated chord patterns, but most don't. Most rely on the chords to support the rhythm of the song and are directly linked to the counts of each measure. Some music is written showing the strum bars.

Seventh Chords [7th] (I7)

When you place FORM 1 on the neck and remove only the fourth finger you are forming seventh chords.

When you see a 7 next to a chord name it is really stating to you that the music requires a flatted 7th to be played. If the chord shows maj.7 then it is telling us to play a natural 7th in the chord. It is important to know the difference when reading the chord and to become familiar with the difference in the sound. Once again, when using my system it is easy to form a 7th chord. All you do is raise the 4th finger.

Move your bar form up the neck. Strum and say the name of each chord in this table.

Table of Chords in FORM 1 (variation for seventh chords) [7th]

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
E7	F7	Gb7	G7	Ab7	A7	Bb7	B7	C7	Db7	D7	Eb7	E7
		F#7		G#7		A#7		C#7			D#7	

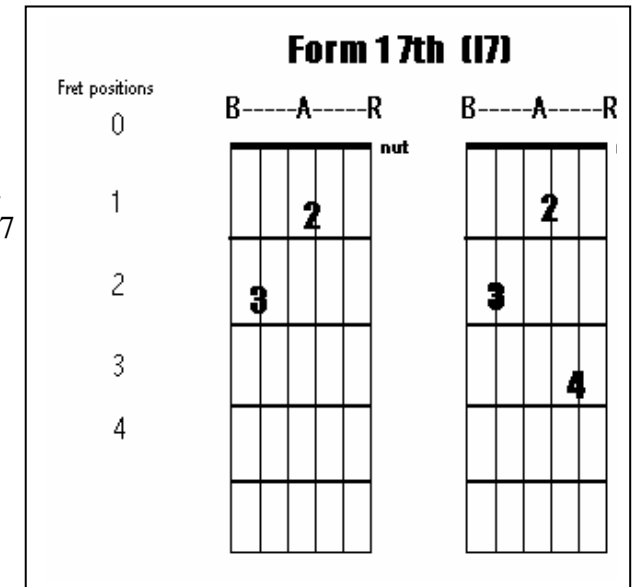
A great way to vary the sound of your chords is to play inversions. An inversion is a chord that sounds the same notes in a different sequence or register.

A simple way to vary the sound of your 7th chords is to raise the 4th finger and place it on the second string in the 4th fret position in your bar. You can press and release this note when desired to add depth to your chord playing.

This is getting easy now.

Each variation gives you the chance to add more dynamics and style to your music. Be sure to go back to simple songs you have learned and use the variations you now know to make them sound even better.

Keep in mind that it is not necessary for you to select hard songs. Simple songs with lots of chord inversions created by using bar chords will sound very impressive to your friends. The more embellishments you add to the songs you play well, the more satisfied your listening audience will be.

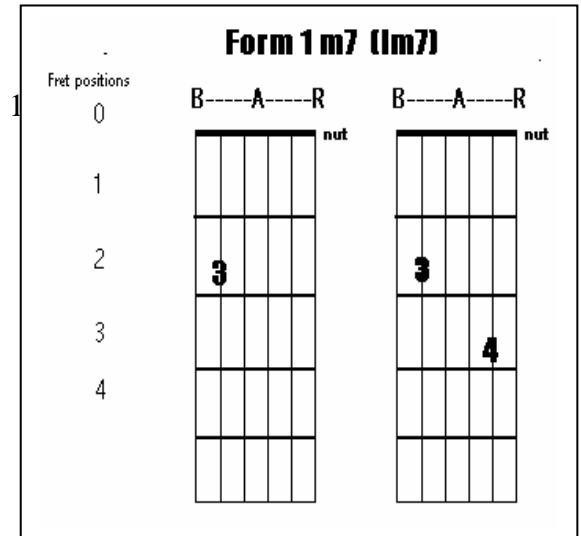


Minor Seventh Chords (Imin7 or Im7)

To form a minor 7th chord all you need to do is raise the 2nd and 4th fingers at the same time. Practice these chords now. Be sure to strum and say the name.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Em7	Fm7	Gbm7	Gm7	Abm7	Am7	Bbm7	Bm7	Cm7	Dbm7	Dm7	Ebm7
		F#m7		G#m7		A#m7			C#m7		D#m7

To add a variation to your minor 7th chords you can add the 4th finger to the second string in the 4th fret position in your bar. You can press and release this note too add depth to your minor chords.



This completes the basics for FORM 1. When you are able to strum each position comfortably you will be able to play hundreds of songs using only this one form with these simple variations.

My Special Notation System

Next we will discuss a simple form of notation so that you can identify chords fast and easy. You will be able to sight read faster and be able to transpose on the fly. After we learn the notation, we will learn 3 more chord FORMS and that's it. Simple isn't it?

My notation system identifies a chord by the form in which you will play it. Since we have only learned FORM 1 so far, our examples will all be in FORM 1.

The roman numeral identifies the Form being used. FORM 1= I
the sub-text identifies which finger is raised. 7th = raise fourth finger
min. or m = raise the second finger
m7 = raise the second and fourth fingers

So if you see a piece of music that lists these chords you would notate them like this.

G	C	C7	D	Gm7
<u>I</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>I7</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>Im7</u>
3	8	8	10	3
/ / / /	/ / / /	/ / / /	/ / / /	/ / / /

strum bars

The number on the bottom reminds you what fret position the chord is played in. Try strumming and playing this chord progression. When you change chords say the fret number, thereby re-enforcing your knowledge of its position on the neck. By doing this you will form many connections that are useful when we begin to use the other chord forms.

The greatest thing about using this notation is that you can change keys and transpose on the fly. Let's say these chords make you sing too low all you need to do is decide how many steps to raise the pitch. If you want to raise it one step move up one fret. All you do is add one to the number you have written in the bottom of your chords.

If you want to raise it 4 steps you add 4 to each number. If you have an interest in knowing what key you are playing in or developing a better understanding of scales and chromatic steps I recommend visiting the library and exploring music encyclopedias or books on music theory. The more you know about the basic principals of music, the better equipped you will be to make your music interesting and dynamic.

With my program I am providing you with shortcuts to technique and performance, but I would be remiss if I did not encourage you to learn as much as you can about music theory.