



**SIMPLIFIED
GUITAR**

HOBBY GUITAR

**THE SIMPLIFIED APPROACH TO PLAYING FOR
YOURSELF, FAMILY, AND FRIENDS.**



HOW TO PLAY THOUSANDS OF SONGS

With only 18 chords & 3 strum patterns

Hi, I'm Jonathan Reaux.

I've been playing the guitar on a weekly basis for my church (and other organizations and venues along the way) since I was 13 years old, often multiple times a week. I've played literally hundreds, if not thousands of different songs. I've directed different teams of musicians, from talented to just starting out.

Many times (if not every time) our only practice was an hour before a service or performance began. And often, that practice was the first time the musicians had ever even heard the songs we were playing.

Because of this experience, I've spent a lot of time tweaking songs and the chords that belong to them to make them easier to play at a moments notice, even for newbies who had only been playing for a few months. I remember on one occasion showing a new musician the chords I use, and he stared at them with his mouth open. "Dude...why haven't I seen this before."

That's when I knew I had something that needed to be shared. So I spent months refining the technique I've always used for years into an actual system of learning, and that's what you're about to get into.

So let's do it!



Jonathan Reaux





CHORD FAMILY CHEAT SHEET

G CHORD FAMILY

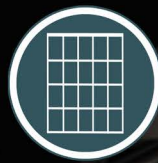
G	Cadd9	D/F#	Em7	Am7	Bm7

E CHORD FAMILY

E	A2	Bsus	C#m	F#m	G#m

C CHORD FAMILY

C	F/C	G	Am7	Dm	Em



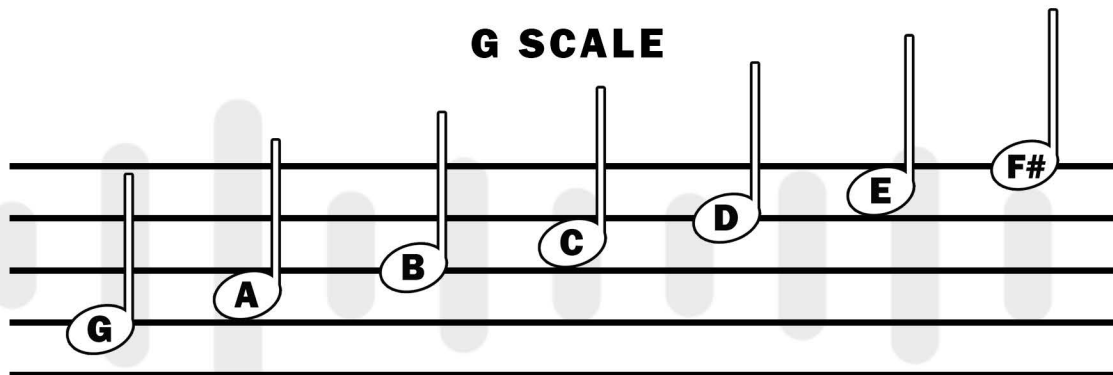
WHY ONLY 18 CHORDS?

The first thing you'll notice is that there are only 18 chords total.

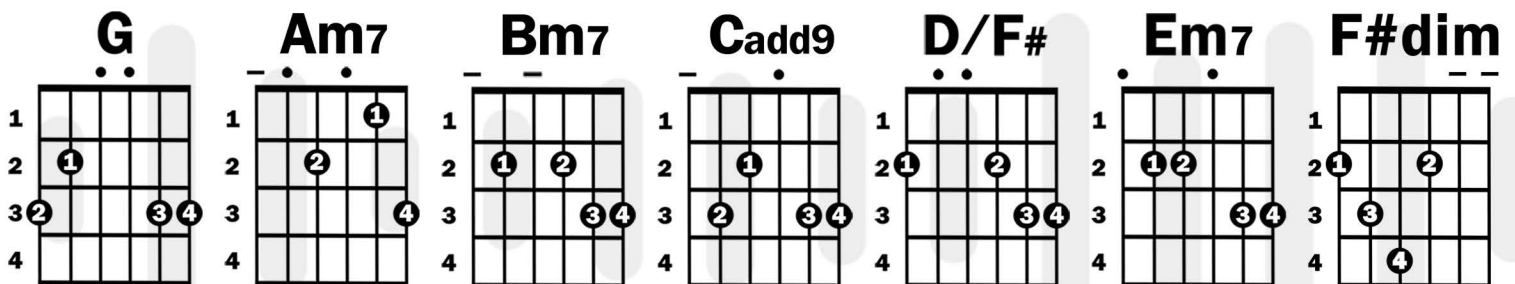
Believe it or not, there are literally thousands of songs you can play with these 18 chords. In fact, they are the only chords I use in all of my song tutorials. The secret behind this powerful leverage is a one, two punch:

1. Chord Families
2. Changing Keys (Transposing)

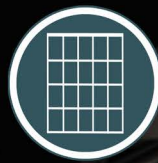
Chord families are very similar to musical scales. But whereas a musical scale has 7 individual notes, the equivalent chord family has 7 chords. For instance, below you'll see the G scale and its 7 notes, along with the G chord family and its 7 chords.



G CHORD FAMILY



A song written in the key of G will be made up of some combination of the 7 notes within the scale, and no more.



NARROWING DOWN

The 7th note of every scale will never be a major player in any song, and for the purposes of the rhythm guitar, that means we'll never be using it, so it can be dropped. This leaves you with 6 usable chords in each chord family.

This begs the question: "Well, how many chord families are there?"

Most popular songs are written in a "Major Scale" from A to G. That's because it's pleasing to the ear and familiar to us. Now, there are 12 Major Scales in music.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#

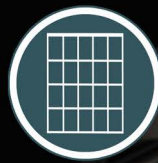
That's a potential 12 chord families. That gives us a total of 72 chords at 6 chords per family.

However, with the help of the capo we can eliminate all but 3 that are necessary to learn.

1	2	3
C	E	G

This means that we can play in any and every major scale with only 3 chord families (a total of 18 chords).

Insane, right!?



WHY THESE 18?

If you've ever tried to learn the guitar before, you'll probably notice a difference between the chords you were told to learn and the chords I have here. The variations I've chosen are not random. The purpose behind them are 3 fold:

1. Similarity

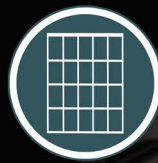
Chords are not meant to be played alone. They are meant to be played together with other chords. This is what makes music. When thinking of chords this way, it makes sense to tailor them in such a way that they fit together like threads in a tapestry to make one beautiful piece of art, rather than sewn together at random like a quilt. (No offense to you quilters). The variations I've selected share things in common throughout the family they belong to. This makes for a much more unified sound when played together.

2. Transitions

Transitioning from one chord to another is one of the most challenging tasks for any beginner. But with these variations, because they have so much in common with one another, it takes less finger movement to get to the next chord. In fact, sometimes many fingers don't have to move at all. This makes for seamless transitions.

3. Ease Of Play

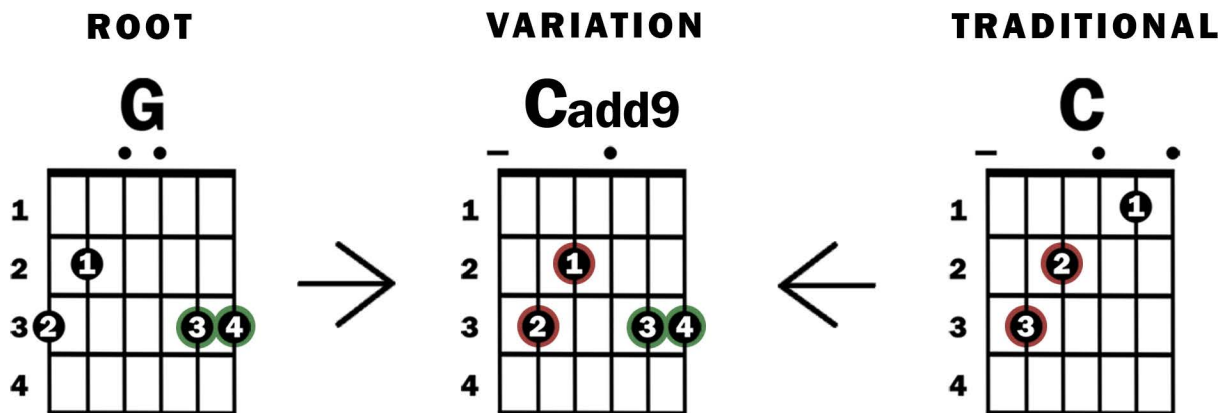
That's right. No barre chords...You're welcome. I perform in front of hundreds of people every week, and I do not use barre chords. Not only are they difficult to play, but they sound clunky in transitions. The variations you'll learn are the easiest versions to play. And no, that's not cheating. If easy is cheating, then everyone who plays the piano is a cheat!



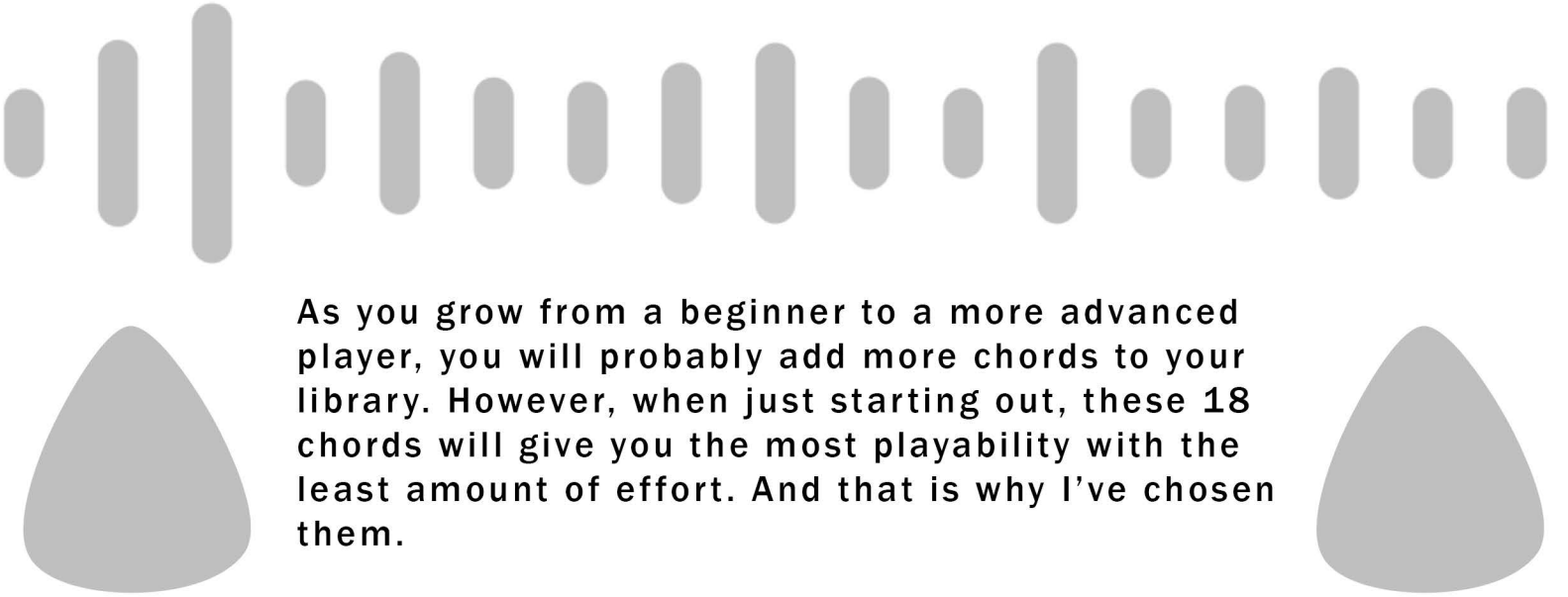
FAMILY RESEMBLANCE

Think of these variations as a child between the traditional chord and the root of the chord family it belongs to.

Let's take the Cadd9 in the G chord family for instance. If you look at it in comparison to the root chord of the family (G), and the traditional version (C), you'll notice it bares similarities to both.



Because these variations relate more to the root, it makes for easier transitions and a more fluid, unified sound.



As you grow from a beginner to a more advanced player, you will probably add more chords to your library. However, when just starting out, these 18 chords will give you the most playability with the least amount of effort. And that is why I've chosen them.



HOW TO PRACTICE CHORDS

When it comes to practicing these chords, remember these 2 important concepts.

Repetition

You need to repeat the same chord shapes over and over again, at least a few minutes each day. Your fingers need the repetition to build callouses and to memorize their new muscle positions.

Persistence

You can't give up on day 3, thinking that it'll never work for you. Progress often comes slowly, so don't look for immediate results. Rather compare your skill level over longer periods of time and you will be more motivated by the change. Give yourself at least a week of daily practice to see any noticeable change.

How to fix muted and chattering strings

One of the greatest difficulties with learning chords is getting a good clean sound, with no muted or chattering strings. Whenever you get a dull string during your practice, review these 3 steps to clean it up.

1. Press on the sweet spot of the fret

The sweet spot of the fret is not in the direct center, but in fact 3/4ths of the way up. When you press here, it gives you the cleanest sound with the least amount of pressure needed.

2. Fingers perpendicular to the fret board

A common mistake is to mute the string below the one you're pressing down with your finger. This is caused by coming into the neck at an angle and can be fixed by arching the finger and coming straight down onto the string, pressing with the very tip.

3. Good counter pressure with your thumb

In order to get a clean sound, it does take some pressure. Use your thumb on the back of the neck to provide counter pressure for your fingers to press against. Most chords will require the back of the neck to rest in the crook of your thumb, with the exception of Bsus & C#m, which work best with the tip of the thumb on the back of the neck.



TRANSPOSING

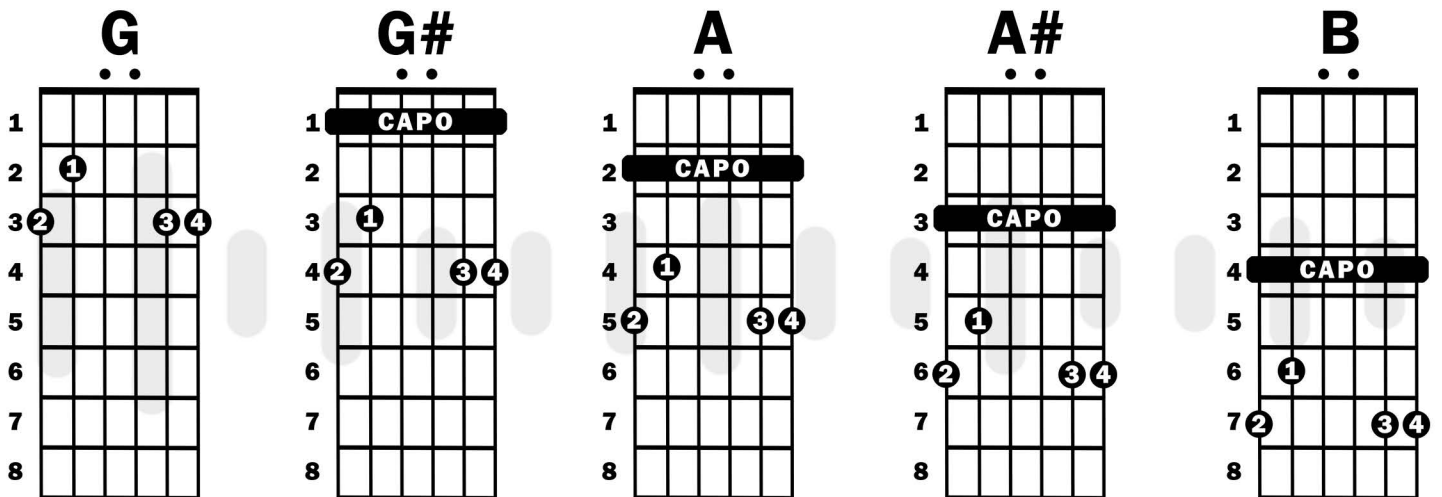
THE CAPO

So what happens when you run across a song that's in a different key than G, E, and C?

You use a capo.

And no, it's not cheating. Again, remember what I said earlier about cheats. Easier does not mean cheating. The point of music is to sound good, and if a capo helps you to achieve that, then by all means, let's use it.

In case you're unfamiliar, a capo is a tool that presses on all 6 strings simultaneously, changing the key of the entire guitar. This allows you to use the same chord family in multiple keys.



As you can see in this example, we are playing in 5 different keys with one chord shape. This is an extremely powerful tool! And with the 3 chord families (G, E, and C) you can play in every major key without putting your capo higher than the 4th fret!



CHANGING THE KEY OF A SONG

Let's say you look up a song you want to play online, and when you find it, it's got a slew of strange chords. Many people may just toss it out and move on to another song. But let me show you how to change those chords to something more familiar.

So for example, if you were to look up the song "In The Air Tonight" by Phil Collins, this would be the chorus of the song that you would find on the internet:

Dm **C** **Bb** **C**
I can feel it coming in the air tonight, oh Lord

Dm **C** **Bb** **C**
I've been waiting for this moment for all my life, oh Lord

Dm **C** **Bb** **C**
Can you feel it coming in the air tonight, oh Lord

Dm
Oh Lord

I don't know about you, but I'm not interested in playing a Bb chord. So the only alternative is to transpose it. But how do we figure out how to transpose these chords into a chord family that we know, while still playing the song in the same key as the recording?

The first thing you'll need is the Transposing Cheat Sheet, which you'll find on the next page.



TRANSPOSING CHEAT SHEET

How to use the cheat sheet

Chords being used.

Capo on fret #...

Actual notes being played.

G FAMILY

	G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em
1	G#	Bbm	Cm	C#	Eb	Fm
2	A	Bm	C#m	D	E	F#m
3	Bb	Cm	Dm	Eb	F	Gm
4	B	C#m	Ebm	E	F#	G#m
5	C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am

E FAMILY

	E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m
1	F	Gm	Am	Bb	C	Dm
2	F#	G#m	Bbm	B	C#	Ebm
3	G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em
4	G#	Bbm	Cm	C#	Eb	Fm
5	A	Bm	C#m	D	E	F#m

C FAMILY

	C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am
1	C#	Ebm	Fm	F#	G#	Bbm
2	D	Em	F#m	G	A	Bm
3	Eb	Fm	Gm	G#	Bb	Cm
4	E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m
5	F	Gm	Am	Bb	C	Dm



TRANSPOSING

1. The key of a song

Before you can transpose a song out of an unfamiliar key, you first have to figure out which key it's in.

Some chord charts you find online or in books will say at the top of the song which key the song is in. But if it doesn't, you'll have to figure it out on your own. In most cases the very first chord of the song will be the key of the song. However, you will run across some songs where this isn't the case, like in "In The Air Tonight" on the previous page. One fault proof way to know the key of a song is to look at all the chords and figure out which chord family all of them fit into.

So, let's go back to our example of "In The Air Tonight". The song has a total of 3 chords: **Bb**, **C**, and **Dm**.

E FAMILY

	E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m
1	F	Gm	Am	Bb	C	Dm
2	F#	G#m	Bbm	B	C#	Ebm
3	G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em
4	G#	Bbm	Cm	C#	Eb	Fm
5	A	Bm	C#m	D	E	F#m

When you compare these 3 chords to the transposing cheat sheet, you'll notice that the only chord family with all 3 chords is the F chord family. Therefore, this song is in the key of F.

Armed with this information, we can now transpose the song from the complicated F key, to the more comfortable key of E. To do this, we simply trade out the chords along the row from one key to the other.

E FAMILY

	E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m
1	F	Gm	Am	Bb	C	Dm
2	F#	G#m	Bbm	B	C#	Ebm



STRUMMING

BASIC PRINCIPLE

Mastering strumming can be quite the challenge, and it's the area of guitar learning that trips up beginners the most. But here's the thing, if you can tap your foot to a song, then you can learn to strum to it as well.

When you tap your foot to a song, you are tapping to the "beat", and if you can find the beat, you're ready to strum the guitar. Strumming boils down to this basic principle:

DOWN STRUMS ON BEATS

1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&
↓		↓		↓		↓	

UP STRUMS BETWEEN BEATS

1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&
	↑		↑		↑		↑

Always...no exception.

Strum patterns are basically different combinations of down and up strums, but no matter what strum patterns you use, this principle will always apply.

Now, after a lot of tinkering and trial and error, I've made a cheat sheet of 3 easy strum patterns that can be used for almost every song. In fact, they are the 3 strum patterns I use in all of my song tutorials on my website. So if you want to see them in use, head over to the [Song Library](#). I hope they come in handy for you!



STRUM PATTERN CHEAT SHEET

Three universal strum patterns for almost any song

Driving Pattern

1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&
↓		↓		↓		↓	↑

A 4 beat pattern used often for songs with a “driving beat”. Emphasis is added on the 1st and 3rd beats with the only up strum coming after beat 4, at the end of the measure.

Folk Pattern

1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&
↓		↓		↓	↑	↓	↑

A 4 beat pattern often used for folk songs. Emphasis is added on beats 2 and 4, with up strums added after beats 3 and 4. The 1st note of the chord is plucked alone for the 1st beat of each measure.

Swing Pattern

1	&	2	&	3	&
↓		↓		↓	↑

A 3 beat pattern often used for swing & waltz style music. Emphasis is on the 2nd & 3rd beats, and the 1st note of the chord is often plucked alone for the 1st beat of each measure. The only up strum is at the end of the measure, after beat 3.



HOW TO PRACTICE STRUMMING

When practicing strumming as a beginner, it's a good idea to start with a song that you know the beat count for (how many beats per measure). If you don't know where to start, then head over to my [Song Library](#) and pick a song from there that interests you. Every song lets you know which of the 3 strum patterns is being used, that way you don't have to guess the beats per measure.

1. Listen to the song and tap your foot to the beat.

Just like you would do listening to a song on the radio, get your foot tapping to one of the song tutorials. Replay it a few times if you need to, until you're able to tap your foot to every beat of the song.

2. Count the beats out loud.

With your foot tapping along to the song, say the numbers and the "ands" for the strum pattern. For instance, if you're listening to a song that uses the Folk Pattern, you would say outloud "one, two, three, and, four, and..." The numbers fall on the beats, the "ands" fall between the beats.

3. Strum down on the numbers and up on the "ands"

Grab your guitar, mute your strings with your fretting hand, and move your strumming hand (with your pick) in the same motion as your foot. Strum down on the strings when you say a number and strum up on the strings when you say "and".

Keep in mind that your hand will be moving up between all 4 beats, but you will only hit the strings between beats 3 and 4 (for the Folk Pattern). In fact, your hand moves in the exact same motion no matter what strum pattern you use: down on beats, up between beats.

Spend some time focusing only on the strum pattern and no chords. Do this by practicing with the strings muted, so you can focus fully on the strum pattern and not be distracted by your fretting hand. There won't be any sound except for the thumping of the strings, but it'll help you learn the pattern more quickly, and then you can apply it with the chords for the song.

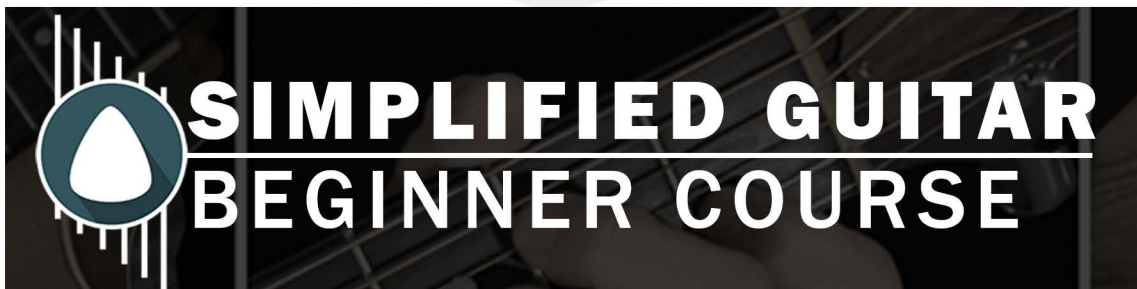
HOW TO PLAY THOUSANDS OF SONGS

With only 18 chords & 3 strum patterns

So there you have it! The 3 steps to simplifying your guitar playing. I hope you enjoyed this free guide and I really hope you get good use out of it.

If you did find it valuable, [share it with your friends on Facebook](#) and pass on the knowledge.

Also, if you would like more in depth training on this material, then you can check out my course...



In this 9 lesson step-by-step course, you'll have access to:

- ▶ **Video lessons that teach you how to play the chords & strum patterns in detail.**
- ▶ **Practice worksheets that help you develop clean sounding chords and quick transitions**
- ▶ **A practice schedule to keep you on track and motivated.**
- ▶ **A private Facebook community for accountability, support, and personal feedback.**

CHECK IT OUT NOW!

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