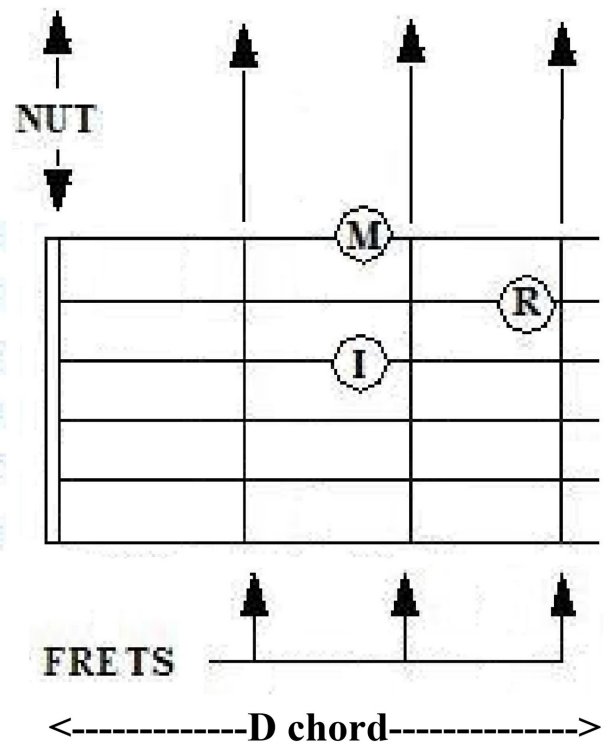
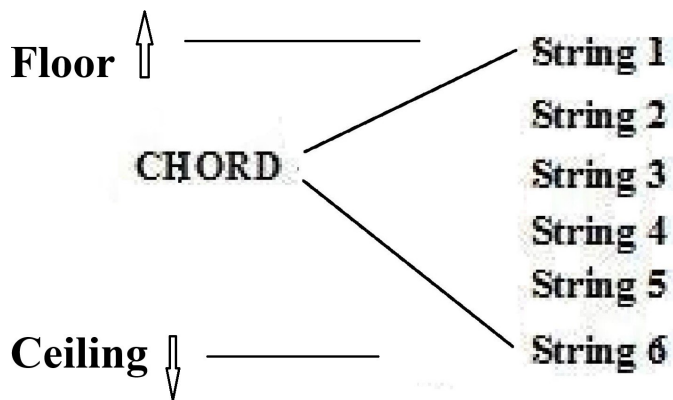


## LESSON 2 D, A7 AND G CHORDS

This lesson will introduce three "chords" (D, A7 and G), and some songs to use them in. Chords are left hand positions on the strings of the guitar. A chord diagram is a picture of the guitar neck showing which fret to press for each string and which left hand finger to use to do so. The strings are numbered from one (thinnest) to six (thickest). An example is the **D chord**.



Note that string 1 is closest to the floor when you hold the guitar.



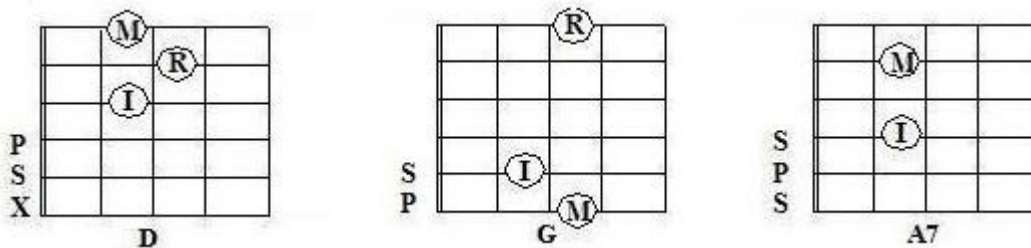
The chord diagram is on the right and is a representation of the guitar neck (as seen in the picture). The letters on the strings refer to left hand fingers (I = index, M = middle, R = ring, L = little) used to hold down the strings. The metal pieces inlaid into the neck are called "frets". The letter "I" on string number 3 means that the index finger holds string 3 on the second fret. The finger should not actually touch the fret, but be slightly behind it. See the picture on the next page on the left.



The purpose of holding a string at a fret is to shorten the string to produce a higher pitch. See the picture above on the right for the D chord.

Note that each chord has a string marked P (Primary bass) and one or more marked S (Secondary bass), for instance, string 4 on D chord (P). This is the primary bass string for the chord and is the same note as the name of the chord. The uses of this will be explained later. An X on a string means that you should not play that string, since that note is not in the chord.

When you are practicing new chords, first get your fingers into position. With no pressure on the strings, stretch your fingers so that each finger is in proper position. Then press down on the strings. Now pluck each string separately with a right hand finger to be sure that each string is held down properly, and with enough pressure. The finger should come straight down on the string with the tip of the finger holding the string. This usually requires that your finger be bent inward at the knuckle. You will get better at playing the chords as time goes by and your hand gets stronger. Here are the three chords for the key of D (D, G A7).



Note that in A7, the index and middle fingers are in the same relative position as in D chord, except that they are moved to strings 4 and 2 respectively instead of strings 3 and 1 as in D chord. If you keep this in mind, it will aid in remembering the positions. A HINT: when playing the G chord, place the ring finger in position first. It is a weak finger and it is hard to get it in the right place if the index and middle fingers are placed first.

The above three chords are called a "chord progression", and are the usual 3 chords in a song in the key of D. At the end of this book a chord chart is given which shows all of the common chord progressions used in this book. In addition, the chords are listed in alphabetical order. In addition to the charts showing chords used in this book, there is a much larger chart at the end of the book showing many useful chords. This chart has many more chords than you will ever need, but is there for reference.

As you learn chords, you will note that some chords have more than one version. If you see a different version of a chord in another book, you should not assume that either one is wrong. The songs that follow are several that you can play in the key of D using the chords D, A7 and G. In these songs, the chord symbols are written directly above where you should first be holding that chord. You hold that chord until the next change. You should switch chords so that you are in the new chord position on the syllable below the chord symbol. As you practice these songs, brush the back of your right hand fingers (nails) over the strings to produce the chord sounds. This is one of several strums that you can use in these songs. Before you start singing, do some strums as an introduction, and to get the "pitch". When it is time to switch chords, stop strumming until you get your left hand into the new chord position. Then re-start strumming in the new chord. The length of the pause between switches will decrease as you practice playing the chords in songs. The pause allows you to think only about the chord change when the time comes.

Below the words of each line, the strum is indicated by the symbol "/", which indicates brushing the back of your right hand fingers (nails) over the strings.

The next pages have some songs in the key of D to practice on. Audio for many songs in the book are also on the website:

<http://www.voith-usa.com/Guitar/index.html>

It may help to listen to the songs if you do not know them. If you do not like these songs, search for your own songs.

## SONGS IN D

### SKIP TO MY LOU (2/4, 1, S1F2)

```

    D
SKIP SKIP SKIP TO MY LOU
// // // // // // // // // //
    A7
SKIP SKIP SKIP TO MY LOU
// // // // // // // // // //
    D
SKIP SKIP SKIP TO MY LOU
// // // // // // // // // //
    A7             D
SKIP TO MY LOU MY DARLING
// // // // // // // // // //

```

### DOWN IN THE VALLEY (3/4, 1, S5F0)

```

    D                                   A7
DOWN IN THE VAL - LEY, VALLEY SO LOW
/// // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // //
                                           D
HANG YOUR HEAD O - VER, HEAR THE WIND BLOW
// // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // // //

```

**ON TOP OF OLD SMOKEY (3/4, 3, S2F3)**

D                                G    D

ON TOP OF OLD SMOKEY                    ALL COVERED WITH SNOW

/// /

A7    D

I LOST MY TRUE LOVER                    FROM COURTING TOO SLOW

/ /

---

**MICHAEL ROW THE BOAT ASHORE (2/4, 1, S2F3)**

D    G                                        D

MI- CHAEL ROW        THE BOAT A-    SH- ORE,        AL- LE- LUI-        A

/ /

D    G                                        A7                                        D    A7    D

MI- CHAEL ROW        THE BOAT A-    SH- ORE,        AL- LE- LU- U-    IA

/ /

---

**TWINKLE TWINKLE LITTLE STAR (2/4, 1, S2F3)**

D                                        G                                D    G                D        A7                        D

TWINKLE TWINKLE LITTLE STAR, HOW I WONDER WHAT YOU ARE

/ /

D    G                        D                                        A7    D                G                D        A7

UP A-BOVE THE WORLD SO HIGH LIKE A DIAMOND IN THE SKY

/ /

D                                        G                                D    G                D        A7                        D

TWINKLE TWINKLE LITTLE STAR, HOW I WONDER WHAT YOU ARE

/ /

---

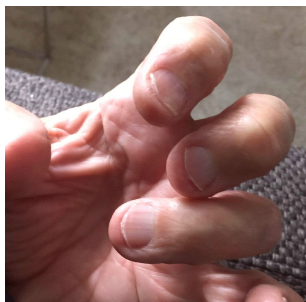
**PLAYING DIFFICULTIES**

Now that you have played some songs, do you notice:

- Aching fingers - your fingers are not accustomed to pressing on strings. After you have played for awhile, your fingers will develop calluses on the tips and your fingers won't hurt as much anymore.
- Dull sounds when you strum the strings - the dull or unpleasant sounds you may hear are sometimes caused by not pressing hard enough on the strings or because part of a finger is accidentally touching the wrong string. Both situations will improve as you get better at the chords and as your left hand gets stronger.

**Here are some tips that may help.**

**The tips of your fingers should come straight down on the strings. The shape of your hand should look like a claw. The knuckles should be bent. Your thumb should be touching the neck of the guitar behind the frets. The string should be as close to the nail as possible.**



**Note that to get the string as close to the nail as possible, you may want to consider cutting your left hand nails very short. If they are too long, they will get in the way of holding down the strings. This is recommended, but not absolutely necessary.**

**In addition, be careful not to touch the fret with your finger. The finger should be as close to the fret as possible, but slightly behind it. Because of the way your hand is constructed, this is not always possible for every finger. The pressure on the strings should come from the fingers, with low thumb pressure. Your thumb should serve more as a guide.**

**Your left-hand wrist should not be bent and there should be no tension in your arms. It helps if the position of your guitar is correct. If you are standing, a guitar strap should be used. You should not support the weight of the guitar with your hands and arms.. The guitar should rest on your abdomen, such that it is in the same position whether you are sitting or standing. The neck should be at a 45 degree angle up. See the first picture below. If you do not have a strap, or prefer not to use it, you can hold the guitar as shown in the second picture below.**



**Another thing that can make it more difficult to play is the thickness or gauge of your strings. It might help to change the strings to a lighter (thinner) gauge.**

This page left blank intentionally

This page left blank intentionally