



Video Reference: Chapter 3 - "Moving Keys"

## Moving Keys

Wouldn't life be SO much easier if everything you ever played was in C major? However, that is awfully boring.

There are two important terms you need to be familiar with here:

1. Transposition
2. Modulation

They are two very distinct musical concepts. **Transposition** refers to the playing of a given piece of music in different keys. **Modulation** implies that we have a deliberate change of key taking place in music.

We must learn to TRANSPOSE because there are many times that you need to accommodate a vocalist's range, even if YOU are the vocalist. Every singer has a particular range that they 'sing best' at, and it's important to recognize this. Transposing allows you to do just that.

There are also times that you want to change key when playing with other musicians, using certain voicings to change the entire mood-set of the given music being played. You already know the various ways to play a C chord using open and barre chords, determined by the chord 'voicing.'

By now you should have a reasonable understanding of the I-IV-V chord family, so this should be pretty easy to retain. A set of chords can be built on each degree scale in the same way that a scale is constructed from its own unique set of intervals. These patterns are called "scale tone" chords, and each chord is given a Roman Numeral relating to the degree of the scale on which it falls.

The pattern of chords for C major is:

C major (I)	D minor (II)	E minor (III)	F major (IV)	G major (V)
A minor (VI)	B diminished (VII)	C major (I)		

The three sequences to play below show the chords on the major scales in the keys of C, F, and G.

### Chords On C:

I II III IV V VI VII I

0 1 0 1 3 0 0 0  
 1 3 0 1 0 1 3 1  
 0 2 0 2 0 2 4 0  
 2 0 2 3 0 2 3 2  
 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 3  
 0 1 3

**Chords on F:**

I II III IV V VI VII I

1 3 0 1 0 1 1 1  
 1 3 1 3 1 2 0 1  
 2 3 2 3 0 3 0 2  
 3 5 2 3 2 0 2 3  
 3 5 0 1 3 0 1 3  
 1 3 0 1

**Chords on G:**

I II III IV V VI VII I

3 0 2 0 2 0 3 3  
 0 1 4 1 3 0 0 0  
 0 2 4 0 2 0 2 0  
 0 2 4 2 0 2 4 0  
 2 0 2 3 2 3 3 2  
 3 0 2 3

We can also use these scale degrees as a musical shorthand for playing chords. A sequence that progresses from I through IV to V can be notated as I - IV - V, which you should already know.

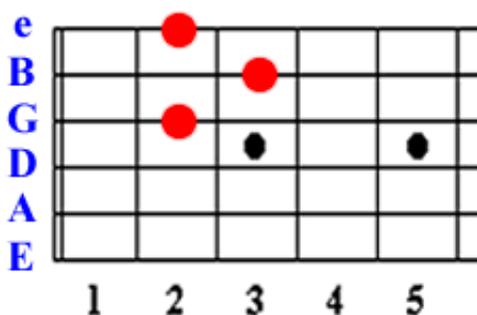
If the I chord is the C major, you know that the IV chord is the F major, and the V chord is the G major. It's a great way of dealing with notation that is very popular with jazz musicians, but is fundamental in ANY style of music you are playing.

**Transposing With A Capo (quick guide)**

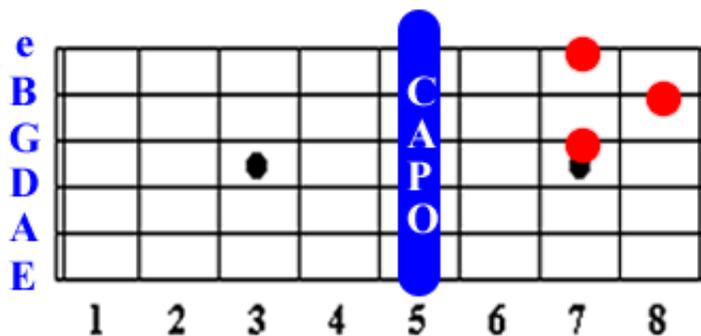
The capo is VERY useful which creates a 'mobile nut' or zero fret when clamped on the fretboard. You can make artificial barres with it and transpose chord progressions. It's also a great way to spice up your own guitar playing for personal music you are working on. If you have a chord progression that moves from D major to A major, to E major, all played as open string chords, you can transpose this from D to G, you can place the capo on the 5th fret of the guitar. You can then use the same open string voicings to play the chords G major, D major, and A major.

Like this:

### Open D Chord



### Capo D Chord



I have included a simple chart of popular MAJOR chords and what they will be with a capo on fret one, two, three, and four. This is to help you understand how this all works. The chart goes like this. It runs horizontally, as you can see. No capo means the major chord played by itself. For instance, column one is the chord A. In the next column, it shows what "A" would sound if you had a capo on the first fret. Then the second fret, and so forth.

Chords	Fret 1	Fret 2	Fret 3	Fret 4
A	Bb	B	C	C#/Db
Am	Bbm	Bm	Cm	C#m
B	C	C#/Db	D	Eb
Bm	Cm	C#m	Dm	Ebm

C	Db	D	Eb	E
D	Eb	E	F	F#
Dm	Ebm	Em	Fm	F#m
E	F	F#	G	Ab
Em	Fm	F#m	Gm	Abm
F	F#	G	Ab	A
G	Ab	A	Bb	B

The only reason this is advanced is because it considers the use of keys rather than individual chords. As stated above, we can see that a capo allows us to use familiar chord shapes in unfamiliar keys. Whilst these can be worked out by subtracting semitones on a chord by chord basis, it is much easier to think in terms of the key and chord position. For instance, if we take the key of Bb;

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Bb	Cm	Dm	Eb	F	Gm	Adim	Bb

Thinking in terms of chord positions rather than names, if the song contained Bb Eb F and Gm minor chords, we consider these as 1, 4, 5 and 6 position chords. We can now decide which key we want to play in. We now play 1, 4, 5 and 6 position chords in the key that we have transposed to.

Similarly, any scales should be also be played in the key that we have transposed to. It is important to remember that when we say we are transposing to a new key, although we are thinking and playing in terms of more familiar chords and keys, we are still really playing those original chords in the original key.

### Exercise 1: Key of G

G barred      G Capo on 3rd Fret

3	0
3	0
4	1
5	2
5	2
3	0

We want to play in the key of G, and this is three semitones lower, therefore we place the capo behind the third fret. This allows you to play the G chord on the 3rd fret with the capo playing in an E open chord formation. Neat huh?!

If you have a song in the key of G with the chords G, C, and D, you could change the song into the key of A without having to re-learn it. You would just put a capo on the 2nd fret, and play the chord shapes G, C, and D. These chord shapes will now sound a whole step higher. They will sound like the chords A, D and E.

No matter what fret you have the capo on, when you play a G chord shape, so in your mind you will always think of it as a G chord. This is a G chord shape. If you were to capo the guitar at the 2nd fret and play a G chord shape, then the chord sound would be that of an A chord.

This is the main idea of using a capo. You are using familiar, maybe even easier chord shapes to get the chord sound of less familiar, more difficult chords. If you have a Bb chord in a song, you could put the capo at the 1st fret, and play an A chord shape. But you will get a Bb chord sound.