

# Fingerstyle Guitar *In a Flash*: Module 1 – The Basics

## Chord Changes with a 4-Step Pattern

Naturally you will need to be able to change from one chord to another as you play fingerstyle, so the best way to do this is using a 4-step pattern. It's called a 4-step pattern because there are four motions to play during the pattern itself. Once you learn to play the first 4-step pattern, you'll then change chords and perform another 4-step pattern.

If you've been looking to get STRAIGHT into the exercises, now is the time. My only word of caution is this:

Maybe you decided to come straight here instead of going through the full module. If you check the patterns out below and run into any confusion as to why a given exercise is shown the way it is, go back to the reference point using the “Crab and Bird Pinch” method.

I'm going to use the first exercise here to explain the 4-step pattern. It's actually self-explanatory, but hey – here's what it means:

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
3		3		3		3	
0		0		0		0	
	2		0		2		0
3				3			
2	T	2	T	2	T	2	T
1		1		1		1	
T				T			

The steps are associated with each and every pluck. As you can see, the arrangement will repeat, so there is only a total of 4 steps in the series. When you play through steps 1 – 4, either jot down (or make a mental note) of any step that might be troublesome. You'll want to go BACK one step and then FORWARD one step between those. The video will help you there.

### 4-Step Pattern Exercise 1 (E Group – A Group – D Group – E Group)

Musical notation for Exercise 1, showing four measures with chords G, C, D, and G. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The fretting patterns are as follows:

Measure	Chord	T (Treble)	A (Acoustic)	B (Bass)
1	G	3 3 3 3	0 0 0 0	3 2 3 2
2	C	0 0 0 0	2 0 2 0	3 3
3	D	2 2 2 2	0 2 2 0	0 0
4	G	3 3 3 3	0 0 0 0	3 2 3 2

2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T    2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T    2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T    2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T  
 1 1 1 1            1 1 1 1            1 1 1 1            1 1 1 1  
 T                    T                    T                    T

### 4-Step Pattern Exercise 2 (A Group – D Group – E Group – A Group)

Musical notation for Exercise 2, showing four measures with chords A, D, E, and A. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a 4/4 time signature. The fretting patterns are as follows:

Measure	Chord	T (Treble)	A (Acoustic)	B (Bass)
1	A	0 0 0 0	2 2 2 2	0 2 0 2
2	D	2 2 2 2	0 2 2 0	0 0
3	E	0 0 0 0	1 1 1 1	0 2 0 2
4	A	0 0 0 0	2 2 2 2	0 2 0 2

2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T    2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T    2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T    2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T  
 1 1 1 1            1 1 1 1            1 1 1 1            1 1 1 1  
 T                    T                    T                    T

### 4-Step Pattern Exercise 3 (A Group – **E Group\*** – E Group – A Group)

0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 0 0 0 0

T 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 3 3 3 3 0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1

A 2 0 2 0 2 2 3 2 2 3 0 0 0 0 2 0 2 0

B 3 3 3 3 1 3 1 3 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 3 3 2

2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T

1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

T T T T T T T T T T T T T T T T T T

I know, I know – we haven't dealt with barre chords yet. However, these progressions are built on common I – IV – V – I progressions, and the F Major is the IV in the key of C. Notice here that (1) NONE of your picking hand has changed across any 3 groups, which includes the previous 2 exercises. Also notice that (2) the F Major, in THIS position, is built directly from the E group ← the open E Major to be precise.

When we move our chords you'll fully understand why the F Major is not only picked the same way as the open E Major, it actually is physically formed the same way. It's just been moved up one fret from the open E Major to the 1<sup>st</sup> fret barred version. What's the next letter after E? F.

Note: If you have trouble playing the F Major barre chord, don't worry. You don't need to dwell on it right now. It won't sound right, but you can, at least in theory, switch that F Major barre chord for an open Em, which is the {iii} in the key of C Major.

Should I show you that chord? Nope. Just form the Em with your fretting hand and pick the same pattern.

4-Step Pattern Exercise 4 (D Group – E Group – A Group – D Group)

Musical notation for Exercise 4, showing guitar chords and fingerings for D, G, A, and D. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The chords are D, G, A, and D. The fingerings are as follows:

Chord	T	A	B
D	2 3 2 3	2 2 0 2	0 0 0 0
G	3 3 3 3	0 0 0 0	3 2 3 2
A	0 0 0 0	2 2 2 2	0 2 0 2
D	2 3 2 3	0 2 0 2	0 0 0 0

2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T    2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T    2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T    2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T  
 1 1 1 1    1 1 1 1    1 1 1 1    1 1 1 1  
 T    T    T    T

4-Step Pattern Exercise 5 (E Group – A Group – A Group\* - E Group)

Musical notation for Exercise 5, showing guitar chords and fingerings for E, A, B, and E. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The chords are E, A, B, and E. The fingerings are as follows:

Chord	T	A	B	E
E	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	2 2 2 2	0 0 0 0
A	1 1 1 1	2 2 2 2	4 4 4 4	1 1 1 1
B	2 2 2 2	0 2 0 2	2 4 2 4	2 2 2 2
E	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0

2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T    2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T    2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T    2 T 2 T 2 T 2 T  
 1 1 1 1    1 1 1 1    1 1 1 1    1 1 1 1  
 T    T    T    T

Same thing here with B Major. If you can play it, go for it. If you can't, don't worry.

You'll just have to skip it for now and play E – A – E. There's no substitution for an open chord in the key of E Major as the only options are:

I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii°	I
E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m	D#°	E
(open)	(barred)	(barred)	(open)	(barred)	(barred)	(just no)	(open)

This is also why it is EXTREMELY important to learn those barre chords. Sometimes there's no other option.

Before I leave you to see how you stack up in this series, I'll go ahead and re-iterate something about the B Major chord from the past. In the location shown above (x-2-4-4-4-2) you'll find that the B Major barre chord here is built from the open A group ← the open A Major to be precise. It has merely been moved (or shifted) from the open A Major position so that the root note of “A” becomes a root note of “B” instead. Simply barre all those original open strings from the open A Major after you've moved it and you have a B Major barre chord from the A group.

BEFORE you go to the next section (which will be called “Putting Together The Pieces”) be 100% sure you can play all of these patterns as best as you can. You'll know why when you reach that section, but it's a pretty decent challenge.