

# Fingerstyle Guitar *In a Flash*: Module 2 – Beyond The Basics

## Marrying Style and Shape

It's all about guitar real estate using 3 basic styles. These 3 basic styles are the foundation for any and every chord style or shape you encounter, including: major and minor chords, 7th chords, minor 7th chords, and even suspended chords - just to name a few. The best part? You'll get to move every shape and style.

Hopefully you went through Module 1 without any hiccups. If not, you are free to stick to that for now – or – you MIGHT be surprised to find that some of the material found in Module 2 *could* be slightly easier.

Module 2 is a beyond the basics concept, but a majority of this module is only considered so because we're working with barre chords. Some folks just really struggle with them. So, in addition to working with barre chords, I will also be giving you a few options on how to make one particular barre chord shape much (much) easier.

First – what the heck IS a barre chord?

You likely already know this, but a barre chord is basically any chord that doesn't have any open strings in it. Any chord can be played as a barre chord, but the same cannot be said for open chords. You cannot play every chord in the world in open position. In other words, there's no way to avoid barre chords. I'll go ahead and let you in on a few points before we begin:

- Barre chords have the same grouping system you already learned about. So, the E Group, the A Group *and* even the D group all work the same way....sort of.
  - Since the open G Major was considered part of the E Group, the same would apply here. However, since we are now working with barre chords, I want you to basically forget what the open G Major chord looks like. Sure, you can still use it, but believe it or not – the barred G Major barre chord might be your “go to” from here on out.
  - The open C Major was considered part of the A Group, and everything you just read above applies here.

- Barre chords used in the A Group, when being played as minor chords, are very simple in terms of finger arrangement for the fretting hand. However, the Major version of these A Group chords are rather strange to play with your fretting hand. You might have already noticed that when you worked with that B Major chord in Module 1. It was a barre chord, and playing it was possibly pretty challenging. I'll be giving you a tip on that chord group.
- Barre chords used in the D Group are absolutely weird when you start moving them. I will give you some insight into how they work, but if I'm being honest here, I wouldn't use them as full forms. They are very strange to play.

Let's start with the EASIEST barre chord group, which would be the E Barre Group.

Quick Interjection: I have always called these “styles” instead of groups. However, when I offered a mini tutorial on this in my Guitar Player Survival Guide, I got a great suggestion from a student. He said that “style” confused him, but if I used the word “group” it made much more sense. So, they both mean the same thing. When discussing groups, you will now the difference between an “open” group and a “barred” group because I will say one or the other. In a nutshell, I will refer to everything as groups, with 2 classifications.

## The E Barre Group

This is where things get really interesting. All those open shapes you saw in Module 1 (E, E7, Em7, Esus4) are the STARTING point for any and every standard chord you'll ever need. The cool part is this: all of the chords are found using just the Low E string. Below is a tab that starts with the open E Major chord. As you move this same shape from its open position to each additional fret, notice the chord names change:

E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

As you take that open E Major and “move” the exact same shape up the fretboard you'll get a different chord. However, notice that the shape hasn't changed. The video will help you there.

I label my chords using sharps because I think they are easier to see than flats, but if you haven't yet fully grasped what that means, here's the basics: F# = Gb | G# = Ab | A# = Bb | C# = Db ← they all mean the same thing.

Theory suggests that when you move from a low chord to a higher chord, it's considered sharp. You are raising it. Thus, when you move from a high chord to a lower chord, it's considered flat. You are lowering it, or “flattening” it.

However, that's just being picky. An F# chord and a Gb chord are the same thing when you hear them. So, any chord with a sharp (#) or flat (b) in it is the same. The only kicker is to remember them as both. Again, the video will make that very easy to follow.

While you likely noticed this, I do want to make a point to state that the E Major groups (and every E group) uses 6 strings. Catch that? Because you are moving the initial open shapes of these chords, one can only assume that the picking hand won't need to change, right? (RIGHT!)

Plus, when you look back at the open E Major shape and how it moves, you'll find that the G Major barre chord looks exactly the same, but shifted. When you played the open G Major from Module 1, you had that issue with the fretted notes, which caused the notes to sound slightly different. That won't happen here. =)

Because every E group of chords will act in the same manner as what you saw above using the open E Major, all you really need to know are the open chords – and then how to move them – to get any of the shapes you want.

Here is the open E7 group as it would appear when moved:

E7	F7	F#7	G7	G#7	A7	A#7	B7	C7
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

You CAN use any of the previous open E7 chords you saw in the other module, but this one is much easier to move.

Here is the open Em group as it would appear when moved:

Em	Fm	F#m	Gm	G#m	Am	A#m	Bm	Cm
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Here is the open Em7 group as it would appear when moved:

Em7	Fm7	F#m7	Gm7	G#m7	Am7	A#m7	Bm7	Cm7
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Here is the open Esus4 group as it would appear when moved:

Esus4	Fsus4	F#sus4	Gsus4	G#sus4	Asus4	A#sus4	Bsus4	Csus4
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

As long as you at LEAST know the following, you're all set for any E Group chord in barred position:

Must Know #1: You need to know the notes found on the Low E string. If you want to take an open Esus4 chord and move it to any other location, just find the note on the Low E string and relate that note to the open Esus4 chord by forming the exact same shape.

Must Know #2: You need to also realize that some chords should be mixed up based on groupings. Notice that I have only covered the first eight frets across the E group. I would say this is a pretty safe stopping point when it comes to barre chords, at least at first. Once you learn all 3 basic groups (and the shapes within each of them) you will likely find it easier to mix up the arrangements on the fretboard. You can actually get by with learning just the E and A group (and their various shapes) and the open D group. You'll see why when we reach the D group.

How do you apply a fingerstyle template to these E groups? Using the same “Any E Group” fingerstyle template!

WHAAAAAAT? Absolutely. There is no change whatsoever. You are simply “marrying” the style and shape of these chords. Remember that when I say “style” I also mean “group.” What makes this so nifty is the fact that you already KNOW the origin chords. The only thing you have to consider is those previously mentioned Must-Know topics.

What about the A Group? Well, this one has a little more to it, but it's still pretty easy.

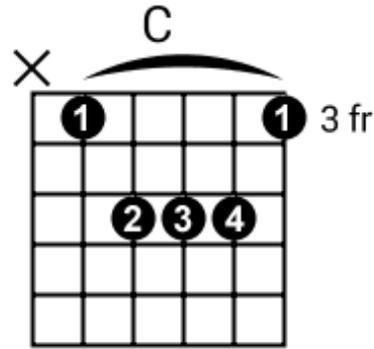
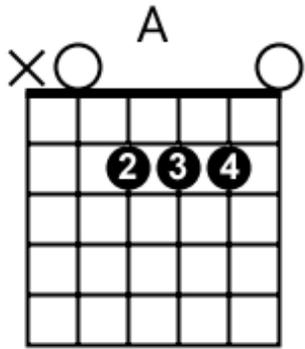
## The A Barre Group

So there's one thing I will say you should consider here. It's what happens when the open A Major chord gets shifted. If you have no issue playing the barred versions of the A Major group, be my guest and go with the flow. I will quickly admit that I don't like the fretting hand arrangement. The picking arrangement isn't all that bad, but you won't likely get real good (and clear) tones if you struggle playing this A barred group – but it only applies to the Major versions.

It's much easier to see when everything is laid out like below.

A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

The open A Major is a breeze to play, but once you start moving it, you'll be stuck in a weird formation. Here's a quick example using a shifted chord movement from open A Major to the barred C Major using the A group concept:



This arrangement is pretty much your standard open A Major chord. By itself it's not an issue, but when you move that same shape, things get somewhat complicated for your fretting hand.

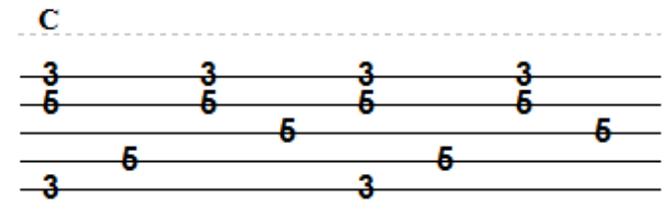
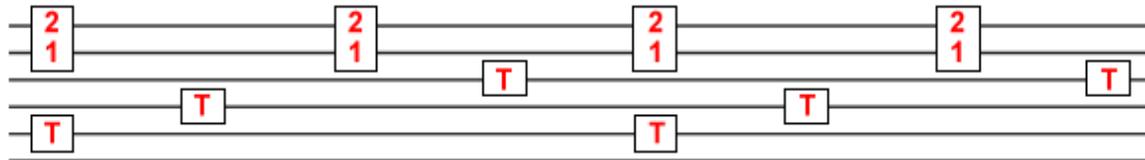
Try it (if you aren't already aware) and I think you'll agree.

So, if you WANT to learn how to play a slight variation, here's how:

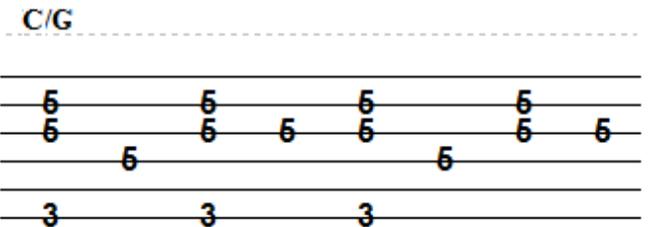
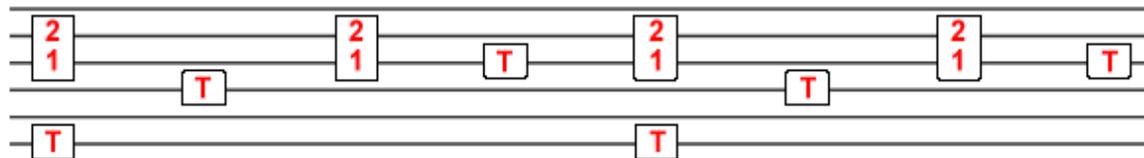
1. You will need to alter the A Group template, but remember: it's just for the A Major group.
2. Doing so might confuse you in terms of the picking hand, but the fretting hand will be much easier.

The top diagram below features the original A group template, which works for ANY chord that falls inside the A group itself (including all the open chords like A, Am, A7, Am7, Asus4) as well as the new barre chord version that has been shifted. The bottom diagram below features an inversion, which is also a split chord!

### **ANY A Group Chord**



### **\*altered for A Major barre groups**



You'll see some slight changes here, but it's just a matter of replacing the high E string notes with the same notes on the Low E string!

Notice I have labeled the “new” C chord as a G/C. This is still just a C Major chord. However, we have now placed the “5” in the C Major chord (1 = C | 3 = E | 5 = G) as the lowest tone heard. This specific instance uses just the notes in the C Major chord itself. This type of inversion is called a second inversion. Had I chosen to use an open E note we would be playing a first inversion.

Either would be fine, but I chose to throw the G note on top because it stays consistent with what was originally being played. I just used the low E instead of the high E. This gives you a very simple fretting hand arrangement as you can quite literally use either your 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> finger to “barre” all the notes on the A, D, G and B strings. So, for ANY of the barred A Major groups, you can use that second option IF you want. You can also, of course, just go to an open C Major or even use the E Group version, which would be 8-10-10-9-8-8 as well.

The good news about the barred A groups is that the minor, 7<sup>th</sup>, and even minor 7ths are rather logical. The only other one that is pretty wonky is the sus4 subcategory, which I don't recommend playing. When it comes to the sus4 chords, I would either just play them all open or even use the barred E group. They are MUCH easier. I'll show those to you in a moment, but let's check out the rest of the ones that are easy first.

Here's one that won't cause any issues, which is the open Am group as it would appear when moved:

Am	A#m	Bm	Cm	C#m	Dm	D#m	Em	Fm
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Here is the open A7 group as it would appear when moved:

A7	A#7	B7	C7	C#7	D7	D#7	E7	F7
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Here is the open Am7 group as it would appear when moved:

Am7	A#m7	Bm7	Cm7	C#m7	Dm7	D#m7	Em7	Fm7
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

And finally – the weird open Asus4 group as it would appear when moved:

Asus4	A#sus4	Bsus4	Csus4	C#sus4	Dsus4	D#sus4	Esus4	Fsus4
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

See what I mean here? Other than the open Asus4, I see no GOOD reason to use any of these – at least based on the Asus4 group movement. Instead, I would use the following in this run:

Use the Esus4 group (barred) for these chords → A#sus4 (Bbsus4) | Bsus4 | Csus4 | Esus4 (open) | Fsus4

Use the Dsus4 group (barred) for these chords → Csus4 | C#sus4 (Dbsus4) | D#sus4 (Ebsus4)

Note: We haven't covered the D barred groups yet, but you'll see why those will be your best bet in a moment. Plus, all of the chords shown in the Dsus4 group above CAN absolutely be played using the Esus4 group, but I didn't want to move you too high on the fretboard to keep things as easy as possible. You already saw where the Csus4 would go in the Esus4 barred group from earlier. Naturally you could just move that Csus4 pattern (8-10-10-10-8-8) up one set of frets to get a C#sus4 (Dbsus4) just the same like this → 9-11-11-11-9-9

Just one more group to go!

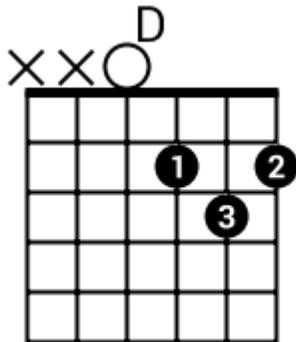
## The D Barre Group

Just a word of caution: I don't honestly recommend using this group for any moveable/barred chord unless you find it easy to do. I sure don't. Furthermore, it becomes rather challenging to relate the open D group chords to the moveable D group chords because most of us musicians are much more familiar with the notes on the Low E and A strings. Attempting to move these open shapes across the fretboard is not only confusing, it's also hard to finger the chords with your fretting hand. However, I do want to show you the reasoning why AND a possible method of making these D group barre chords *somewhat* playable.

First we'll look at the D Major barre group:

D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

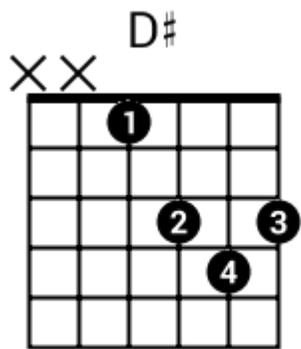
It won't take long at all to see how difficult this would be. This has nothing to do with the way I choose to play the D Major chord, so let's get that out of the way first. Instead, it has everything to do with the D string itself. Take a look below at the only real way to take the open D major chord and move it so that the shape remains the same:



I included one of the many standard finger arrangements here for the picking hand, but that isn't really the important part.

The important part here is going to be what happens once you move this easy open D Major chord shape somewhere else on the fretboard.

So, don't worry about these fingerings for the open D Major chord. That's easy.



This? Not so much. This is a D# (Eb) chord played using the D Major chord (open) group as it moves to the next set of strings. I find it to be particularly challenging to play, but if you don't – it is a solution. The picking hand won't have any issues as you would simply use the same D Group template you are already familiar with as you play.

But again, I would likely play the D# (Eb) version somewhere else. Where? I would probably play it as an A Group (Major) formation – even though that one isn't super easy. I would also consider playing this as an E Group (Major) formation IF I was able to get to that location.

When we reach the tutorial on forms you will see why this would make more sense. Just keep in mind that NONE of the D group chords work really well as shapes that move. That's why most instructors don't even talk about them. They are perfectly fine, however, as their open chord versions.

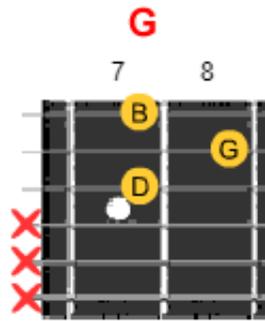
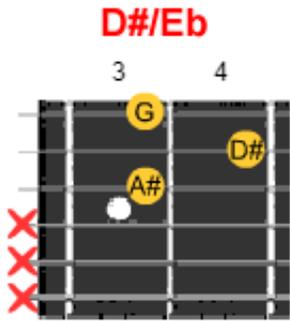
So, that shape above that is labeled as D# (Eb) is how you would move all those D Major group forms around the fretboard. A good rule of thumb is to make sure you have one full fret space between the D string note (which can be any sounding note depending on where your 1<sup>st</sup> finger on your picking hand lands) and the rest of the fretted shape of the D Major chord form itself. That brings me to a POSSIBLE way you can simplify all these D Major group chords into a playable arrangement.

Here's how you can get by still using those D Major shapes and moving them:

→ Completely eliminate the D string note itself. This will give you a second inversion of each chord.

This technically works because the second inversion is where the “5” tone comes out on top. So, when you think of a chord like D# or even G, as shown below, you DO have the 3 tones needed for the D Major chord group in barred form. Just realize that it's an inversion.

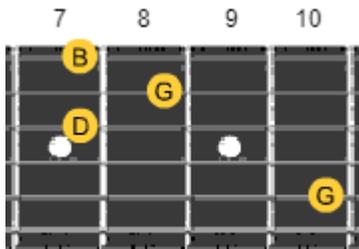
Because you are limited to 3 strings, I wouldn't REALLY call these split chords such as D#/A# or even G/D, but they are, in theory, split chords:



With me here? These *are* MUCH easier to play and work great as “little” chords, but in addition to them being a smaller realm of notes, you can naturally assume you will have to fingerpick them even smaller than the original D group chords allowed – and that was only 4 strings.

So, I wouldn't do this if possible, either.

If you are pretty familiar with your notes across all of the strings, you CAN technically do this as well, but it will also be pretty difficult and would slightly alter your overall D group picking arrangement:



This would indicate a “true” G Major chord that is built in part on the open D Major shape (shifted) as well as the root note of G added from the A shape G Major barre chord. You know it's an A shape because the “G” note is on the A string. Since you want a “G” chord, you would use the starting point for the A Major shape (shifted) so that it reflects the form of the A Major shape itself.

However, this would also require you to use your thumb for that A string “G” note and that'll be a pretty big stretch.

In a nutshell – you can find MUCH better variations of the moveable D Major group chords. I wouldn't play any of the D groups in anything but their open position. I'll go ahead and show you the rest for reference.

Here's the D7 group, which will have the same issue as the D Major group:

D7	D#7	E7	F7	F#7	G7	G#7	A7	B7
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

THIS series presents an even bigger problem if you remove the D string note entirely.

You end up with a diminished chord in every case. It all has to do with the formation of what makes a diminished chord sound like it does. A diminished chord uses the 1 – b3 – b5 in construction. A 7<sup>th</sup> chord uses 1 – 3 – 5 – b7.

When you remove the note (any of the notes) found on the D string, you are left without the ROOT property of the chord. It worked with the D Major group because it was just 1 – 3 – 5. As you can see from the construction formula above, you won't make it work no matter what you try to do.

Here's the Dm group, which is also super weird:

Dm	D#m	Em	Fm	F#m	Gm	G#m	Am	Bm
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

This one WILL allow you to remove any of the D string notes and still get your chord. It'll be a second inversion (the 5<sup>th</sup> will go on top) but if you want that – go for it.

The Dm7 group?

Dm7	D#m7	Em7	Fm7	F#m7	Gm7	G#m7	Am7	Bm7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

It won't work if you remove the D string. In fact, you'll end up with, in theory, ENTIRELY different chords.

If you remove the D string from the D#m7, you end up with an F# chord. It's inverted (1<sup>st</sup> inversion here, which is the 3 on top) so that will be strange.

## What about the Dsus4 group?

Dsus4	D#sus4	Esus4	Fsus4	F#sus4	Gsus4	G#sus4	Asus4	A#sus4
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Remove the D string and you're ok. It'll also be a second inversion.

### Long Story Short – D Groups Aren't Friendly To Move

If you are absolutely positive you want to use these full chords, then you can simply use the D Group and its respective shape. If you decide to play them as little chords, it will work for your D, Dm, and Dsus4 shapes. It won't work for the D7 or Dm7 shapes. If you do use the little chords, you will likely find it easiest to “forget” the plucking on the D string using the template. Just don't play it at all. Doing that will allow you to shift your thinking so that your thumb and 1<sup>st</sup> finger play together, and your 2<sup>nd</sup> finger is left out of the picking pattern.

I don't see any reason to show you the altered D shape as it's highly unlikely (and illogical) to actually use it. If you decide to use it, you wouldn't need me to show you how to play that pattern because you're a beast! (ha ha)

So, you now have ALL of the shapes you need using just 3 basic concepts. All of these moveable shapes will use the precise same blueprint you've been working with from the beginning, so just insert any chord you want either as an open OR barre chord and see which ones work best for you.

The next tutorial will help you decide which of the 3 shapes (and their subcategories) you will want to use in a given situation. It should help tremendously both in getting your form down AND further proving that you can make this as easy or as challenging as you want.