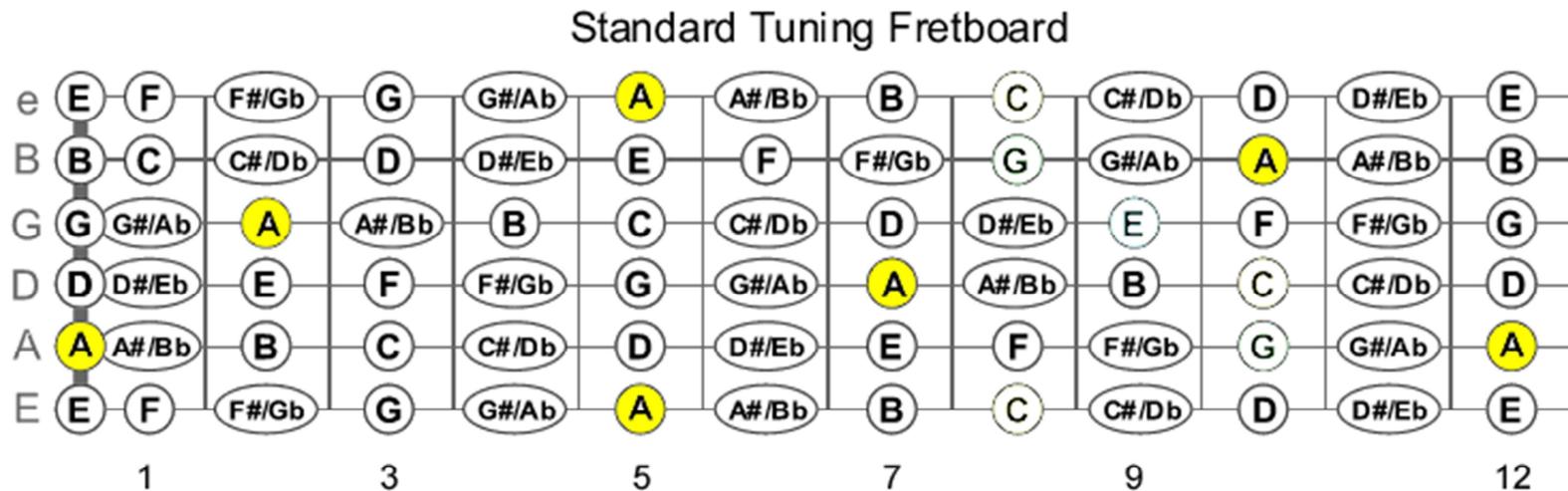


Chapter 1 - Find Chords Anywhere!

In order to find a chord anywhere on the guitar, we must first understand which notes make up a chord. For now we are focusing solely on the Major chords. You'll see the major chord in a few positions, which will include open and barre chord combinations.

The A Major Chord:

The A Major chord (A, AMaj, A major) consists of the notes A, E, and C#/Db. Remember that the slash in the case of C#/Db refers to the concept that sharps and flats have 'dual' names, so you can refer to the C# ALSO as Db, or Db ALSO as C#. Take a look at all of the A notes located on the first 12 frets of your guitar. These notes are highlighted in yellow. Since the chord name is an A, that would mean the note A would be the root note. All we need to do is determine which one of these highlighted yellow notes are indeed the root, and not just an added note. Logically speaking, the lowest tone produced from the A note will generally be the root note desired.

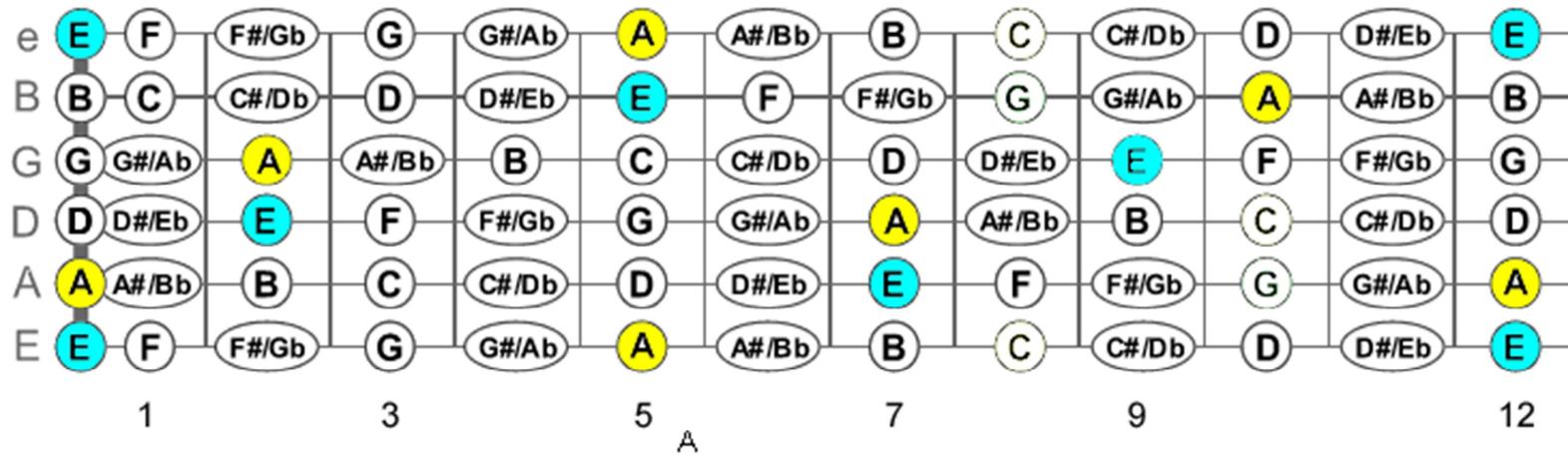


Above is a diagram of all of the A notes that appear on the first 12 frets. For now we just need to examine the notes provided. Here are all the A notes located on a six string guitar, all in standard tuning.

- E strings – We have a 5th fretted note of A on these strings
- A string – We have an open position “A” note, which is duplicated at the 12th fret
- D string – We have a 7th fretted note of A on this string
- G string – We have a 2nd fretted note of A on this string
- B string – We have a 10th fretted note of A on this string

Since we need to find more than just the A note, let’s add the E note to every possible fret on the guitar.

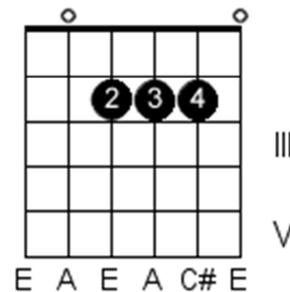
Standard Tuning Fretboard



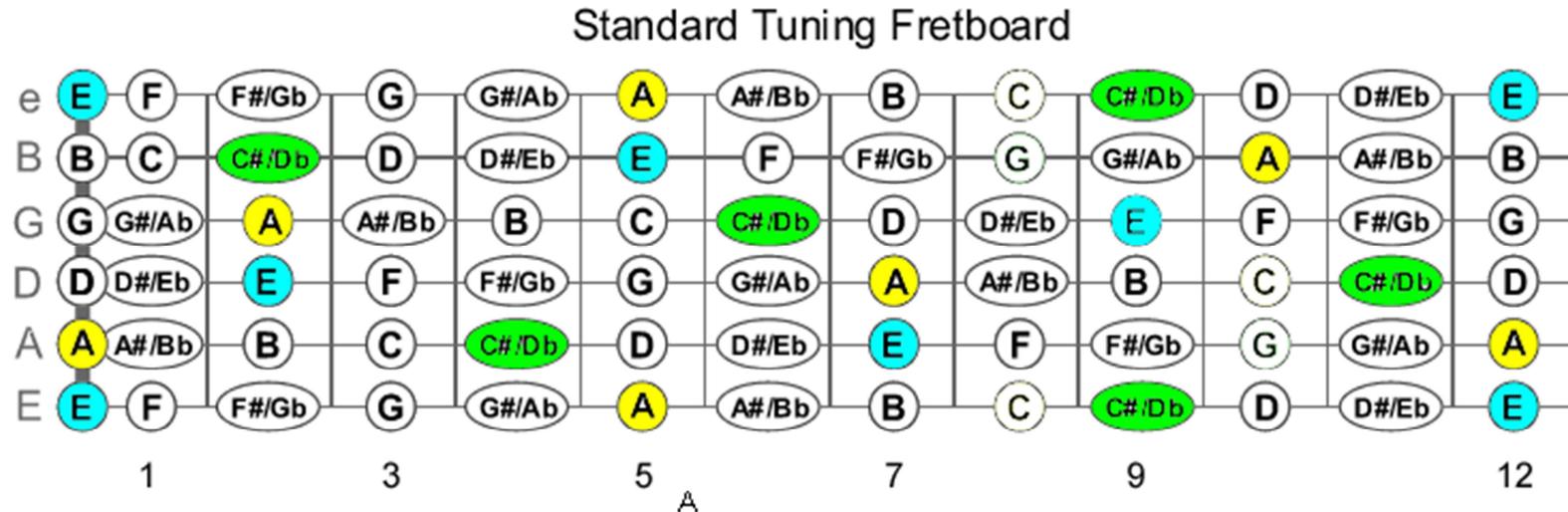
- = root
- = note

The A Major Chord

contains notes:
A - E - C#
root note = A



Now we've added the E notes that are required to begin forming the A Major chord. Above you'll see that I have provided a chord diagram that shows the A Major chord in open position. The fingerings are optional, so for now you don't need to worry about those. We've ALMOST got all of our notes for the A Major chord. Now we just need to apply our C#/Db note to create the actual chord.



The A Major Chord

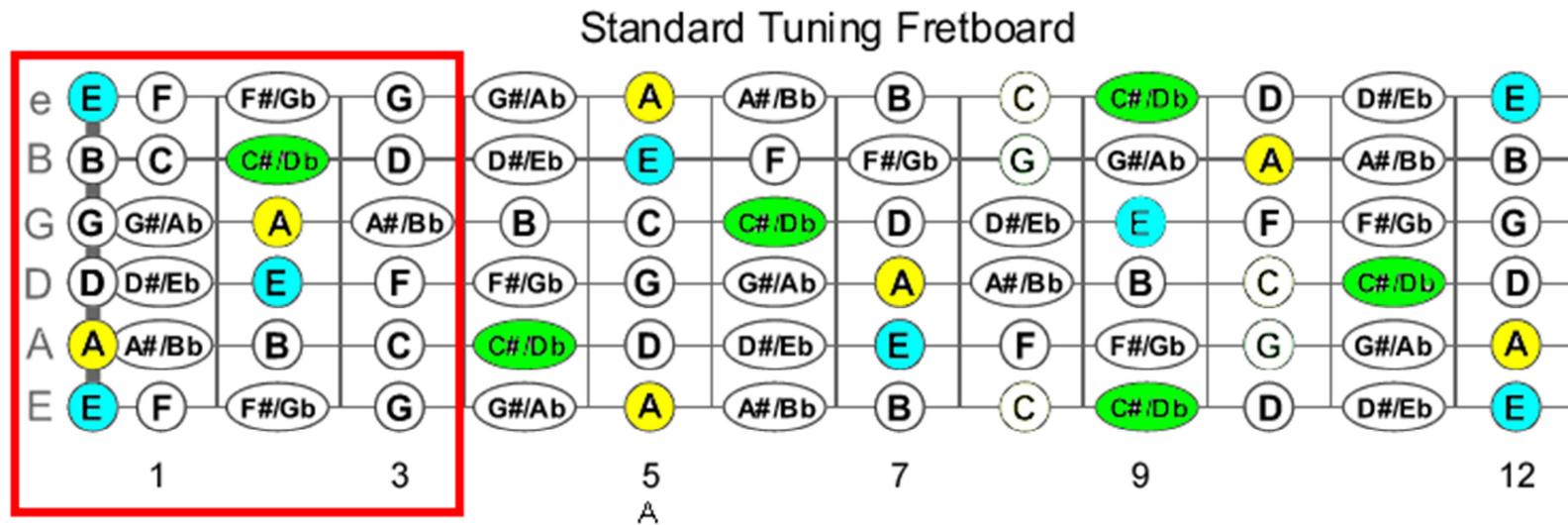
contains notes:
A - E - C#
root note = A

- = root
- = note
- = note

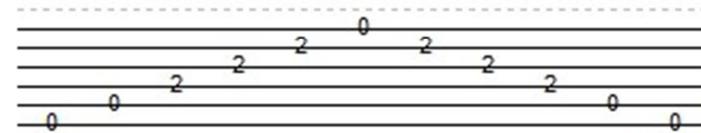
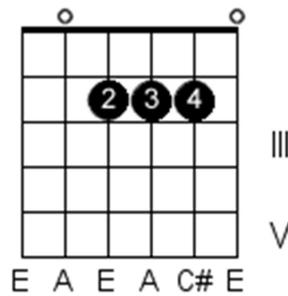
E A E A C# E

Now you can see that all of the required notes for the A Major chord are filled in. The only step left is to find logical groupings to create the actual chord. Let's begin!

In the following diagram, you'll see a red box. This box indicates our starting position – or OPEN position of the A Major chord.

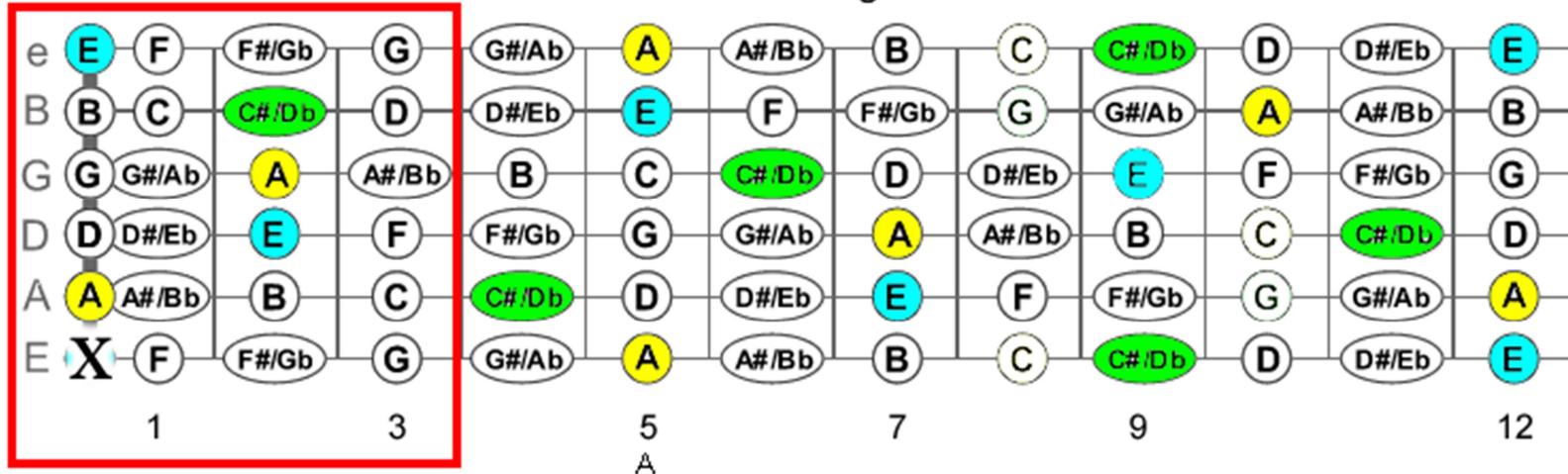


- The A Major Chord**
- = root
 - = note
 - = note
- contains notes:
A - E - C#
root note = A



I've also included tablature to the side of the chord. This indicates all of the notes that can be played within this position JUST to form the A Major chord. Of course, we don't want every note to sound because too many duplicated notes create a very 'muddy' tone, so let's take a closer look at the logical playing options.

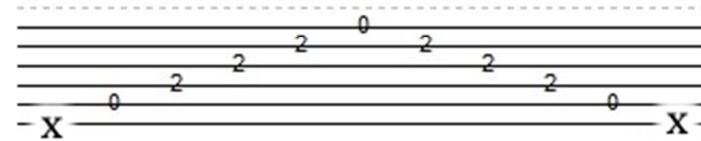
Standard Tuning Fretboard



The A Major Chord

- = root
- = note
- = note

contains notes:
A - E - C#
root note = A



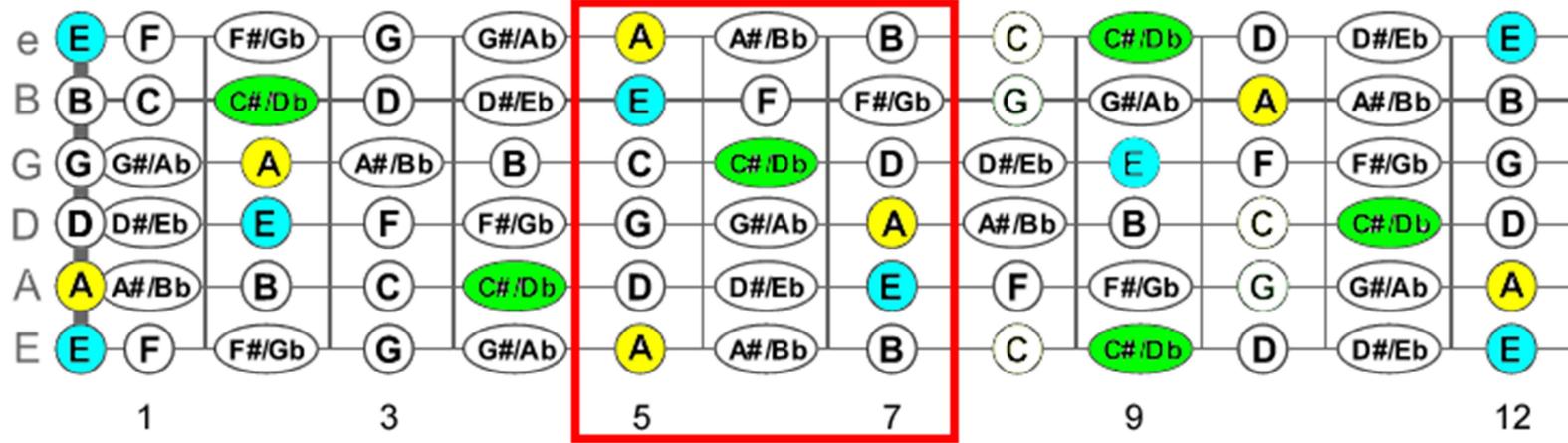
You will now see that I've removed the Low E string note. Why? Well for starters, notice in the chord diagram above that not only does the A Major chord NOT show the Low E string note being played, we also have quite a few duplicate E notes. There are a total of three of these E notes within this chord that are possible. For an open chord, we don't want too many notes to ring out as open notes because they tend to, as mentioned earlier, 'muddy' up the chord. It's a whole different story with barre chords. More on that later.

Quick Tip: Sometimes a chord diagram will show an "o" on a given string. You'll notice that it is above the actual charted chord. That indicates that the string it is labeled above is to be played open. Sometimes a chord diagram will show an "x" in the same way. It means that the string is not played. This is not ALWAYS the case, which is why it's a good idea to understand how to implement note removal in the way I am showing you.

Why is the High E string note on the chord diagram showing as 'to be played' with a "0" as marked? Because this note will ring at a higher octave than the Low E string note counterpart, it CAN be played. It won't muddy up the chord because there is no low melody ringing through it. I won't get into the frequency because that is WAY too much music theory and not important for what we are learning, but just know that generally a High E string note can be played in almost every circumstance – and IS recommended.

Now let's move our red box a little higher in pitch:

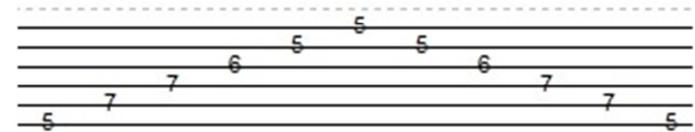
Standard Tuning Fretboard



The A Major Chord

- = root
- = note
- = note

contains notes:
A - E - C#
root note = A

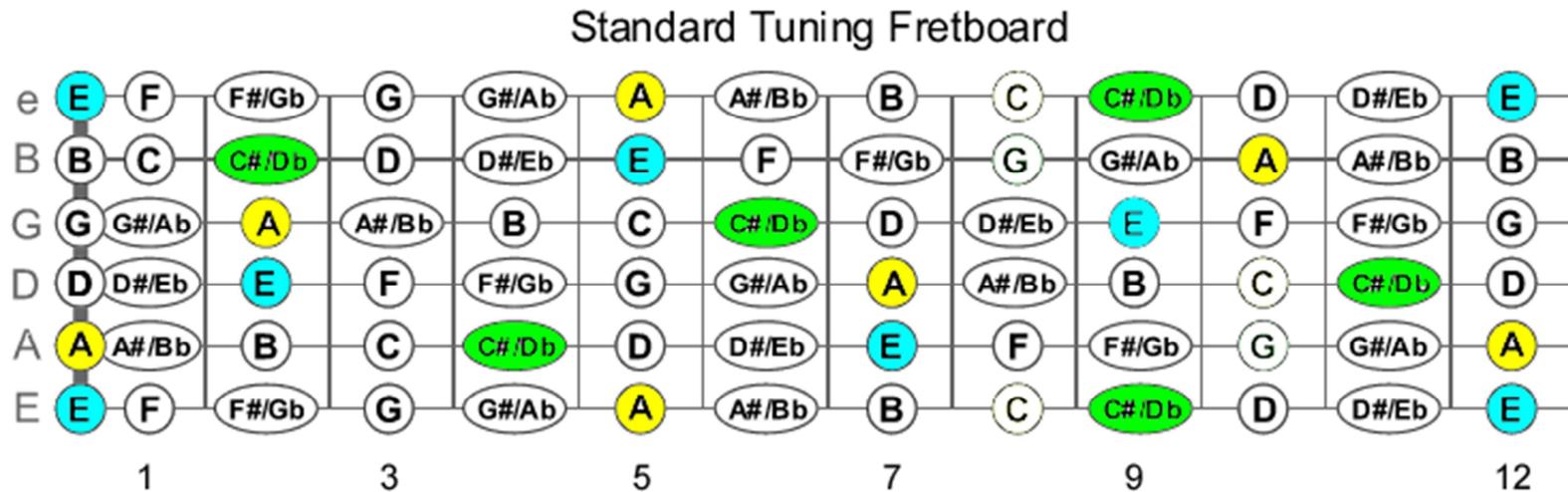


The first thing you might notice about the above diagram is that I completely skipped the 3rd and 4th frets. Why? If you look closely at the fretboard you'll notice that there are NO notes in a grouping that fall into the A-E-C#/Db notes required to form the A Major chord. In other words – there's no place to use them!

However, you WILL see that by working with the 5th – 7th frets there ARE notes that can be used to play the A Major chord. They line up beautifully. This is an A Major barre chord! You'll also see that the chord diagram has changed, as well as the tablature to the right.

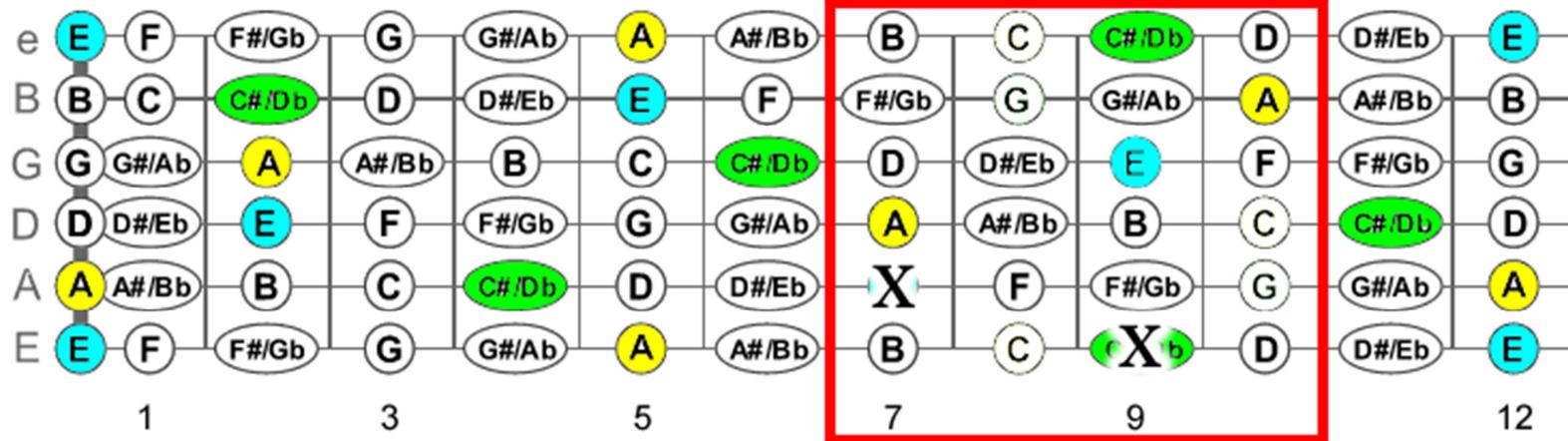
Since this is a barre chord, we want AS MANY notes as possible to ring out, so there's no need to remove any notes from this chord. Obviously we have a total of three A notes, so we need to remember that the LOWEST note will be the root note. This occurs on the Low E string.

Can we move the red box again? Take a look at the overall fretboard diagram once more....



TECHNICALLY we CAN move the box over to the 9th – 11th frets, right? We have all the notes required in A-E-C#/Db, but there's a problem. The root note of A would be on the B string. We want a LOWER tone than that. Otherwise it just won't sound thick enough. This is when we can start to backtrack a little. Notice at the 7th fret there is an A note on the D string. It's not TOO far of a stretch, so we CAN choose the 7th fret D string note as our A note root, as seen below:

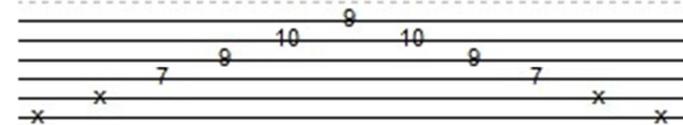
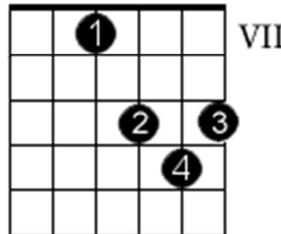
Standard Tuning Fretboard



The A Major Chord

- = root
- = note
- = note

contains notes:
A - E - C#
root note = A

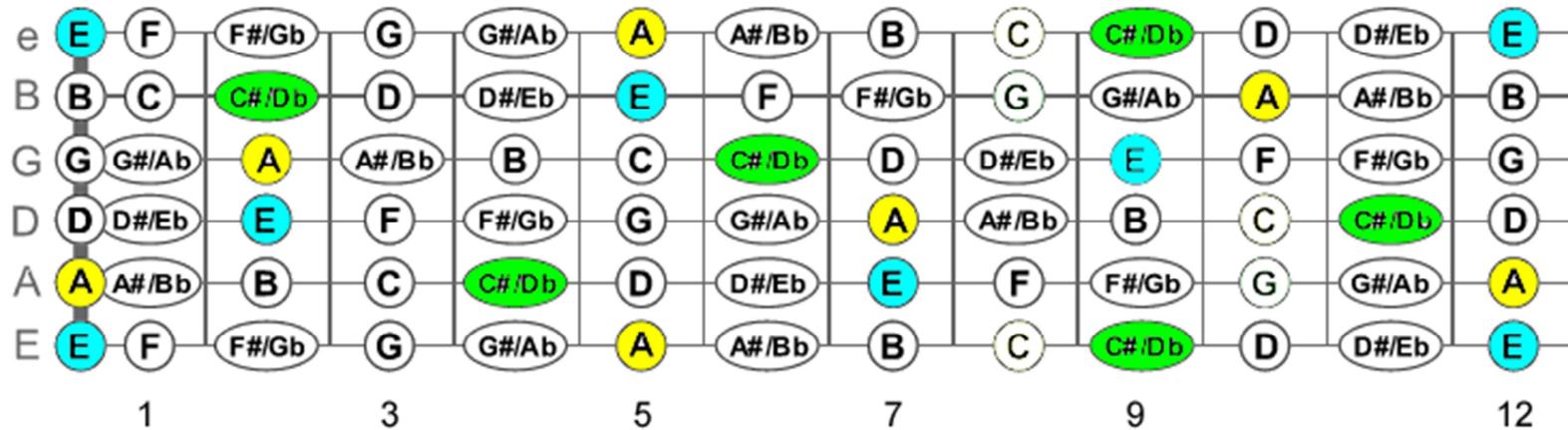


Now it may not be too comfortable, and isn't a logical chord to play when simply strumming, it IS a possibility. Since it's not a barre chord, we want to remove as many muddy notes as possible. We need to remove the note options on the Low E string and A string.

What About Using A Power Chord?

It's ALWAYS an option, and we'll get into more detail with this in our "Chapter 2: Finger Solutions" section, but I'll go ahead and show you where you can play the power chord formation of the A Major chord, but this time, we won't use a charted fretboard diagram. Instead I want you to look at all of the A notes required to form the A Major chord again:

Standard Tuning Fretboard



Now, power chords are simply chords that ONLY contain the root note and the fifth interval. This is why often you'll see a chord that looks like this: A5. This simply means that you are playing an A chord in power chord formation. Fifth interval? What's that? Check this out:

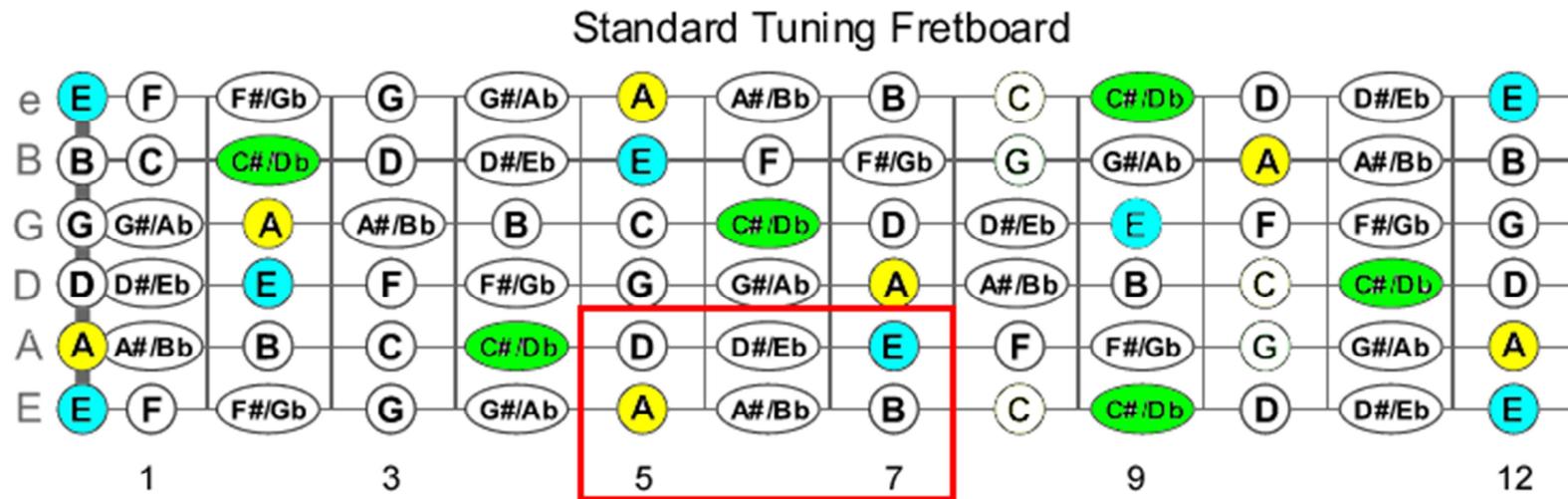
We remember that the notes required to play the A Major chord are: A(root) E, and C#/Db. The easiest way to understand power chords is that there will always be a note one whole space on the fretboard away from the root, AND will always be on the next string that is higher in pitch/tone. Don't get confused. Here's the easy way:

1. Find the note "A."
2. Search for the next note that appears ONE string HIGHER in pitch and is the FIFTH.

Remember the note order: A – B – C – D – E – F – G (we don't need to worry about sharps {#} or flats {b})

A B C D E
 1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Hmm...EUREKA! We need to find the E note. It's the fifth of the root.



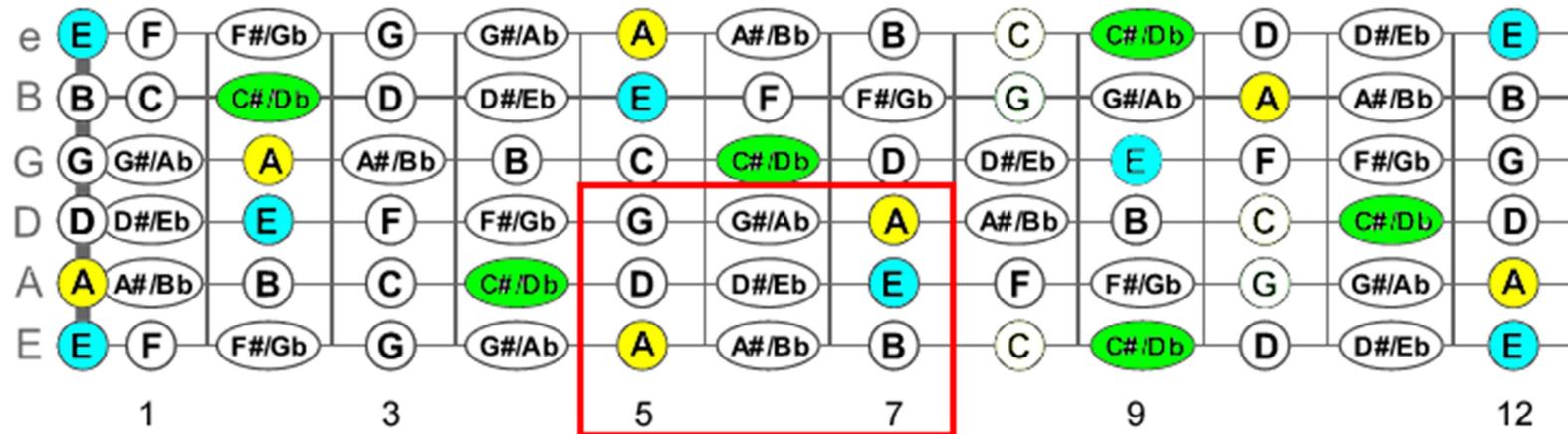
Above I've labeled the most logical power chord to be played that features the root note PLUS the added fifth interval.

But – and I'm not going to get too theoretical about this, we CAN add an additional A note here if we would like to add a little more tone to the chord. TECHNICALLY it would no longer be a power chord, because this additional note is actually an octave ABOVE the root - above meaning higher than the original root note. If you are familiar with families, this would be a "I-V-I". The "I" indicates the root, or starting position. The "V" indicates the fifth. The additional "I" indicates the note an octave ABOVE the root.

Can you guess where you should use this additional A note?

Check this out....

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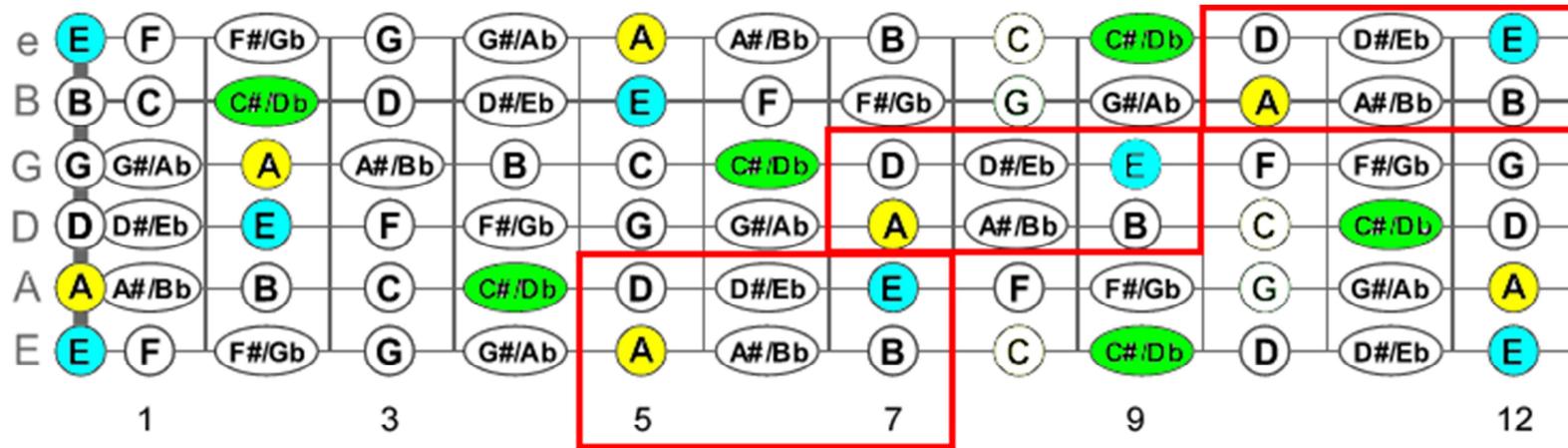


By simply looking at the fretboard, you can see that we have an instant-ready A note that can be played to create the I-V-I concept. This additional A note is found within the red box on the D string at the 7th fret.

Since all we need to create a power chord are the notes A (root) and E (fifth), plus the OPTIONAL A (octave above the root) there are other places in which the A power chord can be played. Here is the final diagram of power chord options, using ONLY the I and V.

This time we're going to avoid the octave above.

Standard Tuning Fretboard



Hopefully you see a pattern here. The reason why I am NOT including the octave above the root is because I don't want to get you confused. Just know that if you are too apply the additional "I" from the I-V you'll need to use the additional A note found within the realm of power chords.

In the case of the power chord formation on the 7th fret on the D string, if you were to add the octave it would be the A note on the 10th fret of the B string.

One more note:

There are times when you can use a power chord in an even easier way. Since we ONLY need to have the root note and the fifth interval, you can play the A power chord as this:

```

E-----x-----
B-----x-----
G------(2)-----
D-----2-----
A-----0-----
E-----x-----
    
```

The (2) indicates the octave above the root as earlier explained. This will work just fine, and is featured in music from AC/DC, Deep Purple, Metallica, and a host of others. However, I prefer not to play this power chord version. To me it might as well be just an A Major chord played open. However, avoiding the use of the C#/Db note DOES make it an A5 power chord.

Exercises:

The focus of this chapter is to deal with various formations, so while these exercises might not be the most fun to play, they ARE required in order to get a feel for the various positions. BE SURE to jot down or use an asterisk (*) to note which chord formation you like the most, or the one that feels the best to you. This will help you discover how adaptable your fingers are to various positions.

A	A	A5	(A5)
T	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7	7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7
A	2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7	7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7
B	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5	5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

Which variations did you like? _____

A	A5	(A5)	A5
T	9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10	12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12
A	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10	9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10
B	7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7	7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7	7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7

Which variations did you like? _____