

Chapter 1 – Additional Notes

I'd like to touch base on a few additional notes when working with chords in various positions because I want to guarantee that I've covered as much material as possible.

1. When deciding as to whether or not you want to play a chord in the open position or in a barred position, there are a few key factors that need to be addressed.

A. One of the first tools you can use when deciding to use either an open chord OR a barre chord, think of the artist that you are working with. In other words, how do you relate what you think they would play? Artists in the realm of folk and country will usually lean towards the open chord positions. Artists in the realm of classic rock or moderate rock tend to use more barre chord positions because it is easier to make quick chord changes. Classic and moderate rock artists will also tend to use quite a large number of power chords as well. This should always be kept in mind.

B. Think of the logics. That's a big one. If you are playing a progression of Am – G – F – G, as played in songs like "All Along The Watchtower" by Bob Dylan you'll do just fine playing the open chords. However, if you want to spice it up in the way that Hendrix did, you can always choose to play the barre chord variations of this song. Again – it's completely up to you in how you approach which variation you want to play. I mix it up, and I recommend you do this as well. It allows you to 'train while you play' so to speak.

2. You WILL run across sharps and flats as you play. You'll see chords such as F#m and C#m. These chords will usually share the same format as their Fm and Cm counterparts. All you will be doing is moving up or down the fretboard. There are various ways to explain 'up' and 'down' because many instructors think of these words differently. The easiest way to explain a sharp is that it will be HIGHER in pitch. A flat will be LOWER in pitch.

Think of it as singing. When someone says that they 'went a little flat' when singing, it means that they DIDN'T QUITE REACH the tone desired. When someone says they 'went a little sharp' then it means that they were OVER-REACHING the tone. In other words: If you are playing a F#m, you simply play the Fm as you usually would, but move it to where the root is NOT on the Low E string at the 1st fret – but on the 2nd fret instead. That would create a sharp. An F# to be precise.

A flat works in the same way, but instead it's a lower tone. If you were playing a Bb chord, you simply move the B chord, located with the root on the 2nd fret of the A string, to the 1st fret on the A string. You moved DOWN in tone, so you've 'flattened' the note.