



Essential Beginner Guitar Theory

Get the free Guitar Theory Videos with this e-Book at:

www.TortoiseGuitar.com

- You are welcome to share this book with your friends -

The Theory of Learning Guitar...

There are 2 sets of skills:

Physical skills: training your hands and fingers to be able to pick and strum, play chords, scales, solos - fluidly and effortlessly.

Head skills: Music theory knowledge, fretboard knowledge, application of simple physical skills to achieve unexpected results.

Head skills are the **most important** skills in the long run. Knowing what to do - and when - with what you have taught your fingers to play.

PHYSICAL SKILLS

'Foundation' Physical Skills & Technique Development

Left Hand = fingering chords, scales and playing solos.

Right Hand = strumming & picking.

Dexterity and coordination between both hands takes time to achieve. That's because you are training the muscles in your hands and fingers to do things they haven't done before.

It takes a while before it all becomes automatic and you don't have to think about where your fingers are going and what they are doing.

But when it is automatic, you can then start focusing on what you're playing rather than how to play it.

So it's important to start with the best possible technique to avoid bad habits

Basic Playing Technique = holding guitar, correct and efficient use of hands and fingers for economy of movement, relaxed and easy playing style, dexterity,

coordination, speed and accuracy. Proper strumming and picking technique.

Learn how to get these **basic foundation techniques** down first and always apply them to ALL your future practice and playing. This ensures you develop an easy, relaxed playing technique – without limitations and bad habits.

Advanced Physical Skills & Technique

Once you have mastered these basic foundation skills you are ready to start developing advanced skills.

These include playing patterns which are simply *groups of things* such as:

Chord patterns, scale patterns, arpeggio patterns, triad patterns, pentatonic patterns, licks and riffs etc. These patterns are always applied over a series of chords in a sequence – known as a ‘chord progression’.

And this is where the majority of your future practice will provide the fastest progress possible for years to come...

Professional musicians are always practicing playing over chord changes, or, chord progressions – in ALL KEYS. You should too, if you want to develop a command over your instrument.

Style Technique

You will also need to discover ‘style’ and the techniques associated with it.

Such techniques include: Vibrato, slides, bends, hammer-on’s, pull-off’s, trills, harmonics, slurs etc.

So you start with foundation techniques and build on them to develop advanced techniques.

These are not that hard to learn but you need to ensure you develop them correctly to get the best possible sound you can.

Taking your time (like the Tortoise) to get these right, will pay huge dividends down the line.

But once you get them - and have them 'programmed' into your sub-conscious and your muscle-memory - you will always have them and be able to use them at will without having to think about it. All on auto-pilot.

Head Skills

Basic Music Theory

Understanding simple music theory gives structure and purpose to what you are learning.

The most important theory to learn is:

1. How scales are made
2. How chords are made *from the notes in a scale*
3. Chord progressions – how chords are used together in songs you want to learn

How Scales Are Made

I'm not going to go too much into this here. If you want to know more about how scales are made, you can download my [Guitar Chord Secrets](#) pdf that discusses scales and chords in more detail.

Instead, I want to focus on the **Major Scale** and the **Chords** within it.

Chords of the Major Scale

There are 7 notes in the major scale.

For each of those 7 notes we build a chord. Therefore, there are seven chords in the scale, or, key.

When you play songs, you play them in a certain 'key' which uses a scale as its basis. "Scale" and "key" are almost interchangeable terms.

- There are 12 'Major' keys/scales and 12 'Minor' keys/scales –

Q: "What key are we playing this song in?"

A: "C Major."

Next logical question...

Q: "What are the chords in C Major?"

The 'C' major scale has the notes C D E F G A B and there is a chord for each note...

The seven chords for 'C' Major are:

C major, D minor, E minor, F major, G major, A minor, B diminished.

Each chord is named after a note in the scale.

If you were to play in the key of G (major) for example, the chords would be...

The seven chords for 'G' Major are:

G major, A minor, B minor, C major, D major, E minor, F# diminished.

Every key has the same sequence of chords – maj, min, min, maj, maj, mi, dim.

Numbering chords helps

The next thing we want to do is number the chords in the scale...

I major, ii minor, iii minor, IV major, V major, vi minor, vii diminished.

Note the use of **Roman Numerals** for numbering the chords. This is so we can denote major chords with upper-case (capital letters) and minor chords with lower-case.

So each chord in the scale has a name and a number. We'll see the value in numbering chords on the next page...

NOTE: You're probably wondering about the diminished chord and why it has lower case letters.

The dim chord is always the 7 (vii) chord and is similar to a minor chord. But there's no need to fuss about that just now. It's not used very often. Generally, the first 6 chords are used the most.

See next page for a chart of all Major keys/scales and their chords...

12 Major Keys and their chords...

Key:	I Major	ii Minor	iii Minor	IV Major	V Major	vi Minor	vii Dim
C	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
F	F	G	A	Bb	C	D	E
Bb	Bb	C	C	Eb	F	G	A
Eb	Eb	F	G	Ab	Bb	C	D
Ab	Ab	Bb	C	Db	Eb	F	G
Db	Db	Eb	F	Gb	Ab	Bb	C
Gb	Gb	Ab	Bb	Cb	Db	Eb	F
F#	F#	G#	A#	B	C#	D#	E#
B	B	C#	D#	E	F#	G#	A#
E	E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#
A	A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#
D	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#
G	G	A	B	C	D	E	F#

The 12 keys are listed down the left column in 'red'. Find a key, then read across left to right to find the chords.

Major chords are green. Minor chords are blue.

The benefit of using numbers for chords...

Chords are used in combinations – groups of two, three, or four chords together (generally).

We call this a 'chord progression'.

We don't say "That's a C, F, G chord progression."

Instead, we use the numbers... "That's a one, four, five chord progression."

That means it becomes easy to **'transpose'** a chord progression to another key.

All you do is look down the column and find the key you want, then look under the I, IV, and V columns to find what chords to use for the key you want.

For example: the I, IV, V progression in different keys:

	I	IV	V
C major:	C	F	G
G Major:	G	C	D
Bb Major:	Bb	Eb	F

Another common chord progression is the **ii, V, I progression** - the chords for this would be:

	ii	V	I
C major:	Dm	G	C
G Major:	Am	D	G
Bb Major:	Cm	F	Bb

Another progression is the **I, V, vi, IV**

	I	V	vi	IV
C major:	C	G	Am	F
G Major:	G	D	Em	C
Bb Major:	Bb	F	Gm	Eb

There are many different chord progressions that are used over and over again in many hundreds of songs.

The above I, V, vi, IV progression is an example. And there's a very good video showing a number of different songs that use this progression:

Click to view >> [Chord Progression Video – I, V, vi, IV](#)

Chord progressions and Practice

Learning to play common chord progressions in all 12 keys (major or minor) is something you should spend time learning to do:

Step 1: Practice the basic simple chords with the progressions first.

Step 2: Learn how to extend those basic chords to create different sounds and flavors... Major and minor 6th chords, major and minor 7th chords, major and minor 9th chords and so on. Dominant 7 chords, dom9 chords, dom11 and dom13th chords.

Of course, to play in all keys you will need to know how to play bar chords.

Step 3: Learn how to solo over those common chord progressions. You can use scales, arpeggios (chord tones), triads etc. There are many different soloing concepts. The best are chord tones and arpeggios.

The idea is that you start with very simple ideas then learn to build on those skills with more complicated ideas.

But it's always over the same chord progressions. This helps keep the concepts and ideas simple and manageable. ***This is what professional guitar players do all the time...*** they practice over common chord progressions in all keys. Learning and applying new chords and new soloing ideas.

It's really that simple.

Granted, not always easy, but it really is that simple.

And if you keep this in mind with all your practice, you'll advance faster than you could ever imagine.

Let's Sum It All Up...

Once you have the most basic skills mastered – basic picking and strumming, smooth chord changes, and some scale/lick ideas under your belt - all your practice should be directed to mastering all the common chord progressions in all keys...

... and on expanding your basic skills – building on what you have already mastered. Building speed, taste, phrasing, etc. (Adding in ideas for different styles of music – country, rock, blues, etc.)

But always in the context of playing over common chord progressions.

And as you practice these progressions your ears will develop and you will recognize progressions, licks, riffs when you hear them. Playing by ear will become the way you learn new songs. Learning songs will be almost *instant* except for highly orchestrated arrangements. But that's another story.

Information Overload = Paralysis by Analysis

If you always remember the basics, you will always be in control. You will avoid the confusion and frustration and you won't suffer information overload. You'll always know what path to take to move your playing to the next level quickly and easily.

There are no magic bullets, no secrets to learning guitar.

YOU have to practice and if you want fast progress then you need to work on what counts – on what truly moves you forward and gives you maximum results, enjoyment and achievement.

Keep working on the basic chord progressions... learning new chord forms to play over them, learning new licks to play over them.

Always work on the basics and build, build build.

And, of course, apply everything you learn to the songs you are learning. And learning songs, lots and lots of them is what really counts in the end.

To your guitar playing success,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Bilderbeck". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

John Bilderbeck – aka the Tortoise

***P.S.** I am sharing a lot of information with you that you won't get from any other guitar product anywhere on the internet. And I'm doing this for a reason...*

It's a shameless bribe to get you to buy my stuff. In particular, to [become a member of Fretboard Domination](#).

But in order to do that, I need to get you to trust me.

And I guess the best way to do that is to give away some of my best secrets that you can apply immediately for instant results. That way, you can see for yourself that what I'm teaching really works.

So I don't expect or want anything until we have developed a relationship and you can see for yourself I'm for real.

There's a series of videos to go with this ebook that explain things a little more. You really need to watch them.

If you haven't signed up for them, do so here: www.TortoiseGuitar.com

NOTES: