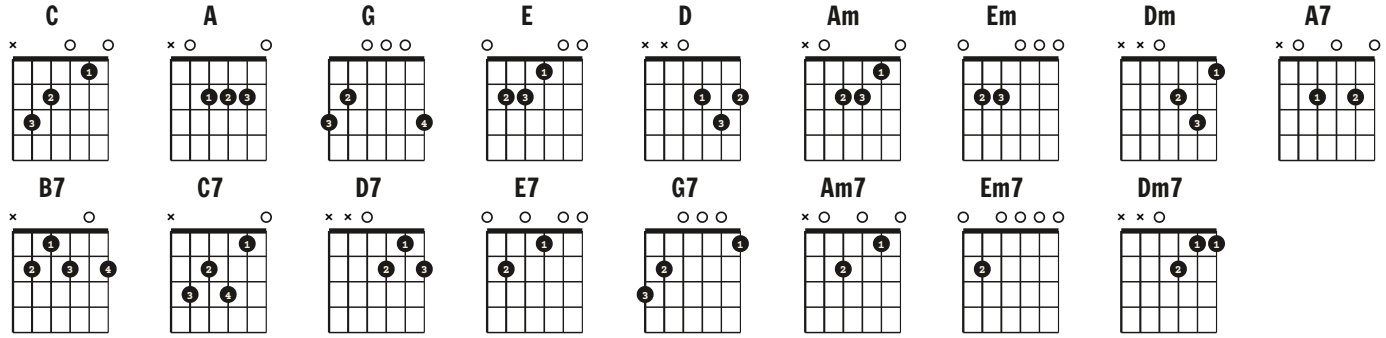
GUITAR CHORDS · CHEAT SHEET

The Woodshed · aDUBta
open · barre · reggae & ska

Reading a chart

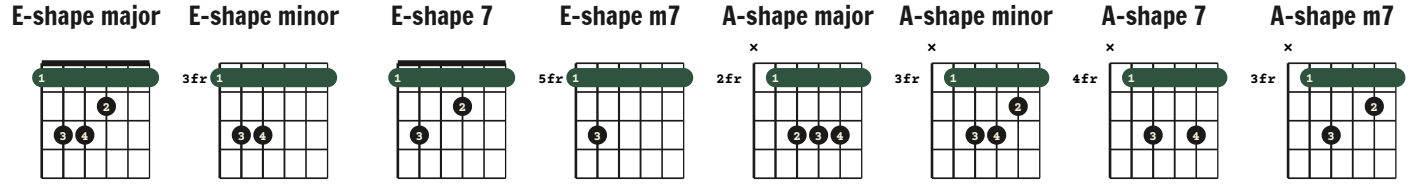
Six lines = strings, low E left, high e right · bars across = frets · ○ open string · × don't play · numbers = fingers (1 index, 2 middle, 3 ring, 4 little) · "5fr" = the chart starts at the 5th fret · green bar = barre with the index finger.

Open chords



G also with fingers 2-1-3; A also with 2-3-4; more fingerings on the website.

Barre chords - one shape, twelve chords



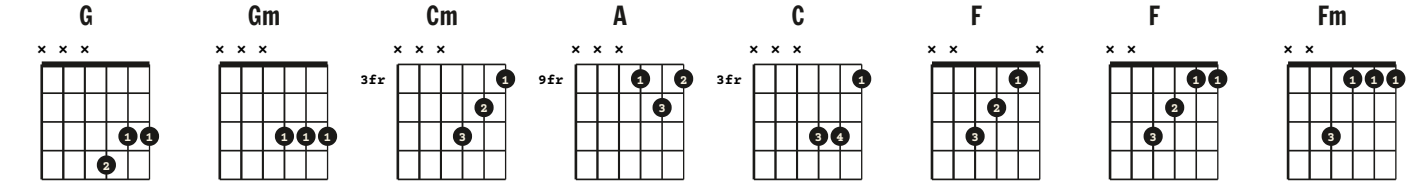
e.g. F at fret 1 · e.g. Gm at fret 3 · e.g. F7 at fret 1 · e.g. Am7 at fret 5 · e.g. B at fret 2 · e.g. Cm at fret 3 · e.g. C#7 at fret 4 · e.g. Cm7 at fret 3

Slide the whole shape: the root on the 6th string (E-shape) or 5th string (A-shape) names the chord. One fret = one semitone.

fret	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
6th string	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	C#	D	Eb	E
5th string	A	Bb	B	C	C#	D	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A

In a full barre the index finger works like a capo. On A-shape chords, touch the low E string with the tip of the index finger so it doesn't ring.

Reggae & ska - the skank



major triad, top 3 strings · minor triad, top 3 strings · minor triad, top 3 strings, root on G string · major triad, top 3 strings, root on B string · major triad, top 3 strings, root on G string · major triad, D-G-B · major, 4 strings D-G-B-e · minor, 4 strings D-G-B-e

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

- Count eighths "1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &" and play the chord only on the "&" – the offbeat.
- Keep chords short: right after the strum, release finger pressure but keep the fingers on the strings (fretting-hand muting). Don't lift off completely.
- Use fretted notes only for the skank: open strings can't be stopped by releasing grip pressure.
- Play the top three or four strings, not the bass strings – so the guitar stays out of the range of organ and keyboards; don't accent the bassy notes on the 5th string.
- Upstroke or downstroke? Sources disagree: MusicRadar/Total Guitar suggests starting with upstrokes inside a constant down-up motion; Premier Guitar calls the downstroke 'a rule' for reggae (upstrokes belong to calypso/ska); Guitar World uses both (downstroke in Ex. 1, upstroke in Ex. 3).
- Typical Marley-style progressions: I-bVII (A-G), I-IV-V, vi-V in D (Bm-A), vi-ii-vi-iii in D (Bm-Em-Bm-F#m), a static Am vamp and a I-IV vamp in A. Some songs never play the I chord.
- Marley mostly used plain major and minor chords, not sevenths or extensions such as 9 or 13.
- The one-drop drum beat accents beat 3 (most pop accents 2 and 4); lock the short chords in with bass and drums. Tone: clean, a little reverb, bridge pickup for skank parts.

Sources (opened and checked 11.10.2026): Fender (fender.com articles) · Guitar World · MusicRadar / Total Guitar · Premier Guitar · JustinGuitar · LickLibrary · Guitar.com · Wikipedia (only next to another source). Full list with links: adubta-music.de/woodshed.html → Guitar chords → Sources.