

# Guitar Lessons

## How To Use A Capo.



A capo is basically a movable clamp that you can use on different frets of the guitar to change the pitch of the open strings. This makes changing the key of a song very easy e.g. If you were playing a song in the key of G with the chords G, C, and D, you could change the song into the key of A by simply placing a capo on the 2nd fret, and play the chord shapes G, C, and D. Since your open strings are now a tone higher the chord shapes of G, C and D will sound as A, D and E respectively.

Using a capo is often described as "cheating". This is largely due to the fact that it lets you play in any key using easier chord shapes. Although this is partially true, those easier open position chords have a sound all of their own, a sound that you cannot get by using a barre chord. So you can utilise a capo to create sounds that you could not get any other way.

### Capo Transposition Table (TsB)

Here is the master transposition chart. It can be used for a couple of different tasks.

- I You can use the chart to find what a particular chord shape would sound like when you have the capo on a particular fret.
- I You can also use the chart to transpose a song to a different key. You would normally transpose into one of the basic guitar keys C, A, G, E or D. To do this find the chord sounds that you want to play in one of the capo fret columns, then see if it will produce a comfortable open position chord shape in the left hand column.

Original Chord	Capo 1	Capo 2	Capo 3	Capo 4	Capo 5	Capo 6	Capo 7	Capo 8	Capo 9	Capo 10	Capo 11
C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B
C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C
D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db
Eb/D#	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D
E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb
F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E
F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F
G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb
Ab/G#	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G
A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab
Bb/A#	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A
B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb

Changing keys using the original chord shapes

With the capo you can easily change the key of a song without relearning the chords in another key e.g. You have a song that has the chords G, C and D, but you need those chords to sound like they are in the key of Bb. Find the G in the chord shape column, then follow that row to the right until you find Bb. So you would capo the guitar at the 3rd fret, and the G, C and D chord shapes will sound like a Bb, Eb and F chords.

### Keeping the same key, but changing the chord shapes

A lot of times you need to go the other way. You will have a song that is in the key of Bb, but you need to change it to a comfortable guitar key C, A, G, E or D.



Here is an example. You have the chords Bb, Eb and F and you want to transpose them into a comfortable guitar key but have the same chord sound as the original chords.

- I Find a Bb in the capo 1st fret column.
- I Follow the row back to the far left column to see what chord shape you will play get a Bb sound when capoed at the 1st fret. It is an A chord shape. That is a good option for transposing your Bb chord.
- I Now check the other 2 chords in the capo 1st fret column and see if they will produce a comfortable chord shape. The Eb chord sound with the capo at the 1st fret is played with a D chord shape, and an F chord sound is played with an E chord shape.
- I Capoing at the 1st fret is a good option for transposing these 3 chords.

You could then go through the same process for all of the other capo frets to find some other possibilities. And in this case there are 3 more frets that work. Though the possibility on the 8th fret and 10 fret are not very common since they are so high up on the neck.

### Using the capo to arrange a song for 2 or more guitars



One interesting way that you can use a capo is to have 2 guitar players playing the same chord sounds, but by capoing at different frets they can use different chord shapes. If one guitar player plays an A chord, and another guitar player plays a D chord shape capoed at the 7th fret, you are going to get 2 very different yet complementary A chord sounds.

If you look at the transposition chart from the previous example, you will have 4 different possibilities of chord shapes that you could play to have the guitar produce the sound of a Bb, Eb, and F chords.