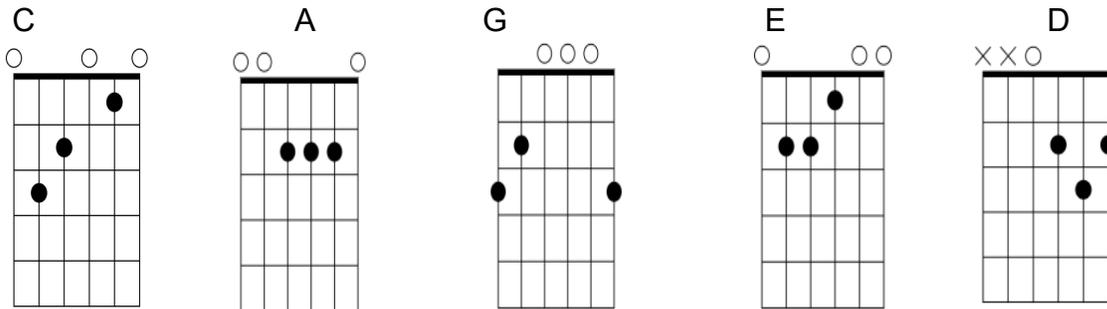
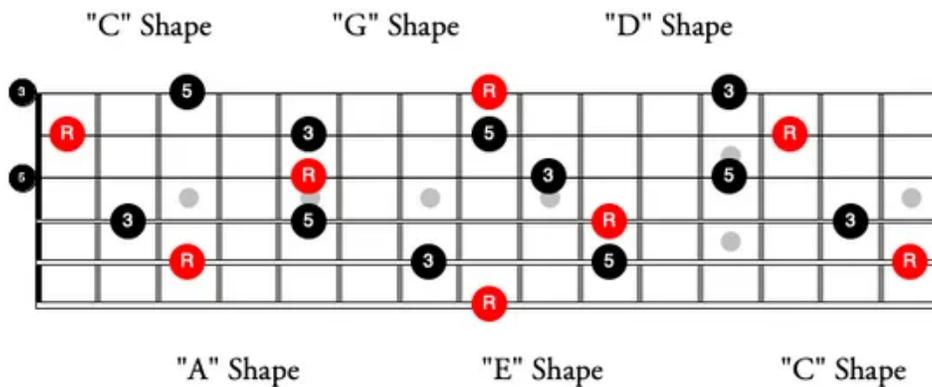


CAGED system workshop
 Tumbleweed Music Festival
 9/5/2021
 Steve Peterson
 stephen.m.peterson@icloud.com

CAGED is a mnemonic, to remember the chord names and the order they come in. They're the common 'cowboy chords' you likely know in the 1st 3 frets.



They relate to each other like this:



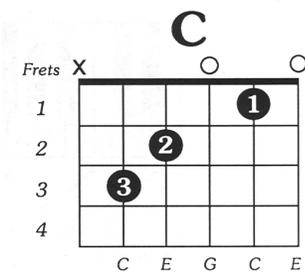
a few things to note about this last diagram:

- the end of one marks the beginning of the next
- the root of each chord is colored red, useful to determine what is where (more on this later)
- the pattern repeats starting at fret 12 – the octave

each of these chord shapes are moveable, requires handling open strings and knowing where you are

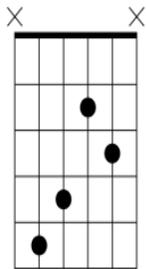
here's an example:

C chord looks like this

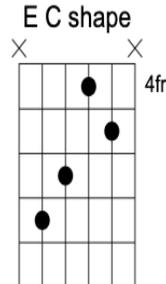


the G string is played open its in the chord (the 5th of C), in this instance the high E open string is also played (its the 3rd of C) but we could constrain the pick 'sweep' to only hit strings 5..2. Let's assume that (more on that later too). Then we can move this shape to make say

a D chord:



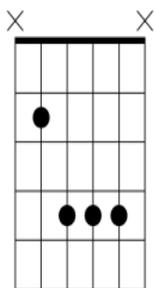
or an E chord:



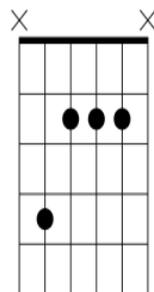
note conventions in these diagrams include:

- bolded bar at the top indicates the nut, unless
- a number shows on the side of the diagram (left or right), then indicates fret number

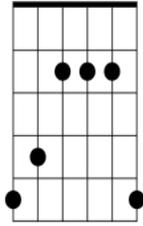
the moveable A shape



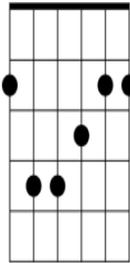
or



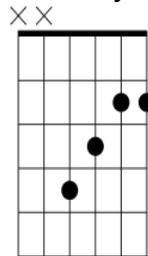
the moveable G shape (nobody actually uses this entire chord)



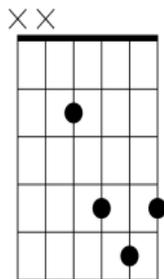
the moveable E shape



or just



the moveable D shape



note: the 'shape' or 'grip' are not the same as the chord; any chord can be played using any of these shapes, in fact that is the point of this workshop!

very brief music theory side bar:

- musical alphabet is A B C D E F G A...
- whole steps between all notes except B & C, E & F
- 1 fret = $\frac{1}{2}$ step
- the half steps between whole notes are represented as # or b
- so the more complete alphabet looks like A A# (or Bb) B C C# D D# E F F# G

ok that's it, it's over now

right hand role

it's not unusual for guitar players to start off focused on their left (fretting) hand, leaving the right to sweep across all 6 strings, more or less keeping time. I would suggest tightening that sweep to strike just the (usually adjacent) strings being played by the left hand. This is not just less work once you get used to it, but makes a more precise, punchy, musical contribution. The guitar makes an excellent accompanying instrument, it is even better at playing a more part-specific role. Try playing clusters of 2 or 3 strings as you move through a chord sequence.

barre chords – what they're good for what they're not

many are familiar with barre chords as they're presented here, in the moveable forms of the E and A shape. They're good for building hand strength, finger independence, for maintaining the all-6-strings-all-the-time strumming familiar to those using only 'cowboy chords'. They need more muscle to clamp down all those strings, making them harder to get into and out of, making chord switching more clunky and less smooth. Learn them, then leave them behind – you'll be a better player for it.

Knowing where is what

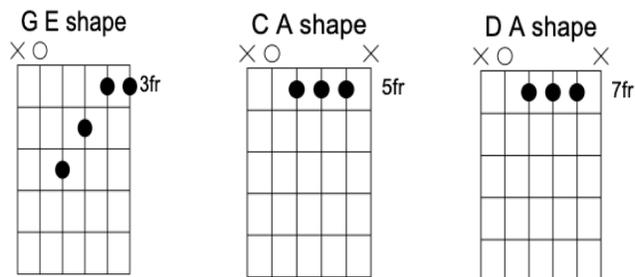
look back at the diagram containing all the grips together, it shows the number of the note in the grip – 1 (or R for root) 3 and 5 – these are the notes needed to make a major chord. To know which notes are where, and what chord is being played using what grip, requires determination:

- memorize the fretboard, sounds daunting, not as tough as it sounds or
- know the notes of the open strings – E A D G B E – and count up from the nut, remember 1 fret = 1/2 step, a whole step between all notes except E&F, B&C

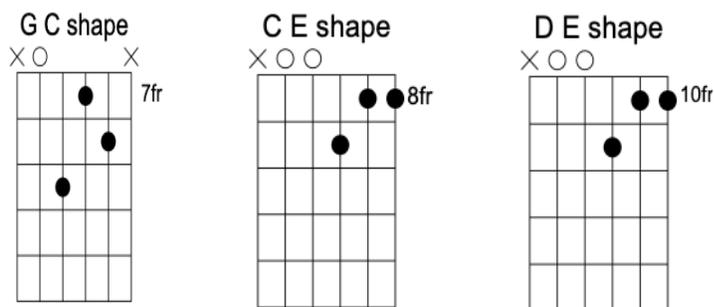
this may sound difficult, and at first it is, lots to take in, but there are lots of ways to get familiar with fretboard layout, and they all reinforce each other – pretty soon you 'just know'

positional relationship of grips – I IV V one way to use these new grips is by recognizing their positional relationships e.g.

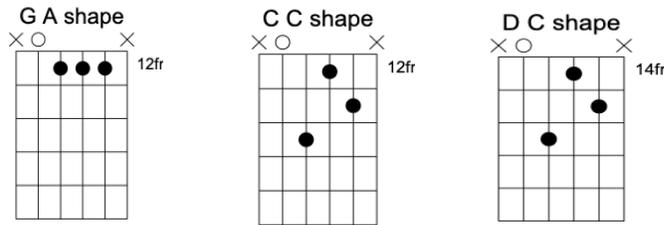
G C D as E A A



G C D as C E E



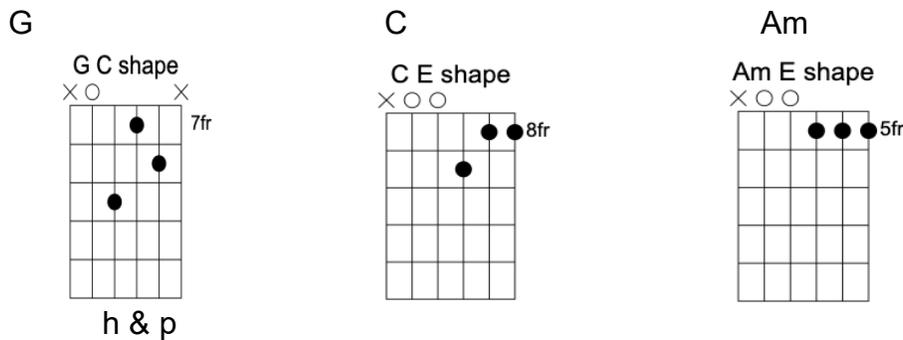
G C D as A C C



IV and V – in this case C and D – are using the same shape, 2 frets apart

example – good lovin' ending

example of partial chords in other positions (plus a little hammer on fluff) – domino riff here is G C G Am



addendum

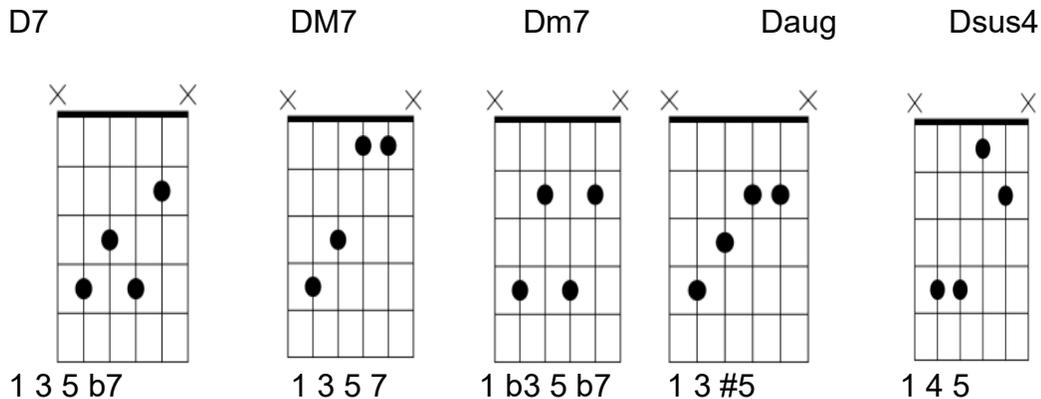
a couple of ideas for expanding this approach if you have interest

moveable chords variations

these chords can be used to make up variations if you know

- what the notes are on the fretboard
- how chords are constructed

for example



each of the other grips shown in this document – C A G E – can be extended to play any of these chords plus many others

arpeggios

once you start thinking of these grips as clusters of chord tones, applying that knowledge to playing arpeggios, particularly across and between positions, will make your guitar playing friends say Wow