

Steve's 7 Point Chord Plan



Introduction

Back when I started learning the guitar, I decided to get the biggest, fattest chord book I could find and begin the task of memorizing chords. The book I purchased (which I still have today) lists 7,488 chords. I quickly despaired of ever learning all these chords, thankfully, I later discovered, I didn't need to.

Below is what I ended up doing instead, an approach that has served me well in all of the playing situations I've found myself in these last 30 or so years.

1/ Know the 12 Essential Shapes

Every guitarist should know how to play the open chords A, C, D, E, G, Am, Dm and Em followed by both the Major and Minor Shape One and Two Bar Chords. The 4 bar chord shapes enable you to play every straight major and minor chord on the guitar in at least 2 positions and 3 including the open chords. This is a good thing ☺

2/ More Chords

Work your way down the More Chords chart to the suspended 4th chords (sus4). You can skip the 7sus4 chords if you like (I only put them on there 'cause there was space on the page).

This is an additional 26 chord shapes.

3/ Bar Chord C Shape

Include the bar chord C shape which gives you the best sounding Eb on the guitar. This shape in addition to the essential bar chord shapes adds another option for a 3 chord family set that you can play on the guitar, very handy.

One more additional shape.

4/ Slash Chords

Slash chords come up often. Learn the two main columns on the Slash Chord chart.

This is an additional 8 chord shapes.

5/ Ninth Chords

Ninth chords are nice to play. Of these I normally use the following:-

Dom 9, add 9, min 9

This is an additional 4 chord shapes.

6/ Diminished and Augmented Chords

Diminished and Augmented chords come up sometimes. These are my favorite shapes

This is an additional 2 chord shapes.

Total chord shapes – 52, way less stress than having to learn 7,488 chords!

7/ Chord Spelling and Fretboard Intervals

Beyond the above have an understanding of chord construction and the intervals on the guitar. With this you'll be able to figure out a suitable chord voicing if you ever have to play a chord you've never played before.