

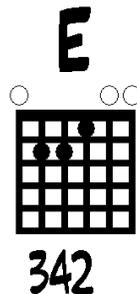
BAR CHORDS ARE YOUR OTHER FRIEND

HOPEFULLY AT THIS POINT YOU ARE CONVINCED THAT THE GUITAR IS A FUN AND REWARDING THING TO DO WITH YOUR TIME. I MEAN LET'S FACE IT, ROCKING OUT IS PRETTY AWESOME. UNFORTUNATELY IT IS TIME TO INTRODUCE A NECESSARY EVIL INTO THIS HERETOFORE BLISSFUL PURSUIT. I AM SPEAKING OF COURSE OF "BAR CHORDS" (OR "BARRE CHORDS" IF YOU ARE A FANCY PANTS). MANY A PROMISING STUDENT HAS CRUMBLER UNDER THE PRESSURE OF TRYING LEARN BAR CHORDS, BUT THAT WON'T BE YOU NOW WILL IT? NO SIR, OF COURSE NOT.

SO HERE ARE SOME REASONS WHY BAR CHORDS, ALTHOUGH OCCASIONALLY ANNOYING, ARE DEFINITELY SOMEONE YOU SHOULD BE FRIENDS WITH, IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THEY CAN GET YOU INTO A LOT OF COOL PARTIES.

- MOST MUSIC IS COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE 12 MAJOR OR 12 MINOR KEYS. MANY OF THE CHORDS IN THOSE KEYS CAN ONLY BE PLAYED AS BAR CHORDS (F#M, B^b, C#M, FOR EXAMPLE).
- THERE IS A DISTINCT MOJO THAT YOU GET WHEN PLAYING BAR CHORDS VS. OPEN CHORDS. BAR CHORDS HAVE A TIGHTER MORE PUNCHY SOUND THAT MAKES IT A POPULAR CHOICE IN ROCK AS WELL AS FUNK, R&B/CLASSIC MOTOWN, AND BLUES.
- THE PREMISE OF BAR CHORDS IS SIMPLE. TAKE WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT USING A CAPO, AND INSTEAD OF THE CAPO, SUBSTITUTE YOUR INDEX FINGER. THAT'S IT. REALLY.
- UNFORTUNATELY THE ABOVE POINT IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE. SO HERE GOES:

FIRST TAKE AN E CHORD WITH THIS FINGERING:



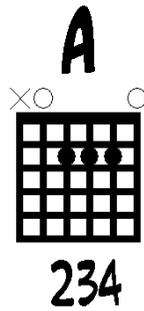
THEN SLIDE IT 1 FRET TOWARDS YOUR BRIDGE AND PLACE THE FIRST FINGER ACROSS ALL SIX STRINGS AT THE FIRST FRET:



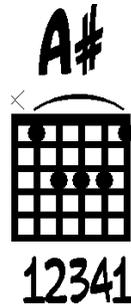
WE NOW HAVE A BAR CHORD VERSION OF F. IF YOU MOVE THE WHOLE THING ONE FRET HIGHER YOU WILL HAVE F# AND SO ON. YOUR "ROOT NOTE", OR NOTE THAT THE CHORD IS NAMED AFTER, IS ON THE 6TH STRING. THIS MEANS THAT IN ORDER TO FIND THE CHORDS WE NEED, IT IS NECESSARY TO MEMORIZE THE NOTES NAMES FOR EACH FRET OF THE 6TH STRING.

FRET	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
NOTE	E	F	F#/G ^b	G	G#/A ^b	A	A#/B ^b	B	C	C#/D ^b	D	D#/E ^b	E

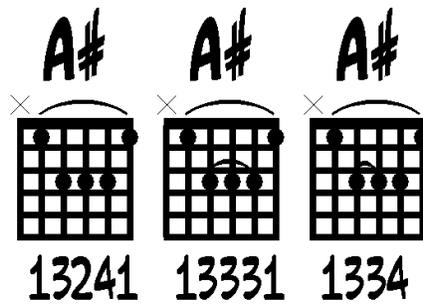
LET 'S TRY IT WITH THE A CHORD SHAPE. PLAY A WITH THESE FINGERS:



NOW SLIDE THE SHAPE ONE FRET HIGHER AND YOU WILL HAVE A#.



SOME PEOPLE (LIKE ME FOR EXAMPLE) FIND THIS FINGERING REALLY HARD. SO HERE ARE A FEW OTHER COMMON FINGERINGS:



THE ROOT NOTE FOR THESE SHAPES IS ON THE 5TH STRING. HERE ARE THE NOTE NAMES FOR EACH FRET OF THE 5TH STRING:

FRET	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
NOTE	A	A#/B ^b	B	C	C#/D ^b	D	D#/E ^b	E	F	F#/G ^b	G	G#/A ^b	A

THE BAR CHORD PRINCIPLES WE LEARNED ABOVE FOR THE E AND A MAJOR CHORD SHAPES, CAN ALSO BE APPLIED TO THE E MINOR AND A MINOR CHORD SHAPES AS WELL. FOR EXAMPLE:

