

Learn to Play Guitar the Easy Way

Module 3

I'm really dredging them up, aren't I? My introduction to Roy Orbison was back in the sixties with his "Only the Lonely", and he continued to deliver some magic songs over the years; even if many were beyond the range of most singers. "Dream Baby" isn't like that at all, and it exemplifies how simple the chords in a tune can be.

Country music is also pretty basic usually, but that never seemed to worry The Man in Black at all. Johnny Cash wrote this song and I heard a live recording of him performing it in Folsom Prison. Despite the depressing message that must have hit home for the inmates, they loved it. And it will help break you into picking and strumming.

Here's your next serve, including your third two-song set:

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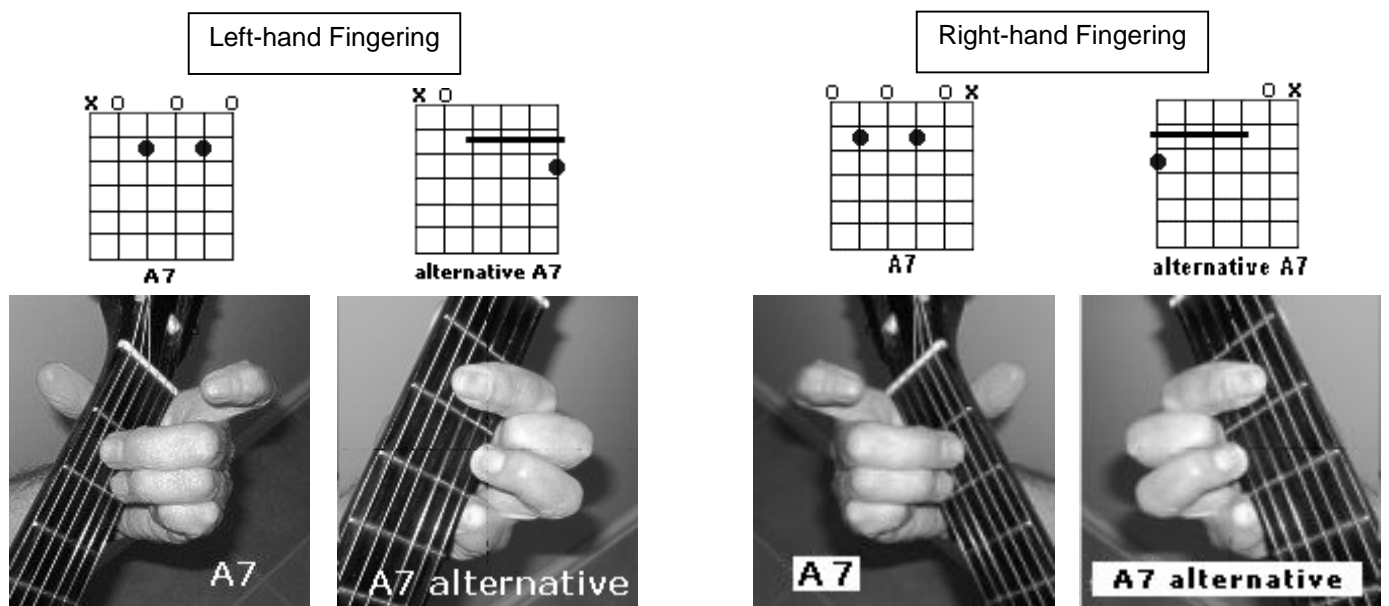
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Starting a Song on the Seventh Chord

Like “Weekend”, the first words aren’t always backed by the (dominant) Chord, but the song overall is still in this same Key. Here’s an instance in Roy Orbison’s “Dream Baby” where, not only does it start on a different chord, but it is actually a Seventh Chord. There are two more Seventh chords that will prove very useful later. They are different ways of playing the same chord by changing just one note on the top string.

As you can see, the alternative A7 is played by barring the top four strings between first and second frets, while trapping the top string between second and third. You are already doing the same when playing the chords of D and F. To start with, play the chords below, first one then the other and listen to how different they sound; and yet they are basically the same chord.



You can try them in the previous songs to see if they fit; but I think you’ll find that the original Major chords sound better. Knowing the difference, however, will help you work out the chords for other songs you might want to play.

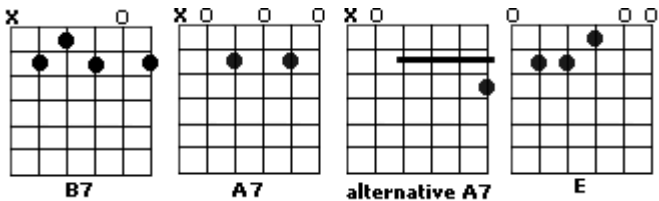
For now, try playing the A (Major) chord, then change to one of these new Seventh chords. Try it again with the other. Mix them up a bit.

As with many of the chords in this tutorial, not ALL of the strings are struck or strummed to make the right sound. Actually, if you play the X-ed out string (base E) as well as the rest for A7 it doesn’t sound bad at all. Try it with different chords, though, and you’ll learn what discord means – generally pretty awful.

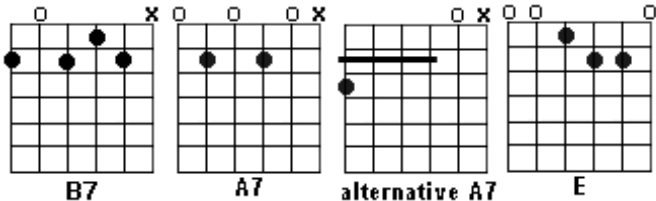
Two interesting things about “Dream Baby”: not only does it start on a seventh chord, but the first words are actually the chorus. Secondly, most of the song is played in seventh chords – B7 and A7. It does, however, go back to the Major Key of E at the end of four lines, then to B7. The song returns to the words of the chorus it began on for a wind-up in B7 as it fades out.

Roy Orbison's "Dream Baby" (Cindy Walker)

Left-hand Fingering



Right-hand Fingering



Chorus:

B7
 Sweet dream baby
 B7
 Sweet dream baby
 A7
 Sweet dream baby
 B7 E
 How long must I dream?

B7
 Dream baby got me dreaming sweet dreams, the whole day through
 B7
 Dream baby got me dreaming sweet dreams, the night-time too
 A7
 I love you and I'm dreaming of you, that won't do
 B7 E
 Dream baby, make me stop my dreaming, you can make my dreams come true

Chorus:

B7
 Dream baby got me dreaming sweet dreams, the whole day through
 B7
 Dream baby got me dreaming sweet dreams, the night-time too
 A7
 I love you and I'm dreaming of you, that won't do
 B7 E
 Dream baby, make me stop my dreaming, you can make my dreams come true

B7
 Oh, sweet dream baby
 B7
 Yeah, sweet dream baby
 A7
 Sweet dream baby
 B7 E
 How long must I dream?

B7
 Sweet dream baby
 B7
 Sweet dream baby
 B7
 Sweet dream baby... **Fade**

Next up we're going to try something different – a bit of simple pick-plus-strum in a Johnny Cash number, "Folsom Prison Blues".

Pick and Strum with Johnny Cash

I've chosen this song because it uses a typical folk/country/blues mix of picking and strumming. What I'm going to lay on you now is just the basic form and nothing too complicated. Do I hear a sigh of relief? I hope so; because, once you get the hang of this style, it opens up the door to stacks of new numbers; AND it will help you move into the realm of lead guitar. What you will be doing is fingering the chords the same as you have been; but instead of just strumming them, you'll be picking out a base note followed by a strum.

Don't worry about the other chords in the song for the moment. The ones below are just to explain the technique of picking and strumming. I've used the Key of A which you already know from previous numbers, and if you've got the hang of the standard chord progressions by now, all you'll have to do is work in the picking. It might seem a bit awkward at first, but after a while you'll be able to do it without thinking.

Pick the base strings as marked **▲** on the chord diagram, but in the numbered order indicated at the top: **1** followed by a strum, then **2** followed by the next strum, and so on.

In this first exercise, each pick is followed by a down-strum **∩**. As there are 4 beats to the bar, you will be counting half-beats on the back-beat: **pick** and strum-one, **pick** and strum-two, **pick** and strum-three, **pick** and strum-four.

You can try them in reverse order (2 then 1), but I reckon they sound better the way I've written them. Each pick is followed by a strum. In the starter exercise, there is one **pick**, then one strum as in the example below. Johnny Cash wrote his song in 4/4 time (4 beats to the bar); but, as you can see, I've split the bar into 8 half-beats. If you skipped the Strumming the Strings section and don't understand this or the diagram, duck back to the beginning for a crash course.

Left-hand fingering

A

Right-hand fingering

A

pick one pick two pick three pick four

Notice that the base E string is X-ed out. I've done the same with the other chords in this song. I don't think they are necessary; and, in my opinion, they simply don't sound right.

That takes care of the main (dominant) chord A. Second up, is A7 which is picked and strummed the same way. Next comes the subdominant D. When I tried this, it sounded better if the higher base note was played first, followed by the lower one; so that's how I've written it. Try the D chord, picking and strumming in the same sequence above; then give the up-beat version below a go.

Although this tune is in 4/4 time, there are 16 quarter beats of rhythm in each bar. All you really need to think about is the rhythm which sounds like: tum tum-tum, tum tum-tum, tum tum-tum, tum tum-tum. Try this beat with your hands on the table: left right-right, left right-right, left right-right, left right-right. Just remember that left is two beats while the right-hand hits are one each. Still puzzled? Okay, try: left-pause right-right, left-pause right-right etc to the end of the bar. Despite actually hitting the table twelve times, there are still only four full beats in the bar. Once you have a handle on the beat, grab the guitar for a pick-and-strum trial.

Left-hand fingering

D

Right-hand fingering

D

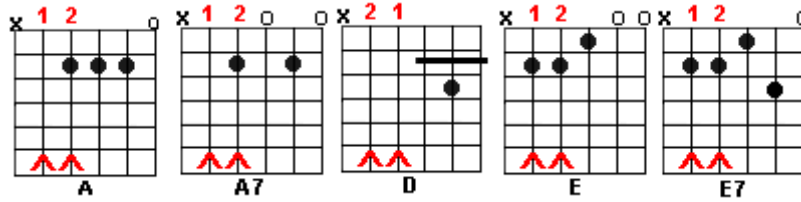
pick one-and pick two-and pick three-and pick four-and

one beat | two beats | three beats | four beats

Just as a point of interest, when I play this song, I pick the base notes with my thumb nail; then, instead of strumming, I pluck the top three strings together as one chord with my index, middle and ring fingernails. My timing is the same as the first example above with just a **pick** followed by a single pluck, eight half-beats to the bar.

Folsom Prison Blues (Johnny Cash)

Left-hand fingering



Note the change in order

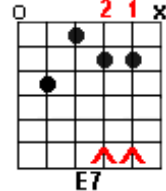
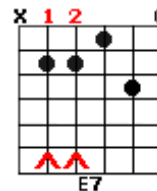
A
I hear the train a comin'. It's rollin' 'round the bend;
A A7
And I ain't seen the sunshine since, I don't know when
A7 D A
I'm stuck in Folsom Prison, and time keeps draggin' on
A E (E7) A
But that train keeps a-rollin' on down to San An-tone

This new chord in brackets (E7) is an option. To play it, finger the E chord, then trap the additional second string with the little finger. If it's too hard at first, just carry on with E and change to A at the end of the line. It will sound okay.

A
When I was just a baby, my Mama told me: son,
A A7
Always be a good boy, don't ever play with guns;
A7 D A
But I shot a man in Reno just to watch him die.
A E (E7) A
When I hear that whistle blowin', I hang my head and cry.

Left-hand fingering

Right-hand fingering



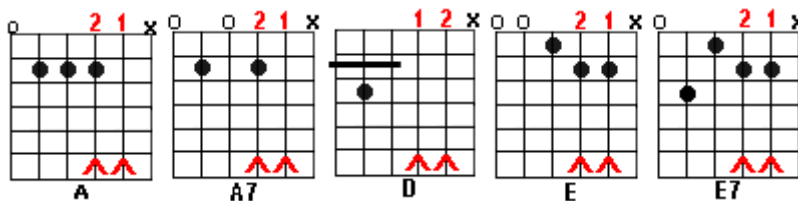
Instumental (listen to a recording and try it, if you fancy)

A
I bet there's rich folks eatin' in a fancy dining car.
A A7
They're probably drinkin' coffee and smokin' big cigars.
A7 D A
But I know I had it comin'; I know I can't be free;
A E (E7) A
But those people keep a-movin', and that's what tortures me.



A
Well, if they freed me from this prison, if that railroad train was mine:
A A7
I bet I'd move out over a little farther down the line.
D A
Far from Folsom Prison, that's where I want to stay;
A E (E7) A
And I'd let that lonesome whistle blow my blues a-way.

Notice that the E7 chord on the last line of each verse comes in between words. If you listen to a recording, you'll hear that there's a brief pause in the words here: e.g. ...keeps a-rollin' – pause plus E7 – ...on down to San Antone.



Right-hand fingering

Note the change in order

This was kind-of country. Module 4 will show how Folk can be really stunning. Make some mega-noise strumming Bob Dylan's "House of the Rising Sun"; or try picking the same song using Alan Price's arrangement that gifted The Animals with a massive hit. Then, when you've managed the picking technique, you can alternate it with strumming in The Rolling Stones' "Ruby Tuesday".