

Learn to Play Guitar the Easy Way

Module 5

Kenny Rogers has an amazing voice for his kind of music, and it tells the story so well. I've chosen "The Gambler" because, not only can the words relate to most aspects of life in general; but the last verse and closing choruses are in a higher Key to the one the song started in. I guess that's also typical of the way things can happen.

I picked an Elvis oldie for the second song. "Blue Suede Shoes" may be dated; but the simple techniques that give it impact are often used in both soft and hard rock numbers.

So, here's your fifth two-song set with some neat ways to make rock really ROCK:

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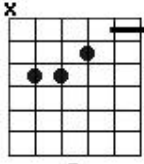
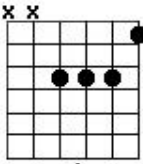
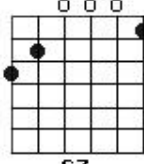
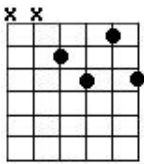
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Raising the Pitch Mid-song

Early songs, especially rock and roll, didn't have much in the way of either chords or words; and a recording might only have lasted two minutes, if you were lucky. Fans wanted more, so artists and writers gave them more. The problem then was that longer songs became a bit tedious - American Pie was a doozie! Producers came up with an answer – take the pitch up a notch for the last verse and chorus.

Kenny Rogers' version of "The Gambler" does just this. I heard a cover band doing the number recently and, although they stayed in the same key for the entire song, it sounded fine anyway. So, you have a choice – stick to the Key of E all the way through (Page 26); or change up to the Key of F for the last part. To do this, you will need to get your fingers around these chords:

			
F	Bb	G7	C7

			
F	Bb	G7	C7

Below is the change of pitch to the Key of F for the last verse. It follows the first **Chorus** (song sheet Page 26) which is in the Key of E. It's easy to see how this works if you look first at the fingering for E, then finger F. What you have done is moved the fingering of the lower notes of the E chord up a space, while barring the top 2 strings with the index finger. You could, of course, use a capo which clamps around the neck of the guitar and over the strings to raise the pitch. That would be fine if you set it up before starting the song; but this is a quick change mid-song and there won't be time.

Bring it in like this: **finish the bar in E, then play one bar in F before starting the words.**

Key change from E major to F major

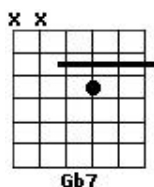
F	Bb	F	Bb	F	G7	C7	
Every gambler knows that the secret to sur-vival is knowin' what to throw away, knowing what to keep;							
C7	F	Bb	F	Bb	F	C7	F
'Cos every hand's a winner, and every hand's a loser. The best that you can hope for is to die in your sleep.							

F	Bb	F	Bb	F	G7	C7	
And when he'd finished speakin' he turned back t'wards the window, crushed out his cigarette and faded off to sleep;							
C7	F	Bb	F	Bb	F	C7	F
And somewhere in the darkness, the gambler he broke even; and in his final words I found an ace that I could keep.							

Chorus X 3:

F	Bb	F	Bb	F	G7	C7	
You got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, know when to run.							
C7	F	Bb	F	Bb	F	C7	F
You never count your money when you're sittin' at the table: there'll be time enough for countin' when the dealin's done.							
<i>No chord</i>	Bb	F	C7	F			

Last line, slow it down: There'll be time enough for countin' when the dealin's done.

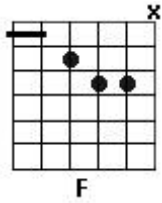


If you want to stick with playing straight through in the Key of E, the only other chord you'll need is Gb7. The signature name sounds complex, but it is pretty simple really and you'll need it to make the smooth shift to B7.

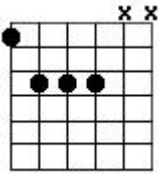
I would still urge you, however, to try the change to F for the last verse.

Right-hand Fingering for "The Gambler"

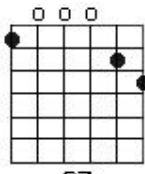
You could find these new chords a bit awkward at first, but they are well worth learning. As with many others, you can just play the top 4 strings until you get the hang of them. If you look at the alternative Key change for the last verse and chorus at the bottom of this page you'll see how they fit in with the Chord (Key) of F. Below are the chords you'll need. Once again, these chord progressions can be used where appropriate in any song you might like to try. To work out which chords fit where when you transpose to a different Key, refer to the tip on Page 11, Module 1.



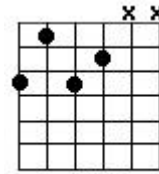
F



Bb



G7



C7



F



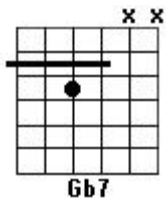
Bb



G7



C7



Gb7



Gb7

If you want to stick with playing straight through in the Key of E, the only other chord you'll need is Gb7. The chords you need for this are on the song sheet (Page 26). The signature name of this new chord sounds complex, but it is pretty simple really and you'll need it to make the smooth shift to B7.

I would still urge you, however, to try the change to F for the last verse.

Bring it in like this:

finish the bar in E, then play one bar in F before starting the words.

Key change from E major to F major

F Bb F Bb F G7 C7
 Every gambler knows that the secret to sur-vival is knowin' what to throw away, knowing what to keep;
 C7 F Bb F Bb F C7 F
 'Cos every hand's a winner, and every hand's a loser. The best that you can hope for is to die in your sleep.

F Bb F Bb F G7 C7
 And when he'd finished speakin' he turned back t'wards the window, crushed out his cigarette and faded off to sleep;
 C7 F Bb F Bb F C7 F
 And somewhere in the darkness, the gambler he broke even; and in his final words I found an ace that I could keep.

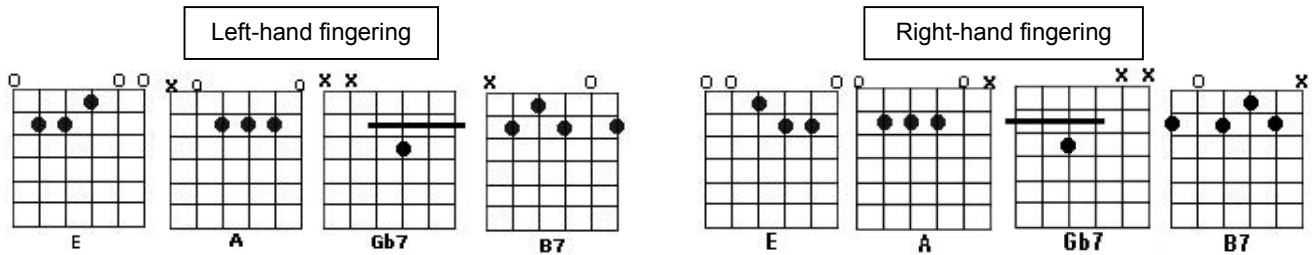
Chorus X 3:

F Bb F Bb F G7 C7
 You got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, know when to run.
 C7 F Bb F Bb F C7 F
 You never count your money when you're sittin' at the table: there'll be time enough for countin' when the dealin's done.
 No chord Bb F C7 F

Last line, slow it down: There'll be time enough for countin' when the dealin's done.

The Gambler (D. Schlitz)

Try this song first with the last verse and chorus as written below, staying in the Key of E. When you've got this, substitute the F version on the previous page for the last verse and repeated choruses.



E A E A E Gb7 B7
 On a warm summer's evening, on a train bound for nowhere, I met up with a gambler; we were both too tired to sleep.
 B7 E A E A E B7 E

E A E A E Gb7 B7
 He said: Son I've made a life out of readin' people's faces; knowin' what the cards were by the way they held their eyes.
 B7 E A E A E B7 E

E A E A E Gb7 B7
 So I handed him my bottle and he drank down my last swallow; then he bummed a cigarette and asked me for a light.
 B7 E A E A E B7 E

Chorus:

E A E A E Gb7 B7
 You got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, know when to run.
 B7 E A E A E B7 E

If using Key change to F major, substitute the version from the previous page here.

E A E A E Gb7 B7
 Every gambler knows that the secret to sur-vival is knowin' what to throw away, knowing what to keep;
 B7 E A E A E B7 E

E A E A E Gb7 B7
 And when he'd finished speakin' he turned back t'wards the window, crushed out his cigarette and faded off to sleep;
 B7 E A E A E B7 E

Chorus X 3:

E A E A E Gb7 B7
 You got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, know when to run.
 B7 E A E A E B7 E

You never count your money when you're sittin' at the table: there'll be time enough for countin' when the dealin's done.
 No chord A E B7 E

Last line, slow it down: There'll be time enough for countin' when the dealin's done.

A Carl Perkins classic is up next. Learn how to damp chords and notes with Elvis as he rocks as only Elvis could in his "Blue Suede Shoes".

Stunning Chords and Damping the Strings

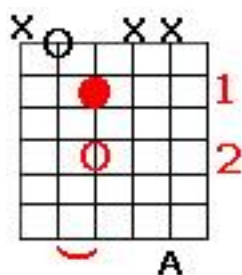
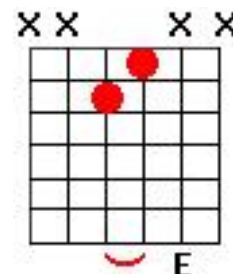
For Pete's sake, what is he talking about now? Well, I don't know the technical terms for this style of playing, so I've just used simple-speak. Hopefully, you'll get the gist.

In quite a few rock and roll numbers a chord may be struck, then stunned. What I mean by that is the chord is strummed once, usually forcefully, and almost immediately stunned by placing the **strumming hand** onto the strings to cut the sound off. In effect, the backing starts and stops in a beat. That gives impact and draws attention to either the following silence; or, as in the song I've chosen as an example, the words being sung during that pause. So, when you see a Key signature over the words like this: **A stun**, the idea is to down-strum once, then immediately rest your **strumming hand** on the strings to cut the sound. Don't strum again until the next chord. If there is no **stun**, strum that chord and the subsequent ones as per normal up to the next **stun**.

Damping the strings isn't as sudden, nor as heavy. Here, I'm referring to the pressure on the strings. I've found the best way to achieve this is to use the **strumming hand** to touch the strings lightly while continuing to play either the chord, or single/double notes. Confusing, yeah? For now, try it with any chord, finger it in the usual way, then lightly rest the fleshy part of your **strumming hand** (from the little finger to the wrist) on the strings, keeping it in contact while down-strumming. You'll find that the more pressure you exert, the harder you will have to strum. That will produce a kind-of chunk-chunk sound. Practise adjusting the pressure of the damping hand and the force of the strum until you achieve the desired balance for the number you want to play. When you've got the hang of this with chords, I want you to try something else.

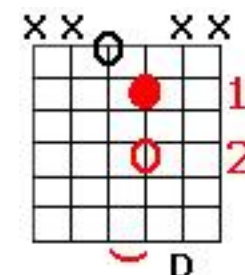
This is another popular technique for many rock numbers. In the diagrams below I've labelled them as if they were normal chords. So, the **X**-ed strings are not played, and those marked with **O** are played open. The Key signatures underneath (A, D and E) are the chords marked over the words of the song that you would be playing if you were just strumming. However, in this exercise, you will only be playing two strings of that chord in time to the beat.

Try this with the E chord first, because it will be easier. Play the two strings together as if they were a down-strum and counting one-and, two-and, three-and, four-and. You should be playing 8 down-strums for the 4-beat bar; but initially without damping them. When you can do this without touching the **X**-ed out ones, try the damping technique until you get the right sound.



Now give A a go. To start with, don't damp the strings.

This time, trap the number **1** string with the index finger and, while continuing to hold it, down-strum both the **O** string and **1** together for one half-beat. Next, still holding down the **1** string, trap the **2** string **O** with the third (ring) finger and down-strum both notes for the next half-beat. Raise finger off the **2** string **O**, and down-strum both strings again for the third half-beat. Next the **2** string **O** plus **O** combo.



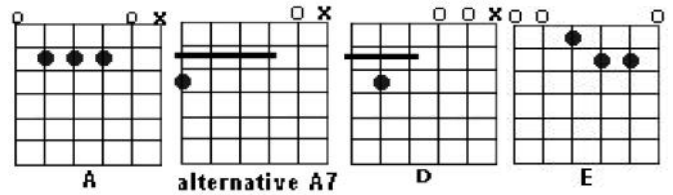
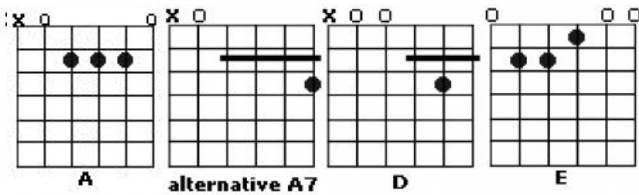
This should have given you 4 half-beats, or half of one 4-beat bar. Remember that all the time you are changing the fingering of the higher pitched string, you are playing the lower pitch **O** string together with it. In effect, using this technique you are playing only two strings of each chord. Keep repeating this for a bit, then damp the strings as before, adjusting pressure until the sound is right. Once you've managed this, try the same method with D.

You now have a choice – play the entire song strumming (not forgetting to stun those first A chords); or you can chunk-chunk the damped double notes, stunning them as you would the full chords where marked. They're great if you have someone else strumming full chords in the background. If not, try a mix yourself and see how it sounds. Better still, go to the next page and see what you can do with the classic Elvis number, "Blue Suede Shoes".

Blue Suede Shoes (Carl Perkins)

Left-hand fingering

Right-hand fingering



A **stun** A **stun**
 Well, it's-a one for the money, two for the show,
 A **stun** A7
 Three to get ready, now go, cat, go;
 A7 D A
 But don't you step on my blue suede shoes.
 A E D A E
 You can do anything but lay off of my blue suede shoes.

A **stun** A **stun**
 Well, you can knock me down, step in my face,
 A **stun** A **stun**
 Slander my name all over the place.
 A **stun** A7
 Do anything that you want to do, but uh-uh honey, lay off of my shoes.
 D A
 Don't you step on my Blue suede shoes.
 A E D A E
 You can do anything but lay off of my blue suede shoes.

A **damp**
 Blue, blue, blue suede shoes. Blue, blue, blue suede shoes.
 D **damp** A **damp**
 Blue, blue, blue suede shoes. Blue, blue, blue suede shoes.
 A E D A E
 Well, you can do anything but lay off of my blue suede shoes.

A **stun** A **stun**
 You can burn my house, steal my car,
 A **stun** A **stun**
 Drink my liquor from an old fruit-jar.
 A **stun** A7
 Do anything that you want to do, but uh-uh honey, lay off of my shoes.
 D A
 Don't you step on my blue suede shoes.
 A E D A
 You can do anything but lay off of my blue suede shoes.

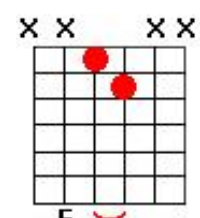
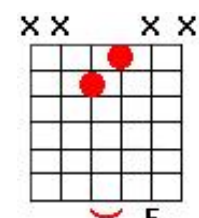
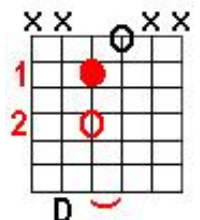
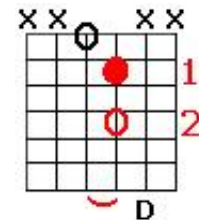
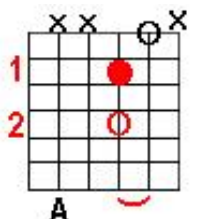
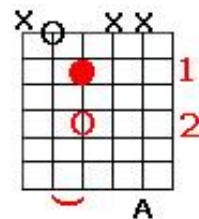
A E D A E A
 Well, you can do anything but lay off of my blue suede shoes.

The first words of each verse are sung with no backing chords until the **stun**. After the last A **stun**, play A7 and the rest as normal until the next **stun**. You can play just chords if you like, strumming with a back beat; or try this...

For the A **stun** notes below, just hard down-strum the **○** and **●** notes together, then **stun**. At the A7 chord, carry on down-strumming the rest in the alternating 2-note sequence until the next **stun**. Damp the chords where marked **damp** and just play them as a single down-strum in 4/4 time. You can also try **damping** the other chords for a really cool bluesy sound.

Left-hand fingering

Right-hand fingering



Some of you will recognise this double-note alternating technique as classic blues beat. Google a few MP3's to get a real feel for an infectious style and inspiration for magic music YOU too can play.

Module 6 is up next month and will be the final tutorial. It comes with fully-illustrated dictionaries of all chords covered in the series, and there are sections for both left and right hand fingering. So don't miss it!