

LESSON 3 – FIRST OPEN CHORDS (E, A, D, Em, Am)

Title: Luc Taylor Music School – Lesson 3

Subtitle: Your First Open Chords

Overview

In this lesson you will:

- Learn what open chords are
 - Learn five essential beginner chords: E, A, D, Em, Am
 - Work on clean chord shapes with ringing strings
 - Begin building the foundation for thousands of songs
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What Is an Open Chord?

An **open chord** uses a mix of fretted notes and open strings (strings played without pressing down).

They are easier to play than barre chords and sound full and rich.

Chord Fingering Guide

(Finger numbers: 1 = index, 2 = middle, 3 = ring, 4 = little finger)

E Major (E)

- 6th string: open
- 5th string: 2nd fret (finger 2)
- 4th string: 2nd fret (finger 3)
- 3rd string: 1st fret (finger 1)
- 2nd string: open
- 1st string: open

A Major (A)

- 5th string: open

- 4th string: 2nd fret (finger 1)
- 3rd string: 2nd fret (finger 2)
- 2nd string: 2nd fret (finger 3)
- 1st string: open
- Avoid strumming the 6th string at first.

D Major (D)

- 4th string: open
- 3rd string: 2nd fret (finger 1)
- 2nd string: 3rd fret (finger 3)
- 1st string: 2nd fret (finger 2)
- Avoid strumming the 5th and 6th strings at first.

E Minor (Em)

- 6th string: open
- 5th string: 2nd fret (finger 2)
- 4th string: 2nd fret (finger 3)
- 3rd string: open
- 2nd string: open
- 1st string: open

A Minor (Am)

- 5th string: open
 - 4th string: 2nd fret (finger 2)
 - 3rd string: 2nd fret (finger 3)
 - 2nd string: 1st fret (finger 1)
 - 1st string: open
 - Avoid strumming the 6th string at first.
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Tips for Clean Chords

- Press close to the fret, not directly on top of it.
 - Curve your fingers so they come straight down onto the string.
 - Check that each string can ring: pick them one at a time to find mutes or buzzes.
 - Adjust hand position slowly until every note in the chord sounds clear.
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Simple Practice Patterns

1. Single Chord Practice

- Choose one chord (for example, Em).
- Strum down four times: 1–2–3–4.
- Lift your fingers off, relax, then build the chord again.
- Repeat.

2. Two-Chord Practice

- Em → Am (or E → A, or A → D).
- Strum the first chord 4 beats, then switch and strum the second chord 4 beats.
- Go slowly and focus on smooth movement.

3. Three-Chord Loop

- Try: E → A → D → A.
 - Four strums per chord, looping around slowly.
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Practice Goals for Lesson 3

- Be able to form E, A, D, Em, and Am with basic confidence.
- Have each string in the chord ring clearly (minimal buzz or dead notes).
- Change between at least two chords in time, even at a slow tempo.