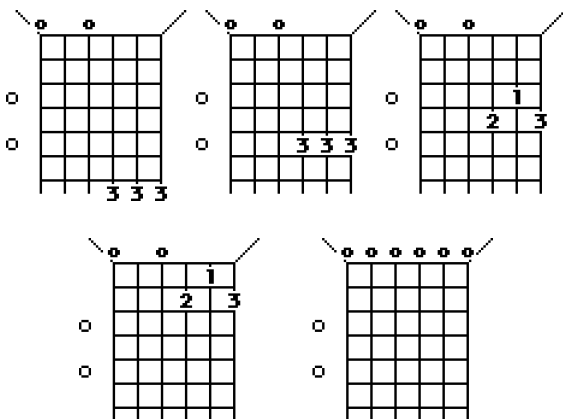


Open Tunings

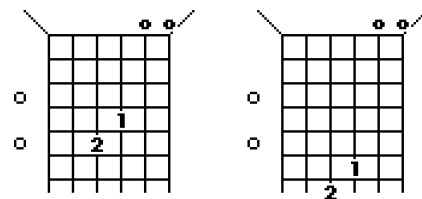
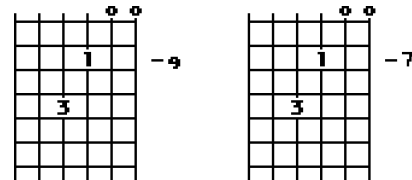
When the strings of a tuning form a simple chord, the tuning is called *open*; the strings of the Open C tuning form a C major chord, the strings of the Open G tuning form a G major chord. Invariably, this makes it easy to play in the “natural” key of the tuning. But it’s a mistake to restrict playing to just a few keys since most of the open tunings are versatile enough to play in any key.

One of the most common uses of open tunings is to play the open strings as drones. This is an easy way to create unusual chordal combinations and interesting sustained tonal clusters. When the harmonic motion is in the treble, the lower strings tend to be used as drones. For instance, in the Open G tuning, the following progression begins with a D major, then “suspends” C major, B minor, and A minor, to finally resolve at G major.



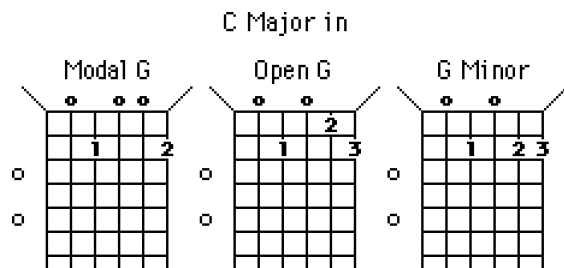
When the melodic motion is in the bass, the higher strings tend to be used as drones. For

instance, the melody C# B G A can be harmonized in the Open G tuning with the two drones B and D.

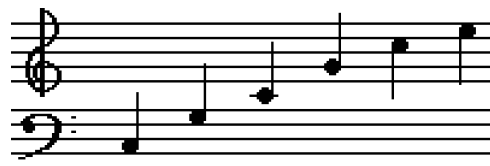


Open tunings are ideal for playing bottleneck or slide guitar, since you can place the slide at any fret and play a full six string chord. Similarly, harmonics sound wonderful in open tunings. You can play a full six strings of harmonics at the 12th, 7th and 5th frets.

Several of the open tunings presented here are closely related - they differ by only one step on one string. Examples are the Modal D - Open D - D Minor and the Modal G - Open G - G Minor tunings. The G tunings, for example, differ only in the second string. Consequently, the chord charts can often be “crossed”, using (say) the Modal G tuning chart for additional chords in both the Open G and G Minor tunings. For example, C major chords are fingered similarly in the three tunings.



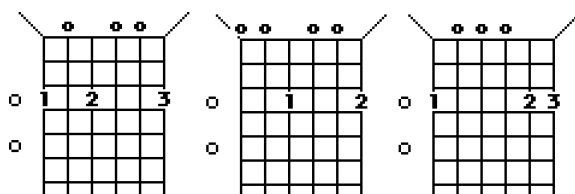
The Open C Tuning



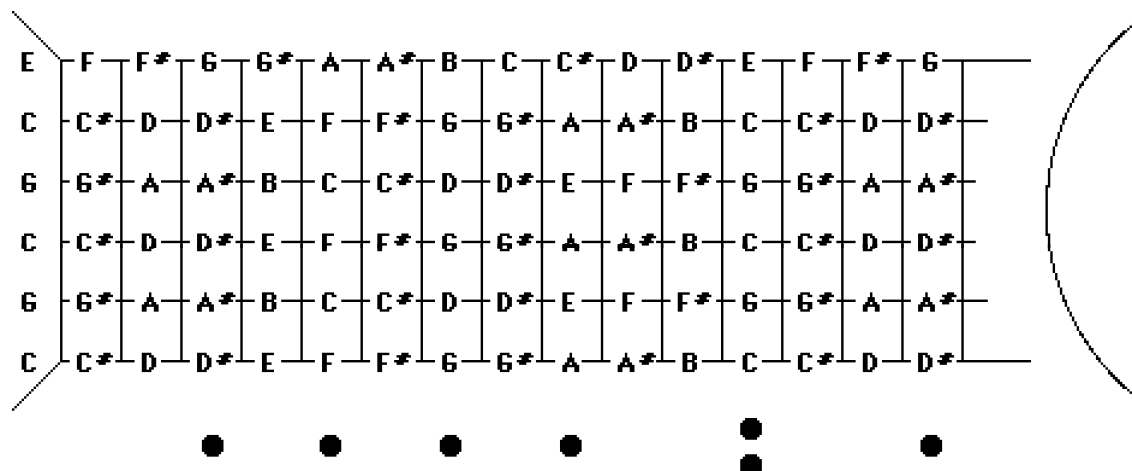
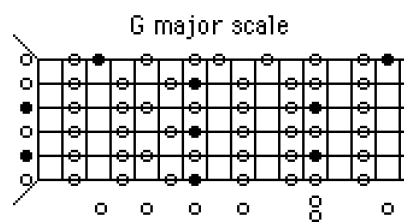
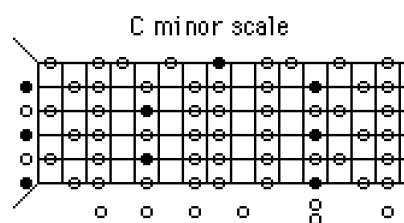
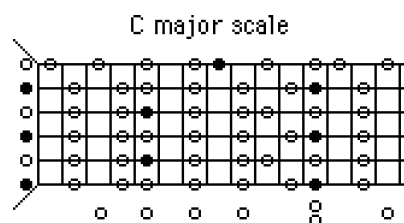
Strings:	6	5	4	3	2	1
Notes:	c	g	c	g	c	e
MIDI #:	48	55	60	67	72	76
Retune:	- 4	- 2	- 2	0	+ 1	0
Fret:	7	5	7	5	4	

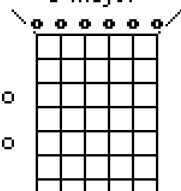
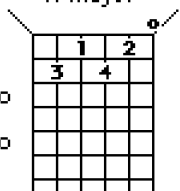
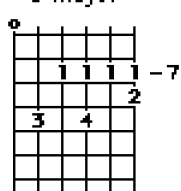
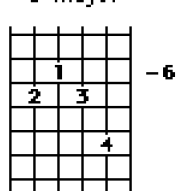
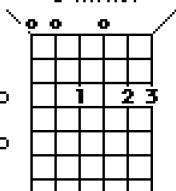
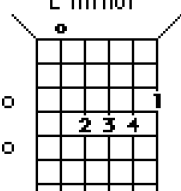
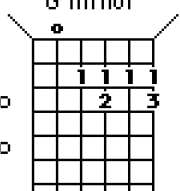
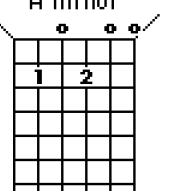
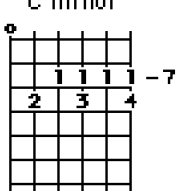
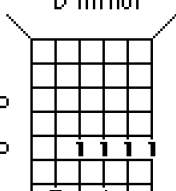
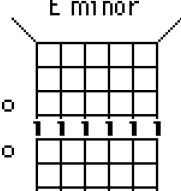
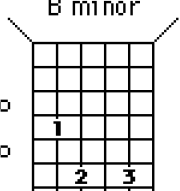
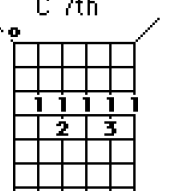
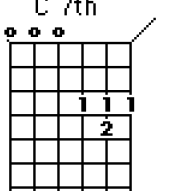
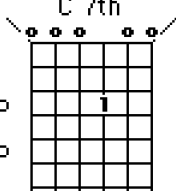
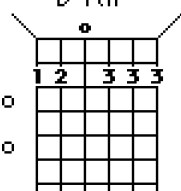
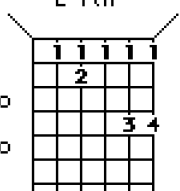
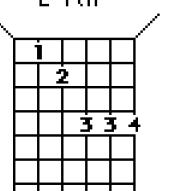
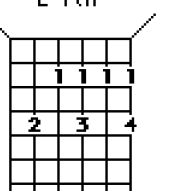
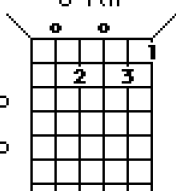
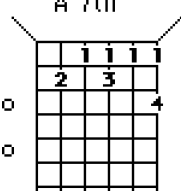
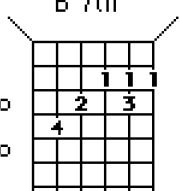
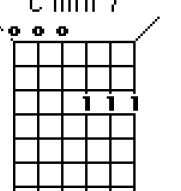
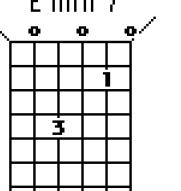
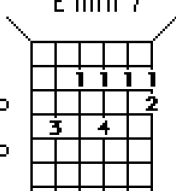
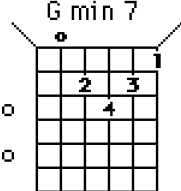
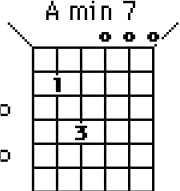
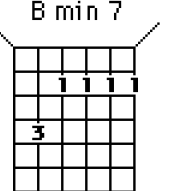
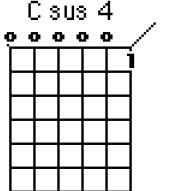
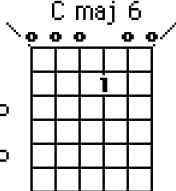
Open C is a deep, rich tuning which can be played in most styles and keys. William Ackerman's *Townsend Shuffle* and John Fahey's *Requiem for Mississippi John Hurt* give an idea of the versatility and spaciousness of the C tuning.

The three C and two G strings can be exploited to provide numerous variations on the chords given in the accompanying chart. For instance, the open C minor chord can be played several ways, since any of the three C strings can be played open or at the third fret.



Similarly, the G strings can often be used to find alternate fingerings. Note how the three C7 chords can be viewed as simple variants of each other. Can you find other interesting C7's?

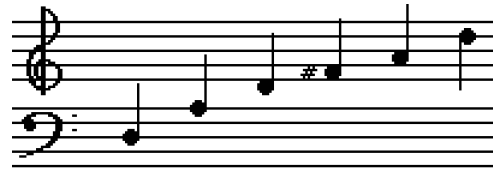


<p>C major</p> 	<p>A major</p> 	<p>C major</p> 	<p>D major</p> 	<p>C minor</p> 
<p>E minor</p> 	<p>G minor</p> 	<p>A minor</p> 	<p>C minor</p> 	<p>D minor</p> 
<p>E minor</p> 	<p>B minor</p> 	<p>C 7th</p> 	<p>C 7th</p> 	<p>C 7th</p> 
<p>D 7th</p> 	<p>E 7th</p> 	<p>E 7th</p> 	<p>E 7th</p> 	<p>G 7th</p> 
<p>A 7th</p> 	<p>B 7th</p> 	<p>C min 7</p> 	<p>E min 7</p> 	<p>E min 7</p> 
<p>G min 7</p> 	<p>A min 7</p> 	<p>B min 7</p> 	<p>C sus 4</p> 	<p>C maj 6</p> 

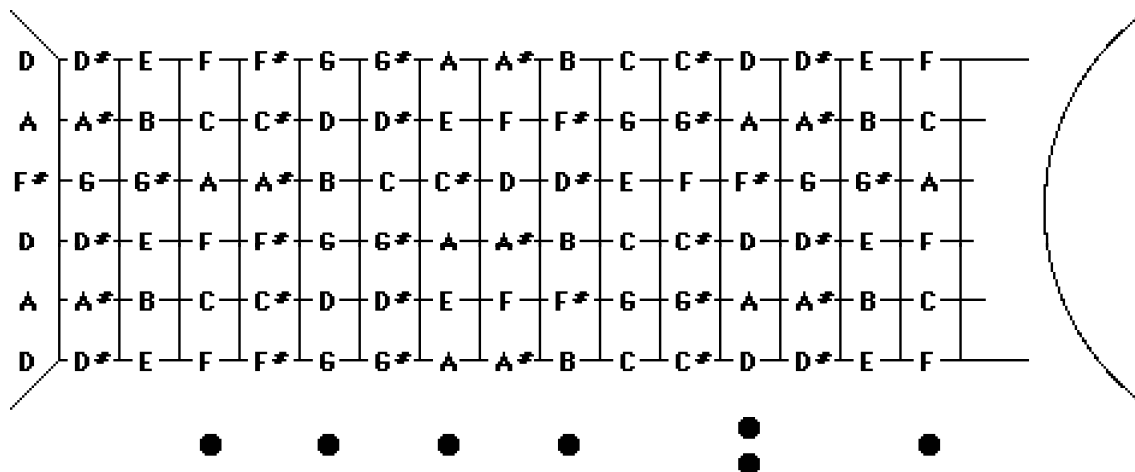
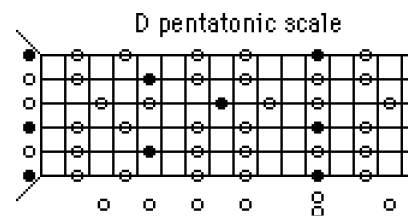
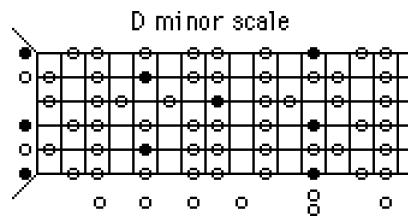
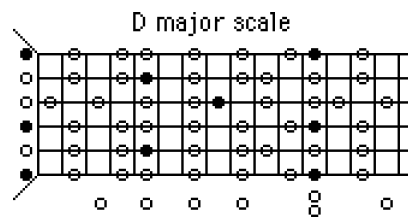
The Open D Tuning

The three bass strings can be used for powerful root-fifth-octave chords, or they can be used as steady drones beneath a shifting harmony. Almost every chord type has an easy bar-fingering: major, minor, 7th, sus 4, major and minor 6, and 7sus 4. This adds to the versatility of the Open D tuning and makes it possible to play in a variety of styles and keys. Two well known tunes in Open D are Joni Mitchel's *Big Yellow Taxi* and the Allman Brother's *Little Martha*. Common variations of the Open D tuning are to tune it down two frets to the key of C (CGCEGD), or to tune it up two frets to the key of E (EBEG#BE).

As with many open tunings, the multiple D and A strings can be used to easily make up new ways of fingering chords. For more chord fingerings, note that the Open D tuning is sandwiched between the Open D minor and the Modal D tunings. Both of these chord charts can be used for additional Open D chords with only minor modifications.



Strings:	6	5	4	3	2	1
Notes:	d	a	d	f#	a	d
MIDI #:	50	57	62	66	69	74
Retune:	- 2	0	0	- 1	- 2	- 2
Fret:	7	5	4	3	5	

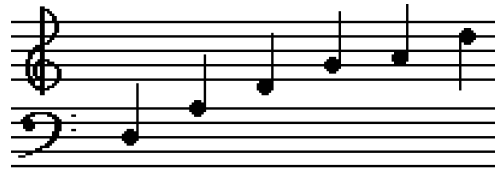


<p>C major</p>	<p>D major</p>	<p>A major</p>	<p>B major</p>	<p>D major</p>
<p>A minor</p>	<p>D minor</p>	<p>E minor</p>	<p>D minor</p>	<p>E minor</p>
<p>C 7th</p>	<p>D 7th</p>	<p>D 7th</p>	<p>F 7th</p>	<p>A 7th</p>
<p>B 7th</p>	<p>C min 7</p>	<p>D min 7</p>	<p>E min 7</p>	<p>F min 7</p>
<p>D sus 4</p>	<p>D maj 6</p>	<p>A dom 9</p>	<p>D min 6</p>	<p>D min 6</p>
<p>D 7sus4</p>	<p>D dom 9</p>	<p>D dom 9</p>	<p>D 6add9</p>	<p>D 6add9</p>

The Modal D Tuning

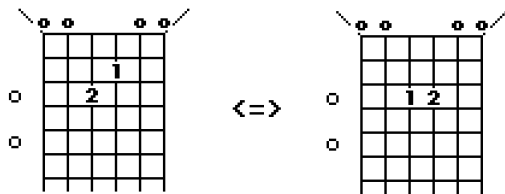
The open strings of the Modal D tuning form a suspended fourth chord, a striking tonality that is neither major nor minor (due to the lack of a third), though it is certainly possible to play in either major or minor keys.

The tuning is very close to the Open D major tuning since they differ only in the third string. Consequently, chords from the Open D tuning chart can be played on a guitar tuned to Modal D whenever it's possible to play the third string down one fret. Similarly, chords from the Modal D chart can be played on a guitar tuned to Open D by fingering the third string up one fret. For instance, the open position D minor chords are fingered

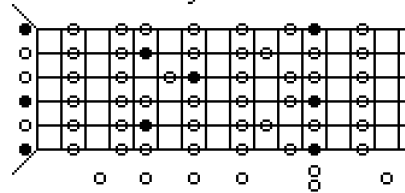


Strings:	6	5	4	3	2	1
Notes:	d	a	d	g	a	d
MIDI #:	50	57	62	67	69	74
Retune:	- 2	0	0	0	- 2	- 2
Fret:	7	5	5	2	5	

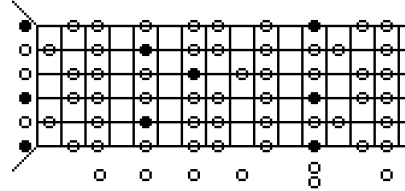
D min in Modal D Tuning D min in Open D Tuning



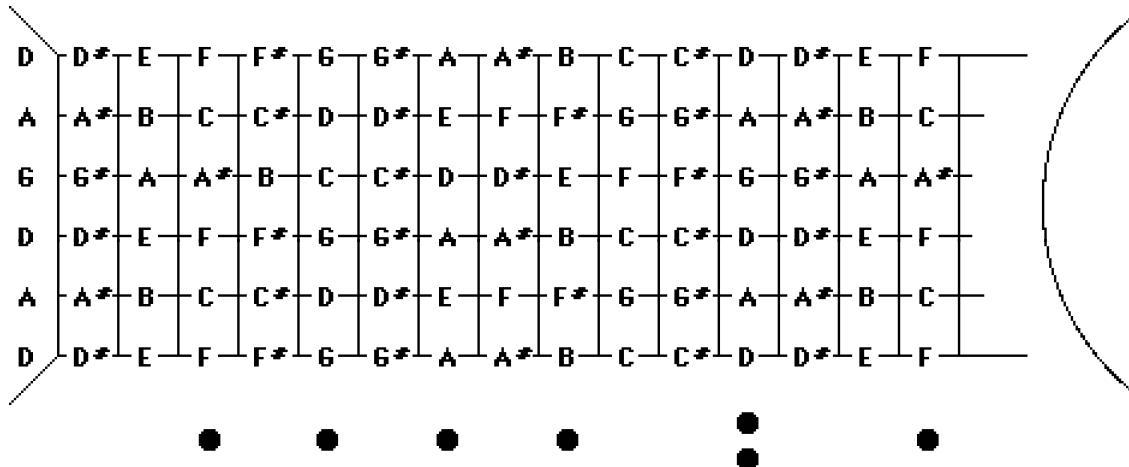
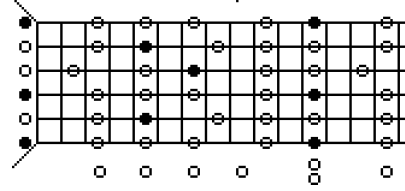
D major scale



D minor scale



D minor pentatonic

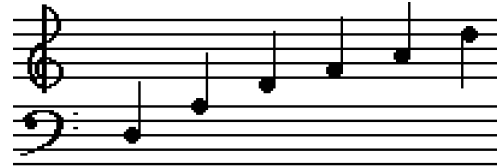


D major 	E major 	G major 	D minor 	D minor
F minor 	A minor 	C 7th 	C 7th 	D 7th
D 7th 	E 7th 	G 7th 	C maj 7 	D maj 7
E maj 7 	E maj 7 	C min 7 	D min 7 	D min 7
F min 7 	A min 7 	D sus 4 	G sus 4 	D 7sus4
C min 6 	D min 6 	D min 6 	D ninth 	D ninth

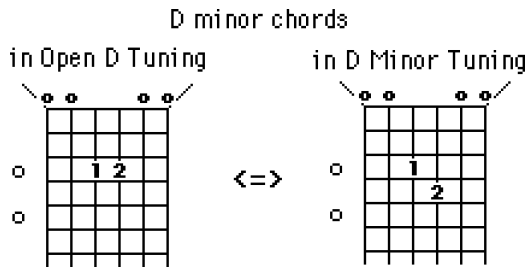
The Open D Minor Tuning

The Open D minor tuning has five strings in common with the Open D (major), Modal D, and Pelican tunings, differing only in the third string. Like its sister tunings, Open D minor has three D strings and two A strings, leading to a wide variety of fingering variations for simple chords.

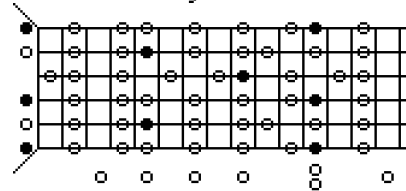
Chords from the Open D (major) chart can be used in the D minor tuning, with the understanding that notes on the third string need to be played up one fret. Similarly, chords from the Modal D chart can be used by playing up two frets, while chords from the Pelican tuning chart can be used by playing down one fret on the third string.



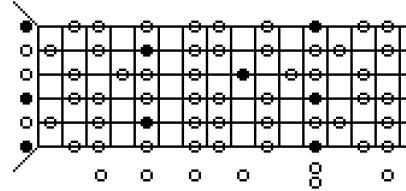
Strings:	6	5	4	3	2	1
Notes:	d	a	d	f	a	d
MIDI #:	50	57	62	65	69	74
Retune:	- 2	0	0	- 2	- 2	- 2
Fret:	7	5	3	4	5	



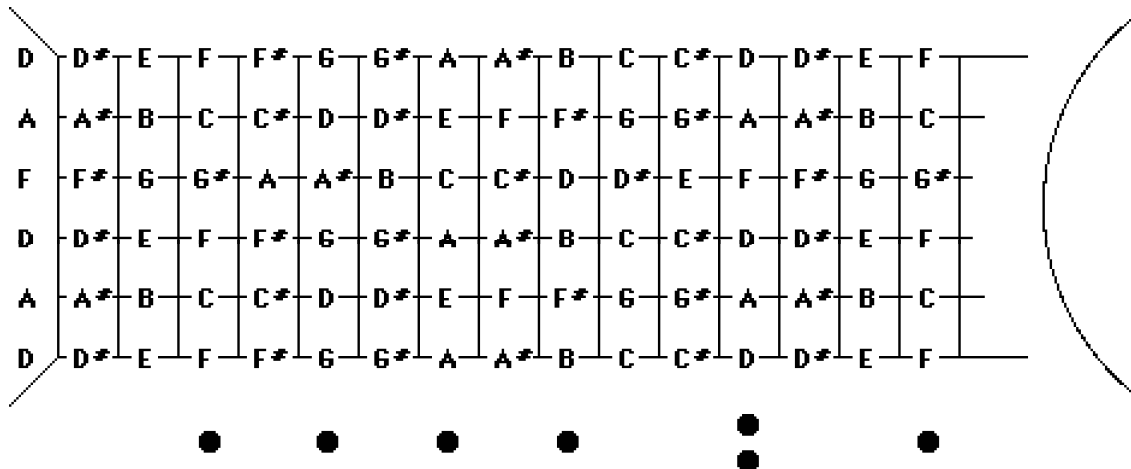
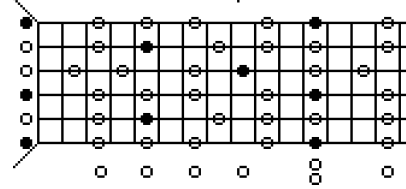
D major scale

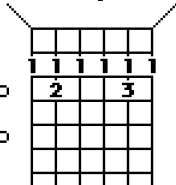
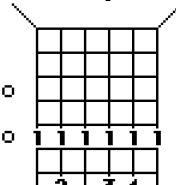
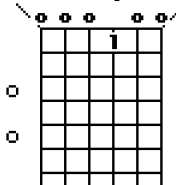
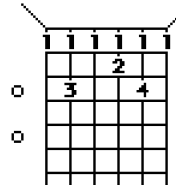
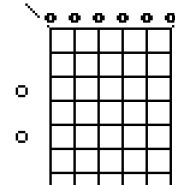
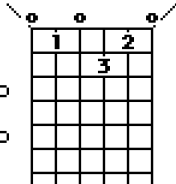
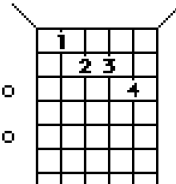
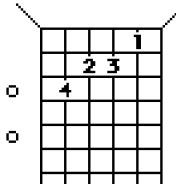
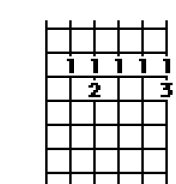
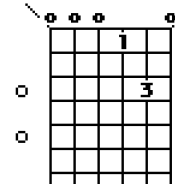
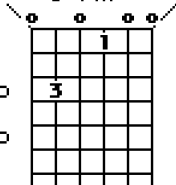
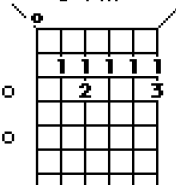
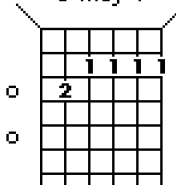
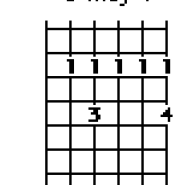
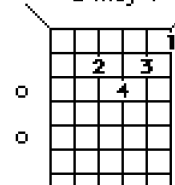
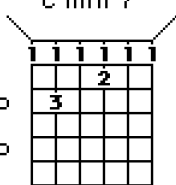
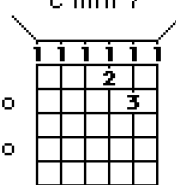
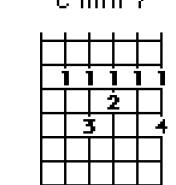
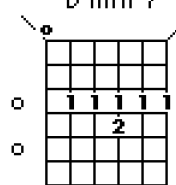
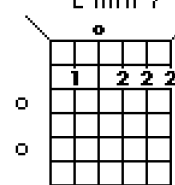
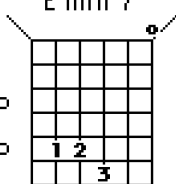
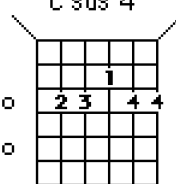
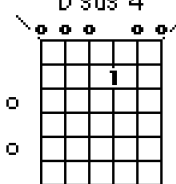
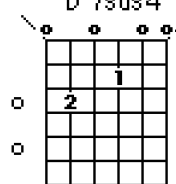
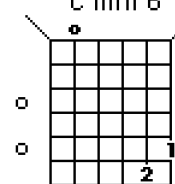
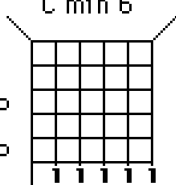
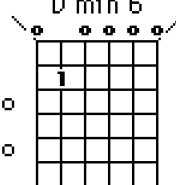
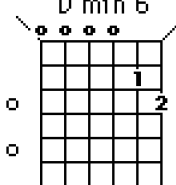
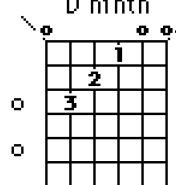
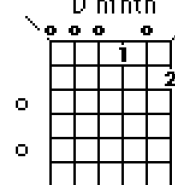


D minor scale



D minor pentatonic



C major 	C major 	D major 	C minor 	D minor 
G minor 	C 7th 	C 7th 	C 7th 	D 7th 
D 7th 	G 7th 	C maj 7 	C maj 7 	E maj 7 
C min 7 	C min 7 	C min 7 	D min 7 	E min 7 
E min 7 	C sus 4 	D sus 4 	D 7sus4 	C min 6 
C min 6 	D min 6 	D min 6 	D ninth 	D ninth 

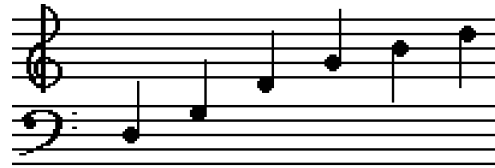
The Open G Tuning

In the Open G tuning, the strings are tuned to a G major chord, making it easy to play in the key of G and in related keys. Though often used in 'folk' music, Jimmy Page's *Bron-Y-Aur Stomp* shows that this is more a matter of tradition than of necessity.

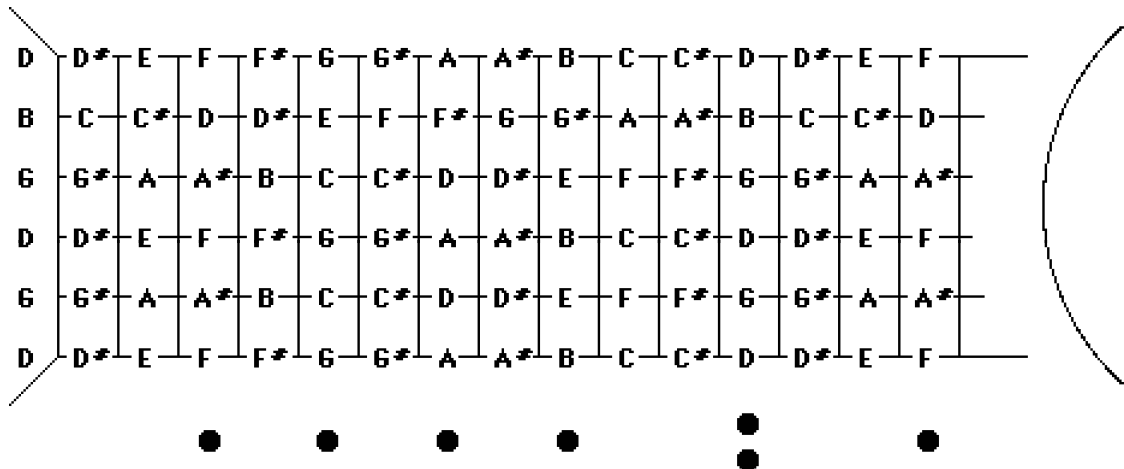
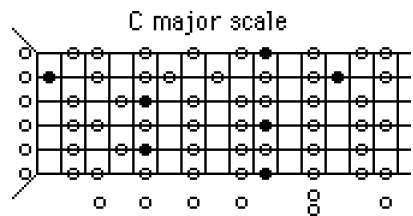
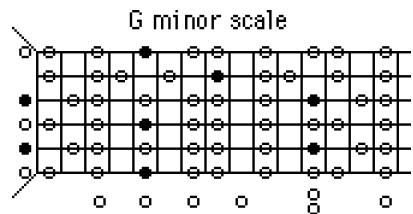
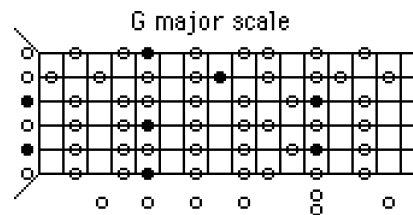
The top four strings are the same as the common G tuning for banjo, so banjo players will find it easy. Alternatively, if you find the open G tuning fun, why not give the banjo a try?

The second, third, and fourth strings are tuned exactly the same as in the standard EBGDAE tuning. All chord and scale forms on these three strings remain the same, making Open G one of the easiest alternate tunings to play in.

As with most open tunings, the multiple D and G strings can be easily used to make up new ways of fingering chords. For more chord forms, note that the Open G tuning is sandwiched between the Open G Minor and the Modal G tunings. Both of these chord charts can be used for additional Open G chords with only minor modifications.



Strings:	6	5	4	3	2	1
Notes:	d	g	d	g	b	d
MIDI #:	50	55	62	67	71	74
Retune:	- 2	- 2	0	0	0	- 2
Fret:	5	7	5	4	3	

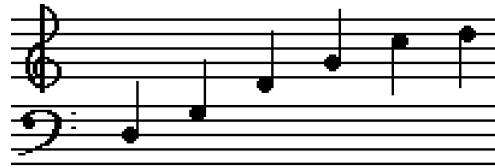


<p>G major</p>	<p>G major</p>	<p>G major</p>	<p>C major</p>	<p>D major</p>
<p>A min 7</p>	<p>E minor</p>	<p>E minor</p>	<p>B minor</p>	<p>G 7th</p>
<p>G 7th</p>	<p>C 7th</p>	<p>C 7th</p>	<p>A minor</p>	<p>A min 7</p>
<p>A min 7</p>	<p>A min 7</p>	<p>G 7sus4</p>	<p>G 7sus4</p>	<p>D 7sus4</p>
<p>D 7sus4</p>	<p>C maj 7</p>	<p>C maj 7</p>	<p>C 6add9</p>	<p>C 6add9</p>
<p>C 6add9</p>	<p>G maj 7</p>	<p>G maj 6</p>	<p>G min 6</p>	<p>G min 9</p>

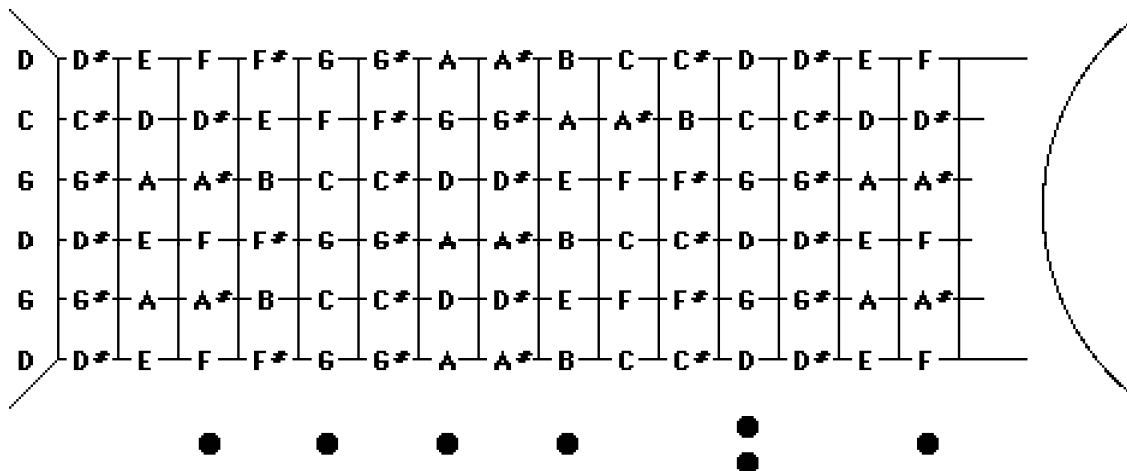
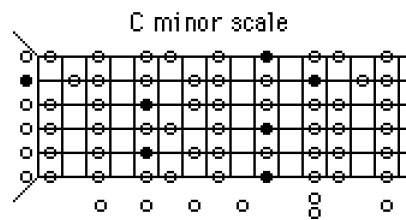
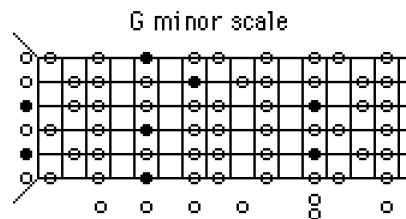
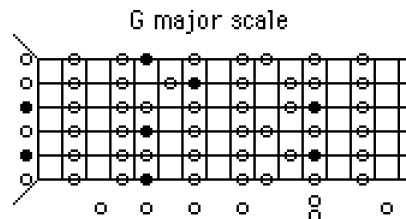
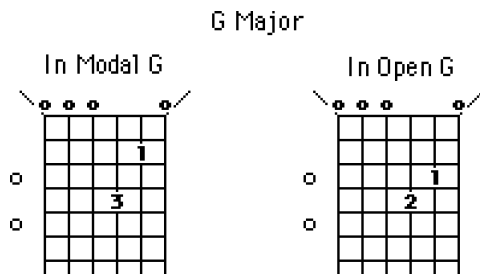
The Modal G Tuning

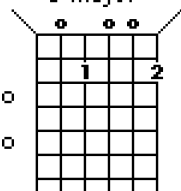
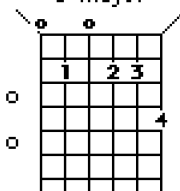
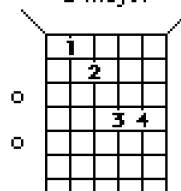
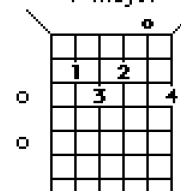
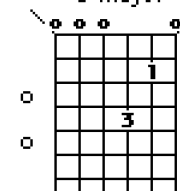
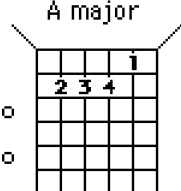
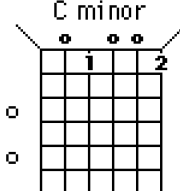
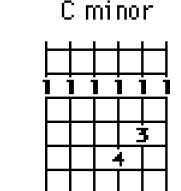
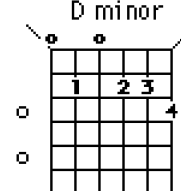
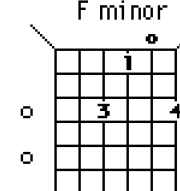
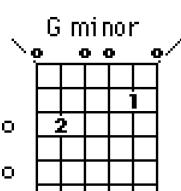
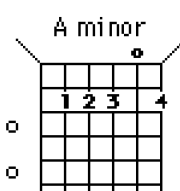
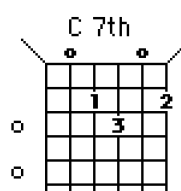
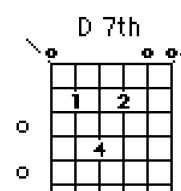
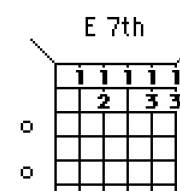
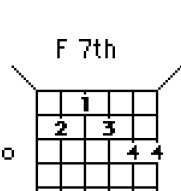
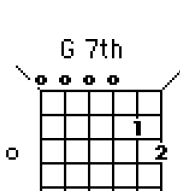
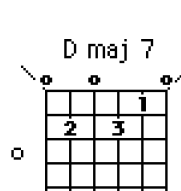
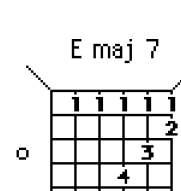
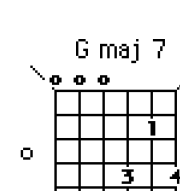
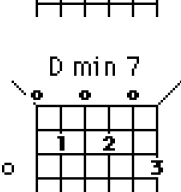
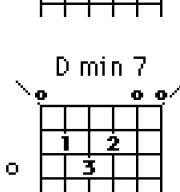
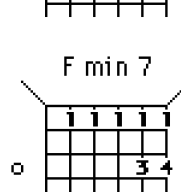
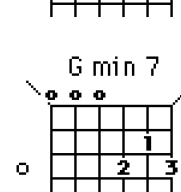
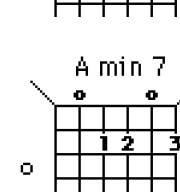
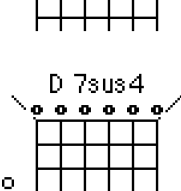
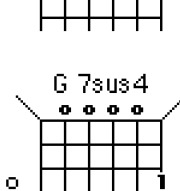
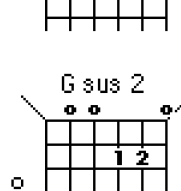
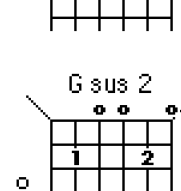
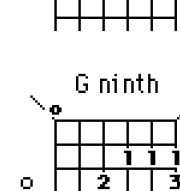
The open strings of a guitar in Modal G sound a suspended texture that is neither major nor minor, neither dark nor light. The two pairs of fifths in strings 3-6 make the low end powerful, while the small separation of the two highest strings make a variety of suspended chords viable and interesting.

Like other open tunings, it is easy to make up alternate fingerings for chords using the three D and two G strings. In addition, Modal G is closely related to Open G; only the second strings differ, and only by one fret.



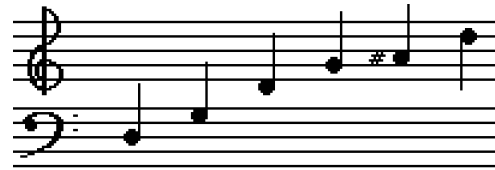
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Notes:	d	g	d	g	c	d
MIDI #:	50	55	62	67	72	74
Retune:	- 2	- 2	0	0	+ 1	- 2
Fret:	5	7	5	5	2	



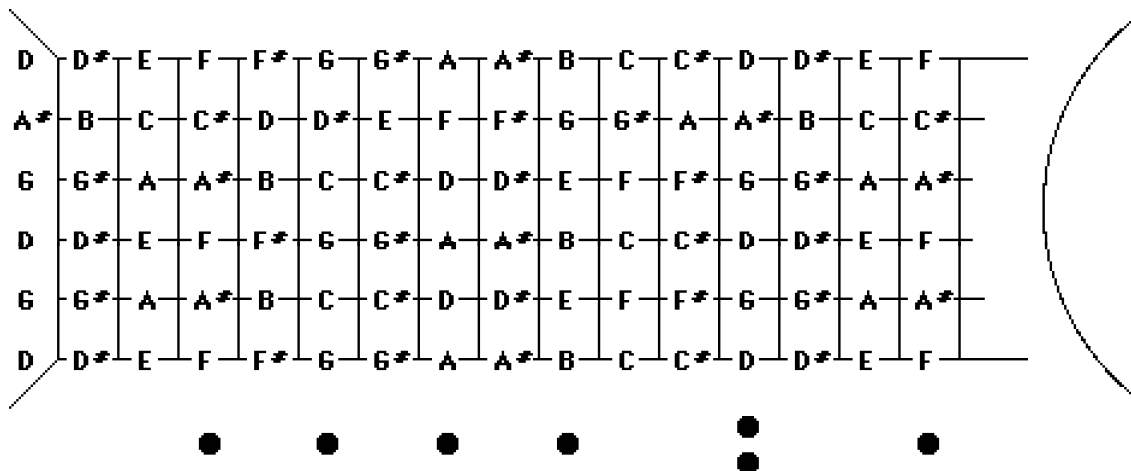
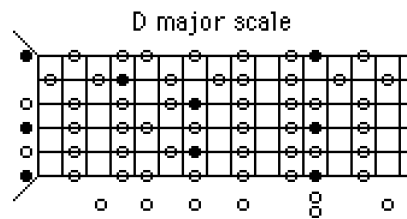
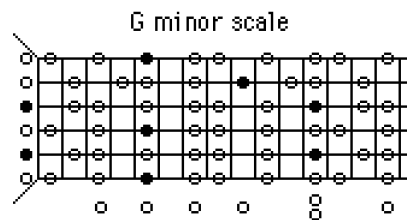
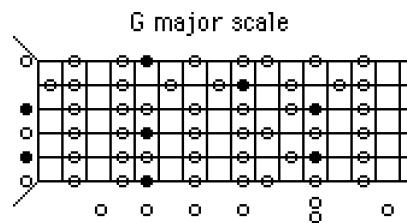
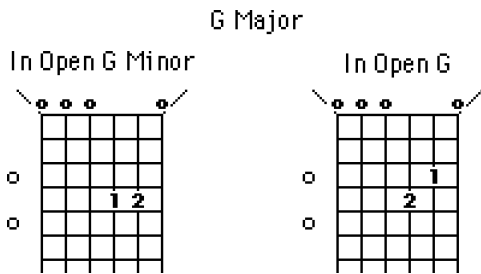
C major 	D major 	E major 	F major 	G major 
A major 	C minor 	C minor  -5	D minor 	F minor 
G minor 	A minor 	C 7th 	D 7th 	E 7th 
F 7th 	G 7th 	D maj 7 	E maj 7 	G maj 7 
D min 7 	D min 7 	F min 7 	G min 7 	A min 7 
D 7sus4 	G 7sus4 	G sus 2 	G sus 2 	G ninth 

The Open G Minor Tuning

Used recently in John Renbourn's *Orphan* and *Mist-Covered Mountains of Home*, the Open G Minor guitar tuning is probably a descendant of the G minor banjo tuning DGA#D, with the lowest two strings doubled an octave down. The tuning differs from Open G (major) only in the second string, so facility with one is easily transported to the other. Clearly, any chords not using the second string can be played immediately in either the Open G (major) or Open G Minor tunings. To use Open G (major) chords in the minor tuning, play the second string up one fret. Similarly, Open G minor chords can be used in the major tuning by playing the second string one fret down.



Strings:	6	5	4	3	2	1
Notes:	d	g	d	g	a#	d
MIDI #:	50	55	62	67	70	74
Retune:	- 2	- 2	0	0	- 1	- 2
Fret:	5	7	5	3	4	

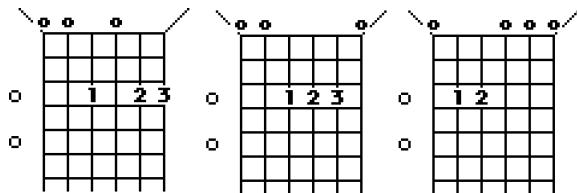


D major 	E major 	A# major 	D minor 	E minor
G minor 	A minor 	D 7th 	E 7th 	E 7th
F 7th 	G 7th 	G 7th 	A# 7th 	D 7th
A# 7th 	D min 7 	D min 7 	D min 7 	E min 7
F min 7 	G min 7 	A min 7 	C min 6 	G min 6
A min 6 	G min 9 	G sus 4 	G 7sus4 	G sus 2

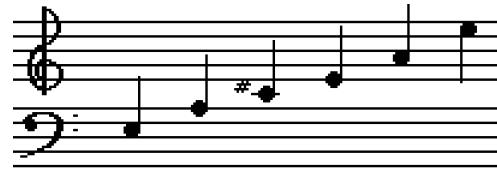
The Open A Tuning

Larry Sandberg says that the Open A tuning is especially useful for the "delta blues sound," and it is a great bottleneck tuning, since it's easy to slide from minor to major on the fourth string.

Like most open tunings, it is easy to find alternate chord voicings by taking advantage of the strings that are tuned in octaves. Consider open position A minor 7 chords. The fourth string must be played on the third fret, but any other string can be played either open, or on the third fret. This leads to a wide variety of fingerings. Some ex-

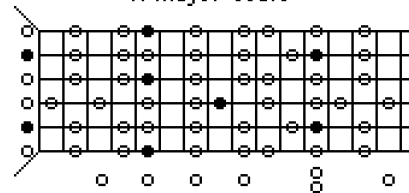


This is the sort of freedom that makes a tuning great.

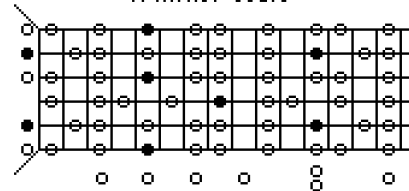


Strings:	6	5	4	3	2	1
Notes:	e	a	c [#]	e	a	e
MIDI #:	52	57	61	64	69	76
Retune:	0	0	-1	-3	-2	0
Fret:	5	4	3	5	7	

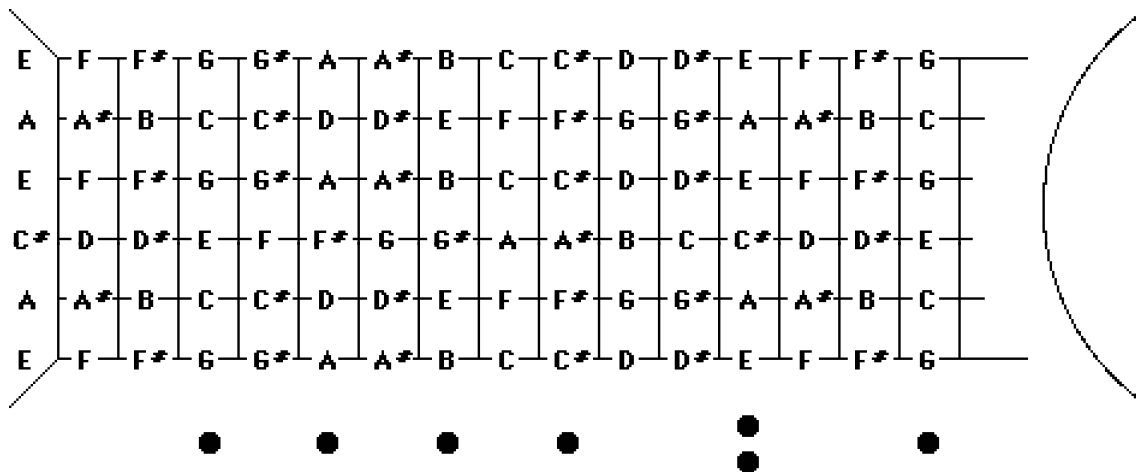
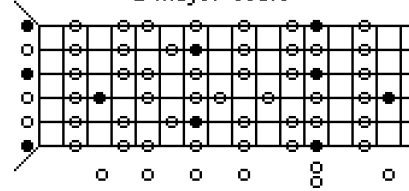
A major scale



A minor scale



E major scale



C major 	E major 	E major 	C major 	E major
E major 	A major 	E minor 	G minor 	A minor
B minor 	C 7th 	D 7th 	E 7th 	F 7th
G 7th 	G 7th 	A 7th 	A 7th 	C min 7
B min 7 	C min 7 	E min 7 	E min 7 	A min 7
A sus 4 	A maj 6 	A min 6 	A min 9 	A 7sus4