

FINALLY LEARN THE GUITAR FRETBOARD

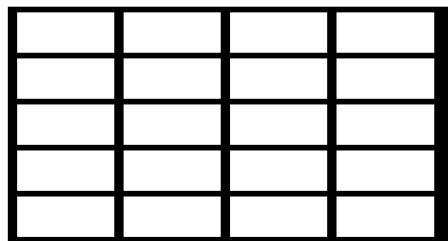
How to Finally Learn the Guitar Fretboard

Many guitarists are familiar with the open position but are less familiar with the notes above the fifth fret. This lesson and workout shows how to learn and memorize the upper notes on the guitar neck.

To start, we need to know some rules about music.

The musical alphabet goes from A-G. Musical notes extend from A to G then repeat up and down like a number line. (A-B-C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C...)

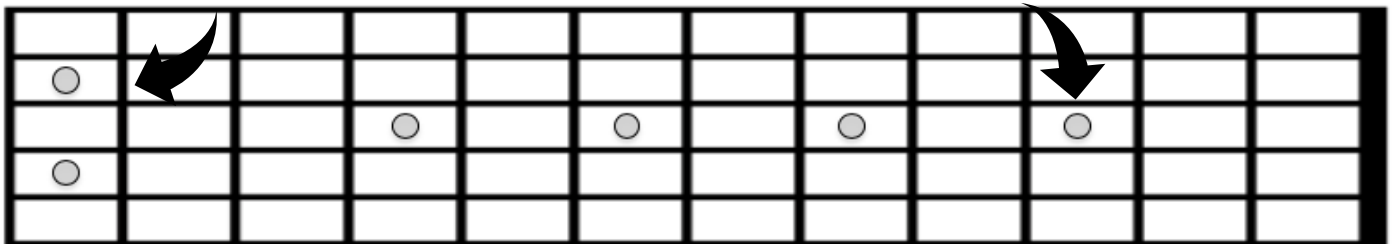
Each of the six strings on the guitar have a letter name that goes with them.



E – 6th String
A – 5th String
D – 4th String
G – 3rd String
B – 2nd String
E – 1st String

Dots are placed at the 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th frets.

A double dot is placed at the 12th fret.



The note at the double dot is always the same name as the open string note.

In music, there are “half-steps” and “whole-steps”. Each fret on a guitar represents one half-step. Two half-steps (or two frets) is a whole step.

Every note to the next note up is a whole step, EXCEPT for B-C and an E-F.

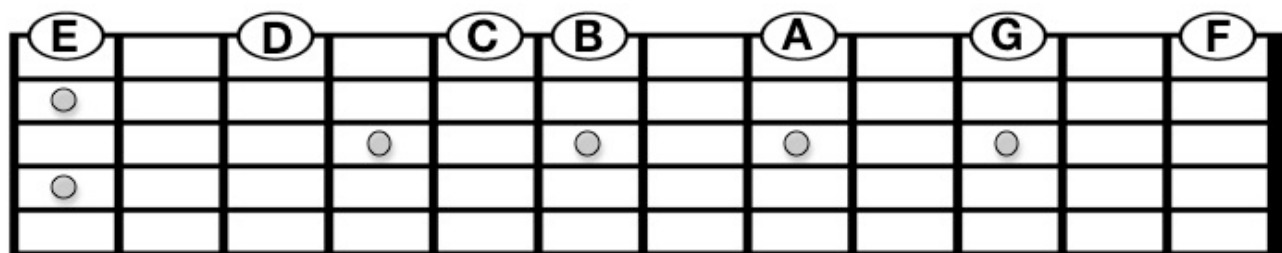
Let's Practice & Learn

Practice Challenge 1: Memorize the Notes on the Open Strings.

Notes on the 6th String

The 6th string is the one closest to the ceiling and is the lowest in pitch. The open 6th string is an E. Here is a diagram of the notes on the 6th string. (Notes above the 12th fret are an exact repeat of these.)

Notice the half-step between B and C. Also, notice how the notes relate to the dots.



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Practice Challenge 2: Say and Play the Notes on the 6th String Ascending and Descending.

Adjustments to the Notes: Sharps and Flats

Any note can be adjusted either one half-step (one fret) up or down.

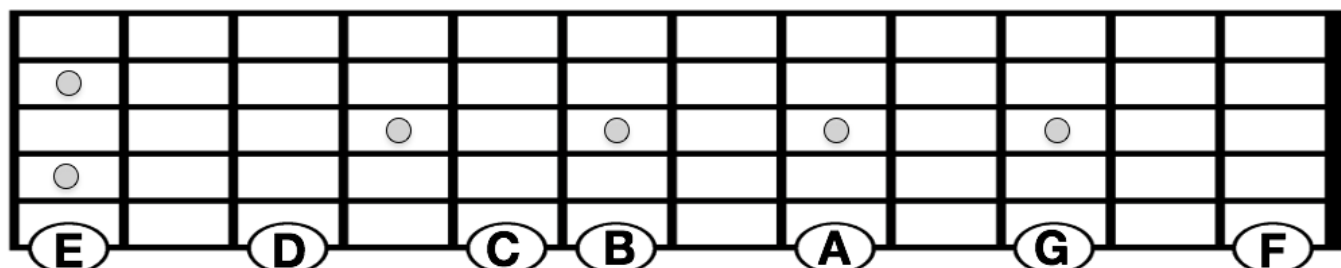
If the note is adjusted one fret up it is called a "sharp" which is notated with a "#" after the letter name.

If the note is adjusted down one fret it is called a "flat" & is notated with a "b" after the letter name.

Practice Challenge 3: Say and Play the Notes on the 6th String or the 1st String in this order: G-C-F-Bb-D#-Ab-C#-Gb-B-E-A-D-G.

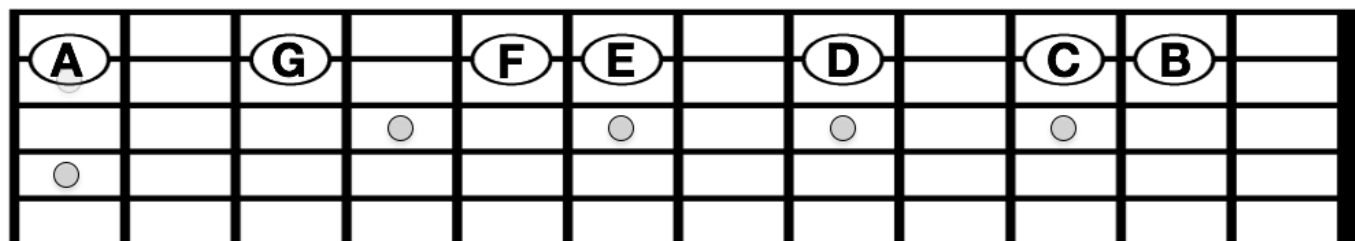
Notes on the 1st String (The Same as the 6th String)

The 1st string is the string closest to the floor. The 6th string and the 1st string are both E and therefore have the same notes all the way up and down the fretboard.



Notes on the 5th String

The 5th string is just below the string closest to the ceiling. The open 5th string is an A. Here are all of the notes on the 5th string up to the 12th fret. Notice the half-step between B and C and also E and F.



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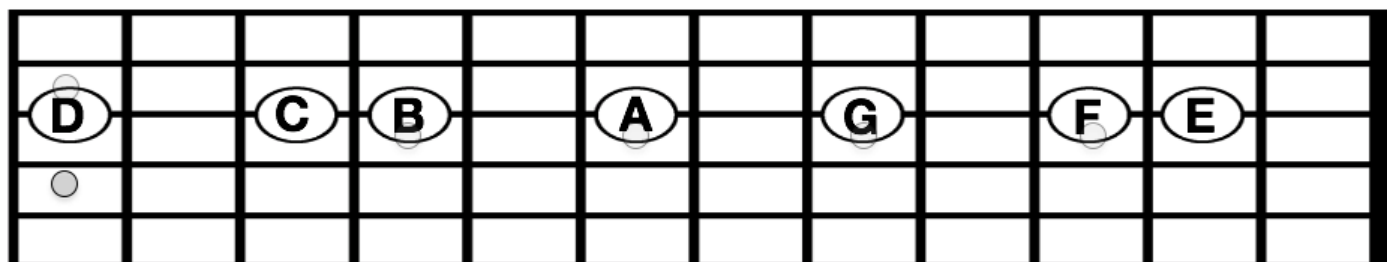
Practice Challenge 4: Say and Play the Notes on the 5th String Ascending and Descending.

Practice Challenge 5: Say and Play the Notes on the 5th String in this Order: C-F-B $\flat$ -D $\sharp$ -A $\flat$ -C $\sharp$ -G $\flat$ -B-E-A-D-G.

Practice Challenge 6: Find the Notes of the Same Name on Both the 6th & 5th Strings.

Notes on the 4th String

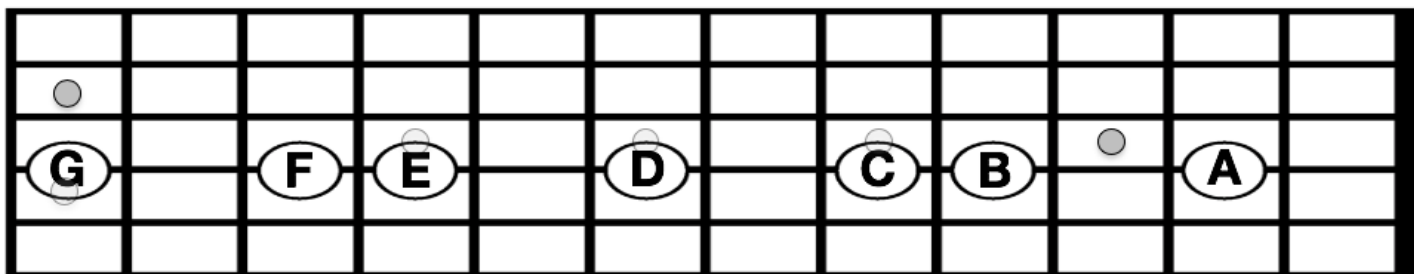
The open 4th string is a D. Here are all of the notes on the 4th string up to the 12th fret.



Practice Challenge 7: Say and Play the Notes on the 4th String Ascending and Descending.

Notes on the 3rd String

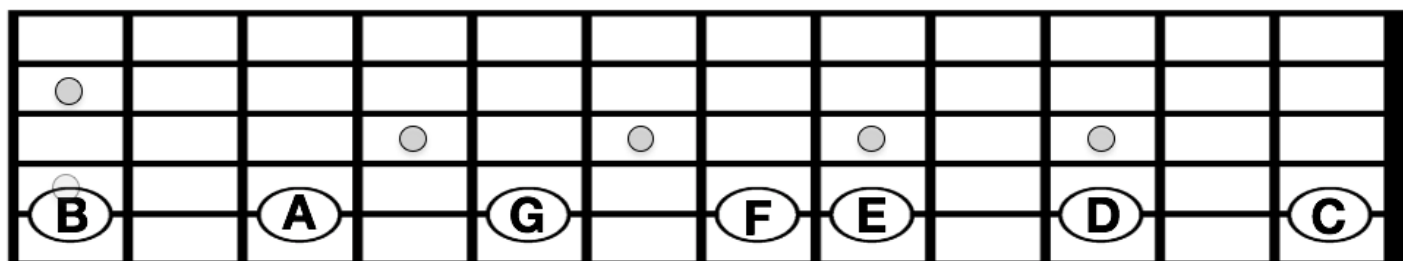
The open 3rd string is a G. Here are all of the notes on the 3rd string up to the 12th fret.



Practice Challenge 8: Say and Play the Notes on the 3rd String Ascending and Descending.

Notes on the 2nd String

The open 2nd string is a B. Here are all of the notes on the 2nd string up to the 12th fret.



Practice Challenge 9: Say and Play the Notes on the 2nd String Ascending and Descending.

Finding Notes by Octaves from the 6th or 5th Strings

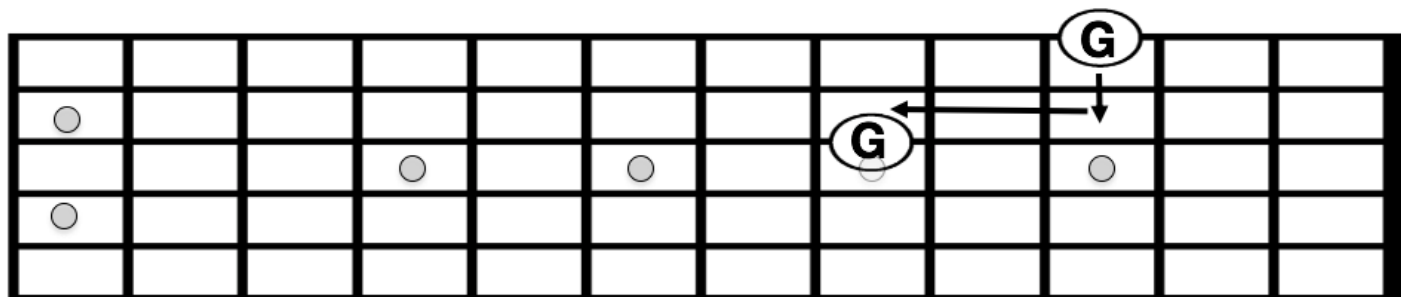
You can also associate notes by their relationship to one another on the fretboard.

You can find an octave of a note that is on the 6th or 5th string by counting down two strings and over two frets up the neck.

On the diagram, notice the shape that it makes on the fretboard.

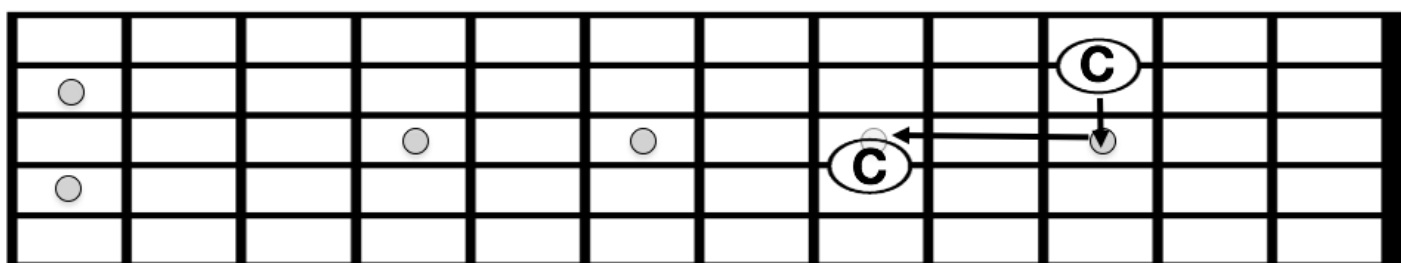
Example 1: To find the octave of a 6th string/3rd fret G, you would go down two strings to the 4th string and over two frets to the 5th fret.

So, the octave of a 6th string/3rd fret G, would be a 4th string/5th fret G.



Example 2: To find the octave of a 5th string/3rd fret C, you would go down two strings to the 3rd string and over two frets to the 5th fret.

So, the octave of a 5th string/3rd fret C, would be a 3rd string/5th fret C.

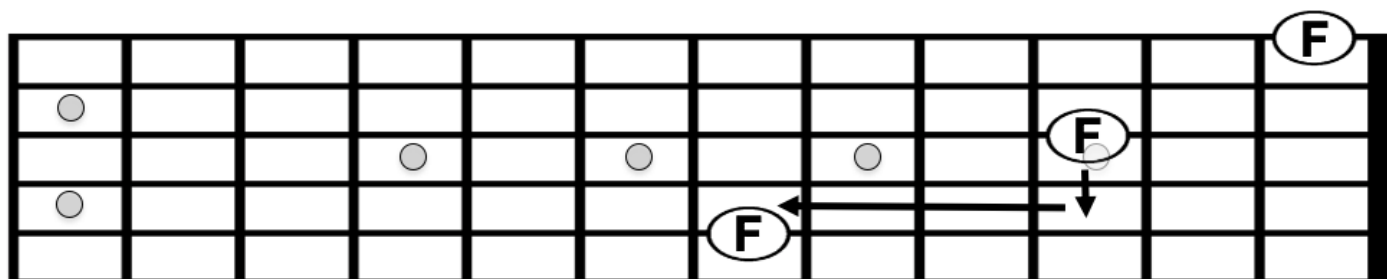


Finding Notes by Octaves from the 4th or 3rd Strings

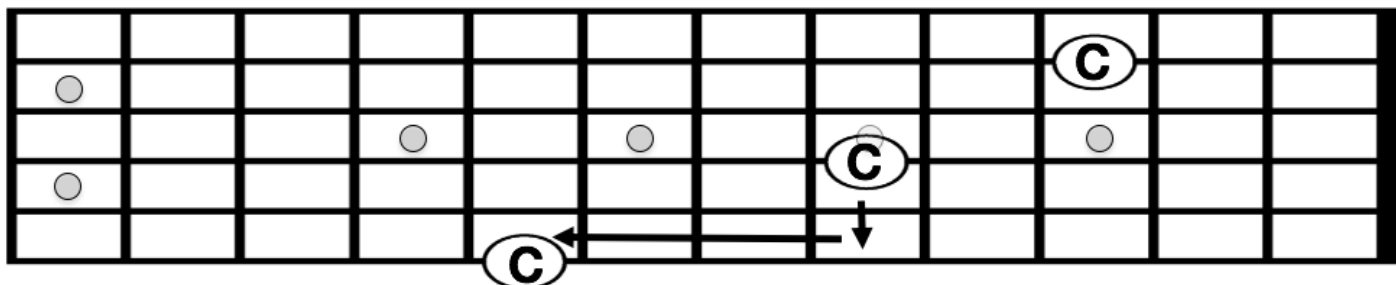
You can also find an octave of a note that is on the 4th or 3rd string by a similar method but the relationship changes slightly.

In order to find the octave of a 4th or 3rd string note, go down two strings and over THREE frets up the neck.

Example 1: To find the octave of a 4th string/3rd fret F, you would go down two strings to the 2nd string and over three frets to the 6th fret. So, the octave of a 4th string/3rd fret F, would be a 2nd string/6th fret F.



Example 2: To find the octave of a 3rd string/5th fret C, you would go down two strings to the 1st string and over three frets to the 8th fret. So, the octave of a 3rd string/5th fret C, would be a 1st string/8th fret C.



Let's Practice & Learn

Practice Challenge 10: Octaves

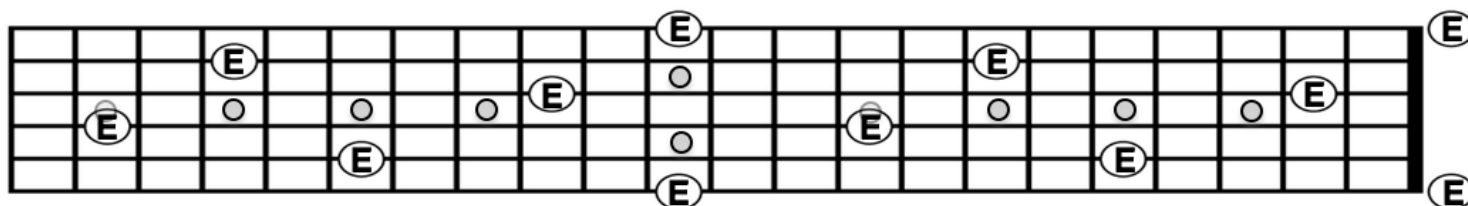
- From the Notes on the 6th String, Find the Corresponding Octaves on the 4th String.
- From the Notes on the 5th String, Find the Corresponding Octaves on the 3rd String.
- From the Notes on the 4th String, Find the Corresponding Octaves on the 2nd String.
- From the Notes on the 3rd String, Find the Corresponding Octaves on the 1st String.

Finding Every Note of the Same Name

Another very helpful exercise is locate every note of the same name on the entire fretboard.

Note: The neck length is different on various guitarist depending on what type of guitar it is. A standard electric guitar length is a 22-fret neck, so that is what is shown here.

Example: Find every E on the guitar.



Practice Challenge 11: Find Every Note of the Same Name on the Fretboard.

- Find all of the E's on the Guitar – Play Ascending & Descending
- Find all of the C's on the Guitar – Play Ascending & Descending

Playing a Major Scale on One String

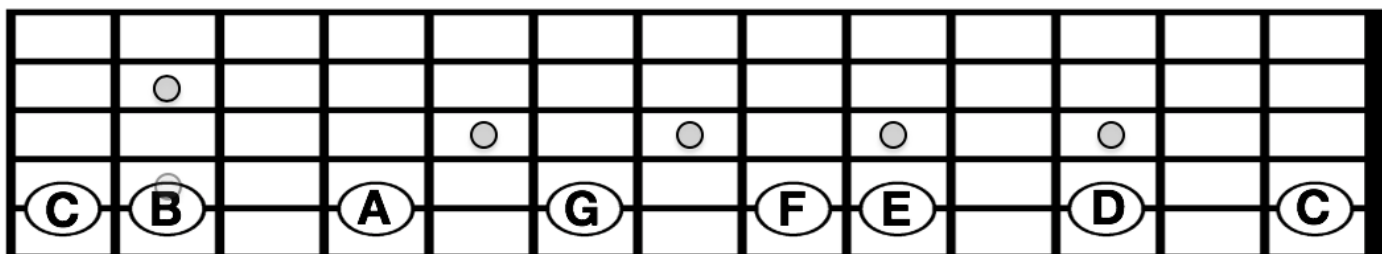
The great guitar educator Mick Goodrick, from the Berklee College of Music in his book “The Advancing Guitarist”, shows this helpful exercise for playing scales that could be used to learn the fretboard.

This exercise relates the position of notes on the string to the sounds of them in a major scale. A major scale is a pattern of whole-steps and half-steps.

The major scale pattern is...

Whole Step – Whole Step – Half Step – Whole Step – Whole Step – Whole Step – Half Step.

For example, a C major scale played entirely on the 2nd string would be this.



Notice the relationships of half-steps and whole steps on the fretboard.

As you play, listen for the difference in pitch of a half-step and whole-step.

Practice Challenge 12: Play a Major Scale on One String Up and Down the Neck.

- Play a C Major Scale on the 2nd String Starting at the 2nd String C at the 1st Fret.
- Play a G Major Scale on the 3rd String Starting at the 3rd String Open G.
- Play the F Major Scale on the 6th String Starting at the 6th String F at the 1st Fret.

Play a Simple Melody at Different Places on the Neck

Finally, one of the most effective ways of learning the notes on the neck, their relationship to each other, and how they sound is to play a simple melody in various parts of the neck.

Example: Find a simple melody, like “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” and start by playing it with a starting note on the 5th string/2nd fret C.

Practice Challenge 13: Play a Simple Melody Starting on Any String. Then, play the same melody in another place on the guitar with a different finger starting the pattern.

You can do it! Keep Learning and thanks for being a great part of our guitar family! - Steve