



Welcome to Guitar Foundations!

For a guitarist, there are several skills that make up the foundation of their playing. Skills like knowing your basic chords or the notes on each string.

But there are also certain other skills that make up the foundation for a good guitarist. One of the most important is knowing how to play intervals on guitar.

Before we get into the specifics, here is what everything on the diagrams mean...

- Numbers on TAB Staff: Show what fret you should be pressing down.
- Fingering Diagrams for Each Chord
 - "X" at end of Chord Diagram = Mute String
 - Open Circle at end of Chord Diagram = Open String
 - Open Diamond = Root of a Chord which can be Moved

The numbers that are circled are the fingering notations.

Intervals and Sixths

The term "interval" is used to describe the DISTANCE between two notes in a major scale.

For example, in a C major scale, the distance between the C and the A would be an interval of a 6th.

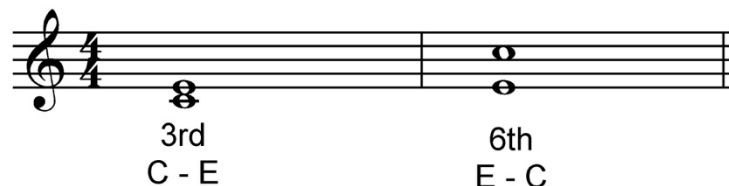
Sixths, along with thirds and tenths, are some of the most helpful intervals that you need to be able to play as a guitarist. Sixths, along with thirds work great when harmonizing a melody. .

Sixths & Thirds Relationship

The intervals of 3rds and 6ths share a unique relationship that mirrors each other.

For example: In the key of C, the major third above C would be E. But if you raise the C up an octave so that it is above the E, the same two notes can be thought of from the perspective of the key of E where C would be a minor 6th above E.

The same two notes – depending on their order – can both be 3rds and 6ths.



Playing Sixths on Guitar: Form 1

On guitar, sixths are commonly played on two strings with a string in between - so it is helpful to think of them by string combinations.

On a 6-string guitar you end up with FOUR different string combinations that include a string between the others, i.e. strings 6-4, 5-3, 4-2, 3-1. Since the guitar is mostly tuned in 4ths except for the 3rd between the 2nd and 3rd string you only have to end up learning TWO different forms to play sixths all over the guitar.

Sixths are generally thought of as the root being the upper note.

So, if we are in the key of E and we wanted to play sixths up the neck it would be like this...

Form 1: Sixths in E (6th & 4th String Combination with Root on 4th String)

E



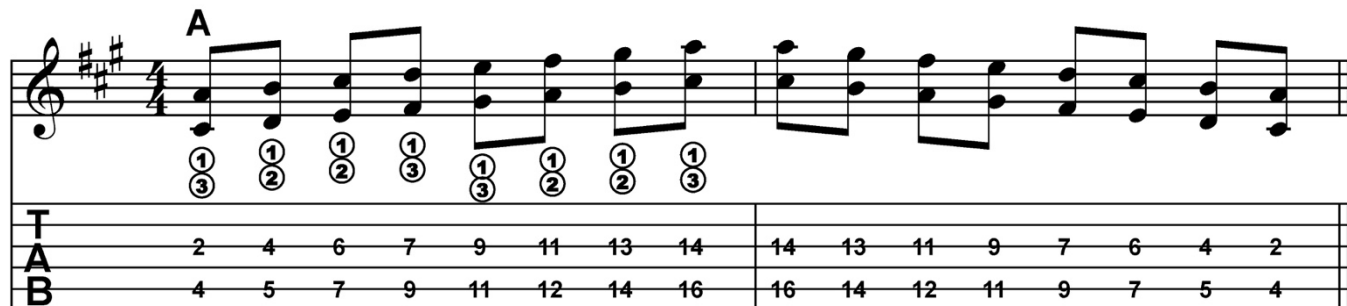
T														
A	2	4	6	7	9	11	13	14	14	13	11	9	7	6
B	4	5	7	9	11	12	14	16	16	14	12	11	9	7

Let's move to the next string combination which has the root on the 3rd string. Play 6ths in key of A.

Remember, it's the same fingering as the intervals in E that you just played – just on the 5th and 3rd strings.

Form 1: Sixths in A (5th & 3rd String Combination with Root on 3rd String)

A



T														
A	2	4	6	7	9	11	13	14	14	13	11	9	7	6
B	4	5	7	9	11	12	14	16	16	14	12	11	9	7

So, to conclude, if the root is on the 4th or 3rd strings then you use Form 1 to play 6ths.

But what if the root is on the 2nd or 1st string? Because of how the guitar is tuned, you need to use a different form with a slightly different fingering.

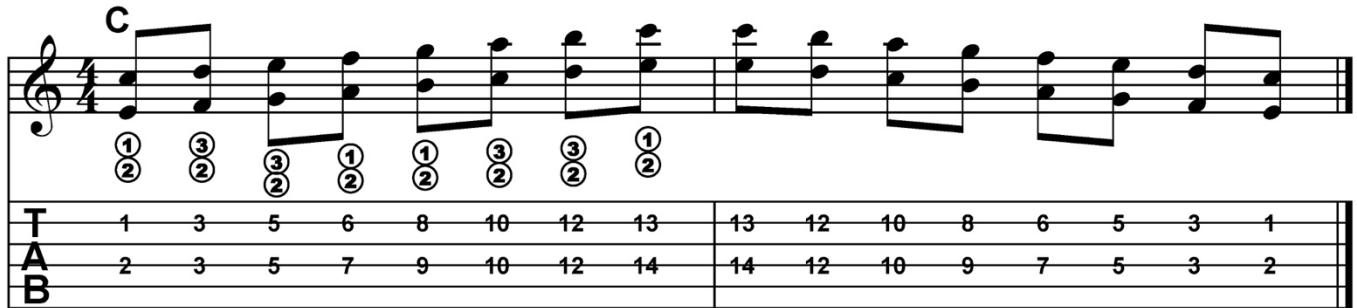
Playing Sixths on Guitar: Form 2

For roots on the 2nd string the fingering changes a bit.

Let's move to the key of C and play 6ths in C on the 4th and 2nd strings.

Form 2: Sixths in C (4th & 2nd String Combination with Root on 2nd String)

C



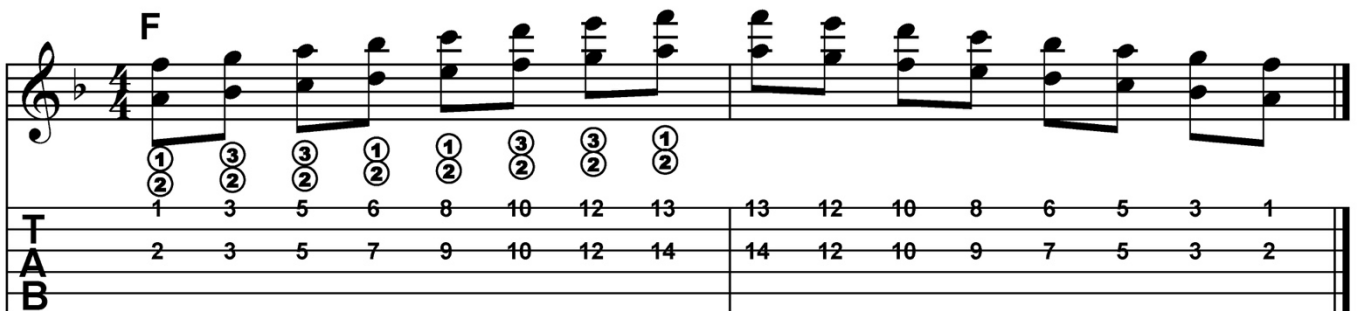
T	1	3	5	6	8	10	12	13	13	12	10	8	6	5	3	1
A	2	3	5	7	9	10	12	14	14	12	10	9	7	5	3	2
B																

Finally, there is only one other string combination that you can play 6ths on – the 3rd and 1st strings.

This is the exact same fingering as the pattern we just played.

Let's move to the key of F and play 6ths in F on the 3rd and 1st strings.

F

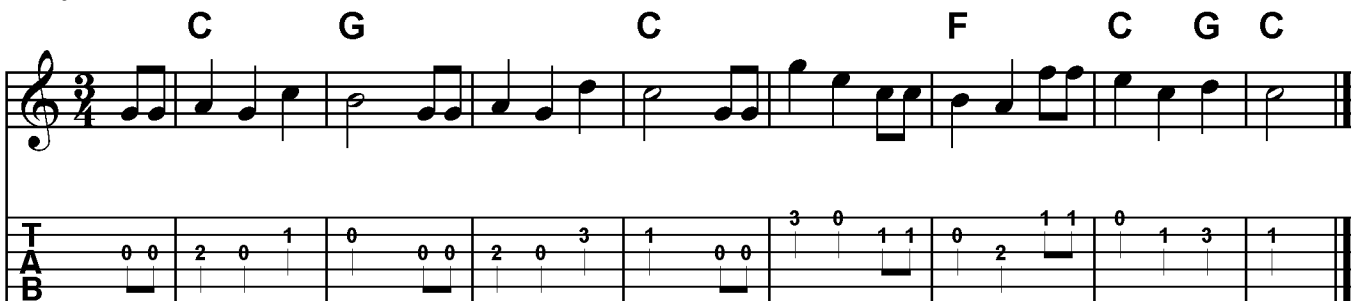


T	1	3	5	6	8	10	12	13	13	12	10	8	6	5	3	1
A	2	3	5	7	9	10	12	14	14	12	10	9	7	5	3	2
B																

Harmonizing a Melody with Thirds & Sixths

Now, let's try to harmonize a simple melody using thirds and sixths. Here is the melody for "Happy Birthday".

C G C F C G C



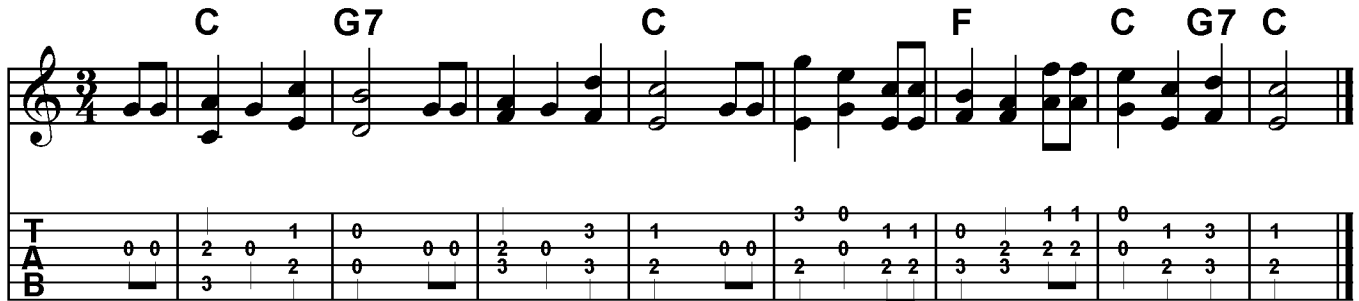
T	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3	1	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	1
A	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3	1	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	1
B																									

To add basic harmony, we can add intervals of a 3rd or 6th to the melody note.

Try the interval of the 3rd or 6th first, then if that doesn't sound correct then try the other interval. Almost always one or the other will create the correct harmony.

Here is the harmonized melody to "Happy Birthday" using 3rds and 6ths (and even a 10th).

C G7 C F C G7 C



T: 0 0 2 0 1 0 2 0 3 1 3 0 1 1 0 1 1 0 1 3 1
 A: 0 0 2 0 0 0 2 0 3 2 0 0 2 0 2 2 3 2 2 3 2
 B: 3 2 0 0 0 0 3 2 0 2 2 3 3 3 0 2 3 2

"Springtime"

Here is a short, beautiful song that uses 6ths to harmonize the melody. Enjoy!

Music by Steve Krenz

A E7 A

♩ = 88



T: 10 9 5 9 7 6 7 5 7 10 9 5 9 7
 A: 11 9 6 9 7 6 7 5 7 11 9 6 9 7
 B: 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

E7 F#m C#m7

T: 6 7 5 7 2 4 5 2 4 0 2 4 5 2 3
 A: 6 7 5 7 2 4 5 2 4 0 2 4 5 2 3
 B: 0 0 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

Bm7 E7 A A2

T: 2 4 2 3 5 1 2 4 2 3 5 5 4 4 4
 A: 2 4 2 3 5 1 2 4 2 3 5 5 4 4 4
 B: 2 4 0 2 4 5 0 2 4 6 0 5 4 4 0