

## Simple C Major Chord

By Christopher Schlegel

In this lesson we are going to learn a simple C major chord.

Some of the notes are "open" string notes. In this case, make sure to keep your fingers clear of that string so you don't mute it. You want to have your hand "hovering" or "arched" slightly over any string that has an "open" string note. Some of the notes are "fretted" notes. In this case, place the tip of your index finger right behind the first fret of the B string (the second thinnest one).

It is important to use the tip of your finger. Beginners find their fingers can be tender & occasionally are tempted to use the pads of their fingers. With time (and dedicated practice!) your fingertips will harden with callouses. Until then, tough it out! You can do it! It is worth it!

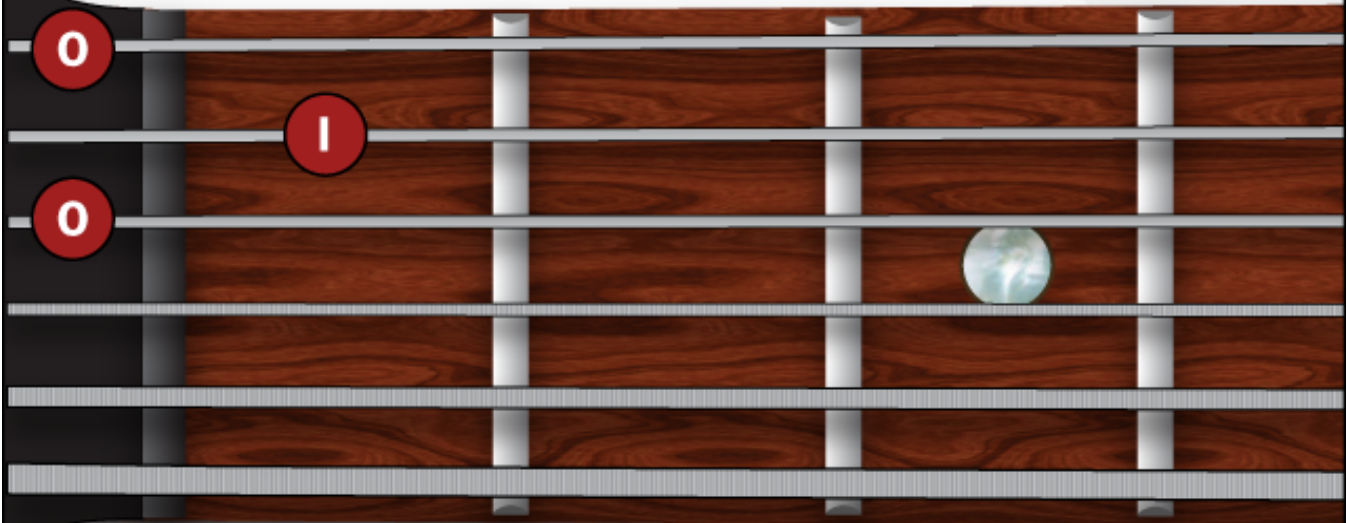
From the last knuckle of your finger to the fingertip, arch your finger so it is pointing straight down into the string & fretboard. This will give you the most leverage & power. In addition, your fingertip should be right behind the fret you are playing. Not on top of the fret! You will get a muted sound right on top of the fret. Also, not too far behind the fret. In that case you won't get enough leverage & you will be making it too hard on yourself. Right behind the fret is the best location for any fretting any note!

Your thumb should be placed directly opposite your fingers on the back of the neck. Your thumb should provide just enough pressure to keep your hand firmly in place on the neck and opposing pressure to help your fingers hold down any fretted notes. Sometimes beginners squeeze too hard with their thumb and/or their fingers. Actually this is a problem for some skilled guitarists, too! Remember that you want just enough pressure to get the job done. Not enough will, of course, result in a poor sounding chord. But too much will is wasted effort and can over time actually hinder your ability to move quickly and effectively to the next chord or hand position.

First, get the notes of these beginning chords to sound. After you can do that, start to experiment with exactly how much pressure you need in order to play fretted notes and chords.

We want to practice playing each chord using two different approaches. We want to individually pluck each string slowly right after one another. This will give us a way to hear whether or not every note in the chord is sounding as clearly as possible. After you've made sure that each note is sounding as clearly as possible, then we want to strum the chord, lightly grazing the pick over each string quickly right after one another. This is typically how chords are strummed on the guitar. Once you get used to this technique, try to strum back and forth.

## Simple C Major Chord Shape



**Finger Legend:**  
**I** = Index  
**M** = Middle  
**R** = Ring  
**P** = Pinky  
**O** = Open String



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The image shows musical notation for a simple C major chord in 4/4 time. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The treble clef staff has a 4/4 time signature and a red '1' above the first measure. The first measure contains a quarter note on G4, a quarter note on B4, and a half note on C5. The second measure contains a whole chord symbol 'C' with a red '2' above it. The guitar TAB staff has the letters 'T', 'A', and 'B' stacked vertically on the left. The first measure has fret numbers 0, 1, and 0 for the strings from bottom to top. The second measure has fret numbers 0, 1, and 0 for the strings from bottom to top.