G, C, & D Major Chords
By Christopher Schlegel

Let's practice more open position chords! Since most songs use more than one chord, we need to learn how to switch between them. More to the point, we need to learn how to switch from one chord to the next chord in time with music.

This time we are getting used to the physical motions involved in moving from G major to C major and D major. Practice putting your fingers in place for a G major, then strum the chord. Switch to a C major chord and strum it. Switch back to a G major chord, strum it. Next, switch to a D major chord, strum it. Finally, switch back to an G major chord, strum it. Keep doing this switching between G, C, & D major until you start to get the hang of it. Over time your hands and fingers will slowly start to more easily "remember" these motions and carry them out more automatically. This is called building "muscle memory". This is the ability of a part of your body to be trained to automatically, quickly and effectively carry out orders from your mind. You think, "Play that next chord," and your arms, hands, and fingers take care of the details!

Next, we need to get used to the idea of switching chords "in time" or "in rhythm" with an implied beat. In this case we are working on playing a chord once and then holding it for four evenly spaced "beats"; a slow but steady count of "1, 2, 3, 4". Then when the next count of "1" comes around again, strum the chord again. This time we have from counts 2, 3, and 4 to get ready to play the next chord. Use this time to get ready to play the next chord. Just like we did before!

Remember that we are focusing on two things: getting from one chord shape to the next and doing it in time to play that next chord on the count of "1".

Keep practicing these motions until you can do it consistently and effectively. The next step is going to be playing these chords along with a backing track.

Chord Practice

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