



A, D, & E Minor Chords

By Christopher Schlegel

Now we know our first full, open position minor chords. Again, 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.

First, simply get used to the physical motions involved in moving from one chord to the next. Practicing putting your fingers in place for an A minor chord, then strum the chord. Then, switch to a D minor chord and strum it. Switch back to an A minor chord, strum it. Next, switch to an E minor chord, strum it. Finally, switch back to an A minor chord, strum it. Keep doing this switching between A minor, D minor, A minor, and E minor 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 an A minor 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 an A minor 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 A minor chord again. This time we have from counts 2, 3, and 4 to get ready to play the D minor chord. Use this time to get ready to play the D minor. Then when the count of "1" comes around again, play the D minor chord. Hold the D minor chord for 4 counts. Then play the D minor chord again.

Now we have from 2, 3 and 4 to get our hands in place for the return of the A minor chord. When 1 comes around again, play the A minor chord. Four more counts and we play A minor again. Then we have to get ready for the E minor chord on the next count of 1. Play the E minor chord, count to 4, play the E minor chord again on 1 and get ready to return to A minor on the next 1 to start the entire pattern again.

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

A, D, E Minor Chords

Slowly ♩ = 80

A minor

D minor

1 2 3 4

T
A
B

A minor

E minor

5 6 7 8

T
A
B